

# Extract from Chapter 2

A recurring trend within the articles was the repetition of Muslims as a group associated with terrorism, as if one could not exist without the other. Contained in The Daily Telegraph article 'Safety overrides any civil liberties' was the following notable quote: *"fighters [from] Iraq and Syria have come back to Australia... they are returning to Australia fresh from the blood-soaked battlefields, still crazed for jihad."*<sup>1</sup> Here a clear association has been baked in between immigrants from Iraq and Syria and their connoted Islamic traditions to violence travelling to Australian shores, suggesting that through accepting these people Australia will become a place of danger. The author later uses supposed violence that Muslims bring, to project their worldview: *"This may require further laws that do not bother themselves so much with civil liberties. The safety of Australians is a priority far above the liberties of those sworn to destroy us."*<sup>2</sup> This article identifies why Muslims have typically been the target of ethically questionable 'Counter-Terrorism' measures, for example in 2003, shortly after the signing of the Patriot Act in the United States a list of 80,000 'suspicious' men was made by the FBI, it contained only Muslims<sup>3</sup>. Of these men 8,000 were interviewed and 5,000 were placed into temporary 'preventative prison' as a result of the Patriot Act<sup>4</sup>. Not a single case resulted in a terror or crime related conviction, yet due to differences in culture and the discriminatory basis of their faith these men were profiled as enemies of the state<sup>5</sup>.

The Daily Telegraph article was not an isolated case. The email interview with journalist Siobhan Lyons<sup>6</sup> identified the scapegoating the Islamic faith by institutional media: *"The media does have a significant role in perpetuating existing bigotry where the Islamic faith is concerned (the commercial channels, in particular Channel 7 and its somewhat conservative shows such as Today Tonight and A Current Affair, are particularly illustrative of this)... nobody goes around and says that there is a connection between the Lutheran religion and violent behaviour. But Islam is a particularly vulnerable target that is frequently and*

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<sup>1</sup> Primary research: Qualitative content analysis between articles conducted 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2018

<sup>2</sup> Primary research: phone Interview with Danielle Celermajer, Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Sydney, conducted 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2018

<sup>3</sup> "The NSEERS Effect: A Decade Of Racial Profiling, Fear, And Secrecy". Pennstate.Com, 2012. [https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/\\_file/clinics/NSEERS\\_report.pdf](https://pennstatelaw.psu.edu/_file/clinics/NSEERS_report.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> Primary research: email interview with Siobhan Lyons, Lecturer of Journalism at Macquarie University, conducted 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2018

*conveniently linked with violence when there are issues of terrorism.*”<sup>7</sup> Lyon’s comment about the scapegoating of Muslims is reflective of the Daily Telegraph article where perhaps because of a cultural difference it is much easier to identify and blame another group, such as Muslims, for acts as ambiguous as terrorism. As Masha Gessen explains in an article from ‘The New Yorker’: *“Viewing him [the terrorist] as a regular person who needs no particular beliefs, affiliation, or label—or even a gun license—to kill dozens of people makes us feel utterly defenceless.”*<sup>8</sup>. The message extracted from this is similar to that of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 where despite him being killed by a lone gunman (Lee Harvey Oswald) people were quick to pin the blame on the Soviet Union<sup>9</sup>, due to the social environment of the time; fearing communism. Max Weber’s rationalisation can again be used to justify this: humans naturally fear the unpredictable, thus we would rather associate blame with an organised, predictable conspiracy<sup>10</sup> rather than the chaotic truth of an estranged gunman acting on no premediated lines.

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<sup>7</sup> Primary research: email interview with Siobhan Lyons, Lecturer of Journalism at Macquarie University, conducted 19<sup>th</sup> of March 2018

<sup>8</sup> Gessen, Masha. "Why We Should Resist Calling The Las Vegas Shooting "Terrorism"". The New Yorker, 2017. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/why-we-should-resist-calling-the-las-vegas-shooting-terrorism>.

<sup>9</sup> Neuman, Scott. "Documents Offer Insight Into Soviet View Of JFK Assassination". NPR.Org, 2017. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/10/27/560345132/documents-offer-insights-into-soviet-view-of-jfks-assassination>.

<sup>10</sup> Max Weber, “The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism”