COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN A MULTICULTURAL CITY:
FROM NATIONAL SECURITY TO LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION
IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

by

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Abstract

Since the events of 9/11, counter-terrorism has been a top priority for governments around the world. Concern over “homegrown” or domestic terrorism has led many governments to consider community engagement as fundamental to counter-terrorism and national security policy. Preventative frameworks are now commonplace. “Soft” approaches to counter violent extremism (CVE) rely on community-based models to tackle the underlying causes of violent radicalisation. Counter-terrorism and CVE programs have been seen to disproportionately target Muslim youth, typically seeking to address disenfranchisement, alienation and social exclusion as factors contributing to trajectories of radicalisation to violent extremism. Critics have described a national security paradox, in which soft security measures have “securitised” integration, social cohesion, and multicultural policies and programs.

Implicit to the examination of national security policy in a multicultural setting are the scalar dynamics that shape how national policies are translated and implemented. By adopting an approach that cuts across multiple scales, it becomes clear that when paradoxical national security policies are ported to the local scale, significant negative consequences can follow. Under Australian national security policy and rhetoric, Muslim communities have been targeted, anti-Muslim sentiment and suspicion of Muslims has been endorsed, and belonging and access to welfare services rendered conditional upon self-identification as “at risk” of radicalisation.

This dissertation is motivated by a pressing central question: what is at stake when social policy is predicated on fear? Drawing on semi-structured interviews with state and local government workers and extended participant observation in a Melbourne local government this dissertation uncovers how policy practitioners negotiate two potentially conflicting objectives—multiculturalism and national security policy. The extended case study highlights capacities at state and local levels to mitigate the detrimental effects of hostile national security rhetoric, policy contradictions, and the stigmatising effects of participation associated with CVE.

This dissertation argues that combining multicultural social policy with a national security agenda risks undermining positive social relations and service delivery for marginalised communities. However, it also highlights the conditions under which local government can afford resistance to the securitisation of Muslims, extend new spaces of belonging, and to promote a meaningful politics of diversity.
Lay Summary

This dissertation seeks to interrogate the relationship between multiculturalism and terrorism prevention. By showing the contradictory ways in which national security and multiculturalism are brought together in Australian policy and rhetoric, it highlights the challenge facing institutions and individuals involved in delivering multicultural service provision alongside terrorism prevention programs. This dissertation argues that combining multicultural social policy with a national security agenda risks undermining positive multicultural social relations and social service delivery for marginalised communities. However, opportunities exist at the state government and local government level to push back against these stigmatising and divisive effects. In particular, this dissertation shows under these conditions local government workers can support marginalised young people to find ways to speak out and be heard on their own terms, to create positive opportunities for multicultural belonging.
Preface

This dissertation is an original intellectual product of the author, Elanna Nolan. The fieldwork reported in Chapters 4-6 was covered by UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board (BREB) Certificate number H18-01672.


Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. iii
Lay Summary ........................................................................................................................................ iv
Preface .................................................................................................................................................. v
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................. vi
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................ ix
List of Figures ....................................................................................................................................... x
Glossary ................................................................................................................................................ xi
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................... xii

Chapter 1: Introduction ....................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 One step forward, two steps back ............................................................................................... 1
  1.2 National security divided: between hard and soft measures ...................................................... 3
  1.3 Multiculturalism is our best defence? .......................................................................................... 6
  1.4 National security arrives at the local scale .................................................................................. 9
  1.5 Research design and questions .................................................................................................... 11
  1.6 Structure of the thesis .................................................................................................................. 14
  1.7 Conclusions ................................................................................................................................. 16

Chapter 2: What We Know So Far: A Review of Existing Literature ............................................... 18
  2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 18
  2.2 Defining terrorism and violent extremism .................................................................................... 20
  2.3 The “homegrown” threat and the prevention paradigm ................................................................. 22
  2.4 Tenuous links between social exclusion & violent radicalisation .............................................. 23
  2.5 Framing security policy in multicultural settings with concepts of social cohesion and community resilience ......................................................................................................................... 36
  2.6 Major critiques of soft security policy .......................................................................................... 44
2.7 Making “suspect communities” .................................................................................. 59
2.8 Unintended impacts and negative effects ................................................................. 62
2.9 Conclusions: Escaping the prevention paradox? ..................................................... 64

Chapter 3: Methodology ................................................................................................ 68
3.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 68
3.2 Research sites and design, by opportunities and constraints .................................. 69
3.3 Sources and methods ................................................................................................. 72
3.4 Ethnography at the local scale .................................................................................... 78
3.5 Limits of interpretation ............................................................................................... 81
3.6 Conclusion: The research destination ....................................................................... 84

Chapter 4: The Inclusion Paradox: Terrorism Prevention at the National Scale .......... 86
4.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 86
4.2 Australian institutional context .................................................................................. 90
4.3 Narratives of Australian multiculturalism ................................................................. 103
4.4 Conclusions: Constantly changing landscape .......................................................... 117

Chapter 5: Policy Translation Across Scales: Reception, Positioning and Implementation ..... 121
5.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 121
5.2 Reception: the Victorian context .............................................................................. 123
5.3 Positioning: The Victorian Community Resilience Unit ......................................... 127
5.4 Implementation: Challenges and opportunities at the state-scale .......................... 133
5.5 Conclusions: Opportunities & discontinuities across scales .................................... 153

Chapter 6: Local government as Community Activist: Municipal interventions in national security .................................................................................................................................. 156
6.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................. 156

PART ONE: Radical Municipalism: Local governments as community activists ........ 158
6.2 Thinking globally, acting locally: From anti-nuclear movements to sanctuary cities 160
6.3 Local government in Australia and the possibilities for municipal activism ........... 165
6.4 The City of Dean: More than “roads, rates and rubbish” ..................................... 170

PART TWO: Business as usual?: A local government’s national security intervention ...... 175
6.5 Dean’s Muslim community call for local government support............................. 177
6.6 Deliberating on CVE: The Dean Community Inclusion Research Project............. 180
6.7 “How can we make the most difference?”: CVE as strategic advocacy and resourcing.. 
........................................................................................................................................ 182
6.8 Letting go: Collaboration and compromise .......................................................... 189
6.9 Extending the life of D-SPEAK?............................................................................. 199
6.10 Avoiding the prevention paradox: Traps, tactics and subversions ....................... 200
6.11 Dean City Council and the Equity and Diversity Unit: As community advocate, activist 
and quango under a neoliberal regime............................................................................. 207
6.12 Conclusions: Is there a role for local government in countering violent extremism? 214

Chapter 7: Conclusions........................................................................................................ 219
7.1 Summary.................................................................................................................... 219
7.2 Research questions and themes ............................................................................... 223
7.3 Limitations and future directions............................................................................. 226
7.4 Final reflections ......................................................................................................... 227

Bibliography ......................................................................................................................... 229

Appendices .......................................................................................................................... 256

Appendix A: Interview Schedule – Policy Makers, bureaucrats, administrators ........... 256
Appendix B: Interview Schedule – NGOs, community and social service organisations..... 257
List of Tables

Table 3.1: Summary of semi-structured interviews and their function in the research design. ... 75

Table 4.1: Summary of hard counter-terrorism funding compared to soft counter-terrorism funding across select states, October 2016. Source: Hardy, 2018................................................................. 102

Table 4.2: Australia Immigration Department names 1945-2019. Source: Fincher 2001; Dunn 2005; Tate 2009; Koleth 2010; Castles 2016. ................................................................. 104
List of Figures

Figure 1.1: Australian Government Department of Home Affairs internet homepage. Source: http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au accessed 20 May 2019. Published with permission. 9

Figure 1.2: Email from the AG Department, 6th June 2016. Source: shared by IFO, City of Dean. Published with permission. 11

Figure 4.1: Significant terrorism related events affecting Australians and Australia’s CT arrangements: 1977-2015, in Australia’s Counter Terrorism Strategy – Strengthening Our Resilience, 2015. Source: Licensed from the Commonwealth of Australia under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. The Commonwealth of Australia does not necessarily endorse the content of this publication. 92

Figure 4.2: Intergovernmental Agreements and Coordination Bodies relating to Counter-Terrorism (note: “National” refers to nationally coordinated). Source: National Counter-Terrorism Plan, ANZCTC, 2017. Published with permission. 95

Figure 4.3: Australian Government, Department of Home Affairs homepage. Source: http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au, 2018. Published with permission. 97


Figure 6.2: D-SPEAK program components. Source: Author’s own, 2019. 190
**Glossary**

3Rs  
Roads, rates, rubbish  

ABC  
Australian Broadcasting Corporation  

ABF  
Australian Border Force  

ACIC  
Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission  

AFP  
Australian federal Police  

AGD  
Attorney-General’s Department  

AISH  
Australian Intervention Support Hub  

ANZCTC  
Australia-New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee  

ASIO  
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation  

ASPI  
Australian Strategic Policy Institute  

AUSTRAC  
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre  

BCRGp  
Building Community Resilience Grants Program  

COAG  
Commonwealth Of Australian Governments  

CRU  
Community Resilience Unit, State of Victoria  

CT  
Counter-terrorism  

CVE  
Countering Violent Extremism  

DECC  
Dean Ethnic Communities Council  

DHHS  
Department of Health and Human Services, State of Victoria  

E&D Unit  
Equity and Diversity Unit, Dean City Council  

ESC  
Victorian Essential Services Commission  

GTRc  
Global Terrorism Research Centre, Monash University  

ICE  
Immigration and Customs Enforcement, USA  

ICV  
Islamic Council of Victoria  

IFO  
Interfaith Officer  

ISIS  
Islamic State (of Iraq and Syria)  

LG  
Local government  

MASC  
Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion  

MCO  
Multicultural Officer, Dean City Council  

NGO  
Non-government organisation  

OMAC  
Office for Multicultural Affairs, State of Victoria  

PM  
Prime Minister  

PVERA  
Preventing Violent Extremism to Radicalisation in Australia handbook  

RIOsC  
Research Institute of Social Cohesion  

RWE  
Right-wing extremism  

SO  
Somali organisation  

TSAS  
Canadian Network for research on Terrorism, Security and Society  

UPF  
United Patriot’s Front  

VMC  
Victorian Multicultural Commission
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And to Gab, for making the kuckó.
That she isn’t trying, that she isn’t trying, that she isn’t trying
To remove layers of her clothing
To remove layers of her comfort
To live up to your standards
You remind her that she isn’t trying
To break her back, carrying your expectations
That she isn’t trying to scrub away at her culture, her lineage, her bloodline
Because she is busy fighting
Trying to take back a story that was stolen from her
A story that you deemed not worthy to be heard or uttered
I mean how
How are you meant to see her when all you do is look at her through security feeds
Stare at her through car windows
Or quickly gaze at her through shopping isles
How, how are you meant to see her when you’re not even looking?

–Zaynab Farah, She Is Light (excerpt), 2018

[Dean] Council has been criticised for taking these stands, told to stick to “roads, rates and rubbish”... But if there are people within our community who are discriminated against, marginalised or feel threatened simply because of the way they look, how they worship, who they love or their gender, then it is absolutely our business. Who else gives these people a voice?

– Dean Mayor, 2019
Chapter 1: Introduction

That is why my Government works hard to promote inclusion and mutual respect, ensuring that all communities and all faiths feel part of ours, the most successful multicultural society in the world... Strong borders, vigilant security agencies governed by the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to the shared values of freedom and mutual respect — these are the ingredients of multicultural success — which is what we have achieved in Australia.

(Turnbull, 2016)

What is it like to live in a world where intimations of incipient terrorism, whether considered or casual, have become the new channel for everyday racism and ethnic hysteria?

(Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010, p. 15)

The fact that it happens a lot in our community; we get so used to it that it becomes so normal to us. So, we won’t be surprised if there’s a couple of Somali boys hanging in the group and they get harassed by the cops. It feels as if it’s normal for us, you know. Like, it’s an everyday thing.

(D-SPEAK participant, 2017)

1.1 One step forward, two steps back

In the ornate Dean City Council\(^1\) Chambers in northern Melbourne, a group of 19 and 20-year old Somali-Australians stood facing their City Councillors. They formally addressed their local political representatives, sharing personal experiences of ongoing harassment and discrimination at a nearby shopping mall. The Councillors were moved and responded with compassion and promises of action. A local youth employment taskforce would be initiated, some of the youth

\(^1\) The name of the local government under study has been changed to Dean City Council (Dean) to reduce exposure through online searches and alerts. Full anonymity was not required by the participating local government.
participants would join the City’s Youth Jury, and a meeting date would be set with the shopping mall management where Councillors would stand with the youth and demand accountability and change. Riding high on the back of what they felt was a surprising and empowering session of political self-advocacy, a group of young women, all wearing the hijab, spilled out into the street. Having become somewhat resigned to the everyday micro-abuses they regularly encounter; they shared their collective surprise at the attentiveness and compassion of their local government representatives. The sense of having been heard and respected by those in positions of power and political leadership was for them, after all, novel. As this group of freshly empowered and optimistic young people began to disband, they were confronted by vicious profanities and insults from a passing car. Their high immediately deflated. One step forward, two steps back.

Last year I attended a seminar in Melbourne, where the results from the first ever Australian Multicultural Youth Survey were discussed. I was struck by one finding in particular: according to the survey, first and second-generation (“multicultural”) young people feel more optimistic about their futures than the general youth population (Johanna Wyn, Rimi Khan, & Babak Dadvand, 2018, p. 30). Considering the challenges faced by migrant young people, including discrimination, mental health issues, and family conflict, their reported confidence in achieving their future goals and their positivity was all the more striking. However, the survey showed that such optimism tends to decline over time, particularly in cases where young people have been in Australia for more than five years.

I reflected on the incident outside Dean City Council Chambers. These politically driven young people, enrolled in a countering violent extremism (CVE) program, had spent three months readying themselves to present issues important to them to their local elected representatives. They had attended facilitated workshops after school, they had learnt how to write letters to Ministers and apply for government grants, they had engaged in critical discussions about (un)belonging and their experiences in the public education system, they had met with council staff to advise on community outreach planning, and they advocated for their parents and community. All this was done on their own time, when not occupied by other responsibilities like caring for their siblings, studying, or working.

While the abuse they sustained outside Council Chambers did not undo their sense of achievement or determination, it was observed and absorbed. The knowledge that the program
that had led them to Council Chambers was a national security-funded CVE program, necessitating their definition as “youth at risk of radicalisation,” did not diminish their sense of accomplishment and purpose. But it was observed, and absorbed. It occurred to me that the balance between their resignation and optimism could be labelled resilience. Yet this kind of resilience cannot be limitless, nor should such resilience be expected. The fact that for “multicultural” young people in Australia, optimism declines over time, is deeply troubling. When reactions to this concern around discrimination, un-belonging, and declining optimism include national security responses, what does this mean for multiculturalism, minoritised youth, and multicultural belonging?

1.2 National security divided: between hard and soft measures

Just a few months earlier, following the 2017 London Bridge attack, former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott used the opportunity to justify Australia’s national security regime, which he had played a critical role in assembling. Feeling vindicated in the aftermath of the horrific event, Abbott used the moment to speak back to his critics who had contested the narrowly focused counter-terrorism policies that targeted Muslim-Australian communities, were expanded under his leadership. In a press conference following the attack, Abbott called for tougher counter-terrorism legislation and increased police powers (Bickers & Jefferson, 2017):

_We've got to avoid any spirit of surrender, any spirit of defeatism and all too often in officialdom's ranks there is this notion that Islamophobia is almost as big a problem as Islamist terrorism. Well, Islamophobia hasn't killed anyone, Islamist terrorism has now killed tens of thousands of people. That's why it's absolutely critical that there be the strongest possible response at every level._ (Abbott cited in Koziol, 2019)

The London Bridge attack had come just days after two non-Muslim men had been killed on a Portland, Oregon train while defending hijab-wearing teenagers from an Islamophobic attack. Earlier that year, an attack on a mosque in Quebec left six worshippers dead. A Wikipedia page established in 2011 has become a register for Islamophobic attacks; countless international incidents of Islamophobia that have resulted in deaths have been documented. Abbott’s assertion that Islamophobia is benign does not hold up. Moreover, the notion that Islamophobia is an expendable concern could be read as an admission of Islamophobic policy. Statements like this
fly in the face of contemporary “soft” terrorism prevention strategies, including those adopted by the Australian federal government.

Contemporary national security strategies are typically made up of two component parts: one “hard,” the other “soft.” Hard strategies like those advocated by Abbott disrupt and respond to terror plots and incidents. They often rely on surveillance, intelligence, profiling, broad stop-and-search powers, arrests and liberal detainment orders. On the other hand, soft strategies seek to prevent and divert radicalisation to violent extremism by addressing perceived “drivers” of radicalisation. Soft approaches, including programs to counter violent extremism (CVE), invoke social cohesion and belonging, contest threatening radical narratives, and aim to increase employment and civic participation of individuals seen to be “at risk” of radicalisation.

Within the national security apparatus, both elements are identified as essential. In practice, they are often found to conflict. Hard approaches such as aggressive profiling and stop-and-search powers, that have been used to target Muslim youth, have been shown to undermine engagement with Muslim communities in the service of terrorism prevention (Cherney & Hartley, 2017; Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a; Innes, 2006; Spalek & McDonald, 2010). Abbott’s rhetoric, in combination with his call for increased law enforcement and military powers to counter terrorism, indicate a national security policy paradox as they occur at the known expense of community relations between law enforcement, the state, and stigmatised Muslim communities.

Because of the sensitive nature of engagements between state agencies and communities who have been marginalised and stigmatised by national security threat narratives, soft security CVE programs require trusting relationships (Spalek & Lambert, 2010). These relationships are therefore fragile. Gains made through local state and non-state agency community outreach are vulnerable to multiple scales of political rhetoric and to backlash. This is particularly the case in periods following ISIS-inspired terror events (Briskman et al., 2017). Not infrequently, this leaves community engagement workers and other agencies scrambling to enact “damage control” to defend and protect delicate relationships, community cohesion, and belonging in the face of declarations of un-belonging, of broad-spectrum vilification, and hate speech.

I first encountered this paradox as a research assistant in 2014, while preparing a literature review for Public Safety Canada on the relationship between social inclusion, exclusion and radicalisation to violent extremism. In the process of preparing the review, I was exposed to British, German, Australian and Danish policy makers and researchers. In describing their
respective terrorism prevention programs, each of which sought to connect stigmatised and alienated Muslim communities with state agencies, aiming to improve interrelations and encourage partnership efforts to combat terrorism.

It was during this time that three distinct but interrelated policy announcements converged in my home country of Australia. Prime Minister Abbott announced a $600 million increase in funding for hard security measures administered through Australian intelligence and counter-terrorism agencies to “fight the threat of home-grown terrorism” (Bourke, 2014). The announcement of the funding boost was paired with the announcement of the winding back of section 18c of the Racial Discrimination Act. Section 18c makes it unlawful to “offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person or group of people…because of the race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person or some or all of the people in the group” (Commonwealth Consolidated Acts, 1975). The third point of note was the introduction of Abbott’s “Team Australia” political rhetoric; his articulation of an emergent reshaping of national multicultural policy. “You don’t migrate to this country,” Abbott declared, “unless you want to join our team” (Cox, 2014). In response, the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) boycotted a meeting with the Prime Minister that week.

I knew that soft terrorism prevention approaches had been adopted in Australia as early as 2010. The ICV had even partnered with the federal Attorney-General’s Department to develop CVE programs. Yet the rhetoric, legislative developments, and active demarcation of Muslim Australians as “outsiders,” unwilling to join “Team Australia” was entirely at odds with the prevention agenda. How could soft approaches to national security remain viable under these conditions? For those working in state-sponsored terrorism prevention, would this mixed-messaging not undermine their community outreach? In light of federal leadership’s disregard for Muslim-Australians’ citizenship, rights and belonging, how could community workers and Muslim leaders possibly sustain relationships and CVE program engagements? This question was made more crucial given that the relationships and programs had been premised squarely on recognising and celebrating Australian multiculturalism.

2  Missing from this legislation was reference to religious freedoms and protections.
1.3 Multiculturalism is our best defence?

Proponents of CVE have typically been countries described as multicultural or super-diverse, like Canada, Australia, Denmark and Britain. Inherent in each of their terrorism prevention models is a particular attentiveness to this demographic and socio-cultural condition. CVE models recognise and applaud cultural and ethnic diversity through the promotion of multiculturalism and social cohesion, yet policies and programs have disproportionately identified immigrant and second-generation immigrant youth as vulnerable, target populations (Abbas, 2007; Nagra, 2011; Ragazzi, 2016, 2017). More specifically, CVE interventions have tended to focus primarily on Muslim communities, contributing to the harmful conflation of Islam with terrorism (Akbarzadeh, 2016; Perry & Poynting, 2006). As a result, CVE strategies, policies, and programs have often been described as inherently contradictory — discursively promoting social cohesion, but undermining cohesion through a pervasive approach of targeting, suspicion, and stigmatisation (Awan, 2012; Choudhury, 2010; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Husband & Alam, 2011; Nickels, Thomas, Hickman, & Silvestri, 2012). This incongruity is another expression of the national security policy paradox.

Abbott exemplified this paradox in another significant moment at a CVE Summit in Sydney in 2015. In the presence of academic, civil society, religious and community leaders, and NGO workers, Abbott reinforced alienating political rhetoric, feeding an anti-Muslim-endorsing atmosphere. The Summit marked six months since a siege occurred at the Lindt Café in downtown Sydney. Not far from the location of the Summit, Man Haron Monis had held hostage a group of café employees and customers, during a 16-hour standoff with police. In the window of the café, Monis had hung a black Islamic flag. The aftermath of this event was notable for spikes in Islamaphobic political speech and harassment of Muslims in public spaces and on public transport across Australia (Akbarzadeh, 2016; Briskman et al., 2017). Though the Summit set out a collaborative agenda focused on community-oriented approaches and promoting social cohesion, then-Prime Minister Abbott opened proceedings by setting an aggressive and alarmist tone. He began by referring to ISIS as a “hydra-headed monster” and warned:

*Daesh is coming, if it can, for every person and for every government with a simple message: submit or die. The declaration of a caliphate, preposterous though it seems, is a brazen claim to universal dominion. You can’t negotiate*
Abbott’s address undercut the CVE theme of the Summit, with his hyperbolic scare-mongering galvanising fear, suspicion, panic and a “hard,” not “soft,” national security response.

Abbott’s fear-mongering has been widely criticised (see for example Akbarzadeh, 2016), and there has since been a consistent effort to alter the rhetorical tone within the federal leadership. For example, former Prime Minister Turnbull (2016) described the objective of terrorism, “to make us turn on each other,” to feed distrust, resentment and conflict. In 2016, he defined the tenets of Australian multiculturalism:

*...Strong borders, vigilant security agencies governed by the rule of law, and a steadfast commitment to the shared values of freedom and mutual respect — these are the ingredients of multicultural success — which is what we have achieved in Australia.* (Turnbull, 2016)

However, with this definition, multiculturalism was again subsumed by the national security agenda. This securitising “turn” is not unique to Australia. Most notably, in Britain this definition of multiculturalism, or its redefinition as social cohesion, has been largely seen as responsive to the threat of so-called “homegrown” terrorism (Eatwell, 2006; Mary J Hickman, Lyn Thomas, Henri C Nickels, & Sara Silvestri, 2012; Husband & Alam, 2011; Pickering, McCulloch, & Wright-Neville, 2008b).

The conceptualisation of multiculturalism has not been fixed, it shifts and changes in different times and in different places. Yet since 2001, it has experienced a broad and sweeping backlash in many places where it has long been embedded in social policy and public culture (Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010). Early multicultural policy is notable for its recognition of demographic diversity, symbolic and financial investment in and celebration of diversity (heritage and cultural difference), and the promotion of equal opportunity, representation, and treatment (Ley, 2010, p. 190). Over the past twenty years, critics of multiculturalism have contended that as a policy regime, it has divided society by failing to compel immigrants to integrate into “mainstream” society, leading to immigrants living “parallel lives” (see for example Cantle, 2001). This view was explicitly articulated in 2011 by UK Prime Minister David Cameron, who blamed
compromised national security on social fragmentation caused by “the doctrine of state multiculturalism” (Cameron, 2011):

*This hands-off tolerance has only served to reinforce the sense that not enough is shared. And this all leaves some young Muslims feeling rootless. And the search for something to belong to and something to believe in can lead them to this extremist ideology. Now for sure, they don’t turn into terrorists overnight, but what we see – and what we see in so many European countries – is a process of radicalisation.* (Cameron, 2011)

In this way, Cameron unambiguously tied the perceived failure of “old” (or state) multiculturalism to the perception of the threat of homegrown terrorism.

There has been a simultaneous hollowing out and doubling-down on multiculturalism in the Australian setting, though with a slight variation. That is, the term multiculturalism has been strategically retained, but federal policy positioning around multiculturalism has shifted, motivated by a national security agenda. Nowhere is this incongruity so patently visible as in the location of the Multicultural Affairs portfolio inside the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs (Figure 1.1). Just as the definition of multiculturalism by “vigilant security agencies” is troubling, so is the implication of a national security governance structure that contains within it the Immigration, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Policy portfolio.
1.4 National security arrives at the local scale

Jihadist terrorism is not a future possibility, it is a present reality... Violent Jihadism is not just a danger somewhere else. It seeks to harm us here in Canada, in our cities, and in our neighbourhoods through horrific acts. (Harper cited in Leblanc and Hannay, 2015, my emphasis).

Multiculturalism policy is often articulated at the federal level, but largely plays out in locally nuanced multicultural strategies, local programs and service provision. Threats to national security and counter-terrorism responses are more directly and conceptually tied to the nation. Terrorist events are, however, planned and executed by individuals or groups in specific locations: in cities, in neighbourhoods. Counter-terrorism responses have thus been re-scaled to “the local.” Coaffee and Wood (2006) have described this as a “local turn” in national security:

There appears to be an ongoing rescaling and reterritorialisation of security as both a concept and a practice, with security more focused on the civic,
While there is substantial research describing radicalisation taking place online, facilitated by social media channels, online magazines, and YouTube algorithms, there remains a strong belief in the influential role of local communities (Conway, 2017; Rogan, 2006). The role of local communities can be seen from at least two vantage points. On the one hand, in some cases radicalisation to violent extremism can be facilitated by a small number of likeminded individuals at the community level (Neumann, 2011; Sageman, 2004). On the other, the community level is seen as protective and crucial to detection and mitigation of national security threats (Thomas, Grossman, Miah, & Christmann, 2017; Williams, Horgan, & Evans, 2016). As such, terrorism prevention strategies have increasingly prioritised the local scale. Under these combined conditions, individuals working in multicultural service provision are increasingly being tasked with the responsibility of implementing national security policy (Cherney et al., 2017; Husband & Alam, 2011). This poses a particular set of challenges, as multicultural “groundworkers” (Ahmed, 2012) or “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky, 1980) must navigate dual policy objectives: multiculturalism (or social cohesion) and national security.

The fusion of the fields of local multicultural service provision with national security strategy places these multicultural “groundworkers” at the centre of the national security policy paradox. This new positionality is irreconcilable for many, particularly in the targeted way Muslim-Australians have been framed in this evolved policy framework. One local state multicultural officer shared with me an email they received from the Australian Government Attorney-General’s Department in 2016. Islamic centres and community organisations around Australia had also received the email wishing recipients “Ramadan Mubarak” (Figure 1.2). The email was signed by the leaders of the Countering Violent Extremism Centre, and the message included a patronising reminder to recipients, from its non-Muslim authors, of the message of Ramadan, “of friendship, generosity and sacrifice [that] reminds us all of the need to be kind, to respect each other and to help our fellow Australians.” Recipients were stunned, some taking to Twitter to express outrage over the singular way in which Muslims were seen by the Australian Government: as a potential terror threat.
We wish you Ramadan Mubarak

Ramadan is a special time for the Muslim community to share with family and friends and Ramadan's message of friendship, generosity and sacrifice reminds us all of the need to be kind, to respect each other and to help our fellow Australians.

The month of Ramadan ends with the Eid Al-Fitr festival, the breaking of the fast that culminates with joyous celebrations across the country, and many of us here are looking forward to sharing these celebrations with you.

On behalf of the Attorney-General's Department, we wish you all 'Ramadan Mubarak' – a blessed Ramadan.

Jamie Lowe, Catherine Jones and Elizabeth Brayshaw
Countering Violent Extremism Centre
Attorney-General’s Department

Figure 1.2: Email from the AG Department, 6th June 2016. Source: shared by IFO, City of Dean. Published with permission.

One incensed recipient tweeted:

This is absolutely nuts. Can you believe your eyes whilst reading this? This message could not be left just coming from the Attorney General's Department without referencing where it is really coming from, direct from the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Centre. It's not even subtle, it's deliberate. Muslims cannot be wished a happy Ramadan by the Government without referencing violence and terrorism. Absolutely no respect whatsoever. (Thomsen, 2016)

The Attorney-General’s Department correspondence succinctly captures the way the national security agenda sidles up to, and draws on, multicultural rhetoric; undercutting notions of respect and inclusion with an alienating lens of “pre-emptive criminalisation” and suspicion (Heath-Kelly, 2012, p. 70). Here again we see the national security, or CVE, paradox.

1.5 Research design and questions

This thesis engages with the critiques of scholars who have observed that terrorism prevention strategies reframe multiculturalism and social cohesion as components of the national security apparatus to detrimental effect. At its core, this thesis is motivated by the pressing question: what is at stake when social policy is predicated on fear?
As such, the objective of the thesis is to describe the specific entanglement of national security and multiculturalism in Australia and the nature and potential impacts of this policy paradox for local state actors—multicultural “groundworkers”—responsible for multicultural service provision (Ahmed, 2012). To glean insights into, and an understanding of, everyday expressions of national security and securitised multiculturalism at the local scale, this research explores the journey of national security policy to its arrival, reception and implementation at that scale. For a variety of reasons, it is difficult to directly evaluate the impact of these strategies (Horgan 2014; Lindekilde 2012a). Rather than evaluating policies and their effects, I have looked to the experience of multicultural groundworkers to understand how they have responded to the hollowing out of multiculturalism and its reframing as a component part of Australian national security strategy. This examination has led me to ask: how are institutions and state agents responding to the securitisation of multiculturalism as national security policy travels from federal to the local scale? Optimistically, I also ask: at which points in this journey, from policy definition at the federal level to local implementation, might we locate subversive potential and resistance to the alienating effects of the national security paradox?

This research began as a comparative project between Australia and Canada. However, during the early phase of research it quickly became apparent that to undertake research in such a sensitive area in two countries— with similar but yet quite different contexts—would require an inordinate time commitment. After the first period of fieldwork in Australia, it was clear that I would need to narrow my focus to one site. This research has developed over a long period of time, helped along by my longstanding connection to the research site. Travelling between my new home in Vancouver and my old home in Melbourne, I began spending extended periods of time at and with staff from the local government of my childhood, Dean City Council (Dean).

Through a series of professional connections, I had become aware of Dean’s interest in developing a CVE program. Gaining the trust of local government staff through shared connections and my status as a PhD candidate at an international university, I was permitted a privileged vantage point from which I observed and participated in their efforts to obtain funds to engage in CVE. With funds secured, I went on to observe as Dean staff co-designed and implemented a CVE program with a group of local Somali-Australian youth. The combination of my longstanding ties as a previous resident of Dean and extended time I had spent in the year prior to program funding meant that I was able to participate and observe the evolution of the
CVE program in close proximity. The program was established in mid-2017 and ran its initial funding course over less than a year. By this time, I had already spent a full year in close contact with Dean staff during the development and planning phase. Just as ethnographic research takes time, so does community engagement. A state government bureaucrat I interviewed reflected on the exaggeration of this slow pace in the case of sensitive CVE engagements, “you can only move at the speed of trust.” My immersion in the spaces of local government in particular, ultimately allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the context, nuance, agency and constraints facing both groundworkers and the institution of local government.

The local experience of soft national security implementation is shaped and influenced by the national security policy journey. I have followed national security policy from the federal through the state level, before its arrival at the local scale. In doing so, I have been able to examine the multi-scalar reverberations that are experienced at the local scale. At each point in the journey of national security to the local scale, unique conditions have informed the way the policy is interpreted, reformulated and implemented.

Discrepancies arise along the way and I have conceived of these as “gaps,” after Czaika and de Haas (2013). Specifically, it is in discursive and implementation gaps that policy negotiation, application and transformation are rendered visible at the scale of the everyday. The voices and actions of groundworkers and institutions tasked with the everyday implementation of national security provide the opportunity to consider these gaps as limitations, contradictions and challenges, but also as openings, opportunities for subversion and resistance. This conceptual framework and methodological design are explored in more depth in Chapter 3.

The questions that shape my research are as follows:

1. How is national security policy articulated and interpreted across scales?
2. How do state actors and institutions negotiate the two potentially conflicting objectives of national security and multiculturalism on their journey from national policy to local implementation?
3. How do local government workers negotiate these two policy priorities—multiculturalism and national security—in everyday practice?
In seeking to illuminate the ways in which the national security paradox is both constructed, deployed and negotiated at the level of translation and implementation, I draw from critical terrorism studies, multiculturalism and urban diversity literatures, and critical policy studies.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The dissertation is presented in three parts, with each part framing the next. I begin with a macro-level focus from the point of ideation – theory, policy, political speech – then zoom into the local scale to consider local government. Local government can be seen as an actor in a national drama where the terms of belonging, multiculturalism, and national security are confronted. This drama plays out as policies travel from federal to state to local scale, in policy reception, response, and local implementation (Peck & Theodore, 2012). It is only at this local scale that we can come to terms with what these macro-level ideas mean in practice.

In the two chapters that follow, I set out the literature that has informed this research and to which I aim to contribute. Chapter 2 presents the terrorism prevention literature and its relationship to multiculturalism. Chapter 3 outlines how I conducted my research, my research objectives, and the limits of my interpretations. In Chapters 4 to 6, I present my research findings according to a scalar logic, from national to state, and finally and most substantially, to the local state scale.

More specifically, Chapter 4 sets the scene for the dissertation by outlining the context that informs state and local government policy and implementation. Before unpacking the ways in which institutions and actors are responding to national security trickling down from the federal to state and local government scales, it is important to understand how the policies and strategies themselves interact; how they are positioned in relation to each other as reinforcing and/or reactive. To understand the context in which institutions and policy actors are operating, the policies themselves are illuminated in light of the surrounding rhetoric and policy context. This chapter ultimately argues that multicultural policy has been enlisted by national security strategy at the federal level.

Chapter 5 focuses on the state scale and considers the Victorian state government’s approach to terrorism prevention. The state-scale is important as a filter between the federal and local scales. Understanding how the state scale intervenes between the federal and local, is essential for appreciating the way in which the local scale becomes entangled in national security issues. I
argue that the Victorian government’s approach can be read as a direct response to the federal government’s national security agenda—specifically, its discursive and implementation gaps. In particular, a close look at the state government’s reception and adaptation of soft national security policy reveals points of distinction and deviation in the state government’s definition of collective belonging. Discrepancies between federal and state government conceptions of national security, collective identity, and multiculturalism thus become opportunities to carve out alternative narratives for belonging and state-community partnerships. In this chapter, I identify openings or possibilities that are generated by this inter-scalar tension.

Chapter 6 focuses on the potential role of the local state as a site and actor capable of advancing a multicultural “politics of difference,” pushing back against the exclusionary effects of Australia’s national security strategy and rhetoric. This chapter is split into two parts, yet both draw on ethnographic data collected incrementally over the course of two years at a single local government site: Dean City Council (Dean). In Part One, I explore the rise of municipal activism and the possibilities of local states challenging dominant national narratives and policies through local resistance, policy adaptation, and entrepreneurial social service provision.

In the second part of Chapter 6, Dean’s decision to pilot a CVE program is documented, exploring the ways local government workers negotiated the national security policy paradox as it became part of their daily work. The subsequent CVE program took on a life of its own, and the program outputs and outcomes provide insights into the challenges of “doing” CVE at the local scale. This in-depth case study offers insights into emergent opportunities, through the combination of the initiative of staff and participants, as they navigated the grey area of soft national security. These insights indicate a need for more broad-spectrum and open-ended welfare programming for communities marginalised by national security policy, exclusivist visions of national citizenship, everyday racism, and xenophobia.

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis and brings these scalar analyses together to consider the study’s implications for national security policy, CVE, and the subversive potential of the local state. In this final chapter, I present a summary of the thesis to directly address the research questions and the implications of the analyses.

Missing in this thesis are the voices of those who are directly impacted by national security policy in Australia. Arguably all Australians are impacted by the securitisation of social policy, of multiculturalism as it envisages an exclusivist society with reduced scope for expressions of
difference simultaneously with solidarity amongst difference. More specifically, national security policy and its rhetoric have made the lives of Muslim-Australians particularly challenging. My research methods have engaged directly and primarily with people like me: often white, middle-class, educated and socially mobile individuals; policy makers and government workers. I have elected not to research up, or research down, but instead to research across. I cannot and do not intend to speak for, or over, those who are most directly impacted by the national security agenda.

1.7 Conclusions

In the final weeks of writing this thesis, there was an horrific terror event in Christchurch, New Zealand. On the 15th of March, 2019, Australian-born Brenton Tarrant killed 51 people, and injured another 50 individuals during prayers in the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre. In the aftermath, in Australia, there was a brief reckoning. Many asked, how was this individual missed by intelligence agents? As discussion circulated over the challenges associated with profiling right-wing extremist radicalisation, the myopic lens of Australian counter-terrorism and terrorism prevention was exposed. In the cacophony of “hate speech” found online, its incorporation of “legitimate” political discourse can require little manipulation. Spotting the “signs” of radicalisation is thus difficult when online radicalisation includes the celebration of populist pronouncements by notable figures like Australian Senators Fraser Anning and Pauline Hanson. Statements like these are considered at worst “hate speech,” but are not necessarily unusual enough to send up red flags. We are told that identifying those who pose an imminent right-wing extremist and violent threat can therefore be difficult (Wilson, 2019).

Some, have called right wing extremism a “blind spot” in Australia’s national security regime (Campion, 2019; Tarabay & Graham-McLay, 2019). This “blind spot” also underscores how multiculturalism has been enlisted in national security approaches in which migrants are responsible for cultivating social cohesion—"multicultural success.” Missing, and vital, is a definition of multiculturalism that recognises the messiness and inevitable tensions of multicultural society (Pardy, 2005), while also prescribing respect and dignity. Yes, terrorism is a reality in contemporary cities. The ways in which we choose to respond to this reality will define what a multicultural society means. Looking at a layered case study, anchored at the local scale in Melbourne, this thesis explores the challenges community workers grappled with as they
negotiated community concerns over the reality of terrorism, radicalisation, and the anti-Muslim implications of a narrowly-focused national security regime.
Chapter 2: What We Know So Far: A Review of Existing Literature

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I have two primary objectives. I seek to highlight the paradox of soft counter-terrorism (CT) policy and to relocate the critical study of CT and its preventative turn from the realm of security studies to geography, where security is located in a larger context of transnational, national, local and inter-scalar relations. I aim to bring attention to the ways everyday lives of individuals and communities are impacted at the local scale by national security policy on a daily basis. The literature assembled in this chapter seeks to contextualise and orient the research questions:

1. How is national security policy articulated and interpreted across scales?
2. How do state actors and institutions negotiate the two potentially conflicting objectives of national security and multiculturalism on their journey from national policy to local implementation?
3. How do local government workers negotiate these two policy priorities—multiculturalism and national security—in everyday practice?

The literature review is primarily engaged with terrorism prevention scholarship and addresses the introduction of the soft national security paradigm from which countering violent extremism (CVE) emerged. Next, this chapter considers multiculturalism, social cohesion and resilience as key concepts that are employed and deployed in the service of CVE. In the final part of the literature review, I briefly consider the theoretical underpinnings of the methodological approach— the distinction between policy intention and effects. While this thesis does not seek to explore policy effects, per se, it is interested in the enlisting of multiculturalism (in its multiple incarnations), in addition to the gaps between policy intention and its presentation, reception, interpretation and implementation by those who are tasked with implementing it.

Much of the literature this thesis draws on has come out of the field of critical security studies. Scholarly progress has been slow, and in part this has been due to the problem of and preoccupation with defining terrorism (Horgan & Boyle, 2008; Lindekiilde, 2012c; Stampnitzky, 2013). Such challenges are revealing, with contention over a term like “terrorism” exposing the relational and contextually contingent nature of the term. It is activated in varying ways:
authoritatively by the state because of the legislative power it holds; to launch a war; and with sensationalist weight it is enlisted by the media (Kaya, 2011; Stampnitzky, 2013).

In this chapter, I recognise, yet avoid the distraction of such definitional struggles in order to focus on the ways in which the concepts of terrorism, counter-terrorism and the homegrown threat have been deployed to animate CVE interventions. I do not, however, endorse the use of this term unquestioningly but rather recognise its discursive necessity for this discussion. I use the terms terrorism and terrorism prevention often interchangeably with violent extremism and countering violent extremism respectively, in response to the often interchangeable legislative and rhetorical uses of this terminology.

In order to understand the premise of this thesis, of a policy paradox of terrorism prevention and soft security interventions, this chapter proceeds in four parts. The first outlines contemporary terrorism prevention as community outreach and countering violent extremism (CVE), borne of the dominant themes for understanding the process of radicalisation to violent extremism. In this part, I trace the circumstances that led to a change in security strategy–from “hard” to “soft”–and contemporary concerns over what has been termed homegrown or domestic terrorism, together with a growing perception that disenfranchised youth present a new kind of threat to national security. In order to fully appreciate the shift to prevention and its associated policy frameworks of social cohesion and resilience, I have outlined the existing literature (or lack thereof) that has sought to understand the radicalisation process under themes of social exclusion, identity, deprivation, and recognition.

In the section that then follows, I move from this foundational discourse and hypotheses of radicalisation to consider the way social cohesion and resilience policy frames emerge in the context of multicultural states. These lenses prescribe programmatic responses to prevent “homegrown” terrorism through community partnerships, with or supported by the state, and seek to avoid the negative impacts often associated with more traditional hard forms of counterterrorism.

In the third part of the chapter, I outline the major challenges to soft security policies and interventions. These challenges and critiques emerge often from a practice-based perspective seeking to uncover “best practice.” Here I consider factors including the complexities of state-community partnerships to prevent terrorism, challenges associated with community complexity and diversity, the limits of state-based engagements in relation to “extremism,” troubling sites of
CVE, and the problem over CVE evaluation. Importantly, these are the challenges and critiques often encountered by those tasked with policy implementation. Thus, they provide important insights into how “ground workers” interact with soft security policy as it plays out at the local scale.

In the final part of the chapter, I return to the central concern of the thesis: the prevention paradox. Here I highlight the literature that explores the securitisation of social policy and the making of “suspect communities.” Unintended and negative effects are also addressed in this section, as a synthesis of terrorism prevention policy and soft security implementation. In particular, this part addresses directly the soft national security and CVE paradox, whereby interventions produce “suspect communities” and cause the very experiences of profiling, exclusion, disenfranchisement and alienation they propose to counteract.

Finally, I present a summary of conclusions that set out the challenge for multicultural groundworkers navigating the policy paradox. Given the pace at which prevention policies and programs are being rolled out, there is another concern to consider – what are the implications of this prevention paradigm on the everyday lives of young people deemed “at risk” of violent radicalisation? Herein lies a space in which geographers have much to contribute, and as such, the agenda of this thesis is situated in the final part of this chapter.

### 2.2 Defining terrorism and violent extremism

Debates over the definition of terrorism continue to preoccupy critical terrorism scholars and political scientists. In 1988, Schmid and Jongman surveyed academics and counted 109 definitions of terrorism (cited in Ganor, 2002). These definitional debates have been playing since as early as the 1970s and will likely continue to do so. The push to come to some agreed upon definition of terrorism relates in part to the effective operationalisation of laws and international conventions to combat terrorism (Ganor, 2002). But also, this push comprises efforts to prevent terror organisations or terrorists from gaining public legitimacy and support. However, the challenge to define terrorism in some normative or singular way is particularly challenging in light of the heavily value-laden nature of the term itself and its deployment as a political tool (Stampnitzky, 2013).

Contention exists over the definition of what constitutes “terrorism” particularly when considering the severity of state responses, applied legislation, and political designation of
significance (Huff & Kertzer, 2018; McGhee, 2008; Pain, 2014). Perpetrators of violence, including high school shooters, white supremacists, extremist “right to life” activists, and intimate abusers typically fall under categories of hate crimes, domestic violence, or simply criminal activities. It is in the aftermath of instances like these, where public debates over what constitutes terrorism are most pronounced and where definitions are “qualified” and politically defined in public discourse (Huff & Kertzer, 2018). In recent years, it has been through policy discourse, framing, and implementation that definitions of terrorism and radicalisation have been expressed through disproportionate application to Muslim populations (Brown & Saeed, 2015; Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a; Husband & Alam, 2011; Sullaway, 2016).

In policy, the Australian government defines terrorism as “an act, or a threat to act, that…intends to coerce or influence the public or any government by intimidation to advance a political, religious or ideological cause” (Australian Government, 2019). Violent extremism has been the terminology used to refer to the outcome of a process through which an individual comes to produce an act of terror. Terrorism and violent extremism are often used relatedly and interchangeably. The Australian government has defined violent extremism as (Australian Government cited in Barker, 2015):

> All forms of violent extremism seek change through fear and intimidation rather than through peaceful means.

> If a person or group decides that fear, terror and violence are justified to achieve ideological, political or social change, and then acts accordingly, this is violent extremism.

Theoretically, definitions of terrorism and violent extremism such as these encompass a multitude of violent acts that could be classified as terrorism (Gunning & Jackson, 2011; Richards, 2011; Schmid, 2013a; Stampnitzky, 2013). Harris-Horgan and Barelle (2016) posit that terms like terrorism are poorly defined and carry connotative baggage. The language of counter-terrorism has expanded, in part to create distance between the “connotative baggage” and revised approaches: from counter-terrorism, to countering violent extremism (CVE) to countering radicalisation. Of course, each of these iterative terms in time becomes equally loaded with their own stigma and become objects of debate (Awan, 2012; Harris-Hogan & Barrelle, 2016; McGhee, 2008; Spalek, 2011).
2.3 The “homegrown” threat and the prevention paradigm

Since the events of 9/11, counter-terrorism has been a top priority for governments around the world. With the emergence of homegrown or domestic terrorism, many governments have begun to consider community engagement as fundamental to counter-terrorism and security policy and strategy. In the UK, Australia, Canada, the US, and more generally in the EU, preventative frameworks involving soft and localised approaches have been adopted, intent on building resilience against the threat of terrorism. Engaging communities in counter-terrorism is not novel; soft security measures were first employed in Northern Ireland, in the latter stages of The Troubles (Spalek & Imtoual, 2007). However, immediately following the events of 9/11, local community-based approaches were seen to be ineffective, in the face of a globalised international threat (Briggs, 2010, p. 971). In the years that followed, precipitated by a series of homegrown terror plots in various Western countries, preventative soft security approaches have been adopted once more.

From “hard” to “soft” security strategies

Soft approaches to counter-terrorism use community-based models in efforts to tackle the underlying causes of violent radicalisation and terrorism. Softer approaches are generally focused on economic, social, and political reform, development, and equality. Critical of the preemptive nature of soft security, Alexander Dunlap (2016, pp. 382-383) describes the post-9/11 reification of soft approaches to counter-terrorism as a “liberal form of warfare” and as “soft counter-insurgency” carried out through “armed social work” (see also Kilcullen 2006). A more positive interpretation has contrastingly recognised soft approaches as enabling citizen influence over the nature of community and security practitioner relations (Myhill, 2006). The shift from hard top-down counterterrorism policing to soft approaches speaks to a shift in how governments understand domestic and homegrown terrorism. Softer approaches emphasise local concerns, social exclusion, and disenfranchisement based on the assumption that it is through these experiences that risk or possibility of violent radicalisation is produced (Pickering, McCulloch, & Wright-Neville, 2008a; Spalek, 2012).

Following the events of 9/11, “hard power” security responses were favoured. Multicultural states prioritised identification and surveillance of high-risk groups, prosecution of individuals, racial profiling and expanded stop-and-search police powers, and the targeted pursuit of known threats (Pickering et al., 2008a). Critiques of hard policing have been focused on the ways in
which securitised landscapes emerge, where public consent is not sought and individuals are cast as informants rather than partners (Innes, 2006). The challenge for super-diverse immigrant societies, like Canada and Australia, is that under this model that treats individuals with suspicion and distrust, there is an inherent risk of endorsing intolerance, racial profiling, and amplifying differences to the point of alienation and conflict.

Since 9/11, due to a variety of factors, scholars reported that the social organisation of terrorism had become more diffuse (Gunaratna & Oreg, 2010; Innes, 2006; Calvert Jones, 2006). Innes (2006) posits that this diffusion was driven by al Qaida’s imperative to capitalise on the increasing tensions in multicultural states, where Muslims often experience acute social exclusion (p. 226). With the realisation that hard strategies were increasing experiences of alienation and disenfranchisement (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a; Stasiulis & Ross, 2006) and producing a more generalised “atmosphere of fear and a culture of surveillance” (Coaffee & Rogers, 2008, p. 102), both scholars and states came to see a new approach as both urgent and necessary (Innes, 2006). Though the shift toward ensuring greater balance between hard and soft security strategies has been attributed to the specific threat of al Qaida and its affiliates, this preventative model has been applied to all groups considered to be national security threats (Hanniman, 2008).

2.4 **Tenuous links between social exclusion & violent radicalisation**

Are young people who experience an array of political, social, cultural, and/or economic disadvantages more likely to become radicalised than young people with greater cultural, social, and/or human capital, and who have an expectation of upward socio-economic mobility? The hypothesis that this is the case—i.e., that those experiencing marginalisation and disadvantage are more vulnerable to extremist radicalisation—has provided a rationale for counter-radicalisation policies emerging in several countries (Lindekilde, 2012a; Spalek, 2007). However, for the most part, scholars have dismissed the premise of clear correlations between social exclusion and a susceptibility to extremist radicalisation (e.g. Piazza, 2006).

Most broadly, causal connections have been dismissed on the basis of there being no single predictive narrative of radicalisation to violence (Dawson, 2009). For example, correlations between low socio-economic status, low levels of education, and a lack of social integration have been widely rejected as providing the grounds for disenfranchisement and alienation that leads to radicalisation to violence (d'Appolonia, 2010). Of course, a predictive formula of risk calculation
or distinctive set of phases would be useful, and scholars such as Horgan (2005, 2008), Moghaddam (2005), Silber and Bhatt (2007), and Glees and Pope (2005) have tried to map these out, for the benefit of policing agencies. However, Ariane Chebel d’Appollonia (2010) reports that in many instances of homegrown terrorism since 9-11, investigations have uncovered profiles that do not fit with this trajectory. Instead, she reports that culprits have been well integrated, middle-class, without criminal records, and educated (2010, p. 128).

