

## Swamped By Muslims: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Pauline Hanson's Maiden Speech 2016

**Abstract:** *This article explores the recent upsurge of using prejudicial discourses in political communication. Following in the footprints of US president Donald Trump many right-wing populist politicians around the world used the strategies of fear to coerce policy making. This article examines the implicit and explicit discursive strategies that were used by Australian Senator Pauline Hanson in order to persuade policy makers to stop immigration and ban the woman's headscarf. The study involves a critical discourse analysis of the maiden speech delivered by Pauline Hanson in Parliament in 2016. The article focuses on the methodologies of Van Dijk's Ideological Square and Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach to inspect the linguistic devices used. The findings of the study show that Pauline Hanson used certain lexical choices to represent Australian Muslims as the 'Other' and politicized the issue to achieve her long-lasting wish of banning the immigrants.*

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**Key Words:** Muslims, Discourse Analysis, Political Speech, Islam, Australia, Islamophobia, Strategies.

### Introduction

The cultural history of Australia conspicuously presents a history of racism and a narrative of the 'Other' primarily from a nation that originally was not from here. The dispossession of the indigenous people of Australia by the British saw a wave of white man's supremacy over the colored (Chan, 2001). This generated a kind of racial conflict between the white and black people of Australia. We can relate this to the racism that existed in other parts of the world, wherever British colonies were created. It is asserted that

there came a shift in the thinking patterns of nationalism in the late 1800s when the 'White Australians', in their pursuit to federate the country, imposed immigration restrictions, especially on Asians and Chinese people (Cope, 1991).

This surge of racism changed its course after the Second World War. And Australia became lenient with the immigration laws and started to distance itself from the 'White Australian policy' and adopted a new paradigm of inclusion in the community. This was the 'Anglo assimilation' policy whereby the immigrants who were coming

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into Australia through other western parts of the world like the European countries e.g. Greek, Italy etc., were asked to adopt the Christian way of life so that they could be accepted in the Australian culture. This assimilation doctrine was later replaced with the rise of multiculturalism which was inevitable due to the co existence of different nations and cultures. And the policy makers then, felt it necessary as it was also the need of that particular time period to shift the policy towards multiculturalism.

The history of Australian culture with regard to its differences from various other cultures is replete with examples. Many scholars believe that the contemporary era, with the rise of the hysteria of terrorist attacks and terrorist organizations working against humanity in different war trodden parts of the world, will give rise to a new enemy for Australia as well. Knowing that the country has a racial past, it was convenient to comprehend the merits of this thought. The present form of racism against Muslims and Islam has been dubbed by many scholars as 'Islamophobia'.

### **Role Of Media And Politicians In Building Public Opinion**

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The debates against Islam and Muslims in the Australian popular culture are shaped by many factors in the present information age. An author wrote that "public opinion can be defined as the complex collections of opinions of many different people and the sum of all their views" [\(Mughal, 30 August 2011\)](#). The two main sources of building and influencing public opinion are the media and the politicians. The Australian media, following the agenda setting theory and framing theory, creates specific stereotypes of Muslims and Islam, portraying them as terrorists and linking them with ISIS and Al Qaida. The media have hidden agendas that are driven by other political and economic goals. As an example, from the past, we have seen how the American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. on 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1963 delivered his famous 'I have a dream' speech which influenced the federal government to taking actions and melted the hearts of citizens and formed a public opinion to end racism in the United States and called for civil and economic rights.

### **Rise of Hate Speech Rhetoric In The West**

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The focus of this present study also comes from one of the above mentioned political parties. Keeping in view the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia and how it is being fueled by politicians, one party leader's extreme statements against Islam and Muslims form the object of analysis for this article. The maiden speech was given by the second time elected Senator Pauline Hanson in the Parliament in 2016 made the headlines and raised controversies among the Australian Muslims when she very tactfully conflated terrorism, extremism and Muslim refugees and built the narrative to call for a ban on immigration, a long-lasting wish and also tried to persuade for prohibiting the women's burqa.

