

Factors associated with Counter Terrorism-Related Behaviour Change among Australian Muslims

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Abstract. Government interventions towards terrorism have often resulted in changed behaviour on the part of Muslims in various Western countries, including Australia. Counter terrorism laws have been seen as targeting Muslims and contributing to a climate of suspicion, resulting in behaviour changes. The study involved interviews to 268 respondents (mostly Muslims) in Australia. Univariate and multivariate Poisson analyses were conducted to identify and examine the factors associated with changed behaviours of Muslims in Australia as a result of the Australian government's counter-terrorism laws. In the final multivariate model, it was revealed that the risk of changed behaviour was significantly associated with having a change of religiousness level, having been personally subjected to security checks at airports and being a female and having been interrogated by the Police. Results of the study are necessary to assess the long-term and unintentional consequences of the Australian government's surveillance on minority Muslims in the country.

Keywords: Muslims, respondents, behaviour, counter-terrorism, Australia

Terrorism, in its different forms, has often posed a threat to the security of a country; and scholars as well as policy-makers have posited that since the terrorist attack on US soil on September 11 2001, countries have been faced with new forms of terrorism which are mainly informed by religious extremism, with "Islamic fanaticism" being regarded as one of the major threats (Howard & Sawyer, 2003; Jackson, 2007).

There have been concerns that counter-terrorism laws and policies have been increasingly alienating Muslims, particularly young people and students, and that counter-terrorism measures may themselves feed and sustain terrorism (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011). The Australian government's white paper on counter-terrorism acknowledges that members of the Australian community are a "critical partner in the protection of Australia from terrorism, and a valuable source of information regarding terrorist-related activity" (Pereira).

One major repercussion of the global "war on terror" is the situation in which, due to their religious affiliation with Islamic radicalisation or terrorist groups, Muslims in Advanced countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), United States of America

(USA) and Australia have turned into a stigmatised minority, and identified as potential threats to these countries (Kundnani, 2014; Peek, 2011; Rimmer, 2009; Sentas, 2014). Commentators and Muslim community groups are of the view that Muslims have been tagged as a suspect group (Breen-Smyth, 2014; Sentas, 2014; Weine, 2015). In recent times, Islamic and other community-based organisations have consistently raised their views concerning an increase in generalised fear and uncertainty within the Australian Arab and Muslim communities. During a recent Australian government review, it was reiterated that counter-terrorism laws impact mostly on Arab and Muslim Australians who consequently feel they have been under massive surveillance and suspicion. The Committee was especially concerned by reports of increased alienation attributed to new counter-terrorist measures, which are seen as targeting Muslims and contributing to a climate of suspicion (Australia).

The impact of the counter-terrorist measures has been felt in a number of ways: a) Muslims self-limit their behaviour, that is, they overestimate the reach of the laws and are unnecessarily cautious. For instance,

people have been seen not wanting to go to normal Islamic classes, or similar things, because they fear that ASIO may be watching. People have also been heard telling their children not to go to protests because they would be just exposing themselves once again (AMCRAN). In other words, some Muslim Australians have resorted to changed behaviours due to the Government's counter-terrorism laws.

This research sought to identify and examine the factors associated with changed behaviour of Muslim Australians. Our findings would develop and deepen understanding of the impact of Australia's counter-terrorism legislation and policies on Muslim communities in particular, and would inform Muslim organisations and other stakeholders to properly counsel Muslim Australians to live their normal lives in the country.

Method

This report is mainly quantitative in design, and drew on questionnaires with individual Muslims in all States/Territories in Australia, particularly New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria (VIC), which are the two most populated Australian states. It provides insight on views and perceptions of respondents, and used questionnaires to obtain information from 250 individual Muslims (hereinafter referred to as respondents). All responses in the questionnaires were collated on the basis that individuals' identity would remain anonymous.

The current research design was part of a larger study related to Islamophobia, Psychological Distress, and Counter-Terrorism Policies. The questionnaire comprised of 70 questions from the larger study. Respondents were asked about their reasons for considering a behavioural change as a result of the Australia government's counter-terrorism laws. The survey was developed and administered using the online hosting software SurveyMonkey™.