**How have connections been drawn between social exclusion and violent radicalisation?**

In late 2011 riots broke out in several London neighbourhoods. *The Globe and Mail* reported “London police overwhelmed in explosion of violence by futureless youth” (Saunders, 2011). What was described in *The Globe and Mail* and elsewhere was an outbreak of violence, evocative of riots elsewhere (i.e., the suburbs of French cities), that revealed deep-seated dissatisfaction, disaffection, and disenfranchisement among marginalised young people (Body-Gendrot, 2012). This narrative of disaffected youth resorting to violence has gained currency and is frequently the starting point for research dealing with youth experiences of social exclusion.

In the case of counter-terrorism policies, social exclusion is frequently considered as paving a pathway toward violent extremism. Soft security approaches are designed to be preventative. They address conditions that are seen to produce “vulnerable” young people. In other words, they tackle the precursors of youth radicalisation to violence, and are expressed in policy through a discourse about the vulnerability of minoritised youth.

This discourse is most evident in efforts to explain homegrown terrorism. In the case of al Qaida inspired homegrown terrorism, Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010, p. 889) suggest that a conventional wisdom has developed over time, in particular through media coverage and the political response to homegrown terror events. “To a significant extent, this shift in focus away from international to “homegrown” terrorism reflected the need of politicians and the media for easy-to-understand narratives that explained how a “good Muslim boy” (or “a good Asian boy”) became a suicide bomber” (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010, pp. 889-890).

Githens-Mazer and Lambert argue that this conventional wisdom is not based on evidence but has become a familiar narrative that is thus generally accepted (2010, p. 889). D’Appolonia (2010, pp. 127-128) similarly observes how accepted and unsubstantiated social exclusion rationales, such as those that highlight socio-economic deprivation as a precursor to
radicalisation to violence, serve to explain how a young person could come to feel hostility toward his or her host society. According to d’Appolonia, it is at this point that a young person could begin to see violence as the best expression for their frustration and disenfranchisement.

The concept of vulnerability is central to counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism focused on prevention. A spectrum of vulnerability is imagined, along which youth identity struggles are key in explaining how a young person could come to turn on their host society. Vulnerability is incorporated in policies through an acknowledgement of youth identity struggles, with youth from minority populations seen as particularly at risk (see Lindeklde, 2012c; L. Z. McDonald, 2011; M. McDonald, 2005).

However, some scholars believe this line of research to be peripheral. For instance, although acknowledging that root causes are important, Richards (2011, 2015) argues that talking about potential terrorists in terms of vulnerability is distracting. Richards worries that viewing terrorism and radicalisation in terms of vulnerability deflects attention from seeing terrorist acts as “rational and calculated acts of violence” (2011, p. 151).

Despite these assertions, some factors linked to experiences of social exclusion have been signalled in the literature as worthy of attention and continue to influence counter-terrorism policies. Scholars are generally quick to qualify their studies with the insistence that while they might propose a correlation, there is no “single fit” model of radicalisation, no single factor that can necessarily be identified as an exclusive indicator of extremist radicalisation.

*Social exclusion by a lack of acceptance and belonging*

There are two contradictory discourses applied to young people in western societies. Young people are simultaneously characterised as vulnerable, in need of protection, and as risky, requiring control (Valentine 1996). It is in this way that young people hold a particularly vital position in our contemporary social imaginations. As Pain et al., (2010, p. 972) put it, young people are becoming the “focus of fears, rather than the hopes, of western societies.”

Imagining young people as a threat is not a new phenomenon. Stanley Cohen’s famous book, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (Cohen, 1972) first introduced the concept of youth as “folk devils.” During the mid-1960s, British Mods and Rockers were cast as a violent threat, living alternative lifestyles perceived to undermine the dominant Western Christian faith. Media coverage at the time incited moral panic in response to a perception of an acute threat to public
order (Valentine 2001). In recent discourse of homegrown terrorism, these anxieties are resurfacing as the media, policy makers, and the public grapple with exceptional cases, in which young people have become perpetrators of terrorism.

Identity struggles and reactive formations

Young people today are in a difficult position, negotiating complex identity struggles, in order to define themselves in the context of globalisation, diasporic attachments, intergenerational differences, and in many places, religious affiliations within secular society (Nayak, 2003; Valentine, 2000). According to Dillabough and Kennelly (2010), today’s folk devils are drawn in the image of “deeply disaffected low-income young people, characteristically, but not always, from ethnic or religious minorities” (p. 1; see also Poynting & Briskman, 2018).

The coalescence of this suspicion, projected incrimination, and the youthful experience of identity definition produces a challenging context for young people to navigate. This struggle is perceived by many as a period in which young people are looking for purpose and meaning in their lives, looking for a place in which they can feel confident, and part of a community. The NYPD describe “a crossroad in life—those who are trying to establish an identity or a direction while seeking approval and validation for the path taken” (Silber and Bhatt 2007, 32). Like the moment Dawson (2012) describes, at some point in time many young people are open to possibility, in the search for a sense of significance and their “true self” (p. 8).

In various multicultural societies, scholars have focused on youth negotiating hyphenated identities. Rima Berns-McGown’s (2013) research with second-generation migrant youth elucidates this unique identity struggle. Berns-McGown, reflecting on Canadian understanding of integration, suggests that there is discord between integration expectations and the specific difficulties faced by Somali youth settled in Canada. Asked to comment on the experience of being diasporic in Canada (i.e. having identity attachments to two different places), young Somali Canadians and hundreds of other second-generation youth engaged by Berns-McGowan “consistently emphasise two facts: they feel Canadian but struggle to balance other connections and cultures as well; ‘back home’ is a strong influence in their lives, and they are under very real pressure from their parents not to ‘lose their culture.’ ” According to Berns-McGowan, this experience is not unique to any one group of diasporic Canadian youth, but is “as true of young people from Poland as it is of young people from Pakistan or from Somalia” (Berns-McGown, 2013, p. 21). In terms of policy implications Berns-McGowan’s message is clear (p. 21):
Integration takes time, and people who are balancing those connections and who run into barriers to their participation in the form of racism will react to it not by feeling less Canadian, but by feeling that they are being told they do not fully belong in this country.

By producing a dichotomous and irreconcilable set of identities or loyalties (e.g. Muslim and secular Canadian)–through experiences of racism, rejection, alienation, and social exclusion–a false and limited choice is communicated.

In places where lines like “go back to where you came from” can be heard shouted from passing cars, painted on walls and expressed in political rhetoric and where nationalism is expressed through fixations on what constitutes national heritage, youth identity struggles are also loaded with cumulative affective weight (Hage, 1998; Nayak, 2017). In Nayak’s (2017) study of Bangladeshi Muslim women living in white majority London neighbourhoods, research participants described their everyday negotiation of spaces where they were ever-wary of racist harassment. They also described their persistent and continued use of such spaces, marked by ambivalence for they were often spaces where “pleasure and danger collide” (p. 297). It is in these spaces, Nayak argues, that the “borders of citizenship and belonging” are encountered and embodied (p. 293). Nayak highlights the ways in which past experiences or “past encounters bleed into future” produce feelings of “fear, risk, suspicion and discomfort” (2017, p. 196).

Nayak, along with Ahmed (2013) and Tolia-Kelly (2006) emphasise the affective dimensions of belonging, central to racialised youth struggling find their place and a sense of belonging in multicultural settler nations.

Reactive identity formation is a term coined by Baljit Nagra (2011) which seeks to make sense of the effects of social exclusion on minoritised youth. Nagra set out to interview young Canadian Muslims post-9/11, with the hypothesis that after 9/11 many may have distanced themselves from their religious affiliations. Instead he found the opposite. Drawing on Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001) theory of reactive ethnicity, Nagra defines reactive identity formation as a response to prejudice, persecution, suspicion, and racism. Rather than concealing those qualities that make an individual subject to alienation and exclusion, those qualities are instead amplified, and an increased identification is observed (p. 426).

Nagra’s work gives some credence to Abbas’ (2007) concerns over radicalisation trajectories; however Nagra is careful not to speak specifically to potential radicalisation, instead simply
explaining the impact of such discourses on Muslim youth. Nagra instead focuses on the reasons behind the reactive identity formations of his research participants who affirmed their Muslim identities in different ways. First, in order to cope with the discrimination they faced; second, as a display of resistance and religious reclamation; and third, thanks to increased religious exposure and understanding, a stronger religious bond had formed (Nagra, 2011, p. 438).

Returning specifically to discourses of violent radicalisation, Berns-McGowan’s message is reiterated by other scholars, particularly in relation to Muslim youth growing up in the West. Diane Frost (2008) argues that it is young supporters and followers of Islam that are most incriminated and alienated by post-9/11 secular society. Further, Sobolewska (2010) argues that experiences of rejection, alienation, and the effects of discrimination, are better predictors than socio-economic status or social mobility, in defining youth at risk of violent radicalisation. Tahir Abbas (2007), similarly, explains that Islamophobia, racism, racial profiling, and the failure of the state to address foreign policy in relation to homegrown threats preclude the possibility of feeling a sense of acceptance, belonging, and political agency.

According to Abbas, al Qaida is attentive to this experience, and initiates the process of radicalisation to violence by appealing to this sense of social exclusion and disenfranchisement among young Muslims to aide their recruitment process. Vulnerability is most pronounced at the moment in which “already marginalized and predisposed” young Muslims seek alternative information, in isolation from their local communities (p. 297). In this narrative, minoritised youth are seen to feel a dual sense of dislocation–from their host country and from their local community - and it is posited that they could go in search of answers and acceptance in places in which they may be at an increased risk of being radicalised to violence.

This narrative is troubling because it can quickly translate to panic, with the assumption that disengagement from the host society or the mainstream necessarily means that radicalisation is inevitable or likely. Bartlett and Miller (2012) highlight the critical distinction that youth resistance is not necessarily violent. Bartlett and Miller insist on the possibility of being safely radical (i.e. non-violent)—after all, youth resistance and radical thinking has been the source of countless positive changes throughout modern history. Furthermore, they are sure to remind us that while minoritised youth face specific challenges in places like Canada or Australia, they also face youthful clichéd desires in terms of radicalisation not dissimilar to those identified in gang recruitment: emotional pull, adventure and being “cool”, status, and peer pressure (see also
Chettleburgh, 2012). In terms of producing a predictive formula of radicalisation toward violence, these elements are crucial in emphasising the irregularity of trajectories, and the highly personalised nature of identity formation (Bartlett & Miller, 2012, p. 13).

**Relative deprivation**

Although socio-economic deprivation has been largely dismissed as a predictor or determinant of extremist radicalisation (d'Appolonia, 2010; Klausen, 2009), the notion of deprivation does hold currency in radicalisation discourse. Scholars have suggested what is more likely is a measure of relative deprivation—i.e. social, psychological, moral (Dawson, 2009).

Relative moral and psychological deprivation can be understood as a lack of sense of meaning and purpose, and fits with the youth identity struggle narrative. A fundamental part of being young is the often awkward and intense process of defining one's identity. It is a time in which young people begin to establish independent world-views, self-views, and how the two relate to one another (Doosje, Loseman, & van den Bos, 2013). For many, this process involves a quest for purpose and meaning. Dawson (2009) advises that scholarship around New Religious Movements is helpful in understanding how an individual might become compelled to act on extremist ideology. According to Dawson, youthful questioning is typical, and youthful idealism and the process of becoming an adult provides fertile ground for recruitment to a radical movement or cause. Following this logic and under these conditions, a young person experiencing personal and political doubt, displacement or dislocation, and exclusion could be open to ideology offering answers, a sense of purpose, and a strategy for empowering action.

Relative deprivation more generally is usually defined in relation to real deprivation. Real deprivation describes the barriers an individual might face, for example, to participation in the labour market and socio-economic advancement. Relative deprivation, on the other hand, refers to the perception of deprivation, which may or may not in fact exist. In terms of socio-economic status, for instance, Dawson (2006, p. 73) describes relative deprivation in terms of an individual’s perception that a discrepancy exists, “between the social rewards they feel entitled to and the rewards they think they are getting or they believe others are getting.” Dawson insists, however, that ultimately this notion has little utility in predicting the risk of violent radicalisation as it does not differentiate between dissatisfaction that leads to violent rather than non-violent extremism.
In studies of extreme-right terrorism, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, scholars have observed reactions to relative deprivation experienced alongside deteriorating and globalizing economies. In the United States, Crothers (2002) explains that industrial and farming industries were transformed by the corporatisation that came with increasing economies of scale and globalisation (cited in Vertigans, 2007). Alienated by these changes and seeking answers, some farmers turned to militia and extremist groups ready to provide answers in the form of ideology (Vertigans, 2007). Vertigans (2007) notes that while various studies have suggested links between extremist radicalisation of the far-right and socio-economic deprivation (see Van Dyke & Soule, 2002), there is a growing realisation that it is not only the impoverished who experience deprivation, but relative deprivation may also be felt by members of the majority middle class (Vertigans, 2007, p. 646).

Accusations of the preferential treatment of minorities have ignited resentment and fuelled ideology that declares injustice (see also Goodwin, Ford, Duffy, & Robey, 2010; Vertigans, 2007). Rendered as a racialised injustice, Shanks-Meile (2000) posits that it is in this manner that extremist movements cut across classes. Engaging the example of Timothy McVeigh and the 1995 Oklahoma Bombing, Vertigans argues that radicalisation begins with a sense of individual or community injustice that is expanded to a higher scale (i.e. racial group, nation), thus justifying and sanctioning criminal behaviour and violence (Vertigans, 2007). For instance, “when these messages are allied to interpretations of American history that are also advanced to justify the use of arms when its legacy is under threat, then a climate is being created in which people become radicalised, in some instances unintentionally” (2007, p. 647).

The concept of relative deprivation has also been useful for researchers trying to understand the specific difficulties faced by second and third generation migrants growing up in multicultural states. Maria Sobolewska (2010), for instance, conducted a study of second and third generation migrant youth in Britain and found that they would sooner compare their social mobility and status to their peers who were part of the majority population, rather than judge their experience against that of their migrant parents. Sobolewska, like Portes (1984), acknowledges that second and third generation migrant youth face more barriers to social mobility and participation than majority youth due to a hierarchical system that privileges Anglo-ethnic or majority populations over ethnicised populations (2010, p. 40). The result, she argues, is dissatisfaction, frustration at the inequality, and resultant distrust in government. Bartlett and Miller (2012, p. 6) also make
this assertion, reporting that young Muslims in Canada and the UK display significantly lower levels of trust in government and higher levels of cynicism when compared to their parents. By highlighting the perception and experience of injustice by minoritised youth, a number of scholars attempt to demonstrate the conditions in which a young person might become more susceptible to extreme ideas and groups (Doosje et al., 2013; Moghaddam, 2005).

**Vicarious exclusion by fraternal deprivation**

Related to relative deprivation is the experience of vicarious exclusion—experiencing others’ exclusion as if it were one’s own. Runciman (1966) distinguishes between “egoistical” deprivation and “fraternal” deprivation—the former being the individual’s experience of his or her own position in a group, and the latter as deprivation felt on behalf of a group’s status in society relative to other groups. Research has shown that in many instances minorities’ feelings of discontent are more likely based on fraternal than egoistic deprivation (Moghaddam, 2005). For example, Moghaddam explains that, in the case of terrorism, “especially important could be a perceived right to independence and the retention of indigenous cultures for a society, a perception that other societies have achieved this goal, and a feeling that under present conditions, the path to this goal has been blocked (e.g., by Americans)” (p. 163).

Vicarious exclusion is also experienced through “humiliation-by-proxy”. Brendan O’Duffy (2008) argues that individuals may look beyond their local borders to experiences of repression elsewhere, particularly in relation to foreign policy. D’Appolonia agrees, and notes that humiliation-by-proxy occurs “when perceptions of injustice at national and international levels mirror local and personal experience, or when local discrimination is consonant with perceptions of liberal imperialist foreign policies, a larger pool of recruits become available for indoctrination” (d'Appolonia, 2010, p. 120). As Schmid (2013b, 26) explains, “terrorist groups sometimes adopt somebody else’s grievances and become self-appointed champions of a cause other than their own.” Farhad Khosrokhavar (2005) in his study of suicide bombers is in agreement, arguing that through identification with victims of repression, individuals are led to believe that ends justify means, and thus violence and ideology merge.

**A lack of recognition: (political) disenfranchisement**

Caught in a state, described by youth geographers, between “being” and “becoming”, young people face barriers to being considered as active agents and as full citizens (Philo & Smith,
2003; Worth, 2009). On the one hand, growing apathy and political disengagement of youth in political processes has been cause for concern (Gauthier, 2003). The extent to which young people should be considered as fully evolved adults with equal political influence as their elders remains contested (Vanderbeck, 2008). The fact that their futures are acutely and unevenly affected by social exclusion, however, is unequivocal.

Youth who are members of minority groups experience an amplified sense of social exclusion in terms of political recognition and representation. Research on minority populations’ political participation has shown that racism, discrimination, and lack of familiarity with local political culture all contribute to feelings of political exclusion and can lead to a sense of disenfranchisement (Abu-Laban, 2002; Bullock & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013; Henn, Weinstein, & Forrest, 2005). In a study of British Muslims, Sobolewska (2010, p. 33) defines four factors or dimensions of political exclusion: (1) trust in institutions; (2) political participation; (3) a sense of belonging to Britain; and (4) feeling of political efficacy (influence). In general, she found that compared to other religiously defined populations, British-Muslims had high levels of trust in government, were least likely to feel as though they had no influence over state decision-making, and displayed high levels of belonging to Britain (p. 33). However, in terms of political participation, they displayed a higher degree of political alienation via low levels of political (non-electoral) participation. There was nothing particularly alarming for Sobolewska in this set of results. However, isolating for age, she found that young British-born Muslims displayed statistically significant disparities across all indicators, except for a feeling of belonging to Britain (p. 40). In terms of political participation, young British Muslims reported higher levels of political participation, in the form of rallies, protests, and demonstrations (p. 41). However, ultimately Sobolewska found no grounds on which to conclude that British-born Muslim youth are disproportionately vulnerable to extremism or violent radicalisation.

In Canada, youth participation in formal politics (i.e. voting) is generally low, and according to scholars young people increasingly find alternative ways of engaging politically (Adsett, 2003; Bullock & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). In Bullock and Nesbitt-Larking’s (2011, p. 13) study exploring young Canadian Muslim’s political participation, the most common reasons for non-participation in formal politics were reported as: “lack of interest, lack of time, boredom, the belief that things are smooth in Canada, not like back home, and being under age (with the expectation of becoming interested in politics once reaching the legal age for voting).” In terms
of informal political engagement, “while very few were interested in following formal politics, and even less actively involved in traditional parties, at least half of those who said they were not political, or interested in politics, had participated in rallies, protests, petitions, or had conversations with friends about political issues thought directly to affect them, such as lobbying against the niqab ban or Palestinian issues” (p. 18). The researchers draw a direct link between political participation and a fragile sense of belonging for Canadian Muslim youth (p. 47). Like Sobolewska’s (2010) study of British-Muslim youth, Bulluck and Nesbitt-Larking (2011) argue that the youth most targeted by counter-terrorism strategies are in fact “amongst the most highly engaged and positive in their attitudes towards holding Canadian citizenship” (p. 47). Findings from a recent study by Thompson and Bucerius (2019) highlighted young Somali-Canadians in Toronto as active agents within their communities, as well as the perceived need for safe spaces for critical discussions. Taken together, they highlight the capacity of these youth to act as “positive change agents,” and note the positive possibilities if communities were provided for with such spaces (p. 589).

In Australia, perceptions of low rates of Muslim-Australian participation in formal politics has fed the narrative link between Islamic religiosity and national disloyalty (Johns, Mansouri, & Lobo, 2015; Vergani, Johns, Lobo, & Mansouri, 2017). Studies have shown that negative political and media rhetoric have a direct and negative impact on Muslim-Australians’ active citizenship (Kabir, 2004; Vergani et al., 2017). Vergani and colleagues’ study found that Muslim youth are withdrawing from formal political participation as a consequence of seeing Australian-Muslim voices regularly disregarded. Indignation was also reported in response to mainstream political presentations of Islam, its demonisation, and the projection of Islam as incompatible with Australian society by its rendering as competing or alternative law. Contrary to popular assumptions, Vergani et al., find religiosity to be a predictor of civic engagement, and grassroots community engagement holds greater potential for active citizenship thereby circumventing the negative associations with formalised, institutional political engagements (see also Davies, 2015). Their findings trouble the notion of political participation, and the frequent definitional distinction between formal political participation compared to organised religiosity as civic participation (Vergani et al., 2017, p. 75).

Political exclusion also occurs through the framing of informal political participation (i.e. dissent and protest) as legitimate or illegitimate by the state. Lodenthal’s (2013, p. 95) commentary on
policy constructions of eco-terrorism argues that “the framing of such socio-political movements within a veneer of terrorism serves a variety of causes for the state in question.” He explains that in doing so, individuals and movements are thus legitimated or incriminated. “Not only does it aid in the regulation of dissent through the construction of a ‘good protestor/bad protestor’, activist/terrorist dichotomy, it also serves to provide an impetus and justification for state manoeuvres which require a constructed enemy” (p. 95; see also good Muslim/bad Muslim in Vergani et al., 2017, p. 75). According to Liddick (2006), this can be seen in the criminalisation of ecological and animal rights movements from the 1970s. While informal political participation goes some way to compensate for lower levels of formal political engagement by youth, delegitimating tactics can both de-value alternative viewpoints and participation, as well as reinforce distrust in the formal system and feelings of marginalisation.

Marginalisation also occurs by those issues for which participation is invited or allowed. While there have been global moves to include young people more actively in decisions made at local scales (e.g. “UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Charter”), larger issues and macro-scale politics remain less attended to. Particular issues, such as economic and foreign policy, are spaces in which youth voices are not often heard (Skelton, 2010). Abbas (2007) and Heath-Kelly (2012) are both critical of the lack of attention to foreign policy and its relationship to counter-radicalisation policies in Britain. Both scholars have found that time and time again, youth that identify with marginalised groups express concern over their home country’s military presence in foreign lands, yet feel unable to voice or have their concern heard. As Abbas (2007) explains, “Certainly, there is a feeling among many that British and US foreign policy has impacted on the perceptions of already much maligned and disenfranchised young Muslim males who feel they have no voice” (p. 291). This critique could easily be echoed, based on similarities in policies, in both Canada (Bartlett and Miller 2012) and Australia (Spalek & Imtoual, 2007; Vergani et al., 2017).

Although they face multiple barriers to participation, some scholars express positive possibilities and hope for youth political engagement and recognition. In terms of a distinction between minoritised and majority youth’s political recognition, Sobolewska (2010, p. 41) reports that minoritised youth do not necessarily feel at a great disadvantage relative to their majority counterparts, in measuring their influence on British politics. Further, in considering the forms of political engagement, although likely to be considered radical, rallies and demonstrations, in fact
demonstrate an engagement that diverges from that which is associated with extremist radicalisation (Bartlett, Birdwell, & King, 2010). According to Bartlett et al., this is a significant point of distinction. “Young people need space to be radical: bold, different, awkward and dissenting. This can be an important antidote to radicalisation that leads to violence” (Bartlett et al. 2010, p. 19). They posit “that civic engagement and political protest distinguishes radicals from terrorists” (p. 19).

In the radicalisation literature it seems we are all too often faced with a choice, between community-labelling and individual pathologisation. Spalek and Imtoual (2007, p. 194) remind us of the inadequacy and difficulties faced by current policy directives, based at the neighbourhood or community scale:

*The notion that extremists can be located within any community is problematic...extremists may be pursuing their own individualised quests, which may have little, if any, connection with any wider communities that they may nominally belong to, in terms of family, ethnic grouping or nationality. It seems that militants may join an “imagined community” that works through minds, attitudes and discourses rather than geographical locales or through social and familial ties.*

Despite the unresolved linkage issue in the literature, there is evidence that terrorist recruitment often targets disenfranchised youth. There are many ways in which young people are led to feel disenfranchised, distrustful of the state, and as terrorism recruiters become attuned to this, their tactics adapt and target the weak spots. Some scholars have attempted to map out trajectories and profiles that aide risk assessment (Glees and Pope 2005; Horgan 2005; Moghaddam 2005; Silber and Bhatt 2007). However, scepticism over correlations between social exclusion and violent radicalisation remind us that there is no singular narrative of violent extremist radicalisation (Dawson 2009; d’Appolonia 2010).

While understanding of the links between social exclusion and radicalisation to violence is still underdeveloped, there is no question that the problem of socially excluded youth is in need of attention and resourcing. But there is a risk of stigmatisation. Therefore, such attention must be mindful, and executed in a way that does not first render young people as potential terrorists, as suspects, or as a problem in need of solving.
2.5 Framing security policy in multicultural settings with concepts of social cohesion and community resilience

Where soft security policies have been adopted, they have generally been framed by ideas of social cohesion and resilience. Homegrown terrorism and new conceptions of national security threats, in both terrorism and security scholarship, frequently locate current national security concerns within a context of immigrant, secular societies grappling with changing social landscapes, super-diversity, and questions of citizenship and identity politics.

The term, “homegrown terrorism” is itself implicitly linked to both preventative national security and soft security strategies (Eatwell and Goodwin 2010). It describes terror attacks planned or executed by individuals who live in the countries in which the attacks take place. Increasingly, over the past few years, concern has been raised over the effectiveness of the preventative model and its implementation. Primarily, critiques have been levelled at the associated risks of conflating social cohesion objectives with national security efforts (Aly 2013; Choudhury and Fenwick 2011). Because the soft security, preventative approach has developed in response to a very specific set of events and circumstances, these concerns can only be understood by first outlining how and why this shift occurred.

Five key events occurred between 2004 and 2006 that focused attention specifically on the threat of domestic and homegrown counter-terrorism.

- In March 2004, a train bombing in Madrid killed 191 people and injured 1,800.
- Later that year, Mohammed Bouyeri, member of Islamist terrorist organisation, the Hofstad Network, assassinated Dutch film-director Theo Van Gogh in Amsterdam.
- In Australia the following year, Operation Pendennis intercepted planned attacks in Sydney and Melbourne and resulted in the arrest of twenty-two men.
- On the 2 June 2006, eighteen men who were planning to attack downtown Toronto, were arrested in a counter-terrorism raid. Those arrested were labelled the “Toronto 18.”
- The following month, the London 7/7 attack occurred, killing fifty-two and injuring 700 people. All attacks were either attributed to or reportedly inspired by al Qaida (Gunaratna 2011).

Increasingly, governments have been explicit about the ways in which the threat of terrorism and violent radicalisation can be diminished through national solidarity (Aly, 2013).
The idea of a prevention strategy was first introduced in the UK, with CONTEST, a “multi-dimensional counter-terrorism strategy” (2011), and later in revised versions (Home Office, 2006, 2009, 2011). The strategy is composed of four elements: Pursue, Prevent, Protect, and Prepare. The Prevent strategy, most notably, has provided a model for soft security counter-terrorism elsewhere—in particular, in Australia and Canada. Soft counter-terrorism strategies under the Prevent umbrella have been subject to major critique, in particular, in the earlier versions, for effectively securitizing social and integration agendas. Notably, these critiques were outlined in a report commissioned by the UK House of Commons’ Communities and local government Committee, entitled “Preventing Violent Extremism Report” (2010), and in a report commissioned by the UK’s Equality and Human Rights Commission, “Research Report 72: The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities” (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011b).

Having come under extensive criticism by scholars and activists in the UK, the 2011 version includes the following caveat (Home Office, 2011, p. 12):

> Having widened the scope of Prevent we also intend to narrow its focus. Prevent depends on a successful integration strategy, which establishes a stronger sense of common ground and shared values, which enables participation and the empowerment of all communities and which also provides social mobility. But integration alone will not deliver Prevent objectives. And Prevent must not – as it has it the past – assume control of funding for integration projects which have a purpose and value far wider than security and counter-terrorism. The Government will not securitise its integration work: that would be neither effective, proportionate nor necessary.

The dynamic nature of Prevent evolution in the UK speaks to the trial and error nature of a strategy developed under tight timelines, and, according to Choudhury and Fenwick (2011, p. 48), in direct response to terror events:

> The urgent need to develop the strategy following the attacks of 7/7 meant that there was limited time to carry out the research needed to inform policy. As one official noted, research was commissioned but by the time the results came in, spending on projects had already started.
A large body of critique has emerged in the wake of this policy, which has also informed policy and program development in other parts of the world (Birt, 2009; CLG, 2010; Thomas, 2010). Echoes of the UK’s policy can be seen the United States, the “National Strategy for Counter-Terrorism” (2011), guided by four core principles: “Adhering to U.S. Core Values”, “Building Security Partnerships”, “Applying CT Tools and Capabilities Appropriately,” and “Building a Culture of Resilience”. Again, resilience is employed in a way that aims to develop national cohesion in the face of a threat. As Anne Aly (2013, p. 5) points out, this can be seen as a distinctive change from the United States’ 2003 counter-terrorism strategy that set out a slightly different set of principles: “Defeating”, “Denying”, “Diminishing”, and “Defending”. Aly notes that while the Diminish goal endorses similar community-oriented programming, by replacing it alongside the principle of resilience, support has focused more on localised, community-level development measures.

In Australia, the counter-terrorism approach, charted in “Counter Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia, Protecting our Community” (2010) was largely shaped by the UK’s Prevent strategy, with four guiding principles: “Analysis”, “Protection”, “Response”, and “Resilience”. Using the concept of resilience, the Australian Government described the way the national community would be included in efforts to resist “violent radicalisation and terrorism on the home front” (p. 65).

In 2013, Canada released “Building Resilience Against Terrorism: Canada’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy” (2013), based on the principles: Prevent; Detect; Deny; and Respond. Resilience is central to the strategy and is explained as follows (2013, p. 11):

*Building a resilient Canada involves fostering a society in which individuals and communities are able to withstand violent extremist ideologies and challenge those who espouse them. They support and participate in efforts that seek to protect Canada and Canadian interests from terrorist threats. A resilient Canada is one that is able to mitigate the impacts of a terrorist attack, ensuring a rapid return to ordinary life.*

In 2018, Canada rolled out its CVE strategy, *National Strategy on Countering Radicalisation to Violence*, supported by the Canada Centre’s Community Resilience Fund that resources targeted prevention programming across Canada. In both the 2013 and 2018 Canadian strategies, we
again see an emphasis on openness, diversity, and inclusivity—each expressed as elements of social cohesion. The 2013 policy is explicit in insisting that this strategy does not intend to be divisive or exclusionary, but rather allow for “positive alternative narratives” that will “foster a greater sense of Canadian identity and belonging for all” (2013, pp. 16-17).

In recent years, researchers have been busy trying to understand and explain domestic and homegrown terrorism. Because narratives of marginalised and socially excluded youth have formed the basis of policy development, scholarship in critical terrorism studies has been drawn to debates over multiculturalism, integration, and social cohesion (McGhee, 2008). In order to explain the shift from hard to soft security mandates, it is therefore necessary to be attentive to the policy landscapes in which this has occurred.

**The quest for social cohesion: soft security in multicultural settings**

Social cohesion was identified as a crucial policy issue in relation to immigration in the mid-1990s (Spoonley, Peace, Butcher, & O’Neill, 2005, p. 89). Generally, it has been rhetorically focused on shared values and equal opportunities, and it grounded national membership as a relationship based on trust, hope, and reciprocity (see for example, Canadian Council on Social Development 2000). It has been suggested that following 9/11 there was a significant shift in social cohesion discourse, when it became more explicitly linked with social capital and shared citizenship—no longer as a policy lens, but as “a high-level policy ambition” (Spoonley et al. 2005, p. 89). In other words, for some, this shift indicated a re-focusing on a national community defined more structurally by shared citizenship rather than by a culture in which shared values, opportunities, and reciprocity are emphasised. Essentially, this shift represented a turn away from “means-based” to “values-based” approaches to social policy and programs, narrowly and increasingly framed through national security objectives (Birt, 2009).

Social cohesion frameworks have been adopted elsewhere, and have faced similar iterations, manipulated in the face of economic and social challenges. In the UK, the adoption of social cohesion as the framework for social policy was focused on galvanizing a British community through a dominant set of shared values (Thomas, 2010). In a new iteration of what Thomas calls integrationism, commonality was privileged over diversity: “Britishness” was used euphemistically, and expressed with hyphenation, to denote a national community before ethnicity or religion, i.e. British-Muslim, British-Sikh, British-Algerian (Thomas, 2010, p. 3). Or, put another way, a requirement is “placed on racialised ‘others’ to feel like part of the nation,
while being constantly reminded of one’s exclusion from it” (Fortier 2008 cited in H. Jones, 2014b, p. 74; see also Ahmed 2010 on 'happy multiculturalism'). In Australia, also, there was a return to nationalist conceptions of identity as a strategy for managing emergent social tensions within a super-diverse society (Jon Stratton, 2006). In Europe, states moved away from multiculturalism toward a notion of “civic integrationism” (Kymlicka, 2010), in what has been criticised as a “rights deficit” approach (Spoonley et al., 2005, p. 90). With the exception of Canada, in each of these instances, the language of social cohesion has been (to varying degrees) substituted for, and to express “the failure of multiculturalism” (Joppke, 2004; Jupp, 2002; Phillips, 2007).

Under these conditions, a binary discourse has emerged that presents integration as distinct from multiculturalism and serves to highlight continuing challenges in immigrant societies. Security strategies based on dialogue and partnerships attempt to address these inherent challenges. Kymlicka’s (2003, p. 3; in Spoonley et al., 2005) list is pertinent here, as the questions he sets out echo those confronted in community-based counter-terrorism:

- How to reconcile the recognition of diversity with building common feelings of membership and solidarity?
- How to understand the links between economic disadvantage and cultural exclusion, since many minoritised groups suffer from both?
- How to promote genuine mutual understanding rather than simply a tokenistic appreciation of diversity?
- How to enable greater public participation, yet also ensure that participation is conducted responsibly, with a spirit of openness and fairness, and is not simply a way of asserting dogmatic claims or scapegoating unpopular groups?

For policy makers, these questions have become more urgent following a series of urban disturbances (i.e. riots) in the UK in 2001, France in 2005, and Australia in 2005 (Thomas 2011). Laying the groundwork for social cohesion to be adopted more formally as social policy, these disturbances, combined with the domestic terror events already mentioned, provoked concern over a cumulative trajectory of dissent and extremism (Eatwell 2006). In this dark scenario, one extremist event fuels and aggravates another, and so on, in a spiraling of conflict and violence.
(Eatwell and Goodwin 2010, p. 7). Social cohesion is therefore proposed as a social policy outcome that works against the effects of rising social polarisation, inter-community tensions, and extremist radicalisation by increasing community resilience.

**Building resilience: Local solutions to local problems**

Resilience, popularised in both ecology and psychology fields, has gained increasing traction in counter-terrorism and national security policy (Stephens, Sieckelinck, & Boutellier, 2019). In the face of terror threats, the ecology of urban space is securitised (or militarised) with the installation of surveillance cameras, bollards, and other built interventions; commercial operators have been allocated responsibility as first responders; and the public have been enlisted as surveillants, always on watch (Coaffee, 2018; Coaffee & Fussey, 2015; Graham, 2004; Swanstrom, 2002). With this security infrastructure and “bordering”, the city is expected to better cope with the ongoing stress of the terror threat and minimise and rapidly respond in the event of a terror attack.

The concept of community resilience is also embedded in the vision of a responsive, resilient urban ecology. Through a logics of social capital, Aldrich and Meyer (2015, p. 2) define community resilience as “the collective ability of a neighborhood or geographically defined area to deal with stressors and efficiently resume the rhythms of daily life through cooperation following shocks.” In the case of a terror threat, networks of social capital become lifelines for individuals, families and communities to access resources – social infrastructure – that allow them to carry on in spite of the challenges they might face (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016). Bonding capital comes from strong ties, with individuals’ closest social networks (e.g. family, friends, kin); bridging social capital through loose connections (e.g. social and religious groups, scene, professional connections); and linking social capital through connections between individuals and those with institutional power (e.g. decision makers, politicians, representatives) (Aldrich & Meyer, 2015). In different ways, these social ties can provide protection against ongoing stressors and shocks. Hypothetically, high levels of bonding social capital could mean that an individual is able to easily reach out or seek help from a family member; high levels of bridging social capital could provide that same individual to access resources beyond those available through their closer social networks, expanding the possibilities of their coping and recovery capacity; and linking social capital might mean that that individuals are able to leverage their connections to have their experience and challenges heard by those in positions of power.
By this logic, developing bonding, bridging and linking social capital is theorised to lead to increased community resilience.

From a terrorism prevention standpoint, community resilience is positioned socially and psychologically in relation to radicalisation. The resilience paradigm is mobilised under a “strengths-based” or “affirmative” regime (Stephens et al., 2019), with efforts to counter-terrorism focus on developing community capacity: to reject hostile terror narratives, intra-community reporting, and cultivating protective factors against radicalisation (i.e. employment, educational engagement, civic participation, etc.) (see Grossman & Tahiri, 2015; Joosse, Bucerius, & Thompson, 2015; Thomas et al., 2017). Under the paradigm of resilience, community empowerment is privileged over coercive law enforcement; individuals and communities are rendered as “vulnerable” rather than victims; and the focus is on bottom-up rather than top-down tactics (Chandler 2012, p. 223). Many of the interventions funded by these new security schemes have been remarkably similar to those funded by social cohesion, social inclusion, community resilience, and multicultural infrastructure. Examples drawn from the European Union include: interfaith meetings, professional development seminars, police-run sports teams, clubs and competitions, citizenship education programming, and establishment of helpdesks at which the public can access information on signs of radicalisation and responsive intervention methods (Schmid, 2013a, p. 51). Underpinning these programs is the idea that individuals and communities seen as “vulnerable” to violent radicalisation can be enlisted in programs through which their resilience to radicalisation can be developed. Some describe this resilience as the product of cultivated national loyalties, improved relationships and collaboration with law enforcement, and communities learning to self-manage risk (Briggs, 2010; Chandler, 2012). Others have resisted this notion of vulnerability by highlighting the rarity of young people who are recruited by terror organisations, and majority who are, in fact, actively critical of radicalisation or terror group narratives. For example, Joosse, Bucerius and Thompson (2015, p. 827) argue that there is power in the “narrative incredulity” or “storied rejections” within Canada’s Somali diaspora. They invert the notion of counternarratives that must be cultivated as part of a CVE program, instead recognise this “incredulity” as an already existing and powerful resource for terrorism prevention. On the one hand, resilience is envisaged as the capacity to divert frustration and hostility away from illegal violent expression, toward or in
support of legal radicalism in the form of activism – as critical and active citizenship (Spalek & Lambert, 2008).

Some see this framing as an offloading of responsibility to prevent terrorism from the state to communities themselves, who are then expected to self-police (Ragazzi, 2016). While this model is framed in security policies and strategies as empowering communities, resilience critics warn that this framing also serves to place the risk and responsibility squarely on the shoulders of “vulnerable” communities – in this case, to prevent terrorism (Davoudi et al., 2012, p. 305). For example, scholars warn of the “grave” toll placed on family members when compelled to report loved ones exhibiting “signs” of radicalisation (Thomas et al., 2017). Here, there is a risk that rolling back state supports in the name of community resilience, and transferring the burden of this responsibility onto marginalised communities alone, can in fact result in the erosion of resilience (Coaffee & Fussey, 2015; Davoudi et al., 2012).

The implicit locatedness of community resilience – combined with social cohesion – has made it a good policy “fit” with terrorism prevention. The necessity of a localised, context-specific strategy has been seen as vital, given the continuous risk of “distant and global concerns can [gain] currency only when they are able to feed off local, everyday, personal grievances” (Briggs et al. 2006, p. 13). To address the perceived risk factor of local grievances feeding the radicalisation process, prevention strategies have tended to focus on “local solutions to local problems” (Lowndes et al. 2010, p. 123). It is at this intersection that various place-based programs are captured in the auspice of a national security agenda. These programs, often underwritten by the notion of “common ground” have framed a vision of resilient communities as those that can maintain social cohesion in the face of ongoing stresses and unexpected shocks (Aly, 2013; Husband & Alam, 2011; Richards, 2011).

State-community partnerships or community-led CVE approaches have been recognised in policy for their inclusionary potential and fit with narratives of social cohesion, liberalism, democracy, belonging and citizenship (e.g. The White House, 2011; Victorian Government, 2015). In this way it has been possible for states to render interventions as neutral, community-empowering investments. However, as Spalek and Lambert (2010, p. 105) insist, community-based counter-terrorism is never neutral and partnerships are never balanced. With this in mind,
the following section presents dominant themes of critique associated with soft security policy and strategies to counter violent extremism.

2.6 Major critiques of soft security policy

Summarizing the points raised in this discussion, critics of prevention and soft security measures have highlighted that community outreach and community-based counterterrorism is never neutral, and partnerships cannot necessarily be balanced (Spalek and Lambert 2010, p. 105). The major concerns expressed in the counterterrorism literature include:

- disputes over funding allocation (O'Toole, DeHanas, & Modood, 2012; Richards, 2011);
- rendering of legitimate and illegitimate partners (O’Toole, Meer, DeHanas, Jones, & Modood, 2016; Spalek & Intoual, 2007);
- making of suspect communities (Awan, 2012; Choudhury, 2010; Mary J. Hickman, Lyn Thomas, Henri C. Nickels, & Sara Silvestri, 2012; Vermeulen, 2014);
- securitisation of Muslims (Akbarzadeh, 2016; Bonino, 2012; Brown & Saeed, 2015; McCaffrey, 2016);
- community engagement privileging community “centres” over “peripheries” (Klausen 2009; Bartlett et al. 2010; O'Toole et al. 2012);
- social service workers in compromised relationships with clients and students (Kühle & Lindekeilde, 2010; Awan, 2012; O’Donnell, 2016; Mattson & Säljö, 2018; Cherney et al., 2017);
- questions of effectiveness, in light of the difficulties associated with evaluation (Lum et al., 2008; Lindekeilde 2012c);
- accusations of intel-gathering in disguise (Awan, 2012; Innes, 2006; Kundnani, 2009; Spalek & O'Rawe, 2014);
- lack of police competencies (interpersonal, social, political) and cultural sensitivity (d'Appolonia, 2010);
- failure to engage with concerns over foreign policy (Abbas, 2007; d'Appolonia, 2010);
- difficulties associated with trust-building—which takes time and openness, that cannot always be fulfilled (Innes, 2006; Spalek & Lambert, 2010).
In the next section, four key components of enacting soft security policy are outlined, highlighting challenges and concerns identified from critical terrorism scholarship.

**Supporting dialogue and establishing partnerships**

The central remit of terrorism prevention strategies has been building partnerships between state and non-state actors and agencies. Primarily this has meant developing connections between selected community organisations and either funding agencies or national security police agents. Objectives of these collaborations are, generally, to foster openness and counter-narratives to those expressed in extremist ideologies; to encourage information-sharing that is mutually beneficial; to repair community and police relations where they have been tarnished; and to create a forum in which community concerns can be voiced and heard.

Underlying the partnership model of counter-terrorism policing is the assumption that terrorists and potential terrorists are social actors embedded in networks, or rather, communities of some kind (Sageman, 2004). Therefore, partnerships between state organisations and community organisations can produce avenues for intervening and averting ideological and social processes that can lead to radicalisation and violent mobilisation (Briggs, Fieschi, & Lownsbrough, 2006). One way in which this is achieved is by helping or supporting community leaders to present alternative, and what are deemed to be more moderate, “counter-narratives” to those offered by extremist ideologues (Grossman, 2014; Schmid, 2013a).

Leaving aside the question of who decides what narratives are considered too radical, and what a moderate narrative should look like, criticism over the partnership model has predominantly been concerned with the selection of partners, and its consequences. Klausen (2009) describes the unavoidable socio-political complexities of choosing some community partners while excluding others. Referencing the British Prevent program, Klausen describes the implicit risk of community-based partnerships (p. 415):

> One is political. Governments worry about becoming “entrapped” by Muslim groups and the political consequences of embracing Muslims as “partners”.

> Muslim groups have the same worry about the authorities. The need to build partnerships with representatives has put the police in the unenviable position of having to pick partners and, while Muslim groups have been receptive to the challenge, working with one group often excludes working with another.
In his paper, Klausen explains the tension that developed as a result of a partnership between the Metropolitan Police and a particular Muslim community group. In this instance, Muhammed Abdul Bari, Secretary of the General Muslim Council of Britain, was angered by what he saw as a move that sidelined his organisation. In effect, the Prevent program circumvented umbrella organisations, like the General Muslim Council of Britain, in favour of a more localised and neighbourhood-level approach. This move also frustrated others, including high-ranking members of the Church of England, who accused the British Government of showing “favouritism to Muslims” (p. 415). Government funding is always controversial. Nevertheless, the conflict presented by Klausen highlights how adversarial inter- and intra-community relations are easily enflamed by affronts to institutional order and perceptions of inequitable distribution of funds.

**Understanding community complexity**

Recognizing diversity within religious, ethnic, or political communities is important to avoiding further distress and antagonism within and between community groups and/or state agencies in efforts to prevent violent radicalisation. As has been well established, community is a contestable term and is regularly enlisted in government policy and strategies to organise collections of individuals sharing some particular quality—be it religion, politics, or ethnicity (Spalek, 2012). While used positively to designate a national community under the banner of social cohesion, for many individuals, the designation of, for instance, “the Muslim community” or “the Sikh Community” is alienating and misleading (Nagra, 2011). Innes (2006, p. 231) shares an interview with a British police officer, apparently frustrated at the rendering of a monolithic Muslim community: “There is no such thing as THE Muslim community. There is a hugely complex set of people making up different sub-sections of a community who have different divisions, rivalries and factions.”

Policing through community partnerships is shown here to be a highly sensitive and nuanced project. Attempts to sweep multiple stakeholders into a homogenous community that is expected to speak with a single voice, Innes suggests, will inevitably inflame tensions, and be counterproductive to state-efforts that aim to foster trusting and meaningful partnerships. Innes warns (p. 231): “First, as peoples’ conception of belonging become more tightly defined, and they no longer feel that who they are is sufficiently represented by broader classifications of
identity, the potential for intergroup tensions is increased.” Community intelligence, it is suggested by Spalek (2012), provides police with avenues for understanding the complexities of inter-community relations (Hanniman, 2008). Similarly, Innes posits that this is precisely the kind of intelligence authorities need to “circumvent the intelligence gaps and blind spots that seemingly inhere in their established methods” (2006, p. 230). Different organisations will, after all, have “different sets of priorities” (Spalek and Lambert 2010, p. 105), and to undertake comprehensive engagement it is argued that these different sets of priorities must first be acknowledged and understood.

When identifying partners, Bartlett et al., (2010, p. 29) argue that community-engagement efforts should focus not just on the centre—the most visible sites of religious, ethnic or political communities—but equally, if not more importantly, include and be responsive to diversity by engaging the periphery (see also Grossman, 2014). Indeed, O’Toole et al., (2012) reflect on Britain’s Prevent program and argue that to counter violent radicalisation, outreach must engage non-violent extremists. They posit that some of these organisations are, in fact, key (i.e. embedded in local governance structures) to effectively diffusing trajectories of radicalisation to violent extremism, to avoid amplifying local antagonisms, and to foster more collaborative or cohesive inter-community relations (see also Lindekilde, 2012d). As the number of groups that fall under anti-terror legislation rises, Spalek and Imatoual (2009) have surmised that more and more individuals will be excluded from engagement mechanisms. This outlook would appear to be antithetical to the inclusive intentions of soft security policy and programming.

Although community-based policing sometimes attempts to recognise diversity and difference between different community groups, community structures can obscure the diversity within them. For instance, Spalek and Lambert (2010, p. 105) argue that in the rollout of Britain’s Prevent strategy, community representatives were generally middle-aged and older men, disconnected from the experiences and immediate concerns of youth and females. While multiple communities were engaged under the partnership model, the effectiveness of this strategy was compromised by intra-community dynamics, which were more difficult to regulate. Being attentive to diversity within communities, and to who does and doesn’t have voice within those groups, is an important aspect of comprehensive community engagement.
Soft security and “moderation”: the limits of inclusion

Another cautionary warning, through critique of the selection of community-partners, is the possibility of rendering some community groups as legitimate and others as illegitimate (Spalek and Imtoual 2007). This critique is raised repeatedly in scholarly research over how citizenship is defined, particularly for young people (Anwar, 1998; Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010; Kennelly, 2011; Nayak, 2003). In the counter-terrorism literature it becomes a matter of good citizens being defined by their selection and participation in community engagement programs. For instance, commenting on community engagement strategies involving Muslim communities in Australia, Spalek and Imtoual describe a “tenuous path between being a ‘good’ Muslim community member and/or being a ‘good’ citizen” (p. 185). Just like with the multiculturalism and integration debates, aspects of an individual’s identity are divided and set in a state of opposition and competition (Spalek and Lambert, 2008; Dillabough and Kennelly, 2010).

Perceived through the lens of radicalisation and terrorism, non-participation (whether self-elected or by exclusion) essentially pits individuals or communities in an adversarial relationship with the state.

Similarly, the Danish government’s action plan for preventing violent radicalisation, “A Common and Safe Future”, has been criticised for its narrow conception of citizenship, ruling out non-violent radicalisation, and imposing subsequent limitations on free speech (Lindekilde, 2012d). Lindekilde writes of the Danish action plan (p. 111):

> The action plan to prevent radicalisation is, in short, all about formation of responsible, liberal citizens at the expense of “radical” identities, and the two fundamental subject positions are understood in terms of either-or. Either you take on the liberal identity, or you take on a radical identity and become the target of corrective policies of intervention. This perception leaves little room for, for example, verbally supporting violent groups like Hamas or al-Shabaab and at the same time being a responsible, liberal citizen.

The result, Lindekilde (2012d) warns, is that key community leaders may withdraw from public debate in fear of being labeled radical and thus delegitimised. He argues that in Denmark, while
these individuals at risk of being labeled radical might not be the most integrated or assimilated liberal citizens, rendering them a security threat is counterproductive and unjust:

Such Muslim actors, be they local imams, community leaders, or influential sheiks, may very well be the best suited to reach young Muslims flirting with violent jihadism. But [...] they would lose their legitimacy if they first had to comply with the premises of the radicalisation discourse by confirming democratic ideals and dismissing principles of sharia. So if the authorities were to make use of such actors in the battle against radicalisation it would mean overlooking intolerant and non-integrationist perspectives for the sake of addressing security concerns. So far the Danish authorities have been very reluctant to do this. (Lindekilde 2012d, p. 30)

Michele Grossman (2014) calls for a more inclusive approach, where peripheral voices are not excluded by virtue of their extreme tendencies. Rather, she advocates for deliberate engagement of peripheral voices, matched with investment in critical thinking skills development that might lead to the cultivation of counter- or counterterrorism narratives. This kind of engagement, however, carries a certain amount of risk.

These challenges speak to the question previously raised: what and whose message is considered to be moderate? And further, it highlights an unresolved and important question: when community leaders are selected, how are their rights and autonomy to be protected, within a state-community partnership model?

**Location matters in community partnerships**

Another consideration, in thinking about how partnerships are devised between state actors and community agents, is the location in which they are enacted. In the UK context Prevent programs have been rolled out in local settings including municipal governments, religious institutions and community centres and schools, and have been subject to sweeping critique (e.g. CLG, 2010). The “where” of CVE is garnering attention as socio-cultural and contextual factors are increasingly understood to provide both opportunities and threats to community relations, experiences of soft counter-terrorism interventions, civic participation, and access to integral services and supports. Cherney et al., (2017) in Australia and Mattsson (2019) in Sweden highlight the potential for compromised trust and service outcomes when local service providers
are in a position where they are required to report on their clients, or - in the case of Küle and Lindekilde’s study – their students (Kühle & Lindekilde, 2010).

In some nations, youth-targeted soft security programs have been proposed for schools. Numerous scholars have been explicit in contesting the role of educational institutions in national security and terrorism prevention regimes (Awan, 2012; Mattsson & Säljö, 2018; O’Donnell, 2016). The argument is that teachers and professors should not be responsible for monitoring their students; that reporting requirements undermine the productive and necessarily trusting relationships that can exist between teachers and students. Nevertheless, universities and schools are sited as key arenas for soft security counter-terrorism programming, in part based on the unsubstantiated profile of the university-educated terrorist. In the UK, Simcox, Stuart, and Ahmed (2010) report that only one-third of terrorist offences, as of 2010, have been committed by university-educated individuals. Awan (2012, p. 1174) explains that this number is not revealing when compared with Britain’s national university educated average, with 40 percent of British young people attending university.

Under Danish counter-radicalisation policy, schools were identified as key sites for soft security interventions. Under the “School–Social Services–Police” (SSP) partnership, schoolteachers were trained to specifically identify radicalisation predictors, to recognise trajectories of extremist radicalisation toward violence, and to instigate pre-emptive interventions (Lindekilde, 2012d). In their study of young Muslims impacted by counter-terrorism policies in the Danish city of Aarhus, Kühle and Lindekilde (2010, p. 130) report that schools programs were met with resistance by some teachers, who felt their responsibility to and relationships with their students would be compromised by the task to “spot signs of radicalization.”

In a slightly different approach, a prevention program in Australia incorporated counter-terrorism programming into mainstream high school curriculum (Aly, Taylor, & Karnovsky, 2014; Taylor, Taylor, Karnovsky, Aly, & Taylor, 2017). In a novel approach that has seen the Resilience strand of Australia’s counter-terrorism strategy shift from solely funding programs targeting Muslim youth exclusively, a new program, “Beyond Bali,” was first trialled in high schools in 2012. Teachers were not enlisted as surveyors, but were instead responsible for moral development teaching modules (Aly et al., 2014, p. 379). The Program includes five modules, each intended to “build social cognitive resilience to violent extremism by preparing students to challenge the influence of violent extremism that can lead to moral disengagement” (p370).
Program exercises are all based on 2002 Bali bombing (in which 88 Australians were killed) and its impact, with activities requiring students to reflect on moral dilemmas related to the event. These “dilemmas” allow them to question their values in a safe environment, and think through conflict resolution and “making good decisions” (p. 380). Taylor et al., (2017) recognise the limits of the program that focuses the effects of terrorism, rather than its causes; victims’ stories, rather than perpetrators’. The burden on participating Muslim students and teaching staff to manage classroom dynamics through such sensitive material remains challenging, however this kind of programming is seen to bring complexity and dialogue into classrooms with a transformative learning approach.

Others have considered a more critical approach to the way education institutions and other social infrastructure might be conceived of as sites for terrorism prevention. Davies (2016) proposes a transitional justice approach that she terms “positive insecurity,” comprised of four key framing principles of inclusivity, contact theory (or encounters with difference), bridging and linking, and active citizenship. There is substantial research to suggest value in support of youth engagement through developing supporting youth activism (HoSang, 2006; Sutton & Kemp, 2011). Davies (2016) argues that in the case of CVE, it is possible to subvert the securitising effects by bringing difficult conversations into classrooms, allowing for conflict, critique and open debate, and to “build habits of engagement” in non-violent participation.

Nevertheless, engaging social infrastructure, like schools, and those whose role it is to support youth through everyday and challenging periods like teachers, social and community works remains contentious (Mattsson & Säljö, 2018). According to Awan (2012), envisioning schools, universities, mosques and community centres as potential “breeding grounds” for extremism and terrorist violence produces geographies of suspicion, fear and exclusion. Moreover, Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) remind us that counter-terrorism prevention strategies are relatively recent, are generally experimental, and based on still superficial understandings of “radicalisation” (see also Mattsson & Säljö, 2018). As such, scholars have warned of further alienating populations already subject to significant discrimination, marginalisation and deprivation by tasking support workers in key service spaces (i.e. schools, community centres, and religious spaces) with surveillance and the role of moral police significantly reduces the provision of spaces of belonging, acceptance and of open discussion.
Particularly challenging in these kinds of soft security partnerships is the need to balance autonomy, empowerment, and support of local actors, engaged in what are ultimately state-initiated programs. While communities might share the concerns expressed in preventative policies, the ways in which they are enacted, through partnerships, inevitably requires negotiation (Cherney et al., 2017; Husband & Alam, 2011; H. Jones, 2013). Further, the sites in which these partnerships unfold can never be neutral. Just as there are challenges inherent in conflating integration and security agendas, so too are there conflicts of interest in conflating community, education, and other kinds of social spaces with security agendas.

**State-community relations & the problem of trust**

Partnerships between state-agents and community organisations require levels of trust and commitment that are unlikely to be even. Because partnerships are developed, based on state-level policy directives, communities are engaged through this frame, and thus, through an already established set of objectives. As such, trust is a key element of an effective partnership (Hanniman, 2008; McDonald, 2012). Many partnership models involve the participation of state-agents, like police. Initiating state-community partnerships based on openness between parties (likely more one way than the other) is made particularly tenuous if there has been a history of targeted and/or over-policing and subsequent “trust deficit” (Dalgard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016; Grossman & Sharples, 2010; Innes, 2006; Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009). With trust writ as a key element of soft security policy—trust in the state, that is—state agents must be particularly attentive to their contextual histories in particular locations and with particular communities.

Minoritised communities have been disproportionately impacted by the use of stop-and-search police tactics, both within and outside of the national security context. Bowling and Philips (2003) report that as well as being subject to greater levels of surveillance and repeatedly rendered as suspect, minoritised communities are simultaneously under-policing as victims. Pantazis and Pemberton (2009) report that after 9-11 in the UK, Black and Asian populations were disproportionately targeted by stop and search powers, by a factor of three. In 2017, Black British citizens were eight times more likely to be stopped, and minority ethnic groups were four times more likely to be stopped and searched (Bartkowiak-Théron & Asquith, 2019, p. 8; Dodd, 2017).

This situation makes for shaky ground on which to enact soft security strategies, with police as community-partners talking about trust and information-sharing (Innes, 2006). In studies
conducted by Spalek and Lambert (2010, p. 107; see also Lambert, 2008), they found that individuals who had first-hand experience of anti-terror measures “were less likely to engage with state authorities in the future.” A study by Cherney and Murphy (2013) revealed that in Australia, experiences with and perceptions of procedural justice were essential in community willingness to support law enforcement in counter terrorism efforts. In this context, community partnerships cannot be meaningful without first acknowledging pre-existing and historically antagonistic relationships, and the need to rehabilitate, recover, and redefine the role of police, and their community relationships–a kind of law enforcement reset (Cherney & Murphy, 2013).

Part of this process, in moving toward a soft security community policing strategy necessarily involves state agents seeking consent from community partners. Reflecting on the UK’s Prevent strategy, Briggs argues that without consent counter-terrorism operations become unsustainable and at constant risk of causing the very effects they aim to curb (Briggs, 2010, p. 973; see also, Coaffee & Fussey, 2015):

> The police and Security Service cannot act without the consent of the communities they are there to protect, because they need communities to extend to them the benefit of the doubt when they make mistakes, and forgive them infringements of civil liberties that might happen in the heat of the moment (although civil liberties should be fiercely guarded at all times). The nature of the threat from Al-Qaeda, which is determined to cause maximum damage without warning, compels the police to intervene much earlier than they would in other circumstances, which increases the likelihood of mistakes.

The sustainability of this model, according to Briggs, is made possible by strong resilient relationships that can withstand the sometimes-contradictory stressors imposed by trying to blend top-down and bottom-up policing strategies.

Building resilient relationships, however, is made difficult by high police officer and social service worker turnover. As Spalek, McDonald, and El Alwa (2011a, p. 20) state: “it is personal relationships that matter.” They argue that with a strong brand name or reputation based on consistency, mutual understanding, and predictability, the barrier presented by, for example, high police officer turnover rates may be mitigated. Failing this, in moments in which civil liberties
are infringed upon, unsuccessful trust-building projects and community engagement can undermine all previous efforts to foster security (Lindekilde, 2012a, 2012b; Sheptycki, 2007). Scholars critical of what are seen to be imbalanced soft security partnerships cite a lack of sincerity, transparency, and visibility on the part of state agents. Following concerns over staff turnover (seen as a lack of commitment), tall orders of understanding (for when civil liberties are infringed upon and mistakes made), and in light of histories of over-policing and racial profiling, Spalek and Lambert (2010) call for sensitivity and reflexivity in the relationships between state agents and community members. Highlighting the very complex conditions under which these partnerships are engaged, Spalek and Lambert cite examples of reciprocal information sharing and dialogue between community members and police, in which counter-terrorism, community issues, and policing strategies and impacts could be discussed. Other scholars have raised similar arguments for more open and reciprocal dialogue between marginalised communities and police, as a way of developing police competencies around cultural sensitivity, ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity, foreign policy, and transnational politics (d’Appolonia, 2010; Berns-McGown, 2013; Cherney & Hartley, 2017).

Repeatedly in the literature, community distress is expressed with instances of disingenuous community-based policing, particularly in relation to counter-terrorism policing. Basia Spalek (2012, p. 76), voicing the concern of many (i.e. Baker, 2012; Spalek & O’Rawe, 2014), asks whether state engagements and partnerships with community groups are merely intelligence-gathering in disguise? Awan’s (2011) use of the term “community surveillance” expresses the deep scepticism felt by critics of the present state of preventative soft security. In the UK, Innes (2006) found that relations between British Muslims and policing agencies have, in many cases, been damaged by Prevent policing, and that reception of the community-outreach model has been mixed. Spalek, El Awa, and McDonald (2011a, p. 19) reported that generally British Muslims responses to “Prevent” policing had been positive, however a greater “level of concern and dissatisfaction among younger British Muslim men” was expressed, paired with the suggestion that “counterterrorism policing was being abused by the police.” Again, Cherney and Murphy’s (2013) findings are pertinent, procedural justice is an important indicator of the possibility and effectiveness of community engagement in terrorism prevention.

Ultimately, many critical scholars are calling attention to the perceived and real general lack of accountability of counter-terrorism agents to community partners. In practice, accountability and
transparency require responding to community demands, including those that may not fall under the direct remit of counter-terrorism teams (Grossman, 2017; Basia Spalek, Laura Zahra McDonald, & S El Awa, 2011b, p. 17). Spalek et al. (2011) are explicit in their insistence upon open and candid identification of officers as members of counter-terrorism units, at the outset of any program. Further, they make a strong case for the upfront negotiation of information sharing as a two-way relationship. In addition to the reinvention, or policing reset, noted previously, these tactics are proposed in response to the exclusive and secretive culture of hard counter-terrorism security practice (Spalek, McDonald et al., 2011, p. 18). With a culture of openness, clarity, and transparency, Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) claim that opportunities can be created in which rumours, media reportage, and stereotypes relating to policing operations can be dispelled or elucidated. Further, these kinds of community contracts set out clear expectations and lines of communication, important in the process of developing trust between partners.

However, calls for a more open culture in policing have are not always met with warm reception by police/security agencies, despite a significant body of research stating its value. Briggs (2010) explains that these kinds of open channels of communication go against the grain of traditional policing, with discretionary power shaping a need-to-know culture. As such, Briggs argues that a structural shift is required, to legislate transparent decision-making around funding allocation, reporting, and program delivery (p. 980).

While many engaged communities have been receptive to this directive, it is likely that—as was found by the Home Office RICU—it is not always clear what this should look like in practice (Turnstone, 2010). Further, criticisms of partnerships that end up looking more like public relations exercises (Innes, 2006) or market-research consultations are understood to potentially cause disenfranchisement, leaving communities feeling patronised (Cook, 2006, p. 105).

Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) in the UK, and Hanniman (2008) in Canada, make clear that failing to ensure that community partnerships are based on sincerity, consistency, and longer-term community investment risks undermining established relationships and the possibility of collaborative efforts to counter violent extremism, and arguably civic participation more generally (Vergani et al., 2017).
The problem of evaluation

All over the world, governments are allocating substantial funds to their counter-terrorism and national security budgets. At the same time, governments have increasingly been drawn to the idea of evidence-based policy, which first emerged in the field of clinical health sciences (Young, 2011). However, according to Lum and Kennedy (2012, p. 3), increased counter-terrorism funding “has not been matched by evaluation and assessment regarding the cost-effectiveness of these expenditures.”

According to Young (2011, p. 20), evidence-based approaches to policy were instigated by the clinical health sciences and based on “the belief that ‘science’ and ‘evidence’ are inextricably interconnected.” In other words, the idea of evidence-based policy is based on the conviction that a scientific approach to policy evaluation can produce unbiased information, providing grounds for rational, accountable, ethical, and fiscally responsible decision-making by government (Chalmers, 2003; Lum, W Kennedy, & Sherley, 2008). As such, these evaluations and assessments are often outsourced to private consultancies or public-private partnerships (Lindekilde 2012c, p. 387). Various scholars have pointed to the complexities associated with the labelling of certain kinds of knowledge as “evidence” (Glasby, Walshe, & Harvey, 2007; Marston & Watts, 2003; Sempik, Becker, & Bryman, 2007). In particular, they emphasise the subjective and contextual nature of what becomes considered evidence (Nutley, Walter, & Davies, 2007).

Despite this cautionary warning, many researchers remain adamant that this approach is essential to promoting accountable, responsible, and transparent policy-making (Chalmers, 2003), and specifically in order to moderate the moral panic that is often associated with counter-terrorism policy development (Lum et al., 2008; Lum and Kennedy, 2012). For example, when there is a terrorist incident, the public may expect immediate action and resolution of the issues involved, even though they may not be fully understood (Brannan, Esler, & Anders Strindberg, 2001).

Growth in critical terrorism research in academic journals (e.g. Critical Studies on Terrorism, Terrorism and Political Violence, Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, and the International Journal of Conflict and Violence) remains largely theoretical, lacking grounding in empirical data (Sageman, 2014). In their assessment of the literature, Lum and Kennedy (2012) assert there is an astounding deficiency of empirical analysis and evaluation of counter-terrorism policies.
and programs. In 2006, Lum et al. reported that only 3-4 percent of terrorism publications included some kind of analysis based on empirical information (p. 892). Four years later, Lum (2012) again expressed surprise at the lack of empirical assessment and evaluation. Putting this scarcity into perspective, she reports that “evaluations of police interventions outnumber those on security and counterterrorism more than tenfold” (National Research Council 2010, cited in Lum and Kennedy, 2012, p. 4). While there is a growing library of such research, the historical paucity of empirical research, assessment and evaluation is attributed in large part to definitional struggles, along with what Sageman (2004, p. 565) calls “an unbridgeable gap between academia and the intelligence community.” Notably, in this dissertation, both definitional struggles and this “unbridgeable gap” imposed limitations methodologically and in the analysis, some of which are discussed in Chapter 3.

Before tackling the above-noted definitional issues, it is instructive to outline some of the most common challenges that have been noted, in conducting research on radicalisation toward violence and, particularly, evaluation of programs designed to prevent it:

- The radicalisation process unfolds over time and understanding it requires painstaking, longitudinal analysis, which is difficult to reconcile with the government’s desire for immediate information;
- Researchers need to gain the trust of individuals and/or groups to conduct their investigation—the very same individuals and groups that feel threatened by the securitisation of society;
- Researchers face the same challenges as officials working for security agencies, in identifying radicalised individuals who are willing to take part in studies (the “needle in a haystack” problem);
- Any attempt to validate CVE strategies must face the crucial question of causality. It is exceedingly difficult to know when specific policies are or are not responsible for specific events or outcomes. For example, if a state spends money on CVE and there are fewer incidents, was it the CVE measures that led to this outcome, or some other factors? More precisely, how much of that outcome can be attributed to CVE measures vs. other factors? Answering this question requires many assumptions, each of which is subject to critical debate.
With so many knowledge gaps, combined with a lack of clear and specific evidence-based directives (i.e. “best practice”), security and law enforcement agencies tend to introduce ad-hoc programs and discretionary interventions.

Addressing national security interventions through a preventative framework begs the question of who is at risk? Who are the young people who have been prevented from engaging with terrorist activity? Identifying “end target” (Lindekilde 2012b, p. 340) or at-risk (Heath-Kelly, 2013) populations requires that national security policy become localised, with policy objectives scaled down and specifically targeted. According to many scholars (see Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Spalek, 2012), it is in this process of policy making (i.e. policy knowledge production) and scaling down to implementation–where radicalisation narratives become linear, and indicators become more specific and contained or measurable–that programs may produce and perpetuate a terrorist profile. Despite growing consensus amongst researchers that there is no single terrorist profile, prescriptive profiles and suspect communities continue to emerge through the policy, interventions, and actions of governments (Heath-Kelly, 2012).

With small data samples, data shortages, narrative-based correlations, a lack of longitudinal studies, and limited understanding of what constitutes a person “at risk of extremist radicalisation,” the generation of false positives becomes a serious problem (Heath-Kelly, 2012). Under a security model based on prevention, “the intended impact is that nothing happens, e.g. no radicalisation…proving the negative” (Lindekilde 2012c, p. 398). Given these problems of evaluation, and a strategy of prevention, Heath-Kelly (2012, p. 70) warns of the likelihood of false positives:

\begin{quote}
We might see more mistakes, more “false positives,” now that the policy is explicitly concerned with the lives of those ‘vulnerable’ to extremism, because terrorism knowledge can never encompass the ‘tipping point between the suspect subjectivities it produces and the figure of the terrorist.'
\end{quote}

Lindekilde (2012c) and Heath-Kelly (2013) describe subjective policies and interventions that allow for discretionary policing, and what Butler (Butler, 2006) and Heath-Kelly refer to as “petty sovereignties,” whereby “persons are exposed to the force of sovereign power–and yet later proven innocent” (Heath-Kelly 2013, 79). The implications of false positives have been
raised by various scholars in relation to the formation of suspect communities and attributed to amplified experiences of marginalisation and disenfranchisement.

Reinforcing the difficulties associated with the absence of foundational clarity, Horgan and Braddock (2010, p. 286) argue that trying to develop a set of best practice recommendations, either through policy and program evaluation, is a naïve task. With a diversity of terrorism “types,” related to the interrelation of multiple scales (i.e. Local networks, national or global concerns), “what works in one region could not necessarily be expected to work in another and the internal expectations of the initiatives vary considerably” (p. 286). For Horgan and Braddock, the uncritical use of the concept of “best practice” obscures the complexities associated with the phenomenon of violent extremism and terrorism, and they argue that this approach will inevitably result in more limited, rather than expanded, knowledge and learning.

### 2.7 Making “suspect communities”

The term suspect community has been used in the past to describe the treatment of the Irish Republican Army (Hillyard, 1993), but has more recently seen a revival by scholars describing the treatment and impact of community-targeted counter-terrorism in the UK (see Awan, 2012; Choudhury, 2010; Heath-Kelly, 2013; Mary J. Hickman et al., 2012). A suspect community is a sub-group of the population that has been identified and labelled problematic, and specifically recognised as a threat to the state (Pantzis & Pemberton, 2009, p. 649). Pantzis and Pemberton (2009) encourage us to think of a pyramid, in which the media sits at the bottom and policy at the pinnacle. In this structure language, media and policy interrelate in particular ways, and in the case of terrorism, policy can easily become united with a media discourse of moral panic (Pantazis and Pemberton 2009; see also Dillabough and Kennelly 2010), Islamophobia (Frost, 2008; Kaya, 2011; Poynting & Briskman, 2018), and the resulting public discourse ultimately shapes who the public imagines as suspect (Miller & Sack, 2010; Nickels, Thomas, Hickman, & Silvestri, 2012). But as Randa Abdel-Fattah (2019, p. 2) notes, it is not just in a top-down order that the label of “suspect” and the “regime of truth” that sees Muslim youth as either moderate or extremist occurs, but through the circulation of policies, grants, media, and the public statements of community leaders too.

Critical terrorism scholars who take this position generally describe communities rendered suspect through CVE policies and programs in two key ways: through policy frameworks that conflate vulnerability and a need for support with the prospect of threat and violence, and in
related processes of self-identification that occur when marginalised communities adopt the language of vulnerability to radicalisation to access state-sponsored resources (Abdel-Fattah, 2019; H. Jones, 2013). This critical discourse around suspect communities and the impact of prevention policies is primarily associated with the UK, with some similar accounts in Australia (Spalek and Imatoual, 2009; McCulloch and Pickering, 2012).

CVE policies have not existed in a vacuum, but have been shaped by the political statements and media framing that circulate around them (Boukes, Boomgaarden, Moorman, & de Vreese, 2015). Boukes and colleagues (2015) have shown that there is a direct relationship between public policy development and journalism; elsewhere regarded as “agenda setting” (Husband & Alam, 2011, p. 79). In other words, the commentary, editorial choices and depiction of policies by journalists influences public understanding and reception of policies, producing significant pressures and consequences for policy makers. Husband and Alam’s (2011) study of UK counter-terrorism policy reveals the media context characterised by moral panic and perpetuating “conventional wisdom” radicalisation narratives focused on Muslim youth has directly influenced counter-terrorism policy’s framing and reception in the UK (p. 80). Analysis of British news media revealed that in the majority of cases in which Muslims were noted in articles, it was in reference to terrorism, and in 55 per cent of articles where they were given a voice it was in relation to terrorism (Firmstone et al., 2009, cited in Husband & Alam, 2001, p.81). Research participants expressed anger and distress at the way news media depictions of Muslim and Islam emphasised terrorism potential (p. 81). Husband and Alam’s study highlights how—in light of this media setting—references to CVE policy and programs contribute to anti-Muslim sentiments, support the making of “suspect communities,” securitise Islam, and undo the alleged community-bonding intent of social cohesion policy. They contend that any examination of terrorism prevention policy requires contextualisation from the perspective of both media and political discourse.

In examining the implementation of terrorism prevention policy, researchers in the UK have concluded that CVE programs contain an implicit logic that depicts some individuals as more vulnerable than others. This assumption of vulnerability authorises a politics and practice of pre-emption (Heath-Kelly, 2013), as well as of pre-criminalisation (McCulloch and Pickering, 2009; 2012). Further, in some jurisdictions, it has legitimated the adoption of intrusive measures, including the alleged embedding of under-cover officers in community spaces (Spalek and
O’Rawe, 2014) and, in a number of places, increased stop-and-search powers and pre-detention charges (Pickering et al. 2008; McCulloch and Pickering, 2009; Choudhury, 2010). In the UK and Australia, these practices are seen as undermining social cohesion and multiculturalism standards with interventions targeted at particular sub-populations (i.e., racial profiling, see Spalek and Imtoual, 2007; Awan, 2012). In the Netherlands and Denmark the logic of vulnerability has also amplified pressure to follow more prescriptive immigration and integration policies (Lindekilde, 2012a).

Critics argue that funding that requires community organisations to frame themselves as vulnerable and thus deserving of additional attention from the state, including funds for community development, does those communities a disservice, by requiring them to self-identify as suspect (Spalek and Imtoual, 2007; Kundnani, 2009; Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011). Choudhury and Fenwick (2011, p. ix), in their report for the Equality and Human Rights Commission, described concern over the way the Prevent program both targeted British Muslim communities and put them in a compromising position— in desperate need of financial support, yet requiring negative social identifications in order to access it (see also H. Jones, 2013):

*Muslims working on Prevent often referred to the process of having to rationalise and justify participation, in light of their concerns about its nature and impact. For some, their concerns were countered by realism and pragmatism about the opportunity that [CVE] created for making a difference in their communities (Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011, p. 51).*

Choudhury and Fenwick also cite interviews in which community leaders expressed frustration at having to “misrepresent their activities and to exaggerate the threat in order to secure funding” (p. 51).

Each of these problems speak to the way in the UK, as in Australia, Canada, and elsewhere, there may be an awkward tension between social cohesion agendas and national security goals (Husband and Alam, 2011; Richards, 2011; Hickman et al., 2012). While there may be “well-intentioned” reasoning behind CVE programs, the discourse around “suspect communities” highlights some of the associated problems and unintended consequences.
2.8 Unintended impacts and negative effects

Although, as already noted, evaluations that speak to the efficacy of CVE programming are difficult to undertake and few are representative enough to really refine understandings of the process of radicalisation toward violent extremism, a number of scholars demonstrate grounds for serious concern. Lindekilde’s (2012a, p. 111) question is pertinent:

More precisely, the question investigated is if the neo-liberal intention of preventing radicalisation by shaping and creating liberal-democratic citizens may be counter-productive, and in the worst-case scenario contribute to the creation of oppositional, illiberal identities?

In other words, while evaluations are unable to demonstrate, or even define, what success would look like, equally they are also unable to communicate, for certain, failure. That said, it seems far easier to demonstrate failure than success, and perhaps for this reason, scholarship reporting the failure of prevention campaigns has been relatively robust. The concern though, is that policies and programs intended to foster social cohesion and prevent violent radicalisation could instead serve to amplify inequality, social exclusion (Kundnani, 2009; Spalek & Imatoual, 2007), disenfranchisement, negative relationships with the state and state agents (Eijkman, 2011), and potentially contribute to violent radicalisation and extremism (Lindekilde, 2012a).

Assessing the Prevent policy post-2011, Awan (2012) suggests that the policy may further alienate and stigmatise Muslim communities in Britain, and instead contribute to an environment in which extremist ideologies could gain more traction. In explaining his critique, Awan highlights the tendency of police officers and security agents to profile potential extremists without an evidence base, and to conflate religious participation with vulnerability to extremism, such as envisaging Mosques as “breeding grounds” for extremism (p. 1178).

In the UK and in Europe, Awan (2012) and Eijkman (2011) argue that governments need to better understand the causes of extremism if they are to develop strategies that work to prevent extremism, rather than feed it. Outlining his recommendations for the future of the UK’s Prevent strategy, Awan states (p. 1177):

The Prevent 2011 strategy should do more to challenge and understand what makes someone become an extremist, and begin a process of engagement that
can help remove the ‘suspect’ community label that has been associated with the Muslim community.

Reiterating this warning, Kundani (2009) asserts that “bad” CVE partnerships do more than hurt relationships between those involved; they also shape future possibilities of partnerships, trust more broadly, and influence feelings of communities and individuals toward the state in which they live (also see Eijkman, 2011).

Identity politics are stressed and loyalties divided when communities are labelled as suspect and vulnerable to extremism. For diaspora and ethno-culturally defined communities, Hickman et al. (2012) describe the pressure to pick a side—the national community (i.e. the state) or the local community (i.e. sub-population). Hickman and colleagues’ qualitative study focused on the experiences of Irish and Muslim communities in the UK and involved discussion groups where individuals were invited to share their experiences of and concerns over community-oriented counter-terrorism strategies. One key informant, a British Muslim, explained the experience of feeling divided (Hickman et al., 2012, p. 98):

*The experience is very alienating. And I think, is alienating and creating, is promoting the concept of ‘us and them’ and dividing communities [...] There [are] huge problems with the psychological impact of all this demonisation which it has never been measured and I think that needs to be measured, what psychological impact it has got and how that is going to affect the whole community—people have got a lot of psychosis that is connected to police and security and so forth.*

Hickman et al. (2012), posit that this kind of alienation can pave pathways toward reactive identity formation, highlighting gang participation and the development of more radical politicisation (not necessarily extremist). Similarities are drawn out in the Australian context, where Spalek and Imtoual (2007) confirm this binary of “us” and “them,” explaining that those who seek to avoid being branded suspects are forced to choose between identities—those that are deemed legitimate by the state, and those that are not. Ultimately, this choice may rule out the possibility of productive and resistant politics of participation, and limits legitimate or transparent spaces in which individuals and communities are able to enact their democratic rights to express dissent and protest (p. 197).
While there are instances in which more positive stories of community engagement and counter-radicalisation are surfacing, (see, for example “Beyond Bali” in Australia and HAYAT in Berlin) the general lack of a solid body of evaluative scholarship means that there still remain a lot of unknowns. Choudhury and Fenwick (2011) are pragmatic in their assessment of counter-radicalisation policy and programming in the UK, noting that this strategy has ultimately been an experiment, from which policy makers have been learning as they go. Similarly, Cherney et al.’s (2017) study of the enlistment of local service providers in CVE indicates an absence of critical understanding as to the implications of this new mandate. What this tells us is that there is a great need for critical examination, challenge and critique—all with the knowledge that these policies exist in different socio-cultural and political climates, and at specific sites.

2.9 Conclusions: Escaping the prevention paradox?

Although there has been recent growth in empirically-grounded critical terrorism scholarship, growth remains slow. As noted, empirical data remains a pressing challenge for critical studies of terrorism and counter-terrorism, and its development continues to be stifled by the inherent difficulties in defining the relative concept of terrorism, radicalisation, and what successful disengagement, resilience to violent extremism, and counter-terrorism might look like (Lum and Kennedy, 2010; Lindekkilde, 2012c). However, in the critical scholarship that does exist, concern first and foremost revolves around the impact of attempts to govern risk and potential threats (i.e. Heath-Kelly 2012; 2013). In the various ways that concerns have been articulated over the unintended and negative impacts of soft security measures, a common problem arises: expression of critique and its significance tends to rely on and reinforce the “conventional wisdom” radicalisation trajectory. For instance, various scholars have argued that soft security interventions label individuals and communities as “vulnerable” to radicalisation to violent extremism, produce suspect communities, and thus amplify experiences of marginalisation and disenfranchisement that are seen to be stepping-stones toward terrorist radicalisation trajectories (Eijkman, 2011; Kundnani, 2009; Lindekkilde, 2012a; Spalek and Imatoual, 2007). Whether the scholars themselves support the “conventional wisdom” trajectory of radicalisation (i.e. that alienation, disenfranchisement, and socio-economic deprivation lead to radicalisation that can, under the right circumstances become violent) or not, it has become so influential that these cautionary warnings of unintended consequences of soft prevention strategies easily become trapped in the dominant radicalisation discourse. By my own admission, I too am guilty of this
offense in this chapter, and I actively seek to guard against this throughout this thesis. This “trap” creates a difficult terrain for research that seeks to understand both the phenomena of so-called “homegrown terrorism,” the “how” of prevention regimes, and also the impacts of soft and hard interventions.

Herein lies a case for critical scholarship tackling these questions, outside of the field of critical studies on terrorism. Silke (2004) and Stampinitzky (2010) have both observed that the development of terrorism expertise and research itself has relied heavily on financial and intellectual dependence on government resourcing, in part due to its devaluing via traditional academic means (see also Sageman, 2014). As Stampinitzky (2010, p. 7) explains:

*Terrorism expertise has its origins as an adjunct to the developing counterterrorism apparatus of the state, with the earliest organised efforts at terrorism studies largely sponsored by the state, and often explicitly oriented toward developing practical techniques of control. Perhaps even more significantly, the state has been not just the primary sponsor of knowledge-production, but also the primary consumer of research.*

Often subject to narrow parameters, resulting research becomes focused and narrow too. Additionally, there is often an expectation for research to produce an output that looks like a solution or remedy to the problem of terrorism. Stampinitzky and others (i.e. Schmid, 2004; Norricks, 2009) are also critical of progress hampered by the subjective, relative and politically contingent concept of terrorism. The term violent-extremism attempts to “solve” this definitional conundrum by eschewing the political baggage of “terrorism” in favour of a descriptor of the action (violence) over the affect (terror). But this move fails to override the fixation on defining radicalisation trajectories. While these are all important issues, deserving of scholarly attention and in need of constant critique, what seems to be missed through this focus is a broader consideration of prevention strategies as a single piece of a puzzle that, in the case of the primary terrorism threat outlined in all the strategies referenced here – al Qaida, which has since become displaced by the threat of ISIS – is part of a much more extensive national security strategy.

While prevention, social cohesion, and resilience are celebrated in outlines of soft and local approaches to counter-terrorism over and over again, the persistent hermeneutics of crisis management supersedes comprehensive community-based approaches with hard, top-down and
oppressive security measures. This means that in any given community-level intervention, multiple scales of policy, media coverage, political rhetoric and ground-level policing and surveillance each influence the nature and experience of community-based approaches.

As previously noted, Heath-Kelly (2012) has cautioned that the more knowledge generated about “‘pre-terrorist’ behaviours and risks, the greater the uncertainty about the ‘tipping point’ where a suspect subjectivity morphs into the figure of the terrorist,” and the greater likelihood of producing “false positives” (2012, p. 70). In light of countless legislative developments across national boundaries, legal protections are being reduced in the service of more pre-emptive intelligence gathering, detainments and arrests. Under these conditions, how can state-community partnerships develop trust and open communication when there is no legal protection for those characterised as “vulnerable” to extremism? How are young people to feel appreciated in these imbalanced relationships? How are young people’s democratic rights and freedom of speech to be protected when the radicalisation “tipping point” itself is pre-empted? And where can, in particular, Muslim young people voice their concern over their treatment, the rise of Islamophobia, socio-economic inequality or foreign policy without having their concerns illegitimated by their casting as dangerously radical?

Soft security prevention strategies aspire to localise national security through partnerships that give agency to community organisations and local institutions. These strategies embrace the idea of a micro-politics, of convivial encounters with state actors and security agents that are expected to breed familiarity and thus trust. Furthermore, through these relationships it is hoped that there exists the possibility of negotiating local concerns that, if left unattended, could contribute to breed hostility between the state and its public. However, so far these strategies and much of the critical literature that discusses them, fail to recognise the interdependent nature of the various strands of counter-terrorism policy and strategy along with the inter-scalar dimensions of CVE engagements, and how local actors might navigate these multi-scalar dynamics.

A critique of soft terrorism prevention or countering violent extremism necessarily needs to be located within a larger paradigm that acknowledges 1) the legitimacy of non-violent radicalisation; 2) the value of radicalisation of various forms for the progress of political thought, social and environmental justice (to name a few); 3) the social and political effects of a pre-emptive “soft” security strategy; and 4) the quality of the multi-scalar experience of “the war on
terror” and its multiple “threats,” on the lives of those who are subjected to labels of “vulnerable” or “at risk.” Critical studies of terrorism and terrorism prevention need to do better to locate and recognise the international, transnational and local as overlapping and interdependent. Furthermore, missing from the literature is the perspective of the groundworkers who face these complex circuits and seek to intervene in the everyday lives of those most impacted by them (Cherney et al., 2017). Given the growing role or implication of community service providers (including local government groundworkers) in the securitisation of social policies – as CVE community outreach programs – there is a need to better understand the challenges, opportunities, capacities and affects within this regime.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Developments in terrorism prevention policy and programs have been characterised as ad-hoc, building in a trial-and-error manner. Although it has grown in recent years, critical scholarship has been similarly piecemeal. Evaluations of countering violent extremism programs and terrorism prevention research based on novel empirical data are few (Lum & Kennedy, 2012; Lum, Kennedy, & Sherley, 2006; Lum et al., 2008), and scholarly and policy development has been stifled by the inherent difficulties and subsequent debates over the definitions of terrorism and radicalisation (Heydemann, 2014; Lindekilde, 2012c; Silke, 1996). Empirical studies encounter multiple challenges including, for example, barriers in accessing research “subjects” (i.e. “terrorists” won’t speak with researchers, or are out of reach) and information sensitivities and restrictions (Lindekilde, 2012c; Mastroe, 2016). The lack of a substantial evidence-base and definitional clarity over terrorism prevention, and specifically countering violent extremism (CVE), makes for a particularly messy policy domain. Harris-Horgan et al., put it succinctly, “many CVE approaches cannot define the specifics of what they are preventing, let alone how or whether they have prevented it” (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle, & Zammit, 2016, p. 1). Meanwhile, there is considerable support for a preventative approach to counter-terrorism that continues to push CVE forward, as undefined as it might be, as a necessary component of pre-emptive national security.

Early interventions to curtail radicalisation to violent extremism have been seen to target and stigmatise already marginalised young people; “justified and depoliticised as relationships of care” (de Goede and Simon 2013, p320). There continues to be concern that CVE programs seeking to combat “the material and ideological causes of radicalisation” risk reinforcing them (Lindekilde, 2012c, p. 343). Dillabough and Kennelly’s (2010) study of marginalised youth growing up in global cities acknowledges the myriad ways in which young people are labelled as “problems”, and asks under these circumstances how young people can feel “at home” in a “world where intimations of incipient terrorism, whether considered or casual, have become the new channel for everyday racism and ethnic hysteria” (Dillabough & Kennelly, 2010, p. 15)? When young, racialised Muslims are repeatedly told they don’t belong—through vilification in media and political rhetoric, everyday harassment, and over-policing—but are then engaged by
national security outreach programs that seek to prevent radicalisation to violence by insisting on their belonging, how is this message received? How is belonging circumscribed?

I am indebted to Charles Husband and Yunis Alam (2011), whose study of local government workers implementing the UK’s Prevent strategy in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings from 2005 has provided a model for the study of policy analysis through the study of its implementation. Like Husband and Alam, I do not seek to evaluate CVE effectiveness or policy efficacy with my research program. Rather, my study is interested in the interface of social and security policy. What happens where terrorism prevention and multiculturalism meet? I seek to better understand the nature and potential impacts of this policy entanglement. My research responds to the critiques of scholars who have observed the way that terrorism prevention strategies reframe multiculturalism and social cohesion as components of the national security apparatus, to detrimental effect. While it’s not a question I am able to definitively answer with my research program, this study is motivated by a pressing concern: what is at stake when social policy is predicated on fear?

3.2 Research sites and design, by opportunities and constraints

Until 2017, when I would tell people I was researching terrorism prevention in Australia, the typical response is: “Why? Terrorism isn’t really an issue in Australia.” Indeed, while there had been a small number of attacks, the intensity of the real terrorism threat in Australia has remained at “probable” since the introduction of the current National Terrorism Threat Advisory System (beneath “expected” and “certain”). Discursively, however, terrorism has been at the forefront of Australian border protection policy and political fear-mongering since 9-11, intensified following the Bali bombings, the Sydney Lindt Café siege in 2014, and Parramatta police station shooting in 2015. The influence of these events on legislation and policy has been substantial (see Chapter 4).

Initially it had been my intention to undertake a comparative study between Canada and Australia. Canada and Australia have long shared policy across contexts, particularly as it relates to immigration (Hawkins, 1991; Mann, 2012). I witnessed this policy circuitry in action while attending Canadian Network for research on Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS) workshop in the first year of my PhD program, where Australian researchers and consultants travelled to Ottawa to participate in policy and practice-based discussion with their Canadian and US counterparts. I believed that applying a comparative approach to my observation of how
terrorism prevention programs were shaping up in each of these settings would reveal insights into the ways in which CVE and multicultural policy paradigms might interact under similar but distinct demographic and policy conditions. At the time, the aim was to consider how social policy was becoming securitised under different sets of contextual circumstances. I judged the comparative fit appropriate given that Canada and Australia were at the time, under conservative leadership: PM Stephen Harper in Canada, and PM Tony Abbott in Australia. Both leaders had relegated multiculturalism to a demographic descriptor, and were known to use alienating language, conflating Islam and terrorism. In both settings there was a sense of an encroachment on immigration and multicultural policies by heavy-handed national security agendas.

As I began my fieldwork there was a leadership change in both countries; Australia saw Abbott replaced by the slightly moderated PM Malcolm Turnbull, and Canada experienced a more dramatic shift with the election of PM Justin Trudeau. These leadership changes directly impacted the progress and viability of my comparative research program; CVE policy was put on hiatus as the new government slowly surveyed the policy landscape. Trudeau’s Liberal Party had replaced Harper’s Conservative government of nine years, and there was a great deal of change in the institutional pipeline that impacted the timeline of my study. National security policy and legislation, particularly around counter-terrorism intelligence and sentencing had become a priority issue. In the lead-up to the election Bill C-51 Anti-Terrorism Act and Bill C-24 New Canadian Citizenship Bill were contested, centring around questions of constitutional rights and multiculturalism.3 The instatement of a progressive Liberal government meant that the grounds

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3 Bill C-51, also known as the Anti-Terrorism Act was passed by the Canadian Harper Government in 2015. The controversial Bill broadened the information sharing capacities of Canadian government (including intelligence) agencies, and importantly, would give the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS) the ability to disrupt terror plots. Concerns were raised over what was seen as being a major reduction in transparency and oversight, including allowing agencies to act in ways previously prevented without a formal court order, extensive data gathering, and the potential for misuse. In 2015, Trudeau was elected on a platform in which he promised to repeal Bill C-51. In 2017, the process of repealing Bill C-51 began with introduction of additional oversight, adding limits to government surveillance, among other changes. Bill C-24, also known as the Canadian Citizenship Law Bill, became law in 2014 also under the Harper Government. Under this Law, Canadian citizenship could be rescinded for reasons other than fraud with no right to appeal. The Bill was criticised for creating a second class of citizenship—those for whom citizenship could be revoked in cases where an individual held multiple citizenships, or could potentially hold non-Canadian citizenship. Again, there was concern over the misuse and targeting of immigrants with this new legislation. Both Bills have been interpreted as targeting minority communities and political activists, blurring the lines between democracy, free speech, and criminality in significant ways. For a fuller discussion of Canadian Anti-Terror and Citizenship legislation during this period, see Forcese and Roach (2015).
on which I had planned to undertake transnational comparative research had shifted. Between these two factors, the possibility of comparative research had become far more challenging to rationalise.

The decision to ground my research in a single country, at a single city site, was reinforced as I began to come to terms with the complex circuitry involved in the implementation of national security at the scale of the city. In one single local site’s soft security intervention I encountered three scales of government. I understood quickly that any attempt to fully comprehend the entanglement of terrorism prevention policy with multiculturalism would require following the policy from the national scale, through to the local scale (McCann & Ward, 2012).

Barriers to access are inevitable with the study of national security and terrorism prevention (O’Hare, Coaffee, & Hawkesworth, 2010; Sageman, 2014). After a series of “failures to launch” – including pursuing a proposed ethnographic study of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police’s national security community outreach team until it was halted by “higher ups” at the point of seeking Top Secret Security Clearance – I took stock of these barriers to access and how I might circumnavigate them in a way that would allow me to maintain my research focus. My familiarity and professional experience in Australia, and Victoria specifically, provided me with a “way in” to the research that might have otherwise proved challenging. Drawing on contacts with previous Victorian government colleagues I quickly gained access to a key “policy elite” from the Victorian Community Resilience Unit (CRU), the Victorian government’s terrorism prevention team. It was through this “gatekeeper” (and their vouching for me) that I was invited to future meetings with staff from the CRU and the Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMAC). These initial meetings and informal conversations over coffee were essential to my scoping and provided for further introductions to government staff and non-government actors involved in terrorism prevention in and around Melbourne.

My research sites and program emerged as much from opportunism as deliberate methodological design. Once granted access to the halls of the Victorian state government, I arrived at an immediate impression that state government bureaucrats working in the terrorism prevention space were driven by concern over, and in response to, the federal government-generated national security context (as will be discussed in Chapter 5). In this way, I came to see the Victorian state government as a filter through which national policy moved on its way to the local scale. Through an incidental conversation with an academic colleague, I was alerted to the
presence of an Interfaith Officer in my old home municipality who was interested in engaging in CVE at the local scale. Her recommendation was endorsed by a member of CRU staff, and when I contacted him, he was immediately receptive to some kind of collaboration or research participation. The sampling for the purposes of conducting ethnographic research was effectively a snowball process, and the feeling of serendipity likely a reflection of the moment in time during which CVE was unfolding as a new, unchartered frontier in the Victorian setting. This relative openness I encountered throughout the early phase of my research is documented in Chapter 5.

The instability and constant shifting ground of the federal government – in both leadership and institutional arrangements – made finding an opportune time to engage federal bureaucrats difficult. My field trips to Australia repeatedly coincided with leadership changes, pre-election and post-election periods of “freeze” and departmental re-shuffles. In light of these conditions, I discerned that interviews with federal bureaucrats would be unfruitful. My sense that I would have difficulty penetrating beneath the “hidden transcripts” of Canberra’s policy elites was reinforced during attendance at the Safeguarding Australia conference in May 2016; despite the almost exclusive attendance of “insiders”, staff from the Attorney-General’s Department and the Australian Federal Police were tight-lipped and remained strictly on-script in the Q&A following their presentations.

I therefore resolved to consider the national scale through policy, political speech, and institutional arrangements and therefore documentary analysis provided a way into comprehending from “where” policy travelled downstream (discussed in Chapter 4). Here I recognised that terrorism prevention policies, and CVE itself, are part of a global marketplace (McCann & Ward, 2012). Consultants, bureaucrats and academic researchers are all participants in this market that sustains the policy adoption and learning through doing experimentation, in the absence of a substantial library of empirical studies. It was my own participation in these spaces that initially led me to this research project, after all.

3.3 Sources and methods

Like Ahmed (2012, p. 6), I quickly learnt that “documents, once written, acquire lives of their own.” I have treated terrorism prevention policy as my (immutable) object of study, with my attention directed at the life of the policy – reception, interpretation, implementation and effects. Following these documents around means following them into what becomes their institutional
and physical form (Ahmed, 2012, p. 12). Put another way, I have considered the circuitry of terrorism prevention policy, particularly in its downstream journey, to where policy is made “real,” to the “prosaic netherworlds of policy implementation” (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 24). It is in the spaces of translation and implementation where “diversity practitioners” or “ground workers” become policy interlocutors, the actors who use the policies in their institutional and physical form, in places or nodes where they become situated (Ahmed, 2012; Husband & Alam, 2011).

To interrogate the Australian terrorism prevention policy’s foundational claim of its compatibility with multiculturalism, my research program engaged policy translators and program implementers who, aware of these challenges, are left to work through them. Close examination of the process of “working through” these apparent discrepancies and contradictions, revealed “gaps” between policy, discourse and implementation, and uncovered persistent problems as well as possibilities (Czaika & De Haas, 2013). It is in these gaps that my project contributes to expanding the study of how terrorism prevention policy operates (or doesn’t). Through the experience of these workers, it becomes possible to better comprehend what it means to implement national security policy within the rubric of local social service provision. First-hand accounts in interviews and in the course of participant observation revealed the ways policy processing plays out. It also expands the potential for exploring the ways in which soft security and social service provision; and CVE and social cohesion; national security and multiculturalism interact and impact one another on a daily basis, and in practice.

My research used a mix of methods and is guided by a grounded approach. Grounded theory emphasises the possibility of developing theory from observation and analysis of observed empirical realities (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Following this approach, observing and interviewing actors involved in the translation and implementation of CVE policies and programs over an extended period of time, allowed for theoretical analysis and a rich account of how policy translation and implementation as a process of “discovery.” Because grounded theory recognises that phenomena change continuously and are never static, this approach incorporates change into its process by a method that “provisionally” held data as it was collected, confirming its significance by repetition in interviews, observations and document analysis. Throughout the research period, politicians, staff, policies, strategies, legislation, implementation plans, as well as the cultural and political climate continued to change. My
project struggled with but responded to this inevitable flux by documenting significant changes, and by anchoring a focus on the experience of the policy-makers and implementation actors’ experiences throughout this period, in an effort to capture the interplay between “change” and its grounded impacts.

Consequently, while interested in the journey of policy from national to local scale, this thesis is primarily oriented toward the local scale of policy implementation. Interviews and document analysis were thickened by a more in-depth ethnographic study of a single local government site. The central focus of my research has thus been a terrorism prevention program in situ; recognising the ecology in which that program came into being. Following Greenhalgh (2008, p. xv), I understand there to be a feedback loop between policy constructs and the institutions that craft them, but also the individual actors who make up those institutions.

The context of national security, terrorism prevention policy and its implementation is “socially constructed and discursively constituted” (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 23). Public policy does not exist in a vacuum, but in a constellation of political and media discourse, hierarchies, and interests (Boukes et al., 2015). In Husband and Alam’s (2011) study of UK terrorism prevention policy, they explicitly examine the media context and its explicit influence in framing terrorism prevention policy and its reception. Their study revealed how CVE policy and programs become enlisted by anti-Muslim public sentiment, supporting the making of “suspect communities”, and undoing the community-bonding intent of social cohesion policy. As such, examining the implementation of terrorism prevention at the local scale requires contextualization from the perspective of both popular discourse and political rhetoric. To this end, I undertook documentary analysis that allowed me to contextualise local policy implementation through the discursive context of national security policy at the federal level, and again at the state level. This work informs, in particular, Chapter 4’s focus on the national scale, and Chapter 5’s attention to the state-level reception and adaptation of national security policy.

From the early stages of my research, I was connected — both directly and indirectly — with staff in all the above-noted organisations and Departments. Perhaps a testament to my relative “insider” status (discussed below), without having sought formal interviews, in a number of cases I was offered interviews. In total I conducted 25 semi-structured interviews with 21 individuals (Table 3.1). I met with participants and conducted the interviews one-on-one over 60-90 minutes each. These included four state bureaucrats, thirteen local government officers
and one councillor, and five CVE program staff from a range of NGOs. Follow-up interviews were conducted with key individuals, including three key local government officers at the ethnographic field site, and with one state government policy officer. In all cases of interviews with state and local government participants, I received permission to note individuals by their institutional roles but not names. In the case of NGO actors, aside from the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), participants expressed ambivalence around naming their organisations and we together decided to maintain their anonymity.