### **Literature Review**

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This paper informs about the previous studies on the related topic. It is significant because this section forms the foundations of the current study [\(Fatima, Ahmed, Shafi, 2021\)](#). This paper sets out to examine the use of discursive strategies employed by right wing politician Pauline Hanson in her maiden speech in 2016. The article bases its argument on the themes of right-wing politics of fear and the use or misuse of the discourses of Islamophobia and immigrants posed as a security threat. As this is an ongoing and hotly debated phenomenon a vast amount of literature exists on the studies of Islamophobia and racism. For the present article, the researcher however, keeps the literature review specifically to the study of the representation of Islam and Muslims in the political domain and touches on related aspects briefly to explain a point. The literature review follows a thematic pattern beginning with the historical understanding of Islamophobia. It will take the readers through the general manifestations of Islamophobia in the Australian context. In the later part of the article, the author connects the phenomenon with the political scenario of the right-wing parties especially citing the studies which conducted qualitative critical discourse analysis on the deliberate polarization of Muslims and mainstream people into 'Us' and 'Them' dichotomy.

## **Historical Understandings**

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The literature informs that throughout history, scholars have debated the definitions of Islamophobia. Different scholars understood it from many different angles and perspectives. Some explain it as an extension of xenophobia and racism while others criticize even the use of the term Islamophobia. Although the term was first coined in 1997 by Runnymede Trust, the presence of hatred against Muslims and Islam is as old as the religion itself. A researcher explained the concept following the footprints of religious hostilities against Muslims from the times of crusades till the present day 'War on Terror'. He analyzed the various definitions of the concept by numerous scholars and institutes and finally rested on the understanding of Islamophobia as 'cognitive, affective and conative' attitudes, considering the concept of Islamophobia as a 'mediated construct'. The author concludes the article by giving a model for understanding the growth of Islamophobia as 'rational or irrational'. The model dissects the problem by providing the operationalization of various elements that exhibit Islamophobic characteristics. Some points for the measuring of the variables include 'cultural threats', 'political threats' and 'security threats.' The author examines that the various definitions of Islamophobia in the past present the concept as an 'irrational fear'. However, the model given by the author will help distinguish the concept correctly as either an irrational or rational phenomenon (Iqbal, 2010).

Considering the contemporary political atmosphere around the world, this model may help in dissecting the rational decision making that is involved in politics regarding the segregation of Muslims as 'Other'.

## **Manifestations Of Islamophobia**

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An article mentions the general atmosphere that surrounds the Australian Muslims regarding their identity, culture and faith which has enormously been affected due to the mainstream's Islamophobia. Australian Muslims are explicitly portrayed and framed with specific labels in the media. They are perceived to be equal with those who commit hate crimes, and transgress law and

religious boundaries. Australian Muslim women and children face discrimination, harassment, verbal abuse and physical assault in their day to day lives. The author argues that the media is hugely responsible for the construction of the Muslim community because of biasedness and political agendas. The only time space that Muslim women are given on air is spent on explaining or defending the head scarf and not discussing the real issues. The article concludes with the suggestion that there should be more representation of Muslims in the mainstream media so that a balance could be achieved. Further, the article also mentions about the role of politicians and journalists in appeasing the hatred among the mainstream Australians and the Muslims (Chopra, 2015).

The literature so far describes that right wing populist politicians in the West successfully coalesce immigrants, refugees and Muslims with terrorists and organizations which conduct terrorist activities. Accordingly, a researcher studied how these right wing political parties achieved a new form of hegemony by bringing the discourses of immigrants to the center of politics and posing them as a threat to their culture (Yilmaz, 2012). Another study examined how Muslims were represented in the right wing politician's speeches, in this case, Donald Trump as the (then) presidential candidate. The study used critical discourse analysis to scrutinize five speeches of Trump by following the frameworks of Van Dijk's Ideological Square model and Norman Fairclough's 3 D model. The study concluded that Trump, during his presidential campaign, used a lot of Islamophobic content in his speeches to gain popularity and incited the public's hatred for Muslims by portraying them as negative, violent and terrorists (Khan, 2017).