Outcome Measurement

Respondents in this study were Muslim Australians. Due to the fact that the government counter-terrorism laws seem to target Muslims, respondents expressed their reservations about how other people view them. This has generated anxiety among them, which has led to changing behaviour. Consequently, the outcome measurement for this current was

“changed behaviour” of the respondents. This measurement was built with features such as 1) distancing themselves from their fellow Muslims and Muslim community events because of the anxiety over coming under government surveillance 2) distance themselves from non-Muslims because they may report them to law enforcement agencies for perceived suspicious activity based on their religious identification 3) removal or reduction of the number of religious items (books/texts, Quran, ornaments, etc) from their home or other places because of the anxiety over surveillance or being unfairly judged because of it 4) changing their religious appearance (removed/adjusted hijab or kufi, shaved beard, etc) or name so that they do not come under the government and law enforcement surveillance 5) trying not to look suspicious at airports or in public places for perceived suspicious activity based on their religious identification or appearance 6) changing who receives their zakat or sadaqah because of the anxiety over government and security agency surveillance 7) changing how they publicly express their religious behaviour (e.g. hiding their prayers from public view, don't greet with 'assalam alaykum' or say "Insha'Allah" loudly, limit their religious behaviour in other ways in public. Our study applied a scale which employed a 5-point score; and the scores for each item ranged from 0 (lowest) to 4 (highest). The changing behaviour due to the Australian government counter-terrorism laws score ranged from 0 point to 28 points. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of changing behaviour due to the Australian government counter-terrorism laws items demonstrated that the internal consistency of each item was satisfactory (item 1, 0.70; Item 2, 0.60; item 3, 0.60; item 4, 0.70; item 5, 0.70, item 6, 0.72 and item 7, 0.72).

Study variables

The variables considered to determine their association with changed behaviour of Muslim Australians included demographic (respondents' gender, age, level of education, state and marital status), religiousness (level of religiousness, change in religiousness level, Islamic belief, observance of the five daily prayers, observance of the Ramadan fast, and payment of the annual zakat), Australian government intervention (Australia government funding and auditing Muslim organisations), community leaders' function and contact with law enforcement agencies (encounter with Federal/State police, airport checks and police interrogation).

Table 1: Potential covariates used in the hierarchical multivariate model

Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Demographic	Demographic	Demographic	Demographic
	Religiousness	Religiousness	Religiousness
		Australian government intervention	Australian government intervention
			Contact with law enforcement agencies

Statistical analysis

Exploratory data analysis was conducted using frequency distribution for categorical variables, graphs and summary statistics for continuous variables to check the normality of the data. Preliminary analysis showed that the data were skewed and followed a log-normal distribution, which violated ordinary linear regression assumptions. Consequently, Poisson regression was used in the analysis as changing behaviour due to the Australian government counter-terrorism laws score

was considered as count variable with non-negative integer values. Poisson analyses were conducted to test for associated factors in the sample. For multivariate analysis, hierarchical Poisson regression analysis was used (see table 1) to assess the independent associations with any behaviour change. Factors associated were translated into relative risk (RR) with 95% confidence intervals (95% CI).

Results

Characteristics of the sample

Table 2: Demographics Characteristics of Sample (N= 268)

Characteristic	n	%
Demographic		
Gender		
Female	175	65.3
Male	93	34.7
Age (years)		
18 - 25	83	30.9
26 - 35	101	37.7
36 - 45	57	21.2
46+	27	10.1
Level of education		
High School	63	23.5
Diploma	43	16.0
Undergraduate	114	42.5
Masters/PhD	48	17.9
State/Territory		
New South Wales	175	65.3
Victoria	52	19.4
Other	41	15.3
Marital status		
Married	164	61.4

Single	85	31.8
Previously married	18	6.7
<i>Religiousness</i>		
Level of religiousness		
High	117	43.7
Average	134	50.0
Low	17	6.3
Change in religiousness level		
No	148	55.2
Yes	120	44.8
Weakened Islamic belief		
No	241	89.9
Yes	27	10.1
Observed daily prayers		
No	221	85.3
Yes	38	14.7
Observed Ramadan fasting		
No	251	93.7
Yes	17	6.3
Paid compulsory zakat every year		
No	218	81.3
Yes	50	18.7
<i>Australian government intervention</i>		
Supported Government fund		
No	124	51.5
Yes	117	48.6
Supported Australian Government audit		
No	236	93.3
Yes	17	6.7
<i>Community leader personal</i>		
Community leaders dealing with personal concerns		
Did not believe	158	63.2
Believed	92	36.8
Community leaders dealing with concerns of Muslims		
Did not believe	159	64.6
Believed	87	35.4
<i>Contact with law enforcement agencies</i>		
Personally met with Police		
No	226	87.9
Yes	31	12.1
<i>Airport check</i>		
Personally checked at airport		
No	91	35.4
Sometimes	75	29.2
Most times	91	35.4

Police interview

Police interrogation			
Male		223	86.8
Female		34	13.2

The characteristics of the study respondents are summarised in Table 2. The majority of the respondents were female (65%). Most of the respondents were aged between 26 and 35 years (38%). Approximately 43% of the respondents were undergraduates; most of them resided in the state of New South Wales (65%) and were married (61%). One-half of the respondents had average level of religiousness and approximately 55% of them maintained their religiousness level. A large majority of the respondents (90%) maintained their strong Islamic belief after the Australia government's counter terrorism laws were passed, 85% of them performed their five daily prayers, about 93% did observe the annual Ramadan fast and 81% of them offered the annual zakat. More than one-half of the respondents (52%) did not support the Australian government's funding system for

Muslims, and a large majority of them (93%) did not support the government's audit system for Muslims in Australia. Nearly 65% of the respondents did not believe the notion that community leaders deal with Muslims' concerns; and about 35% of them confirmed that they have been personally checked at airports during their travels. More than three-quarters of Muslims who have been interrogated by the Police were male.

Univariate analysis

In the univariate analyses, male respondents were at a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour due to Australian government's interventions, vis-à-vis counter-terrorism compared with their female counterparts [Relative risk (RR): 1.19; 95% confidence interval (CI), (1.11, 1.27)] (Table 3).

Table 3: Survey Mean and Univariate Analyses by Demographic, Religiousness, Government Intervention Issues, and Contact with Law Enforcement Agency Variables

Characteristic	Mean	Unadjusted RR	95% CI	p-value
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	12.5	1.00		
Male	15.4	1.19	(1.11, 1.27)	<0.001
<i>Age (years)</i>				
18 - 25	13.4	1.00		
26 - 35	14.3	1.07	(0.99, 1.16)	0.088
36 - 45	13.4	1.00	(0.91, 1.10)	0.999
46+	14.1	1.05	(0.94, 1.18)	0.374
<i>Level of education</i>				
High School	13.3	1.00		
Diploma	15.1	1.14	(1.03, 1.26)	0.012
Undergraduate	13.3	1.00	(0.92, 1.09)	0.970
Masters/PhD	14.5	1.09	(0.99, 1.21)	
<i>Marital status</i>				
Married	14.2	1.00		
Single	13.4	0.95	(0.88, 1.02)	0.131
Previously married	12.8	0.91	(0.79, 1.04)	0.156
<i>Level of religiousness</i>				
High	13.1	1.00		
Average	14.3	1.09	(1.02, 1.16)	0.013

Low	15.0	1.14	(1.00, 1.31)	0.047
<i>Change in religiousness level</i>				
No	13.07	1.00		
Yes	14.73	1.13	(1.06, 1.20)	<0.001
<i>Weakened Islamic belief</i>				
No	13.69	1.00		
Yes	4.93	1.09	(0.98, 1.21)	0.101
<i>Observed daily prayers</i>				
Yes	13.50	1.00		
No	14.34	1.06	(0.97, 1.17)	0.208
<i>Observed Ramadan fasting</i>				
Yes	13.84	1.00		
No	13.47	0.97	(0.85, 1.11)	0.694
<i>Paid compulsory zakat every year</i>				
Yes	13.77	1.00		
No	14.00	1.02	(0.94, 1.10)	0.694
<i>Personally met with Police</i>				
No	13.45	1.00		
Yes	15.00	1.12	(1.01, 1.23)	0.029
<i>Personally checked at airport</i>				
No	12.41	1.00		
Sometimes	12.72	1.03	(0.94, 1.12)	0.571
Most times	15.63	1.26	(1.16, 1.36)	<0.001
<i>Police interrogation</i>				
Male	13.18	1.00		
Female	16.617	1.26	(1.15, 1.38)	<0.001
<i>Supported Government fund</i>				
No	14.06	1.00		
Yes	13.64	0.97	(0.91, 1.04)	0.387
<i>Supported Australian Government audit</i>				
No	3.79	1.00		
Yes	12.94	0.94	(0.82, 1.08)	0.363
<i>Community leaders dealing with personal concerns</i>				
Did not believe	14.50	1.00		
Believed	12.29	0.85	(0.79,0.91)	<0.001
<i>Community leaders dealing with concerns of Muslims</i>				
Did not believe	14.43	1.00		
Believed	12.56	0.87	(0.81, 0.94)	<0.001

CI: confidence interval; RR: relative risk

The risk of changed behaviour was significantly higher among respondents with low level of religiousness compared with those with high level of religiousness [RR: 1.14; 95% CI, (1.00, 1.31)]. The risk of changed behaviour as a result of Police

interrogation was significantly higher among female respondents compared with their male counterparts [RR: 1.26; 95% CI, (1.15, 1.38)]. Respondents who believed that community leaders do deal with concerns of Muslims had a significantly lower risk

of changed behaviour compared with those who did not believe in this [RR: 0.87; 95% CI, (0.81, 0.94].

Multivariate analysis

In the multivariate modeling, we found that males were at a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour compared with their female counterparts

[RR: 1.15; 95% CI, (1.04, 1.26)] (Table 4). Respondents who possessed a Masters or PhD had a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour compared with those who were educated up to high school level, although the result was slightly statistically insignificant [RR: 1.13; 95% CI, (0.99, 1.28)].

Table 4: Poisson Modelling changing behaviour due to the Australian government counter-terrorism laws score Scores. Adjusted Relative Risk (RR)

Characteristic	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4 (Final)
	RR (95% CI)	RR (95% CI)	RR (95% CI)	RR (95% CI)
<i>Gender</i>				
Female	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Male	1.20 (1.12, 1.29)	1.21 (1.12,1.30)	1.14 (1.05, 1.23)	1.15 (1.04, 1.26)
<i>Age (years)</i>				
18 - 25	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
26 - 35	1.02 (0.92, 1.13)	1.05 (0.94, 1.18)	1.05 (0.93, 1.18)	1.01 (0.89, 1.15)
36 - 45	0.97 (0.86, 1.09)	1.01 (0.90, 1.15)	1.02 (0.90, 1.16)	1.01 (0.88 1.16)
46+	0.98 (0.85, 1.14)	1.03 (0.88, 1.20)	1.03 (0.87, 1.21)	1.00 (0.82, 1.22)
<i>Level of education</i>				
High School	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Diploma	0.15 (1.04, 1.29)	1.20 (1.07, 1.34)	1.10 (0.98 1.24)	1.06 (0.93, 1.22)
Undergraduate	1.02 (0.93, 1.11)	1.05 (0.95, 1.15)	1.03 (0.93, 1.13)	1.01 (0.91, 1.12)
Masters/PhD	1.10 (1.00, 1.22)	1.14 (1.02, 1.28)	1.11 (0.99 1.25)	1.13 (0.99 1.28)
<i>State/Territory</i>				
New South Wales	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Victoria	0.96 (0.88, 1.05)	0.96 (.88, 1.05)	0.95 (0.87, 1.05)	0.98 (0.89, 1.09)
Other	0.99 (0.90, 1.09)	1.00 (0.90, 1.12)	1.01 (0.90, 1.12)	1.06 (0.94, 1.20)
<i>Marital status</i>				
Married	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Single	0.95 (0.86, 1.05)	0.95 (0.85, 1.06)	0.95 (0.85, 1.07)	0.99 (0.87, 1.11)
Previously married	0.96 (0.83, 1.10)	0.96 (0.83, 1.11)	0.93 (0.80 1.08)	0.97 (0.82, 1.14)
<i>Level of religiousness</i>				
High		1.00	1.00	1.00
Average		1.13 (1.05, 1.22)	1.12 (1.03, 1.21)	1.12 (1.03 1.22)
Low		1.18 (1.00, 1.40)	1.12 (0.92, 1.35)	1.14 (0.93, 1.40)
<i>Change in religiousness level</i>				
No		1.00	1.00	1.00
Yes		1.12 (1.05, 1.20)	1.11 (1.03, 1.19)	1.08 (1.00, 1.17)
<i>Weakened Islamic belief</i>				
No		1.00	1.00	1.00
Yes		1.04 (0.91, 1.18)	1.04 (0.91 1.20)	0.96 (0.82 1.12)
<i>Observed daily prayers</i>				
No		1.00	1.00	1.00

