

# *Climates of Hate: Media and State Inspired Victimisation of Muslims in Canada and Australia since 9/11†*

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## *Abstract*

This article represents a preliminary comparative exploration of anti-Muslim racism and violence in Australia and Canada, especially since September 11. The article contextualises the anti-Muslim vilification and victimisation within parallel – yet still distinct – political climates that bestow permission to hate. That is, negative media portrayals, together with discriminatory rhetoric, policy and practices at the level of the state create an enabling environment that signals the legitimacy of public hostility toward the Muslim communities. The article concludes by pointing toward the need for more extensive empirical exploration of the phenomenon in both countries.

Since the terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington DC and above Pennsylvania on 11 September 2001, ethnic minorities associated with Islam in most Western countries have experienced increased negative attention from the media, police and security forces, and indeed from agitated citizenry. There has been a concomitant increase in all such countries in the extent of anti-Muslim or 'Islamophobic' hate crime, racial vilification and discrimination (for the case of Canada, see Helly 2004; CAIR 2005; Kilgour et al. 2002; for Australia, see Poynting 2002; Poynting & Noble 2004; HREOC 2004; Dreher 2005). This has been exacerbated by subsequent terrorist events, notably in Bali in October 2002 and October 2005 (especially in the case of Australia), in Madrid in March 2004, and in London in July 2005, as well as the foiling of a terrorist threat in Toronto in 2006. There is some early evidence that the car fires and attempted bombings outside a London nightclub and at Glasgow airport in 2007 have led to a similar escalation.

In the aftermath of these attacks, backlash violence against those perceived to be Muslim escalated dramatically, resulting in assaults, arsons, even racially motivated murders across the world, and especially in nations aligned with the United States. Even in Canada, one of the Western nations that did not support the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, anti-Muslim violence as well as anti-Muslim practices by the state mushroomed. It is these reactionary patterns –

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as played out in Australia and in Canada – that we explore in this article. Our article opens with a brief discussion of the significance of treating Canada and Australia as comparators, followed by parallel discussions of the extent and nature of racial discrimination, harassment and violence against Muslims (or those presumed to be Muslim) in both Canada and Australia. These findings, finally, are contextualised by our discussions of the enabling climates of hostility facilitated by the media and the state in both countries. Interestingly, our observation is that the anti-Muslim fervour is dramatically muted in Canada, relative to Australia. Indeed, the Canadian response appears to be rather less straightforward, and might, in fact, be characterised as rather ambiguous and inconsistent.

Before proceeding, it is worth noting the complexity of the communities that we are addressing. Often in racist ideology and vilificatory discourse, the notions of ‘Arab’ and ‘Muslim’ are used almost interchangeably. In reality, however, these ethnic and religious communities are not coterminous, either in Australia or Canada. While most Muslims in Australia are (often second or third generation) immigrants of Arab background, by no means are all Australian Muslims of this ethnicity; nor are all Arab Australians adherents of the Muslim faith (HREOC 2004). In Canada, roughly a third of Muslims are of South Asian background, a third of Arab background and a third originate from Africa and elsewhere. Similarly, not all immigrants in Canada from these origins are Muslim. The perpetrators of hate crime and the practitioners of racial profiling pay little attention to these niceties.

A related issue has to do with perpetrator motivation and perception. Such is the level of ignorance and insularity of Western hatemongers that the subjects of discrimination and violence have been anyone who looked like they may be from somewhere in the Middle East, or may be Muslims – dark-skinned, bearded men who wear turbans or *kufis*, or women who wear *hijab*. Addressing a public hearing by the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (1991:9), then assistant director of UCLA’s Von Grunebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies, Medhi Bozorgmehr observed that ‘Arab nationalism, Arab-Israeli wars, and anti-Arab discrimination in the U.S. have all contributed to the emergence of an all-encompassing Arab identity despite a diverse background’. This observation applies equally in Canada and Australia. As early as 1978, Edward Said himself tacitly recognised this conflation in Western ‘orientalist’ ideology between Arab and Muslim:

Since World War II, after each of the Arab-Israeli wars, the Arab Muslim has become a figure in American popular culture, even as in the academic world, in the policy planner’s world, and in the world of business very serious attention is being paid to the Arab (1978:284-285).

There is deep-seated and widespread ignorance in the West of the diversity of religious faiths in the Arab lands and their diaspora; it is commonly assumed that all Arabs are Muslim. Westerners moreover often fail to distinguish Arabs from other ethnic groups originating in the Middle East, and assume that all Middle Easterners are Arabs. Furthermore, the vagaries of phenotype as a marker of supposed ‘race’ can mean that ‘Middle Eastern appearance’, say, may be ascribed for instance to some South Americans, southern Europeans, South Asians, or even Australian Aborigines.

As a result of these factors, a number of the victims of anti-Muslim vilification have not been Arab or Afghani or Muslim but Sikhs, or, in the US, second and third generation Americans of Indian descent; Lebanese Christians have been mistaken for Muslims and even Greeks have been taken for Arabs. As in the US, Sikhs in Canada are mistaken for Muslims, and accordingly attacked for their perceived identities. In one case, a Hindu temple was apparently confused with a mosque, and targeted by arson (Kilgour et al. 2002).

In Australia likewise, attacks on Sikhs were reported in the wake of 9/11, and churches bearing Arabic script and even a Russian Orthodox church were vandalised (Poynting 2002). Very recently an apparently Sikh man was pursued and racially abused by two men in a Melbourne street screaming, 'fucking Arabs ... Aussie pride ... we have to kill them all', according to a Jewish man of Asian background who intervened, and who was afterwards assaulted with baseball bats and called a 'fucking Jew' by the same perpetrators (Oakes 2007).

## Comparing Canada and Australia

Canada and Australia are comparable for our purposes for a number of reasons. The first is demographic. Muslims comprise approximately 2% of the Canadian population, with a community of almost 600,000 as measured in the 2001 census, though the Canadian Islamic Congress estimates in 2006 that they now number some 800,000. Australia's 2001 census recorded 281,578 Muslims: around 1.5% of the population. In Australia, they live predominantly in capital cities, especially Australia's two largest and most ethnically diverse cities, Sydney and Melbourne, with 48% and 31% of Australian Muslims respectively. Some 86% of Canadian Muslims live in the major metropolitan areas, with, for instance, more than 300,000 resident in the Greater Toronto region, and over 150,000 in Montreal, a similar number to Sydney, with its 135,000 Muslim residents. Sydney and Melbourne share with the Canadian cities featured here similar overall levels of ethnic diversity, and these cities are of comparable size to both Montreal and Toronto. Vancouver and Ottawa have smaller but nonetheless significant numbers of Muslims, reinforcing the notion that, in both countries, the Muslim populations are largely urban.

