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The impact of Australian counter-terrorism measures: a qualitative study of the perceptions and experiences of young Arab Muslims and the discourse(s) on Islam in Australian news media.

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## Abstract

This master thesis address the issue of what it means to be a young Arab Muslim in the context of Australia's "war against terrorism" and ask how these young citizens perceive and experience the impact of the current counter-terrorism machinery. Since the interview results illuminated the role of media in shaping the perceptions of these young Muslims, patterns in and across Australian news media are analysed in order to identify discursive representations of Islam and Muslims. The hypothesis is that Islam and Muslims may be misrepresented in Australian media and that there is a stereotyping and negative reporting of Muslims, due to various types of linguistic choice. Under the joint theoretical leadership of Van Dijk and Said, the thesis was carried out using critical discourse analysis and the notion of *Orientalism* as a theoretical framework. Methodologically, the research design is of qualitative character. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to meet the first objective and a qualitative discourse analysis was performed to meet the second. Two themes, including a range of sub-themes, were prevalent in the interview material: *Psychological effects* and *social impact*. One of the major findings is that, not only law and policy but also the media and news media discourses impact on the lives and perceptions of young Arab Muslims in Australia. The critical discourse analysis reveals that ideological elements are reflected in news media representations of Islam and Muslims, and these in turn impact on the lives of young Arab Muslims. Nevertheless, the analysis also reveals elements of counter discourses, which resonates with the narratives of the young Muslims. These highlight, among other things, the fact that generalisations about Islam are counterproductive and likely to foster friction and tension within our societies.

**Keywords:** Counter-terrorism; impact; law and policy; Muslims; Critical Discourse Analysis; Media; Orientalism

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# **1. Introduction**

Since 9/11 2001, Al-Qai'da influenced terrorism has posed a major security threat to western liberal states. Recently, the proclamation of the Islamic State in the Middle East, has amplified this condition. Australia's foreign minister Julie Bishop commented recently in a national newspaper that terrorism has become "more dangerous, more diversified and more global" than ever before (The Australian, 2015). In the aftermaths of 9/11 a counter-terrorism agenda with a prominent focus on pre-emptive action and a fundamental strengthening of police discretionary powers through the introduction of further legislation on counter-terrorism, emerged (McCulloch and Pickering 2010). In Australia, legislation and law enforcement has been strengthened and intensified throughout the past decade. In 2014, several legislative acts and amendments were suggested, which would extend for instance the use of coercive police power, by a government creating "a safer Australia" (Prime Minister of Australia, 2014). Moreover, the last couple of years an enhanced attention has been given to the emergence of a "home-grown terrorism" threat, defined by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department as "locally-cultivated violent extremism by individuals born, raised or currently living in Australia" (*recited in* the Strategist, 2013). Consequently, counter-terrorism strategies, traditionally focusing on internationally coordinated terrorist threats, have been re-directed towards a focus on individuals and communities within national borders (Mythen et al. 2009:738). However, in the context of an increasingly complex environment, coercive powers traditionally promoted as effective counter-terrorism measures, have proven themselves ineffective in suppressing and preventing terrorism, whether it be within or outside national borders. Subsequently, the current counter-terrorism strategies in Australia have been redesigned to entail not only a "hard power" model, the traditional hallmark of counter-terrorism responses, but also to offer a "softer" approach including tools that aim to increase community cohesion, deter violence and reintegrate groups and individuals who have become involved in extremism. Governments have thus attempted to (re)value community engagement as a way to reduce the risk of alienation and isolation felt by Muslim communities in particular (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009:651). This is captured in the current strategies in Australia, which are based on an assumption that Muslim communities, by working with state agencies and institutions, can help combat terrorism (Spalek and Imtoual 2007). For instance, the police commissioner in the state of Queensland follows such a strategy by reminding all Australian citizens to heighten their sense of awareness and

willingness to report suspicious behaviour within their communities (*Sky News* 25 June 2015) These discursively imposed responsibilities are increasingly framed by counter-terror measures, which encourage internal community surveillance and people, as citizens, to actively contribute to the reduction of the risk of extremism and terrorism (Spalek and Lambert 2008). Expectations that some fear can create tensions for especially Muslims that are being put under pressure to negotiate a tenuous path between being “good” Australian citizens and community members, and being “good” Muslims practicing their religious beliefs (Spalek and Imtoual 2007). Australia's counter-terrorism responses have been criticised, not only in academia but also, by non-governmental organisations, human rights advocates and civil libertarians for their excessive and discriminating character (*ibid.* p.384) One critique is that, although the language of these laws seems to be neutral, in practice they target citizens disproportionately. It is argued that Muslims in the West are being targeted as the “enemy from within” and as “suspect communities”, causing reactions and counter-reactions by both majority and minority groups.

Moreover, current economic and political insecurities have generated pronounced xenophobic attitudes towards migrants in general, and Muslim and Arab Australians in particular. Some may argue that exclusionary, misrepresenting and mistrusting discourses have emerged at the cost of this particular group. For instance, the media has been accused of stereotyping minorities and reinforcing perceptions such as that Muslims deserve the label of enemy. Kabir (2006) notes that media representation and framing has an impact on readers' perceptions and that the portrayal of Islam and Muslims negatively can be said to have such effects on the public. Norris, Kern and Just (2003) examine the ways that media construct news and how citizens respond to this coverage, understand particular events and react to issues of civil liberties. The authors assert that news frames, that “simplify, prioritize, and structure the narrative flow of events” (p. 10), are shaped by the way that terrorist events are interpreted by official sources of the government (i.e. political leaders, security and intelligence services, law enforcement, experts, interest groups among others). It is therefore valid to say that the government approach to terrorism and counter-terrorism has an impact on the national news media, and they are therefore related to one another. Moreover, their model predict that news media shape the public policy agenda and also, indirectly, public opinion and perceptions. However, the latter is not only affected by news framings, but also by personal experience and interpersonal communications and relations. Nevertheless, the news media of any society plays a central role in shaping public reactions, “especially where there

is a broad consensus creating a 'one-sided' interpretation among most leaders and those who share a common national culture and identity" (ibid. p.13).

## **1.1 Research aim and questions**

Against this wider backdrop, questions may be raised regarding what it means to be a young Muslim in todays context of Australia's "war against terrorism" and how these young citizens perceive and interpret the effects of the current counter-terrorism machinery. The aim of this thesis is therefore to explore how young Arab Muslims in Australia experience and respond to counter-terrorism legislation and policy frameworks and their implementation. The following research question will be explored to meet this objective:

- *How do young Arab Muslims in Australia experience and perceive the impact of counter-terrorism measures?*

In addition to the first objective, this thesis also explores the patterns in and across media articles to identify a particular discursive representation of reality. The interview results show that young Arab Muslims believe that media attitudes towards them and Islam disadvantages them, and that, as a result of a media bias rather than of the legal counter-terrorism machinery, they feel that they are being vilified. The hypothesis is that Islam and Muslims may be misrepresented in Australian media and that there is a stereotyping and negative reporting of Muslims, due to various types of linguistic choice. Hence, the thesis also explores the following two questions:

- *How are Islam and Muslims being portrayed in major Australian newspapers against the backdrop of the public debate on terrorism and counter-terrorism policy and legislation?*
- *Are ideological elements and arguments reflected in these portrayals?*

## **1.2 Relevance to the socio-legal research field**

In seeking to understand how particular groups in society perceive the application of law, we

can better comprehend how law and its implementation for instance constitute race-related social inequalities. To begin, law is not a single coherent entity; it is complex as well as contradictory at times. Hence, it is of socio-legal interest to illustrate the perceptions and interpretations of law and law enforcement systems using the stories and accounts of people, in order to capture the commonplace of law and to demonstrate that legality is a feature intertwined with social relations, rather than something external to social life. Moreover, law is manifested in different forms at different levels of social reality and is often seen and experienced differently by different groups in society (Banakar *in* Denis and Kalekin-Fishman 2009:59). While some may see law as a source of justice other may experience it as a form of oppression. This represents the fragmented reality of law, even though law still presents itself as a unified corpus. From a socio-legal perspective the importance of further research into the impact of counter-terrorism law and practice is self-evident.

### **1.3 Disposition of thesis**

The thesis has been structured in the following way: The first part of the thesis outlines the key terms and definitions including the concepts counter-terrorism and impact. Following chapter two is a presentation of previous research. After that, the background contextualising counter-terrorism and Islam and Muslims in Australia are presented. Here, the demographic profile of Australian Muslims, the socio-political context and the legal landscape for counter-terrorism in Australia are presented under individual sections, finishing up with the current critique of the counter-terrorism machinery. The next chapters offer accounts of the theoretical and methodological frameworks. The second part of the thesis contains a presentation of the interview results as well as the discourse analysis. The interview findings were analysed inductively which means that no theoretical standpoint guided the coding and structuring of the interview results. Rather, the interview findings led to the adding of a critical discourse analysis of Australian news media and thus the creation of a synthesised theoretical framework. Finishing up the thesis is a section of containing the conclusions.

## **2. Key terms and definitions**

### **2.1 Counter-terrorism**

For the purposes of this thesis, counter-terrorism can be broadly defined as “an instrument of state policy that actively seeks to degrade and manage risk of terrorist attacks against national interests, particularly (although not exclusively) against national territory” (O’Neill 2007:473). The aim of counter-terrorism is in this sense to disrupt planned attacks before they occur, deter terrorists from planning attacks in the first place and it also includes the use of coercive measures to pre-empt threats from emerging. Adding to this definition is another definition of counter-terrorism as having alternative goals that drive current counter-terrorism agendas: to eradicate terrorism, which entails addressing the root-causes of terrorism and to destroy or decrease the motivations of terrorist groups and individuals to engage in violent terrorist action (Ganor 2005:25-26).

### **2.2 Impact**

It is essential to form an understanding of the type of impact that is of relevance for this particular research inquiry. In a normative discourse (in a large body of traditional academic and policy literature) impact is related to an understanding of *effectiveness* that concerns the state and its institutions. Impact in this regard takes on a state-centred crime prevention perspective; policy and practice is expected to impact effectively against terrorism. However in recent years, more critically engaged scholars have challenged this dominant notion of impact pointing out ”the importance of recognising differing experiences and levels of impact on different parts of the public” (Spalek et al. 2012:5). This represents a shift that includes “community impact” that can be viewed from a grass-root perspective in order to be understood and analysed. This perspective has been given more attention and exposure as a result of civil society activism and critical academic research. Further, on a micro level “the impact on the psychology of individuals and communities creates a further, arguably more profound form of impact [...], the negative and intersectional impact of counter-terrorism on the perception of personal identity.” (ibid. p. 7). These multiple forms of impact, social and psychological, must be understood as being experienced in multiple layers generating an accumulative impact that may be more far-reaching than any single factor.

### **3. Previous research**

For the past 10 years, there has been an increased research interest, within a varying range of scientific disciplines, into the impact of counter-terrorism regulation on society, ethnic and religious minority groups in particular. However, if compared to research on crime control more generally the empirical research is rather thin in the area, a fact supporting the need for further investigation. The following section forms the starting point for this thesis and entails a presentation of the existing research into counter-terrorism and its impact on Muslims and other minority communities living in western countries. In order to make it comprehensible, the literature has been thematically structured under three sub-themes: “suspect communities”, “high” policing: surveillance and stop and search powers, “low” policing: community engagement.

#### **3.1 “Suspect communities”**

A key strand of research focuses on whether particular communities are constructed and treated as “suspect communities”. As a starting point, Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) develops the notion of “suspect community” in relation to Muslim communities building on Paddy Hillyard's study from 1993 on the impact of British anti-terrorism regulation in the 1970's on the Irish population. The construction of Muslims as suspect communities and as a subgroup of the population, which is singled out for state attention is produced through political discourses that designate Muslims as the new “enemy from within”. Pantazis and Pemberton argue that such discourses justify particular a legal and strategic counter-terrorism machinery. From their research they conclude that the counter-terrorism strategy from 2006 in the UK unambiguously identifies the new threat of terrorism as coming from Islamists, which fixates the Muslim community rather than individual subjects. The authors alert harmful impact on both individuals and communities drawing attention to how democratic values and practices are undermined in the pursuance of greater security. A categorisation of Muslims may also serve to undermine national security, rather than enhance it. It may also have long-term consequences for the communities themselves. Steven Greer (2010) criticise Pentazis and Pembertons “suspect community” thesis and offers an outline of the systematic flaws of their theory; the analytical and methodological problems, conceptual difficulties and policy

implications. Greer demands credible empirical evidence that can show that a substantial majority of the Muslim population in UK has indeed fallen under a form of official suspicion, before accepting the thesis. In addition, Greer criticise the definition of a “suspect community”, noting that it is both over-inclusive and indeterminate.

Although facing criticism, other scholars have used the “suspect community” thesis in research in various ways. For instance, Banakar (2008), see the phenomenon of Muslims being treated as a “suspect community” in relation to wider contexts and discourses, as something related to a growing Islamophobia in the west and a “culture of control”, termed by David Garland, which represents a move from “penal welfarism” to a management of risk in relation to the governance of crime. Further, in his case study of two court cases in the UK, Banakar looks at the symbolic effects of counter-terrorism legislation that lead to a normative ordering of social relations, something apparent in the enforcement of stop and search powers. This symbolic dimension of counter-terrorism is realised within the paradigm of ‘managerialism’, which aggravate the same social conditions that give rise to terrorism in the first place. This argument resonates with Pantazis and Pembertons who argues that symbolic injustices affect Muslims in ways that are causing deep resentments within the communities. Also theoretically interested in the notion of “suspect community” are Poynting and Mason (2006) who find that, ideas of the Muslim population as the “enemy within” together with polarisation and moral panic has raised concerns among Muslims regarding issues of citizenship, identity and loyalty. Further, Mythen et al. (2009, 2013) have empirically studied British Pakistanis in North Western England and found that, in the state of “partial security”, certain groups are protected while “others” are exposed to both scrutiny and hostility. Some Muslims respond to an environment of encouraged “self-surveillance” by adopting practices of “checking and hushing” to reduce the possibility of experiencing racially motivated victimisation, while others turn to violent actions and become radicalised.

### **3.2 “High” policing: surveillance and stop & search powers**

Existing research, mainly UK-based, suggests that stop and search powers, as a “high policing” tool to counter terrorism, causes reactions of infuriation and disenchantment, as well as a 'responsibilisation' (Choudhury and Fenwik 2011; Mythen et al 2009). Exploring, much like Banakar, the symbolic aspects of law and its impact on minorities in the UK, Parmar (2012) finds stop and search powers to have a disproportionate impact on the Asian ethnic

minority and that these powers are unevenly delivered in a geographical sense. Thus, counter-terrorism policing in the UK not only comprise civil liberties, but also sanctions ethnic profiling. Further, such practices are concluded to have counter-productive consequences due to the fact that feelings of exclusion diminish a sense of belonging and reverse the development of mutual trust between state authorities and communities. In length this means that it has negative implications for the possibility to build strong relationships and partnerships between state actors and communities. Choudhury and Fenwik, Mythen et al., as well as Bowling and Phillips (2007) would agree to this point, noting that unlawful racialized targeting of Muslim citizens has serious implications for both individual and national security, potentially triggering public disorder as well as a de-legitimisation of the police. Focused on the issue of citizenship in particular, Jarvis and Lister's (2013) draw on focus group data to explore the implications of counter-terrorism initiatives upon “multiple dimensions of citizenship including participation, identity and duties as much as rights” (p.656). It is found that counter-terrorism measures may be contributing to a condition of “disconnected citizenship”; which means that there is an experience of differential citizenship that can potentially weaken and fracture national citizenship in a broader sense. As other scholars before them, Lister and Jarvis contend that a declining sense of belonging have a diminishing effect on political engagement which in turn impact on perceptions of duties and rights. Nonetheless, even if the “harder” approaches to policing may potentially damage the prospects for the “softer” counter-terrorism initiatives (see. Spalek et al. 2009), some Muslims are responding with a greater engagement and participation at the same time as feeling disproportionately affected by certain counter-terrorism measures (Choudhury and Fenwik 2011).

### **3.3 “Low” policing: community engagement**

What has been shown so far are various demonstrations of how counter-terrorism measures impact certain groups more than others, that they have a disproportional impact, and that they in doing so create a less secure form of citizenship. Due to this, several studies have focused specifically on community engagement and the relations between state authorities, such as police and security agencies, and the Muslim communities in the context of counter-terrorism. To start, Spalek and Imtoual (2007) examine Muslim community engagement in relation to the impact of counter-terrorism from a theoretical standpoint. They focus on the exclusive

process of engagement in relation to counter-terrorism in the UK and Australia. It is argued that the state works with binaries such as legitimate/illegitimate and moderate/radical Muslim, and that this has an effect on the participation process. In a more recent study Rashid (2011) agrees to such claims, stating that governments are selective in the engagement processes hence “adding another layer of exclusion”. Research from the UK (see. Briggs 2010) also show that the community-based “soft” approach has a number of tactical difficulties such as the fact that local authorities seem to be engaging selectively and that decisions are being made behind closed doors without transparency and accountability. Briggs stresses that even though this approach has been strategically successful, communities need to be trusted and treated equally and with respect, something also argued by Spalek (2010).

As demonstrated by many studies before, negative labelling lead to provocation of communities as well as it questions their sense of belonging, allegiance and loyalty as citizens (Poynting and Mason 2006, Jarvis and Lister 2013). For instance, Rashid (2011) argues further that Muslims have become suspicious of government attempts to encourage involvement in “softer” forms and that they are so because of a certain degree of cynicism about the underlying motives of government-led community initiatives. Research show that Muslim communities that are expected to deal with extremism and terrorism from “within” are under constant scrutiny and that this may enhance the lack of enthusiasm among communities to participate in the mainstream society. In the Australian context it is further problematic that the harder approaches to counter-terrorism are more uniformly introduced than the “softer”, due to the fact that the latter are left to various state governments to initiate whereas the former are decided for at a federal level (Spalek and Imtoual 2007). Pickering et al. (2008) claim in regard to this that the “soft” measures are under-appreciated by the Australian government and that there is a clear preference for the poorly calibrated “harder” strategies.

### **3.4 Concluding observations**

Whether it is focused on presenting Muslims as a suspect community, or concentrating empirical research on the implications of “hard” approaches or on the strategies directed towards models of “soft” counter-terrorism, questions about citizenship, identity, loyalty and trust appear to be the central themes of existing research into the impact of counter-terrorism on Muslims. Further research capturing the impact of counter-terrorism on Muslims and

Muslim communities in Western countries is needed. Most of the existing work is theoretical, while empirical and in-depth qualitative research appears to be missing to a larger extent. In addition, the empirical research is rather limited in a geographical sense, to a British context, even if some studies have been focusing on Muslim communities in Australia (Poynting and Mason 2006, Spalek and Imtoual 2007, Rashid 2011, Pickering et al. 2008). Consequently, this thesis emphasises the importance of furthering qualitative research into the impact of counter-terrorism measures and argues for an inclusion of Muslim voices in research since it may help to find new pathways and perspectives within the social science academic field.

## **4.1 Background**

Under this section, the demographic profile of Arabs and Muslims in Australia will be presented drawing on official data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. After this, the current social and political environment for Australian Arabs and Muslims will be described in order to provide a wider, more inclusive, context for the analysis of the impact of counter-terrorism law and practice. Then, turning towards the legal and policy landscape within the field of counter-terrorism in Australia, an outline of the counter-terrorism policy frameworks at federal and state (Queensland) levels and the Australian legislative regime will be examined. The large volume of legislation within the field of counter-terrorism is reviewed with the aim of identifying developments and themes, particularly those likely to have an impact on law enforcement. The documents reviewed include legislation, government media releases, government policy documents, statements by key policy makers and major reviews of legislation.

### **4.1 Arab Muslims in Australia: an overview**

#### ***4.1.1 Demographic profile***

To define who an *Australian Arab* is, is a rather complex matter. In a report from HREOC, an Arab Australian is defined to include people that are bound by a common language (Arabic) and cultural heritage traced back to Arabic speaking countries of Middle East and North Africa (p.21). The Australian Human Rights Commission uses the ABS's definition includes individuals that are: Algerian, Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Libyan, Moroccan, Palestinian, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, and Tunisian (AHRC, Fact Sheet). Official statistics show that approximately 160.000 Australians are born in one of the 22 Arab League Nations, another 120 000 people have at least one parent in an Arab country and nearly 200 000 Australians speak Arabic (Census 2011). Being a very diverse group, the most common national origin is Lebanese, Egyptian, Iraqi and Syrian (HREOC p.23). Nevertheless, the definition cannot be limited to people born in Arab countries or that speak the Arabic language, it have to encompass those who identify themselves with this group and that live in Australia as well. Thus, the understanding of the definition Arab Australian is flexible.

An *Australian Muslim* entails those Australians who identify themselves as followers of Islam (HREOC p. 21). It is a common misconception in Australia that all Arab Australians are Muslim. While Muslims do constitute a religious majority in the countries of origin, Arab Australians are predominantly Christian. Nevertheless, the 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census shows that 476 300 Muslims live in Australia, with 34 050 of them living in the state of Queensland. Although constituting a relatively small proportion of the Australian population, there has been a significant increase in the number of Muslims over the past decades. For instance, 1991-2001 the population grew 157% (ABS Census 2001). Moreover, Islamic leaders in Queensland believe that the Muslim community is more than double the size suggested by the 2011 Census. The Islamic Council in Queensland report that Muslims in this region are hiding their religious identity from officials in fear of being targeted more than they feel they already are. While sharing a common religion, Islam, Australian Muslims are a culturally and linguistically diverse group. Around two-thirds are born overseas in countries such as Lebanon, Turkey, Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh, Iran, Somalia and Egypt. 38.5% of Australia's Muslims are born in the country and around 20% of Australian Muslims are born in Arab (or more broadly Middle Eastern and North African) countries (ABS Census 2011). Australian Muslims speak a range of languages, Arabic being one among many others. Moreover, Arab-Australian Muslims are a relatively young population. The 2011 Census shows that the largest age group, within those who have chosen to affiliate with Islam, are 29 years and younger (58.6%), and of the Australian born Muslims, over 85% are younger than 25 years. Similar numbers are shown for the Arab Australian population where over 75% are 24 years old or younger (HREOC report).

With regards to socioeconomic indicators, official statistics demonstrate that a significant proportion of Muslim Australians occupy a social and economically marginal position in the Australian society. Hassan (2009) argues that this is contributing to Muslims' alienation from the mainstream society and its values. Furthermore, the issue of young Muslim Australians' economic disadvantage has particular significance in relation to the current environment of heightened public concern about Islamic terrorism and radicalism and an increase in anti-Muslim sentiments as well as the politics of "otherness" in contemporary Australian discourses.