Table 3.1: Summary of semi-structured interviews and their function in the research design.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview participants</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Dean*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Interviews were largely used to document first-person accounts of activities in local government setting, including exposure to national security policy and programming (including CVE). These interviews were also used to cross-check participatory observations, provide alternative perspectives from staff on single topics or issues, and to aid development of interpretation and analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Interviews primarily focused on other local government experience with national security, CVE and multicultural policy. These interviews provided alternative perspectives to Dean, the primary site under study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Government of Victoria</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interviews explored policy development, translation and implementation at the state scale; negotiation of multicultural and national security policy; and state government activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other CVE/NGO Actors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interviews explored past and current experiences of engaging in CVE, through local government and NGO engagements. These interviews provided important context, in particular, for ambivalences of NGOs and other agencies engaging with federal government, and the tensions between national security and multicultural policy and programming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the focus of the research was somewhat narrowly defined by the three-tiered policy journey from federal, to Victorian state and then to a specific local site, interviews were conducted with actors outside of these agencies. Interviews with local government workers from other local councils and NGO actors were valuable in avoiding “entrapment” within these

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4 City of Dean refers to the local government under study. Although anonymity was not required for the study, it is referred to as City of Dean to limit exposure through keyword searches and alerts.
defined institutional spaces. For instance, interviews with local government workers where CVE programs were specifically not being adopted were important to appreciating the perceived “risks” of engaging in terrorism prevention at the local government scale. Further, interviews with NGO actors provided perspectives from outside the state that were at times more critical and at others pragmatic. These interviews, in addition to the broad spectrum of informal meetings I undertook with agents outside of my designated study boundaries supported my effort to, as Kuus (2013, p. 7) puts it, minimise my “risk of entrapment in the technocratic echo-chamber”.

Because of both the sensitive nature of this area of work, its newness, and its political volatility, naming agencies can have potentially negative impacts for both program participants and relationships of trust between policy and program actors and engaged communities. As was seen in a number of instances throughout the period of study, leaked information around applications for funding and existing state-funded programs in the aftermath of a terror event resulted as part of a political “blame game,” compromising the continuity of program funding and both NGO and state agency reputations. As such, there was an apprehension around full disclosure and despite interest in co-producing knowledge through participation in research projects, details were carefully guarded (O’Hare et al., 2010). In a few cases where individuals were willing to be named in the research, I anonymised their participation if I felt their identity may be likely to expose others who had requested anonymity.

For some participants, the interviews were seen as opportunities to discuss or process some of the questions they had themselves about the work they were doing. For example, as I explained my interest in asking policy makers and practitioners about if and how they reconcile CVE, multiculturalism and social cohesion in their own thinking, one policy officer responded:

> Look, I think one of the ongoing challenges we have, and I'd be happy to talk about it, again I don't have a script, so probably talking out loud and thinking out loud, thinking out loud, as I go... I would be really interested in talking some more about that.

I was surprised at this general willingness. On the one hand I wondered if it was just that I was in the “right place at the right time,” when individuals were yet to feel the political consequences of a program gone wrong. It could also have been a strategic manoeuvre of charismatic policy
elites, acknowledging eschewing their use of “political script” (Kuus, 2013). Or perhaps it was my presentation as an almost-insider: a Caucasian 30-year-old Australian-Canadian PhD student, both local and distant, with state and local government professional credentials, membership in the Canadian network for research on Terrorism Security and Society (TSAS), and a PhD supervisor with influence, who was at the time TSAS co-Director. Whatever the reason, the tone of the interviews allowed for unexpected dialogue and moved beyond the “extractive” (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 26).

My strategy with these interviews was to initially have research participants detail their day-to-day practices and the specifics of how they see the development and implementation of terrorism prevention policy. Interviews with state-level and local-level policy and program actors were focused on the perceptions of how national policy had travelled to the local scale, and how its reception and implementation were likely to develop or were already developing (Greenhalgh, 2008). Interviews, in particular, at the local government field site were utilised as an opportunity for me to clarify what I was “witnessing,” and to clarify my interpretations and develop confidence in my data interpretation (Kuus, 2013, p. 9). Critically, my ability to ask specific questions “on the record” during these extended interviews allowed me to cross-check my reading of how policy was being interpreted, and how programs were progressing, in addition to opening discussions of individual apprehensions, ambivalences, uncertainty and positionality. These interviews also allowed me to cross-check interpretations of events by different staff working on the same program, as individual positions tended to influence the interpretation of developments. Isolating points of difference between individual interpretations of policy and implementation provided a way into distinguishing between the local state as a single institution, and as collection of individual actors with different motivations, perspectives, degrees of agency and constraint, and modes of operating within the institution (Greenhalgh, 2008).

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5 For example, during the development and implementation of the D-SPEAK program, program officers with more face-time with youth participants tended to have a clearer understanding of why the program was developing as it was. Those who were involved in planning or support roles, with some distance, tended to project their general ambivalence around the CVE project onto their explanations of program development. This was the case when youth participants chose to focus on an anti-euthanasia campaign as their advocacy issue to present to councillors and state Ministers, which turned out to be the result of a miscommunication between youth participants and their Sheikh. This is event is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.
In processing the audio-recorded interview data, I followed a basic method of first transcribing and then manual coding. I read and re-read the interviews to identify recurring themes and concepts. As per my previously noted grounded method, I looked for patterns, deduced and cross-checked themes and elaborated sub-themes accordingly. Where recurrent themes emerged, I looked for specific iterations and differences in expression and interpretation that could add nuance as sub-themes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). This process relied heavily too on the combination of long interviews with observations gathered during the local government ethnographic fieldwork (see 3.4). This combination allowed me to begin to sketch out the contours of my analytical chapters, with emergent themes generating their sub-headings.

3.4 Ethnography at the local scale

Kuus posits that, “In theory, ethnography refers to the methodology of endeavouring to make sense of how others make sense of the world” (Kuus, 2013, p. 117). Generally speaking, my research program was designed to dig into the various ways in which, primarily, state actors were making sense of terrorism prevention policy and its relationship to multiculturalism and social cohesion. This was achieved by observing and documenting the ways in which, in particular, ground level workers put terrorism prevention policy to work: how they sought funds, how they designed programs, and how they sought to rationalise or justify their engagement in CVE. Moving between the discursively constructed national scale to examine the journey through the state and implementation at the local provided a framework for seeing the gaps between what was said and what was done.

I followed terrorism prevention policy between May 2016 and August 2017, at a local government, Dean City Council (Dean). While not strictly an institutional ethnography, a significant component of the fieldwork for this thesis was undertaken in an institutional setting and drew on institutional ethnographic methodological practices, including participant-observation in institutional spaces, interviews conducted within the physical spaces of the institution, and following key actors (Billo & Mountz, 2016, p. 10). Over this time period, there were two distinct phases of participant observation. The first began in May 2016 prior to initiation of the CVE program, D-SPEAK. The second, began with the approval of funds in May 2017, and rapid program design and implementation. Phase 1 was characterised as a period of policy reception, interpretation, and terrain mapping, while Phase 2 was focused more on policy
implementation, policy in practice. Following from policy reception, to interpretation and then to implementation provided unprecedented contextual appreciation for how ultimately the policy materialised as a youth outreach program. Throughout the entire period of study, I remained in regular contact with Equity and Diversity (E&D) Unit staff, conducted interviews, would regularly attend meetings and receive updates over coffee, and receive relevant documents and correspondence over email.

Phase 1 included a six-week period of “time on the inside” beginning in May 2016, embedded in the physical space of the E&D Unit, responsible for the CVE program I followed a year later (Billo & Mountz, 2016, p. 11). I was allocated a desk amongst the E&D Unit staff, introduced and spent approximately 3-4 days a week working from that desk, shadowing the Interfaith Officer during his daily engagements with community agencies and other staff, and providing material support in the preparation of a literature review and grant application. At least three times a week, there would be time to break with the Interfaith and Multicultural Affairs Officer, with whom I followed most closely, to have a coffee at Tasties Coffee Shop and discuss progress, his concerns and insecurities, and his plans. I had a strong feeling I was fast being his confidante; he expressed gratitude for the opportunity to process, question, reflect and sometimes vent his frustrations. I often wondered how our dynamic might be different were I not a white non-Muslim 30-year old woman, who also happened to be an attentive listener, invested in following and seeing his labour. Was his usual flow—stream of consciousness—as he chatted with me over coffee, evidence of his comfort, and my non-threatening status? The intimacy these kinds of moments afforded, extended his willingness to include me in episodes of his everyday work. He would typically take me along to all his community meetings throughout the week, with various religious and community leaders. For example, I attended a series of meetings with him as he worked on preparations for an upcoming Interfaith conference. I participated in meetings where we workshoped grant applications and met with staff at the Dean Ethnic Communities Council to discuss room bookings and resourcing. I helped with two community consultations: one with Muslim youth at an evening homework club, and for another I documented and analysed the results of a public consultation on the topic of the community safety of Muslims in Dean. Much of my time during Phase 1 was spent sitting at a desk in the open plan E&D office, where I worked on the literature review and participated in informal office discussions around the various staff portfolios. This exposure was essential to my appreciation of individual E&D Unit staff, and their individual and collective intentions in their
work. This exposure also helped me to understand the bureaucratic challenges that are inevitable in a financially constrained local government setting.

My presence was somewhat disruptive and in the first couple of weeks comments were made by the E&D Unit coordinator that suggested a degree of self-consciousness: “you’re really seeing us in all our mess.” However, my capacity to support staff in the process of reviewing literature, applying for funding, and bringing a critical lens to an area in which the Unit felt ambivalent and inexperienced, rendered me a useful resource during this time. My knowledge of the CVE literature, by virtue of my PhD student status and involvement in the Canadian Research Network on Terrorism, Security and Society (TSAS) was, in some ways, my currency in this ethnographic exchange. Once inside, however, it grew into something more—a critical friend and friend. At the end of Phase 1 the staff organised a celebration with cake and coffee, during which they presented me with a Dean lapel pin and welcomed me “to the family.” As I note later, this presented me with both the privilege of access, but also the later challenge of negotiating my own sense of “betrayal” that I arrived at in the process of writing the dissertation.

Phase 2 took place in 2017, with a 12-week period of closely following the funded D-SPEAK project from the Working Group initiation meeting to the completion of the first period of program funding. This phase also included participant-observation, but through an incremental presence timed with the bi-monthly meetings at the Dean offices. New staff were employed during this phase, and staff who had a lesser presence in Phase 1 became more involved in Phase 2, bringing new perspectives to the policy reception and interpretation during discussions over implementation. During Phase 2, the bi-monthly meetings provided more structure to my participant observation, influenced too by a more deliberative work practice by staff. At the Working Group initiation meeting, a model of “reflective practice” was endorsed by the group that included the E&D coordinator to collect written reflections from staff after meetings. This commitment to reflexive practice underpinned the reasoning behind endorsing my presence, too. At the early stages, I participated in this reflective process too and in response to one of my submissions where I expressed my own wariness as an observer documenting work-in-progress, the coordinator responded over email:

_I was mindful of this last week – and realised I was under ‘scrutiny’ – albeit for the public good! – but reflected afterwards about my own standards and professional ethics._
Gilmer observes the way that participant observation, or ethnographic immersion, allow the researcher “to observe the minutiae of daily work” and “the power struggles made within the office” (VandeBerg and Gilmer 2014 cited in Billo & Mountz, 2016, p. 11). Participant-observation during Phase 1 was particularly important for coming to understand the way in which the CVE program was later positioned, the individuals who “ran” it, and how different actors became more or less critical during Phase 2. In this way it became possible to read the CVE program as a response to national security strategy and policy, tempered by the specific dynamics within the local state institution.

3.5 Limits of interpretation

Disclosure and scrutiny

As I previously noted, I came to this research as much through serendipity as by deliberate design. Barriers to access and constraints on disclosure have inevitably impacted my effort to answer the question of how terrorism prevention might securitise multicultural policies. As O’Hare and colleagues (2010, p. 244) warned, undertaking research in the field of national security policy is always marked by “an aversion to disclosure and scrutiny.” While O’Hare et al., recommend collaborative research as a response to this obstacle, and while I often considered my relationship with the local government Equity and Diversity Unit as collaborative (i.e. “critical friend”), I was reminded on a few occasions of the limits of collaborative research in this space, and the political pressure and limitations imposed on disclosure. My plan to co-author a chapter with staff from the local government under study was thwarted by the concern, at the time, over revealing the local government’s identity by naming co-authors. I was contacted at one point by a state government official who “encouraged” me to send my draft chapters to him for review and reminded me – in what I found to be a patronising tone – of the risks associated with revealing the geography and potentially identity of participants in a CVE program. It had never been my intention to name participants or identify community agencies explicitly in my published work, and I was familiar with the risks he described. Furthermore, I had engaged in open dialogue with research participants about the pros and cons of transparency in this research. The willingness of Dean to be identified in the study was intrinsic to their desire to be transparent about engaging in this terrorism prevention space, to both hold themselves accountable and to speak back to the associations and politics of national security in Australia. Generically referring to the Somali organisation (SO) engaged with Dean was also discussed.
Given the broad coverage of African-Australians in news coverage over the course of the research, and in the context of the narrative and arguments that came out of the dissertation analysis, it was felt that such generic reference was appropriate. As is outlined in Chapter 6, Dean’s stance on CVE was oftentimes a critical response to national rhetoric as well as state government policy directives and the voices of the youth participants projected publicly.

**Access, positionality, betrayal**

Common problems I encountered throughout my thesis research could be characterised by either not knowing enough or knowing too much. It has often been the case that I have not known enough. While frustrating, this is unsurprising. National security policy and programs writ-large develop in meeting rooms and conferences governed by the Chatham House Rule. As is reflected in Lum and colleagues’ surveys (Lum & Kennedy, 2012; Lum et al., 2006; Lum et al., 2008), empirics are sparse in counter-terrorism scholarship. During the period in which I was frequently attending TSAS meetings I bore witness to this circulation of knowledge and anecdotal evidence. This proved useful in my early interviews with state government bureaucrats, as I was able to leverage my association with TSAS to gain access to key actors, and once granted access to these bureaucrats I was also able to present as “in the know.” However, less frequent participation in such meetings in the latter part of my research has left me feeling slightly less confident in my ability to anticipate the knowledge of policy elites. Working in the interface of academic research and policy means there is always a fear of, in particular, telling people things they already know, and thus losing credibility. In cases where I have known too much, this has been challenging in writing up my research findings.

In many cases key actors were unwilling to speak with me “on the record” but willing to speak very frankly “off the record.” These conversations were useful in mapping the terrain and understanding “what matters” and to whom. However, it has at times put me in a difficult position in the writing of this dissertation, as it has prevented me from explaining the why and how of some policy decisions. In some ways it has also prevented me from presenting a richer picture of those who advocate strongly for soft terrorism prevention and CVE programming.

These considerations have resulted in limitations to my interpretations, and as much I as have tried to circumvent them, there are traces of these limits in what is included and excluded from the thesis and, at times, the appearance of a confirmatory approach or bias.
At times I felt acutely the absurdity of my role as researcher in the space of policy implementation. In interviews with key actors, like the community engagement worker responsible for implementing Dean’s CVE program—a Muslim woman of colour, who was also the same age as me—I was humbled by her extensive (insider) knowledge, experience, generous insights and sensitivity. Given her own personal experience, I was moved by her willingness to share it, and her clear sense of purpose and rationalisation for being involved in Dean’s program (see Chapter 6). The interview ended with me questioning why I was there when her description and experience of the program, directed at policy elites, would be far more poignant and enlightening. Instead I was there as an interlocutor—a white, non-Muslim interlocutor, no less—recording her voice, transcribing her words and assembling them in my thesis. The transcript of that interview alone answered my persistent question of what constitutes “policy relevant research.”

I was humbled by moments like these and reminded too of my situated—partial and embodied—knowledge (Haraway, 1991, p. 193). In my analysis and writing I have sought to be mindful of the situatedness of my knowledge and attempted to craft a “useable objectivity” through qualified writing and triangulated research practice. The process of writing, in particular, the extended ethnographic case study at Dean City Council, was made more challenging by the sense of betrayal I felt; a result of “the intimate entanglements that emerge through friendship and working ethnographic relationships” (Billo & Mountz, 2016, p. 11, see also Stacey, 1988; Visweswaran, 1994; Mountz, 2007). There were two kinds of betrayal I felt. One was in the “simple” act of interpreting and using the words of others at times has felt like betrayal, by virtue of the limitations I experience in understanding what it would feel like to be Muslim, to be racialised, to be surveilled in grocery stores and regularly selected at airports for random additional screening. The implications of the securitisation of multicultural policy and of social welfare are for me a step removed from my personhood. The second betrayal I felt was in the knowledge of the personal lives of the local government workers, their private lives, domestic challenges and insecurities which were often shared with me in ways that felt like “confidences” rather than moments under observation. In her study of local governments implementing community cohesion policy and programs, Hannah Jones’ (H. Jones, 2014b) addresses an absence in research that considers the affective dimension of local government workers. While I have incorporated a degree of this in my analysis (see Chapter 4), omissions have resulted from my own sense of personal responsibility to those whom I observed at Dean, and with whom I
developed meaningful and ongoing relationships with since initiating the research relationship in 2016.

Throughout the various stages of the research I have reflected on the role and responsibility of the researcher. In conversations with groundworker participants, in particular, we discussed how I could “value-add” through our interviews and my presence in the office, rather than simply “mine.” I recognise there is complexity in this desire too, which undoes notions or the performance of neutrality (especially in interviewing) and provokes questions of bias and complicity. However, given the access and intimacy I was afforded through extended ethnographic fieldwork, that included participation in and observation of the process of developing a CVE program focused on, and co-led by young Muslim people of colour, I was driven by my own desire for transparency and by a framing of research as critical service. This is not something I have fully resolved in my own mind but expect to continue to grapple with throughout my career. The words of Sophie Rudolph—a white Australian Settler researcher working in the space of Indigenous studies—resonate this necessarily ongoing and uncomfortable process:

*To be a critic and take seriously these conditions is, therefore, to be uncomfortably aware of the ways in which the critic cannot always escape complicities in the legacies and violence of the past, even when attempting to highlight injustice. It is how one addresses this complicity, I suggest, that is what matters.* (Rudolph, 2019, p. 80)

### 3.6 Conclusion: The research destination

At previously noted, I have struggled with the question of how this could be “policy relevant research” when I was not evaluating the outcomes of terrorism prevention policies or CVE programs. Without “policy relevance” who would be the audience for me research project? Through my interviews, and my extended presence at the Dean E&D office, I came to realise that there was a thirst for deeper understanding of what happens when these policies, based on limited evidence, were being adopted without adequate time and opportunity for critical reflection. Ward (2006) notes that knowledge production is the result of interaction and dialogue between researchers and publics. He states that, “there is a sense that through interaction and
reciprocity progress is “possible,” whatever that might mean in different situations” (p. 499). This thesis doesn’t so much have a “destination,” as much as I might have wanted it to.

Rather, the purpose of this study is to extend, deepen and enrich understanding of the complexity and stakes involved in the development and implementation of terrorism prevention policy in a multicultural context. In the following chapter, I begin to map out the federal policy context and paradox that directly and indirectly influences the local case central to this study.
Chapter 4: The Inclusion Paradox: Terrorism Prevention at the National Scale

4.1 Introduction

During the years spent researching and writing this dissertation Australia has had five Prime Ministers (PM)—a consequence of no less than four leadership “spills” and only two elections. The past few years have been spent learning the new names of constantly changing Australian immigration departments and their responsible Ministers: from the 2012 Department of Immigration and Citizenship, to the 2013 Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and most recently to the Department of Home Affairs. Throughout this politically tumultuous period, the Australian national identity rhetoric has shifted and morphed (if only slightly), influenced by the national security politics of the day.

This chapter sets out Australia’s current approach to national security, including the threat landscape and the prevention landscape. The threat landscape, as articulated through federal government policy and statements, has been primarily concerned with the rising threat of ISIS enacted through “homegrown terrorism” and foreign fighters. The absence of concern over the rise of the far right, particularly as it relates to anti-immigration populism and white supremacy, is perhaps reflective of what many see as an atmosphere of tacit endorsement. As has been the case elsewhere, at the federal level, the focus on “homegrown terrorism” has prescribed a primary focus on first- and second-generation migrants, typically Muslim youth (for example, in the UK see: Kundnani, 2009; Thomas, 2010). Through this logic there has been a distinct overlapping of immigration and asylum policy with national security strategy. This relationship was made explicit with the formation of the Home Affairs Office in December 2017, which brought together security agencies, immigration and multicultural affairs under one departmental roof.

As has been the case elsewhere (see Chapter 2), the overlapping of social and immigration policies with national security have seen the policy and rhetoric of multiculturalism enlisted in national security defence strategy. Multiculturalism has been a constant descriptor for Australian society since the early 1970s, though the governance regime it encompasses has had many lives. Over the past decade two such lives can be discerned, between PM Julia Gillard’s 2011 multicultural policy statement centred on principles of social inclusion and equality, to PM
Malcolm Turnbull’s declarations of “multicultural success” defined against the threat of terrorism. Given its most recent enlistment in the national security agenda, the latter formulation has enormous relevance for explaining the current Australian approach to terrorism prevention. Therefore, to examine the soft security turn in Australian counter-terrorism (CT), it is vital to begin by considering how multiculturalism has been rhetorically adapted and carried through this turn, under this new threat landscape. In short, this chapter explores how multiculturalism is instrumentalised under national security policy.

*Australia’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy: Strengthening Our Resilience* (2015) prescribes the promotion of social cohesion and increasing social and economic participation as the antidote to violent radicalisation risk factors and identifies local communities as the prevention “frontlines” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, p. 10). As such, the Strategy places the obligation for terrorism prevention at the local scale, in the hands of communities, local groundworkers and street-level bureaucrats.

The relationship between federal and local governments, however, is not simply a matter of two-scale interaction. As soft security policy travels down to local actors it must pass through the state government level, where social and economic participation policy objectives tend to be delegated by the federal government. This means that soft national security strategies are filtered through a state-tier lens (see Chapter 5). In 2015, the federal government’s Strategy was endorsed by the Commonwealth of Australian Governments (COAG), which means that states and territories across Australia were consulted, met and agreed upon a coordinated approach. However, each state has its own distinctive media and political context. Accordingly, the journey of a national strategy into state level policy is informed by both inter-scalar political dynamics and local priorities.

In Chapter 5, I explore how the Victorian government’s terrorism prevention policy can be read as both consistent with the national strategy, and as a reaction against the federal government’s rhetoric. There are both “discursive gaps” and “implementation gaps” between national and state policies, which become evident as the national strategy lands in the state context (Czaika & De Haas, 2013). These gaps produce unique opportunities and challenges for discourse around social cohesion and belonging, as well as terrorism prevention programs.

These “gaps” are again encountered as policy travels one more tier, to the local scale (see Chapter 6). The complex dynamics that exist across the three tiers of Australian federalist
governance present the possibility of seeing more clearly the sometimes divergent or dissenting interpretations of what constitutes national security, multiculturalism and social cohesion. The way in which these concepts become written into state policies and expressed in local programs reveals geographically distinctive interpretations of national identity, social inclusion, exclusion, and possibilities for belonging.

Observing terrorism prevention in a multicultural setting, as a social policy regime framed through a lens of national (in)security risk and fear, this chapter asks:

1. What is Australia’s national approach to terrorism prevention?
2. How has Australian multiculturalism become entangled in national security policy and rhetoric and to what effect?

**The current threat landscape in Australia**

Since 2014, Australia’s official Terrorism Threat Level has remained set at the third of five levels: “Probable” (Australian Government, 2018c). Between 2014-2018, 14 significant disruption operations were reported by the federal government at the stage of “imminent attack planning,” in addition to six planned onshore attacks (Australian Government, 2018c). Figure 4.1 highlights key terror-related events that have informed the current CT infrastructure and focus.

Since the emergence of ISIS and the subsequent declaration of caliphate in 2014, the federal government has reported that the number of individuals becoming radicalised has been steadily growing. Between August 2014 and May 2015, authorities reported they had assisted in the “offloading” of (prevented flying) 284 passengers at international airports, based on “security concerns” — including 17 passengers offloaded in May alone (Bergin et al., 2015, p. 43). The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI, 2015) regards 2014 as a critical turning point in the Australian national security threat landscape. The Sydney Lindt Café siege of December 2014 and the death of two police officers in Melbourne in September 2014 have been considered critical points in narratives of terrorism in Australia; symbolically expressing the real possibility and potential for this kind of extremist violence in Australia.

The 2014 declaration of caliphate led to a rise in individuals leaving Australia to fight in foreign conflicts. The Australian Government has stated that as of May 2018, there were approximately
110 Australians fighting in conflicts in Syria and Iraq, of an estimated 220 individuals who have travelled to support designated terrorist groups in recent years (Kfir, Patel, & Batt, 2018). It is estimated that at least 90 individuals have died fighting and 40 foreign fighters have returned to Australia, but according to authorities no individual has returned to Australia after fighting with ISIS (Kfir et al., 2018). Inside Australia, 160 individuals are allegedly actively working with recognised terrorist organisations (Barker, 2015).

In public and political discourse, this threat landscape has served as justification for extensive legislative change, at least for security-conscious policymakers and national authorities. Notably, rights to citizenship have been reviewed and a regime of citizenship-stripping in cases involving dual-nationals endorsed. As of October 2018, six dual-nationals have been stripped of their Australian citizenship. The first was Kaled Sharrouf in 2015, following the publication of an image of his seven-year old son holding a severed human head (Norman & Gribbin, 2017). Sharrouf was known to authorities, having been arrested in 2005 during Operation Penndenis – then Australia’s largest terrorism raid – and convicted on terrorism charges. Having served four years in prison, he was released and, in 2014, using his brother’s passport, he travelled to Syria to fight with ISIS. In August 2018, a group of five men aged in their 20s and 30s were next to be stripped of their Australian citizenship for their involvement with ISIS in foreign conflict (Borys & Yaxley, 2018). Plans to extend the Minister for Home Affairs’ discretionary powers to strip any individual (not just dual nationals) charged with a terrorism offence of their Australian citizenship have been proposed, making Australia’s citizenship-stripping powers the most extensive in the world (Pillai, 2019).

Following the Bourke Street attack in November 2018, in an effort to convince the Australian public of the initiatives being undertaken and proposed by security, policing and intelligence agencies, PM Morrison presented a counter-terrorism stocktake. Between September 2014 (when the terror threat was raised to “probable”) and November 2018, across Australia, 90 people were charged with terror-related offences resulting from 40 counter-terrorism operations and 14 major disruptions of planned attacks (Maiden, 2018). In November 2018, PM Morrison revealed that there were more than 400 individuals on a “terrorism watchlist” and at least 230 individuals whose passports had been cancelled (to prevent their leaving to fight in foreign conflicts) (Karp, 2018a). In an effort to explain how events like the Bourke Street attack could take place, Morrison explained that there simply were not sufficient resources to surveil all persons of
interest at all times. Resourcing limitations have factored into decision-making around defining priority and “target” communities, with prevention programs overwhelmingly focused on first and second-generation immigrant and refugee youth (Kehoe & Tillett, 2019; Wilson, 2019).  

4.2 Australian institutional context

The dominant terrorism narrative in Australia prior to 2014 was shaped by events that had taken place elsewhere, in which Australian citizens had been victims (Figure 4.1). Both before 2014 and since, the discourse around terrorism has consistently and almost exclusively been associated with so-called “Islamist extremism.” Key events include the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre in which ten Australians were killed, and the Bali Bombings of 2002, in which 202 people were killed, including 88 Australians. The two events of 2014, noted above, provided the foundations for a national counter-terrorism strategy with significantly increased political currency and budget. As expressed by the Prime Minister at the time, Julia Gillard, in Strong and Secure, A Strategy for Australia’s National Security (Australian Government, 2013, p. ii, pii):

*The attacks of 11 September 2001 are the most influential national security event in our recent history. The threat of global terrorism not only shaped the national security landscape of the past decade, but also heralded a new era for national security across the globe. Since then, much of our national security focus has been dedicated to guarding against such an attack occurring on our own soil.*

*Strong and Secure* was Australia’s second national security strategy – following the first, *Counter Terrorism White Paper: Securing Australia, Protecting our Community* (2010) (see Chapter 2). It signalled a more serious threat of domestic radicalisation to extremist violence. At this time, the Attorney-General’s Department (AGD) had been tasked with the responsibility of housing a Countering-Violent Extremism Unit, with $9.7 million over four years, outlined in the 2010-11 Budget. Over half of funding announced for CVE in 2010-11 Budget went to $5,000-

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6 Following the 15 March, 2019, Christchurch mosque shootings, carried out by a radicalised right-wing extremist Australian citizen, there have been calls to redress this focus (Kehoe & Tillett, 2019; Wilson, 2019). This impetus has been reflected in recent Calls for Proposals for CT research and community interventions.
$10,000 grants administered by the Attorney-Generals’ Department. It was during this time that CVE began to take shape in Australia, in an ad-hoc manner. By 2011, based on community feedback, more substantial CVE funding became available under the Building Community Resilience Grants Program (BCRGP), with individual grants of up to $100,000 for programs that fulfilled broad socially cohesive aims, similar to those in the UK’s Prevent program (e.g. mentoring and youth sports programs; see Chapter 2).
Figure 4.1. Significant terrorism related events affecting Australians and Australia’s CT arrangements: 1977-2015, in Australia’s Counter Terrorism Strategy – Strengthening Our Resilience, 2015. Source: Licensed from the Commonwealth of Australia under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia Licence. The Commonwealth of Australia does not necessarily endorse the content of this publication.
Current approach

In 2015, soon after the Sydney Lindt Café hostage crisis, Australia’s third national security strategy was released, *Australia’s Counter Terrorism Strategy – Strengthening Our Resilience* (*Strengthening Our Resilience* or the Strategy) and endorsed by the Commonwealth of Australia Governments (COAG). The Strategy maintains and promotes themes of resilience, social cohesion, and celebrating the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in Australia. Unlike *Strong and Secure* (2013), however, it is explicit in its primary focus: Muslim communities. *Strengthening Our Resilience* identifies ISIL, Al Qaeda and similar groups as the principal national security threat:

“Terrorism based on other ideological, religious, or political beliefs – such as right wing or left wing extremists – is also of concern, though it does not represent the same magnitude of threat as that posed by violent extremists claiming to act in the name of Islam” (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015, pp. v-vi).

The strategy is elaborated in the *National Counter Terrorism Plan* (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017), which is broken into four component parts: prepare, prevent, respond, recover. These elements echo common practice in comparable national settings and appear most directly inspired by the model originally developed in the United Kingdom’s CONTEST strategies (see Chapter 2). Australia’s “prevent” component includes countering violent extremism (CVE) and intelligence-led disruption activities (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, p. 18):

*CVE aims to reduce the risk of individuals becoming or remaining violent extremists and to address the social impacts of violent extremism. CVE activities are distinct from, but complement counterterrorism activities such as investigations and operational responses.*

The objectives of CVE are described along the usual lines of developing community resilience to violent extremism, to divert individuals seen to be “at risk of becoming violent extremists” and highlights potential for rehabilitation. Key stakeholders are identified as: civil society, community organisations, academics, and international partnerships that provide the possibility of collaboration, partnership, and co-designed diversion or prevention programs.
Social cohesion and resilience are the conceptual frameworks on which Australia’s counter-terrorism prevention strand is based. In simple terms this means two things: (1) fostering a cohesive, socially bonded society in which individuals feel a sense of belonging that inoculates them to the attraction of violent extremism, and (2) that in the case of a terrorism event, society will be capable of recovering from the trauma together, rather than precipitating reactionary violence. The prevention paradigm underpins a broad framework of counter-terrorism that aims to interrupt the process and narratives of radicalization to violent extremism. Prevention could occur, for example, through diversion in airports (i.e. no-fly orders or passport suspension), as well as through counter-narratives based on interventions in school classrooms with counter-radicalization curriculum (i.e. Beyond Bali education module, see Aly et al., 2014).

The federal government explicitly recognises that developing social cohesion will fall within the jurisdiction of other non-security-oriented federal government departments, agencies, and programs, but will nonetheless have a preventative impact (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, p. 19):

*Building and sustaining social cohesion at the local level helps create a sense of shared purpose and belonging for all Australians...*

*Australian governments’ activities include funding and conducting social policy programs that support community harmony and address barriers to social and economic participation. While these programs are not funded for security purposes they may indirectly contribute to security by developing protective factors in individuals and groups that can act as buffers against violent extremist influences.*

It is in this recognition of the broad-spectrum welfare-oriented interventions as terrorism prevention that the waters of what constitutes CVE become muddied. In theory, all programs funded through the Department of Social Services could potentially be framed as terrorism prevention. When it comes to funding then, when is a program funded with CT funds, and when is it not? And, does it matter? If so, to whom? I return to these questions in Chapter 6.

**Apparatus & delegation**

Counter terrorism policy and governance is coordinated across various committees and assemblies (Figure 4.2). As is often the case, keeping track of all the acronyms and membership
of each assembly can be difficult. In regard to terrorism prevention, the most important bodies appear to be the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), an intergovernmental forum bringing together state and territory governments, typically twice a year. It is in these meetings, that policy is coordinated, reviewed and endorsed, as was the case with *Strengthening Our Resilience* (2015). Given the delegation of activities to the local scale, as per *Strengthening Our Resilience*, COAG meetings are where state and territory governments discuss, share and negotiate how they will operationalise national security, including counter-terrorism and emergency management planning. As evidenced in Figure 4.2, an international and coordinated outlook is encapsulated in the primacy of the Australia-New Zealand Counter Terrorism Committee (ANZCTC), allowing for transnational capacity building (policy development and operations) and intelligence sharing.

![Intergovernmental Agreements and Coordination Bodies relating to Counter-Terrorism](image)

Figure 4.2: Intergovernmental Agreements and Coordination Bodies relating to Counter-Terrorism (note: “National” refers to nationally coordinated). Source: National Counter-Terrorism Plan, ANZCTC, 2017. Published with permission.

In Australia, CT is overseen directly by the Prime Minister, supported by the Department of Home Affairs. Counter-terrorism interagency coordination includes security, policing, border force and intelligence operational agencies. Until January 2018, the Attorney General’s Department was home to counter-terrorism; however, with the announcement of the new
Department of Home Affairs, the component units of CT were shifted across to this new super-department, to improve coordination across agencies. At present, the Home Affairs Portfolio includes the Australian Border Force (ABF), Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC), and soon the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Outside these five operational bodies, the Portfolio also includes emergency management, transport security, criminal justice, multicultural affairs, and immigration and border control.

The rationale for the new Department was to assemble operational and policy elements that feed the government’s national security agenda (Figure 4.3). Put another way, bringing together these units previously housed in the Attorney General’s Department (security, law enforcement policy and emergency management), the Department of Social Services (multicultural affairs), the Department of Infrastructure (transport security), and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (counter-terrorism and cyber security) is a strong statement of the federal government’s prioritization of national security.

To analyse how national security strategy is received and implemented at the local scale does not require detailing all the various tentacles of operational agencies. That being said, in interviews with both state and local government officials, an awareness of concerns from the community around infiltration and contact with federal intelligence officers was expressed. To fully explore the entire CT assemblage would require empirical data that is beyond the scope of this study – both in regard to access and in regard to scale. These issues are explored more fully in Chapter 3 of this dissertation. Understanding the specific experiences of state and local government reception and implementation of soft CT policy is the focus of this project.
Legal framework

Counter-terrorism legislation change has tended to flow rapidly following terror events. Examples of rapid and far-reaching expanded police powers were observed following the 2005 London bombings (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a) and more recently in France following the 2016 Nice truck attack (Bogain, 2017). Research by Ariane Bogain (2017) has evidenced the public’s willingness to accept “exceptional measures” that reduce their civil liberties, in the aftermath of a terror event, particularly when the consequent reduction in civil liberties is framed through a rationale of protecting human-rights. In a survey of public attitudes toward civil liberties in the context of terror attacks, Davis and Silver (2004) found that trust in government
and individuals’ experiential histories of compromised civil liberties are important factors influencing factors willingness to accept increased restrictions to personal freedoms in the name of terrorism prevention (i.e. African Americans are less willing). When a terror threat is felt to be an immediate threat to one’s safety there generally follows a greater acceptance of restrictions. However, this tendency is found to wane over time, and therefore cannot be used to predict future willingness to trade individual liberties for national security.

The predictable pattern of rapid legislative change, focused on the reduction in individual freedoms in the immediate aftermath of a terror event speaks to the “hermeneutics of crisis management” noted by Brannan and colleagues (2001, p. 4). Brannan et al., find that a crisis management response is combined with an antagonism toward the subject of the threat, which overpowers the motivation to understand the threat, or for that matter, to understand the individual who poses the threat. Rather than asking “why did this happen?” and developing a response to the “why” question, the response is to swiftly clamp down in a show of “hard” security protectionism. Of course, condemnation of such acts of violence is essential, but the condemnation that has often come in the immediate aftermath of a terror event, in Australia and elsewhere, has resulted in the alienation of entire communities based on the vilification of Islam, of immigrants, refugees, and individuals deemed as outsiders (see “Team Australia”). While Brannan and his colleagues originally introduced their concept to describe the “antagonistic relationship” between researchers and their “terrorist” research subjects, it can be argued that this same antagonism extends to the favouring of an immediate legislative response. While counter-terrorism legislation is directly implicated at the “pointy end” of the counter-terrorism system itself, it has been seen to marginalise communities and can directly influence the atmosphere of “softer” interventions (Mitchell, 2015).

Key tools in the CT legislative toolkit include control orders, preventative detention orders, and declared area offences. In Australia, “control orders” are based on a British model, whereby police can arrest and detain individuals “if it substantially helps prevent a terrorist attack” (Australian Government, 2017b). A control order can only be issued by the court, and applications must be received from the Australian Federal Police, with consent from the Minister for Home Affairs. A control order can impose detention, the wearing of a tracking device, and require the constant reporting of movements.
“Preventative detention orders” are another form of Australian control order, that apply to any person aged at least 16-years-old (Australian Government, 2017c). Under these orders, individuals can be detained when there is threat of an imminent terrorist attack or immediately following an attack. Preventative detention orders allow for an individual to be held for between 48-hours (Commonwealth law) and 14 days (state and territory laws, or in combination with Commonwealth regime) for questioning. Law enforcement have described control orders as a measure of “last resort” (Kfir et al., 2018, p. 14). A review of Control Orders and Preventative Detention Orders Annual Reports by the Attorney-General from 2009 to 2017 reveal that during this period no preventative detention orders have been made. The latest reports indicate that in March 2018, only six control orders had been sought (Kfir et al., 2018). However, concern persists as to their future application.

In the case of “declared area offences,” the Minister for Foreign Affairs is responsible for declaring areas in foreign countries as “declared areas” where it is known that hostile activity by a listed terrorist organization is taking place. Currently listed declared areas include the Mosul district in Iraq, and until November 2017, Al-Raqqa province in Syria was listed also (Australian Government, 2018b). Individuals who enter or remain in declared areas are subject to up to 10-years imprisonment upon return to Australia. It has been proposed that individuals found to have travelled to declared areas and returned to Australia be stripped of their citizenship, however this proposal has not yet been passed.

While recognised as playing an important role in preventing terror attacks, these key counter-terrorism legal instruments have been subject to criticism by both public media and non-government agencies. For example, in a Parliamentary review submission, legal experts McGarrity and Williams (cited in Kfir et al., 2018, p. 14) refer to the “law’s reverse onus on proof” that ultimately compromises due process. A similar critique of due process is highlighted by the Australian Human Rights Commission in relation to control orders, which are seen to allow for restrictions on human rights without sufficient justification (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2017). Preventative detention orders are considered particularly controversial as they allow individuals to be detained by the AFP without charge, and without free access to the circumstances of their detainment or evidence that may be held by authorities (Farrell, 2014).

The President of the NSW council of civil liberties, Stephen Banks, stated (Medhora, 2015):
Australia has legislated more than any other country in response to terrorism and the legislation has been utterly counterproductive. What more legislation does is alienate sections of the community. The proposed laws are undoubtedly going to be in breach of human rights standards.

Greg Barnes of the Australian Lawyers Alliance agreed, identifying in particular the amendment to control order provisions which saw the minimum age of individuals subject to the order reduced from 16 to 14-years (Medhora, 2015):

*If you want to further radicalise people, if you want them feeling they are completely alienated from society and you do that to a 14-year-old kid then you’re going the right way about it.*

The legislation was proposed and passed not long after the death of civilian police worker, Curtis Cheng, who was shot and killed outside a western Sydney police station by 15-year-old Farhard Khalil Mohammad (Bright, 2016).

States and territories have extended their counter-terrorism legislation further, in many cases with agreements spanning jurisdictions in order to aid local policing capabilities. In 2017 three new measures were introduced as states and territories agreed to enhance their CT legislation, making it possible to hold terrorism suspects as young as 10-years-old, for up to two weeks without charge; to broadcast terrorism incident warnings over telecommunications networks for cell phones within range of an incident; and adding state and territory driver’s licence photographs to a national database to allow for cross-referencing with facial recognition technology. Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews acknowledged that this development curtailed civil liberties, but reasoned that “national considerations of civil liberties do not trump the very real threat, the very real threat of terror in our country today” (Andrews cited in Yaxley, 2017). Critics, wary of the “scope creep” associated with facial recognition capabilities were vindicated when seven months later, Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton proposed extending the application of biometric technology to target identity crime.

In a similar pattern of reactive legislative amendments, two weeks after the Bourke Street attack, in November 2018, PM Scott Morrison proposed changes to Australian citizenship legislation. As previously noted, this would make it easier to strip dual-nationals convicted of terrorism offences of their Australian citizenship (Doran & Belot, 2018). This move extends PM Tony
Abbott’s 2015 citizenship-stripping legislation, previously limited to dual nationals convicted of terrorism charges who had served six years in prison. The proposed legislation waives the condition of six years served. Legislation like this is found elsewhere, and in Canada critics have argued that it creates two classes of citizens: those protected by single citizenship status – in this case, Canadian-only citizens – and dual nationals who are vulnerable to “citizenship stripping” (Forcese, 2014). In most cases, vulnerable individuals are first and second-generation immigrants. In the Canadian case, there are clear constitutional implications, in particular in relation to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* of which there is no Australian equivalent. Against Australia’s obligations under the UNHRC Conventions on Statelessness, additional legislation was introduced in November 2018 in the form of a new “exclusion order.” This order prevents individuals who have travelled to conflict zones from returning to Australia for at least two years (Karp, 2018b). In this scenario, Australian-only nationals would effectively be rendered stateless.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute has argued that counter-terrorism legislation must carefully balance national security and individual rights. They explain that this is achieved through important oversight mechanisms and in some instances, sunset provisions (Kfir et al., 2018). Observing the remarkably low usage rate of much of this legislation, they astutely argue that, “while in theory these laws are sound and appropriate, serious consideration needs to be given to why they aren’t being used” (Kfir et al., 2018, p. 14).

**Funding**

The 2017-2018 Australian federal government budget allocated $9.3 million for programs to counter violent extremism to prevent terrorism (Australian Government, 2017a). Forward estimates for the following three years estimate that $6.1 million per annum was to be spent on CVE. However, the 2018-2019 budget of $158 million is allocated to what was previously the Attorney General’s National Security and Criminal Justice Program, with no specific designation listed for CVE programs (Australian Government, 2018a). It is expected that a portion of these funds will be allocated to community prevention programs, consistent with the *National Counter-Terrorism Plan* (2017), as has previously been the case. There is a lack of clarity over exactly how and through what channels the federal government will fund CVE programs. Keiran Hardy (2018) points out that $36.6 million has been allocated by the Department of Social Services in a community resilience fund, from which “Grants help to strengthen the capacity of
communities to become more self-reliant and empowered to address local issues” (Australian Government, 2018d). This funding is not designed to address the tenets of what is generally understood to be CVE-specific interventions, addressing ideology and processes of radicalisation. However, it could be indicative of a shift in approach, away from securitising broader social and economic participation, belonging, and social inclusion programming. The implications of this withdrawal from designated federal CVE funding has not yet been explained.

Prior to the establishment of the Home Affairs Department, soft prevention programs were funded through the Attorney-General’s Department, through *Building Community Resilience Grants* that resourced community-oriented programs and the production of “soft” security resources. Between 2015-2017, the federal government spent $1.2 billion on the “hard” side of CT (i.e. intel gathering and security capabilities), and $40 million was spent on CVE and community cohesion programs (Pash, 2015). Of that $40 million, only $2 million was awarded to successful community-level grant applicants (42 successful out of 97 applicants) (Clarke Jones, 2017).

Some state governments have been filling the CVE funding gap, with investment in community programs and de-radicalisation interventions. But, as Hardy (2018) has documented, the soft terrorism prevention funding pales in comparison to hard security funding allocations (Table 4.1). The Victorian approach to CVE, including its funding regime is detailed in Chapter 5.

Table 4.1: Summary of hard counter-terrorism funding compared to soft counter-terrorism funding across select states, October 2016. Source: Hardy, 2018.
Although pre-2018 funding had been available for one-off community-based CVE programs, the uptake of federal funding was not straightforward. Some organisations were resistant to taking federal funds due to negative associations with federal rhetoric and distrust of the federal government and its intelligence agency, ASIO (see Chapters 5 and 6). During this period federal funds were sometimes channelled through state government and awarded to local initiatives on a more ad-hoc basis.

Both hard and soft counter-terrorism funding regimes in Australia remain an understudied area. Understanding the ways in which funds are managed, distributed, and their complex arrangements would be a worthy topic for further investigation. However, issues of confidentiality and high sensitivity would make such a project difficult.

4.3 Narratives of Australian multiculturalism

A close look at multiculturalism reveals the shifting foci of Australian multicultural policy over the past fifty years. What began as a nation building project premised on the notion of the “Australian family” with attempts at times to apply a welfare lens, has in recent years increasingly trended toward security. The trajectory from, and distinction between, welfare and security lenses, and inclusionary/exclusionary policy framing has also influenced public discourse. Despite efforts under the Howard Government in the 1990s to abandon multiculturalism in Australian policy and rhetoric, it has persisted. At the same time in the UK, there was an explicit rejection of multiculturalism and shift to social and community cohesion. In the Australian context, a similar shift has occurred in the policy landscape, but the language of multiculturalism has been retained. Forrest and Dunn (2010) observe a contradiction in Australian multiculturalism discourse whereby public support for cultural diversity is reported across Australia, together with negative attitudes toward multiculturalism. The dissonance between multiculturalism as demographic reality (cultural diversity) and multicultural values (recognition and celebration of “difference”), in part, speaks to the shift from means-based to values-based approaches to social policy (Birt, 2009). It perhaps also provides insight into the way social cohesion is supplanting multiculturalism as a policy ambition, seen in declarations of “successful multiculturalism” (Spoonley et al., 2005). Mapping the meaning of multiculturalism policy (and rhetoric) provides insight into how multiculturalism and national security have become entangled, and the implications for national belonging, inclusion, exclusion and vilification.
In spite of its lack of federal legislative recognition, multiculturalism has persisted in Australian policy discourse. It is this absence of legislative definition that has made it particularly vulnerable to appropriation under different governments and at different times. One need only look at the changing titles of the departments that have been home to immigration policy over time to get a sense of the ways in which immigration, integration, multiculturalism and citizenship have been framed over the course of the last fifty years (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Australia Immigration Department names 1945-2019. Source: Fincher 2001; Dunn 2005; Tate 2009; Koleth 2010; Castles 2016.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department name</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Summary of approach</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration (DI)</td>
<td>1945-1974</td>
<td>• Pre-multiculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• “Populate or perish” post-war migration scheme, settler-migration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• White Australia Policy, assimilationist regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department of Labour and Immigration (DLI)</td>
<td>1974-1975</td>
<td>• Under Whitlam Labour, shift from racial preferencing toward social policy approach</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Social and economic participation central to immigration and integration regime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Introduction of concept of “multi-cultural society” (Minister Al Grassby)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA)</td>
<td>1975-1987</td>
<td>• Under Fraser Liberal government (19751983-) bipartisan support for concept of</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>multiculturalism was achieved, using terminology ‘multicultural’ and ‘cultural</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>pluralism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• ‘Unity’ promoted over assimilationist ‘similarity’; morality as guiding principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Substantial intake of refugees, including boat arrivals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on migrant access to and provision of social services and supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Office for Multicultural Affairs (OMA), given status by location in the Prime</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Minister’s Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Affairs (DILGEA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>social justice and productive diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Expansion of multicultural programs, prioritise increasing participation of “ethnic”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>communities and representation of diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA)</td>
<td>1993-1996</td>
<td>o Investment in immigration and multicultural research and advisory bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Introduction of multicultural nationalist narrative</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) | 1996-2001 | • Under Howard Coalition government, marked retreat from previous constructions of multiculturalism seen as leading to separatism  
• Withdrawal and reduction in funding for new migrant services incl. English language and settlement services  
• Disinvestment in immigration and multicultural research and advisory bodies  
• Immigration with economic lens, shift from family reunification to focus on “skilled migration” |
| Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) | 2001-2006 | • Continuation of Howard Coalition government and economic lens  
• Hostile, anti-asylum and refugee policies  
• Increasingly assimilationist framing of multiculturalism |
| Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (DIMA) | 2006-2007 | • Howard Coalition government, continuation of above  
• Introduction of Australian “citizenship test” |
| Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) | 2007-2013 | • Under Rudd-Gillard Labour government:  
  o Dismantling, and later reinstatement, of anti-asylum and refugee policies  
  o Maintenance of economic lens, with focus on employment outcomes (sponsored skilled migrants)  
  o Reinstatement of multicultural “pride,” framed as “progressive patriotism”  
  o Shift from multiculturalism in policy, toward “social cohesion” and “citizenship” |
| Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) | 2013-2017 | • Under Abbott and Turnbull Coalition governments, strong focus on “securing” borders, including national security and counter-terrorism rationales  
  o Securitization and militarization of asylum  
  o “Migration as threat” rhetoric; “Team Australia” national loyalty rhetoric  
  o “Multicultural success” narrative tied to preventing terrorism |
| Department of Home Affairs | 2017-present | • Under Turnbull and Morrison Coalition governments, maintained focus on security and immigration policy; border protection  
  o Multiculturalism relocated, along with Immigration portfolios to Dept. Home Affairs  
  o “Multicultural success” narrative tied to preventing terrorism |

The Australian government’s most recent multicultural policy statement is titled *Multicultural Australia: United, Strong, Successful* (2015). While related, the three strands of this policy statement are distinct in their framing. A “united” Australia is a socially cohesive Australia, with a shared sense of loyalty, belonging and equal (not equitable) opportunity. A “strong” Australia introduces national security into the multicultural policy frame. And a “successful” Australia, allows for the framing of immigration as enterprising, supportive of global innovation and economic realisation. Here we see the twin drivers of multicultural policy: security and economy, while social or intercultural objectives are contained within a security agenda. In this framing, the social policy objective is to achieve social cohesion that will generate resilience to the dual threats of radicalisation and terrorism. Arguably, multiculturalism, at least in its promotion through Australian federal policy, has always been informed by economic drivers. But in its current iteration, we see it closely nested in a national security regime (see Home
Affairs Department, Figure 4.3). This development can be seen as the latest step in the continuing project of multicultural policy nation-building.