The second reason for comparison is a parallel history of cultural politics. This is no coincidence. The policy of 'multiculturalism' was developed in Australia in the early 1970s when the old 'assimilation' policy had become untenable, through more or less direct borrowing of the contemporaneous Canadian policy (Cope & Kalantzis 2000: Lopez 2000). This policy, still the official approach in Australia, has come under concerted attack since around 1996, with the terror attacks of 11 September 2001 then complicating and exacerbating this 'debate'. Especially since the July 2005 public transport bombings in London, committed by British-born perpetrators of second-generation immigrant background, the policy of multiculturalism has been strongly questioned in that country and elsewhere, and linked with the apparent production of, or at least support of and sympathy for, terrorists from within the nation itself. We may well inquire whether, and to what extent, the policy of multiculturalism has contemporaneously come under comparable criticism in Canada. We might ask whether Canada shows similar ruptures in multiculturalism, as manifest in public intolerance or hostility toward Muslims, specifically.

To say that these two countries are comparable is not to say that they are thus the same. We do argue in this article that anti-Muslim backlash has been evident in both Australia and Canada since 9/11. In both countries, there has been renewed popular resort to xenophobic stereotypes, increased media attention, new laws and 'anti-terror' measures instituted by the two states, along with ethnic targeting or racial profiling, and (arguably consequent) retaliatory anti-Muslim hate crime incidents. However, the patterns that have emerged in the two countries have been rather distinct. In particular, the effects have been somewhat more muted -- almost ambiguous -- in Canada for several reasons. First, there is rather less of the culture of populist 'crusades' by talkback radio personalities, tabloid newspapers, and sensationalist commercial current affairs television in Canada than in Australia; thus one

element of the moral panic constructing an Islamic folk devil is dampened more in Canada. Secondly, the extent of hate crime laws in Canada, though not highly effectual, is greater than in Australia, and the incidence of hate crime is (however inefficiently) officially monitored, which it is not in Australia. This indicates, at least, a difference in symbolic responses to and recognition of hate crime. Thirdly, Canada's *Multiculturalism Act* 1988 and Article 27 of the Canadian Charter mandate 'reasonable accommodation' of minority cultures over rights which in Australia would be denied, litigated or, in the current climate, subjected to media furore about 'political correctness' (though these outcomes all obtain, to a lesser extent, in Canada) (Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW 2003; Helly 2004). That is to say, there is a more established culture in Canada of negotiation in relation to cultural pluralism, and Canadian cultural and political life has suffered less from neo-conservative or right-wing populist attacks on multiculturalism. Finally, even under the current neo-conservative Harper administration, Canada has not experienced the government fanning of populist xenophobia for electoral advantage which has marred Australian politics, both federal and state, over the foregoing decade. In short, while the two countries appear alike in many ways, there are significant distinctions that have conditioned disparate reactions to the recent spate of terrorist violence.

It is also important to keep in mind that the patterns of anti-Muslim sentiment and activity which have characterised Canada, Australia and other nations have a historical grounding. In the Western world, Anti-Muslim sentiment is not new. Rather, it is often latent, overshadowed by what are the typically more evident schisms among whites and blacks, Asians, and Aboriginal peoples, for example. Nonetheless, there exists a history of colonialist deprecation that provides the foundation for the current rash of anti-Muslim threats and intimidation: Western preoccupation with things Islamic is episodic, to say the least; it seems to take moments of extreme gravity – the Arab-Israeli wars, the Palestinian Intifadas, the 1979 revolution in Iran and the ensuing hostage crisis, the Gulf War of 1991, the horrendous terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon – to awaken its dormant interest. Little wonder, then, that Islam has been at the receiving end of so much stereotyping – depicted as intolerant, reactionary, fanatical, and, when resisted, violent. Such caricature notions of Islam rarely are far from the surface (Malley 2001). As Malley contends, it is not uncommon for reactionary incidents to follow triggering events. In particular, the 30-year trend toward typifying Arabs as 'evil' or as 'terrorists' has yielded a similarly long history of backlash violence; the months following the September attacks are the most recent in a lengthy series of retaliatory violence directed toward US citizens and residents of Middle Eastern descent. Abraham (1994:194) concurs:

The pattern of jingoistic violence ... had become fairly predictable. Events occurring in the Middle East, particularly violence against U.S. citizens, often trigger jingoistic violence against Arabs and others who could conceivably be confused with them, such as Muslims, Iranians, or Palestinians.

Abraham (1994:193) characterises such 'jingoistic racism' as a dangerous hybrid of 'knee-jerk patriotism and homegrown white racism toward non-European, non-Christian dark skinned peoples ... spawned by political ignorance, false patriotism, and hyper ethnocentrism'. This is an apt description of the current backlash violence against Muslims in Canada. Not since the Gulf War, and perhaps not even then, have we seen such frenzied patriotism in the West. In Australia, which has never had an extensive tradition of displaying the national flag, there has been a burgeoning of flag-waving and jingoism. The 'Aussie! Aussie! Aussie!' chants during the Islamophobic and anti-Arab (they were both) mob riots at Cronulla Beach in 2005 (Poynting 2006) were accompanied by mass wearing

of the flag – and often little more – as apparel, and people were bullied into kissing the flag at the ‘Big Day Out’ pop concert in 2006 and assaulted if they refused.

Another manifestation of this nationalistic xenophobia, of course, is hate crime. Hate crimes are unlike other violent crimes in that their impact extends to the victim’s entire community. The goal of hate crime, in fact, is to send a message to the group – in this case all Muslims – that they are at risk, that they are not wanted here. Moreover, it is much more than the act of mean-spirited bigots. It is embedded in the structural and cultural context within which groups interact (Young 1990; Bowling 1993; Kelly et al. 1993). It does not occur in a social or cultural vacuum, nor is it over when the perpetrator moves on. Hate crimes must be conceived of as socially situated, dynamic processes, involving context and actors, structure and agency. Moreover, the potential for hate crime is cultivated in very particular contexts that allow for its growth. In the current article, we focus specifically on the ways in which the popular media and the state contribute to the popular enactment of hate motivated discrimination, harassment and violence.

The following official data on racial victimisation in Canada must be taken with a grain of salt. There is manifest and huge underreporting of such occurrences to official authorities (see Levin & McDevitt 1993), as indeed there is in Australia (see Poynting & Noble 2004; Dreher 2005). In fact, Julian Roberts (1995) argues that, out of the various types of criminality, hate crimes are probably one of the most underreported of offences. He cites, among the reasons: fear of retribution, lack of surveillance (and hence, presumably, lack of witnesses and identification), and victims’ apprehension of the criminal justice system. Moreover, even where hate crime is *reported to police*, there is some doubt as to whether it will ultimately become *recorded by police*. In Canada, unlike the US, police are not required to record hate crime statistics. Nor are most trained well enough to recognise it when they see it. Thus, police are complicit in the low estimate of hate crime victimisation.

## **Anti-Muslim Discrimination, Harassment and Violence in Canada**

In a pilot survey involving 12 major police forces across Canada covering some 43% of the national volume of crime, there were 921 incidents of hate crime recorded for 2001 and 2002, some 57% of which were designated as motivated by race/ethnicity and 43% by religion (Silver et al. 2004). For the year 1999, the Canadian General Social Survey showed that about 4% of self-reported criminal victimisation incidents were believed by victims to be motivated by hate. This amounted to some 273,000 incidents, the vast majority of which were believed to be based on either race/ethnicity (43%) or religion (unfortunately categorised as ‘other’ along with age and sexual orientation, at 37%), or culture, at 18% (Silver et al. 2004).

While both data sets suffer from some of the flaws noted above, they are also limited for our purposes for yet another reason. Neither breaks down the broad categories of race, ethnicity, religion or culture into their constituent parts. Thus, there is no accurate way to determine what proportion of victims may have been Muslim, or Arab, or from any other Middle Eastern community that perpetrators might have presumed to be Muslim. Given that the Muslim and Arab communities are relatively large in Canada, it is likely that a sizable proportion of the recorded victims may have shared this identity. For more specific counting of Islamophobic violence, however, it is necessary to turn to other ‘unofficial’ measures of racist vilification and violence. For example, over half of the Muslim Canadians surveyed by the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) had experienced an anti-Muslim incident since 9/11 (CAIR-CAN 2004).

Together, the official Canadian data sources cited above suggest, for the general Canadian population, self-reported hate crime victimisation has been relatively stable in the opening years of the 21st century (Gannon & Milhorean 2004; Silver et al. 2004). Thus, it appears even more striking that the Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC) reported (2003) a 1600% increase in the annual incidence of anti-Muslim hate crime reported to them, albeit from a low base of 11 cases in the year prior to 9/11 to 173 in the subsequent year. Clearly, this group has seen a disproportionate increase in victimisation. The CIC, for one, feared the possibility of more backlash violence following the arrests of 17 young men for their role in a plotted terrorist attack in Toronto in June of 2006. Indeed, within a day of the arrests, a major Toronto mosque was targeted by vandals.

A survey of Canadian Muslims in 2002 by the Canadian Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR-CAN) found that 56% of respondents had experienced at least one anti-Muslim incident in the 12 months since 11 September 2001. The same percentage found increased media bias against Muslims and Islam. Some 33% had experienced verbal abuse; 18% had experienced racial profiling and 16% had experienced workplace discrimination (CAIR-CAN 2004:6).

Denise Helly (2004) cites a 2002 CAIR-CAN study which found that 60% of the people of Muslim heritage surveyed reported that 'they experienced bias or discrimination since the 9/11 terrorist attacks', with fully a third saying their lives had worsened since 9/11, that they felt Canadians disliked them and that they were concerned about their own and their families' safety.

A survey of Canadian Arabs conducted between November 2001 and March 2002 by the Canadian Arab Federation (n=253) similarly showed 49.4% encounter racism in their daily interaction with people 'occasionally' (41.5%), 'frequently' (4.7%) or 'all the time' (3.2%), with the other half responding that it didn't happen to them (44.7%) or they didn't know (5.9%) (Khouri 2003).

## **Anti-Muslim Discrimination, Harassment and Violence in Australia**

Given the lack of explicit hate crime legislation, it is perhaps not surprising that there are no 'official' measures of hate crime in Australia. Thus, what we know of such victimisation in Australia must of necessity be drawn from sporadic surveys and from Muslim associations and ethnic organisations of those caught up in the same wave of xenophobia.

This increase of 16 times the rate of anti-Muslim hate crime in Canada post-9/11 is comparable with the records of the Australian Arabic Council, whose racial hatred telephone hotline registered 20 times the rate of complaints in the month following 11 September 2001 (Poynting 2002; HREOC 2004). In a survey of Australians of Arab and Muslim background in 2003 for the HREOC, Poynting and Noble (2004) found that two-thirds of respondents had personally experienced an increase in 'racism, abuse or violence' since 9/11: one third responded 'a bit more'; one third 'a lot more'. Only about one fifth of respondents reported no increase in personal experiences of racism, abuse or violence since around 2001. Some 93% of survey respondents believed there had been an increase in racism, abuse and violence directed against their ethnic or religious community; with 64% reporting 'a lot more'.

Similarly, an analysis of phone reports to the hotline of the Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural New South Wales (CRC) set up on 12 September 2001 to monitor the expected backlash (Dreher 2005) revealed 248 incidents of reported racial

hatred in NSW in the two months between 12 September and 11 November 2001. Of these, 43.4% were of verbal assault, 13.2% of physical assault, 17.5% of harassment or discrimination, 10.3% of threats and 10.3% of media vilification. In the roughly half of cases (52%) where religion could be discerned (owing to the CRC's lack of hard provision for this in gathering the data), over two thirds (68%) were Muslim; 28% were Sikh; one case each were identified as Jewish, Hindu and Christian. As in the hate crime during the 1991 Gulf War (HREOC 1991), and also as in other countries after 9/11, many Sikhs were misidentified as Muslim.

### Anti-Muslim Bias in Canadian Media

The patterns of discrimination and violence just described are predicated upon legitimating ideologies and images which mark the Other, and the boundaries between self and other, in such a way as to normalise the corresponding inequities. It is within the cultural realm that we find the justifications for inequities, and for ethnoviolence. For it is this body of discourse which articulates the relations of superiority/inferiority, thereby establishing a hospitable environment for openly racist activity. In line with an essentialist understanding of racial classification, the overriding ideology is that of inscribed traits, wherein 'the stereotypes confine them to a nature which is often attached in some way to their bodies, and which thus cannot easily be denied' (Young 1990:59). The 'New Racism' (Barker 1981) tends to see such characteristics less in biological and more in cultural terms, but nevertheless conceives the boundaries between cultures as relatively fixed and immutable, resulting effectively in a similar essentialism.

Stereotypes which distinguish the racialised Other from white subjects are thus grounded in what are held to be the identifying features of racialised minorities. They help to distance white from not white. Here 'white' may be a metaphor for Western or non-'Third-World-looking', rather than a matter of skin pigmentation or other such phenotype (Hage 1998). The latter is to be feared, ridiculed, and loathed for their differences as recognised in the popular psyche. Almost invariably, the stereotypes are loaded with disparaging associations, suggesting inferiority, irresponsibility, immorality, and non-humanness, for example. Consequently, they provide both motive and rationale for injurious verbal and physical assaults on minority groups. Acting upon these interpretations allows dominant group members to recreate whiteness as superiority, while castigating the Other for their presumed traits and behaviours. The active construction of whiteness, then, exploits stereotypes to legitimate violence.