This dominant ideology of perceiving Muslims and Islam as a threat and danger to Western societies has also penetrated the public sphere and shows its ugly manifestations in popular culture. As explained by a researcher by conducting a corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis on Donald Trump's Facebook page conversations. The article examined the issue of immigration and the discourses of hate that existed among the American public and supporters of Trump. The paper showed that

Muslims were framed as violent and dangerous who were not fit to live in a democracy. They were perceived as terrorists, untrustworthy and aggressive. The researcher sensed the Muslims' position as the "Other" in the data collected and noticed that being a Muslim was enough to be disqualified from being a proper US citizen (Knoblock, 2017).

### **Us and Them Polarization**

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The nature of party politics and democracy makes it crucial for one party to win while the other to lose. This sets the vitriolic competition among the parties and political actors where they divide the society into in-group and out-group polarization. An article mentioned this 'us' versus 'them' categorization in the wake of the 2001 September attacks on the US by conducting a membership categorization analysis (MCA) on speeches of three stakeholders, the president of the United States, the British Prime Minister and Al Qaida's leader Osama Bin Laden. The author found that all three speakers created Us versus Them categorizes. The former two speakers did it in terms of social, political and moral aspects while Bin Laden did it in terms of religious aspects Leudar, Marsland, & Nekvapil, 2004). Another study examined the construction of Muslims in the theoretical underpinnings of the 'Othering' theory. The authors took a corpus of Australian Print Media articles from December 2005 following the Cronulla riots which indicated a form of 'new racism' against the Muslims in Australia. The researchers used discourse analysis methodology emphasizing on the model developed by Michel Foucault to deconstruct media representations of Australian Muslims, as media was considered a place where racism is portrayed in the form of social narratives. The article using the Foucauldian discourse analysis approach examined that the discourses in the media construct the Australian nation as a fair, just and tolerant society and 'legitimized' and 'justified' the narrative of 'other' when used against the Muslims. The researchers analyzed that racism persisted in the media including the 'negative other presentation', 'positive self-presentation', 'mitigation', 'denial', 'reversal', 'naturalizing', 'inequality' and 'blaming the victim'. The article concluded that these racist

discourses pervading the print media would have implications in everyday life in the sense that particular people will be made to feel 'unwelcome', 'uncomfortable', and 'illegitimate' in the general Australian society (Quayle & Sonn, Volume 21 No 1 June 2009).

Examining the diversity of linguistic means in political discourses, two authors studied the 'us' and 'them' constructions from a pragmatic-cognitive approach which simply means that these linguistic structures are considered based on the speaker's intention which depicts how the speaker wants to portray us and them. Moreover, the authors explained that these means are dynamic and depend on the type of context they are used in, like proximization theory, ideological square and common ground strategies which construct different discourses in different settings (Wirth-Koliba, 2016). Along the same line of thought, a study was conducted by a young researcher to see the portrayal of Muslims in 'Us' versus 'Them' dichotomy in the political discourse of two right wing politicians, Donald Trump and Nigel Farage. The researcher used critical discourse analysis to compare speeches from two different continents namely America and UK and examined the negative representation of Muslims that was apparent in both speeches but was somehow implicitly expressed in the speech of the British politician as compared to Donald Trump from America. The researcher used the approach of 'exclusionary rhetoric' by Ruth Wodak and 'Ideological square' by Van Dijk to evaluate the speeches in detail. The study concluded that both speakers used subtle techniques to deliver their rhetoric implicitly. However, at the portions of speeches where they explicitly express their hatred, certain argumentative strategies were deployed to justify and legitimize the claims. The findings showed that both the politicians linked Muslims to terrorists and immigrants very cunningly by using lexical choices and mentioning names of terrorist organizations. And at the same time, they portrayed themselves as somebody without prejudice and racism. The study further suggested investigating whether the techniques used by Trump and Farage, especially the referential and predicative strategies, are

reinforced by right wing politicians of other countries. [\(Tennant, 2016\)](#)

### **Research Questions**

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The present article aims to analyze Pauline Hanson's maiden speech in 2016 to answer the following research questions:

**RQ 1:** How the religious "Othering" of Muslims is being constructed and abused by the right-wing politician Pauline Hanson?