**Nation-building multiculturalism**

Since its inception, multiculturalism in Australia has been envisaged as a nation-building program (Collins, 2013; Mann, 2012; Moran, 2011). Christian Joppke has argued that unlike European interpretations of multiculturalism, this combination is unique to settler societies like Australia and Canada (2004a, p. 244). In Australia, it has created a particularly difficult entanglement with “problems of self-definition” (2004a, p. 244). Rather than being focused on serving minority rights as it does in Europe, multiculturalism in Australia emerged in the 1970s as a collective notion, famously expressed by Al Grassby as “the family of the nation” (Mann, 2012, p. 494). During the incubation stages of a fully-fledged multicultural policy, the Whitlam Government dismantled the longstanding White Australia Policy, which had so vehemently determined Australia’s society to be fundamentally Anglo-Celtic (Tavan, 2005). During this period, which saw increased immigration from non-European countries, such as Lebanon and Vietnam, an ideology and language of multiculturalism became infused in political discourse (Mann, 2012; Moran, 2011). However, it remained paired with a policy of integration. In 1973, Grassby, as Minister for Immigration, addressed parliament with a recommendation to promote multicultural pride:

> A positive and continuing campaign to inculcate in the present and future generations, a feeling of national pride in the achievements of Australians of many national origins in the fields of human endeavour. (Grassby, 14 March 1973)

Grassby’s recommendation received wide support. As did the recommendation that recognition coincide with equal citizenship in order to contribute to a bonding and cohesive national community. From its earliest days, the ideology of multiculturalism in Australia was not just about recognition of already existing diversity but set the tone for an active and productive diversity that would continue and grow national interests.

While the early 1970s were still marked by an integrationist approach and limited non-white immigration, the move to a formal policy of multiculturalism slowly seeped into the Australian popular imaginary. Jatinder Mann (2012), in her revision of the history of multiculturalism in
Australia, contends that the official adoption of multicultural policy can be attributed to the rapid increase of Vietnamese asylum seekers, fleeing the Vietnam War. While under the Whitlam government, Vietnamese fleeing the Vietcong were admitted in smaller numbers, later, under conservative Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, Vietnamese asylum seekers were both welcomed and offered settlement and financial assistance. Recommendations from the *Galbally Report* (1978) expressed the benefits of preservation of immigrant cultures and fostering cultural exchange for the nation, and led to public funding and provision of migrant support services (Jupp, 2002). Funding and service provision was endorsed with a declaration of moral obligation by PM Fraser (Mann, 2012, p. 493). Enlisting moral responsibility as rationale for taking in and supporting asylum seekers and new migrants would require a resilient, robust and confident sense of Australian identity.

Looking back, it is possible to see a disconnect between policy at the top and attitudes on the ground. Insufficient funding and support services inhibited full realization of multiculturalism as policy, beyond rhetoric and ideology. Moreover, Tavan (2005) recounts growing public anxiety over arrivals of Vietnamese refugees. Though Jupp (2002) describes general support for multiculturalism between the late 1970s into the 1990s, Tavan’s point highlights that while politically optimistic, there is an ongoing history of divisiveness (see also Forrest and Dunn 2010).

**Border security multiculturalism, a turning point: the Howard and Hanson years**

Border anxiety reached new peaks during the 1990s, laying the groundwork for increasingly exclusivist visions of Australia. The coalescing of a multicultural national identity over several decades was not sufficient to avert another wave of panic when the arrival of boats carrying asylum seekers to Australian shores spiked significantly (Betts, 2001). In the 2000s, asylum-seekers attracted unprecedented public and political vilification, dramatically transforming their place in the broader Australian imagination (Letki 2008). Most saliently, the new, seemingly inflexible immigration policy of “mandatory detention” for all people arriving by sea without visas underwrote a phase change in the political framing of multiculturalism in Australia (Letki, 2008; Suvendrini Perera, 2009, p. 7). Seemingly, while cosmopolitan multiculturalism continued to be celebrated over espressos and paninis in Little Italy’s all over Australia (Hage, 1998), the national imaginary did not always stretch to include all newcomers.
Along with increasing border insecurity, and a pervasive “Asian invasion” discourse pushed by PM John Howard, the 1990s were also riddled with a national identity politics concerned with “official” Australian history (Shaw, 2009, p. 429). Conservative scholars like Geoffrey Blainey and other “white armband” historians sought to re-write British pride into the contemporary imaginary. In what became known as the “history wars,” Blainey and other “white armbands” attacked “black armband” scholars for challenging official, written Australian history (Blainey, 1993). Howard endorsed a prideful view of Australian history, that actively neglected accounting for past colonial atrocities, celebrating settler-heroism and national achievement (Howard & Trust, 1996; Macintyre & Clark, 2003). This period was thus marked by a turn toward a re-invigorated British heritage as part of a broader program of national self-definition. Amelia Johns (2008) writes of the return of the ANZAC soldier into the national imaginary, via political discourse. She recounts routine speeches in which Howard’s language increasingly defined “Australian values” in terms of “Anzac spirit.” Johns argues that in doing so, Howard elicited a public revisionism that implied a hierarchy of Australian belonging, with British heritage ascendant. Earlier iterations of multiculturalism were undercut by a new exclusivist, nationalistic formation of public discourse (Macintyre & Clark, 2003).

A simmering debate exploded into the popular sphere in the mid-1990s. In 1996, the right-wing firebrand, Pauline Hanson was disendorsed by the conservative centrist, Liberal Party. The party she and her supporters formed in response, One Nation, was vociferously anti-immigration and pro-“traditional”—British or colonial—Australian cultural values (Hage, 1998). When Hanson’s party polled second in the 1998 Queensland state election, receiving almost as many votes as the two leading conservative parties combined, the national political dynamics surrounding multiculturalism were transformed virtually overnight (Green, 2018). Before the election of John Howard, the first Liberal Prime Minister in more than two decades, and Hanson’s rise, PM Paul Keating had promoted Australia as a “hybrid nation,” celebrating “the mixing of ‘imported and home-grown cultures’” (Department of Communications and the Arts, 1994 cited in Dunn, 2005, p. 34). Hanson rejected this vision as she invoked a “flooding” and “dilution” of national identity (Pikó, 2018), demarcating boundaries between “us” and “them.”

*I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians...They have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate.* (Hanson, 1996)
Hanson described multiculturalism as a policy that had punctured holes in an exclusively white, Anglo-Celtic national border. Hanson’s rhetoric imagined a loss of pre-existing, defined national identity in direct opposition to that promoted by Keating. Once again re-elected to the Australian Senate after years in the political wilderness, Hanson would later update and reiterate border anxiety in 2016 – declaring, “now we are in danger of being swamped by Muslims, who bear a culture and ideology that is incompatible with our own” – calling for a ban on Muslim immigration to Australia and “banning the burqa” (Hanson, 2016). Her white nationalist image leaves no space for negotiation and hybridity; instead a “finite and singular national identity…[can] only experience change as a threat” (Pikó, 2018, p. 461). In her Maiden Speech in 1996, Hanson declared (Hanson, 1996, my emphasis):

*I and most Australians want our immigration policy radically reviewed and that of multiculturalism abolished. Of course, I will be called racist but if I can invite whom I want into my home, then I should have the right to have a say in who comes into my country. A true multicultural country can never be strong or united.*

Positioning herself as “just an ordinary Australian” (Rapley, 1998), the plain speaking single mother and former fish-and-chip shop operator mapped out the contours of an increasingly exclusive national identity (Ahluwalia & McCarthy, 1998). Hanson and One Nation’s rise is a significant moment in the narrative that begins with the downscaling of multiculturalism in Australia and climaxes with the Cronulla “race riots” of 2005. Not only did it initiate a large-scale division in nationalist rhetoric, it also created a space in which John Howard, as Prime Minister, was able to appear as moderator while denying new migrants welfare benefits (Galligan & Roberts, 2003; Koleth, 2010a).

Perhaps counter-intuitively, investment in multiculturalism – including its expression in public rhetoric — and immigration have not gone hand in hand. During the early to mid-1990s, Labour PM Paul Keating (1991-1996) was an active proponent of multiculturalism. Yet under Keating migrant intake was substantially cropped. In part a response to economic recession, skilled intake was roughly halved between 1992-1993, and the family stream was also substantially reduced during this time (Betts, 2003, p. 175). In the final years of the Keating Government, immigration quotas began to increase slightly, but remained lower than they had been under the previous Hawke administration. For Keating, multiculturalism was expressed in both rhetoric
and efforts to support immigrant economic and social integration through targeted service provision and efforts to reduce barriers to participation (Birrell, 1996). This approach was expressed in *Our nation: multicultural Australia and the 21st century* (1996), released by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, which promoted a proactive, affirmative action-oriented multicultural vision and strategy for Australia.

Under the Keating government, immigration quotas were reduced but immigrant integration service provision increased. Whereas under the leadership of Howard (1996-2007) an inverse regime was implemented. Howard famously avoided any use or reference to the word “multiculturalism,” attempted to remove the term from Australian policy discourse, and generally expressed and enforced negative rhetoric around immigration, particularly in his strident opposition to accommodating asylum seekers. Yet, under Howard, migration intake increased, with substantial growth in the permanent program in the “skilled” stream, student visas, and the 457 temporary business visa stream (Goethe-Snape, 2018). Many of these leaps coincided with his increasingly hard-line immigration rhetoric. Here again, we see a mismatch between rhetoric and policy.

Under Howard, immigration and integration policy shifted away from social and economic participation, to economic rationalization. Access to welfare by new migrants was stripped back: only humanitarian migrants would be eligible for Austudy (tertiary education and apprenticeship payments) and welfare payments during their first two years, all other immigrants were barred access. It was during this period that immigration quota caps were introduced in new legislation. In the three years between 1995-1996 to 1998-1999, the family reunion stream was subject to a new capping regime, resulting in a reduction from 56,700 to 32,040, and parent visas dropping dramatically from roughly 9,000 to 3,000 (Betts, 2003). This economic focus was expressed through a new language of “diversity dividends” and productive diversity (J. P. Walsh, 2014, p. 293). Multiculturalism as it had been understood from the leadership of Whitlam to Keating was abandoned, but the project of managing ethnocultural diversity remained an ongoing concern. Attempts to coordinate and manage ethnocultural difference were not entirely discarded, but as Walsh (2014, p. 281) explains, they were “re-calibrated to complement the marketization of politics and social relations.”

National identity was repeatedly invoked and defined by immigration policy, and in particular with reference to “unauthorised” arrivals. Hanson’s pronouncements, later repeated by John
Howard, stirred public concern over the arrival of asylum seekers to Australian shores. Howard, in his 2001 election campaign policy launch speech repeated the sentiment of Hanson from five years earlier (Howard, 2001):

*We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.*

In this way, Howard justified the securitization of immigration policy (Clyne, 2005). Not only was promising to secure the safety of Australians from possible terror attacks post-9/11, he was integrating this commitment with a determined and urgent securing of the “Australian way of life” (John Stratton, 2011). Howard made this clear in the same speech (Howard 2001):

*This campaign more than any other that I have been involved in, is very much about the future of the Australia as we know it and the Australia we love so much. It is also about having an uncompromising view about this fundamental right of this country to protect its borders.*

While inferences to multiculturalism were espoused by Howard, its meaning had been transformed. To many, Howard’s multiculturalism was reflected in a neo-liberal definition of citizenship: conditional, and resting upon the expectation of assimilation and self-reliance (Galligan & Roberts, 2003; Joppke, 2004; Suventrini Perera, 2007; John Stratton, 2011).

**Contradictory messaging: Multiculturalism in a climate of terror**

Following the September 11, 2001, attacks on the New York World Trade Centre buildings and the Pentagon in Washington DC, PM Howard invoked a diverse and inclusive nation (Howard, 2001):

*We should understand that barbarism has no ethnicity and evil has no religion. Both around the world and within our own society, we should take pause lest we engage in the evil of scapegoating of individual groups within our society. I have said on a number of occasions that I know that my fellow Australians of Islamic faith are overwhelmingly as appalled about what happened as I am, as an inadequately practising Christian. This is an assault on values common to all the great religions of the world, and it is also an assault on the values of many people who profess no religion. I say to my fellow Australians of Islamic*
faith or of Middle Eastern descent that I extend to you the hand of friendship. You are part of our great society; you are part of the fabric of the great, decent, freedom loving, fair minded Australian nation; and you are as entitled to share my outrage, my sorrow, my anger and my sadness as are others within our community—because wouldn't it be a terrible, tragic, obscene irony if in responding, however we do it as individuals or as nations, to these terrible terrorist attacks we forsook the very things that we believed had been assaulted last Tuesday in New York?

This initial response to this shifting moment viewed in isolation is open, warm, inclusionary – all things Howard rejected in his multiculturalism and immigration policy moves.

Many consider 2001 as a tipping point in Australian foreign policy, with domestic implications (M. McDonald, 2005). Just two months before the abovementioned 9-11 speech to Parliament, the Howard government had refused a Norwegian freighter entry into Australian waters because it was carrying 433 asylum seekers it had rescued from an Australia-bound sinking shipping vessel. The event that later became known as the “Tampa affair” – after the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa – became a central and divisive issue in the 2001 federal election. The confluence of the Tampa Affair and coinciding federal election set the scene for the demonization and framing of asylum seekers and refugees as a significant threat to Australia’s security (McMaster, 2002). This rhetoric, and the Howard government’s immediate re-election, led to the 2001 policy known as the Pacific Solution, or mandatory offshore detention of asylum seekers, and the Border Protection Bill. Both have been heavily critiqued as in breach of the UN 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. The combination of the Tampa Crisis and 9-11 mark an important moment in which the threat of terrorism and threat of asylum-seekers and refugees were overlapped, as Matt McDonald explains (M. McDonald, 2005, p. 298):

In short, the Howard government has played a crucial role in creating a context in which security is primarily understood as involving the (violent) rejection of ethical responsibility to the ‘other’, and the need for a militarised vigilance in protecting Australia’s security in an insecure world.

There are numerous examples of immigration policy and treatment of new migrants being at odds with multicultural policy since its inception, and it continues to be an easy task to find
current examples today. But taking September 11, 2001 as a marker of a national security paradigm shift is important as it signals the beginning of a trend toward blending a far more clearly defined threat with multiculturalism policy. Arguably, this has always been the case, depending on one’s reading of the assimilationist tones of multicultural policy. In one sense, the implied unassimilated threat to a so-called Australian way of life – to Australian values, language and culture – has been ever-present (see for example Dunn, 2005; Hage, 1998). However, in the context of the current conflation of multiculturalism in the service of national security and counter terrorism, we can consider it an important turning point.

In the years following 9-11 and the Tampa Affair, there has been a new wave of national “insecurity” (Johns, 2008; Suventrini Perera, 2007). During this period, national identity was increasingly defined as a lifestyle under threat by violence and insecurity (Perera, 2007). A popular destination for Australian vacationers, the 2002 Bali Bombings resulted in the death of 88 Australian citizens, bringing the “terror” threat closer to home. With it came a call to vigilance in February, 2003, when every Australian household received a letter from the Prime Minister explaining the enclosed “Terror Kit” (Johns, 2008). The letter read (Howard 2003 cited in K. Walsh, 2003):

\[
\text{Dear Fellow Australian, I am writing to you because I believe you and your family should know about some key issues affecting the security of our country... We have strong national security co-ordination arrangements, and our intelligence, law enforcement, defense and emergency services are well-prepared to respond to the threat of terrorism... Australians have every reason to be hopeful and optimistic about the future. We are a strong, free, compassionate society – together, we will look out for Australia and protect the way of life we value so highly.}
\]

Recipients were asked to act as surveillants, looking out for suspicious activity – for example, someone with “a lifestyle that doesn't add up” (K. Walsh, 2003). The exclusionary impact of this kit, along with targeted policies and the public portrayal of the Islamic Other, amplified divisions and with them definitions of citizenship and belonging (Bliuc, McGarty, Hartley, & Muntele Hendres, 2012; Johns, 2008; Poynting & Mason, 2008; Poynting & Noble, 2004; John Stratton, 2011). In this top-down cultural conditioning, and in the context of post-9/11 policy, the
notion of multiculturalism was undermined by racial profiling of “the enemy” (Kühle & Lindekilde, 2012, p. 1608).

Ten years later, in the months following the 2014 Sydney hostage crisis and Endeavour Hills stabbings – both considered terrorism events – another kind of “terror kit” was released by the federal government. It evidenced a new direction in the government’s approach to counter-terrorism, as preventative and with an apparent effort to be more expansive in the definition of the terror threat. The *Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia* (PVERA) handbook (2015) was commissioned by the Attorney General’s Department (AGD) and was produced in collaboration with the Global Terrorism Research Centre (GTReC) at Monash University. The AGD drew on research and expertise provided by scholars and practitioners working at or with GTReC, meaning it was set slightly outside of the government’s otherwise quite targeted CT focus on the threat of ISIS and Islamist extremism.

Media and political discourse played an important role in the way the PVERA handbook was both released and received (Boukes et al., 2015). In the same month that the PVERA handbook was released Australia saw a change in leadership. The conservative Prime Minister at the time, Tony Abbott, had his leadership challenged and was immediately replaced by Malcolm Turnbull, a member of the same conservative party. The approach and language used to talk about matters of national security changed dramatically with new leadership. Under Abbott, the divisiveness of the discourse was significant. Abbot had relied on slogan-like statements such as, “we do have to be vigilant against [home-grown terrorism], and my position is that everyone has got to be on Team Australia,” (Rajca, 2014). On other occasions, Abbott used inflammatory language which was criticized for potentially feeding propaganda to ISIS. For instance, while speaking at a CVE summit in Sydney, in 2015, he stated that “Daesh is coming, if it can, for every person and for every government with a simple message: ‘Submit or die’” (Rajca 2014). Kuranda Seyit, the leader of the Islamic Council of Victoria has publicly spoken about the exclusionary and divisive language used by the Abbott Government, and accused Abbott of using the Muslim community as a “political football” (ABC 2015). Seyit levelled this critique squarely at the leadership:

> We're all part of the Australian community and yet I can speak to people on the ground who don't feel accepted and it comes down from the top, leadership by the Prime Minister is paramount.
Newly instated in office, Turnbull began to work at changing the Government’s approach, particularly in regard to language and community partnerships. Especially prioritised were efforts to reach out to, and publicly change, the discourse relating to Australian Muslim communities, in an attempt to rehabilitate relationships and recognise Muslim communities as partners in CVE. Turnbull’s first public address that spoke to the issue of violent extremism occurred following a shooting incident at a Sydney Police Station, where a civilian Police employee was shot and killed by a 15-year-old man who was reported to have been radicalised in support of ISIS. Turnbull assured the public of the high standard and capacity of Australian police and intelligence, but added (Turnbull, 2015):

[It’s] also important to understand the critical importance of the collaboration, co-operation with the Muslim community. Efforts to blame or vilify the Muslim community are utterly counterproductive.

At the Safeguarding Australia conference in May 2016, Muslim community legal and religious leaders spoke positively about the leadership change, and Turnbull’s consultative approach. They observed a distinct shift away from vilifying language in favour of an inclusive and collaborative approach. Policy officials I spoke with from both state and local governments were similarly positive about the shift at the time. One state policy official described the end of Abbott’s term and impact of the leadership change:

Things were very very toxic in terms of the discourse around [suspicion directed at the Muslim community], and to an extent still are, but there’s less of the day-to-day inflammatory rhetoric coming out of Canberra.

Despite the fact that the new framing positioned Australian Muslim communities as critical collaborators in challenging a national security threat (relative to the harm and hurt caused by Abbott’s), the change was generally welcomed. Arguably, national belonging and inclusion continued to be viewed through a prism of fear and insecurity, and commentary suggesting that vilification and blame were not just entirely wrong but would be “counterproductive” go some way to revealing the persistence of an “us” and “them”, exclusivist mentality. Under Abbott’s leadership, Muslim communities in Australia had been repeatedly maligned as a group and depicted as incapable of national allegiance. The extent to which Prime Minister Turnbull remained committed to the continued rehabilitation of those relationships has been subject to
scrutiny; however, the discursive shift at the moment of leadership change and during the period in which the PVERA handbook was released was nonetheless significant.

**Contradictory messaging: Doubling down in a climate of terror**

A new chapter of vilification and maligning has evolved since 2018 that presents inconsistencies in Turnbull’s more careful approach. In 2018, Turnbull’s government and its state government allies have turned their fear-mongering toward African Australian youth in Victoria. F Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton, speaking about the lack of crime deterrence in Victorian policing, stated that (Hunter & Preiss, 2018):

> The Victorian public is really outraged by some of the goings on ... the reality is people are scared to go out to restaurants of a night time because they’re followed home by these gangs, home invasion and cars are stolen. And we just need to call it what it is – of course it’s African gang violence.

Though Turnbull has been cautious in his statements to avoid being as direct as Dutton, he endorsed Dutton’s position, stating that (Karp, 2018c):

> You’ve got to be honest. There are Sudanese gangs in Melbourne. It is an issue, okay? ...But the fact is, there is a Sudanese gang issue and you’re not going to make it go away by pretending it doesn’t exist. At some point, you’ve got to be fair dinkum and you’ve got to acknowledge that it is a concern, that people are concerned about it.

In January, Victoria Deputy Commissioner Andrew Crisp rejected that Victoria had a problem with “African gangs” (Ryan & Stayner, 2018). A couple of days later, a side-step distinction was made by Acting Chief Commissioner Shane Patton, who stated that while not organised gangs per se, there was an issue with groups of young criminals behaving like street gangs. Later, Victoria Police Commissioner Graeme Ashton deflected the continuing characterization, consenting that (Ryan & Stayner, 2018):

> We've certainly had a deal of African, Sudanese-based offending, but we've also had offending from every other group as well.

Reviewing the crime statistics, it is quickly apparent that this so-named “African gangs crisis” reflects sensationalist media in the lead up to an election. Statistics show that an individual in
Victoria is 25 times more likely to be seriously assaulted by a perpetrator born in Australia or New Zealand than an individual born in Sudan, and five times more likely to be a victim of an aggravated burglary where the perpetrator is Australian or New-Zealand-born than Sudanese born (Ryan & Stayner, 2018). While there is reportedly over-representation amongst the Sudanese-Australian population, and there has been an increase in Sudanese-born offenders in armed robberies over the past four years, Sudanese-born Australians make up 0.1% of Victoria’s population, and only 1.07% of crimes committed in Victoria between April 2017-March 2018 were committed by Sudanese-born individuals, while 61.6% of offenders were Australian-born (Hanrahan, 2018). Also crucial, but generally ignored, is that Sudanese-Australians in Australia are disproportionately young, and that offending peaks in late adolescence and declines in early adulthood (Parliament of Victoria, 2017, p. 7). Furthermore, the Victoria Police have acknowledged that their history of racial profiling has seen Police disproportionately stop young people of African backgrounds, which they are currently seeking to redress (Haile-Michael & Issa, 2015; Milman, 2015).

For those young people who are both Muslim and of African descent, their marginalisation is compounded. It would seem that while Turnbull had been willing and active in calling for a stop to vilifying Muslims because it feeds terrorist recruitment, the risks associated with vilifying African Australian young people has not been sufficiently considered “counterproductive” to call for its end.

4.4 Conclusions: Constantly changing landscape

This chapter sought to describe Australia’s national approach to terrorism prevention, and situate that approach within its policy, political and media ecology in order to uncover some of the implications of soft CT policy at the federal scale, namely its interaction with and proximity to conceptions of Australian multiculturalism.

It is apparent that the Australian approach to terrorism prevention is characterised by stark contradictions. Hard, surveillance-led approaches tend to undermine community relations and trust in state institutions that are central to soft security community engagement efforts. Political statements following terror attacks implore the Australian public not to vilify all Muslim-Australians for fear of losing them as resources for intelligence gathering. Successful multiculturalism is feted in political messaging, while a singular vision of the terror threat to Australia is racialised and rendered as Islamic. Following the November, 2018, Bourke Street
terror event in Melbourne, current PM Scott Morrison identified “extremist Islam” as the primary religious extremism threat in Australia and called on religious leaders to act (Maiden, 2018):

*But here in Australia we would be kidding ourselves if we did not call out the fact that the greatest threat of religious extremism, in this country, is the radical and dangerous ideology of extremist Islam.*

*There is a special responsibility on religious leaders to protect their religious communities and to ensure that these dangerous teachings and ideologies do not take root here. They must be proactive, they must be alert and they must call this out, in their communities and more broadly for what it is.*

In the days following the attack, it was reported that the offender, Hassan Khalif Shire Ali, had been associated with a northern Melbourne mosque, though he had not attended the mosque for over 20 years. It has been suggested that Shire Ali had both mental health and substance abuse issues and is far more likely to have become radicalised online than in a mosque. However, Morrison offloads responsibility of state security agencies, and allocates blame squarely at the local, community level when he says (Remeikis, 2018):

*Shire Ali] wasn’t radicalised in a suburban mall he wasn’t radicalised in a schoolroom. He was radicalised in a community here in Melbourne.*

*Now, we all have jobs to do to keep Australians safe. It’s my job to ensure that our intelligence agencies and our law enforcement agencies both have the resources and the powers to enable them to do their jobs.*

*It’s the job of communities to protect themselves and to keep the wolves from coming in amongst the sheep in their own religious communities.*

In the same day of statement-making, Morrison admitted that Muslim communities of Australia and many of their leaders have been active agents in countering extremism. He described direct contact he has had with Muslim community leaders who had expressed concerns and sought assistance to prevent radicalism through extremist religious ideology. However, in these tactical media statements – in this case at the site of the Bourke Street attack – blame is levelled
primarily toward Melbourne’s Muslim communities, with little mention of the specific role of national security agencies or mental health support services preceding this event.

It is precisely this accusatory messaging that alienates a community who will invariably suffer in a multitude of ways, following the event. A number of Muslim leaders refused to attend a meeting with Morrison following his intervention (Hartcher, 2018). Ultimately this story comes down to a play of politics, at the expense of the security and social inclusion of a marginalised, disempowered community reeling from a traumatic event and its inevitable repercussions.

In the above statement the “Australian community” is drawn distinct from the “communities” from which “the wolves” emerge. Exclusionary definitions of the “Australian community”, or who belongs to “Team Australia”, serve to divide all the while proffering a language of “successful multiculturalism.” The urgency of the threat – depicted as hiding within the multicultural Australian community serves to define a threat to the nation as a contagion implanted in immigrant or newcomer communities. It promotes a culture of suspicion of the “multicultural other,” and stitches together multicultural social policy and interventions with a security agenda. Here we see the securitisation of multiculturalism played out in the disproportionate investment in social services for minority communities, compared to the investment in programs for minority communities in the service of national security. At the federal scale this is most apparent with the location of multicultural portfolio within the Home Affairs Department.

Public policy does not exist in a vacuum, it is directly shaped by the political statements and media framing that circulate around it (Boukes et al., 2015). Across the board, federal government declarations on the importance of social inclusion and the rejection of anti-Muslim sentiment have been rationalised by federal ministers as being essential to ensuring partnerships with, and intelligence gathering by, Australia’s Muslim communities. But what is at stake when the state appeals to the public to hold back xenophobia and racism in order to avoid disturbing security agency and policing relationships with potential informants? Or to avoid provoking radicalisation of “at risk” individuals? What is at stake when the Prime Minister speaks of “multicultural success” in the context of responding to a terror event? What kind of relationships are produced in a climate marked by suspicion, directed at the Muslim and African Other? Who is included and who is excluded in a “successful” multicultural society in 2019? Although these are not the central research questions this dissertation specifically asks, they are driving force
behind this research. Coming to grips with the contradictory discourse that defines Australia’s national security agenda is a step toward addressing these urgent concerns.

However, while the contradictory relationship between multiculturalism, national identity and national security are defined at the national scale, they are changed by their journey to street level. Passing through distinct geographical and political conditions, policy and rhetorical gaps appear, creating spaces for local interpretations and definitions infused with contextual specificity. Policy is thus changed at the point of reception, and again at the point of local implementation. In the following chapter I continue to map this journey, with a focus on the Victorian state site en route to local government implementation.
Chapter 5: Policy Translation Across Scales: Reception, Positioning and Implementation

5.1 Introduction

National security strategy is defined by the federal government but is actioned at the local scale. On its way to the local, policies move through state (or territory) government “filters.” National security is thus modified by its journey to, and arrival at, the local scale. As noted in Chapter 3, the “field of reception itself represents more than some passive hinterland, but an active zone of adaptation and transformation,” even its “joint constitution” (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 23). The path from national ideation to local implementation is therefore not a straight one. It follows that state power is greatest at the highest governance scale and reduces with each scalar step down – from federal, to state, to local government respectively. State and local governments exercise agency in their own distinctive rhetoric, in policy adaptation, and in implementation. We might consider these distinctions as divergences that produce discursive, implementation, and efficacy gaps – in so doing, adding a scalar perspective to Czaika and De Haas’ policy effects and effectiveness conceptual framework, outlined in Chapter 3 (Czaika & De Haas, 2013).

As is the case in many places with multi-tiered governments, in Australia’s federalist system it is possible for different political parties (with different ideologies) to hold office at different scales of government (for example Canada, USA, UK). Often the political parties do not align across scales, and antagonistic relationships can influence differences in interpretation or the articulation of policy. These relationships can be as much a consequence of distinct geographic socio-cultural difference as political ideology.

This chapter focuses on the state scale (i.e. provincial) and considers the Victorian government’s approach to terrorism prevention. I argue that the Victorian government’s approach can be read as a direct response to the Australian government’s (i.e. F or Commonwealth) national security agenda – specifically, its discourse and implementation gaps (see Chapter 4). In particular, a close look at the state government’s reception and mutation of soft national security policy reveals points of distinction and deviation in the state government’s definition of collective belonging. Discrepancies between federal and state government conceptions of national security, collective identity, and multiculturalism are sometimes seen as opportunities to carve out
alternative narratives for belonging and state-community partnerships. Building on the context provided in Chapter 4, in this chapter I highlight some of the openings or possibilities that are generated by these inter-scalar tensions.

**This chapter asks the following questions:**

1. How is the federal approach to terrorism prevention received and implemented at the state level? What factors influence policy reception and implementation?
2. What characterises the Victorian approach to terrorism prevention?
3. What are the implications (opportunities and challenges) of policy coherence and incoherence across scales of government?

Drawing on documentary evidence and interviews with state government officials and individuals working in the CVE space in Victoria, this chapter examines the resistance and willingness of agencies and individuals to engage with state government actors in efforts to prevent terrorism. I argue that the Victorian government is able to position itself productively against negatively perceived federal actors, enabling a network of community-led CVE interventions. This project is underpinned by a communications strategy that introduces a more congenial state-bounded geography for inclusivity and belonging.

Despite the more seemingly inclusive and positive framing of the Victorian government’s efforts in the soft security space, state government actors continue to encounter challenges like those experienced at the federal scale. Discursive gaps continue to undermine policy implementation and outcomes (e.g. ICV Safe Spaces, see Chapter 1) and state actors and community leaders can find themselves in a position of “doing damage control,” when and state political actors (ministers, policing and security agencies) intervene in state level affairs.

The state-scale is important as a filter between the federal and local scales. Understanding the way in which the state scale intervenes between national and local scales is essential to appreciating the ways in which the local scale becomes entangled in national security issues. After all, at present immigration, foreign and national security policies sit exclusively within the remit of federal government. Although state government may inherit and enact policy received from the national scale that relates to or implements these policies, it is jurisdictionally limited and unable to directly shape these policy domains. Agency is exercised through advocacy and implementation. This chapter describes the state-scale as a filter and funder of local policy
interventions, allowing for a more comprehensive examination of the experience of local government interventions in national security. Accordingly, this chapter can be considered as a bridge between the chapters that examine the national and local scales.

5.2 Reception: the Victorian context

Victoria is the second most populous and most culturally and ethnically diverse state in Australia. Over a quarter (28.4%) of Victorians were born overseas in over 200 countries, over a quarter speak a language other than English at home (26.0%) and over half the population follow more than 130 different faiths (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016a; Victorian Government, 2017a). This diversity is strongly represented in Melbourne, Victoria’s capital city – home to 4.5 million people. Some of Greater Melbourne’s municipalities are the most diverse in the country. Most immigrants moving to Australia choose to settle in Sydney or Melbourne (87% of skilled migrants), pulled by the employment opportunities, provision of services, and the presence of established immigrant communities.

Victoria is often called “the most progressive state” in Australia. This status has recently been re-asserted, following the re-election of Daniel Andrews’ Labour government (2014-present) who are described as the “most progressive and active state government in a generation” (Alcorn, 2018). Over the past four years the state of Victoria has seen leaps in social policy under the leadership of the Andrews government. For example, in response to research that has shown high levels of bullying and detrimental mental health impacts experienced by LGBTQI youth, the state government legislated that public schools must adopt Safe Schools programming. The program involves professional development curriculum for teaching staff to ensure LGBTQI students are made to feel welcome, valued and accepted in their school context. In another social policy leap, the Victorian government has been the only state to enact voluntary assisted dying laws for individuals suffering illness and likely to die within six months. Furthermore, following the national Royal Commission into Domestic and Family Violence, the Andrews government raised the profile of the issue, committing $1.9 billion in the 2017 budget and actively coordinating the implementation of the 122 recommendations made by the Royal Commission. In each of these cases Victoria is a standout across Australian states and territories. Nowhere else has the Safe Schools program been adopted, euthanasia legislation remains debated or off the table, and state budget commitments to addressing domestic and family violence fail to match the extent of Victoria’s commitment. This period of social policy progression over the past five
years is not an anomaly; Victoria has long been considered to have a greater tendency toward socially progressive policy positions relative to most other states and territories (with New South Wales and more recently, Queensland, following closely behind).

**Victorian multicultural policy: “Victorian. And Proud Of It”**

As previously noted, multiculturalism is defined rhetorically by the Australian federal government, but legislated at the state government tier. This means that across the three tiers of Australia’s federalist government, multiculturalism morphs and takes on distinctive regional variations (Koleth, 2010b). For example, the Multicultural Queensland Charter (2017) is framed through a social inclusion lens and is attentive to Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander recognition. The South Australian Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission Act (1980) defers its focus on the Australian Government’s Multicultural statement and highlights social and economic participation as central. In New South Wales, “multicultural principles” are incorporated into the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* in which unification amongst difference and a rights-based framework is expressed.

The Victorian approach is unique in the way it so directly acknowledges contemporary challenges facing a culturally diverse state, and the multicultural strategy is framed as a response to those challenges. The Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement, *Victorian. And proud of it*, was released in 2017. It begins with a “party line” celebration of the state as a “multicultural success story” (2017, p. 11). Victorian “multicultural success” is, however, distinct in its framing when compared to federal declarations of success, as outlined in Chapter 4. The normative framing of the Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement is weighted toward the ways in which the policy seeks to address continuing and new challenges. In this way it connotes (or exemplifies) an explicit recognition of and apparent “willingness” to engage in more difficult socio-political conversations (Victorian Government, 2017b, p. 12):

> It is easy to support multiculturalism in good times, but much harder when times are tough. Right now, some Victorians feel uncomfortable by the pace of our changing world. And while this is understandable, it is never excusable to promote divisions based on race or religion. How we choose to respond to this challenge will define us as a state. The easy – and misguided – path would be to blame those of a different faith or race. But as we’ve seen elsewhere in the
world, this only leads to further division. We cannot allow Victoria’s success to be undermined by fears built on misinformation and misunderstanding.

In addition to the standard social and economic participation agenda, reducing barriers to access, and respecting cultural, religious, and other identity differences, the current statement applies a distinct political and security lens to the meaning of multiculturalism. Political participation, particularly enhancing participation by new and emerging communities, is highlighted, as are “shared values” and a pledge to “be unafraid to have difficult – yet necessary – conversations” (2017b, p. 12). In the list of policy outcomes used to measure progress, priority is given to safety and security: “So people can live free from abuse, violence and fear, and enjoy suitable and stable housing” (2017b, p. 16). This sweeping outcome can be seen to address various strategic directions, from the prevention of domestic and family violence, to the recognised challenges in accessing social and crisis housing – both of which were major items in the 2017 budget.

The policy is contextualised in the midst of “tough times,” fitting with the resilience paradigm where violent extremism is the ongoing crisis (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016). The crisis is both the anticipation of a terror event and a future terror event realised; socio-political polarisation, “social in-cohesion,” and extreme public violence. Multiculturalism is then presented as a culture, a way of being, and a social condition of Victoria, and Victorians. Multiculturalism is articulated as a set of values that underpin social cohesion, and thus constitute Victorian resilience to the threat of terrorism. This framing fits with what Vermeulen has called a “values based approach” (Vermeulen, 2014, p. 291).

Drilling down to the actions and programs celebrated by the policy statement, however, we see the first domain as “Victorians are safe and secure” (2017, p. 25). Elaborated, Victorians should be free from fear and violence and living in secure and appropriate housing; both are important baseline conditions we can easily accept. In a stocktake of initiatives that fall under this theme, celebrated first is maintenance of law and order – by a commitment to build new police stations, recruit more police, and the provision of grants fund initiatives that target root causes of crime (p. 26). There are many other elements of the policy statement that address social and economic participation and access, and the values espoused point to a distinction from the federal government’s approach. However, the privileging of safety and security in the Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement is indicative of securitisation creep.
This is a fairly complex policy document, positioned against the backdrop of a persistent and polarised “with us or against us” federal national identity narrative. The membership boundaries of Victorian “citizenship” also demarcate against “intolerant” and divisive Victorians; many of whom would likely make strong Australian identity claims. Importantly, the policy brings together various social, cultural, economic and political themes, notably, within a state-scaled geography of belonging – “Victorian. And proud of it”, not “Australian. And proud of it” – to cultivate a defensive sense of solidarity (see Aly, 2013), distinct from the nation.

**Descaling belonging and terrorism prevention**

This distancing from the Australian government’s discourse was overcome through a distinctly Victorian (state government) approach, thanks to its separation of politics and rhetoric from those of the federal government. One state government policy officer explained that in a way, the clear federal-state distinction created a new opening:

_In particular, since the election of Abbott, things became very toxic... things were very very toxic in terms of the discourse around those issues, and to an extent still are, but there's less of the day-to-day inflammatory rhetoric coming out of Canberra. So, again, that was one of the drivers for the establishment of this Victorian response, the Victorian Government's disappointment and concern at the impact that Canberra's senior political leaders were having on the community, and that we felt that we could do things a little bit differently down here. So, so, now we can, when I'm talking to individuals I can be very upfront and say "listen this has got nothing to do with the AG's Department, it's the Victorian Government funding", and I think it makes things easier for us._

This recognition of the importance of making a distinction between state and federal governments in Victoria is most apparent with the Victorian multicultural policy, _Victorian. And Proud Of It_ (2017). However, it is not without the national securitising thread. The statement is about belonging to a state-based rather than national-based community, in the service of fostering community harmony across difference. But the instrumentalisation of multicultural policy is still apparent. At the release of the new policy, Premier Daniel Andrews framed it by reinforcing the message of the federal government’s policy, “united, successful, strong”: 
We are stronger for our diversity – but that doesn’t mean it’s always easy. In the face of extremism and fear, we need to reaffirm what is most important to us. (Premier of Victoria, 2017)

Premier Andrews’ statement picked up on the securitised language of resilience to violent extremism, as articulated in the Victorian terrorism prevention strategy. The Minister for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott’s statement to the media was more typical in its traditional multicultural rhetoric, emphasising the focus on the state of Victoria (Premier of Victoria, 2017):

To build a strong and fair society takes work, but we all deserve to enjoy the benefits of a dynamic and diverse Victoria... We all have something to contribute. To foster everyone’s sense of belonging, so they feel pride in their home and their state, is one of the most important things government can do.

Victorian. And Proud of It is a central piece in Victoria’s terrorism prevention agenda. Indeed, its development was informed by work undertaken in the Victorian government’s terrorism prevention team, the Community Resilience Unit – in particular the Communications Officer, now Chief Resilience Officer – along with the Office for Multiculturalism and Citizenship (OMAC) and the Victorian Multicultural Commission, located centrally under the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Victorian. And Proud of It is more than just a policy document, it is a component of a strategic communications platform that includes a travelling virtual reality bus that visits rural communities, schools, events and community groups, and a billboard and TV advertising campaign sharing stories of Victorians in all their diversity. In total, it is part of a broad spectrum agenda that is pushing back against social and political polarisation described in the policy statement, and reinforces the messages of social cohesion and resilience depicted in the Community Resilience Unit’s Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Resilience (2015) described in the following section. These two documents interlock deliberately and coherently. There are benefits to this interlocking, but also the issue of intimate proximity between multicultural policy and terrorism prevention policy is inevitable. This too is explored in the pages that follow.

5.3 Positioning: The Victorian Community Resilience Unit

Victoria first began to respond to emerging trends in violent extremism in 2006 when the state government committed $5.6 million to establish the Global Terrorism Research Centre at
Monash University (GTReC). Its establishment followed a number of international and local terror incidents, including the Bali bombing (2002), Madrid train attack (2004) and Australian CT disruption Operation Pendennis (2005), among others, in addition to rising international concern over “home-grown” terrorism. The Department of Premier and Cabinet allocated funding to extend international research on counter-terrorism with an Australian focus that would address local knowledge gaps. GTReC’s focus tended toward the operational and enforcement side of counter-terrorism. Over time, however, international trends in both academic and emergency response settings began to expand to include a prevention thread. This shift in thinking, largely influenced by work in the UK (i.e. CONTEST, PREVENT; see Chapter 2), expanded following the 7/7 British terror attacks, brought CVE to the fore and precipitated the establishment of the Community Resilience Unit (CRU) in 2015. Funded by the Victorian government to the tune of $25 million over four years, the CRU was established to support Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Ministerial Taskforce (Ministerial Taskforce). The Taskforce is chaired by the Deputy Premier of Victoria and Minister for Education, James Merlino MP, and includes Ministers for Multicultural Affairs Robin Scott MP, Minister for Youth Affairs Jenny Mikakos MLC, and the Minister for Police Lisa Neville. The CRU staff support the work of the Taskforce and is made up of approximately 15 civil servants, many of whom have been seconded from other state government departments including Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC) and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The governance structure exemplifies the “whole-of-government” approach articulated in the CRU documentation and is typical of prevention-oriented approaches. The CRU reports directly to the Ministerial Taskforce, and sits under the Department of Premier and Cabinet, and its Community Resilience and Social Inclusion branch within the Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion (MASC) division. The mandate of MASC “provides policy and program support to drive the Victorian Government’s multicultural vision and priorities” (Victorian Government, 2018).

The CRU’s guiding policy document is the Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Resilience (2015). The title of this document is, however, misleading. For those familiar with softer CT language, it might be obvious. The document is concerned with social cohesion and resilience, specifically in efforts to prevent terrorism. In this way it is directly aligned with the federal government’s CT strategy, with social cohesion, community resilience and community-level partnerships are features of the Framework. The opening two paragraphs
of the Framework begin by articulating the cultural diversity of Victoria and acknowledges Australia’s “multicultural success.” The Framework is concerned with community protection from terrorism and terrorism prevention.

Social cohesion is defined in the Framework according to five domains: belonging; social justice and equity; participation; acceptance, rejection and legitimacy; and worth. In the Victorian Framework, belonging is defined in relation to Australia, and social justice and equity in relation to institutions (p. 2). Acceptance, rejection and legitimacy is concerned with attitudes towards newcomers and minority communities, and worth relates to one’s future outlook, optimism and happiness. Principles that guide the priority actions include a particular focus on “shared responsibility” and “new ways of working together” that, translated into actions, map out youth leadership framed as “Victoria’s future custodians,” equity oriented actions like improved employment and education outcomes of Victorian youth, and “community co-produced and evidence-informed” policy. While the overarching conceptual framework clearly reflects the COAG endorsed federal approach and national vision, the principles and actions articulated more directly reference the state and local context. It is in the specific principles, priority themes and actions that we can see a slightly more progressive thread running through the document.

The Framework articulates a focus on the local scale, following a community resilience model. As is the case with OMAC’s community grants model, soft terrorism prevention efforts are typically developed in a partnership or resourcing model, where community agencies are funded through small to medium grants to undertake relatively short-term (often 6-12 month) interventions. This kind of competitive grants-based financing model fits with the resilience paradigm, in which government “invests” in communities, supporting principles of capacity-building, self-reliance and self-determination (Chandler, 2012; Davoudi et al., 2012).

In contrast to the federal government, authors of the Victorian state government’s strategy take care not to identify Islamist extremism as a primary threat, as does much of the federal government policy documentation. Rather, the Victorian CRU defines individuals who radicalise to violent extremism by general characteristics (Victorian Government, 2015, p. 3):

> [Individuals] whose beliefs and actions threaten other people’s free exercise of their democratic rights and freedoms. Ideologically motivated violence is usually based on a belief that one race, ethnicity or religion is ‘better’ than
another and that there is only one ‘good’ or ‘right’ way to live. Actions motivated by such extreme ideas – which can occur across a wide political and social spectrum – undermine social cohesion and have no place in accepting, democratic society. Whether a person is a right-wing or ISIS-inspired extremist, neither is acceptable.

The broad approach in political discourse has generally been matched by the Victorian Premier and other state ministers in public discourse. This is an important point of distinction, when compared to much of the federal documentation and public statements. In the case of Victoria, it reflects the position of internal and external advisors and the bureaucrats, many of whom come from settlement and community services and academia, and their sensitivity to the way in which terrorism discourse so often focuses on the Islamist extremism threat, reinforcing characterisations of Muslim Australians as a “suspect community” (Cherney & Murphy, 2016; Poynting & Mason, 2006; Spalek & Intoual, 2007).

As with the national strategy, there is an articulation of community bonds as central to defending against terrorism. However, Victorian Counter-Terrorism Statement (2017) avoids explicit descriptions of multicultural bonds, in favour of general community bonds: “The best defence against terrorism is a strong and connected community” (p. 4). By eschewing reference to multiculturalism, cultural and linguistic diversity, or “multicultural success” in describing the “terror landscape,” the Victorian Counter-Terrorism Statement (2017) avoids the securitization of Muslims as per the national strategy.

The focus on social cohesion, articulated through description of a bonded, networked society capable of supporting each other through shocks and ongoing stressors is consistent with the Victorian. And Proud Of It policy statement, in its carving out a state-level geography of inclusion and emergency response. This discourse and framework also align with the Victorian Community Resilience Framework For Emergency Management (2017), which brings a social lens to emergency response planning. For example, equitable response planning is sensitive to different community needs and the unique challenges facing different groups, as seen in the following objective: “[to] identify and measure changes in community characteristics to support continual improvement processes” (p. 6). Actions include assessment of management strategies as “relevant to, and respectful of the communities’ needs, values and pace” (p. 41).
As a baseline policy, the approach articulated in the *Victorian. And Proud Of It* (2017) statement is seen to articulate a foundational understanding of how community resilience is understood in related CT response and prevention strategies. It is therefore strategic as an intervention that alters the paradigm through which national security can be interpreted at the local scale. That being said, the power of federal policy and rhetoric is strong. However, fissures that appear in the points of difference between federal and state scales present openings in complex spaces that might otherwise be closed.

**Research-informed experimentation**

In addition to the policy and program development the CRU undertakes, it also administers the Research Institute on Social Cohesion (RIOSC). Of the $25 million committed to the CRU’s work, $4 million was allocated to establishing RIOSC. This research network brings policy makers, researchers, and community practitioners together in a community dedicated to developing a local evidence base for policy and program development and informing the direction of the CRU’s work. CRU awards research grants through RIOSC, for small to medium scale projects including evaluations and novel research. In so doing, local research projects progress efforts to better understand the local context, radicalization factors, and the effectiveness of intervention programs that guide policy development and future funding guidelines.

University institutions have been a crucial resource for the CRU, both in formal partnership and informally. As noted by a CRU officer and in light of the relative newness of CVE, a dearth of evaluations, and the challenges associated with studying CVE (including the “control” problem) (Lum & Kennedy, 2012; O’Hare et al., 2010), RIOSC research grants provide a way of identifying and tracing expertise networks that can be tapped into by CRU staff through research funding and more informal consultations:

> The [universities] are a big one. You know, going to Deakin, and Vic Uni, and Melbourne and Monash, you know. They're just really great contacts there because, we're not, you know, experts on the subject. And that's been really important. And then from there I've got really good contacts around who to consult with and who to talk to. For me it's been a matter of, you know, who's applying for grants...
Academic publishing timelines and confidentiality issues present challenges for policy makers working in CT and terrorism prevention (O’Hare et al., 2010). More informal contact and round-table meetings therefore provide a confidential setting in which research can be detailed, advice provided, and ideas tested across the table of both researchers and policy makers. These research and policy networks are increasingly becoming the norm in the development and coordination of terrorism prevention strategies in Australia and elsewhere (e.g. Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence, Community Resilience Fund).

**Humble bureaucrats, cautious bureaucrats?**

With a double-pronged focus on understanding and addressing “root causes” of violent extremism, the CRU was given licence to work at a relatively slow pace and initially with relatively low levels of exposure. CRU bureaucrats I interviewed were reflective when commenting on their work and the role of the CRU. Their willingness to engage with researchers, and to be participants in research projects was unexpected in what is usually a highly guarded national security space. It speaks to the ethos outlined in the Framework that emphasised both collaboration and learning. Aside from the optics of participation – of presenting transparency and openness – there is little else gained by state bureaucrats who participated in my study. There is, however, a degree of exposure. Perhaps then, as Kuus notes in her examination of institutional ethnographic research with policy elites, bureaucrats’ participation reflects the curiosity of the individuals working in this space, for whom this work is uncharted and often uncomfortable (2013, p. 125). Asked about how multiculturalism, social cohesion and national security are reconciled in theory and practice, and the attendant risks of securitising social policy, one CRU officer responded:

> Look, I think one of the ongoing challenges we have, and I'd be happy to talk about it, again I don't have a script, so probably talking out loud and thinking out loud, thinking out loud, as I go.

It was surprising to hear this bureaucrat’s ambivalence and scepticism so openly expressed. In conversations with mid-level bureaucrats this kind of response was common. It is possible that being “off-script” is part of the “script.” However, the long periods of scoping by bureaucrats taking on new CRU portfolios, the willingness to meet with a PhD student like myself without editorial “control” over my research output, and the often critical and reflexive nature of the
interview content suggest that amongst the individuals working inside the state government institution there is a degree of sensitivity that could be seen to be out of place in “hard” CT space. This was not a rule across the board, and it is worth noting that while some staff were happy to meet with me, conversations were “off the record.” In the latter period of my research, I could sense this openness closing, with more active oversight from a CRU bureaucrat who offered to act as a draft reader and who would contact me independently to check in with my progress and the direction of my analysis.