Where the popular image of the Other is constructed in negative terms – as it frequently is – group members may be victimised on the basis of those perceptions. Hate crime is thus 'bolstered by belief systems which (attempt to) legitimate such violence' so as to 'limit the rights and privileges of individuals/groups and to maintain the superiority of one group' (Sheffield 1995:438-439). Members of subordinate groups are potential victims *because of* their subordinate status. They are already deemed inferior, deviant, and therefore deserving of whatever hostility and persecution comes their way. In sum, they are 'damned if they do, and damned if they don't'. If they perform their identities on the basis of what is expected of them they are vulnerable. If they perform in ways that challenge those expectations, they are equally vulnerable.

Such negative constructions of Islam undoubtedly underlie the victimisation of Muslims in Canada and in Australia. In fact, many commentators have suggested that Arabs generally and Muslims, especially Arab Muslims, may represent the last 'legitimate'

subjects of slanderous imagery and stereotypes (Abraham 1994; Said 1997; Stockton 1994; Suleiman 1999). For example, Moore (1995:16) observes that:

Crude caricatures of Muslims appear abundantly in the production and organisation of popular culture. Events and situations, whether fictional or real, are presented to us within a framework of symbols, concepts, and images through which we mediate our understanding about reality. ... The news and entertainment media both generate stereotypes and rely on our familiarity with them in order to formulate the world in their terms and communicate ideas in an efficient, i.e., timely, fashion.

As Moore suggests, the media are especially complicit in the dissemination of anti-Muslim imagery. The widespread perpetuation of such caricatures – by the media and by public figures – fuels sentiments of suspicion and mistrust by shaping public perceptions in less than favourable ways. There are few, if any, positive images of Arabs, Muslims, or Middle Easterners generally. Rather they are portrayed collectively as wholly evil and warlike. Based on his observations of cartoons and other public media, Stockton (1994) has identified eight ‘assigned image themes’ that consistently appear in depictions of Arabs: sexual depravity (e.g., harems and belly dancers), creature analogies (e.g., vermin, camels), physiological and psychological traits (e.g., unappealing physical characteristics, fanaticism, vengeance), savage leaders (e.g., warmongers), deceit (in business and politics), secret power (e.g., use of oil wealth to manipulate others, especially the West), hatred of Israel, and terrorism. Among the potential effects of the media tendency to stigmatise or demonise the Other is that it contributes to a culture that bestows ‘permission to hate’, indeed, permission to engage in hate crime. As Snow et al. (1986: 464) have argued, the media frames that we have pointed to here do more than provide entertainment, and even more than shape perceptions; they can also serve as a ‘guide to action’. Media constructs define and assess their objects, but they also ‘suggest remedies’ (Entman, cited in Greenberg 2002). Among the remedies available for re-aligning intimate relationships that have blurred racialised and sexualised positions is bias-motivated violence.

In a 2002 nationwide survey of some 300 Canadian Muslims of South Asian, Arab, African and European background, CAIR-CAN found that 55% of respondents thought the Canadian media were more biased since 9/11. The report remarked on a ‘startling similarity between media myths on Islam and Muslims and the hate-text of many documented anti-Muslim incidents’ (Khan et al. 2004). Moreover, recent work by Ismael and Measor (2003), by Helly (2004), and by the Canadian Islamic Congress (2001, 2002) all point to the uneven distribution of media bias across news sources. All of these authors single out the *National Post* as especially likely to engage in disparaging and inflammatory coverage of Islam, tending to emphasise extremist ‘tendencies’.

Ismael and Measor (2003) observe that, after 9/11:

The blend of the xenophobic fears of the ‘other’, and that of terrorism, provided media consumers in Canada with a clear path to the conclusion that Islam was a faith in which acts of unspeakable violence were acceptable and that terrorism was endemic to Muslim and Arab culture. This framed Arab and Muslim societies and individuals as somehow fundamentally different from the average Canadian. By refusing to represent the diversity of Islam as a faith, the obfuscation of its tenets, and through their lack of coverage of the articulated ideas of Muslims the world over endorsing peace and supportive of human rights, the media conducted reductive exercises of the highest order.

This did not begin in September 2001, they point out, but the ‘war on terror’ marked an intensification of existing Islamophobia in the media. Indeed, the CIC’s *Anti-Islam in the Media Report* (2005) observed that:



From 1998 (the year *Anti-Islam in the Media* was launched) until September 11, 2001, CIC media research showed a modest average annual reduction of 17% in the use of anti-Islam language and terminology. Following that watershed date, however, and continuing during 2002, the data gathered revealed a substantial reversal of this trend. By 2003, the level of anti-Islam occurring in the Canadian media had returned to pre-9/11 levels.

This is also the case in Australia, where a similar intensification had been recorded during the earlier Gulf War of 1991 (HREOC 1991).

Whatever the timeline, many media outlets unfortunately draw on and reinforce the negative images noted above. The CIC has identified a number of key terms commonly used to denigrate Muslims. It is these terms that the organisation uses to rank media according to their anti-Islamic tendencies. Among the terminology identified are the following:

- Armed Islamic group
- Canadian-based Islamic extremist
- Extreme: branches of Islam
- Extremist: Islamic group, Islamic regime
- Hard-line: Islamic regime, Muslims, Muslim regime
- Global Islamic militancy
- Fanatic: Islamic
- Fundamentalist: Islamic terror, Islamic terrorist, strain of Sunni Islam
- International: Islamic extremist, Islamic movement militancy
- Islamic: dictatorship, extremist, extremist group, extremism, fighters, fundamentalist, fundamentalism, fundamentalist terrorist groups, hard-liner, -inspired terrorist attacks, insurgency, insurgent, Jihad, Jihad militant, guerrillas, militia, hard-liners, hijacker, forces militancy, militant, militant group, purists, radical, radicalism, rebel, resistance, separatists, suicide bomber, terrorist, terrorist cells, terrorist group, terrorism, violence
- Islamist: cell, terrorism, group, militancy
- Militant: Islamic, Islamic government, Islamic group, Islamic organization, Islamic mullahs, Islamist group, Muslim
- Murderous: Islamic militant
- Muslim: activist, dictator, extremist, fundamentalist, fundamentalist militant, guerrillas, militia, militant, mercenaries, mob, vigilante group, rebel
- Puritanical Islamic militia
- Radical: armed Islamic group, Islam, Islamic fighters, Islamic group, Islamic militia, Islamist, Islamist group, Muslim, Muslim faction, Muslim organization, Islamic militant
- Violent Islamic group (CIC 2005).