#### ***4.1.2 The current socio-political context***

In contrast to many other “advanced democracies” Australia has been relatively immune from acts of terrorism (Pietsch and McAllister 2012). Despite this, public opinion has been subjected to the effects of international terrorism by way of for instance the Bali bombings in 2002. A 12-year national study from 2009 about public opinion and attitudes show that Australia is a land of anti-Muslim sentiments. Queensland and New South Wales is shown to be the most racist states in the country. The study shows that 45.4 % of the respondents in Brisbane, Queensland are anti-Muslim, 20.6% think that Muslims do not fit into the Australian society, and 15.6% think the same of people coming from the Middle East. In relation to all other groups measured in the survey, anti-Muslim sentiments stood out in relation to all other cultural or religious groups. Related to the reality of Muslims in Australia is the politics of “Otherness”, in which particular groups are being seen as outsiders to the mainstream moral community (Lee Koo 2005). These are not entitled to the access of political space or values. The Arab Muslim migrant has been subjected to such exclusionary treatment and such political discourses that enable fear, threat, danger and difference, alters the social and political environment for Muslims and fuels anti-Muslim sentiments and prejudices.

It is essential to consider experiences of alienation and marginalisation amongst Muslim communities in order to situate the impacts of counter-terrorism measures within a broader understanding of different forms of exclusion. The “Arab Other”, perceived and identified in mainstream society as a homogenous category, includes individuals with Arab, Middle Eastern and/or Muslim background (Poynting et al 2004:12) Throughout history, this image has been other than positive. Instead, Muslims have been portrayed as deviant, threatening and violent. The Sydney siege and the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris are recent events that have strongly affected governmental as well as media discourses in such a way. Poynting et al. contends that young Muslims, especially men, of Arabic speaking background is pictured as a major threat to public safety and as reduced to a entity that is in clear opposition to “Australians” (2004:36). Young Arabs and Muslims in Australia, most of who are actually born in the country, are increasingly alienated due to questioning of their “Australian-ness”. It is argued that the mythic “Other” has little to do with the lived experience of those of Arab and Muslim origin, and “everything to do with a host of social anxieties” (Poynting et al 2004:3). Contemporary images of Muslims, presented by politicians and mainstream media, are tied to an agenda that “announces its desire to 'engage' with them while at the same time forcing debate into such contorted and tenuous channels” (Morey and

Yaqin 2011:2). This is said to have implications for Arab and Muslim Australian's participation and inclusion in the mainstream society. The centrality of the "Arab Other" to current frames around crime and terrorism has had implications on ethnicity and racializing certain criminal practices. Moreover, this process is not simply a case of ideological representation by media and politicians; it is a process that also impacts the judicial system (Poynting et al 2004:3).

## **4.2 Australian counter-terrorism policy and legislation**

The fundamentals in the current Australian counter-terrorist strategy are found at a dual level, turning both inwards, domestically, and outwards, beyond the Australian territorial borders. However, the core of the strategy is the effective management of the "threat assessment dilemma": not to overstate the threat and foster a climate of fear that by consequence alienate useful domestic constituencies, at the same time as not to underestimate the threat at the cost of national security. As already mentioned, the 9/11 attacks and Bali bombings in 2002 prompted a thorough review of the Australian approach to combating terrorism. Since these events the Government's counter-terrorism strategy has evolved mainly around three pillars: domestic legislation, intelligence and regional assistance, the first two pillars will be described into detail. The three pillars are encapsulated in the National Counter-Terrorism Plan (NCTP), which sets out the current strategic approach for preventing and dealing with acts of terrorism in Australia and its territories. The NCTP is the primary document on Australia's counter-terrorism policy and arrangements at a federal level. However, there is a long list of strategic documents that are related in various ways and have led up to the current plan, among them are the most recent national policy framework adopted in 2010. There are also strategies and policies adopted at state level and these will be mentioned in the context of the state of Queensland, since this is where the study was conducted.

### **4.2.1 Federal policy frameworks**

In 2004, the first major Australian federal policy statement, *Transnational terrorism: the threat for Australia* was issued on national security and counter-terrorism. This strategic statement stated at its time that contemporary terrorism differed from any threat previously faced by the nation and set out an outline of Australia's international response to terrorism with more emphasis than before on regional cooperation. After the Bali and London bombings

in 2005, the first white paper *Protecting Australia against Terrorism*, a new edition of the federal counter-terrorism approach was published. This too provides an overview of Australia's strategy and policy direction, turning this time towards not only regional cooperation but also an emphasis on working with state and local governments as well as the Australian community to build effective counter-terrorism capability. The 2006 edition of the Australian counter-terrorism approach stands out from the previous ones due to the fact that it highlights the need for domestic arrangements and an increased focus on prevention and preparedness, in terms of legislation but also intelligence and law enforcement. This strategic approach focuses on engaging the Australian public and encourages citizens to remain vigilant and report suspicious behaviour in their communities. It asserts that well-informed and engaged citizens are pivotal to Australian counter-terrorism efforts. A focus on domestic intelligence, not only legislation, to support counter-terrorism efforts is to be found in all strategic papers. Also, strengthened law enforcement is emphasised as vital for the counter-terrorism strategy in all levels of society. This is further reflected in the legal developments within the field of counter-terrorism. In 2010, a third national policy framework *Securing Australia - Protecting our community*, set out a strategy for even more concrete action to combat terrorism and a strengthening of domestic counter-terrorism efforts are found. It is the first strategy in the country that focuses specifically on countering violent extremism (CVE) in Australia, at the home front. One key element not previously emphasised is resilience, a resistance to the development of extremism in Australia's communities. The Australian federal government believe that policies at state, territorial and federal levels together can mitigate radicalisation and that it is important to address grievances, whether real or perceived, and to encourage full participation in Australia's social and economic life, thus setting out a multi-layered approach to keep Australia safe and secure. Furthermore, terrorism started to be viewed as a long-term challenge that called for efforts at many levels. The Australian strategic response to terrorism has continued to be intelligence-led, but since 2010 the response also contains an element of building resilient communities to resist terrorism "at home". Arrangements and responsibilities for dealing with terrorism is set out in the NCTP, latest published in 2012. The plan focuses on *preparedness*, which includes the legal framework, *prevention* that entails intelligence, protection of community, awareness and vigilance and CVE, *response* and *recovery* (PPRR). Under the strand *prevent*, elimination and reducing the occurrence and severity of a terrorist act as well as engage and protect the community are of focus. Here, intelligence and law enforcement is key, as well as having a strong intelligence

framework guided by risk management principles. Prevention entails aware and vigilant citizens that report suspicious behaviours when identified. Such information is held to be invaluable in keeping national security. The National Security Hotline is a concrete tool initiated to gather such information about potential threats in the Australian community. Since 2010, CVE has been an integral component of Australia's counter-terrorism strategies, including effective prevention that involves a combination of appropriate security and law enforcement responses, strong partnerships at all levels of government, solutions locally appropriate and implemented with active support of local communities. Building on the former edition a new strategy, *Strong and secure: a strategy for Australia's national security*, was published in 2013 containing key objectives such as protect and strengthen sovereignty, promote a safe and resilient population, secure assets, infrastructure and institutions, and promote a favourable international environment. Thus, it follows the lines of the previous strategic response. However, in the 2013 edition even more emphasis is put on preventative efforts and the capacity to discover and degrade hostile activities by stating that intelligence legislation need to be ensured to an even greater extent. All of this being said, it is the State governments rather than the Federal, that have the responsibility for operational response to all terrorist incident and their jurisdiction as well as to determine prevention strategies and operational responses.

#### ***4.2.2 Queensland state government initiatives***

Under the Intergovernmental Agreement in Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Arrangements (IGA), the Queensland government has agreed to establish effective counter-terrorism machinery. Queensland's approach, set out in the counter-terrorism strategy for 2013-2018, is founded on principles sustainability and resilience, with a shared responsibility in the state between government, communities, businesses and individuals. As within the national strategy, the response is intelligence-led and risk based, and the arrangements, as well as the legislation, are aimed to be adaptive and responsive to the current security environment. One of the objectives is to inform and engage which entails developing and maintaining effective relationships to promote community resilience and social cohesion, as well as reduce vulnerability to the influences of violent extremism. A part of the strategy raising awareness of issues and threats related to terrorism, by using innovative communication tools and technologies to connect with the community. Another objective is to mitigate terrorist attacks by implementing pre-emptive measures, in order to improve security and effective regulation.

The Queensland Police Service and counter-terrorism group (SCG) work in partnership with business and industry groups to minimise the impact of terrorism, promote awareness of counter-terrorism issues and provide guidance or preparations. It is the Police Service that has the operational responsibility for preventing and responding to various terrorist threats, while the SCG is responsible for supporting government strategies and plans to foster counter-terrorism engagement through the use of a Counter-terrorism Liasion Officer Network. Moreover, the Department of Communities in Queensland have developed initiatives to strengthen resilience of the Queensland community through the Multicultural Affairs whose assignment is to promote participation and positive community relations among diverse groups, and to promote a sense of belonging. As an example, a youth strategy was developed in 2013, connecting young Queenslanders with a vision of creating “good citizens who participate in their communities” (Queensland Government, Safeguarding). Funded by the Attorney General's office, de-radicalisation workshops has been organised in the state targeting youth across Queensland. These workshops attempt to encourage Muslims to live as constructive and peaceful Australian citizens and to empower the Queensland Muslim community, especially youth. Also, federal strategic initiatives aimed at feeding back into the objectives of CVE, such as community engagement projects have been funded by the Government and initiated through the Australian Multicultural Foundation. The foundation has organised Muslim Youth Summits in various states, Queensland is one of them, in partnership with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Through these summits it has been discovered that Muslim youth lack opportunity to gain skills and qualities for leadership and mentorship and that they feel a need of help in developing better participation and contribution to the community. The summits have resulted in programmes that facilitate engagement and positive action of young Muslims. The objectives of these have been to connect with at-risk young Australian Muslims to reduce alienation, to create opportunities to engage with the broader community, to develop leaders and to expand their networks.

#### ***4.2.3 The Australian counter-terrorism legislation and intelligence regime***

In 2006, Australia's parliament had passed over 30 pieces of legislation (O'Neill 2007:477). Major legislative initiatives include amendments to Crimes Act 1914, the ASIO Act 1979, the Criminal Code Act 1995 and the passage of two Anti-terrorism Acts 2004 and 2005. Research highlights the impact of these legal developments in a two-folded way (O'Neill 2007). One the one hand, it resulted in a lowered barrier to authorities monitoring, detaining and charging

those suspected of engagement in terrorism, and those having links with terrorists. For instance, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Australian Intelligence Security Organisation (ASIO) gained a greater scope to determine the circumstances under which suspects are monitored. The Anti-terrorism Act 2005 contains provisions for 'control orders' and provide for a host of restrictions on an individual's movement up to 12 months, if believed by the AFP to be involved in preparations of a terrorist attack. Under ASIO Act 2003 individuals suspected of possessing knowledge of a terrorist act can be detained without charge or up until seven days, amended to 14 days in the Anti-terrorism Act 2005. The second pillar, intelligence, remains for the Government essential as part of the preventative strategy since it provides early warnings of preparations for a terrorist attack.

