Representations of Islam:
A Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of Australian Newspapers

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Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other
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I JUDITH SANDNER attest that Research Higher Degrees candidate CAITLIN PARR (nee McGREGOR) was the principal contributor to the conception, design, writing and revision of the paper/publication:


Date: 19/12/2016

Dr Judith Sandner

In addition, I hereby declare that the work embodied in this thesis also generated the following publications:


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Abstract

This research is a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of local Australian newspaper coverage of proposed Islamic property developments in three specific communities: Doveton, Victoria; Camden, New South Wales; and Gungahlin, the Australian Capital Territory. Prior research has shown that Orientalist depictions of Islam are evident in Western news media, and this study explores if such representations are manifest in three contemporary case studies. The research compares coverage of Islamic development proposals that were granted approval, and proposals that were denied, to identify similarities and differences that could indicate particular news discourses might have affected the outcomes.

Within the comparative case study framework, a combined critical discourse and content analysis has been conducted on both textual and visual elements of news items published in Doveton’s *Berwick Leader*, Camden’s *Camden Advertiser*, and Gungahlin’s *The Canberra Times*. The variety of news items studied includes news reports, editorials and Letters to the Editor, which have been scrutinized for Orientalist depictions of Islam and Muslims. Analysis reveals evidence of ‘Othering’ discourses across the three cases studies that have been expressed in diverse ways. Importantly, it also produces evidence of more inclusive discourses in each instance. This original research contributes valuable insights and new knowledge about how representations of Islam and Muslims in news media discourses may influence community perceptions of Islam and Muslims, and subsequently have real world effects in respect of proposed Islamic property developments in specific locations.