Moreover, the media help to perpetuate the 'us' vs 'them' mentality that also serves to marginalise the Muslim community in Canada. Following Bush's leading assertion that 'you are either with us or with the terrorists', the more conservative and reactionary Canadian media outlets jumped on the jingoistic bandwagon. The *Windsor Star*, for example, exclaimed:

The real targets of the hijackers and their flying bombs were freedom, democracy, and capitalism ... It is time to draw a line in the sand. On one side lies democracy, individual freedom, and the capitalism that makes the two most essential qualities of life possible. On the other side lies terrorism.

The most notoriously Islamophobic newspaper, the *National Post*, provided this banner headline: 'There is no negotiating with psychopaths.'

Much like US, UK and Australian media, then, there were Canadian outlets that repeated the reductionist accounts of Muslims as homogeneously evil and prone to terrorism. Having said that, however, our comments must be qualified somewhat. While there is evidence of anti-Muslim bias in the Canadian news media, it is also important to note that this has tended not to be quite as virulent in its racism as the media in other Western nations. Indeed, Helly (2004) cites research suggesting that many Canadian media outlets offer relatively 'balanced' or 'objective' coverage of Islam. A recent case in point is newspaper coverage of the foiled terrorist attack in Toronto, wherein 17 suspects were arrested. Even the CIC has praised such wide circulation newspapers as the *Toronto Star* and *La Presse* for their sympathetic and relatively sophisticated treatment of Islam. Coverage in the *Toronto Star*, for example, has been rather sympathetic, taking pains to call for tolerance, and the recognition that the suspects were fringe members of a marginal sect. Muslim leaders are cited liberally, in an apparent effort to present the peaceful side of Islam. This is very much in contrast to American, British tabloid, even most mainstream Australian media accounts of similar events; these tend to use such occasions to reinforce negative perceptions.

### Anti-Muslim Bias in Australian Media

Manning's (2004) content analysis of the two major Sydney daily newspapers, the broadsheet *Sydney Morning Herald* and the Murdoch tabloid *Daily Telegraph*, as well as their Sunday counterparts, in relation to Arabs and Muslims for a year before and a year after 9/11, gives an indication of the extent and nature of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias in the Australian press. The study found that 30% of items in these newspapers over the period concerned, dealing with the selected categories of Arabs, Muslims and refugees/asylum-seekers, pertained to 'Lebanese rapists' and 45% to asylum seekers (2004: 11): reflecting two racialised moral panics about Middle Easterners and Muslims which (in addition to the panic over 'Muslim' terrorism) had been prominent in Australian media over the period (Poynting & Noble 2003). The percentage of articles mentioning the words 'Muslim'/'Islam' as well as the words 'extremist', 'fundamentalist' or 'terrorist' increased by a factor of about 10 in the *Telegraph* and six in the *Herald*, for the year following 9/11 (Manning 2004). 'Of those articles in the international news, [the] proportion of the total [that] mention the words "violent", "death", "attack", "kill", "bomb", "gun", "terror", "suicide" or "gunmen" whenever the words "Arab", "Palestinian", "Muslim" or "Islam" are used is 58%' (Manning 2004:13). Stuart Campbell's (2006) linguistic analysis of Sydney newspapers from October 2002 to March 2003 shows similar bias against Arabs, globally.

In its study of bias against Arabs and Muslims in the Australian media since 9/11, the Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales (ADB) found that:

Over the past 18 months, debates in the media about September 11, the international 'war on terror', the prospect of US-led attacks on Iraq, the Tampa dispute, Australia's policies regarding asylum seekers, and the ongoing debates about law and order in Sydney, have had the cumulative effect of generating a 'moral panic' in Australia. The central feature linking, simplifying and blurring these debates is race, encompassing concepts of ethnicity, culture, religion and nationality. Print, radio and television news media representations have increasingly drawn on race as the explanation for or cause of conflict, deviant behaviour or social problems (ADB 2003).

Thus, '[w]hen heard in the media, the voices of Arabic and Muslim community leaders were perceived as less credible sources in shaping media stories, and were called on to defend their communities rather than to identify the agenda for addressing the impact of the criminalisation of their communities' (ADB 2003).

In the HREOC survey of Arab and Muslim Australians, some 47% of respondents believed their communities had been vilified in the media (Poynting & Noble 2004). In HREOC's national consultation, Arab and Muslim community informants reasoned that much media coverage engenders an atmosphere conducive to their vilification and discrimination against them, and can induce racial hatred and discrimination. Said one participant: 'I reckon that the media and the propaganda that the media has caused is a big cause of discrimination against Arabic and Muslim people' (HREOC 2004:65). Another remarked, 'If I wasn't Muslim myself I wouldn't like them either the way the media portrays them' (HREOC 2004:64).

The foregoing is not to suggest that the media or even the mainstream media are monolithically Islamophobic. Indeed, there are some honourable exceptions. For example, the *Media Watch* television program on the Australian national broadcaster, the ABC, has done some excellent work in showing up Islamophobia in Australian journalism. The *Australian* newspaper played an important role in exposing the 'children overboard' propaganda of the Federal Government in 2001 which so effectively exacerbated and exploited popular xenophobia about asylum seekers in the election campaign of that year. Similarly, ABC Radio and the *Australian* recently (2007) brought to light deception by the government and the Australian Federal Police over the politically expedient detention in supposed connection with terrorism (the London and Glasgow attempted bombings) of the immigrant doctor, Mohammed Haneef, who was later released, presumed innocent. Tanja Dreher (2007) has demonstrated that concerted campaigns to educate journalists on matters of cultural diversity and to encourage some modicum of balance by 'good news' stories about cultural and religious minorities, can have some measure of success. The Australian Arabic Council presents periodic awards to journalists who report upon their communities with fairness and sensitivity, and the shortlist is always impressive. The point is that these honourable exceptions at this stage are indeed still exceptions.

## Permission to Hate

Hate-motivated vilification and violence can only flourish in an enabling environment. In Western nations like Australia and Canada, such an environment has historically been conditioned by the activity – and inactivity – of the state. State practices, policy and rhetoric have often provided the formal framework within which hate crime – as an informal mechanism of control – emerges. Practices within the state, at an individual and institutional level, which stigmatise, demonise or marginalise traditionally oppressed groups legitimate the mistreatment of these same groups on the streets.