On the other hand, the scope of how terrorism related offences are defined in Australia has broadened. The Security Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act 2002 inserted 'providing or receiving training to carry out terrorist activity' to list of offences (Division 101). According to this Act, individuals can be committing such offences even if the actual act does not occur. Further, Anti-terrorism Act 2004 makes it an offence for individuals to intentionally associate with someone who is a member of a terrorist organisation listed by the Government. In addition, the Anti-terrorism Act 2005 makes it an offence to recklessly provide funds to another individual, directly or indirectly. In 2014, new laws were suggested by the Government that was introduced in three separate stages with an aim to increase powers of security agencies and to make it easier to detect and prosecute Australians involved in terrorist activities. These new laws include: The National Security Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 1) 2014, Counter-Terrorism Legislation Amendment (Foreign Fighters) Bill, and Telecommunications (Interception and Access) Amendment (Data Retention) Bill 2014. These new laws allow one single warrant to cover a whole computer network, enabling ASIO officers to disrupt the operation of targeted computers and use third party computers to access targeted computers allows for a person's passport to be suspended for 14 days. They make it an offence to "advocate terrorism", including on social media, lowers the threshold for authorities to be granted control orders and preventative detention orders, and requires telecommunications companies to retain customers' phone and computer metadata for two years as well as give security agencies access to the data when they can make a case that it is "reasonably necessary" to an investigation. To be noted, the Telecommunications Bill also introduced an independent oversight mechanism, allowing the Commonwealth Ombudsman access to agency records, which is an attempt to boost privacy protections.

#### ***4.2.4 A critique: breaching human rights and civil liberties***

Both the Australian anti-terrorist legislation and its implementation have faced criticism from various directions. Among others, critical scholarship have criticised how anti-terrorism legislation, in general, have diminished civil liberties and human rights, and in particular curtailed the right to freedom of religion. The developments in the legal field of anti-terrorism highlight a worrying trend in Australian counter-terrorism towards “irresponsible belligerence” (Aly 2008). Critics stress that the laws are strategically counter-productive approach as a response to terror threats. The draconian way of responding to terrorism in Western democracies is nothing new, but it has consequences for “certain categories of people”, that potentially can be drawn into the criminal justice system due to their status and irrespective of their behaviour. Aly emphasizes that counter-terrorism must be carefully calibrated, to be firm but never excessive, discriminatory and politicised. However, this is the opposite of what seems to describe the Australian counter-terrorist strategy (2008:23). Furthermore, Lynch and McGarrity (2008) claim that these laws have implications for Muslim communities in particular. The breadth and loose scope of offences in current anti-terrorism legislation gives rise to a fear among Muslims that they may be applied arbitrarily and exposes people to liability even though their activity has no direct connection to terrorism. The most unsettling of offences is the one found in Division 102 of the Criminal Code Act, which criminalises membership and association. Section 102.8 is even more worrying, making it an offence of association with a member of a terrorist organisation (17 out of 18 listed terrorist organisations are self-identified as Islamic). The Security Legislation Review Committee was critical towards this section mainly due to the fact that the central concepts, 'associate' and 'support', are unclear. The committee felt at the time of the passing of the amendment that it was provocative to Muslim community by targeting the human rights of association. The limiting of the freedom to associate also limits the right to practice religion and interferes with ordinary family and religious communication (Chong 2008).

## **5. Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework was developed throughout the research process. Since the thesis initially set out to explore the perceived and experienced impact of counter-terrorism measures by young Arab Muslims in Australia, the section starts out with Ulrich Beck's description of the so called world risk society, a society in which a climate of fear and discourses of uncertainty and insecurity have influenced law and politics, e.g. counter-terrorism, but also in which notions, such as terrorism, have been defined by elite groups and institutions such as politicians, security agencies and mass media. Discourse, language and ideology are central concepts that emerge in this context. Of interest for this study is the relation between the Western and the Islamic world. In order to look into these aspects, the relationship between language and ideology is explored and the notion of *Orientalism* and critical discourse analysis forms the theoretical framework. In the context of the exclusionary and mistrusting discourses that was spoken of in the introduction, several scholars accuse Western media of manipulating audiences and skewing information to serve its own purpose to maintain the ideology in its dominance. Thus, it is crucial for critical scholars within social and political science to analyse and focus on Western print media in order to unfold and make transparent such ideologies. Also, and as shown in the interview findings presented in chapter seven, since there is a common perception among young Arab Muslims in Australia that media play the greatest part (together with government politics) in having an impact on Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike, it becomes even more relevant.

### **5.1 Law and politics in a world risk society in late modernity**

Under late modernity, most locally debated political and moral issues have global dimensions. 'Globalisation' as such, and the dimensions that have emerged, have brought higher levels of uncertainty and other forms of inequalities in the world. Transnational and global forces have emerged and re-shaped the political and legal landscape. For instance, within the legal sphere a move from welfare oriented social and legal policies to legal forms of regulation concerned with managing risks rather than addressing the causes of social problems have taken place (Banakar 2008:21). In late modernity a shift to risk management strategies have occurred parallel to a rise of global problems such as terrorism, which is caused by transnational forces

that do not “lend themselves to simple risk calculations or policy regulations” (*ibid.*). Lending thoughts from Bauman, Banakar notes that this represent the “new world order” in which no one seems to be in control. This new world order, can be explained through Ulrich Beck’s theorizing of a world risk society where he explains the notion of reflexive modernity as a new kind of capitalism, economy, global order and personal life which undermines territorially-based social relations, networks and communications traditionally distinctive of a nation state. A risk society in late modernity, as explained by Beck, is faced with uncontrollable risk and of unnatural and human made uncertainties, de-bounded in spatial, temporal and social terms. Hence, the central issue comes down to how to “feign control over the uncontrollable”, in law, politics and science as well as in everyday life. Global terror, and the “culture of fear” (“as a pathological evasion rather than a rational engagement with risk”), is one of the axes of conflict in a world risk society, which empower governments and states (Spence 2005:286; Beck 2002). Further, the perception of terrorist threats undermines the trust in fellow citizens, foreigners and governments, hence replacing “active trust” with “active mistrust”, something that becomes visible both in political and public discourses (Beck 2002:44). As noted by Spence (2005): “By leveraging sentiments of uncertainty amongst target populations, pre-emption, like all mechanisms of terror, enlarges the impact of aggression, provoking fears that permeate the cultures thereby constituted and reproduced” (p. 289). Moreover, there is an element to the world risk society of gross simplification of enemy images constructed by government and intelligence agencies (Beck 2002). Bonino (2012) states that Muslims have emerged as the “folk devils of late modernity” drawing upon the work of Cohen who argues that Muslims have become suitable enemies, not only considered to be “threatening outcasts”, but also deemed responsible for the “crime” of their religious identity (p. 6).

## **5.2 Orientalism, ideology and the media**

The simplification of enemy images by governments and security agencies explained by Beck, coupled with the constructed image of Muslims as “threatening outcasts” can be tied to Edward Said’s notion of *Orientalism*. Said argues that, *Orientalism* is the dominant ideology of Western relations with the Islamic world and that this ideology employs a narrative which assumes a distinct social and cultural reality about the Orient (1978:143). *Orientalism* as a phenomenon and as a system of statements and thoughts by which the world is known is

traditionally designated to Asia or the East (geographically, morally and culturally). In this, the historical supremacy of the West is generally associated with 'our' knowledge of Egypt and the Orient. By the absolute fixing of the meaning of the Orient, the reliance on a binary language as well as the use of an essentialist discourse that universalizes particular characteristics and traits to the Islamic World, *Orientalism* functions as a Foucaultean discourse of power and domination (Said 1978). The object, the Orient, is in this discourse identified as 'a fact' which never changes and which receives its meaning from others (in this case those with political authority provided by the Western hegemonic discourse). To have knowledge over "such a thing is to dominate it, to have authority over it" (Said 1978:33). So, in the essence of *Orientalism* lies this ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority. This differentiation is contained and represented by dominating frameworks that exercise cultural strength and sets up constraints upon human thought (Said 1978:42). As a style of thought, it produced a knowledge that became an uncritical reproduction of various assumptions and beliefs, an unquestioned cultural dominance, which has ended up as naturalized and institutionalised. Another key theme is the politics of representation and identity. The effect of constructing an identity for the 'Other' was also the self-identification of Europeans themselves. A self-identification that fostered 'the taken-for-granted superiority' of Europeans and promoted the identification of the Orient as underdeveloped, characterized as subjects of fundamental backwardness. Xenophobic representations (e.g. fundamentalism and terrorism) demean and degrade Eastern men, while xenofilic varieties (e.g. harem, veiling) sensualise and passives Eastern women. Both modes of representational discourse objectify and stereotype "the diversity of social life in countries and societies geographically east of the Mediterranean sea" (Franklin 2005:184). The Orientalist discourse can therefore be said to be a highly racialized one that has shaped relations of international politics throughout history. According to Said (1978) *Orientalism* functions as a Eurocentric ideology for media representations of Islam and Muslims. Ideological influences of racism in news making are essential to highlight in this regard. These influences can be identified in topics, perspective, quotation, event descriptions, style, rhetoric, selection of sources and salience. The latter has to do with when news stories about ethnic-racial 'Others' are distributed not only by criteria of social and political relevance but also by ethnic-racial criteria. Moreover, such news (i.e. news about bad actions of "Them") are often more salient than other kinds of news (Van Dijk *in Wahl-Jorgensen* 2009).

### **5.3 Critical Discourse Analysis**

The overall aim of a discourse analysis is to shed light on the linguistic-discursive dimension of a particular social and cultural phenomena and process of change. Fairclough (2013) speaks about how discursive practices in the media take part in shaping new form of politics. It is important to examine such practices in order to fully understand developments and changes in the political sphere, as well as in the public. Further, serious social problems are naturally complex, which is why Van Dijk (1993) argues for a multidisciplinary approach to analysis, in which a distinction between theory, description and application is less relevant. Nevertheless, theory is still needed in order to understand social issues such as inequality and dominance.

Furthermore, Tator and Henry (2002) consider critical discourse analysis as “a tool for deconstructing the ideologies of the mass media and other elite groups and for identifying and defining social, economic, and historical power relations between dominant and subordinate groups” (p. 72). The researcher performing critical discourse analysis seek to understand the role structures and strategies of text and communicative events play in the reproduction of dominance and wish to deal with the discursive dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality that result from it. Further, Van Dijk consider news as a particular ideological discourse which requires a systematic analysis if wishing to explore how news media may ‘mis-represent’ events and how news distort ‘facts’ in certain ways. Such an analysis shows us “where and how ideologies preferably manifest themselves in news reports” (1993:195). The focus of critical discourse analysis, essentially motivated by pressing social issues such as the issue of terrorism and counter-terrorism, is the role of discourse in the (re)production and/or challenge of dominance. Dominance in this sense is the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups (e.g. news media institutions) that results in social inequality, including racial, political, cultural, and ethnic and class inequalities (Van Dijk 1993:250). Moreover, the reproduction of dominance in contemporary societies requires a justification or legitimization. Such a justification of inequality involves two complementary strategies; the positive representation of the own group and the simultaneous negative representation of the ‘Other’.

## **6. Methodology**

This thesis employs a qualitative research design and starts out by exploring the question of how young Arab Muslims experience and perceive of the impact of different counter-terrorism measures encapsulated in Australian laws, policies and practices. The study was conducted as an in-depth and small-scale case study in Brisbane, Australia and employed method of semi-structured interviews. After interviewing and later thematically coding the material, the focus of the study took a turn. The interview results illuminated the role of the media in relation to the perceptions and experiences of the participants. As opposed to what was first asked about the impact of legal norms and regulations as well as law enforcement, the results showed that media has the greatest influence on how young Arab Muslims understand the impact of counter-terrorism measures. Due to these findings, the study shifted locus by adding a critical analysis of newspaper articles in elite Australian press with an aim to explore the question of how Islam and Muslims are being portrayed in current media discourses. The thesis further asks if there are ideological influences and elements to be found in the way that news media are produced and presented. In order to analyse elite media discourses on Islam and Muslims and find the relationship between language and ideology, the thesis carries out a synthesised framework consisting of Van Dijk's notion of the 'ideological square' and the notion of *Orientalism*, which is described in the chapter containing the theoretical framework.

### **6.1 Philosophical considerations**

Methods are informed by methodology, which is a process where the design of the research and the choice of methods are justified (King and Horrocks 2010:6). The epistemological position is central and it is important to, in relation to the methodological approach, develop internal integrity of a research project. In exploring and documenting Muslim community member's own experiences, perceptions and understandings of counter-terrorism legislation, measures and practices, this research is giving access to voices from their particular standpoints. This position is related to standpoint epistemologies maintaining narratives of socially marginalised peoples. Through their narratives it will be possible to comprehend a critical understanding of the social world, thus drawing upon feminist standpoint theory

(Fricker 2000). This thesis is concerned with capturing the voices of Muslims that encounter enforcement systems and authorities. It is also meant to look beneath the surface of law to identify the implication of rules and those assumptions underpinning them. I argue that this perspective or epistemological position is necessary in order to perpetuate the subordination of specific groups and to challenge dominant power relations in society. By taking on a critical stance, the thesis engages critically with the world where emancipatory knowledge is of greatest interest. The assumption being made here is that the important reality is what people perceive it to be and the choice of method is thus qualitative interviews. Critical discourse analysis is chosen due to the fact that the interview results revealed the crucial role of media discourse in shaping and affecting the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

## 6.2 Methods

### 6.2.1 *Semi-structured interviews*

The face-to-face individual interview attempts to understand themes of the lived everyday world from the subjects' own perspectives and is thus appropriate for the purposes of this thesis. There are only a few pre-structured procedures for conducting a non-standardised or semi-structured interview. Many of the methodological decisions are made on the spot requiring a high level of skill and knowledge on the behalf of the interviewer (Brinkmann and Kvæle 2015:19). Hence, ethical issues permeate this type of interview research, something that will be returned to in a later section. The semi-structured interviews were conducted according to an interview guide that was formulated around themes and questions (see appendix 1). It was at a later stage transcribed and together, the written text and sound recording constitute the materials for analysis (Brinkmann and Kvæle 2015:32). The formulation of interview questions was guided mainly by the existing research into the impact of counter-terrorism measures. To make the interview as smooth and clear for the interviewee as possible, a relatively few number of single and open-ended questions was asked the participants. These questions were sequenced by follow-up questions, probes. I initially took a decision to allow exploration during the interviews. However, I still decided to stay on track with the main questions as much as possible in order to gain the kind of information I needed to satisfy the research question. To be able to create an inclusive image of how these young Arab Muslims perceive and experience counter-terrorism law and practices, a few questions

were asked about their thoughts on terrorism and the level of threat that it poses in Australia and the general societal environment in the country today, how they feel about being a Muslim in contemporary Australia and whether or not they have perceived any changes in the overall climate over the past few years and months. An open-ended question were also asked about their knowledge about Australian counter-terrorism laws, this were mainly due to the fact that previous research conducted in the UK on young Muslims have indicated that the general knowledge about the legislation in this field is rather low. After asking such questions and have let them talk freely about the aforementioned topics, several questions about the Australian counter-terrorism machinery were asked to further explore their own perspectives on the matter.

#### **6.2.1.1 Selection and recruitment of participants**

Qualitative research does not seek to make generalisations, thus there is no reason to recruit a sample that is statistically representative of a population. A purely ad hoc sampling strategy is not appropriate; instead a sample within qualitative research needs to relate in a systematic manner to the phenomena being studied. One criterion for sampling is diversity. For instance it is possible to choose a sample that controls one consequential aspect, but varies in others. This particular case is chosen primarily in line with two variables: ethnicity and geographic position. Firstly, the study will focus on Arab-Australian Muslims. The demographic profile and socio-political context in a previous section show how Arab-Australian Muslims in particular face a range of different challenges and issues in their everyday life. Secondly, followed by New South Wales and Victoria, which are the states where the majority of Australia's Muslims live, Queensland inhabit the third largest amount of Muslims in the country. Further, since the existing research mainly focus on the two former states, it is important to look deeper into the impact of counter-terrorism on Muslims in Queensland. Furthermore, statistics show that most of the Muslim communities are urban and reside in the larger cities and their suburbs. The thesis therefore chooses to examine Arab Muslims in the city of Brisbane, the largest city in Queensland and the third largest city in Australia. Additionally, due to recent events related to terrorism such as the raids and arrests in 2014, Brisbane have been in the locus of political, public as well as media discourses. In addition to ethnicity and geographic residency, the selection of participants for the study is also made by the two variables gender and age, both men and women are equally represented and the age of the participants range between 18 and 25, representing what this thesis considers to be

“young”. Considering how relatively young the Muslim and Arab population is in Australia, it becomes relevant to examine this section of the population. Access to participants was gained through contacts, “insiders”, from local organisations. These contacts were able to identify organisation members who meet criteria of study, to pass project information and letters requesting participation. Following this method of recruitment, I contacted three of the larger and active Muslim organisations in Brisbane: Crescents of Brisbane, Islamic Relief Association and AMRAH, and met or spoken to representatives of each organisation that all are working with young Muslims that reside in different parts of Brisbane. After have had established these contacts, with people who closely work with young Arab Muslims in these areas, a 'snowballing' sample method was employed in order to reach out to potential interviewees. The snowballing tactic is the most widely employed method of sampling within qualitative research and is the “main vehicle through which informants are accessed” (Noy 2008:330). It is also an effective tool when trying to obtain information on and access to hidden or marginalised populations. Noy (2008) claims that the snowballing tactic delivers a unique type of social knowledge, that it is an informative and dynamic procedure rather than a default option. The knowledge that emerges is political and interactional and can be conceptualised in terms of power relations and (natural) social networks. Since the informants are those who supply the referrals to be interviewed, the quality of the referring process is naturally related to the quality of the interaction. The snowballing sampling process is thus interlinked with the quality and productivity of the material collection method, which in this case is semi-structured and in-depth interviewing, further explained in the following section.

#### **6.2.1.2 Interview data analysis**

The research strategy of this thesis includes *analytic induction* as the mode of analysing the interview materials. Through describing and coding activities or meanings of a particular phenomenon, patterns, categories and concepts can be derived and form the basis of a potential explanation of the problem at hand (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015:224). Thus, thematic and systematic coding of the material was performed. Themes in this context were defined as “recurrent and distinctive features of participants' accounts, characterising particular perceptions and/or experiences which the researcher sees as relevant to the research question” (King and Horrocks 2010:150). The systematic way in which the data was analysed started by a descriptive coding of data which involved reading the transcripts, a highlighting

of relevant material and a definition of descriptive codes that were refined during the process. As a third step, the codes were clustered into two overarching themes: *psychological* and *social* impact, under which a range of sub-themes was formulated.

### **6.2.2 Discourse Analysis**

#### **6.2.2.1 Data selection and sampling**

For the critical analysis of news media discourses, I selected the 3 largest daily national newspapers published in Australia: Herald sun (Melbourne), The Daily Telegraph (Sydney) and the Courier-Mail (Brisbane). The Herald Sun is a morning tabloid and daily newspaper founded in 1990 and aligns itself politically to the centre-right. The Herald Sun is the highest-circulating newspaper in the country with a weekday circulation of 515 000 and readership of 1 500 000. Its counterpart in Sydney is the Daily Telegraph, which unlike Herald Sun is a conservative, and populist tabloid newspaper founded in 1879. The circulation of the Daily is approximately 300 000 on weekdays and 1 200 000 in readership. In Brisbane, Queensland the largest tabloid is The Courier-Mail founded in 1933. Similarly to the Herald Sun, Courier-Mail is centre-right in its political position. Furthermore, recognizing the large quantity of news about terrorist events since 2001, news articles covering Islam and Muslims were sampled from 2014 up until present date. This period was chosen due to all of the events occurring in Australia in 2014 as well as because of the increased attention to counter-terrorism law and policy during this year. Mapping the large amount of articles written on topic, I kept track of the type of news (news articles, editorials and opinions), the geographical context (local, domestic and international), themes and topics addressed in each news item. Selected articles include the terms Islam and Muslims in its headlines. However, due to the size limitations of a master thesis some were chosen while others were not.

*Table 1 Number of news articles*

| Newspaper                       | The Herald Sun | The Daily Telegraph | Courier-Mail |
|---------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| <b>Total number of articles</b> | 7              | 7                   | 8            |

#### **6.2.2.2 Van Dijk's method of analysis**

The analytical framework of this thesis is inspired by Van Dijk's investigation of how various aspects of discursive semantics (topic, focus, prepositional structures, lexical items,

implications and macrostructure) may be influenced by underlying ideologies. Doing this he make use of the ‘ideological square’, i.e. the positive self-representation of one group and the negative Other-representation of another group, as an overall strategy of analysis (Van Dijk 1993:263). Moreover, the 'ideological square' explains “the dichotomous character of the prevailing discourse in societies (Richardson *quoted in* Poorebrahim and Zarei 2012). This model or conceptual tool can make visible ideological representations across all dimensions of a text, from lexicon and syntactic structures to meaning of and coherence relations between sentences. The linguistic elements of *naming choices* and *lexical choices* in individual paragraphs and headlines will be identified, as these are the units of analysis. In analysing the articles for naming choices, the ways in which groups and individuals are referred to as ways to establish in- and out-group identities are examined. Further, the ideological significance of lexical choices is stressed by Fairclough whom argues that “a text’s choice of wordings depends on, and helps to create, social relationships between participants” (1989:116). The choice of different words referring to the same thing but presented by different speakers reveals “different ideological affiliations” (Sykes 1985:87). An example of this is the choice of “freedom fighter” versus “terrorist”. Moreover, since the thesis asks whether or not the representations of Islam and Muslims in the Australian newspapers reflect elements of *Orientalism*, it considers whether and which of the eight Orientalist themes, first categorized by Alatom (1997), serve as premises for the assumptions being made and the arguments advanced. These eight themes are: Inferiority, backwardness, irrationality, and submissiveness, Islam as threat, Christians/Jews versus Muslims, strangeness and untrustworthiness.

## 6.3 General and ethical considerations

### 6.3.1 Methodological challenges

The interpersonal situation, being one of the key issues if interviews, is important to consider. Since the interview is seen as an interaction, the interviewer has to be aware of the potential ethical transgressions of the interviewees’ personal boundaries. The knowledge produced depends on social relationships and the interviewer must create a free open space. There must be attempted to balance between a concern for pursuing interesting knowledge and ethical respect for the integrity of the interviewee (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015:20). Also, since the interview represents something other than an everyday conversation, the researcher also have

to account for the asymmetrical power relationship and that it can lead to the subject trying to counter control the interview situation. It can be a reaction to the dominance of the interviewer and mean that the interviewee can withhold important information, talk around the subject matter or even withdraw from the interview (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015:38). I have done everything I can to minimize such imbalances.

### ***6.3.2 Ethical research principles***

There are a few ethical guidelines to follow or recognize before going into interview research. Among other things, it is important to think about how the research can and will contribute to enhancing the situation of participating subjects or the group they represent. Other essential matters to consider are those of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and the role of the researcher. To assure transparency of the procedures will assist in validating the findings and so will openness in relation to the participants. To satisfy these principles, a consent form will be handed out to the interviewees for reading and signing (see. appendix 2). This form contains: a preamble with some opening statements, information about the length of the interview, the purpose of the research and the methods for disseminating results and finally a closure with a reminder to thank the participant, an assurance of confidentiality and anonymity and a request for permission to follow-up after the interview is done if clarifications needed.