Briggs (2010) argues that CT policing depends on community trust in police because law enforcement and security agents are bound to “make mistakes” some of the time, and there needs to be understanding and patience in reserve, in order to preserve state-community relationships during these times (p. 973). The same could be said for bureaucrats working in the terrorism prevention space. For the most part, state government bureaucrats I spoke with appeared to have internalised this message and presented their understanding of their roles and work in the context of the sensitives and “unknown unknowns” in the work they were undertaking. However, there is no escaping the traps of politics and political optics.

The Victorian approach, shaped by the Multicultural Policy Statement and the CRU’s Strategic Framework, actively distinguishes it from the federal government while also fulfilling the state’s obligation to develop a terrorism prevention regime (as per COAG endorsement, see Chapter 4). *Victorian. And Proud Of It* forms the foundation of a different kind of relationship between the state and communities of Victoria, as that defined by the federal government’s alienating rhetoric and vision of an exclusivist multiculturalism. The approach was articulated in the attitudes, openness, and reflective positions of state bureaucrats working through the implications of terrorism prevention in a state that has publicly committed to its own multicultural vision.

5.4 Implementation: Challenges and opportunities at the state-scale

*Defining violent extremism and suspect communities, in practice*

As noted previously, the CRU’s Framework makes a concerted effort to avoid a narrow or singular focus on Islamist extremism in defining violent extremism. Discursively, this broad definition works. However, implementation of breadth has been more difficult in practice. A CRU officer responsible for developing the right-wing extremism (RWE) prevention pilot
explained the difficulties faced in this space. For them, just defining right wing extremism had proven difficult. Asked how the CRU define RWE, the officer responded:

That's a very good question [laughter]. Well, yeah, you ask a really good question. In the sense that right wing extremism...We haven't been working to a formal definition, is probably the short answer. Because, through all the consultations that I've had, you know, there's this balance that I have to strike between the wording that's been used by the Government in the media release about what we're going to do in this space, and that was that we would respond to right wing extremism including forms of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

This state-government worker’s response highlights how policy documents have lives of their own (2012, p. 6). Never complete, often malleable, often fulfilling a representational function, and subject to a field of influence – in this case politics and rhetoric – that can continuously shape and reshape their interpretation, meaning and implementation. During this period, the media landscape was dominated by panic over Islamist extremism, obscuring all other kinds of violent extremism. Despite efforts to separate the Victorian approach from the federal, it has not been possible to totally overcome the impact of alarmist discourse and Islamophobic media on policy interpretation and implementation. The CRU officer goes on to explain how efforts to bring right wing extremism into the fold of the CRU’s work have been challenging. Not least because of the interrelationship between right-wing extremism (RWE), Islamophobia and primary focus on Islamist extremism:

What we're fast realising is two things...that there's quite a sole focus on the Islamophobia element, because that's what... the current climate is. It's... less about anti-Semitism and more about Islamophobia. But it means also that we're not just looking at right wing extremism [in isolation]. I think it's more accurate to say that we're stretching the net around, you know, hate speech. It's ultimately about incitement of hatred, against a group based on their race or religion that we're trying to respond to, so it's not like we're going solely after your sort of white supremacist groups... I think that this is looking sort of more broadly, but specifically at the same time, if I can put it that way.
What became apparent through interviews and conversation with state government officials was that in practice there was a clear definition of the threat of groups like ISIS, but that rest of the violent extremism spectrum noted in the Framework document was more slippery to define:

*Yep, yep absolutely. Yes, [the United Patriots Front] very much are the target, well not the target group, because I'm not working with those groups, but it's the groups, it's the sort of Reclaim [Australia] movement that we're looking at. Because they, if you think about it, they also again don't fall into an easy right-wing extremism category say that the Klu Klux Clan would, or you know, a lot of the skin head movements. With these new groups, it's a buffet pick and mix approach, there's Islamophobia, there's anti-immigration, there's anti-multiculturalism, at times suddenly somewhere anti-Semitism will pop up, it's very hard to classify.*

The Chief Resilience Officer also commented on the shifting nature of right-wing extremism, observing that there had been growing momentum from anti-Semitism to Islamophobia, which had implications for the ways in which interventions and approaches were designed:

*One of the things that happened in Australia has happened in other parts of the world with right wing extremism, is that it itself has undergone a transformation from being kind of focused on being anti-Semitic to really being Islamaphobic and that’s been a quite... definite shift within Australia and other parts of the world. Part of their desire is to try and make Muslim populations feel as unwelcome as possible, and then that actually then gives more say ammunition to those people who want to then promote a particular world view that says that Muslims aren’t welcome, and then that develops... so you get other extremist messages come out...then the right wing extremists seize on those to say “look we told you so.” ...So one of the key things...this is not simply about ISIS inspired, or Al-Qaeda-inspired ideologies, this is more broadly about all those things...Victoria as you know has prided itself on developing one of the world’s most successful multi-cultural societies, and that’s something we want to protect and we see it as a great asset. So those*
people whoever who try and sort of unpick this and pull it apart that’s one of the things we’re wanting to focus on ...our framework makes it quite clear.

In responding to these definitional challenges in the first two years of the CRU, it was possible to see a split in Victorian CVE approaches. While CVE focused on Islamist extremism has been easier to map and develop, non-Islamist extremism prevention interventions largely developed in a broad manner. One way in which the CRU has responded to RWE has been through the Victorian. And Proud Of It multicultural policy campaign.

**Local interventions: resourcing communities and community-led partnerships**

The CRU clearly identifies their focus on community-based interventions. This strategic approach aligns with the *National Counter-Terrorism Plan* but is markedly different in the manner in which community relations and interventions are developed and funded. The Chief Resilience Officer explained that at its inception, the CRU community grants would be administered differently to the way similar grants had been managed under the AG Department’s terrorism prevention program:

> *What was expected [by federal agents] was that communities would implement government programmes and not actually design the things themselves. So, I think it would be true to say that one of the things we’ve had to say is that we actually want to work at your pace, to deal with the things that you think are important, and I think that’s one of the key elements.*

CRU staff spent lengthy periods of time scoping the social “landscape” to understand how to begin to identify and approach organisations where it was thought terrorism prevention programs might be appropriate. In the early phase of the CRU a high-ranking police officer working in counter-terrorism was seconded to support cross-institutional communication, learning and scoping.⁷

A community-led approach was established through early consultations with communities and was seen by CRU staff as crucial to developing trust and support for a new, Victorian

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⁷ Despite what CRU staff saw as a positive and invaluable arrangement, in recent years there has been a noted absence of secondments like this in the CRU, as Victorian policing efforts have shifted focus toward what some call the “pointy end” interventions.
government model for government-community relations. The Chief Resilience Officer noted the importance of trust development at the local scale, made possible by the closer contact that state government scale enabled, compared to the federal. He contrasted this to federal-local engagements, which were inevitably more broadly defined:

*People are different and have different issues and you need trust; it’s around trying to build that trust. Generic general nationwide responses tend not to work because they don’t actually mean anything to any particular person.*

In conversations with community groups, it quickly became apparent that government agents could not meet with community groups and immediately ask about, for example, parent concerns about their children radicalising to violent extremism. These questions were often met with disengagement and frustration, potentially reinforcing the negative federal government rhetoric and the Muslim communities’ experiences of being rendered as “suspect.” It was important that CRU staff therefore began consultations by asking broad questions about wide-ranging community concerns. As research has shown (Abbas 2007), responses would more often identify concerns over drugs, inter-generational challenges of parenting, employment, family members detained in immigration detention and off-shore processing centres, and precarious immigration status. Staff learnt quickly that in order to open up conversations about a sensitive topic like terrorism prevention, such pointed conversations would need to be preceded by a meaningful discussion about general welfare and government policy. CRU staff needed to demonstrate that they were not simply engaging communities as resources or sources of intelligence, but responsive to specific community needs. For many marginalised communities, direct access to government workers can be, or at least feel, out of reach. Therefore, this approach provided an inadvertent access point for communities to speak directly to government agents. This was an important early learning for CRU staff that speaks more broadly to issues of equity and welfare, and the existing gaps in access to political participation for marginalised communities.

One of the challenges encountered by CRU staff in these interactions with largely immigrant and refugee communities were the differential jurisdictional responsibilities across tiers of government. Staff would explain that they had no control over immigration detention centres and could not provide information about individual cases. They would explain that in these cases, state government’s role was limited to advocacy. In planning CVE responses, this community intelligence –understanding the importance of immigration and asylum policy as influencing
marginalised communities’ relationships with the state – speaks to the breadth of approaches required to support state-community partnerships (Spalek, 2012; Thomas et al., 2017).

Community-led programs are therefore seen to allow for self-determination and general community development. The unique situation of state government allocating funds to small local organisations, usually NGOs, has put their officers in intimate contact with a variety of agencies. State government informants explained that while such contact is not entirely unusual for state-funded social service provision, close contact between state government workers and agencies was not typical. The scale and sensitivity of the programs meant that close oversight was seen as necessary. In the early stages of the CRU, policy officers were allocated particular geographic regions as areas of responsibility. This allowed the officers to develop ongoing, closer relationships with communities and agencies, to counter the revolving door trope often associated with bureaucratic agencies. As noted in Chapter 2, “it is personal relationships that matter” in this space (2011a, p. 20). One policy officer I maintained close contact with was responsible for the northern region of Melbourne, where the groups with which he was most often engaged were Muslim community and religious organisations. His previous experience as a policy officer at the Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC) and his work as a settlement worker meant that he already had strong relationships with settlement agencies and individuals in the communities he was engaging in his role at the CRU. He would often attend community meetings during and outside of business hours, maintaining a presence, “turning up” and being consistent. His plain-speaking manner and self-reflective approach appeared to influence the kinds of relationships he had managed to maintain while moving from settlement services into terrorism prevention. In some ways his role became one of a community advocate, supporting community organisations to navigate CRU grant applications in a way that he felt could support them to fund the programs he knew they needed. His efforts included support during the evaluation phase by other CRU staff, with regular phone contact, the provision of information on evaluation precedents, and other resources.

There are at least two ways to look at the role of this state agent and his colleagues. In the best-case scenario, he actively supported the entrepreneurial efforts of community organisations to access funds to enable them to achieve a degree of self-determination and provide for the communities they served in ways that they desired. Under a more sinister light, his efforts supported the characterisation of communities “at risk,” by encouraging them into state-
partnerships based on grants designed to prevent “at risk youth” from “radicalising,” which could be interpreted as undermining community agency and self-definition, and enlisting community organisations into intelligence-gathering (by grant application and/or by evaluation).

CRU staff were relatively unguarded, speaking about the operation and strategy of the CRU, which made me more inclined to a sympathetic interpretation of their observations and reflections on their work. While they were coming to learn the “lay of the land,” the key community partners and gatekeepers, developing rapport, trust and buy-in from communities, they revealed their conscious and strategic objective to implement a terrorism prevention program that was resourced by state government, but was still “grass-roots.” Two CRU officers described their strategic approach and understanding of state government as a community resource:

*Who are the sort of key players, community groups or stakeholders that I need to be talking to a) understand the landscape a bit better, and to sort of test the ideas that we have for the pilot? Then also to sort of lay the groundwork to get buy-in, and to gain support, because ultimately delivery of this pilot is going to require those key partnerships that are strategic because I mean one of the things we know, sort of messaging around this sort of work has to come from a non-government voice.*

*But I've gotta be honest and say that I feel that, you know, we in the CRU, whilst we're fifteen or so strong now, we're still a fairly small unit, servicing a Ministerial Taskforce...it takes a lot of time and resources...so it's very easy to get sucked into that vortex of public service, you know, when your job becomes servicing the machine, feeding the beast, rather than being more outward facing. So, my view is that if there are others that are doing some of that work as well, then we can speak with them, connect the dots with them, and that we are all on the same page. So, I would see that as a way of amplifying or increasing our outreach and coverage as people working in this space. I would see it as a good thing.*
The motivation for community-partnerships or community-led programs addresses at least three objectives: first, it extends state government resources through strategic “investments” by community grants; second, it provides opportunities for ownership of programs in support of an ethic of self-reliance and community resilience; and third, it manages the narrative of terrorism prevention as coming from the “suspect communities” themselves, rather than a top-down state-led CVE regime. These principles are no accident. They are the result of a long period of strategic policy and program development based on learning, in particular, from the UK’s experience. Additionally, guidance provided by a network of CT and CVE intergovernmental, academic, and emerging CVE industry knowledge sharing was significant. CRU staff are very well-versed in the latest research and pilots from around the world, and appear to be treading lightly, helped by shifting much of the responsibility of CVE onto community partners. This “partnering” approach is explored further in Chapter 6.

**Funding CVE: from toxic money to entrepreneurialism**

As previously noted, the CRU’s *Framework* and the Multicultural Policy Statement provided a distinct set of parameters for a distinctively Victorian approach to terrorism prevention. Disociation from the federal government and its funding regime was vital for CRU staff to begin connecting with local organisations, explaining their agenda as distinct from the federal, and introducing the new Unit and its agenda. Islamophobia articulated by the nation’s leadership had left Muslim communities feeling victimised, hyper-surveilled and fearful of ongoing experiences of everyday violence at mosques, on trains and buses. All this fed distrust in and disengagement from federal government agencies.

> *I think it's because, you know, people's experience with ASIO [Australian Security Intelligence Organisation]...you hear that many people have received a phone call and been asked to go have a coffee, and that sort of thing..."hang on how the hell did you get my details? What have I done?!" So there's this real suspicion. And obviously it reinforces this view that the whole community is being seen through a security lens. And so, people are quite clear that they don't wish to accept [AG Department] funding.*

Distinguishing between a federal and state level approach was made possible through new funding opportunities for community engagement. Victorian state funding for terrorism
prevention filled a gap that had developed as a result of negative federal state-community relations, as noted by one CRU officer:

> And the advantage I guess, of the CRU being established and the Victorian government allocating twenty-five million over four years is that now we have, if you like, a relatively clean source of funding that's not in any way, shape or form to do with the AG's office and the Commonwealth [federal] Government and I guess with, and in particular since the election of Abbott, things [had] became very toxic.

These reflections were reinforced in interviews with individuals who had been working in the CVE space prior to the CRU establishment. They repeatedly remarked on the negative impact of the Abbott-style hostility and Islamophobia-authorising atmosphere described in Chapter 4. In particular, research participants commented on the conspicuous disociation of Islamic and other community organisations from collaborating with, taking funds from, and participating in projects associated with the federal government. The general manager of the Islamic Council of Victoria explained that there was both a need for the financial resources offered by the AGD, but a strong distaste and active avoidance of associating the organisation with the Department and its money. He explained,

> The community feels the same way as well, yeah, they look at it as toxic money; we don't want to be defined by that.

Another youth engagement officer who had been working in an immigrant settlement services organisation that ran a 1-year CVE program funded by an AG Department grant echoed this sentiment. They explained that the federal leadership’s rhetoric ultimately led to their decision to no longer seek AG Department funding:

> It was too political, or it’s a politicised fund, and that might risk the reputation of organisations such as Spectrum.

In contrast, the Victorian state government’s CRU grants have been seen as less politicised and more an investment in community development. As one settlement services youth worker explained:
I think they, their work, is more of a community-minded, community approach rather than this political, more law and order approach, the policing. It doesn’t involve policing, it’s more community engagement, community empowerment models.

This particular youth worker noted that the successes achieved in previous CVE programming he’d been involved in were a consequence of resources available to underserved and higher-needs communities. For example, in one CVE program, youth were invited to attend an all-expenses paid camp in the leafy rural town of Kyneton:

And for all of them, this was their first opportunity for a camp...Some of them were Somali girls and this was even the first time ever they had an opportunity to go outside Melbourne.

These approaches to CVE were positively framed – highlighting the opportunity to access funds to support youth personal and professional development that were otherwise lacking. Again, we can see this relationship of “exchange,” where under-serviced communities gain access to resources and opportunities through their engagement in CVE. Reflecting on this approach, the youth worker commented that for marginalised young people to participate in programs they needed to see how that engagement would benefit them – what will they get out of participation? How will it help them to progress toward their goals? In this view, the “exchange” is framed as conditional, whereby youth participants are discerning and entrepreneurial agents. This view avoids the characterisation of youth passively accepting the “at risk” or “suspect” label.

Despite some of these more positive interpretations of the state government’s grants, they continue to operate on relatively short funding cycles, undermining continuity, ongoing relationship development and predictability that is reportedly essential to effective CVE programming (Spalek & Lambert, 2010). The CRU itself was only guaranteed 4 years of funding and would be subject to abandonment in the case of a new political party’s election.

In the context of neoliberal governance, social service providers, NGOs and community development agencies experience precarity in the face of short funding cycles and competitive bidding that have become the norm (Dollery, Wallis, & Allan, 2006; Kim & Warner, 2016; Peck, 2014). A lack of predictability and continuity in funding make it difficult to plan for long-range programs, to retain staff, and to guarantee vulnerable communities will not be “dropped” at the
completion of a funding period. As a result, these agencies must act as entrepreneurs – articulating a problem and proposing a solution that meets the available funding guidelines. In this there was a sense of resignation expressed by a number of the NGO and local government actors with whom I spoke. For example, a representative from the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV) stated:

That’s why we try to reframe it. I mean the reality is we can’t walk away, like that money is always going to be there, it's always going to sort of trickle down and you can’t completely devoid yourself from it, but if you can utilise that in a productive and positive sort of way, I think that’s important yeah.

The catch here is that applications for funds from the CRU require that “target communities” be identified as posing a risk – of radicalization to violent extremism – effectively rendering themselves as “suspect communities.” Amongst local government workers, representatives from NGOs and religious organisations, and some of the youth leaders involved in CVE-funded programs, there was a sense of frustration but also resignation, which was usually channeled through a pragmatic and enterprising attitude. This position is articulated plainly by ICV’s general manager:

I mean another way of looking at it is to try to not look at it from [a terrorism perspective]. Try to look at that money to be used for sort of positive sort of social enterprise sort of way. I mean looking at it in terms of health, improving health outcomes, improving education outcomes, rather than the negative sort of connotation.

...

I think the important thing is that we don't get trapped as well. Like CVE [is an] important area, important space, no one denies that, but don't let it be at the expense of other critical areas as well. We can’t just be single minded and say radicalization is a problem and it's more than any other. Like I said, 3 times our population is in prison [compared to non-Muslim groups] and that’s from drug and substance abuse, that’s huge, that’s only second to I think the indigenous community, 28 per cent, something like that. So mental health
issues are another growing concern for us, family violence, we’re not immune to it. So they’re all critical issues for us and they’re issues that we want to be there advocating on and supporting.

At the state government tier, this issue was made evident in the duplication of applications by NGOs, “peak organisations” (allied interests), local governments, religious communities and other applicants seeking community grants simultaneously from the Office for Multicultural Affairs and Citizenship (OMAC) and the CRU. Means-based multiculturalism is absent where these community organisations are seeking funding by any means necessary. When national security grants are offered in place of multicultural welfare we see the securitisation of multicultural policy occurs here when communities are seeking funding by any means necessary. According to a senior OMAC bureaucrat I spoke with, there was initially a deliberate effort to separate multicultural policy (and its funding) from CVE by establishing the CRU with an agenda distinct from OMAC. This distinction was evident in grant guidelines between four streams: (1) Multicultural Infrastructure Community Fund; (2) Community Harmony Fund; (3) Capacity Building and Participation Program; and (4) Multicultural Festivals and Events. In the allocation of funds, priority communities are identified and include, for example: youth, refugees and asylum seekers, rural multicultural communities, and more recently those experiencing domestic and family violence. The OMAC officer involved in grants administration explained that there was a deliberate effort to avoid language associated with CVE, hence the innocuous titles. The officer interpreted this move as entrepreneurial:

[We have been] very careful not to use “violent extremism” and “radicalization.” Although, applications that come through may use that kind of language. Yeah, I’ve had a few Capacity Building [grant applications] that have talked about, you know, working against radicalization and things like that, and...sometimes we actually move the grant over to Community Harmony, because it’s more appropriate to the objectives. People hedging their bets and putting their application into every single stream they can, and they use the words that are appropriate [to those streams].

The OMAC grants officer explained that his/her office would meet with the CRU grants officer to cross-check their applications and to make decisions based on “best fit” for those seen to be “double dipping”. Close proximity of OMAC, CRU and the Victorian Multicultural
Commission’s (VMC) work spaces has promoted informal conversations between staff, and thus the opportunity for more informal processes for managing funding allocations. In funding briefs and decision-making, and in the physical spaces where staff across OMAC, VMC and the CRU interact in an ad-hoc manner, the overlap between national security and multiculturalism are negotiated.

**Transparency and Trust: State government as protective intermediary?**

Much has been written about the trust deficit marginalised communities have when it comes to relationships with policing and security agencies. Research on CT policing points to the often-overlooked need for rehabilitation of negative relationships in order to meaningfully engage communities who have had negative encounters with law enforcement (Innes, 2006). Against a backdrop of declining public trust in police, security agencies and media (Edelman, 2018; LaFree, 1998), and mistrust and disappointment in the federal government in the foreground, CRU officers need to respond to these experiences. Communicating the message that state government is not the same as the federal government was important for state government workers. Marking out state government’s jurisdictional limits has been an aspect of cultivating clarity over state-community relations. One might think of this as recovering a “trust deficit” by articulating and following-through these points of distinction, with particular attention to transparency and consistency (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016; Grossman & Sharples, 2010; Innes, 2006; Pantazis & Pemberton, 2009). Additionally, this has led to the state government directly acknowledging the negative experiences Muslim community organisations have had with federal agencies:

"I've been saying, when I've been talking to people "listen it's important to understand that this [grant] did originate from the AG's Department, there's no, there's not going to be any reference to that, but in your heart of hearts you need to be comfortable." So, people are able to make an informed decision about, well with the value around...what they would want to do around mentoring with young people...There are members of the community, and particularly I’d say, some of the first-generation migrants who don't really necessarily understand that distinction between the Commonwealth [federal], state and local. But there are many people now that do, and I feel that the Victorian government is generally...perceived generally more positively in this
space than is the Commonwealth government. And that's an advantage, that's an asset for us.

In addition to the challenges posed by the “toxicity” of the federal government’s messaging and reputation, the Chief Resilience Officer reflected that organisations ambivalent about initiating CVE programs felt disillusioned by previous involvement in AG funded interventions:

And we’ve had to work to overcome that and in some cases people kind of say we tried something like this before and it didn’t work because – and part of that is distance you know, if you’re in Canberra and you fly down for a meeting and you fly back or – also because what was expected was that communities would implement government programs.

The decision was made in the CRU to avoid top-down CVE programming in favour of community-led, community-designed programming. This approach was seen to allow for the possibility of supporting the development of more trusting relationships and letting community organisations guide interventions based on their specific needs. Both essential to this approach, and a consequence of it, have been slower-paced cycles of funding and allowances for the kind of scoping out the “landscape” noted previously:

I think that’s one of the key elements. There’s a line, which you’ve probably heard of… that you can’t go fast at the speed of trust.

Developing trust means that CRU officers spend a lot of time outside the office. For a state government unit of 15 staff, this is highly unusual. They are on-the-ground though, interacting face-to-face with community organisations and community leaders:

The thing about trust is that is that you have to keep going back and you keep having those conversations – I mean you can’t have community engagement which means coming and have a discussion and then not talking to anybody for 10 months, I mean while we’re quite small and we focussed on a few particular areas so people can keep going back and build – so people know we’re serious about engaging with them because there is that’s important

And how often would you go and say return to the same…?
With often high turnover rates in CVE work and working in a context where communities may have had previous negative experiences of CT interventions or CVE programs, reputations based on consistency, mutual understanding and predictability are all essential factors in opening possibilities for state-community engagements (Spalek et al., 2011b). As Spalek et al., note, “it is personal relationships that matter” (p. 20). With this understanding, the decision was made by the CRU to focus on a smaller number of interventions, making it possible for CRU staff to maintain close ties with funded community groups.

**Politics and optics**

As previously discussed (see Chapters 2 and 4), security threat narratives – borders under siege, unregulated immigration and majority populations outnumbered – and the resultant panic can benefit both political parties with law and order agendas and media outlets sell their products. This strategy directly contrasts terrorism prevention approaches that prioritise community building and the fostering of collective belonging against the polarising forces that might feed radicalization to violent extremism.

Managing terrorism and threat narratives has been an important part of terrorism prevention policy and programming at all levels of government. At the *Safeguarding Australia* conference in 2016, federal policing and security agencies expressed exasperation at the ways in which media reporting enflamed social polarisation and alienated communities seen to be “at risk”, sabotaging their efforts to develop positive working relationships with community and religious organisations. This is a familiar story for individuals working in the CVE space, both within and outside of government. Just as federal agents had expressed frustration, my interviews with state government officers, the Islamic Council of Victoria management, and local government officials all described having to do “damage control” in the aftermath of inflammatory commentary in the media and reproachful rhetoric by politicians.

Examples of provocative federal government rhetoric and the state government agents’ work to articulate their point of difference have previously been noted. State government politicians have also been guilty of undermining their own bureaucrats’ efforts to build trusting community relationships and living up to their own multicultural policy statement. In one such case, the ICV had applied for a CRU community grant to fund a “safe space” program. The program would
allow for young Muslims to participate in a program led by a respected Imam to gather and, guided and supported by the Imam, speak freely – ask questions, challenge government policy, complain, express empathy or understanding of the motivations of those who might have fled to fight in foreign conflicts or enacted some kind of violence – without fear of ASIO (Australian Security Intelligence Organisation) listening-in or facing terrorism-related charges. Describing the curtailment on freedoms to express a full range of emotions, the words of Muslim ex-prisoner Mohamedou Salahi are illuminating:

“If you say that you are angry, it is understood as an emotion. If I say that I am angry, it is seen as a threat to national security” (Salahi cited in Taub, 2019, p. 53).

Research has shown that programs that provide safe, structured and private spaces for critique, for emotion, and for processing are an important strand of CVE (Grossman, 2014). In addition to recognizing the possibility of non-extremist radicals as being legitimate voices in broad spectrum political discourse (Aiello, Puigvert, & Schubert, 2018; Bartlett, Birdwell, & King, 2010b; Mary J Hickman et al., 2012), members of the RIOSC Taskforce had supported the idea, in some cases backed by their own research and experience (i.e. Grossman, 2014). CRU policy staff, too, expressed conviction that this was an essential piece of CVE in Victoria. This is important because the extensive CT legislative framework makes it difficult for individuals considered to be “at risk” (i.e. young Muslims) to speak openly about their dissatisfaction with foreign policy, for fear of being cast as “promoting” terrorism and exposed to criminal risk (Aiello et al., 2018).

The application for “safe space” funding was leaked in 2017 on the day following the “Brighton siege,” when a 29-year old Somali-born Australian man, Yacqub Khayres, held a woman hostage in a suburban hotel where he killed a hotel receptionist before engaging in a shootout, wounding three police officers before he was shot and killed by the police. During a press conference held the day after the siege, Premier Daniel Andrews responded to the leak, which had received panicked coverage on shock-jock talk-back radio. Andrews stated (Andrews cited in Davey, 2017):

*We’ve had a constructive relationship with the Islamic Council of Victoria but ... proposing to create a space where people can just rant ... this is a hate space... The notion you can safely, without being monitored, without being*
picked up by authorities, be involved in all the radicalization we’re trying to diffuse makes no sense to me.

Following this attack on ICV, the head of ICV announced that they would no longer cooperate or work with the Victorian state government, that trust had been broken and their misrepresentation over the proposed program had harmed their community. I cannot confirm that they have indeed now severed ties with the CRU, and it is possible that they have now reconnected. But after years of work between CRU and ICV staff, and with the ICV’s strong anti-AGD position, this experience risked leaving them isolated and disengaged. This example demonstrates the power of a single media statement to undo trust and community relationships that can take years to develop. Furthermore, it shows how easily “hard-to-reach” organisations and communities can become further alienated when most in need of support. Professor Greg Barton, who co-leads the Australian Intervention Support Hub (AISH), responded to Premier Andrews’ hostile comments (Barton cited in Davey, 2017):

It’s not necessarily a crazy proposal. It’s interesting that Mr Andrews is feeling so antagonistic about it. Some people will be very hard to reach, like the Yacqub Khayres of this world, but there are other, non-violent young people very confused, genuinely confused, who will be susceptible to anyone who gives them time and that’s where we should have been investing in clever ways for them to discuss their ideas in a safe space.

In an interview prior to the Brighton siege, CRU leadership and bureaucrats themselves were agreed on the importance of safe space-style initiatives, in a stark point of difference from that of the Premier. As one CRU officer explained:

If you have a view – if you don’t like the Australian foreign policy it is quite legitimate for you to actually voice that you don’t like it – and we have political processes which enable you to get involved to try and change it – but if you have the view that there’s no point then that’s a problem... how do you get safe spaces for people to talk about difficult things...And if you want to have a discussion about what’s going on in Syria, it doesn’t mean to say you support ISIS. But some people say I am not even allowed to talk about it, which means that the only information people get is often distorted or wrong
because... everyone’s too scared even to say you know. To say that there are grievances which need to be addressed doesn’t mean to say that you’re supporting the way ISIS is addressing them.

These points of difference expose the ways in which politics and its rhetoric interrupt the more sensitive and nuanced approaches by those working on the ground, and highlight how easily politics can undermine relationship-building between state agents and marginalized communities.

Challenges in defining terrorism, CVE and the radicalization process have already been noted, including the critique that narratives around radicalization, in particular, can lead to preemptive criminalization (see Chapter 2). These definitional dilemmas have implications for applications like that of the ICV safe spaces proposal, and also in the management of politics and optics for engaging particular groups. This was an issue raised by the CRU officer responsible for the RWE portfolio. The officer expressed the CRU’s concern that any outreach involving RWE groups could be at risk of looking like government “endorsement.” This perspective is interesting given the critique of narrowly defined radicalization by governments, particularly the federal government, as exclusive to Islamist extremism. The pragmatics of both defining what constitutes RWE and developing a targeted approach to RWE had proved challenging:

I'm still trying to work out which community groups can I talk to? Who are the sort of community-influencers that would really help both inform the work, but then potentially one day deliver the work.

So, are you also consulting with the right-wing groups themselves?

That's a very good question. The Police had advised against it. The Police really felt that at this stage they're just too nasty and volatile, and all sorts of things, in terms of personal safety. But also, in terms of putting our work at risk. Because, as you know, groups like the UPS are very quick to, you know, target and jump on, "look at what the government's doing, you need to watch them closely" that sort of thing, so we're trying very hard not to grab the attention in that way as well. So, we're not I suppose, but it doesn't mean that I'm very aware and have continuously said in a lot of my briefings that the engagement in that space has to happen eventually, and we need to have
ongoing discussions with VicPol about how we can do that well, and then you
know, who would that intermediary be? That would meet with groups, because
I don't think it would necessarily be, you know, members of this Unit.

In order to manage the optics of CVE engagements with RWE, and the potential volatility of
funding community engagements that tackle RWE, CRU staff plan to engage external parties. In
doing so they see it possible to maintain important distance:

Mmm, it's actually a really, it's actually one of those terrible crucial
challenges in the sense that the work that we're doing would be completely
serviced by meeting and engaging with right wing groups, it almost feels like
it's this obvious part of the puzzle, but I think yeah, at this stage we just can't,
we can't do anything about it.

In the meantime, the lopsided effect of CVE as defined by engagements with Muslim
communities more than other groups, and the political and media coverage that highlights these
efforts and neglects to recognise the various forms of violent extremism undermines the
messaging behind documents like Victorian. And Proud Of It and reinforces the frequent
association between terrorism and Islam.

Program evaluations as research and surveillance

As noted in Chapter 2, though growing, there remains a dearth of evidence-based research that
plagues CVE and CT in policy and practice (Lum & Kennedy, 2012; Lum et al., 2006). That
being said, in many places governments are expected to operate to a mantra of “evidence-based”
policy (P. Davies, 1999; Young, 2011). In part, this issue is addressed by the CRU’s research
arm, RIOSC and the research projects it funds. The other way is through pressing the importance
of evaluation as part of grant funding agreements. Noting the limited library of evidence-based
resources, the CRU’s Chief Resilience Officer explained how evaluation play an important role
in evidence development, and their focus on evaluation was part of the larger critical terrorism
studies research agenda (Sageman, 2014):

And that's – and we're aware of that so we're trying to turn that 4% [of
empirically-grounded studies] to maybe 5%
As previously noted, close oversight by CRU officers meant that organisations that received grants to develop and implement terrorism prevention programs were supported to achieve what they saw as more rigorous evaluation. In this model, community grants double as research grants, in effect. The issue here is that if we return to the entrepreneurial and social enterprising approach taken by NGOs, local governments, and other religious organisations, there is a risk of developing a biased, unfaithful, and compromised evidence base. Herein lies the risk of false positives, noted by scholars like Charlotte Heath-Kelly in the UK Prevent program (Heath-Kelly, 2012).

Because the process of securing grants requires identifying a “target” community and individuals “at risk,” in need of CVE intervention, the process begins with surveillance. While the CRU recognises the ability for organisations to anonymise participants, the very fact of an organisation identifying itself as “in need” of funds isolates a particular group and locates a community of individuals. The next problem arises when the grounds on which the applicant has been approved funds then becomes the evaluation framework by which they must assess their own achievements and setbacks. Because they are likely to want to continue funding their agenda, the funded organisation needs to identify ongoing issues, while also highlighting their successes. Finally, the restrictions imposed by the evaluation model, framed by the original “needs” identified, means that achievements or needs identified outside of the CVE remit are difficult to capture, and have limited capacity to develop a case for what might be more general community welfare needs. Seen through a radicalization and violent extremism prism, the ordinary service needs, social supports and challenges facing marginalised young people are at risk of going uncaptured in this evaluation process, including the potentially negative sentiment associated with the knowledge that the program they are participating in exists only to prevent them from radicalising to violence and committing violence against the Australian public.

In summary, three primary issues arise out of this process of evaluation and the making of a library of evidence. First, the characterisation of evaluations as intel-gathering which has been shown to ultimately undermine relationships of trust between the state and marginalised communities in CVE efforts (Awan, 2011; Spalek, 2012; Spalek & O’Rawe, 2014). Second, the potential for an inaccurate and/or inadequate evidence-base from which future policy directions are determined, potentially causing harm. And third, the ongoing reinforcement of the “suspect community” label that haunts terrorism prevention policy and practice, undermining the
collective belonging and civic participation core to theories of radicalization prevention. While recognising the productive general principle of policy and program evaluation, these three problems highlight significant issues that feed the negative implications of securitising social policy.

5.5 Conclusions: Opportunities & discontinuities across scales

*I think the thing is that the Australian community is not one thing…*I mean there’s an attempt often by federal politicians to say, “now, people play rugby in Victoria everyone’s all the same.” But that’s not the case. *I mean, I am not saying anything particularly radical to say that, you know, it was well known that the former Prime Minister Abbott’s rhetoric was received least well in Victoria particularly around issues around society and embracing diversity…That there is a national message that resonates everywhere equally is not actually true.* (Victorian Chief Resilience Officer)

In this chapter I have attempted to respond to three primary questions:

1. How is the federal approach to terrorism prevention received and implemented at the state level? What factors influence policy reception and implementation?
2. What characterises the Victorian approach to terrorism prevention?
3. What are the implications (opportunities and challenges) of policy coherence and incoherence across scales of government?

By conceiving of the state scale as an active “field of reception”, it is possible to then consider ways in which national security policy travels through the state government apparatus, to examine the opportunities and challenges that arise from this interrelationship. Importantly, the state government has been able to productively position itself in contrast to the federal government, in part by speaking out against federal government representatives in media statements, but also in policies like the *Victorian. And Proud Of It* multicultural policy statement. Put another way, public discourse gaps that emerge between federal and state scales of government provide openings for new state-community relationships, based specifically on that difference in discourse and in response to the noted trust deficit. In part this discontinuity
both opens up and relies upon a fresh geography of belonging, where the “Team Australia” rhetoric is overridden by a state-bound community.

Although the Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Resilience (2015) echoes much of the language and directions of the Australian government’s National Counter Terrorism Plan (2017), the meaning and implementation in the Victorian context is remarkably different. This point is made most strongly by the willingness of Victorian agencies to seek out funding from the CRU, while remaining strongly opposed to federal Attorney General’s Department funding. Knowledge of the unique circumstance and context in the Victorian setting has meant that CRU staff are keenly aware of this point of distinction as an opportunity to engage communities otherwise increasingly opposed to state engagements. The backgrounds of CRU staff have played an important role in the ways in which communities have been approached, based on an understanding of the “targeted” communities’ ambivalence to CVE.

While there are many positive points of distinction, there are also some more challenging and potentially negative aspects to the way in which the state government has engaged in terrorism prevention efforts. For example, we might consider the “implementation gap” that is revealed when comparing CVE funding applications, the funded programs and resultant evaluations. Communities organisations, like ICV, are clear-sighted in their approach to CVE funding as a means to an end, allowing them to fund much-needed social programs to address issues relating to mental health, high prison rates, and drug addiction. What we might call an entrepreneurial approach to accessing government funding requires communities to self-describe as “at risk” of radicalization to violent extremism, where evaluations feed into an evidence-base that does not comprehensively reflect the reality of struggling communities and their broad-spectrum needs.

While the majority of the rhetoric coming from Australia’s most progressive state could be described as inclusive in the face of federal government alienation of Muslim communities, this is not consistently the case. Political discourse undermines policy implementation and outcomes when, for example, political optics override research-supported, community-led initiatives like the Islamic Council of Victoria’s “safe space” proposal. Exposing groups who are seeking support to undertake sensitive and complex community work that is supported by CRU staff and its Ministerial Taskforce amplifies the marginalization of these groups and undoes the trust-building and partnership efforts that have taken place over the course of multiple years. The
ICV’s decision to no longer work in partnership with the state government happened overnight, demonstrating the fragile nature of these relationships wherein the community group already feels out on a limb, in the knowledge they have identified themselves as “at risk” to seek funds. In these instances, it is all too easy for alarmist media narratives to take hold, telling a story that the state’s Islamic peak body wants a space where youth can criticise the government and spout ISIS ideology with impunity.

As noted in the Victorian Chief Community Resilience Officer’s statement, “the Australian community is not one thing” and community interventions that seek to better support and engage marginalised communities cannot be captured in a nationally scaled response. The Victorian government’s focus on its role as resource provider, enabling local community engagement programs highlights the appreciation for the unique geography of the local scale. In the following chapter the qualities of the local scale are further explored in light of this policy pathway, from national security to local implementation, filtered through the state level as a midway field of reception.
Chapter 6: Local government as Community Activist: Municipal interventions in national security

6.1 Introduction

Local governments play a unique role in national democratic governance. Recent examples, such as Sanctuary Cities in the US and Canada, have highlighted the radical potential of the local state to challenge national policy, and expand increasingly restrictive definitions of citizenship and belonging. This chapter focuses on the potential role of the local state – as both a site and actor capable of advancing a multicultural “politics of difference,” pushing back against the exclusionary effects of Australia’s national security strategy and rhetoric. This chapter is split into two distinct parts, both drawing on ethnographic data collected incrementally over the course of two years at a single local government site, in addition to document analysis.

Part One explores the rise of municipal activism and the possibilities of local states challenging dominant national narratives and policies through local resistance, policy adaptation, and entrepreneurial social service provision. Part One also provides context for the local government case study, the City of Dean (Dean), where a national security programme has been implemented since 2017. The unique qualities of the local scale and its governance are first described, in order to situate the City of Dean within state and national governance circuitry. A short “multicultural vignette” is presented as a way of comprehending the setting in which national security policy “landed” in Dean. This first section is a crucial precursor to the examination of Dean’s foray into countering violent extremism (CVE).

Part Two details Dean’s decision to pilot a CVE program through the Equity and Diversity Unit (E&D Unit). This section takes as its starting point Jones’ (2013, p. 5) characterisation of policy implementation as interpretive and dynamic practice, rather than commanding and didactic. Put another way, in this section I consider the work of “policy practitioners” (or for Ahmed, 2012, “groundworkers”) as interlocutors engaged in local translation of national security policy. By drawing attention to policy as practice, and to the everyday activities of policy practitioners I present the compromises, negotiations and dissensus that is ironed out in official evaluation reports and subsequent institutional memory.

In this way, Part Two documents the process of staff coming to terms with administering a state government (Community Resilience Unit, CRU) funded program, D-SPEAK, its development
and its implementation. Following a co-design and co-led approach with youth participants, D-SPEAK appeared to take on a life of its own. Program development, outputs and outcomes are seen to provide insights into the challenges of doing CVE at the local scale. Additionally, Part Two examines the opportunities that emerged through the combination of the youth workers’ and participants’ initiative. Essential to the program’s development and implementation were the unique networks, experiences, and investments made by staff who confronted their own ambivalences and discomfort with engaging in a national security intervention at the local scale.

Part Two presents insights into the development process and program implementation that indicate a need for more broad-spectrum and open-ended welfare programming for communities marginalised by national security policy, exclusivist visions of national citizenship, everyday racism and xenophobia. The setting at Dean, the staff that have shaped that setting, and the atypical loose funding conditions created a situation in which a CVE pilot program was funded through a state government agency, but customised by participating youth to meet their own self-identified needs.

Chapter 6 brings together the three primary dissertation research questions and applies them to the local scale. The first two questions provide context for this chapter, while the third asks specifically how, at the local government level, local government officers working in the E&D Unit interpreted and implemented a national security agenda while maintaining their guiding principles and objectives of supporting specific community needs, under principles of equity and diversity – or multiculturalism and social cohesion.

1. How is national security policy articulated and interpreted at the local scale?
2. How do state actors and institutions negotiate the two potentially conflicting objectives of national security and multiculturalism on their journey from national policy to local implementation?
3. How do local government workers negotiate these two policy priorities—multiculturalism and national security—in everyday practice?

In Chapters 4 and 5, I referred to the discursive and implementation gaps that exist between rhetoric and policy across scales of federal and state government. In Chapter 6, I continue with this conceptual framework to highlight the opportunities, subversions, creative agency and dissent made possible at the local level because of these “gaps.” This Chapter does not present an evaluation of the program. However, drawing on extensive ethnographic research from a
single site, it posits that the unique role and setting of local government can allow for critical implementation of controversial policy, that reflects the experiences, needs and desires of “targeted” communities, going some way to subvert the negative associations of national security policy and funding.

PART ONE: Radical Municipalism: Local governments as community activists

Alongside the rise of global cities, city mayors around the world are finding their voices amplified, extending their influence beyond municipal boundaries. Names like Robert Ford, Rudi Guilliani, Sadiq Kahn, and Boris Johnson have been familiar figures much farther afield than Toronto, New York, and London respectively. While some of these figures might be more notorious than reputable, these leaders represent the rising recognition of cities as important networked actors at the national and often global scale (Bulkeley, Luque-Ayala, McFarlane, & MacLeod, 2018; Davidson, Coenen, Acuto, & Gleeson, 2019). The path from local government (LG) to state and federal politics is well-travelled in many places, and city governments have provided a stepping-stone for countless new politicos, cutting their teeth on neighbourhood issues and planting the seeds of their broader political agendas. Perhaps for some, it is ambition and drive that compels local councillors to vociferously develop their policy positions beyond municipal borders. But for others, activist LGs and their representatives reflect and recognise their role as democratic institutions with closest contact to the public, and their responsibility to represent constituent interests. Increasingly, LG institutions are becoming sites where public sentiment regarding issues like the recognition of First Peoples, border politics, national security, and climate change surface. Concerns come to light as council workers liaise with communities, process planning and development applications, prepare emergency management and sustainability plans, and provide a range of social services. At the Fearless Cities summit held in Barcelona in 2017, this trend toward seeing the municipality as a “strategic front” was dubbed the “New Municipalism” (Russell, 2019).

In early 2018, an inner-city local government in Melbourne, Australia announced that they would cease to hold citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day, 26th of January. The decision was supported unanimously by councillors, recognising the negative connotations of the day known to many as “Invasion Day” – the day when the First Fleet of British ships arrived on present-day Australian shores. Mayor Amanda Stone of the City of Yarra, announcing the decision to refrain from holding citizenship ceremonies on the 26th January, was asked by a reporter the extent to
which her office had surveyed their constituents about the decision—had they held a referendum? Mayor Stone explained that in addition to information gathered in the everyday work of local council interfacing directly with individuals and communities, including close consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives, Yarra had conducted over 300 street surveys. The interviewer’s question to Mayor Stone characterises the typical admonishment of local government when they are perceived as breaching their bounds of “the three Rs” (3Rs)—roads, rates and rubbish—and engaging in politics beyond their jurisdiction (Clure 2017):

Interviewer: ...But that is something that local councils, be it Yarra or any other council around the country should not be sticking their noses into – you should be more concerned about things like road maintenance, providing local facilities, upkeep of local parks and the like. What do you say to that?

Mayor Stone: You know under the local government Act in Victoria, we’ve got three key roles and one of them is to advocate on behalf of our community. It’s a recognised role of local government, and this is a message we’ve been getting loud and clear from large numbers of our population, particularly young people in Yarra who make up a large part of our community. So, we are advocating, and we are doing what we can to represent our community’s views.

Local governments Yarra, Fremantle and Dean, who each passed motions to cease citizenship ceremonies on 26th January, have replaced the events with traditional smoking ceremonies. Noongar elder Robert Eggington remarked (Eggington cited in Moodie, 2017):

Australia Day being celebrated on the 26th of January means the celebration of history, and in that history Aboriginal people have suffered so greatly... I think white Australia will benefit from the decision that Fremantle Council has made, once it’s able to rise above the fear... I think we’re creating a potential unity for the future by speaking out.

In response to Fremantle’s decision, federal Liberal MP Ben Morton accused the local government of “wanting to create a national debate,” deriding the third tier of Australian government in stating that (Moodie, 2017):
**Fremantle council, in my view, should be sticking to its core business of making our parks nice and clean and picking up the rubbish.**

In response to local governments refusing to hold citizenship ceremonies on 26th January, the Turnbull government have stripped at least three local governments of the right to confer citizenship ceremonies at all. In 2017, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull described the local government protests as an “attack on Australia Day,” and characterised it as “un-Australian” (Turnbull cited in Clure, 2017):

Though consistently contested, the role and voice of local government institutions is becoming increasingly vital to representative democracy. In this chapter, I argue that local government dissent creates breaks in monolithic national narratives about borders, identity, etc., and in so doing, creates opportunities for multi-cultural belonging in what has been considered an exclusionary and even hostile national context.

### 6.2 Thinking globally, acting locally: From anti-nuclear movements to sanctuary cities

The dictum “thinking globally, acting locally” originates from an environmentalist approach, attributed to Scottish biologist and town planner Patrick Geddes in the early 20th century, and popularised by Friends of the Earth founder David Brower in 1969. This familiar dictum continues to resonate with respect to climate change and its impacts, which adhere to no formal administrative borders. The expression has been central to the global justice movement, protecting “the local” through shopping locally, campaigns for local control over local resources and labour, production, culture, flora and fauna (Solnit, 2016, p. 97). The slogan wills individuals to be active agents rather than passive recipients of global conditions. Recently, this activism has been amplified by strategic alliances between global cities, demonstrating and advocating for action that could have more cumulative and far-reaching effects, particularly in relation to environmental and climate crises (Bulkeley, 2014; Hughes, Chu, & Mason, 2018).

Solnit and others (see Born & Purcell, 2006; Purcell, 2006; Purcell & Brown, 2005) have cautioned against romanticizing “the local” and falling into the “local trap” by assuming that “local” is an independent object with inherent qualities. Solnit, however, notes the human dimension that thinking in this scale enables, particularly when strategically, globally networked. As discussed below, this was certainly the case for anti-nuclear activists in the 1970s.
Networked activist cities first appeared with the anti-nuclear movement in the late 1970s and continued into the 1980s. The movement in Missoula, Montana has been recognised as the first city to have voted to become a Nuclear-Free Zone in 1978, followed soon after by Hawaii in 1981 (Schregel, 2015). Other US cities, including Takoma Park, Maryland, Oakland and Berkeley, California followed suit over the next decade. European municipalities began to mobilise following a meeting of foreign defence ministers in Brussels in 1979, when a decision was made that in the case that arms talks failed with the Soviet Union, 108 Pershing II missiles and 464 Ground-Launched Cruise Miles would be deployed (Schregel, 2015, p. 568).

An upswing of anti-nuclear groups was observed across western Europe following this decision, triggering what came to be known as “peace activism” at the municipal level (Schregel, 2015, p. 568). In 1980, Manchester City Council became the first UK city government to declare itself a Nuclear Free City and set out to recruit other city councils (The Peace Museum, 2009). Recruitment of UK city governments grew to more than 150 by 1995. The City of Sydney in Australia announced its nuclear-free position in 1980, and by 1983 there were 50 local government members (Suter, 1985). A year later that number had almost doubled. Municipalities joined the movement across Japan, Germany and New Zealand during this time, often linked nationally and internationally by shared resources, manuals, and inspiring each other’s actions (Schregel, 2015, p. 568).

The anti-nuclear moment, articulated by city governments, through the 1970s and 1980s provides both precedent and a window into understanding the unique capacities of local governments. It demonstrated their capacity to participate in and influence policy and discourse that develops beyond their geographic boundaries, with very real implications for urban settings and their inhabitants. As Schregel (2015, p. 567) so succinctly observes:

> Within the 1980s quest for alternative defence and security policies, activists rejected regarding cities and towns as places where consequences and effects of ‘high politics’ only manifested themselves. Instead of subjecting themselves to national or international decision-making processes, protagonists of municipal interventions in defence insisted that issues of (nuclear) armament and deterrence should – and indeed could – be dealt with by municipal
institutions... Anti-nuclear discourse interpreted cities and towns as concrete places and locality as a scale that might have political potential and which could enable citizens to work for arms control and armament.

As Schregel’s (2015) historical study of municipal interventions in nuclear disarmament reveals, locality became an important aspect of peace efforts, appropriating urban spaces and linking experiences of insecurity and peace to the everyday setting. In effect, it was possible to transform an elusive, existential, global threat into something with plausible community impacts (not dissimilar to the framing of the climate crisis today). Consequently, it promoted public conversations and active political engagement with national security and foreign policy in a way that had never before been seen.