The role of the state in legitimating hate crime is inextricably linked to its role in the politics of identity-making and the construction of difference. Omi and Winant (1994) make the argument that the state is increasingly the pre-eminent site of racial conflict. The state is implicated in constructing popular notions of identity in racialised terms. Ascendancy – or domination – 'which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth' (Connell 1987:184) applies as much to the construction of hierarchies of race and ethnicity as it does to class. West and Fenstermaker (1995:9) remind us that race, along with class and gender, acts as a 'mechanism for producing social inequality'. The state not only holds us accountable to race, but plays a critical role in shaping what it means to 'do' race. Thus, the state serves to both define and maintain what it is to 'do difference'.

To facilitate this enterprise, the state can call upon existing public sentiment around race and gender. The political rhetoric of hate does not fall on deaf ears. Consider Gramsci's

assertion that hegemony must begin with or incorporate prevailing sentiments. Degradation of the other is on fertile ground in a culture with a history of – indeed with origins in – a worldview which saw non-whites as heathen savages, for example. Australia and Canada share a legacy of centuries of persecution of minorities, whether they be Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, homosexuals, as indeed also women have been subordinated. Such a history normalises mistreatment of those who do not appropriately conform to the preconceived hierarchies. That leaves us with a culture reflected in bitter letters to the editor, opinion polls that seem to tap deep divisions and resentments, and ultimately, hate motivated violence.

Political discourse reaffirms and legitimates the negative evaluations of difference which give rise to hate crime. The state is a contested site, wherein the ‘deliberate use of hate by rhetors is an overt attempt to dominate the opposition by rhetorical if not physical – force’ (Whillock & Slayden 1995:xiii). Muslims in Canada and Australia, especially post-9/11, have been subject to the stigmatising effects of state action intended to control and contain the terrorist threat by which all Muslims become suspect. Since the attacks, political and public figures have intensified their ‘crusade’ against Muslims.

Political expressions of hate and bigotry are to be located at any number of different sites. Press releases and related sound bites, judicial decisions, parliamentary debates, commission hearings and certainly single issue and electoral political campaigns are laden with images and language – both implicit and explicit – representative of the dominant ideologies of race. The demonisation of minority groups is reinforced by the racialised discourse of other politicians, judges, political lobbyists, and more. Interestingly, *failure* to engage in public discourse can also leave groups vulnerable. Silence, as well as speech, can effectively render victimised groups impotent, excluding them from protections afforded others. Both acts of commission and omission raise questions about the particular groups’ legitimacy and place in society; in some cases, they explicitly define their ‘outsider’ status. Here, perhaps, is where we see the most glaring evidence of Canada’s relative ambivalence, and indeed, its distinctiveness from the Australian case. On the one hand, Canadian politicians have been relatively temperate in their statements on Muslim involvement in terrorism. There is little evidence of the sort of ‘cowboy rhetoric’ for which George W. Bush has become so (in)famous. Yet on the other hand, neither have Canadian leaders been quick to come to the defence of Muslims. Consider, for example, Canadian Prime Minister Chrétien’s failure to condemn the hate motivated violence perpetrated against Canadian Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11. No public calls for peace and understanding were forthcoming; no strengthening reforms to hate crime legislation were ever considered (in contrast to rabid action on anti-terrorist legislation; see below); nor were increased police or prosecutorial vigilance on the public agenda. Rightly, Muslim organisations – as well as respondents surveyed by such organisations – were critical of Chretien’s lack of intervention. Indeed, even such conservative politicians as Stockwell Day took Chretien to task for his apparent apathy. Such inaction suggests sympathy with the perpetrators rather than the victims of hate crime. It lends legitimacy to the reactionary violence, rather than condemning it as a means of protecting Muslims. Moreover, deeds speak louder than words, and as we will demonstrate below, the actions of the state – whatever the rhetoric – have, in fact, served to stigmatise and marginalise Canadian Muslims.

One of the consequences of the demonisation of Muslims on the part of politicians and policy makers is that it finds its way into policies and practices that further marginalise the group. There is a lengthy history of discriminatory law and practice within the state that has limited, if not outright violated, the rights of racial and ethnic minority groups – Arabs and Muslims among them. This is especially the case with respect to the activities of law enforcement and security agencies. Here one can easily see the ways in which negative

images have played crucial roles in shaping the discriminatory treatment of Muslims or those perceived as such. Anyone who displays an interest in their Middle Eastern homeland affairs, or even who is noticeably devout in their religion, is vulnerable to pursuit by federal agencies in particular. Involvement in Muslim or Arab organisations, political activism, even subscribing to Middle Eastern magazines can provoke federal attention.

Patterns of surveillance and harassment of Muslim residents are apparent in both countries. Particularly in the aftermath or context of politically charged events like terrorist attacks, government agencies step up their engagement with Muslims. This has been readily apparent in Canada, for example, since the September 11 attacks. Ironically, not only did the Chrétien administration not intervene to dissuade perpetrators from attacks on Muslims; the administration, in fact, could be held responsible on some level for intensifying the hostility toward these groups. Fast on the heels of the September 11 attacks, both Canada and Australia joined the US and UK in an ill-considered flurry of legislative activity intended to strengthen anti-terrorism legislation. However, the array of newly introduced provisions 'does not expose potential terrorists and fails to increase national security. On the contrary, it undermines national security while harming Arabs, Muslims, and other racialised groups by heightening their vulnerability and reinforcing their exclusion from Canadian society' (Bahdi 2003:294).

It was Bill C-36 that featured the most extensive reforms to the investigation and prosecution of terrorist activity in Canada. Moreover, the fact that the legislation was passed by December 2001, suggests the extent to which it was conceived with little time for thoughtful reflection or public debate. Smith (2003) goes so far as to suggest that, unusually, the Canadian provisions, and especially the definition of terrorism in the Bill, were even more problematic than US anti-terrorism legislation. The latter is relatively narrow and refers to 'politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combative targets'. The Canadian definition, on the other hand, is much more inclusive – dangerously so – in that it makes reference to acts of civil disobedience committed 'in whole or in part for a political, religious or ideological purpose, objective or cause', which is intended to cause 'serious disruption of an essential service, facility or system'. Under this definition, virtually any labour activity, or other sort of political demonstration could be considered terrorism. The Australian legislation contains a very similar definition, and civil rights activists have raised the same objections.

Moreover, the legislation allows for an unprecedented extension of intrusive law enforcement activities on the one hand, and contraction of individual and collective rights on the other. This is perhaps not surprising, given that in addition to the expected Criminal Code amendments, the Bill also provided for parallel amendments to no less than 15 additional Acts. Most troubling among these, perhaps, are the amendments to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, the *Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act*, the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*, and the *Privacy Act*. Collectively, these amendments allow for a dizzying array of increased powers of surveillance and intrusion, including:

- making it easier to use electronic surveillance against suspected terrorist groups;
- creating new offences targeting unlawful disclosure of certain information of national interest;
- amending the *Canada Evidence Act* to continue and clarify the mandate of the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) to collect foreign communications;
- within carefully defined limits, allowing the arrest, detention and imposition of conditions of release of suspected terrorists to prevent terrorist acts and save lives;

- requiring individuals who have information related to a suspected terrorist group or offences to appear before a judge to provide that information; and
- extending the DNA warrant scheme and data bank to include terrorist crimes (Smith 2003:149).