### ***6.3.3 My role as a researcher***

A reflexive approach to my own research position is both inward and outward looking and entails exploring my knowledge and own experiences as well as intersecting relationships and the world around me. Reflexivity also means a realisation that “researchers and the methods are entangled in the politics and practices of the social world” (King and Horrocks 2010:125). It is unavoidable to accept the fact that doing social research is both an active and interactive process in which we have emotional, theoretical and political commitments. By carrying out a particular standpoint, I will always bring subjective values and meanings to my academic work, accepting this is not a problem, but a resource. In fact this enables my critical stance and can be useful when articulating a particular theoretical position. Although being concerned with the interactive character of the qualitative interview, I attempt to interfere as little as possible with the contents revealed in the interviews due to the fact that I am mainly

concerned with bringing forth the participants' experiences, attitudes and narratives as much as possible. Nevertheless, it is important to reflect on my position in relation to the people that are being researched. I believe that I can legitimately study the research issue, even if I am considered an "outsider" holding a non-minority social position and identity. However, in reality it required my active involvement with minority organisations and individuals. To meet this criterion, I made sure to contact organisations and individuals that could contribute to my increased knowledge about the Muslim communities in Australia. That prepared me better for the interviews. Moreover, in order to conduct a reliable critical discourse analysis I needed to attempt to distance myself from the data. I am aware of my explicit socio-political stance when engaging in a critical analysis of discourses. In a way, my objective here is to contribute to change through a critical understanding of a social issue. A critique of discourse is also a critique of politics, and those responsible for reproducing particular power relations. Consequently, critical discourse analysis is normative and its success can thus be measured by its contribution to change (Van Dijk 1993:253). Modesty is mandatory in this regard. The contribution of my thesis may be marginal, but important nonetheless.

#### **6.3.4 Reliability and validity**

Trustworthiness and transferability of knowledge are often brought up in relation to the notions of objectivity, validity, reliability and generalisability in social science research. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), issues of reliability and validity in interview research goes beyond technical concerns by raising questions about the objectivity of knowledge in qualitative research. Objectivity generally refers to reliable knowledge, undistorted by personal bias and prejudice. In principle, interviewing can be an objective research method, at least in the sense of being unbiased. However, it is common to speak of *reflexive objectivity* in this context. I have already mentioned the reflexivity in the role of the researcher, which relates to this. The aim has been to be open, honest and transparent in my position. I have strived for sensitivity against my subjectivity and so gained insight into my prejudices. When it comes to *reliability*, this refers to consistency and trustworthiness of research findings. To meet the demands of reliability, I have thought of the reproducibility of this study; to the type of questions asked and to the transcription and categorization of the interviews. To respond to the call for *validity* in qualitative research, I have assured that the methods investigated exactly what they were supposed to investigate. As a final remark, to make generalisations about the issue at hand is not my intention.

## **7. The impact of Australia's counter-terrorism measures: as perceived and experienced by young Arab Muslims**

In this section of the thesis the results from the interviews will be presented. As described in the methodology section, the interviews were transcribed and thematically coded in order to find common and diverging patterns in the responses. The various themes presented in this chapter attempt to answer the following research question: *How do young Arab Muslims in Australia experience and perceive the impact of counter-terrorism measures?*

### **7.1 Views on the level of threat of terrorism in Australia**

The level of threat of terrorism, the reason for high alert issued, is believed to be amplified by the news media and the government: “Because of the increased media coverage, there would be an increase of threats, but there is still not as big as the government is portraying to be” (Male participant). The media coverage on terrorism was compared by another participant to news segments on other issues such as the incident in Australia where a gay couple was arrested for paedophilia when the news disclaimer made clear that these people do not represent the gay community. The perception in this context is that the news media never do that, when they speak about ISIS, they never clarify that ISIS does not represent all Muslims. The believed consequences of this were that a majority of people get nervous around and scared of Muslims. The participants think that many events that have been labelled as terrorist events by the media have nothing to do with Islam, only that it is crazy or mentally ill people committing crimes in the name of religion. One of the male participants believe that publishing events in news as terrorist attacks, put radical ideas in people and result in that they act upon such ideas. Others expressed a concern regarding the fact that there are other groups in society and other issues that should be in focus and prioritised. It was a common opinion that the almost non-existing threat of terrorism does not need the amount of attention it is getting from the government and the news media. There is simply too much focus politically on terrorism and that the news media and government are neglecting many other issues, such as domestic violence and violence against women, as a consequence and focusing wrongly on terrorism as the largest threat to the Australian society:

Those are the real issues. Ignorant people that carry on this behaviour, on and on and on. Those are the people and issues that need attention rather than terrorism, which has not been an issue in Australia for real, it has just been a media thing that has been hyped up. I think, definitely there should be laws and precautions and efforts, but it should be more a community effort (Female participant).

Overall the new anti-terrorism laws, designed to meet the increased level of threat of terrorism, were perceived as over exaggerated. It is clear that these young Arab Muslims considered many of the new counter-terrorism laws as unnecessary and disproportionate to the level of threat. At the same time, they expressed an understanding to why such measures exist and why the government continues to fund counter-terrorism initiatives.

## 7.2 Psychological impact

### 7.2.1 *Fear, anxiety and insecurity*

A very prominent finding when exploring the experiences and perceptions of these young Arab Muslims in Brisbane was the concerns about what feelings counter-terrorism measures create within Muslim communities, the psychological effects. Firstly, they spoke a lot about fear and insecurity. For instance the term suspicious and the association definition in relation to the definition of a terrorist act was something that all the participants brought up. The confusion regarding these legal terms are causing young Muslims to feel uncomfortable and cautious, restricting their right to express themselves, both religiously (charity donations, praying and travelling outside the country for Ramadan for instance) and in everyday life activities (using the web for research, google-searches, and being in public talking about the issue of terrorism e.g. being careful using certain words). Secondly, the participants highlight the fact that a lot of these measures that the government are introducing and also the general media climate in Australia are causing feelings of anger and frustration among Muslims and that this in fact can lead people into being more violent and aggressive. Two of the participants talk especially about young Muslim men that turn violent and potentially radical to counter the developments that we may be witnessing in Australia. However, they contend that even though such reactions are natural to some extent, aggressive behaviour does not help Muslims in the long run.

### ***7.2.2 Identity and sense of belonging***

All participants mentioned the issues described above as linked to whether or not they felt as if they belong to the Australian society in different ways and in different contexts. Also how their sense of belonging had changed due to recent events and in recent years. The Australian strategy to counter-terrorism is perceived as rather counter-productive in the sense that it is creating more barriers between people than a safe environment where Muslims feel as part of the larger society.

It is aimed also at the Muslim community and the Muslim people and I don't think that it is fair. It has made a lot of Muslims uncomfortable and has made them like they don't belong and made them feel like they were kind of criminal when they weren't (Male participant).

The participants asserted that the majority of Muslims are happy to be in Australia, and feel as if they “mix” well into society, and therefore do not pose any threat to the nation. However, with the new laws and restrictive security measures people seem to withdraw more and society is therefore moving “backwards” rather than towards greater diversity and social cohesion. However, despite such perceptions of the counter-terrorism machinery, what was perceived to be the factor with the most negative influence on their lives was the news media.

I usually don't care what people think too much. But now I do, and I think it is mostly because of the media and the news, and it is hard enough practicing and understanding your religion, Let alone trying to understand all of these extremists. It makes you question your religion more. It is just kind of annoying, because you know it is not like that, but being in the media in that way. Why are these people doing that, how are they associated with our religion (Female participant).

As shown in the above quote, there is an expressed insecurity and confusion about the religious identity, much due to international events and international terrorist organisations claiming their affiliations with Islam, but also because of how news media portray Islam in such contexts. The responses show that young Arab Muslims feel that they need to negotiate between being Australian and being Muslim, especially when the Muslim identity is questioned. Moreover, the participants' link what is going on around ISIS on the one hand, and news media portrayals of terrorist organisations as Islamic on the other hand as two

factors affecting the perception of their Muslim identities. Although mentioning younger generations most of the times, one of the participants also note that it also affects the older generations because older Muslims do not feel or identify themselves as Australians as much as the young, and therefore find themselves in a more insecure position.

## 7.3 Social impact

### 7.3.1 *Infringements on civil rights and liberties*

There is a perception that the counter-terrorism legislation has changed a lot and also increased in recent years. All participants seemed to trust the government with the assignment of passing laws and regulations, but they simultaneously contend that there are some “lines” that should not be crossed. One example mentioned is the right to privacy. First and foremost, the view is that it has been limited, but more specifically that there are now laws making it possible for authorities to put recording devices in people’s homes if they see anyone as suspicious. ASIO is brought up in this context, and that it is known that their powers have increased in accordance to the new laws:

Like before, if they walked up and wanted to have a chat with you, you could still say no, whereas now, ASIO can shoot you if they think you are a threat” (Male participant).

A female participant gave an example of an experience of a friend of hers that was in a situation, together with her children, boarding a regular train. The friend was asked to show identification and being questioned for security reasons, but with no apparent grounds. She, the participant, believes that people with a heavier accent or foreign name get targeted at random checkpoints at airports more than others. This is based on the fact that she has no experience of this type of security measures herself, thinking it has to do with her not looking very Arab or wearing traditional Muslim clothing. A male participant explain that friends of him have experiences of security measures at Australian airports, that most people that come back from Saudi Arabia after Ramadan get their phones checked. At the same time as he thinks it is a fair practice, he thinks it is unfair that not all passengers' phones are checked and asks why it should matter where you come or depart from. In the end, these type of measures, even though being justified in some cases, are thought of by the participants of having a

negative effect on the whole Australian community. The participants worry that this can have psychological effects as well, that it can bring suspicion and fear to the non-Muslim community so that they may start to believe that all Muslims are the same, that Muslims are the equal to terrorists.

Furthermore, if a person's privacy is invaded it can create tensions between authorities and young Muslims. If a person is picked up on the street and turns out to be innocent, or if the person is arrested for a long time without being charged or proven guilty, then there is a problem and can create hostile feelings, a feeling of "being outside":

If someone has not done anything wrong, you will feel injustice. This is what people of Australia don't understand. The government is trying to keep it safe, but if they pick on someone that has not done anything wrong. It is not right. It is not justice. Nothing happens after that, they have raided him, invaded his privacy. They have picked someone up from the street and it turns out this person has not done anything. It was the wrong suspicion. I see this as a problem. This is where the tensions can grow (Male participant).

At first, the common attitude towards authorities' ability to tap peoples' phones so that people that are planning criminal acts can be found was positive. But after some more thoughts, the participants started to express concerns about the legal definition of suspicious, and realised how many people that can actually fit under the definition. Giving an example of a personal experience in relation to this, a female participant says that, at one point, when she was attending an Islamic charity event, she donated some money to the cause. She found out that at one stage this organisation was put in association with a terrorist activity or organisation. Realising this, she instantly felt that she was under suspicion to be involved in funding a terrorist organisation, which is a criminal offence by law. In general, there is a belief that many people can be put in such a position just because of the fact of being Muslim and perhaps being involved in something traditionally looked upon as part of the religious practicing.

Moreover and central to the perception of increased surveillance as part of recent counter-terrorism regime, is the need for understanding. The young Muslims wish to understand terrorism, what causes it and who perpetrates it. However, at the same time as they try to find out information and try to explore this, they are deeply concerned that they feel that they have to be cautious of what they search for on the Internet or of what they say in public:

If I am talking on the phone I am cautious of the words I use. Like, with my friend the other day we were in an elevator. We were like six to seven girls in there and she said: “We are like a little army in here” and then she said “oh, we probably shouldn’t use the word army.” And people in there were just laughing but it just makes you very very conscious of what you are saying and you worry about how people will interpret or think.