**RQ 2:** How did Pauline Hanson provoke Islamophobia in her maiden speech in 2016?

### **Research Methodology**

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This study is guided by qualitative critical discourse analysis.

### **Theoretical Framework**

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For the present study of analysis involving a political speech which derogates and discriminates Muslims, Critical Discourse Analysis has been selected as a methodology and theoretical framework. According to a major proponent, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a kind of study that examines the power abuse, dominance and inequality practiced by the powerful groups and the resistance shown by the dominated groups in the context of social and political discourses. [\(Van Dijk, 2001\)](#). In the book 'Analyzing discourse-Textual analysis for social research' (2003) it is assumed "that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life" and the author believes that the study of language should be the focus for any social research. The author further asserted that this inspection of language is more than just a linguistic analysis involving 'interdiscursivity', which is a way to see texts in other discourse genres and styles [\(Fairclough, 2003\)](#). It is, however, advocated that since discourses are embedded in history, therefore it is best to study them with respect to that context relying on "extra linguistic factors as culture, society and ideology" [\(Wodak & Meyer, 2001\)](#).

Within the critical discourse analysis realm, there are various approaches developed by different proponents of CDA like Van Dijk, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak etc. and different types of discourses are better studied using the various models of CDA [\(Van Dijk, 2001\)](#). However, it is suggested that all these models have the same basic focus of studying social dominance and the typical vocabulary of most CDA scholars features ideas of power, dominance, inequality, discrimination, race, gender, ideology and hegemony [\(Ahmed, Shafi, & Masood, 2021\)](#). Since the present article focuses on the construction of in groups and out groups by studying the discriminatory discourse of a political speech, therefore Van Dijk's Ideological Square model and Ruth Wodak's model of discursive strategies have been used to analyze the discourse.

### **Ideological Square Model**

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The ideologies are often polarized into the dichotomy of in-group and out-group [\(Van Dijk, 2016\)](#). In the political scenario, this polarization manifests blatantly owing to the conflicting categorization of political parties. As a result of this segregation, the political ideologies and in turn, the political discourses also become polarized, as in the case of the immigration issue and racial discrimination against Muslims in Australia. Here members of the in-group are trying to depict a positive self-presentation and a negative other presentation.

### **Discourse-Historical Approach**

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Within the domain of critical discourse analysis, Martin Reisigl and Ruth Wodak developed another model to analyze discriminatory discourses. This approach is known as the 'Discourse-historical Approach (DHA)'. It is stated that DHA is focused on analyzing extensively through the historical perspective in which different discriminatory and racist events occur. These include racism, ethnicism, nationalism, xenophobia, sexism and Islamophobia [\(Reisigl, 2017\)](#). As explained by the major advocates, the discourse-historical approach is based on the "socio-philosophical orientation of critical theory". The authors assert

that DHA follows three complex interconnected aspects of social critique.

Socio-diagnostic critique': which is concerned with demystifying the implicit and explicit discursive practices. At this stage, the researchers are allowed to build their point of view based on historical, social, and political contexts and interpret the meanings based on social theories.

Prognostic critique: It simply means providing suggestions and proposals for improvement of the discursive event (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001).

To conduct discourse-historical analysis, Wodak and Meyer (2001) lay out five discursive strategies to examine discriminatory and racial discourse practices with which in-groups create positive self and negative other presentations. These include referential/nomination strategies to see how persons are named and referred to; Predicational Strategies to see what traits, qualities and characteristics are attributed to our groups; Argumentation Strategies to analyze how groups build their justification of racism and exclusion; Perspectivation and framing Strategies, to know from what point of view and position the in-group arguments and attributes are formed; and Intensification/mitigation Strategies, to inspect whether the racial utterances are covertly or overtly expressed.