Yes	1.02 (0.90, 1.15)	1.05 (0.92, 1.19)	0.08 (0.93, 1.24)
<i>Observed Ramadan fasting</i>			
No	1.00	1.00	1.00
Yes	0.93 (0.79, 1.10)	0.92 (0.78, 1.10)	0.96 (0.78, 1.18)
<i>Paid compulsory zakat every year</i>			
Yes	1.00	1.00	1.00
No	1.02 (0.93, 1.13)	1.03 (0.93, 1.14)	1.01 (0.91, 1.13)
<i>Personally met with Police</i>			
No		1.00	1.00
Yes		0.95 (0.84, 1.07)	0.94 (0.82, 1.08)
<i>Personally checked at airport</i>			
No		1.00	1.00
Sometimes		1.00 (0.91, 1.10)	1.01 (0.90, 1.12)
Most times		1.17 (1.07, 1.29)	1.19 (1.07, 1.32)
<i>Police interrogation</i>			
Male		1.00	1.00
Female		1.12 (1.00, 1.26)	1.10 (0.96, 1.25)
<i>Supported Government fund</i>			
No			1.00
Yes			0.99 (0.90, 1.09)
<i>Supported Australian Government audit</i>			
No			1.00
Yes			0.96 (0.78, 1.19)
<i>Community leaders dealing with personal concerns</i>			
Did not believe			1.00
Believed			0.86 (0.75, 1.00)
<i>Community leaders dealing with concerns of Muslims</i>			
Did not believe			1.00
Believed			1.04 (0.91, 1.20)

CI: confidence interval

The risk of changed behaviour was significantly higher among respondents who had a change of religiousness level compared with those who were resolute with their level of religiousness [RR: 1.08; 95% CI, (1.00, 1.17)]. Respondents who were most of the time personally subjected to security checks at airports had a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour compared with their counterparts who were not checked at these airports [RR: 1.19; 95% CI, (1.07, 1.32)]. Female respondents who had been interrogated by the Police had a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour compared with their male counterparts [RR: 1.12; 95% CI, (1.00, 1.26)].

Discussion

This current study explored the factors associated with changed behaviour of Muslim Australians due to the Australian government's counter-terrorism laws, which are perceived to target mostly Muslims. Significant factors associated with changed behaviour of Muslim Australians as a result of counter-terrorism laws in Australia included gender (males), levels of education (possession of Masters/PhD), level of religiousness (average), change in religiousness (yes) and personal checks at airports (mostly).

Both univariate and multivariate analyses of this study revealed that the risk of changed behaviour as

a result of counter-terrorism laws was significantly associated with male Muslims. This observation is understandable since females are often accompanied by their spouses or parents, and the males are those out and about. If they fear to be targeted, the tendency is to change their behaviour, for example, their appearance, such as the type of dress they wear and/or not wearing a beard, which are often associated with Muslim terrorism, or making pronouncements about Allah in public. Muslim males often get stereotyped as terrorists, violent and criminal, whilst their women counterparts are proud of their gender, do have a voice and choose to celebrate some of their traditional roles (American Psychological Association, 2017). In the United Kingdom (UK), Pro-Western or “moderate” Muslims have been rewarded and considered as “true” Muslims. The interpretations and religious traditions of such men are elevated as true reflections of Islam and are often referred to as true representatives of the Muslim community (Qurashi, 2018). This might be the case in the Australia scenario. Muslim men are scarcely portrayed as vulnerable or as one who displays positive emotionality, and those who are subjected to acts of violence are less newsworthy than Muslim male perpetrators of violence (Britton, 2015). Men’s relationships with significant others are seen to be characterised by emotional distance or negative emotionality. This is demonstrated by the portrayal of the Muslim male patriarch who prioritises the collective interests of the wider family, kinship group or community over the well-being of individual younger and female family members (Charsley & Benson, 2012; Charsley & Liversage, 2013; Razack, 2004).

We found that the risk of changed behaviour due to counter-terrorism laws was significantly associated with Muslims who possessed a Masters or PhD degree. This might be because such high-thinking individuals may perceive an increase in Islamophobic attitudes toward Muslims when accessing mainstream services; in turn, they might be faced with a situation where they do not want to be outwardly connected to perceived stereotypes others may hold about the Muslim faith. Further, they could fear being told to change their faith by others given the overrepresentation of negative portrayals of Muslims in the mainstream media. In such a situation, the Muslim individual would rather not seek mainstream services, including mental health services to address their concerns of

Islamophobia. Past research has revealed that many Muslims are hesitant in seeking help from the mental health professionals in Western countries (Hedayat-Diba, 2014; Hodge, 2005; McGoldrick, Giordano, & Pearce, 1996) due to the differences in their beliefs and lack of understating of the helping professionals about Islamic values in their treatment modalities. As a consequence, Muslims might feel uncomfortable in seeking psychiatric help to avoid being in conflict with their religious beliefs.