Both facets – law enforcement expansion and rights constrictions – were vigorously resisted by rights groups across the nation. Among the throng of dissenters were organisations expressly representing the interests of Muslims and Arabs. Correctly, they recognised the particular threat the new anti-terrorist measures posed for their constituents, not just in terms of state harassment, but also in terms of the reinforcement of public perceptions of ‘villainy’ and terrorist tendencies. In a Justice Committee hearing leading up to passage of the Bill, Dr Mohamed Elmasry (Canadian Islamic Congress) denounced it, arguing that it would make Muslim Canadians ‘the most targeted group in the country’. His sentiments were echoed by the Congress’ lawyer, Rocco Galati, who said: ‘You might as well delete the Constitution from our landscape.’ Galati went on to say that ‘it just repeats the historical injustices against a racial or religious minority that we’ve seen throughout Canadian history’ (CBC News Online 2001). Subsequent events have borne out their fears.

The 2004 CAIR-CAN report documents extensive experiences in which law enforcement agents (CSIS, RCMP, police) ‘approached’ or ‘contacted’ Arabs and Muslims, often with no explanation for the contact. In fact, of the 467 respondents, 8% had been contacted – the bulk of whom (84%) were Canadian citizens; among those who were not directly contacted, nearly half (43%) knew at least one other Canadian Muslim who had been (CAIR-CAN 2004). Moreover, 19% of those who had been contacted indicated that this was not a single event, but characterised by multiple contacts. What is particularly disturbing here is the impact that the contact had on the individuals:

46 percent said they felt fearful, anxious, ‘freaked out,’ paranoid, confused and/or nervous when contacted by security officials. 24 percent indicated feeling harassed and pressured, violated and/or discriminated against. 5 percent indicated feeling outraged, furious or angry. 14 percent felt indifferent (CAIR-CAN 2004:13).

The embarrassment and fear associated with the visitations was undoubtedly exacerbated by the fact that so many occurred in the respondents’ workplaces, thus drawing attention to their ‘suspect’ identities. Law enforcement agents thus shed a negative light on the individuals which may very well have the effect of creating fear and mistrust among co-workers. One respondent indicated, in fact, that he lost his job shortly after the visitation, thereby reinforcing the broader patterns of discrimination.

Equally intimidating were the questionable tactics used by law enforcement agents. Among the practices identified were discouraging legal or other third party assistance; aggressive and threatening behaviour; threats of arrest; problematic and suggestive questions (e.g., attitudes toward or knowledge of such things as jihad, al-Qaeda, or loyalty to Canada *as opposed to* loyalty to their religious faith); improper identification; attempts to recruit participants as informants; and interrogation of minors. Some respondents were subject to many of these tactics; many were aware of others who shared similar experiences. The ultimate result of these patterns is to increase the alienation and mutual distrust between Muslims and law enforcement agents. Additionally, it reinforces the public perception that Muslims *are* questionable with respect to their loyalty to Canada, and with respect to their knowledge if not involvement in terrorism. After all, if the police are regularly contacting, they must have some reason! However unfounded or unjustified the police surveillance and racial profiling may be, it nonetheless leaves a lingering sense of doubt. The pattern of state badgering of Muslims ‘makes people feel comfortable with their prejudices and grants

those who hold pre-existing racist attitudes permission to express those attitudes and expect them to be taken seriously. It empowers individual prejudices and fuels popular fears' (Bahdi 2003: 314).

Interestingly, recent events underscore Canada's relative reluctance to engage in the type of fear mongering evident in so many other Western nations. Here, the courts have begun the process of whittling away at the counter-terror legislation introduced five years ago. Most recently, the Ontario Superior Court struck down references to 'political, religious, or ideological' motives as unconstitutional. Courts have also demanded the release of non-Canadian terror suspects held without charge. Critics in the House were able to halt the renewal of the 2001 anti-terrorism Bill, and with it, its provisions for preventative arrest and investigatory hearings – neither of which have actually been used by Canadian authorities to date.

In Australia, the spate of security 'visitations' began as early as the end of September 2001. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), accompanied by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and local NSW police raided around 30 households and workplaces in Sydney. They brought the media with them and publicised the raids (Trad 2001; Kidman 2001:4-5). All those raided were Muslims, and the Australian tabloid media furnished justification, as well as the desired exposure.

The perpetrators of the September 11 attacks were young Middle-Eastern Muslim men. Bin Laden's followers are young Middle-Eastern Muslim men. So it is young men of Middle-Eastern Muslim background who will be targeted in Sydney, many of them Australian citizens, who were born here (Devine 2001:28).

Opinion columnist Miranda Devine appreciated their forbearance in 'having to contend with their homes being invaded at dawn by armed police', since it 'helps make us all a little safer' (Devine 2001:28).

The raids were obviously intended as a public gesture and also clearly designed to intimidate. In one case, 'five heavily armed officers stormed the house', forced a man to lie on the floor at gunpoint, and conducted a body search. His wife was escorted downstairs by a male and a female AFP officer, without time to cover her body adequately in accordance with her beliefs. The house was penetratingly searched. The man was told, 'You have small children, you would not like for them to not see you for ten years' (Trad 2001; Poynting 2002). That no arrests were made for any terrorism-related offence (though there were some visa infractions, a matter that has also concerned Canadians facing security 'visitations') confirms the intimidating rather than investigatory or protective function of the raids.

After the Bali bombings in October 2002, ASIO and AFP operatives again mounted raids on suburban homes of Muslim citizens – this time on homes of mainly Australians of Indonesian origin in Sydney, Perth and Melbourne (Poynting et al. 2004). Neighbours of one family swooped upon at dawn in a Perth suburb reported the door being splintered with sledge hammers and windows being shattered by an armed squad wearing black helmets, balaclavas, goggles and flak jackets (*Daily Telegraph* 2002:7). A 17-year-old, whose home in Perth was raided, told of the trauma she experienced along with her three brothers and sisters, one only four years old, who 'saw balaclava-clad officers thrust their machineguns in [their] faces' (Head 2002).