### Data Collection

This study focuses on the use of Islamophobic content emerging in the right-wing politics in Australia. For this purpose, a couple of notorious right wing Australian politicians presented a choice. The initial review of literature presented the case of Pauline Hanson which got the attention of the researcher knowing the fact that Pauline made the headlines in 1996 with her controversial speech in the Parliament. After twenty long years of struggle to gain power, she



got the second chance to resume her seat in the Senate but her stance on hate mongering remained the same. This allured the researcher to qualitatively analyze the maiden speech given by Pauline Hanson in 2016 in the Senate as no scholarly literature was found on this particular speech during the time frame the researcher worked on the article. The transcript for the speech was retrieved from the internet ([www.abc.net.au](http://www.abc.net.au)). The article does not intend to analyze the whole speech since the principle aim of the study is to examine discriminatory discourses against Islam and Australian Muslims. The author limits the analysis to only those excerpts which are related to Islam and Muslims. The portion of the speech analyzed is attached in the appendix.

### Instrument

The study is based on the paradigm of qualitative research following the methodology of critical discourse analysis. The article uses two different approaches or models as developed by Teun A. Van Dijk, the ideological square and discourse-historical approach (DHA) as practiced by Ruth Wodak and Martin Reisigl. The instrument to analyze the discriminatory, racist and Islamophobic discourses in the speech was developed by conflating the two models. The linguistic categories of Van Dijk were fused within the discursive strategies of Wodak (see table for reference) to extract the implicit and explicit ideologies and infer the latent meanings and interpretations from the discourse. The coding for the data was done with the help of different color keys for convenience (See details of the table in appendix for color keys, underlines, and bold lines) and a detailed interpretation and analysis based on the linguistic devices that are used in the speech is presented in the findings. In the final section of the article the analysis is further interpreted to present the answers to the proposed research questions.

**Table 1.** Coding for data

Discursive Strategies	Color Coding	Linguistic Categories	Some Examples from Data
Referential/Nomination & Predicational Strategie	US 	Nouns Pronouns	We, our, own, us, Australia, Christian,

Discursive Strategies	Color Coding	Linguistic Categories	Some Examples from Data
		Adjectives Actor Descriptions Attributions Positive/Negative traits Implications Categorization Lexical Choices Generalizations Stereotypes	tolerant, national, secular, cohesive neighborhood, open
	THEM 		They, them, their, Muslims, refugees, theocracy, immigrant, radical, antisocial, hyper masculine, misogynist, Crime, violence, ISIS, terrorist, fight, suspect
Argumentation Strategies		Authority Comparison Claims without Evidence Fallacious Claims Vague Generalization Topoi: usefulness, danger & threat, burden, numbers, history, culture,	Islam sees itself as a theocracy It's partly a religion but it is much more than that Curtis Cheng Murder ASIO has over 509 terrorists If we do not make changes now
Perspectivation, Framing or discourse representation strategies	<u>Underlined</u>	Metaphors National self glorification Presupposition Vagueness	Being swamped by Muslims Australia has embraced migrants Why then has Islam Many more Australian Muslims Muslims want to see Sharia Law
Intensification/ mitigation strategies	<b>Bold</b>	Dramatization Mitigation Intensification Hyperbole Victimization Exaggeration Question instead of assertion	I will take you to the airport Islam does not believe in democracy It has a political agenda How should we tell the difference?

## Findings and Analysis

This section of the research discusses the findings of the research and analyses the data qualitatively. The analysis helps dissect our object of study for further explanations of our research questions (Masood, Shafi, & Darwesh, 2020). The analysis follows the categories mentioned in the table above. The color coding for the data has been provided in the table and in the appendix. The coding makes it convenient to identify the different linguistic categories. For this purpose, the analysis is divided into four parts, as guided by the table above.

## Analysis of Referential/Nomination and Predicational Strategies

The analysis of the referential/ nomination strategies explains how the social actors are described in the speech. Our main Actor Pauline Hanson deploys a range of nouns, pronouns, adjectives and lexical choices to achieve her objective of creating polarization between the in-groups and out-groups. These in-groups and out-groups primarily refer to the mainstream Australians of predominantly Christian origin and the Muslims principally of Australian origins but also include other nationalities of the Muslim community, respectively. The deployment of these discursive techniques has been used to construct the stereotypical image of a group or community. The foremost lexical choices to nominate and predicate the "in group" by Pauline includes 'we', 'us', 'our', 'Australian', 'our cohesive society', 'openness', 'tolerant' whereas the lexical choices referring the out-groups includes, 'you', 'they', 'them', 'their', 'Muslims', 'refugees', 'theocracy', 'migrants', 'radical', 'antisocial', 'different races', 'inmates', 'violent', 'hyper-masculine', 'misogynist', 'terrorist', 'suspects', 'ISIS' etc. The planned and deliberate use of these words explicates the preconceived notions and negative presuppositions of the speaker with respect to the Australian Muslims.