### ***7.3.2 A heightened sense of responsibility***

There is also a high sense of responsibility among the participants. Even though saying there is a minimal, if no, threat of terrorism in Australia, and that they have not experienced anything of this in their own personal spheres, the participants still see it as a natural thing to be involved in strategies that aim at preventing extremism at an individual and community level. Some of them contend that with the help and close relationship with communities and local organisations, there is a greater chance of mitigating terrorism before it has the chance to grow. At the same time, there are a resistance towards this, an attitude that show that they as “normal” Muslims living in Australia should not have to apologize for people, i.e. those engaged in terrorist acts, that should not be associated with them in the first place.

Simultaneously, a female participant promotes working within the community with young people and with the fact that they tend to be violent and as a consequence to that have extreme thoughts that they can act upon. So even though not feeling responsible for this, almost all of the participants have a strong sense of responsibility for the larger society and want to handle the matter of extremism personally, if it occurs within the Muslim community:

It is my responsibility to stop the bad in my organisation, and if we work together like that, we can stop the bad in every organisation. Most Muslims are like that, even if there are small groups deviating with extremist thoughts and ideologies  
(Male participant).

In addition, there is a wish for non-Muslims to better understand Muslims and Islam, and that it is the responsibility of each Muslim to be a part of spreading such knowledge in the role of “ambassadors” of Islam:

This is where I say the Muslim community should react better. If we act good, it stops there. If the Muslims react, more problems will come (Male participant).

### ***7.3.3 Impact on community cohesion and relations***

The young Muslims participating in this study have an understanding of the solution to preventing terrorism in the country being a one that is bottom-up rather than top-down, even if there is a general understanding of that certain measures is needed. However, they stay rather critical to the government approach that include “hard power” solutions, saying that it creates more tension and friction in society, both in the larger community and between different communities, both non-Muslim and Muslim. The community is central to these young Muslims in various ways. A female participant states that it is important that the community stick together if they see people in vulnerable positions. There is a feeling that can be linked to the feeling of responsibility to protect the community and to prevent extremism within community. A few have personal experience of workshops in their community about how to prevent radicalism and extremism, where they were told about what may influence young people, and why there are people with extreme religious or ideological views. They understand that some people are violent, but the make clear to me that these do not truly understand the religion, Islam, and that it is them who make everyone else look bad:

It is the people that really don't understand the religion, that are not religious or practicing at all that have the loudest voice when something happens (Male participant).

Furthermore, there is a perception that education within communities on extremism is a possible solution. To solve problems within their own communities is more productive than scaring people with the claim there is a constant threat of terrorism present. Although understanding that “it is difficult to spot someone who is in trouble from a far”, as a female participant says, a softer approach to counter-terrorism is voted for. However, the participants do not really see that there is any “real” threat of terrorism domestically and notes that there are many dangers in making the public start looking for suspicious behaviour in their communities, that it can create confusion and insecurity among all people in society. A suggestion for a better solution is that community leaders should be the focus of government

attempts to prevent extremism. Nevertheless, Muslim communities and leaders should not be single focus. One participant argues that there should be a focus on getting different ethnic and religious communities engaged: “We should all be fighting against the same enemy, rather than making the Muslim the enemy for all” (Female participant).

## 7.4 Summary

The general opinion among these young Arab Muslims is that the government has gone to certain extreme measures and that there is no real need for such an approach to preventing and countering terrorism in Australia. Further, the impact of counter-terrorism measures is described to be both psychological and social. The *psychological effects* include, as described in the first theme, *fear, anxiety and insecurity*. The participants believe that the new anti-terrorism laws create more fear than they protect people in the Australian society. One of the strongest perceptions is that the new counter-terrorism laws and practices are targeting Muslims and are aimed at the Muslim communities in Australia in first hand. The feeling of being targeted is shown through the fact that it has made more and more Muslims uncomfortable and insecure about their place in the Australian society. All of the interviewees blame this first and foremost on media sensationalism and note that no one takes into consideration how it “can backfire against the community, against the Muslim communities” (Female). However, this is not believed to be something that the government are doing consciously or with the purpose of hurting the community, but rather that it is something not being given enough consideration from the first place. Furthermore, under psychological impact are also the effects that counter-terrorism has on *identity* and *sense of belonging*. The whole counter-terrorism approach in Australia has made young Muslims more self-conscious, thinking about what clothes to wear and about their general appearance. For instance there are concerns about the ability of a female Muslim wearing a hijab in Australia. Muslims have become more visible and gained much more attention in media and political debates and since last year more and more attacks on Muslims have occurred. The participants experience a change, that what did not cause a problem in their everyday life before is now making them feeling less Australian, and that they have to justify and defend their religion and cultures. This is a common perception of all participants in this study. As an example, they mention the way that terrorism is constantly linked to Islam in the news media and how this is believed to put Muslims in more vulnerable positions becoming subject to negative public opinions.

In addition to the psychological impact, counter-terrorism measures are experienced as affecting Muslims socially. To begin, the participants mention the impact on *civil liberties and human rights*. The right to privacy and freedom the practice your religion is mentioned as being those affected the most. Further, the young Arab Muslims are afraid that the Australian counter-terrorism machinery will cause more problems in the *communities* and that tension between non-Muslims and Muslims have increased, at both local and national level, socially and politically. Although being a common perception that Muslims have been targeted by counter-terrorism measures, mostly in relation to the community engagement-approach to counter-terrorism, all participants see their *responsibility* and contribution as important. This is apparent even though they simultaneously believe that there is no, or minimal, threat of terrorism in Australia.

Nevertheless, the participants contend that it is not only laws and law enforcement practices that are impacting on society and young Muslims in contemporary Australia, it is related also to government and media framings of terrorism and representations of Islam and Muslims. The impact of the wide range of counter-terrorism measures on young Muslims is believed to have a lot more to do with the general climate and the way news media portray Islam, Muslims and terrorism. One of the participants expressed a concern regarding the media, that it is giving too much voice and freedom to “ignorant people”, rather than focusing on showing the “good side” of Islam. She states that, in fact the majority of the world's Muslim leadership is condemning terrorism and terrorists for their actions. It is a common perception among the participants that Muslims should not be associated with terrorism in the way that it is in Western media and other Western institutions.

## **8. The representation of Islam and Muslims in Australian news media**

A move towards a critical analysis of the media discourse on Islam and Muslims is crucial to the analysis of the impact of counter-terrorism measures because of the finding that young Muslims are more concerned about the news media and how it influences public opinion and current government policies on counter-terrorism than they are about the actual laws and policies. The thesis therefore examines how Islam and Muslims, in relation to terrorism and counter-terrorism, is represented and portrayed in three major Australian newspapers, The Daily Telegraph, Herald Sun and Courier-Mail. Secondly, it explores whether or not there are certain ideological elements reflected in media coverage of Islam and Muslims. To meet these objectives, the study carries out a synthesised model entailing Van Dijk's notion of the 'ideological square' and Said's notion of *Orientalism*. Within this framework, the dichotomous character of the content of the articles as well as the naming and lexical choices is identified. The analysis proceeds by exploring reflections of Orientalist arguments in the texts. As stated in table one, 21 news articles written between 2014-2015 are analyzed. While table two and three provide an overview of the identified Orientalist themes in the different newspapers as well as the words collocating with 'Islam' and/or 'Muslims' in the headlines of the sampled articles, the following section entails the discussion and interpretation of the findings.

### **8.1 Deconstructing discourse: reflections of *Orientalism***

As a secular state it would not even be our business except the Islamists are here, colonizing us (*in Islamic fascists unveil their hate*, the Daily Telegraph).

The most prominent theme revealed in the news media discourse on Islam and Muslims is the one that Islam, and Muslims, stands in stark conflict and contradiction to the West and to Christianity. This dichotomized image, manifested in the *Orientalist* discourse, is exposed in the following quote:

This reveals the lie that all religions are equally bloodthirsty; in the 21<sup>st</sup> century only

one religion is at the center of terror attacks around the world. [...] We cannot be scared into silence or intimidated into self-blames, the problem lies with radical Islam not our Western democratic societies (*in Islam, you have a very serious problem*, the Daily Telegraph).

Similarly, articles in the Herald Sun reflect the idea that Islam as a religion stands in opposition to the West:

It isn't the West, what we see in Iraq are Muslims killing Muslims and in the name of Islam [...] Islam, not the West, is the problem (*in Listen to the voice of hatred in the name of Islam*).

Yet another article reflects the dichotomized way of depicting Islam in relation to the West:

We must stop pretending that these incidents have nothing to do with Islam. They quite clearly have everything to do with Islam and the sooner we admit this truth the better we can work to protect our people and values from this ever-present scourge (*in Radical Islam and Western values cannot coexist peacefully*).

These quotes not only reflect the theme of *Christianity versus Islam*, it also reveal another Oriental theme, *Islam as a threat*. Muslims are portrayed as being threatening because of their adherence to a particular Islamic ideology and culture. It reflects the representation of Islam as a threat to Western values and people. A picture that informs us that Muslims and Islam is something different than "Us" and "our values" and that Islam is cause to an "ever-present scourge", a plague in the West. This Orientalist theme of Islam as a threat is repeatedly occurring in the Daily Telegraph as well as in the Herald Sun:

And there was this warning: 'If the Australian Government is serious regarding the terror threat locally, then it must review its foreign policy decisions with regard to this region'. Consider that warning carefully [...] that sounds like an outrageous threat. Name one other ethnic or religious group here that warns Australia to change its foreign policies or face violence from its members" (*in Muslim leaders continue to betray Australia*).

The last sentence reflects a strong echo of the Orientalist idea that the Muslim world stand in

opposition, and are different, to all other religions in the world. Not only to the Christian West. In the article “ Islamic extremists armed and dangerous in our jails” in the Herald Sun the argument that Islam poses as a threat is shown by the choice of words collocating with Islam in its headline. The negative phrasing of ‘extremism’ and ‘danger’ are here assembled with ‘Islam’. This is similar to the headline of another Herald Sun article “Denial of Islamic fundamentalism puts us in danger” in which ‘fundamentalism’ and ‘danger’ are words collocating with ‘Islam’. Moreover, in the same article the word ‘terrorist’ is positioned next to the word ‘Muslim’:

Must we always feign this surprise when a terrorist is found to be – gasp – Muslim?  
[...] Surely we’re entitled to conclude that something in Islam seems to license violence, given we have just as many Buddhists here as Muslims, yet not one Buddhist has killed here for faith.

These lexical choices strengthen the Oriental discourse, which has been found present in Australian news media. Particular lexical choices that intensifies an ideological discourse can be seen in another example:

The elements are shocking, true. But Islam contains a strong streak of violence and intolerance of other creeds. Mass immigration from the Middle East has left us in greater danger than before. Muslim leaders were recklessly slow to help fight extremism in their doctrine and their followers, including the mad.

The portrayal of the Orient as savage, mad, brutal and barbaric, and thus backward, is strengthened here. Also, by using the word reckless to describe Muslim leaders, the image of the Oriental as *untrustworthy* is intensified, something visible also in the following piece:

Islamists want holy men to dictate what you can eat, what you can wear, and when you will be lashed and stoned to death. They want any criticism of their political and religious ideology outlawed. And they are winning (Islamic fascists unveil their hate, the Herald Sun).