This research found that the risk of changed behaviour due to counter-terrorism laws was significantly associated with people who had a change of religiousness level. This is consistent with a past study which found that the likelihood of adopting radical beliefs decreases with the intensity of their religious practice (Oskooii & Dana, 2018). Additionally, research using the World Values Survey data based on sixty-one countries for 1981–1997 showed that religiosity decreases revolutionary attitudes, except for Muslims (MacCulloch & Pezzini, 2010). This exception about Muslims, if it is true at all, is due to the anger and anxiety harboured by Muslims; as the Australia counter-terrorist laws seem target mainly Muslims. It has also been observed in the extant literature that becoming more devout over the course of one’s life decreases the likelihood to justify terrorism, and Muslims do not differ from other religious groups in this regard (Egger & Magni-Berton, 2019).

Additionally, respondents who were most of the time personally subjected to security checks at airports had a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour compared with their counterparts who were not checked at these airports. This finding is reflected in a scenario from the USA concerning a female business executive who was travelling with her non-Muslim colleagues. She avoids passing through security alongside them, because she did not want them to see the humiliation she was going to go through (Luongo). She is often subjected to more scrutiny and humiliation at such check points. She further pointed out that some of her Muslim friends avoided travelling with religious or cultural clothing and would even “deliberately wear college shirts or something like that to kind of mitigate the potential discrimination” (Luongo). Furthermore, the extant literature observed a loss of trust and confidence in airport authorities, which, in turn, was cited as a reason for passive non-compliance as well as warranting one’s own and others’ active defiance.

For example, one Muslim traveller reported lying to US authorities about who he was visiting because he did not trust their competence to judge who was and who was not a threat (Blackwood, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2012). This current study suggests that Muslims' negative interactions in airports should be understood as a form of identity denial and misrecognition, which could have a negative impact on relations with authorities (and potentially the wider community). Once the confidence of people that they are included in a society is lost, and they cannot trust that they will be treated accordingly, the restoration of trust may be difficult; indeed, past research reveals that amongst socially marginalized groups there is evidence for procedural justice having no effect whatsoever or even backlash effects (Huo & Tyler, 2001; Murphy & Cherney, 2010, 2011).

Furthermore, female respondents who had been interrogated by the Police had a significantly higher risk of changed behaviour due to counter-terrorism laws compared with their male counterparts. This is not surprising, as the Police would interrogate women whose outfit appears to be "Muslim" or "Islamic". In order to avoid these interrogations, female Muslims would have the tendency to not dress as they should as Muslims. There is evidence in the extant literature on stigma and social identity threat that indicate that avoiding behaviours, situations, or aspects of an identity can serve as a recourse to avoiding the threat of being stigmatized, discriminated against, or confirming a negative stereotype by open interrogation by the Police (Davies, Spencer, Quinn, & Gerhardstein, 2002; Fiske, 1998). A past study in the US observed that strategies that attempt to hide and minimize expressions of identity (and thus the suspicion of other people), may become preferred strategies. In particular, situational avoidance and various forms of suppression (behavioural, cognitive, and emotional) may be effective at eluding the suspicion of others (O'Connor & Jahan, 2014).

In spite of the numerous implications of this current study, it has some limitations. In particular, the sample size was small, and the study covered only Muslims. Non-Muslim respondents failed to grant the interviews. Furthermore, the present study could not distinguish between actual, perceived, and misperceived instances of surveillance. It must be further considered that all respondents were Muslim. This latter point suggests our sample was more identified with being Muslim than may be typical

within Australia. Since stronger group identification indicates increased perceptions of discrimination (Sellers & Shelton, 2003), the data for this study may not be an accurate reflection of the factors associated with Muslim Australians' changed behaviour due to the government's counter-terrorism laws. As a result of the afore-mentioned factors, caution must be taken against reading much into the descriptive result that most of the participants reported experience with government surveillance.

Conclusion

The current study revealed the factors associated with Muslim Australians' changed behaviour as a result of the government's counter-terrorism laws. The factors included female Muslims, Muslims with high levels of education (Masters or PhD), Muslims with changed levels of religiousness and Muslims who are most of the times subjected to checks at airports. Our study highlighted the fact that some Muslim Australians have had the tendency to change their normal behaviour in order not to be unnecessarily targeted by law enforcement agencies. Results of the study are necessary to assess the long-term and unintentional consequences of the Australian government's surveillance on minority Muslims in the country.

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