As the speech was delivered to the other parliamentarians and also to be heard by the general public through media coverage, Pauline used the first person plural pronoun "we" in order to close the gaps between the in groups. To give an assurance that the one asked is not alone that

we are in this together that we will face it together. Like in the example "If we do not make changes now..." (See appendix Para 13 Line 1), here "we" was smartly used in place of 'you' like an experienced teacher asks her students 'we will now make a circle' implying the latent meanings that 'you' should all make a circle now.

In the same dichotomy of 'Us' versus 'Them', another theme that Pauline Hanson brings forth is the apparent collision of Islam versus Australia. She personifies a religion by attributing negative traits to Islam as in the example "Islam does not believe in democracy...."(See appendix Para 5 line2), implying and associating Islam, the religion itself with the trait of being undemocratic. Similarly, in a further line, "It has a political agenda that goes far outside the realm of religion" (See Appendix Para 5 lines 4 & 5), the phrase 'political agenda' implies negative meanings which can further lead to many harmful interpretations. Pauline in order to obtain her goal of creating polarization, also uses the linguistic device of generalization for Islam. As in these two excerpts.

## Analysis of Argumentation Strategies

The general analysis of argumentation strategies employs the examination of the 'topoi' that are used to create the justification for the construction of "Othering". Pauline Hanson, in her maiden speech in 2016, mostly relied on the 'topoi of danger and threat' while referring to Muslims and immigration issues to persuade her fellow parliamentarians. As in the excerpt below

*"Now we are in danger of being swamped by Muslims, who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own....."* (See appendix Para 1 line 1 & 2)

Referring to the speech that she delivered in 1996 where she used the controversial phrase 'swamped by Asians', she talks about the present and using the topos of danger and threat, she asserts that now we are in danger of being 'swamped' by Muslims. She combines the topos of culture for the second part of the sentence and creates the assertion that since the culture of Muslims is incompatible with our own, something must be done to change this situation. While talking about Islam, she says

*"It is partly a religion, but it is much more than that"* (See Appendix Para 5, line 4)

Pauline Hanson, in her pursuit of persuasion at any cost or from her unnecessary fear and hatred or yet limited knowledge of Islam and Muslims, makes vociferous claims but provides no evidence for her arguments touching the boundary of fallacy.

Another strategy to identify discriminatory discourse is by recognizing the use of the topos of numbers where the speaker uses the number game to make their arguments and, in turn, their racism justified. Pauline Hanson conflates the topos of numbers and comparison, talks about the Muslim imprisonment and compares it with the national average. Here the comparison between Muslims and nationals creates the allusion that Muslims may not be a part of the national entity. In another attempt, Pauline says, *"ASIO has over 509 terrorist suspects under surveillance"* (See appendix Para 8 lines 2 & 3), suggesting a link between Muslims and terrorists by mentioning the security organization as an Authority. Another example of using authority comes in the line

*"Most Australians find them confronting, as did two of our former prime ministers"* (See Appendix Para 14 line 3)

In the above line, Pauline referring to the burqa (headscarf worn by women), makes the vague generalization that 'most Australians' don't like it and then completes the sentence by adding authority to the claim in the form of 'former prime ministers' also not liking it. Using the 'topos of usefulness,' Pauline says

*"Therefore, I call for stopping further Muslim immigration and banning the burqa, as they have done in many countries around the world"* (See Appendix Para 14 lines 1 & 2)

### **Analysis of the Perspectivation, Framing or Discourse Representation Strategies**

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An analysis of perspectivation, framing and discourse representation strategies include examining the involvement of speakers in discriminatory discourses and a study of their explanations regarding the viewpoints that they take for narrating, describing and quoting the discriminatory events and practices (Reisigl &

Wodak, 2001). While framing the Muslim discriminatory discourses, Pauline makes use of certain linguistic devices like metaphor, self-glorification, presupposition and vagueness. When expressing her concern regarding immigration, she says, *"...in danger of being swamped by Muslims..."* (See Appendix Para 1 line 1). The metaphor 'swamped' refers to flooding which is a common word used in racist discourses for migrants. Contrastingly when talking about Australia, she says *"Australia has embraced migrants from all different races, making us one of the most multiracial nations on earth."* (See Appendix Para 4 lines 1 & 2) This is an example of using a national self glorification device in order to project an amplified view of Australia and its history of accepting migrants. Similarly, she uses the idiom *"from the bottom of my heart"*, (See appendix Para 4 lines 3 & 4) for those Muslims who, according to her, have assimilated and integrated into their culture to express her deepest sincerity for them. But when she describes the out group i.e. the Muslims and Islam, she says it in this way *"Why then has Islam and its teachings had such an impact on Australia like no other religion?"* here, she uses the device of presupposition hiding the assertion in a question form to imply that Islam had a negative impact on Australia. Another line from her speech which uses presupposition is *"Muslims want to see sharia law introduced in Australia"* (See Appendix Para 11 line 1) here she has already decided that Muslims will implement Sharia Law although the country is 'predominantly Christian' and further believes or presupposes that *"we will be living under sharia law and treated as second-class citizens"* (See Appendix Para 13 line 2) Another example of presupposition from her talk is regarding burqa about which she believes that *"a lot of the women forced to wear them would love to cast them aside but live in fear to do so"* Pauline Hanson also uses the device of vagueness when framing her discourse about Islam and Australian Muslims as in *"...it is much more than that"* (See Appendix Para 5 line 4) implying the links to terrorism and in *"Many more Australian Muslims have volunteered...for ISIS..."* (See appendix Para 8 lines 1 & 2) not knowing or providing exact numbers just as in the case of describing the hate

for burqas she mentions “*Most Australians find them confronting...*”

### Analysis of the Intensification/Mitigation Strategies

The discursive strategies of intensification and mitigation are used to mitigate or reduce the level of harshness in the lexical choices by the ‘in-group’ members when they are involved in immigrant related discourses in order to refrain from being criticized as racist while at the same time the use of intensification devices for the ‘out-group’ discourses justify the discriminatory utterances and amplify the ‘out group’ actions. In other words, it follows Van Dijk’s ideological square model of de-emphasizing the bad things for the “US” and emphasizing the bad things for the “Other”. Accordingly, Pauline Hanson uses discursive devices like dramatization, exaggeration, hyperbole, and victimization, among others, to create intensification and mitigation in her speech. As an example, *sin* “*If it would be any help, I will take you to the airport and wave you goodbye with sincere best wishes.*” she uses dramatization to disguise the sarcastic comment and decrease the effect by appearing polite and sincere. While in order to emphasize and exaggerate the bad effects regarding Islam and Muslims, she uses hyperbolic phrases like “*Muslim leaders are deafening with their silence, or lack of sympathy*” for the atrocities inflicted upon Australians who are “*feeling the impact of Islam in their lives and a distaste for its beliefs*” (See appendix Para 8 line 4) or when describing the Sharia law she says “*This law is a totalitarian civil code which prescribes harsh feudal rules imposed on everything, firstly for Muslims, later for everyone.*” This is done to invoke the rhetoric of fear among the people so that they can also share and accept her views and conform to the justification and reasoning to take action like banning the burqa or immigration in Australia.

Pauline also makes use of the device of victimization by giving examples of three incidents ‘Lindt Café siege’, ‘Curtis Cheng murder’ and ‘stabbing of two police officers’, to justify her demand for stopping immigration which she asserts later in the speech is valid. She also uses a device of the question instead of assertion when

she asks, “*But how should we tell the difference?*” and “*. How many lives will be lost or destroyed trying to determine who is good and who is bad?*” (See appendix Para 7 lines 7 & 8) Here the underlying assertion which is mitigated in a question form, is that there is actually no difference between a ‘good Muslim’ and a ‘bad Muslim’. Pauline is actually criticizing the liberal government leaders for their policies of embracing the good Muslims.