In the article “Islam, you have a very serious problem” published in the Daily Telegraph, the “radical Islam” is put in contrast to Western values. Muslims are described as people that are

“despising our way of life, our freedom, openness and diversity” with their ”backward attitudes”. Here, the positive image of “us” and negative image of “them” are illuminated, but this representation of Muslims also reflects the theme of *Oriental backwardness*, as contrary to advanced Western ways of life. Further, radical Muslims are described as “subhuman savages” that “cannot be reasoned with”. It reveals the theme entailing the idea that basic humanity of the Oriental can be fundamentally questioned as well as the theme of *Oriental irrationality*:

These are not people who can be reasoned with or counseled into adopting our values of humanity, tolerance and liberty (*in Radical Islam and Western values cannot coexist peacefully*).

The Oriental themes of *irrationality*, *untrustworthiness*, as well as *inferiority*, are all reflected in the above quote. Further, the theme of *submissiveness* is reflected in the way Muslim migrants are described in the same article as “appreciating” abundant freedoms and opportunities “available” to them in countries like Australia. Furthermore, the theme of *strangeness* of the Orient is reflected in several of the news articles. The oddities of Islamist individuals compared with a normal Western standard is described in a way that makes Islam something that should not be trusted, much due to the explanation of its inherent ’evilness’ and backwardness:

In a nutshell (as it were) Islamists believe that their belief system justifies as much cruelty, bloodshed, death, rape, murder, fear, terror, slavery and violence being visited upon non-believers as they see fit for whatever their particular purpose. Even though that includes kidnapping and sodomising 12-year-old-school girls. All in the name of God. Sounds like pretty succinct definition of evil to me (*in Islamism the evil that dwells in our nation*, the Courier-Mail).

The dichotomous character of the headline in the article quoted above is revealed by the lexical choices of ”our nation” versus ”Islamism”. Islam is represented as the ”evil” and thus a threat to the West.

*Table 2 Orientalist themes identified in the articles*

| <b>Theme</b>                    | <b>The Daily Telegraph</b> | <b>The Herald Sun</b> | <b>The Courier-Mail</b> | <b>% of total</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Inferiority                     | 1                          | 5                     | 0                       | 28,6              |
| Backwardness                    | 3                          | 3                     | 0                       | 28,6              |
| Irrationality                   | 2                          | 1                     | 0                       | 14,3              |
| Submissiveness                  | 0                          | 1                     | 0                       | 4,8               |
| Islam as threat                 | 3                          | 6                     | 1                       | 47,6              |
| Christians/Jews vs. Muslims     | 4                          | 6                     | 1                       | 52,4              |
| Strangeness                     | 1                          | 1                     | 1                       | 14,3              |
| Untrustworthiness               | 2                          | 4                     | 0                       | 28,6              |
| <b>Total number of articles</b> | <b>7</b>                   | <b>6</b>              | <b>8</b>                | <b>21</b>         |

*Table 3 Words collocating with Islam and Muslims in the news articles' headlines*

| <b>Words collocating with Islam/Muslims</b> | <b>The Daily Telegraph</b> | <b>The Herald Sun</b> | <b>The Courier-Mail</b> |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Hate/Violence                               | 1                          | 2                     | 0                       |
| Threat/Danger                               | 2                          | 2                     | 0                       |
| Evil  | 0                          | 0                     | 0                       |
| Extremism/Radicalism                        | 2                          | 3                     |                         |
| Fundamentalism                              |                            |                       |                         |
| Enemy                                       | 1                          | 0                     | 1                       |
| Chaos                                       | 1                          | 0                     | 0                       |
| Terror/Terrorism                            | 2                          | 0                     | 0                       |

### **8.3 Elements of counter discourses**

*People need to see we are not extremists*

- Imam Akbar, the Courier Mail

Although most newspapers still reflect a view of Islam as a threat to the West, elements of counter discourses are also prevalent. In the Daily Telegraph article “Teen terror threat: dangerous sons of Islamic refugees involved in one of the majority of Muslims living in Australia. Within the larger Muslim community, these teens are seen as people that “don’t practice Islamic norms” and as street boys that “do not care about anything and are not good”. As shown in the following paragraph, there is a separation of radical and violent from moderate and peaceful Muslims:

Islamic extremism is a global problem that moderate peaceful Muslims need to unconditionally condemn and help solve instead of engaging in games of deflection” (*in* Counter-terrorism agencies warn of hidden danger of radicals who use Islam as cloak for extremism, the Herald Sun)

This can be seen as a reproduction of the dominant discourse, which offers an oversimplified and indiscriminate depiction of Islam and Muslims. However, it can also be seen as raising the fact that a whole religion, Islam, and its followers have been accused for atrocities committed by a minority. This counter discourse encloses the claim that Western dominant discourses on Islam and Muslims are ignorant, simplistic and selective. That they are causing people of the West to believe that Islam is inherently violent, and that this is a highly problematic contention as well as difficult for one third of the Worlds population, i.e. the Muslim population, to reconcile with.

Islam is innocent of the crimes committed by Muslim terrorists in the same way Christianity is innocent of the sexual abuse by some clergy, and not all people are Neo-Nazis. No, this form of commentary is counterproductive and likely to foster community division (*in* Saying all Muslims and Islam are to blame for extremists’ actions can only divide our community, the Courier Mail).

Another alternative theme offered by the Courier-Mail is that "the tired comparisons with Buddhism to 'prove' Islam is 'warlike religion'" are unhelpful, referring to the on-going brutality against Muslim Rohingyas in Myanmar:

The Muslims of Myanmar can tell you what it's like to be on the receiving end of Buddhist violence (*in Sydney Siege: Goodies v. Baddies debate unhelpful*, the Courier Mail).

The counter-narrative that has emerged in Australian news media, mostly prominent in Queensland newspaper, the Courier Mail, asks us not to abandon good judgement and fundamental values for "a simplistic kneejerk explanation or a 'goodies and baddies' view of the world", offered by the Orientalist representations on Islam and Muslims. In another attempt to counteract negative coverage of Islam, the positive contribution of the Muslim community to the western societies and the active distancing from barbaric actions committed by terrorists is highlighted in this quote from Imam Akbar in the Courier Mail:

We stand for justice for all. So if there's any kind of barbaric act carried out anywhere in the world, we should stand up united because we believe that justice is the reason why Australia is a beautiful country. Because God almighty said where justice is served, the country will prosper.

Moreover, the precarious situation that many Muslims in Australia is emphasised. The counter discourse suggests that Muslims are being targeted, legally, politically and socially, because of a general "terrorism hysteria". Here, Muslims, not Westerners, are the victims. Muslims are represented not as the enemy but as the ones threatened and put in fear. Further, by resisting the idea that Muslims are a homogenous group, comprising of extremists and terrorists, the dominant news media discourse is challenged. Nevertheless, this may be undermined by the dichotomised view that Muslims are either 'radical' or 'moderate', since that is the very same binary language that functions in the *Orientalist* discourse.

## 9. Conclusions

The findings of this thesis adds to existing research by concluding that negative labelling and stereotyping discourses, legal, political and public, lead Muslims to question their sense of belonging as well as their allegiance to Australia as loyal citizens. There are many factors affecting young Muslims' perceptions of counter-terrorism measures and how they respond to and resist dominant discourses in society. Firstly, the general perception among young Muslims is that Australia, aiming for multiculturalism and diversity, might be going in opposite direction to these goals. Furthermore, counter-terrorism measures are experienced as having an impact on many facets of life. Much like Poynting and Mason (2006), this thesis finds that identity, as well as other aspects of citizenship, has been strongly affected. A perceived targeting of Muslims by counter-terrorism measures has led to shifts and limits to their belonging and identification. Thus, multiple dimensions of citizenship, i.e. identity, rights and duties and sense of belonging, have been affected (Jarvis and Lister 2013). However, it is not only the legal discourse that has an impact. News media discourses also contribute to a sense of 'disconnected citizenship' among Australian Muslims. Negative stereotyping of Muslims in the Australian news media has "injected a sense of victimhood which Muslims in Australia have used as the basis for a reconstruction of their identity [...]" (Aly and Green 2008:16). The thesis therefore sheds light on the function of language and ideology in news media discourses. The aim has been to make transparent opaque ideologies in news media representation of Islam and Muslims through the application of critical discourse analysis under a theoretical leadership of Van Dijk and Said. The analysis suggests an ideological discourse prevalent in Australian newspapers that objectifies the cultural and religious diversity of the Muslim population in accordance to an *Orientalist* style of thought. However, it also indicates that elements of counter discourses are reflected in some of the newspapers, the Courier-Mail in particular. These are resisting the idea that Muslims are a homogenous group, suggesting that Muslims are being targeted, legally, politically and socially and urging us to consider the fact that generalisations about Islam are counterproductive and likely to foster friction and tension within our societies. As a final remark, the thesis conclude that the counter discourses in the newspapers resonate with the narratives provided by the young Arab Muslims participating in this study.

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## **12. Appendices**

### **12.1 Interview Questionnaire**

The aim of this study is to explore the experiences and perceptions of young Muslims in Brisbane, Australia of the impact of counter-terrorism measures upon themselves and their communities. The thesis attempts to investigate this in relation to young Muslims' understanding of citizenship.

#### **Background of interviewee**

1. Gender
2. Country of birth

#### **Citizenship**

3. Explain what citizenship mean to you? What would you say it entails?
4. How do you perceive your identity? Being a Muslim in context of the Australian society and citizenship.
5. How do you perceive your current ability to be involved in society and in community initiatives and activities?

#### **Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism**

6. Describe your experience of the Australian society, over the past decade.
7. Describe your thoughts around terrorism and the threat of terrorism Australia?
8. Explain what you know of counter-terrorism laws and practices in Australia?
9. Describe your feelings towards the police service (and other authorities) in Australia/in Brisbane? (trust and confidence in authorities)
10. Have you or someone you know experienced counter-terrorism measures first hand?  
*Airports, streets, police interaction, community activities?*
11. How would you say that counter-terrorism measures affect you?  
*In general / everyday life? Friends / family / community?*
12. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have been talking about, with regards to Australia's counter-terrorism laws and practices?

## **12.2 Informed Consent for Masters project**

**Title: A socio-legal qualitative study of young Arab Muslims' experiences and perceptions of the impact of counter-terrorism measures in Australia**

Dear (name of participant)

I am a Masters student in the Department of Sociology of Law at Lund University in Sweden. I would like to invite you to participate in research I am undertaking as part of my studies. My research project explores the experiences and perceptions of young Muslims in Brisbane, Australia of the impact of counter-terrorism measures upon themselves and their communities. It also investigates the affect it has on young Muslims' understanding of citizenship in the context of contemporary Australian counter-terrorism strategies.

If you agree to participate, this will involve being interviewed once and it is expected that the interviews will last no longer than one hour. I can undertake the interview at a time and place that is convenient for you and I would want to record and transcribe the interview. After some time of the interview, it may be asked of you to answer follow-up questions to clarify what has been said under the interview. All interview data will be treated with the utmost respect and will be stored securely. However, information about the project, including interview data, will be shared with my dissertation supervisor at Lund University, Sweden.

You may be concerned that other people will be able to know what you've said in the interview, I will do my very best to protect you from this by removing identity information, for example, not using your name and your age. You will be able to withdraw from the project at any time until 10 May 2015. After this time I will be at the point of writing up my research and therefore will not be able to remove quotations from the final dissertation. The final dissertation resulting from this project will be publicly available through the University Online library.

I appreciate you giving time to this study and if you have any questions please do call me at 0431-331391. You can also contact my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Reza Banakar at [reza.banakar@soclaw.lu.se](mailto:reza.banakar@soclaw.lu.se)

**Thank you**

Anna Messa

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If you are willing to participate in the Master's project outlined above please sign below.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Print name\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_