On both of these occasions, and again in the series of raids around July 2005, the ethnic profiling brought terror to the communities being targeted. One interviewee, a middle-aged tradesman with Lebanese background from Melbourne, told Poynting and Noble (2004):

It was increasing, the scare and frightening when they accused me. I felt it was accusation. Maybe not officially, but the way they talked to me, three, two from Federal Police and one from ASIO, to come and talk to me like this ... At home I'm scared that one day they'd come in the same way they did to some people in Sydney and other places, we heard, break things and scare children, scared women.

Muslim leaders said the raids had 'caused hysteria and fear that anyone in the community could be targeted'. Sheik Fehmi Naji, Imam of the Preston mosque in Melbourne, said that many Muslims were upset about the blaming of their community for the Bali bombing (*Age* 2002). Such swoops serve an important function in the maintenance of the prevailing hegemony: the coercion behind the consent, in Gramsci's famous formulation. The effect goes well beyond those raided. The raids sent a message of intimidation to whole communities to which those raided belong. For that very reason, the media were taken in tow in the raids of 2001, 2002, and 2005. On several occasions the media identified the families concerned, and they were consequently subjected to vigilante style harassment. As the raids were probably counter-productive for intelligence-gathering purposes (hardly inspiring community cooperation and volunteering of information), and no-one raided was charged for terrorist offences; this can scarcely have been their underlying purpose unless they were extremely bungled. They did function to reassure the white, Christian 'mainstream' that something was being done about these terrorists or terrorist sympathisers in our midst, and to frighten the targeted communities into keeping a low profile. The mainstream media literally went along with this. This, too, is a form of terror, as is the gentler form of persuasion in the shape of fear of the ubiquitous enemy.

Though the Australian security raids detailed above were claimed by Foreign Minister Alexander Downer to be within existing law, Federal and State governments saw the need for further legislation effecting anti-terrorist measures. The Australian Security Intelligence Organisation Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Bill 2002 provided capacity unprecedented under Australian Commonwealth law to arrest a person on suspicion, merely for interrogation. The whole family of a 'person who may have information that may assist in preventing terrorist attacks or in prosecuting those who have committed a terrorist offence' could be detained in this manner (*Sydney Morning Herald* 2002:12; *Lateline* 2002a). Terry O'Gorman, of the Australian Council for Civil Liberties, averred: 'I think there's a very big risk that there'll be racial stereotyping in respect of these new ASIO laws (*Lateline* 2002b; cited in Poynting et al. 2004).

The Islamic Human Rights Commission (2002) saw this law as modelled on the UK anti-terror laws. As in the British case, there were some very token concessions made to civil liberties objections, but with the opposition cowed by 'soft on terror' depiction, the *ASIO Legislation Amendment (Terrorism) Act* was passed in 2003. Certainly, in addition to the above provisions, the new raft of legislation proscribed membership of 17 'terrorist organisations'. Every one was a Muslim organisation.

Islamic leaders are justifiably concerned that such actions fuel the backlash. As noted at the beginning of this section, state practices provide a context and a framework for the broader demonisation and marginalisation of minority groups. Through its rhetoric and policies, the state absorbs and reflects back onto the public hostile and negative perceptions of the Other – in this case, Muslims. Public expressions of racism by state actors are constituted of and by public sentiments of intolerance, dislike, or suspicion of particular groups. Thus, the state seems to reaffirm the legitimacy of such beliefs, while at the same time giving them public voice. Political rhetoric simultaneously evokes and exploits fears of this erosion of identity boundaries (i.e., backlash) at least, and the threats posed by the Other at most. In so doing, the state rhetors play on cultural symbols – often provided by



the media – that differentiate ‘Us’ from ‘Them’: good vs evil; the ‘savage’ vs the ‘civilised’. Political discourse thus reaffirms and legitimates negative evaluations of difference, in that it is central to the ‘enactment, expression, legitimation and acquisition’ of bigotry of all types (van Dijk 1995:2), including hate-motivated violence.

The biases embedded in the state create an environment hostile to Muslims in Australia and Canada. Discriminatory policies and practices by government agencies reinforce anti-Muslim sentiment. Moreover, they have a ‘trickle down’ effect, by which ‘official use of profiling (for example) sends a message to the larger community that a person who fits a certain physical or religious description is suspect, if not guilty until proven innocent’ (CAIR 2002:7). Consequently, political manipulation of public perceptions and its attendant discriminatory practices bestows permission for other forms of discrimination.

## Conclusion

This article has traced the intensification after 11 September 2001, in both Canada and Australia, of existing anti-Muslim racism: from popular xenophobia, to media stereotyping and bias, to state institutional discrimination and targeting. We have argued that the state in both nations, in collaboration with various popular media expressions of anti-Muslim bias, and in slightly different ways, has effectively lent ‘permission to hate’ to those inclined to commit hate crime against Muslims. In declining adequately to recognise and to act against hate crime, and in actually modelling anti-Muslim bias by practising discrimination and institutional racism through ‘ethnic targeting’, ‘racial profiling’ and the like, the state conveys a sort of ideological licence to individuals, groups and institutions to perpetrate and perpetuate racial hatred.

We have here provided but an initial outline map in small scale of anti-Muslim racism and hate crime in the two countries concerned. There is a need for much more detailed mapping in both of these nations. For example in Australia, which lacks specific legislation against hate crime, and thus has no official and systematic recording of such offences, it will be necessary to research the extent of the phenomenon beyond the initial attempts at such a sounding made by HREOC (1991, 2004). The possibility of collecting and systematising data on the incidence of hate and bias crime within the various State and Federal crime statistics organisations should be investigated. In Canada more data on hate crime are gathered, though the procedures are patchy. Moreover, the statistics cannot be disaggregated to indicate anti-Muslim hate crime, entailing recourse to unsatisfactory substitute criteria such as ‘visible minority’ status or broad ‘ethnicity’ (often also racial) categories. There is an urgent necessity, given the level of anti-Muslim hate crime and bias outlined in this article, to measure its extent in Canada, and also to assess qualitatively its deleterious effects on the everyday lives of Canadian Muslims and their experience of national belonging.

Similarly, while we have been indebted to the several reports published by Muslim organisations like CAIR-CAN, their work is not without its limitations. They represent a useful starting point, in that they do tap the experiences of Muslims specifically. However, they can be enhanced by more systematic data gathering and larger samples. Moreover, these data sources have tended to make a broad sweep of discriminatory practices generally, with little concrete attention to hate crime specifically. Additionally, few if any of the Canadian surveys have addressed either the impacts of hate crime on its victims and the Muslim community at large, or the reporting practices of victims. Each of these areas demands further empirical attention.

This work is offered as a preliminary exploration, and in the hope that researchers and policy-makers in each of the two countries here considered, may learn something from the case of the other. We have drawn our sketch map with broad brush strokes, but believe there is a strong intellectual and moral case for more detailed study of anti-Muslim hate crime in both Canada and Australia.

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