### Discussion

**RQ 1:** How the religious “Othering” of Muslims is being constructed and abused by the right-wing politician Pauline Hanson?

The analysis of Pauline Hanson’s maiden speech in 2016 gives us insights for answering our first research question. The question presents two parts, the first about the construction of the religious “Othering” of the Muslims and the second regarding the way that constructed image is abused to gain political benefits. The first part of our analysis manifests the discursive strategies that Pauline uses to create an image of Australian Muslims as the out-group. Pauline uses the referential/ nomination strategies to create segregation of Muslims by referring to them with certain stereotypical names and predicting them certain negative attributes and labels as terrorists, misogynists, hyper-masculine, violent etc. these associations are used to persuade the audience to have a particular image of Muslims one that is mostly negative. The second part of the question relates to the political manifesto of Pauline Hanson and particularly her demand of stopping immigration which she also mentioned in 1996 with reference to the Asian community but this time it was about banning Muslim immigration and the burqa. Pauline Hanson, in accordance with her political desires, first created a monstrous representation of Muslims and then tried to build her narrative by providing a solution for a problem. To achieve her purpose, she struggled to invoke the common fear of the public i.e. terrorism and linked it with Muslim refugees. She used certain discursive devices like argumentation strategies, perspectivation and framing strategies and intensification/ mitigation strategies to create an emphasis, as Van Dijk suggests, on the positive self-presentation and

negative other presentation and to construct a de-emphasis on the negative self-presentation and positive other presentation.

**RQ 2:** How did Pauline Hanson provoke Islamophobia in her maiden speech in 2016?

The nuisance of Islamophobia which can be simply described as fear and hatred of Muslims and Islam has been rearing its ugly head for the last two decades, inflamed by the incident of 9/11 and fueled by public opinion leaders and the media. The recent emergence of right-wing political parties around the world has seen a new wave of Islamophobia being exploited by the political candidates to gain public support. Donald Trump's success in the US presidential election in 2016 further encouraged other right-wing politicians from various countries to use hate speech and build their rhetoric on public fear. Similarly, Pauline Hanson, in her maiden speech on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2016, when she was elected as a senator, provoked the public by her hatred of Islam and Muslims with the use of certain deliberate discursive strategies of nominating pessimistic labels for Muslims and giving justifications for her racism by intensifying and exaggerating the terror incidents that unfortunately occurred in Australia. To achieve her political manifesto of banning Halal certification, stopping the building of mosques and schools, prohibiting the burqa and banning the Muslim immigration, she created a terrifying image of Muslims living in Australia and those of other countries fleeing war zones just to survive. This paved the way for hatred to creep in general and suggested segregation of Muslims in Australia.

## **Conclusion**

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While concluding the article, it is pertinent to glance upon the implications of using hate speech and encouraging Islamophobia among the masses. Although Australia has been a multicultural and multiracial society, but roots of racism and xenophobia have also been apparent here in the past. Islamophobia is a new kind of xenophobia directed towards religion and its followers. Recent elections have seen a rise in Islamophobia aggravated by right-wing politicians. Many unfortunate incidents and terror attacks have become hot topics for politicians to gain public support. Without realizing that this segregation of society based on religion will cause more damage to the society and will be a source of hate crimes by certain individuals in the country, creating a never ending anarchy. This approach of right-wing politicians of being overprotective and presupposing a calamity to implement certain policies will not be fruitful as banning immigration and burqa does not solve the problem instead, it creates new precedents for extreme acts. The analysis reveals that a society which once identified itself as tolerant, diverse, and even felt proud of its multicultural temperament is now being trodden by the underlying dominant ideology of homogeneity propagandized by a few right-wing hate mongers. A suggestion for the predicament of Australian Muslims is to have a proper voice in the politics that could counter the Islamophobic narratives and direct the government's focus on the real issues that Muslims are facing. [Masood, Shafi and Darwesh \(2020\)](#) believed that there should be futuristic implications of any study, so further research could be done comparing the right-wing politicians to study their discourses about Islam and Muslims.

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