In all contexts, alliances of agitating local councils powerfully and strategically managed to expose and criticise federal government policies, increase the attentiveness of the public to

federal motions, and hold federal governments accountable. Though not always oppositional, in cases like New Zealand, local government anti-nuclear agitation transpired in 1984 with Prime Minister David Lange designating New Zealand a Nuclear Free Zone and led to the 1985 South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty of Rarotonga, much to the dismay of the US who had been conducting nuclear weapons testing in the Pacific (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2018).

**Sanctuary cities: Resisting national policy at the local scale**

In coming years, more people than ever before will live in cities. Presently, it is estimated that 54 per cent of the world’s population resides in cities, and that number is expected to increase to almost 70 per cent by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). While urbanisation of the world’s population is largely driven by rural-urban migration patterns, aging populations and fertility rates (United Nations, 2015), a significant proportion will also be driven by international migration. For those who migrate internationally as economic migrants or refugees, chances are they will settle in a city. Between 2000-2015, the UN reported annual net migration to Europe, North America and Oceania constituted on average, 2.8 million people per year (United Nations, 2017, p. 11). But when grouped by income, it is quickly apparent that high-income countries are more attractive to international migrants. During the same period, high-income countries received 4.1 million net migrants annually, travelling from lower- and middle-income countries. The UN describes this as economic and demographic asymmetry and predicts its continuation as a powerful generator of international migration in the medium-term foreseeable future. Indeed, it is these migration pathways where the greatest opportunity for employment exist. In global cities like Sydney, New York and London over one third of residents are immigrants, and in Greater Melbourne the number is close to 40 per cent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016c; The Migration Observatory, 2018).

While immigration policy is typically set at the national scale, it is principally seen, felt and enacted at the local scale. As such, local governments have been known to implement or propose their own policies and regimes. Formal policies of sanctuary have been adopted in US, Canadian, Australian and British cities. Urban sanctuary has different meanings in different places (Bauder, 2017, p. 174). In the US and Canada, sanctuary cities are those with policies that actively protect undocumented or illegalised immigrants, including promoting access to services without fear of exposure. On the other hand, in the UK and Australia, urban sanctuary status is usually a commitment and practice of welcoming and political advocacy on behalf of asylum
seekers and refugees, in lieu of legal protections (Bagelman, 2013). In both instances, Sanctuary City designations - or Refugee Welcome Zones in the case of Australia - are clear articulations of a rejection of national immigration policy at the urban scale. Local governments across these contexts have varying degrees of constitutional authority and jurisdictional influence, and therefore are more or less able to realise their urban immigration regimes. However, as with Nuclear Free Zones, it is through city governments that awareness and visibility of resistance to the dominant federal regimes is made possible.

In recent years the most visible dissent against national policy has come from sanctuary cities in the US. The volume and visibility of sanctuary cities across the US reflects the more aggressive shift in immigration policy since the instatement of the Trump administration. As was the case with the origins of sanctuary policies in the US, recent Sanctuary declarations indicate key moments where a critical mass of resistance to national policy is articulated at the local scale. Sanctuary policies emerged in step with the Central American Sanctuary City Movement of the 1980s, and primarily served to provide safe haven for individuals fleeing violence in Guatemala and El Salvador. Initially a movement driven by churches and other religious institutions, the movement responded directly to the challenges facing Central American asylum seekers to obtain refugee status (O’Brien et al., 2019, p. 7). The movement “sought to address what was perceived to be inequities in the enforcement of U.S. immigration policy” (O’Brien et al., 2019, p. 8). Sanctuary policies have existed in the US since 1971, with the first sanctuary ordinance passed in Berkeley, California. In 1979, Los Angeles passed a Special Order (40) that made it illegal for city employees, including police, to enquire as to an individual’s immigration status. In 1985, the City of San Francisco passed a “City of Refuge” resolution, which was later imbued with power as an ordinance in 1989. Like the Los Angeles Special Order, the City of Refuge ordinance implemented a sanctuary policy whereby city funds and resources could not in any way be employed by federal immigration enforcement, and ruled that immigration status information could not be collected, recorded or shared by city employees, except in instances where it was required by state or federal law (Bauder, 2017). Although to different gradations, these urban policies seek to promote cooperation between law enforcement and illegalised immigrants, enable access to social services, and project opposition to federal policy.

Critics of sanctuary cities, including President Trump, routinely spout rhetoric that they give license for undocumented immigrants to steal American jobs, reject American norms and
language, and commit violent crime (Trump, 2017). Critics argue that sanctuary ordinances result in rising unemployment rates, failures of immigrants to assimilate, and increases in violent crime (O’Brien et al., 2019, p8). Recent research by O’Brien and colleagues (2019) refute this myth, finding there is simply no evidence to support these claims. In particular, their findings show no discernible relationship between sanctuary policies and crime rates, when comparing sanctuary to non-sanctuary cities. Moreover, they show that since the 1930s, immigrant (documented and undocumented) crime rates have consistently been lower than native-born population, which they attribute to fear of consequences including deportation.

Nevertheless, on 25th January 2017 President Trump issued an executive order, “Enhancing Public Safety in the Interior of the United States” (Trump, 2017). Under this Order, local state and law enforcement agencies across the US are required to extend their operations in the service of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), effectively requiring all state law enforcement to act as ICE officers. The Executive Order stated that law enforcement should be empowered by state policy to “make use of all available systems and resources to ensure the efficient and faithful execution of the immigration laws of the United States” (Trump, 2017). For example, city Police were expected to collect and report immigration status information for anyone they apprehended. Failing to do so would result in the withholding of federal grants, which made up almost a quarter of Seattle’s $4 billion budget, for example (O’Neal, 2017). Almost forty city governments either individually or together brought suits against the Trump administration, challenging the constitutionality of the sanctuary cities executive order. Without support from Congress, Trump’s order was found to have no constitutional legitimacy and as such cannot be used to withhold federal grants. Ongoing attempts to circumnavigate the constitutional restrictions continue, as do legal challenges.

These battles between the US President and cities across the country have highlighted both the capacity of cities to act as political advocates and activists individually and collectively. But they also highlight the ways in which city governments’ capacity to reflect the values and priorities of their local constituents can be stymied by their reliance on federal funding.

6.3 Local government in Australia and the possibilities for municipal activism

Looking back to the origins of local government in Australia, a case can be made in defence of the comprehensive and advocating role of local government. The role of local government, in particular to support community health and wellbeing, was crystallised during the 1970s
Whitlam Era and carried forward, for a time, by the Fraser government (Peel, 1995). During this period there was a focus on place-based interventions and frequent pronouncements of the unique capacities of local governments—the social and political building-blocks of the nation. Since the 1970s, there have been numerous examples of local governments engaging in national politics, representing the interests of their local communities and in doing so, refining the grain of democratic discourse. Topics range from environmental activism, to immigration and border politics, indigenous recognition, and gender and sexual equality. Examples from Victorian local government are presented below to elaborate this precedent. In doing so, these examples provide evidence in support of the argument that there exists significant capacity for local governments to meaningfully engage in advocacy to feed a more diverse and nuanced national politics, opening up alternative identifications and opportunities for belonging that subvert singular nationalistic identity narratives.

Inherent to this discussion is the relationship between the three spheres of government, including state government’s powerful influence over local government (legislated in the *Local Government Act 1989*), and complex relationships between federal and local government.

**Institutional context**

Characterised as a “creature of the states”, local government (LG) is the third tier under Australian federation and is legally recognised under state and territory legislation (Munro, 1997, p. 77). In Victoria, LG is defined by the *Local Government Act 1989*. The Act states that a LG (or council), “is elected to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.” This role encompasses responsibilities to represent and engage local communities in decision making, provide leadership and governance accountability, to responsibly manage Council resources, advocate on behalf of local communities, partner with other spheres of government to support community needs, and support and foster active participation and community cohesion in civic life. In short, local government is expected to “handle community needs” at the nearest interface with the Australian public (Suter, 1985, p. 2). Today, councils provide a range of services from waste collection to town planning, from recreation facilities management, to maternal and child health care.

Beginning in the mid-19th century, Australian local governments have been responsible for the physical administration of municipalities. Following the foundation of local councils by the *1840 Parish Act*, colonial local governments were tasked with the responsibility for roads, streets,
bridges, public buildings, schools, police and gaols. The Parish Act was considered a failure as well a precursor for government and community relations, as it triggered conflict between pastoralists and the Colonial administration who collected property taxes to pay for the development of infrastructure. Property owners, generally pastoralists, were reluctant to pay for infrastructure and services they deemed the responsibility of the Colonial regime. Hornby (2012) describes the tension between pastoralists and the Colonial administration as a precursor for modern day tensions between state and local tiers of government in relation to the Commonwealth administration, with conflict over vertical fiscal imbalances at its centre.

Local governments were formalised in the late 19th century with distinct legislative frameworks in each state. The earliest municipalities were Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Geelong, Maitland, Hobart and Perth; their duties were defined in state-specific Municipalities Acts. The 1842 Municipalities Act in Victoria defined roads, water supply and drainage under municipal administration (Hornby, 2012). Importantly, the Victorian Act stood out with an additional emphasis on the provision and support of hospitals and other care facilities like benevolent homes for the poor, sick and destitute. The origin of Victorian local government is thus distinct in its early social, communitarian agenda.

Today, local government is the sphere of government with which Australians have most everyday interaction—they pay their rates, expect their rubbish will be collected on time, and benefit from childcare services, local roads and parks. Advocates of local government contend that a “sense of place” and belonging can be cultivated through a focused representative local government that enables participatory democracy (Dollery & Crase, 2004). Dollery and Crase (2004, p. 274) argue that citizens who feel like they can influence local outcomes are more motivated to participate in democratic processes, to bring their local knowledge to improve the quality of decision making and foster more “socially beneficial behaviour,” like volunteering.

Australian local governments are notable for their small scale. Their US counterparts are more akin in spending to Australian state governments, while in Canada and Germany municipal governments have per capita operating budgets almost three times Australian local governments’ revenue base. Thirty-five per cent of Australian local governments’ revenue comes from local taxation which comprises 3.4 per cent of total public revenue; an additional quarter comes from user charges, and the rest is largely made up of grants and subsidies from the state and territory governments (ALGA 2015). During the forced Victorian local government amalgamations under
the leadership of Premier Jeff Kennett in 1994, the case for municipal reform was made in commissioned papers based almost entirely on accounting (Munro, 1997). As Munro (1997) notes, the Kennett government depicted local governments as inefficient, self-interested, and incapable of modern management practices. The counter-argument to this characterisation contends that it is precisely because of their local scale that LGs have afforded more meaningful democratic participation and grassroots movements, which would be impractical in comparable overseas municipal systems because of size (Self 1997).

The 2015 Victorian election promise to introduce rate capping was paired with reports of LG corruption and a desire to limit LG’s political voice. More often than not the media coverage around the standing of local government has been negative, with the oft-cited dictum that councils should “go back to basics” and stick to the 3Rs, “roads, rates and rubbish” (Victorian Minister for Local Government, 2015). Since the most recent bout of rate capping and evaluation of essential services by the Victorian Essential Services Commission (ESC), the urgency and importance of this question has required careful consideration. With the Local Government Act 1989 under review, and a Bill that proposes redefinition or refinement of the role of local government under consideration in Parliament, there is a need for clarity over the role, potential, and value of local government. During historic periods of economic slumps and austerity, cuts to local government funding have targeted social service provision. In this chapter, I argue that there are clear historical precedents that indicate the unique and significant value of social services and political engagement provided by the third sphere of government, that allow for local government to act as advocates and activists for their constituents.

Perception vs. reality

Although practically speaking, local government is an important sphere of government, it is often overlooked. Noted Australian local government scholar, Brian Dollery (2015, p. 1) describes its frequent portrayal as “the poor cousin of its national and state counterparts.” Though Dollery here refers to its scholarly treatment, or lack thereof, this characterisation neatly captures public perception of local government as having lower levels of professionalism, political import and respect compared to the other tiers of Australian government (see DELWP Community Attitudes Survey 2016). In a recent study of community attitudes toward local government undertaken as part of the review of the Local Government Act 1989 currently in front of Parliament, Victorians expressed low levels of both knowledge and respect for the third
tier of government (DELWP 2016). Asked if they feel the work of local government is important, 78% of Victorians responded positively. However, asked if they knew how local government worked, just over a third (37%) expressed that they had fair or comprehensive understanding. Despite compulsory voting, almost a third of Victorians (31%) didn’t vote in the last local government election. Presumably of those who did they weren’t paying close attention or didn’t follow up on the results, given that just over a third of Victorians (36%) and a quarter of metropolitan Melburnians (27%) know who is currently serving as their mayor. Despite this dearth of knowledge about the work and representatives of LGs, this tier of government is regularly under public scrutiny. At the centre are questions of the role, necessity and value of local government.

Those who consider LG core business as exclusively the domain of the “3Rs” are out of step with the historic precedents of local government, the legislated role of local governments, and the very nature of contemporary cities. Cities are, of course, inextricable from their regional, national, and global context; arguably this is the case today more than ever. If local governments were exclusively responsible for the 3Rs, then the somewhat popular argument for disbanding the third sphere of government could be reasonable (Lucas & Dow, 2016). However, as Suter and others have argued, it is precisely because local governments’ responsibilities extend beyond these three duties that “the tier of government closest to the people,” is so important to the functioning of Australian democracy (Suter, 1985, p. 2).

**Taking local government seriously: a battle for recognition**

Repeated attempts to acknowledge the role of local government (LG) through constitutional recognition has highlighted the ongoing struggle among LGs to clarify and consolidate their role and value. Referenda were held in 1974 and 1988, with another proposed in 2014. In each case there has been a failure to develop sufficient momentum and bipartisan support for constitutional recognition. In 2008 the ALGA outlined the contemporary rationale for constitutional recognition of LG as achieving three kinds of recognition:

1) Symbolic recognition: Broad recognition of LG’s role in the federation;
2) Institutional recognition: An acceptance of some principles relating to the existence and continuation of local government as an institution and local councils as democratic representative bodies; and
3) Financial recognition: A streamlined approach to LG funding resulting from a more direct financial connection between LG and the federal government.

The quest for constitutional recognition remains of minor importance for the majority of Australians. In 2011 poll, less than 30% of Australians reported a strong commitment to LG recognition (Expert Poll 2011, cited in Aulich, 2015).

A generally low level of understanding about LG might go some way to explaining the lack of investment or interest by the public in its constitutional recognition. The Australian Constitutional Values Surveys between 2008 and 2014 have shown consistently low levels of trust in local government performance. Repeatedly, these biennial surveys have reported that 40 per cent of Australians “do not currently have trust in local government’s performance” (Aulich, 2015) and attribute poor performance to a lack of resources and political status (Brown 2013, cited in Aulich 2015). It could be argued that the lack of trust in performance and attribution of poor performance are in fact mutually reinforcing.

The lack of fuller public and constitutional recognition remain ongoing challenges for Victorian LGs. For now, the Local Government Act 1989 section 4 of the Preamble still states that “It is the role of the Council to provide governance and leadership for the local community through advocacy, decision making and action.” Describing the role of council, under Section 3D (2)(d) states local government is responsible for “advocating the interests of the local communities and governments.” It is through this specific and threatened legislation that Dean City Council (discussed below) are able to justify both the existence of their Equity & Diversity Unit and engaging, in their own way, in CVE programming.

6.4 The City of Dean: More than “roads, rates and rubbish”

Located between five to fifteen kilometres north of Melbourne’s central business district, the City of Dean (Dean) is 5,344 hectares and currently home to over 146,000 residents (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016b). Dean is situated on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, the traditional owners of the land. In the 2016 Census, 1,167 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people resided in Dean, notably one of the largest proportions across Greater Melbourne’s 31 municipalities. Dean recognises the longstanding and ongoing presence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the area, “in the face of displacement, disenfranchisement and policies of assimilation” (City of Dean, 2016a).
Over the past decade Dean’s population has been growing steadily. Over 20,000 people travel to Dean every day to work, study, shop, and participate in other activities. Since the colonial settlement of Melbourne and subsequent urbanisation of the northern region of Melbourne, Dean has been shaped by its history as a culturally and linguistically diverse area. In 2016, one third (33.2%) of residents were born overseas in non-English speaking countries and in total, came to Australia from 153 countries and speak 148 different languages (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016b; City of Dean, 2018). Just over half of Dean’s foreign-born residents (50.9 per cent) arrived in Australia prior to 2001, while 25 per cent arrived during or after 2011.

Despite a trend of overall declining socio-economic disadvantage reported in Dean, geographic pockets of entrenched disadvantage remain. It is likely that significant gentrification in some areas explains the reported general reduction in socio-economic disadvantage. Dean acknowledges and responds to the increasing proportion of high-earning residents and the associated market effects in the Dean Housing Strategy 2013-2033, positioning Council as community advocate, regulator and monitor for “affordable, accessible and sustainable housing” (City of Dean, 2013b).

The area has long been recognised as an established left-leaning electorate, reliably voting in Labour and more recently Australian Greens political representatives across tiers of government. The council is made up of primarily Greens Party representatives, including a Greens Mayor. This political orientation is seen in Council’s policies, advocacy, festivals and activism, and is exemplified in the internal character of the administrative arm of Council. A substantial commitment can be seen by the employment of approximately ten Equity & Diversity Unit (E&D Unit) staff, with portfolios that include: Human Rights, Domestic and Family Violence, Multicultural Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs, Interfaith, Social Housing and Gambling.

The elected arm of Dean City Council has been outspoken on public issues including: advocating the removal of children from immigration detention centres, the promotion LGBTQI+ equality in the marriage equality plebiscite, promoting recognition of Traditional owners in the naming of administrative regions and physical spaces, and standing up against domestic and family violence. Dean is also a Refugee Welcome Zone – Australia’s sanctuary city equivalent – and has committed to protecting the human rights of refugees and demonstrating compassion in rhetoric, policies, advocacy and services in support of welcoming refugees. Through both rhetoric and investments in local initiatives, Dean can be seen to position itself as a political
actor, serving a democratic function of representing local residents and the issues important to them.

**Messy multiculturalism in Dean**

Outside Dean’s council chambers banners are displayed proudly welcoming refugees, rejecting domestic violence, expressing LGBTQI+ pride, and acknowledging the Traditional owners of the land. For street-level bureaucrats working at Dean, who often have more direct contact with community members, the activist rhetoric projected by council and councillors can produce complex challenges.

When I first began my ethnographic research at Dean in 2016, the acting Multicultural Officer (MCO) was in the midst of negotiating the text to be displayed on a plaque alongside the “Dean Community Monument for All The Victims of Genocide and All Other Atrocity Crimes.” In an initiative led by the Dean Ethnic Communities Council (DECC), the monument was originally sought by a local Armenian community organisation to mark 100 years since the Armenian Genocide. The acting MCO characterised the challenges associated with multicultural social planning by way of anecdote. He explained how the original request from Dean’s Armenian community had ultimately resulted in a monument that universally recognises victims of genocide. Upon hearing that the Council had responded positively to the Armenian community’s request, representatives from the Australian Turkish Advocacy Alliance objected to the proposal, disputing the fact of Armenian genocide. During this time, word spread about the planned monument and other complaints were levelled at Council including criticism that recognition of genocide elsewhere but not locally would amount to hypocrisy. This sentiment was captured in an objection received by Dean (City of Dean, 2015, p. 92),

_Not speaking as Indigenous Persons, rather as people living in Australia. The most profound Genocidal Acts for Australia are the historical and contemporary treatment [of] Indigenous People who are over-represented in human rights, health and social justice indicators such as: lower life expectancy, poor health outcomes, lower education attendance, lower employment rates, higher rates of imprisonment etc. If Council wishes to raise_
a monument so Australians can reflect on Genocidal Acts it need look no further [than] the historical and ongoing treatment of First Australians.

With an increasing pool of community representatives seeking recognition of experiences of genocide locally and globally, the definition of the monument was expanded. In its expansion it became more generic. At first a list of groups who had been victims of genocide, specifically including Aboriginal Australians, was proposed for inclusion on the plaque. However, when this list was circulated objections were again received. In some cases, objections refuted the use of the term “genocide” (e.g. by Turkish and Sri Lankan community representatives), while others rejected Council’s authority to adjudicate in which instances the term “genocide” could be applied. Liberal (read Conservative) councillor and Deputy Mayor expressed discomfort with the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders on the plaque:

_In many ways I have issues with the Aboriginal part, because technically it is not a recognised genocide._ (cited in Tippet, 2016)

During this time, the acting MAO was informed that the federal government could sue Dean if the monument was raised, formally recognising genocide of Australia’s First Peoples.

After close to three years of back-and-forth on the monument and its text, the universally titled monument was revealed in September 2018 and listed no specific victims of genocide. Anecdotally, the process was described to me as having begun with the “good intentions” of councillors but—as can often be the case with good intentions—was stymied by a lack of knowledge, preparedness and sensitivity as to the implications of such a monument. For council groundworkers, the labour involved in extensive consultation and community facilitation was made more difficult by divisive media coverage that extended inter-community tensions.

The story of the victims of genocide monument captures the progressive proclivities of the municipality and its councillors, and some of the inherent challenges of “managing coexistence” in multicultural, settler society (Sandercock, 2003). Council workers in Dean’s E&D Unit work in two modes: (1) responding to the directives of the elected arm of Council; and (2) responding directly to community needs. As such, policies and strategies emerge in two directions – from the ground up and from the top down. This interface positions council workers in a unique and often difficult position (H. Jones, 2014a, 2014b), particularly as they execute councillors’
rhetoric and work through the inevitable contradictions that multiculturalism in a settler society entails (Dunn, 2005).

The coordinator of Dean’s E&D Unit confided in me early on that my presence in their Unit meant I was seeing the Unit “in all their mess.” In many cases, what this meant to me was that I was seeing the unresolved, imperfect work of street-level bureaucrats and multicultural groundworkers responsible for enabling a politics of difference. Staff holding work portfolios that included human rights, Aboriginal affairs, social housing, gambling, and interfaith relations would overlap, challenge one another, edit, and strengthen each other’s efforts. The E&D Unit staff themselves came from a variety of ethno-cultural and religious backgrounds, and their ages varied. Seeing behind the institutional curtain from the banners and rhetoric to policy development and implementation engenders some appreciation for the negotiation, facilitation and compromise that is often the foundation of contentious programs. In agreeing to my presence during a period of particularly sensitive program development, with their first foray into national security, I was privy to the ambivalence, negotiation and compromise (the aforementioned “mess”) involved in bringing terrorism prevention into a domain defined by principles of multiculturalism, equity and diversity.

Reflecting on Dean’s local activism it is possible to discern a framework of practice guided by four themes: (1) actively challenging national narratives; (2) rejecting national bordering; (3) mediating intercultural conflict; and (4) collaborating across difference. Though messy, open-ended, unresolved, and not always successful, these practices are reproductive. They develop reputation, humility, relationships, and trust between the local state and local communities. As a consequence, there exist greater possibilities of connecting with and supporting “harder-to-reach” communities. Importantly, these conditions provide a setting for local government to undertake more complex and sensitive community engagements, with substantial redistributive potential (Fincher & Iveson, 2008). In this way the co-option of multiculturalism (policy and programs) by a national security agenda is resisted. Furthermore, access to resources and possibilities of belonging – defined by civic knowledge and participation, access to resources, and a sense of entitlement to resources – are extended to marginalised communities, as is evidenced by Dean’s experience engaging in a national security intervention, D-SPEAK, explored in Part Two.
PART TWO: Business as usual?: A local government’s national security intervention

In 2016, at a conference in Sydney that brought together policy makers, academics and practitioners around the topic of social cohesion and violent extremism, two local government officers from Dean City Council (Dean) stood tentatively at the podium delivering their presentation titled “A local government ‘thinking globally/acting locally’.” Their anxiety over public speaking was amplified by their apprehension about the new and difficult terrain they were traversing. They described a recent consultation with local Muslim communities during which they listened to reports of harassment and abuse: the ripple effects from local and international terror events. In response to these concerns the council workers felt compelled to ask:

How should local government respond at a local level to a domestic, or for that matter, a foreign terrorist incident that may impact our community?

As they noted in their presentation, global events can have local impacts. But participating, even if only tangentially, in the traditional space of security agencies and police felt uncomfortable (H. Jones, 2013), as did drawing attention to terrorism in a way that might risk increased exposure to xenophobia and violence toward a group already suffering. In grappling with this emergent issue in their community, they sought to frame it through a “business as usual” approach by highlighting the community health and wellbeing dimension, where they could argue that there existed clear legislative rationale as to the role of local government.

Taking stock of Dean’s exposure to terrorism and terrorism-related offences, staff counted at least 19 individuals—either living in or spending regular time in Dean (either at mosque or school)—since 2005, that have either been convicted of terrorism-related offences or have left Australia as foreign fighters. Initially these incidents were linked with al Qaeda, but more recently individuals were aligning themselves with ISIS. In 2005, 11 men linked to a Dean mosque were arrested as part of Operation Pendennis, a two-year counter-terrorism investigation that played out in Melbourne and Sydney, that resulted in 18 terrorism convictions. Almost a decade later, Adam Dahman, a teenager from a Dean suburb, travelled to Baghdad in 2014 where he killed himself and five others in a marketplace near a Shiite mosque using a bomb. Though these events are few and far-between, their impact has been felt and the major local
mosque in Dean has remained a site of interest for national security agencies and law enforcement.

Despite their usual apprehension about both national security policy and the federal government, Dean was responsive to community concerns and their approach was thus framed as one of concern over “community inclusion.” As the IFO explained:

_Local government as the first tier of government, I think it’s in the perfect position in this whole CVE space, given that we know the community, we usually have good working relationships with the various segments of the local community, we’ve got communication channels there, um, ah, Council usually has an idea of the affected communities and agencies that could work in response to those affected communities. Council also has resources and venues and facilities and expert staff, so I see our principal role in this CVE area as linking communities and agencies together and also in coordination. There might be a cash-strapped youth soccer club finding it difficult to host matches or to raise the funds for their events when Council has venues and community grants that, you know, can help build or establish or develop these groups._

This framing spoke to the guiding principles of all E&D Unit staff, that there exists the possibility at the local scale to provide antidotes to un-belonging, alienation and disenfranchisement (HoSang, 2006; Sutton & Kemp, 2011)—each associated with radicalisation to violent extremism in the Victorian Government’s Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Resilience (2015).

Dean’s practice-based knowledge was reinforced with the release of the 2017 Multicultural Youth Australia Census. Key findings of the Census revealed that migrant youth were generally optimistic about their sense of belonging and life chances in Australia, despite facing countless challenges (Wyn, Khan, & Dadvand, 2018). Almost half of refugee and migrant young people reported having experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the past year. Almost two-thirds had witnessed discrimination, and half were either unemployed or underemployed, which they most frequently attributed to racial discrimination. As noted in Chapter One, in spite of these negative experiences, immigrant and refugee young people overwhelmingly reported feeling optimistic about their ability to achieve their goals in Australia. Researchers processing
the Census data hypothesise that these feelings of optimism speak to a belief and investment in the national ideal of Australian multiculturalism. But they also observe that there are limits to this belief and investment, as the Census showed: optimism fades and pessimism rises over time. Wyn and colleagues thus found the local scale to be a key site for interventions, reporting that immigrant and refugee young people locate their sense of belonging most strongly at their local scale (neighbourhood, municipality), compared to national, state, and school settings. This understanding of the possibilities of place-based interventions at the local scale compelled Dean E&D Unit staff to consider a CVE pilot program.

6.5 Dean’s Muslim community call for local government support

As “the tier of government closest to the people” (Suter 1985, p. 2) in the course of their everyday work Dean E&D Unit staff began to hear expressions of distress from members of Dean’s Muslim community. Given the Dean Interfaith Officer’s (IFO) longstanding personal and professional relationships with the local mosque leadership and the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), he was privy to rising concerns from community members around the victimization of and backlash against Muslims in the municipality, more often in the aftermath of local and international terror-related events. He heard reports of everyday experiences of Islamophobic violence in public spaces and on public transport, as well as the fears of parents and religious leaders about the manipulative pull to radicalisation to violence that appeared to be taking place secretly and online.

These concerns were distinct and separate, but there was also concern over their relation. Put another way, there was community concern over the possibility of this harassment and abuse leading to what the IFO called, “co-radicalisation.” This fear was crystallised in 2016 with an incident at a local shopping mall, where a group of young Muslims had been harassed by a group of non-Muslim teens, and a violent knife fight had broken out. There was a sense that increasing hostility directed toward Muslim youth could result in Muslim youth disengaging from their families, religious communities, and other communities of support. Events like these and the highly publicised 2014 death of Dean teen Adam Dahman as a suicide bomber in Baghdad, led parents to feel concerned about the wellbeing and safety of their children. Later, in 2014 at a Dean Interfaith Council meeting, members of the Council reported that violent extremism, radicalisation and racism contributed to their communities’ perceptions of a lack of safety in
Parents were frightened that without warning, they might discover their son or daughter had become alienated and pushed down a path like that of Dahman.

In 2015 there was an intensification of the anti-Muslim and Islamaphobic climate in Australia. Media vilification, online harassment and physical victimization were all reported by the Islamophobia Register and researchers at Curtin University (Akbarzadeh, 2016; Briskman et al., 2017). There was a reported upsurge in media reporting about Muslims and Islam by 81 per cent in Australia (Briskman et al., 2017, p. 40). Political rhetoric during this period inflamed an increasingly assertive anti-Muslim sentiment, explicit in the occurrence of numerous anti-mosque rallies and the rapid growth of Facebook pages like “Stop the mosque in Bendigo.” This intensification occurred and was shaped by the Sydney siege of December 2014, the Charlie Hebdo shootings of January 2015, the Parramatta shooting of a police employee in October 2015, and the Paris attacks of November 2015. Islamaphobic and anti-Muslim momentum gathered, and immediately following external events there were significant spikes in incident reports to the Islamophobia Register. Specific days in May and November 2015 saw more incident reports than would typically be reported in a given month (p. 57). May 2015 was significant for its coverage of charges against a Melbourne teenager who had made a bomb, and November 2015 for the Paris attacks, when 130 people had been killed and many wounded in a coordinated attack by suicide bombers at a sports stadium, concert venue, and in restaurants and bars. In November, federal Attorney-General George Brandis (2015) announced the new national terrorism advisory system and described the “current threat environment” as “the most significant” ever faced by Australia.

In April 2016, DCC held a public community consultation with Muslim residents following reports from community leaders and individuals of significant spikes in anti-Muslim victimization over past months. Participants were asked: “In your day-to-day lives what risks do you feel, as Muslims living in the City of Dean?” One participant, an emergency relief Chaplain for the Muslim community, praised Dean’s consultation initiative, stating that to his knowledge, no other council had ever asked Muslim communities to help to identify risks unique to their community. Participants concerns were summarised by staff and included:

- A sense of social exclusion;
- Vilification of their communities and negative media representations;
• The burden of responsibility to prove themselves as innocent, non-violent, and “moderate”;
• Harassment, physical and symbolic violence, and a sense of fear;
• Lack of trust in law enforcement;
• Intergenerational challenges, including parental fear of youth involvement in gangs, drugs, and ISIS recruitment;
• Direct and indirect physical and mental health impacts; and
• Heightened risk of all of the above in periods immediately following terror-related incidents.

The 18 months preceding this consultation had been particularly fraught. Participants reported spikes in incidents in the days following the December 2014 Lindt Café Siege in Sydney, the January 2015 Charlie Hebdo and November 2015 Paris attacks. Women, children and young adults were identified as being at greatest risk of victimization during these times. Participants’ concerns were heard by Dean Equity and Diversity officers, members of Dean’s Corporate Risk Department, and in the presence of a Victorian Community Resilience Unit officer. Participants asked council workers for support and called for improvements in public safety planning.

In response to these concerns it was decided that a two-pronged approach was required: emergency response planning and prevention. To address the “response” prong, the IFO instigated a new component of Dean’s Municipal Emergency Management Plan (2017) that would account for “civic disruptions and social emergencies” (or “backlash mitigation”) in addition to the typical heat wave, flooding, and influenza emergency management issues. The proposed amendment to the Plan was designed in typical emergency management style and describes networks of support and contactable community representatives in the case of civic disruptions and social emergencies, including a terrorism incident, that might trigger an increase in violence and harassment of particular groups. Unique details in the proposed amendment will include a food security plan that will ensure access to Halal food in the case of an emergency, in which Dean’s Muslim community might feel unsafe leaving their homes. While typical in design, the inclusion of “civic disruptions and social emergencies” as part of emergency management is novel in Australian emergency management planning and speaks to a relatively recent shift in thinking about what constitutes an emergency, new kinds of threats, and a turn toward bolstering “social resilience” as part of emergency management planning.
6.6 Deliberating on CVE: The Dean Community Inclusion Research Project

Rather than a broad-spectrum anti-Islamophobia or anti-Islam prevention intervention, the focus of the “prevention prong” was narrower, addressing the concerns articulated by parents and community leaders around the risks of young people becoming radicalised to violent extremism. This interpretation of what constitutes prevention might be considered more dubious were it not instigated by Dean’s Interfaith Officer (IFO), a devoted Muslim with direct experience in counter-radicalisation programming.

The broadly named Dean Community Inclusion Research Project was drafted primarily as a positioning document, a precursor to what would ultimately become D-SPEAK, a CVE intervention. The question posed in this report was: “Is there a role for local government in building community cohesion and preventing violent extremism?” Arguably the very existence of the E&D Unit and Dean’s proactive approach to social issues and activism would answer the first part of this question: there is an active role for local government in developing community cohesion. It is the second component of this question that was novel. Bringing the two together implied an implicit connection between them, thus a confirmation of council’s responsibility to act to prevent violent extremism. The Community Inclusion Research Project cites Dean’s Diversity Statement included in the Dean Council Plan 2013-2017 (p. 11):

The Community of [Dean] cherishes this diversity and values it as an important civic asset. Council plays a role in promoting, encouraging, fostering and harnessing this asset and giving it the opportunity to flourish and be celebrated, acknowledged and respected.

As such, the objectives of the Community Inclusion Plan are framed by the problem of diversity as a civic asset, under threat by the global rise of terrorism and its local impacts (including radicalisation, racism, and violent extremism). The Community Inclusion Project therefore sought “to support individuals and families who may be at risk of Islamophobia, radicalisation and extremism” (City of Dean, 2016b, p. 6).

Having set out an agenda for a prospective local government role in countering violent extremism, the Dean staff set about securing funds from the state government to pilot a year-long CVE program. They applied for a competitive grant through the Victorian Community Resilience Unit (CRU) for $100,000. Because the CRU’s goal was to fund community
organisations to encourage community-led CVE, local governments were not eligible to apply for funds. Dean’s IFO approached the Dean Ethnic Communities Council (DECC) – a NGO funded by state government and the City of Dean – and proposed a partnership in order to qualify for funds. In placing DECC as the grant recipient but promising to be the practical lead, Dean’s IFO was able to put together an application for funds in which council would act as project manager and resource provider (staff, space, services), while DECC would administer the money. Though he agreed to the arrangement, the DECC Chairperson had strong negative feelings about CVE creating suspect communities, and harmfully and disproportionately targeting Muslims. While his position on CVE was negative, his agreement to partner was founded on his trust in the IFO’s intentions and relationship to the communities which he planned to engage. This turned out to be the case with a variety of others that the IFO approached to seek involvement in a fuzzy and undefined CVE proposed program. It didn’t help that the objectives outlined in the Community Inclusion Project grouped “individuals and families who may be at risk of Islamophobia, radicalisation and extremism” together – distinctly different issues (City of Dean, 2016b, p. 6). The somewhat clunky grouping together of Islamophobia alongside radicalisation and extremism undermined the efforts of staff to avoid repeating the harmful implicit association between Islam and violent extremism: one of the very issues both community members and the IFO himself identified as problem encountered in everyday life.

This association was reinforced by a list of almost entirely Islamic community and religious organisations who were approached and listed on the funding application. Due to a tight grant application deadline, the IFO was unable to meet and fully explain his intentions for the program, and those I interviewed explained that they had agreed to participate because they trusted the IFO’s judgement and commitment to their communities. In some cases, trust in Dean as local government was also expressed as sufficient justification for agreeing to participate despite limited information. During this period, the IFO’s E&D Unit colleagues expressed their own concerns and criticism of the application for funds, echoing those of the DECC Chairperson’s. However, the explanation was consistently that there was community desire for support and intervention, and this temporarily alleviated some concerns over the risks of further alienating Dean’s Muslim communities by seeking terrorism prevention funds.
In the end this application for funds was unsuccessful, despite the CRU expressing interest in a program sited in the municipality of Dean. It is possible that the loosely sketched program was not sufficiently defined to be seen as resolved and feasible. Although disheartened by the setback, the IFO continued communicating with the CRU, and in May 2017 Dean secured $60,000 for 4-months from the Victorian Community Resilience Unit (CRU) to pilot a CVE program, with an additional $15,000 contribution from Dean. CRU staff were interested in the possibility of there being a role for local government to play in the administering or support of CVE programming. While they had not officially developed a funding stream to suit this kind of intervention, as often happens in government, the end of financial year meant there were funds the needed to be “offloaded”. Faced with an exceptionally short timeline, funds awarded to Dean were tied to relatively loose conditions, with the view that a pilot program in Dean might serve as a conservative scoping opportunity for both the CRU and Dean, both interested in a potential role for local government to counter violent extremism.

6.7 “How can we make the most difference?”: CVE as strategic advocacy and resourcing

The Victorian Community Resilience Unit (CRU) were supportive of an approach that would be co-designed and co-led with youth. Dean was required to prepare an evaluation framework at the outset of the project, responsive to the CRU’s program logic. Short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (2-4 years), and long-term (4-6 years) outcomes were listed and Dean staff were expected to draw out specific outcomes from each list. Short term outcomes could be generally described as social welfare outcomes, like “increased access to socio-economic opportunities”, “increased access to services reducing disadvantage”, in addition to those which could be considered as being at the “pointy end” of CVE, like “decreased support for expressions of violence” and “increased trust in narratives countering extremism”. Medium-term outcomes were focused around improving social inclusion and wellbeing as protective factors against the lure toward violent extremism (VE), VE diversion, and developing factors of social cohesion, like “increased respect, value and pride in community diversity”. Long-term outcomes fit directly with the Community Resilience Unit’s *Strategic Framework to Strengthen Victoria’s Social Cohesion and Resilience* (2015), which identified goals of public safety, social inclusion and community resilience.
The project working group met for the first time in May 2016, chaired by the Equity and Diversity Unit’s coordinator with members from the Unit including the IFO, Human Rights Officer, Community Renewal Officer, a community engagement worker from Dean’s Office for Youth and myself. Also present was a newly employed youth worker, hired to work part-time on the D-SPEAK program (referred to as G). The new youth worker, G, was known to Dean’s Office for Youth engagement worker through projects they’d previously been involved in together. G was also working for a Muslim human rights NGO, and had previous experience working in community outreach including with drug-addicted Muslim young men.

The combination of the newly-formed Working Group and a loose prescription around what Dean was expected to “deliver” in the four-month funding period meant that what CVE at Dean might mean was up for re-definition. Between members of the D-SPEAK Working Group, there was disagreement about the kind of approach that should be adopted. The IFO remained tied to his original funding submission application that mapped out a program with exclusive focus on Muslim youth, while others argued that a broader approach was necessary to avoid the too-frequent association between Muslim youth and terrorism. All Working Group members were in agreement in their critique of national de-radicalisation strategies (i.e. the Preventing Violent Extremism and Radicalisation in Australia handbook, see Chapter 4) that vilified minority young people, specifically Muslim youth. In the process of defining what CVE might mean in the context of Dean, one Working Group member argued that any CVE engagement should instead be framed by the question: “What is it that pushes young people to take up or not take up actions of violence?” For this Working Group member, engagements with youth “at risk of radicalisation” needed to be grounded in love, empathy, and compassion for an individual who might be “pushed” (as opposed to “pulled”) to resort to violence in the face of discrimination, social exclusion, and pre-emptive criminalisation.

In order to avoid the targeting of Muslims associated with counter-terrorism programs in Australia (and elsewhere), a broad-spectrum approach was floated. This would mean recognising the various kinds of extremism that exist, bringing a diverse group together, and avoiding conflating terrorism and Islam. The suggestion of a broader approach was met with concern by the new youth worker, G.; she had spoken with local Muslim youth who had been involved in a broad-based, “transitional justice” (Davies, 2016) style CVE program that convened white supremacists and young Muslim men of colour over the course of a multi-day camp. While the
intention seemed progressive, the execution failed to deliver positive outcomes on both “sides.” The program had centred on the affective labour of young Muslim participants (Ahmed, 2010) who shared their personal stories, experiences of discrimination and violence, and their faith, which had led to the de-radicalisation of the white supremacist participants. Some of the white supremacists had revealed that they had never before conversed with a person of colour, or anyone of Islamic faith. Following the contact hypothesis, these encounters were intended to diffuse prejudice—fear of “the stranger” or Other—through meaningful engagement, exchange, and cultivated connections between groups under “safe” conditions (Allport, 1958). These “encounters with difference” (Fincher & Iveson, 2008) and story-telling approach to de-radicalisation had worked for the white supremacists; but left the young Muslim participants exposed and raw. The young Muslim men reported feeling “dropped,” unsupported and without the language and “tools” to respond to the xenophobia and racism they had had to face, up close, through this process:

[The young Muslims participants] felt like they were being used for these people to feel better about themselves. So, nothing actually came out of it...They realised they needed to brush up on their debating skills, that’s what came out of it... So, we focused on that...we were like “ok, that’s your learnings from that” ...What we really need to focus on: how do you write a letter to council? How do you speak out? How do you advocate? Because that’s a skill you would need forever. And that’s something that [they]are obviously fed up with. And it would have been great for that to be an ending of the project maybe, where they got to [develop] those skills and then go...That’s my thoughts on when you connect [to] the right wing.

In this previous program, the Muslim youth participants were tasked with the responsibility of de-radicalising their tormentors (Nayak, 2017), and as the youth worker explained it, this was expected to be “enough.” G’s position was that before a broad-spectrum CVE approach is possible, marginalised communities needed to be supported in isolation to develop skills, tools, trust and language that could better prepare them for the confrontations implicit to such an approach.

The new youth worker, G, proposed a narrower approach and offered up her own personal contact with an influential local Somali-Australian Sheikh as a strategic opportunity for a CVE
partnership. Having worked closely with this Sheikh on previous youth engagement projects and having first-hand knowledge of the community needs and resourcing issues, the youth worker described a symbiotic relationship wherein council could act as resource-provider in support of local efforts already underway to engage so-called “at risk” youth. Such a partnership would provide a direct and efficient pathway to engagement, short-circuit the challenge of developing trust and rapport by leaning on the Sheikh as gatekeeper and the youth worker’s already existing relationship as validating the local government’s credibility, and offset “targeting” participants by instead leaving the community leader to do the participant selection.

E&D Unit groundworkers were aware of their lack of contact and established relationships with the local Somali community. The possibility of opening up a relationship with an influential Sheikh, and in so doing connect with local Somali community organisation where the Sheikh held influence, was a win-win. The Somali population in Dean were known to be an isolated and inward-looking group, having limited contact with Dean’s social services. The majority of Somali-born Australians arrived after 1992, initially as refugees fleeing civil war, and more recently as family migrants (Australian Government, 2014). There was evidence of high levels of intra-community resilience, having successfully fundraised $1 million to purchase and develop their own site in Dean, as a community centre where they would provide religious, youth, and other kinds of outreach and events programming. The youth worker explained that there was a sense of distrust in the state combined with a tight-knit community invested in self-sufficiency and self-reliance. From the perspective of the E&D Unit, there was no problem with a tight knit, inward-looking ethno-cultural community. Rather, there was an awareness of the crucial role that such organisations and the community bonds provide in community resilience-promoting in the face of resettlement, integration and coping with past trauma (Correa-Velez, Gifford, & Barnett, 2010). E&D Unit staff wanted to ensure equitable service provision that would eschew real or perceived barriers to Somali-Australians accessing local government and other state-based services, particularly given the disproportionate levels of unemployment and socio-economic disadvantage there (Australian Government, 2014).8 Furthermore, there was an

8 In the 2011 Census, rate of unemployment for Somalia-born Australians was 22.1 per cent compared to 5.6 per cent for Australian-born population. Median individual weekly income for Somalia-born Australians, aged 15 years and over was $295, compared to $538 for all overseas-born and $597 for Australia-born population. The total Australian population median individual weekly income in 2011 was $577 (Australian Government, 2014).
awareness that while parents may wish to remain a part of a more insular community, for many Somali-Australian young people, mainstreaming through school and other social engagements meant that they were likely to seek out or be open to activities and employment beyond the bounds of the Somali-Australian community (see also Karimi, Bucerius, & Thompson, 2018).

By the end of the meeting, and given the short time frame, it was decided that it made more sense to focus the program on this higher-needs group. Consensus in the room was that Somali-Australian Muslim youth in Dean were in need of more support to address issues associated with the Victorian government’s view on the “root causes” radicalisation, noted previously: un-belonging, alienation, political disenfranchisement and socio-economic disadvantage (Victorian Government, 2015). The guiding question that rationalised this decision and D-SPEAK moving forward became: “How can we make the most difference?”

**Coming to terms with national security funded programming**

*A Council for the future. Our Council provides high-quality services and maintains amenity while balancing the budget with decreasing funds. The world is changing fast and we can no longer rely on the old ways of making savings and efficiencies. A new direction is needed.* (City of Dean, 2017, p. 7).

At no time was D-SPEAK intended or explicitly prescribed by staff to engage in “pointy-end” terrorism prevention. In intention, development and implementation the program remained squarely focused on resourcing that was responsive to community-articulated needs. Aside from the IFO, D-SPEAK Working Group members felt a sense of discomfort about the program’s association with terrorism, as the Community Renewal Officer reflected in the later stages of the program:

*Interestingly, like [D-SPEAK], the title says nothing about what it's about...so I think that we haven’t made the link [to terrorism], and I think consciously we haven’t made the link to de-radicalisation. I don't even talk about violent extremism, I do talk about de-radicalisation... When I’m explaining this project to people – because [it’s name] says nothing – I say it's funded by the state government around de-radicalisation, but it's also about why, why: what is it that pushes young people to take up or not take up actions of violence? But I don't like – I just say – de-radicalisation and everyone seems to nod. But*
I’m sure they're making all these pre-determined assumptions about what that means.

The Officer went on to explain that she had not spent time “de-bunking” pre-determined assumptions, but instead focuses on what the program supports and resources.

I want [people] to know that racism and Islamophobia is hurting people, as long as it's ongoing. [The Somali community organisation] were [sic] looking for resourcing – brilliant. Love that, there’s mutuality in that. But I would be really concerned if there wasn’t an ongoing relationship at least... We have so many resources across council, part of my role around the school equity stuff is to make sure, and community development stuff, is to make sure that an equitable amount of those resources get to those communities.

This position was reinforced by the Youth Office community worker involved in the D-SPEAK working group, who was frank in explaining his familiarity with accessing what he called “twisted” funding, often from the Department of Justice. From his vantage point, as long as it was possible to put youth at the centre of the outcome, the funding source should not be a barrier to applying for or accepting funds. Although he had argued for a broad-spectrum approach, he had been moved to accept a more narrowly defined program because of the calculation of maximum impact for those most in need of additional support.

Each member of the Working Group brought with them their own rationalisation and understanding about what D-SPEAK would be, based on their own portfolio as a “lens.” For the Human Rights Officer the focus was on developing the political agency of participants, to support skills development in the form of advocacy, following a human rights framework:

The idea about the project very much spoke to me about, because for me that’s really, it felt more like a project that was around trying to provide an opportunity for a group of people to have access to some of those understandings, have access to understanding about what local government does, and how to become advocates for the issues they were facing in their life...which is probably a little different from the hyperbole around counterterrorism and so on. For me, it was, really, in its final development, was a project that was really about giving voice to people who don’t really
have a strong voice, and who feel very pushed to the margins of our community, and how we can bring them more into, into the work of local...into the work of us as a council, and I guess help them feel more confident and more able to become advocates for themselves and the people they represent.

The new youth worker, G, explained her reticence about the association between terrorism and Islam, her faith also. Her discomfort had almost prevented her from taking the position with Dean:

So there used to be this place where you don't touch that money, where you don't work for that money, you don't touch that money, um, I think I used to think like that as well. It's quite...it's hard. It's really hard.

G had taken the job as youth worker for a program that had initially been designed to engage Muslim youth because of her trust in the reputation of Dean as a local government and her sense that there would be scope to challenge the associations and expectations often tied to CVE funding:

Like it could come down to management here, and ethics, but very very different, they're very flexible, they're not going by the book, they're happy to go back to funding departments and challenge them, versus other places where they're like 'we've gotta tick the box, you know, bums on seats'. And that's what's caused a lot of these issues with a lot of these communities because that's the experience they've had before...not as authentic, not as transparent.

In part, the long lead up and Dean-funded Community Inclusion Research Project was evidence of the internal support for a careful, deeply considered and consultative approach. There was a strong sense from staff, led by the E&D Coordinator, that the definition of what constituted CVE could and should be questioned and if necessary, challenged:

This project's been a challenging one, and a well-challenged one. I think the critiques put in it, for instance of asking the questions around – "what are we actually doing?" and "is this our business at all?" – the moral issues that have come up for me, particularly around the presumptions and the sort of delivery
of an agenda, and a classic case of, we see playing out now: Our relationship with state government, that we're not at the table but they want us at the table.

Although the state government would administer the funds to Dean to implement D-SPEAK, under the agreement and conditions of funding, Dean was in a unique position to set boundaries and define its own evaluation framework.

6.8 Letting go: Collaboration and compromise

The greatest strength and the greatest challenge of D-SPEAK was its co-design and co-led approach. G was tasked with convening the program, and she herself was at the “edge” of youth; having only recently turned thirty. The local Sheikh who was effectively D-SPEAK’s “gatekeeper” had identified a group of young people who he felt would benefit from a program drawing on local government’s resources and focused on youth-empowerment and up-skilling. The youth he had selected were not what he described as being the most “at risk”, but rather were identified as potential community leaders, with an interest and investment in developing their advocacy and leadership skills. The vision of the program was increasingly one in keeping with what Kirshner might call an “activism apprenticeship” (Kirshner, 2006).

As such, the program was pitched with a focus on advocacy skills and knowledge development, with opportunities to enact skills and knowledge with platforms to speak and be heard (Figure 6.2), not dissimilar to the transitional justice approaches advocated by Davies (2015) and Mattsson and Säljö (2018). In this way, the program was conceived with both means- and values-based frameworks, realising Dean’s definition of multiculturalism as equity and diversity, articulated in their Departmental title: the Equity and Diversity Unit. Staff highlighted various aspects of the program according to their particular orientations. For example, the Community Renewal Officer described it as active citizenship development, while the IFO emphasised the development of “official” avenues for expressing grievances. Youth worker G highlighted the possibility of demystifying local government, professional development and resumé-building in the service of improved employment opportunities and mentorship from young leaders and activists.
Youth participants were involved in both the design and implementation of the program. This began with a small and rapid series of community consultations with G and the Dean Office for Youth engagement officer. In consultations, youth participants assembled by the Sheikh, were asked “what are the issues that are important to you?” to initiate conversation about priorities, needs, and what would be possible with Dean’s resourcing and support. The main themes of the program were prescribed, as in Figure 6.2, but the content of each of those themes was a blank canvas awaiting youth participants’ interventions.

All staff involved in D-SPEAK were aware of the importance of developing trust and rapport with participants if the program was to tackle sensitive, complex and personal concerns: participant buy-in and ultimately ownership was essential. The short timeline made this challenging. However, because the Sheikh had brought the youth participants to the table and vouched for G combined with her shared faith and personal experience, the process of rapport-building was fast-tracked. In the initial consultation, the youth participants spoke of issues important to them: challenges associated with accessing employment, experiences of racism and discrimination, and a lack of knowledge about how “the system” worked.

The first round of facilitated workshops was framed as an extension of the early rapport-building consultation period. They were organised by G and responsive to the concerns expressed by participants in the first meeting. Drawing on her own external networks, G arranged for Ethiopian-Australian spoken-word artist of Oromo heritage, Soreti Kadir, to run a workshop with participants. The session was designed to encourage participants to find new ways to explore and express themselves, to open up the language and possibilities of describing their heritage, experiences, and challenges. There were both descriptive and performative elements to the
workshop outcome, with a focus on personal expression, emotional expression and recognition, and confidence-building.

The second primary facilitator was Australian-Bangladeshi comedian and activist, Aamer Rahman. In his workshops he shared his own experience of growing up in Australia along with his activist work that influenced his comedy and other radio and television work. Rahman explained to the participants the various ways in which they could express their dissatisfaction with the status quo. Facilitators both supported and challenged the youth in facilitated sessions where the youth were treated in a “collegial manner” (Kirshner, 2006). It was during these discussions that the participants turned to the skills-based aspect of the program and began to think about the different media they might like to learn how to work with, like podcasting and video.

The loosely defined D-SPEAK program had included from the outset a plan for youth participants to have direct face-time, first with councillors and then with state government Ministers: “platforms to speak and be heard.” The facilitated workshops were therefore designed to initially provide opportunities for rapport-building and exploration of important issues, and then to support youth in their self-directed preparation for their engagements. During the course of these initial consultations, as rapport was developing between facilitators, Dean youth workers and the participants, the young people began to zero-in on the primary issues of concern that they would tackle.

This period could be considered the “hand-over” in the activism apprenticeship. Participants began to take a greater role in defining the program they wished to take on, by first identifying their “issue” of focus, around which they would develop a campaign and take it up the chain in a presentation to local political representatives. The youth participants announced that they would focus on euthanasia. At the time, assisted dying was being debated in state parliament, and state government was on the verge of passing new legislation that would allow assisted dying under specific conditions. Dean Ethnic Communities Council ran a workshop during which youth participants learnt how to write a formal application to Council to recognise their concerns, and the youth began to work together, independent of Dean staff, putting together their application which they would then present in Council Chambers to three Dean councillors the following week.
D-SPEAK staff were mystified by the participants’ collective decision to focus on developing an anti-euthanasia campaign, and this became a significant test of their collaborative approach. The initial consultation sessions had largely focused on issues around inter-generational challenges experienced by the youth participants, experiences of discrimination in everyday life and in accessing employment, and filling knowledge gaps in the role and services provided by local government. Staff felt blindsided by the introduction of the euthanasia debate, exposing unanticipated challenges of configuring staff and youth dynamics in the context of a youth-led program (Kirshner, 2006). For some staff members, the prospect of a Dean-supported political campaign to prevent the passing of assisted dying legislation was at odds with the vision of the program and with local government itself. Staff understanding of the program was focused on supporting participants to speak from their own personal experience, to speak out against the discrimination and dis-belonging they had experienced first-hand. Technically, though, the skills they were developing around advocacy and active citizenship were being employed in the service of speaking out on an issue they appeared to have decided was of great importance to them. It is possible to argue that they were exerting their agency and eschewing personal definition by their very choice to focus on an issue that was related to their convictions rather than their personal, first-hand experience.

Reflecting on the increasingly youth-led direction of the program, staff felt that it was a missed opportunity for participants to speak from their own experience about the problems they encounter daily with an attentive audience of political representatives. Some felt that in this choice, the socio-emotional aspects of the program were getting lost. It was not until after the presentation to councillors in Council Chambers that it was revealed that the focus on euthanasia had trickled down from the Sheikh himself, who had recently attended and been inspired by an anti-euthanasia organising event held by the Catholic Church. He had suggested that D-SPEAK participants “consider” it as their issue of focus. The youth had heard this suggestion, coming from an important, influential community and faith leader as an instruction and had thus determined euthanasia would be their focus.

Two days of facilitated workshops were held before the youth presentation in Council Chambers. The two-day program introduced youth to council staff from across the Equity and Diversity and Wellbeing Units, the Mayor, and Dean Community Legal Services. Council staff from diverse backgrounds shared both personal and professional stories, including one staff member who
shared personal testimony of being taken from his Aboriginal family and put into a white family’s foster-care, making him a member of the Stolen Generation. He explained to the participants how this experience had shaped the work that he now did at Dean. The Human Rights Officer led a practical workshop that offered definitions of human rights and useful language that youth might apply in their broad and self-advocacy. NGO Dean Community Legal Service presented a workshop outlining individual rights and legal avenues for challenging discriminatory treatment. Before the Mayor’s official welcome and before the participants moved into Council Chambers, Aunty Joy, a well-known local Wurundjeri elder of the Kulin Nation, performed a Welcome to Country and held a smoking ceremony. The Welcome and smoking ceremony situated the participants on the land on which they had gathered, and for most of the youth participants it was a new experience. Participants reported feeling a sense of privilege and occasion. The Welcome was a reminder of the status of all Australians, excepting First Nations peoples, as having immigrant heritage. The choreography of the two days provided a relatively immersive experience that took the participants outside of their everyday activities and opened up social and physical spaces and networks that had previously been, or appeared, closed. Some remarked on the value in hearing the personal stories of Dean staff and councillors, which allowed them to see the component parts – the individuals – that make up what they thought of as monolithic government. Seeing this led some to reflect that they were now able to imagine themselves in similar roles and as having an impact.

**Strategic advocacy and messaging**

When it came time to present their “issue” to three councillors in Council Chambers, the youth began with their formally prepared presentation of their anti-euthanasia stance. Once completed, they requested to present a second issue, and went on to describe to councillors their specific experiences of discrimination at a local shopping mall. Going somewhat off-script, the youth described their mistreatment at a popular restaurant at the mall, where unlike all other customers, they were expected to pay upfront for their meals. They described being followed around the mall by security staff, and numerous attempts to seek employment from a major supermarket had been rejected. What they described amounted to racism and discrimination. The councillors listening to these stories were visibly in shock, asking follow-up questions and recording the details reported by the youth. As the presentation turned into a discussion, becoming increasingly informal, the youth participants broke out into more intimate discussions with the
attending councillors. After the event, Dean staff described this as a major achievement, where youth were able to get intimate face-time with their local government representatives, speaking about their personal challenges, being and feeling heard. This kind of interaction, they felt, was far more likely to result in local government intervention and accountability. As a result of this unplanned, close interaction, one Councillor pledged to initiate a Horn of Africa Youth Employment Taskforce. Youth participants were invited to become members, and to work directly with him to develop an employment strategy for the municipality and to broker employment pathways with local traders.

Reflecting on this stage of the project, staff described their frustration at the “euthanasia issue,” understanding it to be a wasted opportunity and failure to strategically advocate. As they saw it, the issue of euthanasia was too far along in the state legislature for their intervention to have impact. But more importantly, they felt that it was a missed opportunity for self-advocacy in their local area. Youth worker, G, organised for both Soreti Kadir, Aamer Rahman and other local activists to continue to facilitate workshops with participants as they worked through their new direction—addressing racism and discrimination at the local shopping mall and more broadly.

They collectively decided that rather than repeating their stories (trauma) of discrimination, racism, and Islamophobia, they would create a video that they could share. The video would be used first in the meeting with shopping mall management but could later be used in a youth-led anti-racism public forum. It would also be screened in municipal libraries and would eventually become part of an education resource pack for local schools. The process of developing the video provided an opportunity for skills development—writing, planning, filming, editing and producing. It also provided a way to speak directly to and of the discrimination they encountered in their everyday lives. Specifically, D-SPEAK participants spoke about their constant experiences of over-policing, racism and Islamophobia:

At the train station, we usually get pulled over by the inspectors, and what not, more than the white people. So, it’s like, on a daily basis this happens. So, I’ll be sitting next to a person who’s white, but they don’t get asked the questions, we get asked the questions. So, it’s like, ‘have you topped up your Myki? Do you have your health care card?’ Like they ask all these questions, and then the minute they’re finished with us, we’ll be expecting them to ask the same
questions of the person next to us, but they don’t. They just walk away. And it’s like, why me? You know what I mean? I most of the time drive now, I don’t really take the public transport, to be honest. If people think I’m exaggerating about this: I got pulled over twice today, once on my way here.

And it’s evident. We’re not really blind, we’re not oblivious. We see the increase in the number of police officers, we see the number of security guards in certain places where there’s a black demographic.

The fact that it happens in our community, we get so used to it that it becomes so normal to us, and we won’t be surprised that there’s a couple of Somali boys hanging in a group and they get harassed by the cops. It feels as if it’s normal for us, you know? Like it’s an everyday thing.

The video shines a light on the reality of what it is to be a person of colour, and a Muslim person living in Melbourne today. It is also a call to action, developed in a style and with an ethic that is more reflective of an NGO or activist production. The participants were proud of what they had made, and soon after its completion held a community event, Say No to Racism, at a Dean library where they officially launched the video. Youth featured in the video spoke about the process of making the video before engaging in a facilitated discussion with audience members. The event title echoes Dean’s anti-racism training module, an outcome of the Dean Anti-Racism Strategy 2012-2015. The final scene ends with a 20-year old female D-SPEAK participant describing the encroaching resignation amongst her friends, and instead calling for action:

What’s even more sad is that some of my friends just genuinely don’t think much of it. They’ve gotten to a point where they’re so used to it, and they feel like there’s nothing they can do about it. But I feel like there’s something that they can do, that there’s a change that they can make, just by speaking out about it. It just really saddens me that they’ve just accepted something that shouldn’t be accepted in the first place, that should not be happening in 2017...We shouldn’t be getting used to this. We shouldn’t be accepting things
that are only done to us, in particular, and not other people. I want us to be outspoken about it. I want us to come forward and make a difference, because if we don’t who will?

She speaks eloquently and passionately. What is unclear is if the call for action is directed at her friends who are becoming resigned to their mistreatment, or if it’s a broader call. The video is a local state-sponsored production, however, it was produced without oversight from the local state bureaucracy. It was made in facilitated workshops with activists hired to work with the youth participants. If this project had not been co-designed and co-led, becoming increasingly youth-led, the final question posed in the video might take on a different kind of meaning. Put another way, it could appear that the suggestion was that marginalised youth need to take responsibility for their own experiences of discrimination, because no one else, including the local state, will intervene.

Dean’s eagerness to support the production of the video, its rollout in local schools and libraries, and events where marginalised youth can hold open forums where they describe the injustices they experience in everyday life was powerful for the young people involved and likely for other young people who hear their experiences represented in the voices of the participants. However, in terms of “Saying NO to Racism” as per the Dean training package and the event title, there is an unaddressed problem of who is expected to say “no” to racism. Who is this message directed at? Whose responsibility is it to eradicate these behaviours and abuses? There is a risk in a program focused on leadership, empowerment and self-advocacy in that it can trend too far in the direction of neoliberal self-reliance and resilience; framing racism as a problem that must be solved by its victims.

**Unexpected outcomes of D-SPEAK**

The Interfaith Officer was typically overrun with a multitude of projects and often struggled to keep up with the iterant and ad-hoc nature of the developing D-SPEAK program. He repeatedly described it as a “messy bowl of spaghetti” and would become flustered when asked about the status of the program. Certainly, compared to his past work in the prison system, a program largely directed by a group of 20-year-old, energetic, non-prisoners was inevitably going to be more unpredictable. With a little distance, however, the program appeared to be developing strongly with a powerful life of its own, directed in large part by the energy and intention of the youth participants, and made possible by the all-hours availability of G, as its convener. This,
you could say, is the reality of a co-designed and youth-led program, and also the reality for a
group of young people juggling family responsibilities, often part-time employment or care
work, tertiary education and their personal and social lives. Sometimes it was seemingly minor
issues that caused the biggest waves. For example, changing times and dates of participant
meetings would result in lost deposits for booked meeting rooms. Catering for events where the
Halal options didn’t match with the food preferences of a group of 20-year-olds proved
challenging for staff making food orders. For G and the Youth Office engagement officer, these
were normal, everyday aspects of the job. For those unfamiliar with working with young people,
however, these issues proved much more challenging.

The program continued to grow in new directions, organically taking shape off the back of
discussion in facilitated workshops and through more informal conversations between
participants and G. G described the debriefing after the presentation to councillors:

We [G and Office for Youth engagement worker] didn’t want to go in and say
“guys, don’t do euthanasia”, we wanted it to be organic, for them to see, and
for it to happen naturally. When the push came to shove, [the participants]
were just like.... “We just want an information session for our families and our
communities, can you get that done? But you know, our main issue is
discrimination. You know, it’s what, it’s happening every day.”

Prior to their involvement in D-SPEAK youth participants had had little sense of the role,
resources and services provided by local government. As they came to map the local government
terrain, they gained a better sense of the possibilities available to them in partnership with local
government. In another unexpected development, participants proposed holding an inter-
generational youth-facilitated workshop with parents and youth in the community. Discussions
around common tensions between youth and their parents highlighted mental health, in
particular, as a difficult topic for many young people to effectively broach with their parents:

[The youth participants] were talking about things like mental health. [Dean]
Health might not understand that in Somali culture there’s no word for
depression. You’re called “crazy”, that’s the definition. So how do you
engage? There’s a big mental health problem.
So that’s very cultural [shame], but in Islam a lot of people would disguise depression and mental health issues as “jinn.” Jinn is possession: you’re possessed. And so the Sheikh…has made many sermons about this. You’re not possessed, you actually need to go see a psychologist, you need to get a mental health plan, like he’s very open.

Both the Sheikh and youth participants highlighted this as a pressing challenge, amplified by an incident at the time in which a new mother, Sofina Nikat, in a neighbouring municipality had killed her baby in what appeared to be a state of post-natal psychosis, having described her daughter as “possessed” (Younger, 2017). G described scepticism about public mental health services within the local Muslim community, in what was perceived as a failure of service providers to intervene to prevent Nikat’s actions, reinforcing the status-quo of distrust and arguments for self-reliance:

So, their whole thing is we can’t rely on services, we rely on each other. But that’s also, it’s not sustainable. To an extent that you need support from outside...So that was so important to the young people, the young women were like...mental health comes number two after discrimination, for them.

Once again, drawing on G’s networks and Dean’s resources, an alliance was struck with a local health organisation and a young female Muslim psychologist. Two intergenerational workshops were co-designed and delivered by participants with D-SPEAK staff. As previously noted, Somali-Australians living in Dean had remained elusive constituents, despite outreach attempts by council staff. With their children now animatedly involved in D-SPEAK, parents’ interest had been piqued. Hearing of the positive experiences the youth were having, the strides forward they were making by effecting change in their local area, led to parents’ willingness and desire to get involved too. Following the intergenerational workshops, youth participants described the value they derived from these facilitated discussions with their parents. In many cases youth reported that following the workshops their parents (usually mothers) had become more open, both listening to their children’s challenges and also sharing stories of their lives prior to arrival in Australia. This process reportedly opened up dialogue between parents and their young adult children about their different experiences in Australia. An added benefit was achieved as parents became wise to the role of and services and opportunities available through their local government, thanks to their children’s engagement. Consistent with research by Thompson and
Bucerius (2019), provided with resources and “safe spaces,” youth participants demonstrated their desire and capacity to act as “positive change agents” (p. 589).

6.9 Extending the life of D-SPEAK?

The D-SPEAK program was initially funded between May and August 2017, but by August funds still remained and the Victorian Community Resilience Unit agreed to extend the program timeline until the following year. This extension allowed for the continuation of the program along the new threads emerging, including the intergenerational workshops and the advocacy video production. The program continued throughout 2018, with Dean contributing $15,000 funds. At each of the expected completion dates there has been discussion about the best location for the program. Is this program best suited to the Equity and Diversity Unit? And if so, is it problematic holding it within the portfolio of the Interfaith Officer? These questions remain unanswered; however, in mid-2018 a plan to transition D-SPEAK to the Youth Office had been developed. The IFO and G expressed concern over this proposal, feeling that following the intergenerational sessions the program had increasingly become a whole-of-community program. Their concern was that under the Youth Office, the program would be restricted in its focus exclusively on youth, and the forward-leaps achieved in engaging parents, who had previously been so hard to reach, would be lost. To them the move could be harmful, and the narrow focus on Somali-Australian Muslim youth may become diluted in the shift. In the early stages of the program there had been an end goal sketched out in which the narrow focus would be widened once the youth participants had developed skills and had been supported to a point where they would be confident participating in a less exclusive program. However, the way in which D-SPEAK had evolved suggested to them that there was still a need for a narrow, tailored program that addressed their specific needs.

The Youth Office engagement worker, on the other hand, felt that a focus on youth did not preclude parental involvement and a whole-of-community approach. From his perspective, a focus on youth necessarily drew in parents and families:

*I've always started with the interest and needs of the youth first...we support community in their efforts and attempts to support young people in their community.*
From his perspective the situation of the program in the E&D Unit was not so much the essential component of program continuity. Rather, youth worker G, whose relationships with both participants and their families had deepened over the course of the program had become, in his words, the “critical element” of the program.

6.10 Avoiding the prevention paradox: Traps, tactics and subversions

In the literature, some of the main critiques of CVE centre on the notion that interventions may cause more harm to marginalised young people than they help. Experiences of social exclusion, alienation, disenfranchisement, and deprivation have all been associated with increased “vulnerability to radicalisation” (see Chapter 2). This has more often been the case in policy assumptions, perhaps, than in evidence-based research. The national security paradox is captured in these experiences. Marginalised young people are targeted for CVE programs, but the process of targeting these young people can itself lead to or reinforce their marginalisation (Choudhury, 2010; Heath-Kelly, 2012). Concerns have been raised by researchers such as Lasse Lindekilde (2012a) as to the potential for resulting iatrogenic—unintended negative—effects. The likelihood of iatrogenic impacts is heightened by CVE programs that frequently suffer from a lack of program continuity, short funding cycles, high staff turnover, and a lack of transparency and openness about the funding or program purpose. Challenges to meaningful engagement result due to lack of trusting relationships between community and CVE program staff, a lack of cultural competence, knowledge and sensitivity, and a lack of recognition of traumatic relationships between marginalised communities, law enforcement and security agencies.

A critical approach

Prior to pursuing and accessing funding to run their own CVE intervention, Dean staff had considered these critiques as part of their Community Inclusion Research Project. I participated in this phase of the project by providing academic research papers inaccessible to non-University affiliated staff, written summaries, and editorial advice on the project report. E&D Unit staff had reviewed the document, and together discussed the literature in a way that generated relatively informed discussions around what CVE at Dean might look like. While ambivalence about engaging in what by name was CVE work, trust in the IFO’s relationship with the local Muslim communities and the consultation findings provided a sufficient basis to make a case for piloting a program. An ongoing critical practice was maintained in D-SPEAK Working Group meetings, including, on occasion, staff contributing written reflections on the progress of the project that
were submitted to the E&D coordinator to track how staff were feeling about the integrity of the program. What could be termed “red teeming” has been maintained, and in the case of the participant’s selection of “euthanasia” as their issue of focus, this proved an important practice for working through the implications of engaging faith communities, politics, and advocacy backed by secular local government.

**Ensuring program continuity and sustainability**

Importantly, at the outset of the program, strong consensus was reached over the principle of “do no harm,” which saw staff committed to engaging in this work on the condition that the program would be sustainable, and participants would never feel “dropped” or forgotten by Dean. This commitment to continuity proved challenging in light of short funding cycles characteristic of both the CRU’s four-month funding allocation, and of social services funding more generally. This has required continued efforts by the IFO and Equity and Diversity coordinator to seek out small pots of funding from a variety of sources, encouraging Dean City Council councillors to match or add to the CRU funding, and finding creative ways to resource the program through other avenues, like the existing work of the Dean Youth Office.

Another way of addressing this problem of continuity was achieved by embedding continuity wherever possible into the program components. Five key components contributed to addressing this intention for continuity: (1) the advocacy video that would become an education resource; (2) face-time with political representatives that would lead to increased accountability to address participant concerns; (3) intergenerational workshops that reduced barriers and opened up access to local service providers, for both youth and their parents; (4) creating pathways to ongoing leadership opportunities both within council (i.e. mentoring program, participation in the Dean Youth Jury and Horn of Africa Employment Taskforce) and in other council-supported advocacy roles (i.e. advocacy video resource facilitators); and (5) demystifying legal rights, local government services and resources, and grant-writing skills that would improve participant’s capabilities to access future funding, and lobby council. These outcomes were not all predetermined, but the basic premise and commitment guided both D-SPEAK staff and resourcing in a direction that supported them.

Heated discussions between staff around the negative impacts of CVE funding that would associate Islam and terrorism, and the effective casting of Muslim youth participants as “risky” or “suspect” became less of a concern as the program evolved. The decision to engage youth in
co-design and co-implementation of the D-SPEAK program allowed space for youth agency and program definition responsive to their own identified needs and desires. There were conversations between staff and youth participants from the outset around program resourcing, by counter-terrorism funds. It was reported by staff that this discussion was vital for building confidence in their participation, bolstered by a sense that Dean had put all the “cards on the table.” Although participants expressed frustration at the fact that they could only access funding if they were seen as being potential terrorists or gang members, their resignation directed them to take advantage of what they chose—encouraged by their Sheikh—to see as an opportunity. This sentiment was supported by Dean staff, presenting themselves as primarily a “resource provider” open to the directions agreed upon by participants and youth worker, G.

**Transparency, trust and stewardship**

In the first consultation with prospective youth participants, G was asked by participants about the program funding, she recalled one participant saying to her:

> We know you're real because you're one of us, but... how do we know that, like, how can we trust where the money's coming from?

G recounted the exchange, explaining her personal position and principles on both the funding and her work with the City of Dean:

> You don't have to trust me, I go. For us, for me in particular, I've learnt from my experiences not to work, not to take positions from organisations that won't be transparent and won't back up and won't be flexible. And it's basically, I said yeah, maybe 10 years ago I would've been that person who would be like "I don't know [where the funding came from]” and said something else. But now I'm in a position from my experience where I can go back and have that conversation and believe that [Dean] would be more happy to be open. And I go, "you know this is where the money's coming from." I was very open about it, because they know...They know. They're at the point now where they don't care anymore.

For G, having worked in national security-funded programs previously and being herself part of a community that was subject to a counter-terrorism gaze, it was important to be open about
where the program funding was coming from. She raised this from the beginning and the response from the IFO and E&D Unit coordinator engendered trust:

The fact that I was told, it's okay, tell [participants] where the money's coming from, like to have that conversation. If they really want to we can break it down and we can show them the budget. Versus other places where you could never do that. It's just lie to them more, to mask it. So just having that transparency, and having that, and the importance of being flexible, and co-delivered by [youth participants], and able to negotiate with leaders when we had those issues just was, there was, [we] were able to reshape that relationship and trust in local government again for these people.

Furthermore, G felt comfortable explaining to the participants that she felt her involvement in a counter-terrorism-funded program was “cringe-worthy” but that she had resolved that her participation in the program would allow her to “challenge it”:

That's been one of the most challenging things to swallow: that that's where the money is coming from…But having that honest conversation with [the youth participants] and telling them that, this is also hard for us.

G was not alone in her “cringe-worthy” feelings, which were identified by most of the other E&D staff. These conversations with the participants however provided opportunity for reinterpretation and for unburdening. In other words, it was determined that sunlight might be the best disinfectant.

Describing the E&D Unit’s approach to their community engagement work more generally, the coordinator outlined a sense of public duty, framed as “stewardship”:

We are public servants, there is that acknowledgement about our role and the obligations, the word you know [the Social Housing Officer] used the other day, which is "stewardship." I suppose our area, and a lot of the areas, have stewardship of certain issues and concerns and – how do I put this – the voice, you know. So, I feel strongly. But a lot of this work is incremental, and over time and we've built relationships...our approach is so different... it is much more conducive to having a round table, that is where people can get to know
you and know what your agenda is and you build the relationships. And some of the relationships for me have been over twelve years.

This long-term investment has been critical to the approach of the E&D Unit, and arguably the Youth Office too, but is not necessarily reflected across other Dean Departments. In initial meetings aimed at partnering with an influential Somali organisation (SO), community leaders were apprehensive about Dean staff because in previous engagements with staff from other Departments, like the planning staff, engagements had not been sustained and members of SO had felt let down by what they saw as tokenistic contact. In early discussions about partnering with the E&D Unit on D-SPEAK, it was decided that as a show of faith and in an effort to demonstrate an equitable vision of multicultural engagement, a Service Agreement contract was drawn up, with a payment of $15,000 made to the Sheik’s SO-based education centre. Paying one-third of the total CRU-allocated budget directly for D-SPEAK to the centre at SO, was an important demonstration of investment, of power-sharing, and was responsive to SO’s grievances over past tokenistic engagements with local government.

**The importance of staffing**

The staffing of D-SPEAK was essential to both its existence and its successes. Community partners and youth worker G’s participation in D-SPEAK—despite reservations about state engagements with CT-funded programming—are a testament to both the reputation of Dean as local government, and to the relationships with Dean staff. Most partner organisations explained their decisions to participate in D-SPEAK on the basis of very little information, as a result of deep trust in individual staff. Relationships, in particular between the IFO, youth worker G, and the E&D coordinator were key. One partner NGO explained their collaboration despite ambivalence:

*I think I’m going to come back to the word trust. Over the past 18-months to a year, we’ve developed a really good working relationship with [the Equity & Diversity Unit coordinator], and I remember talking to [my colleague] and saying, I’m not really sure what this ‘SPEAK business is, I really need to find out, and then he said to me “Oh, you know, relax, it’s from [the E&D coordinator], we trust her.” And I was like, “Yeah, fair enough.” So I wish…*I feel like I should be more rigorous about it, but honestly, because I trust [the
E&D Unit coordinator], I feel like I trust the process. I don’t think she’ll get us to do things we’re uncomfortable with.

Staff were both insiders and outsiders, and at times both. The understanding, scepticism and personal investment that some local government staff brought to the program meant that community leaders and youth participants felt they were in like-minded, sympathetic hands. The IFO responsible for initiating the program was himself frustrated by the associations between Islam and terrorism and by what he called the “hijacking” of the religion he loved by extremist elements, as he explained:

_I am a Muslim, I am a passionate Muslim, I've been a Muslim for 26 years and the Islam that I know, and originally fell in love with – the violent brand is just something I don't see in Islamic sacred texts, or Islamic theology or Islamic world view – so I guess a fair bit of this stems out of a, from what I know about Islam and Islamic history, a fantastic faith is being totally hijacked by those with a radical world view. Especially those that want to impose a particular ideology on others. And impose a legalistic, harsh interpretation of Islam, particular on other Muslims, as well, not just those, on the world._

His first-hand experience as the Victorian Islamic prison chaplain working with individuals who had been radicalised to the point of planning for extremist violence meant his perspective on CVE was perhaps more grounded in face-to-face experience than rhetoric. For the IFO, the themes that emerged from the community consultation were intimately related as he personally felt the anxiety over the negative effects of terror incidents on the reputation of Islam as a religion, and Muslim communities. The backlash reported in the aftermath of terror incidents and the possibility that it might lead to a rise in radicalisation to violence concerned him deeply. While he had reservations around funding administered through the federal Attorney General’s Department due its destructive reputation (see Chapters 4 and 5), he had cultivated positive relationships with the Victorian Community Resilience Unit and felt confident in his relationships with at least two particular staff members whose portfolios covered the Northern region, where Dean was located. Personal experience and trusting relationships across tiers of government were essential to the IFO’s decision to pursue a CVE program in his role in local government. It was precisely because he was the one initiating this project that local agencies, including the Dean mosque and Islamic Council of Victoria, agreed to support his application for
funds. This buy-in was essential to his ability to put forward a case to both the E&D coordinator and to councillors that CVE might be appropriately placed at the local government scale.

In the course of D-SPEAK, there were repeated indications that the successes of the program were directly related to the relationship between the youth worker, G, and the youth participants. This sentiment was expressed by a youth participant who had taken on a leadership position in circulating the D-SPEAK advocacy video, now part of an education resource kit for local high schools. Describing youth worker, G, she explained that:

> She’s amazing. She's done so much...from the time that I've known her, from the first day that I met her she's been so open and so straight-forward....She says it like it is, like she'll tell us where the funding is coming from, what's going on, what we can and can't do....and I think that transparency is what I love most about her. She'll tell you the way it is. And if I have a question about it, I'm not scared to ask her. Yeah, she's amazing. And everything that she's done has had a great impact.

G’s frank and direct approach, combined with her reliability, around-the-clock availability, and consistency allowed for rapid development of trust and rapport with participants. As was the case with the youth facilitators, participants described the value in G’s shared experience, appearance, and understanding of their lives:

> She's been with us every step of the way, and she's still around, and she's still supportive no matter what. She's always like – if you have work to do at home, or actual study, don't over-burden yourself. She's just so understanding and I think that's really great...And she's also a woman of colour, and a woman who wears [a headwrap]....So it's also good to see that she sort of gets it.

The problem of retaining staff in the face of uncertain project timelines and funding has burdened D-SPEAK, as it does so many other community outreach programs. G only expected to be employed for four months and as a full-time student herself; still working at a Muslim women’s human rights NGO part-time, she was under a significant amount of pressure. Participants had her personal phone number and would contact her at all hours. It was because of this availability and commitment that they responded so positively to her, but it was also because of this availability and commitment she felt her continuation in this position was unsustainable,
particularly as she was getting closer to completing her studies and beginning full-time employment. Despite informing staff of her plans to leave the position, she continues to work in D-SPEAK 18-months since its commencement.

6.11 Dean City Council and the Equity and Diversity Unit: As community advocate, activist and quango under a neoliberal regime

Strategic brokers

The characterisation of Dean as community advocate and activist reflects not just its active engagement in state and federal politics but also the work of the individuals who carry the relationships between constituents and the institution. In many ways Dean’s E&D Unit has operated as a quango. Although deeply embedded in the bureaucracy of a state organisation, and necessarily responsive to the elected arm’s directives, the entrepreneurial manner in which staff like the Interfaith officer and youth worker, G, were required to work are reminiscent of NGO workers who must often vie for state government funding in order to develop programs responsive to community needs. Additionally, as is the case in NGOs, employment is more likely to be precarious and contingent on grant-based funding. This was the case for both D-SPEAK and for the viability of both the IFO and G’s position at Dean.

As is also often the case in NGOs, much of the work staff do is not compensated. Take, for example, the IFO, whose work requires him to often participate in out-of-work hours religious events and to be seen as being an active member of Dean’s interfaith community. Working at the interface of a multi-religious, culturally and linguistically diverse municipality is no small task, and his work requires sensitivity, continuity, trust, and time. The IFO has a Master of Community Development degree, and is a trained psychologist, with specialisation in emergency management and theological training. He is employed on a part-time basis, for a total of 15.2 hours, with an income considerably less than the average for adult Australians in the labour market. As a father of a young child with special needs, and as the single household-earner, he has been under significant financial strain. His family had moved from within the Dean municipality into the northern neighbouring municipality where rent is more affordable. During the funded period of D-SPEAK, he had been able to add an additional two days to his paid work week, doubling his income for the duration of the program, which had made it viable to keep working at Dean. But the financial strain continues. In 2017, the IFO submitted an application for reclassification of his position—to recognise his specialist contribution, responsibility and
self-directedness of his role—which was rejected. Soon after receiving the news of his rejected reclassification application, the IFO attended a formal state ceremony with the Dean’s Mayor where he received a High Commendation for Government and Civic Leadership from the Victorian Multicultural Commission. The Mayor and IFO accepted the award together.

I was not surprised when I heard from the IFO that his application for reclassification had been rejected. In light of budgetary restrictions resulting from the Victorian state government’s rate capping regime, and in anticipation of a council restructure following the appointment of a new CEO, staff were generally aware of the likelihood of a tightening of the belt around social policy and services. Expanding staffing for the Interfaith portfolio would have been a difficult sell. That being said, $300/week for the broad social services and policy development roles undertaken by the IFO, and the skill required to do so seems to be both insufficient remuneration and a failure to appreciate the complexity and value of this portfolio. As previously noted, the D-SPEAK youth worker, G, likewise brings a unique skill set and capacity to her role yet her employment remains precarious, subject to grant applications from both council and the state government.

“Hard-to-reach” communities were reached through community partnerships brokered by these two precariously employed workers – “strategic brokers” – who drew on their own ethnocultural, religious and professional networks to do so, however this was not sufficiently recognised within the local government institution (Katz, 2005; Larner & Craig, 2005).

Husband and Alam (2011), in their study of local government participation in Britain’s Prevent program, found that Muslim staff engaged to deliver CVE programming often felt compromised in their roles, acting as interlocutors between faith communities and the local state. Local government workers would “infuse their practice with a Muslim sensibility,” translating social cohesion and national security policy as it related to Muslim communities (2011, p. 202). This practice would frequently lead to critique of the policies they were tasked with implementing, policies that disproportionately targeted or sidelined Muslim communities. They reported Muslim council workers who felt caught in a difficult position, where because of their critique, it was possible that their professionalism would be challenged. On the other hand, in cases where local governments could engage positively with that critique and take an institutionally critical position, there was scope for more positive engagements and collaboration. Local governments willing to hear and challenge policy are thus shown to be essential to secular institutions’ engagements with faith communities (2011, p. 202):
A personal moral stance informed by an Islamic faith will, within the contemporary local state, sit uncomfortably with the penumbra of Islamophobia that has pervaded the new protective state. Yet, if mutual comprehension is at the core of both Prevent and Community Cohesion, it is exactly such voices that need to be present within the dialogue between the state and its Muslim citizens.

The IFO explained the challenges he had previously faced, as Islamic Chaplain in the Victorian prison system, where at times he felt as though he was tasked with presenting, in Husband and Alam’s (2011) words, the “acceptable face of the local authority in order to facilitate the introduction of highly unpopular Prevent initiatives into Muslim communities” (2011, p. 202). As such, the IFO had come to recognise risk of being seen as a “resource” for the prison system’s deradicalisation agenda. In the case of D-SPEAK and his role as Interfaith Officer, he had learnt to utilise his value and together with other members of the D-SPEAK team—and in particular youth worker, G—created scope for critique of terrorism prevention policy.

**Governing by pilot program: Offloading risk, resilience and self-reliance**

At moments I have witnessed the City of Dean, as an institution, act as a community activist, advocate, and quango subject to a state government-imposed neoliberal regime. As activist, Dean’s rhetorical positions on refugee welcome, anti-domestic violence, and LGBTQI+ marriage equality are evidence of their activism. Evidence of advocacy can also be found in the inclusion of a substantial Equity and Diversity Unit within Dean’s institutional structure. And at other moments I have seen Dean imposing its own neoliberal regime on its component departments and units. For example, in the rejection of the IFO’s application for reclassification and the position’s limited remuneration relative to expertise. In these instances, the E&D Unit has had to behave strategically as an independent entrepreneur within the local and state systems. These often-incompatible characterisations each influence the kinds of community engagements and relationships that are possible in the geographic municipality of Dean. In some ways they capture the conception of local government as a single unit within the three-tiered Australian system of governance, as well as component parts or agents that make up an institution like local government.

In many ways the case of D-SPEAK highlights the way in which state government and arguably federal government rely on community partnerships as a way of offloading risks associated with
terrorism prevention – of which there are many. First and foremost, as a consequence of the community partnership model, risk and responsibility for possible iatrogenic effects must not be carried by the state alone, but can be shared by government with community partners (Lindekilde, 2012a). This model provides a way to diffuse responsibility for the political fallout that might occur in the event that engagement in a CVE program led an individual to feel more alienated, disenfranchised and resentful of the state, such that they may be compelled to engage in violent extremism. Additionally, the partnership model better insulates state agencies against the risk of fallout in the event that a participant of a CVE program commits an act of violent extremism. In both federal and Victorian state government settings, terrorism prevention policies emphasise the central role and ownership of communities. The rationale is presented according to the community’s internal and unique capacities, for the “softer” engagements these interventions allow, and their resilience-building potential. While this rationale holds, missing is recognition of the added benefit for state agencies, who are less exposed to blame in the event that CVE experiments fail. Risk management is also indicated by the implementation of CVE pilots limited to short-term funding commitments.

As has been now widely established, the concept of resilience is inherently Janus-faced (Davoudi et al., 2012). In the positive it is seen to be an attribute that allows a system, place, community, or individual, to recover from a disaster or trauma. In the negative, it is seen as a concept that seeks to erode the state’s responsibility, and instead fixate on the individual or community’s capacity and responsibility to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps and reinvent themselves in the face of external challenges” (Swanstrom, 2008, p. 10). During the course of my research I was exposed to attacks on community and religious leaders that called them to account for the behaviour of individuals and that required them to publicly condemn an individual’s violent extremist actions. Frustration was expressed by both individuals speaking to their private everyday experience, and also noted Sheikhs, Imams, and organisational leaders (i.e. Islamic Council of Victoria) who were expected to speak with authoritative, representative voices. While recognising the significance of their public statements of condemnation, they resented the expectation that they needed to condemn actions that they saw as antithetical to their faith. Their concern was that their condemnation would be interpreted as an admission of responsibility and thus guilt. It is in the same manner that the acceptance of CVE programming to marginalised communities may be seen as shifting the burden of responsibility onto those communities to both solve a problem and bear the criticism in the case of a terrorism incident.
While there was initially apprehension by the Community Resilience Unit to grant local governments funds to engage in CVE, their eventual offer of funds for Dean to undertake a CVE pilot program was their way of conservatively “testing the waters.” The stakes were contained by a relatively small investment of funds and by an initially short, 4-month timeline. The CRU’s expectations were limited by the timeline, yet they felt it would be a valuable exercise in scoping out the appetite for such a program in the community. Furthermore, they had been interested in connecting with the local mosque, and had had trouble doing so, therefore they hoped that D-SPEAK would introduce the possibility of a “way in.”

There is a lack of evidence that exists in strong support of the effectiveness of local government intervention, but a wealth of evidence from the UK’s Prevent program that has cautioned against it (Birt, 2009; CLG, 2010; Thomas, 2010). However, given both Australian federal and state policy, along with research trends that suggest localised interventions are most effective in both engaging communities and in addressing the broad-spectrum radicalisation influences that have included social exclusion, political disenfranchisement and disengagement, a case could be made for experimenting with what local government CVE might look like in the Victorian context (Cherney et al., 2017; Lowndes & Thorp, 2012; Spalek & Lambert, 2012). In the context of risk-averse politics, the prospect of local CVE pilots appears to be the “safest” option, despite research that argues for the importance of longer-term investment (Choudhury & Fenwick, 2011a; Vergani et al., 2017).

Dean E&D Unit staff were cognisant of the nature of their engagement in CVE and in accepting funds from the state government. They reasoned that their involvement would allow for an extension of resources and organisational opportunities otherwise unavailable. Their decision to pay partner organisation SO and the Shiekh’s education centre a portion of that funds was a way of sharing the benefits and the burden of the program. Because of the trust that had developed, in particular between the IFO and the Victorian Community Resilience Unit staff, there was a degree of comfort in taking the funds, despite some ambivalence amongst other E&D Unit staff. The coordinator of the E&D Unit described her own ambivalence in the nature of such state-local government relationships, processed through her resolve and action in challenging the power dynamic between the funder and the funded:

*And we've probably pushed back in a really nice way of saying, well, you [state government] know if you want us [local government], have us at the*
table, we're welcome to sit at the table and discuss and explore, but we can't problem solve, you know, you can't use us as consultants to problem solve a complex problem because it's complex.

I'm probably, not even going off the record there, I'm just probably saying that in this space there's been like, there's been constraints that they've obviously had about what they can say and what they can't say. How much information they can give to us, and what they can't give to us.

In this way, the coordinator explains the unequal power dynamics, access to information and trust required to collaborate. She notes that this has required a new kind of agility and discretion:

And that plays out in meetings that you might have a bit of a chat, feel like you've been asked something, but you're not quite sure what's been asked, and yeah. So that's new. That's probably a new aspect of this work...

I wouldn't necessarily want to start working with state government directly on things like this because having our independence is a nice agility, I wouldn't want to lose at this time in the project.

The coordinator articulated the challenging nature of these inter-governmental relationships, in which local government is effectively employed on short-term contracts to implement the state government’s terrorism prevention policy. Efforts to maintain critical distance from state government were essential to the principles and largely youth-led development of D-SPEAK.

Neoliberal inclusion, empowerment and resignation

In an interview with a D-SPEAK participant who had gone on to become a program leader, I asked her how she felt about the funding of the program from a counter-terrorism portfolio. She replied with a tone of resignation. She explained that before counter-terrorism funded programs it was gang-prevention programs, that the only way she and her community could access support is if they were seen to be a problem. As far as she was concerned, as long as Somali-Australians could access the funds they needed to increase their opportunities for employment and career progression, they would take it. However, this resignation did not equate to acceptance. Rather, it came across as longstanding frustration and tired pragmatism.
Faranak Miraftab (2004), writing on the neoliberal operationalisation of empowerment, community participation and social capital highlights the way in which emancipatory tools of activism have been co-opted by government programs that maintain material exclusion by a social inclusion agenda that is limited to the symbolic. While her assessment of the deployment of programs fixated on empowerment, social inclusion and community participation is largely negative, she notes potential for uplift.

> Women and men who organize to clean up their neighborhoods for free, or for little remuneration, in the process discover the litter of the system itself, which perhaps prompts their long-term process of empowerment and emancipation.
> (Miraftab, 2004, p. 254)

A similar critique is possible in the case of D-SPEAK. It is a program focused on empowering marginalised youth, in which their program output does the work that should have been done by council representatives (i.e. effectively consulting constituents and reducing barriers to accessing participation), and in which their participation results in the production of interventions and resources, like the *Say No To Racism* panel and D-SPEAK video, that will become part of a local government education toolkit. As previously noted, the question posed in the D-SPEAK advocacy video leads the viewer to question who is responsible for preventing the harassment and discrimination of Dean’s most marginalised communities:

> I want us to be outspoken about it. I want us to come forward and make a difference, because if we don’t who will?

The critical approach brought to the program by the E&D Unit and D-SPEAK staff, in addition to the independent voices of external activist facilitators and the Dean Community Legal Service, made evident the “litter of the system.” Transparency over terrorism prevention funding, combined with skills development, including a toolkit of strategic tactics for speaking back to government representatives, carried through to real platforms on which to speak and be heard, will perhaps support a longer-term process of empowerment and emancipation. Though, as Miraftab argues that (2004, p. 254), “grassroots movements and their empowering outcomes emerge despite the ‘empowerment’ rhetoric of the neo-liberal programs.” It is not because of their engagement in a CVE program that these young people are rendered resilient to the “lure” of violent extremism; rather, it is despite their engagement in CVE. Discussions with E&D staff
suggested an awareness of this implicit challenge embedded in the complex D-SPEAK, CT-funded program, and their various subversions are testament to their efforts to avoid the harmful effects Miraftab asserts.

6.12 Conclusions: Is there a role for local government in countering violent extremism?

The City of Dean’s refusal to hold citizenship ceremonies on the 26th January, Australia Day, was justified as a response to Aboriginal communities’ trauma associated with this date, marking the arrival of the First Fleet and the commencement of European occupation. Their refusal to hold citizenship ceremonies on the 26th January sought to separate the celebration of what politicians so often call “the most successful multicultural nation in the world” from the ongoing oppression of the Australia’s First Peoples. In so doing, they proposed a vision of a multicultural society that recognises its precedence by a First Peoples who have suffered genocide, displacement and silencing. Dean’s stance resonated with the youth involved in D-SPEAK’s, as noted by youth worker, G:

*Just knowing that that's what [Dean's] doing [refusing citizenship ceremonies on 26th January]. Hearing [Dean] saying, being part of advocacy makes them, it's just building that relationship more. You can see they're proud of [Dean] now, whereas in the past they were like they [didn't] care.*

Dean’s critique of and challenge to federal authority provided a model for what D-SPEAK participants were invited to do through the program. Community partners and the key youth worker’s participation in CVE programming was explicitly tied to the City of Dean’s institutional reputation in addition to the reputation of its E&D staff. In a chain reaction, the youth who participated in the program did so because of the community partner and youth worker’s endorsement. Ironically, it was only through their participation in this CVE program that the youth became alert to the role and capacities of local government.

A vision of local government as exclusively responsible for “roads, rates and rubbish” was evident during the citizenship ceremony debates that continue to circulate in the annual lead up to the 26th January. And while news media rhetoric and federal politicians derided the role of LG outside of the 3Rs, the public discourse triggered by the Australia Day debates itself provided evidence of the important role of local governments in creating opportunities and spaces for public discourse around complex issues. In Victoria, local government’s capacity to contribute to
complex public discourse and advocacy remains threatened by legislative reform. Those who argue against LG’s role in broad political discourse fail to see the possibilities it represents for cultivating a politics of difference and expanded multicultural belonging at the local scale.

Dean’s CVE experiment, D-SPEAK, was instigated to address specific community concerns about Muslim youth radicalising to extreme violence. Of particular concern was the notion of “co-radicalisation” as a reaction to discrimination and harassment, particularly in light of backlash following global and local terrorism events. Although funding was secured based on the premise of preventing terrorism, the program unfolded in direct response to participant needs and priorities. This resulted in a series of learnings and unexpected outcomes that were tailored by participants, and specific to their identified community-needs. These outcomes were a result of flexible program design that has allowed for genuine and complex youth-led engagement, with local government resources and staffing support.

Concerns over iatrogenic effects and bad press have led to a perception of CVE as risky for state agencies, and a cautious approach by both state government and local government. Of the local governments I spoke with, only one would go on the record, and described the unwillingness to engage in CVE based on apprehension by the local government’s Communications Department. How would they explain to their constituents they were engaging in CVE without either alienating those typically targeted by CVE programs, or avoid an alarmist interpretation of CVE program indicating a “terrorism problem” in their municipality? While Dean E&D Unit staff were cautious about their consent to initiating D-SPEAK, there was always a sense that they had a strong rationale. That rationale was supported by the Dean Community Inclusion Report and leadership by the Interfaith officer, himself a member of the local Muslim community, such that they felt confident they could handle the “messaging”. The program outcomes, including the Say No To Racism panel and advocacy video were strong expressions of the principles and ethics the staff and participants had articulated at the outset of the program.

Often discourse around unintended policy outcomes focuses on unintended negative outcomes. In the case of D-SPEAK, there were numerous positive unintended outcomes. A prime example would be the series of intergenerational dialogues instigated by the youth participants, where topics around mental health, and intergenerational conflict and misunderstanding were broached with support from a local health clinic and Muslim psychologist. Another might be the engagement of participants in the Dean Youth Jury, the establishment of a Horn of Africa

These unintended outcomes align with Dean staff’s original questions regarding terrorism prevention: “is this just business as usual?” I contend that yes, the program and its outcomes are consistent with the work that the Equity and Diversity Unit set out to do – as captured in the title of the Unit itself. Youth engagement funded through counter-terrorism funding prescribes social policy and community outreach that is precipitated by fear. This notion is fundamentally at odds with the nature of the relationship the E&D Unit staff sought with youth participants. There were deliberate efforts to avoid rendering youth as “suspect” by instead rendering them as citizens of Dean. This internal critique was made possible within the program structure and by the participants who were able to steer the program in directions that recognised their experiences and needs and allowed them to speak directly to individuals in positions of influence. While interviewing one of the Dean councillors who had been audience to D-SPEAK participant concerns in Council Chambers, he expressed his frustration at learning of the harassment and discrimination Somali-Australian youth were enduring at their local shopping mall. Furthermore, he was disappointed that he was only hearing about this mistreatment and discrimination through a program funded through the state government, and as a terrorism prevention program. At the time, Council had only contributed $5,000 to the program, which he felt was entirely insufficient. This longstanding councillor shared his conviction that the program should be a component of standard community outreach, that its timeline was too short, and that Dean’s funding contribution to support Somali-Australian youth should be increased substantially. It remains to be seen how he will carry this intention forward in his role as councillor.

Perhaps the question of whether or not there is a role for local government in countering violent extremism is not the best question to ask. Instead, by looking at Dean’s experiment in CVE programming, we might ask: what does D-SPEAK tell us about how local government engages in critical ways with marginalised communities?

Returning to the emerging and potentially useful concept of New Municipalism, it is worth re-stating that it is not because of the smaller scale of the municipality or that the local scale is inherently better or more democratic (Purcell, 2006; Russell, 2019). The New Municipalism is not so much an overarching theory as it is an emerging collection of case studies that together highlight the possibilities that local, municipal proximity enables:
The emphasis is on the potential to mobilize a range of social forces – from both within and without the municipal authorities – to instead ‘democratize’ institutions such that decision-making and power is distributed outwards. (Russell, 2019, p. 3)

Certainly, in the case of D-SPEAK, proximity has been essential to both staff and participants challenging the imposition of “risky subjectivities” on Muslim, Somali-Australian participants. Proximity here has meant proximity of the IFO with communities engaged – where personal relationships were essential to the program initiation. Proximity has also meant the youth participants have had direct face-to-face encounters with political representatives, providing for close proximity between those with less and those with more power. That proximity has set expectations for and pressures of accountability, too.

In the case of Dean’s activism and advocacy – a necessary precursor to D-SPEAK – there is another scalar argument to be made that rests on the expression and comprehension of national policy reception, implementation and meaning at the municipal level. On the one hand there is a democratic representation by a finer grain constituency – which we are warned does not in itself mean heightened democracy (Russell, 2019). On the other, there occurs a fracturing of the very notion of a national identity and politics, that creates fractures suggesting incompleteness, allowing for difference, diversity and possibility. For D-SPEAK participants, these fractures, articulated by Dean’s Mayor on issues such as Australia Day citizenship ceremonies and asylum seeker advocacy were important conditions for what was largely self-directed engagement in a local government sponsored youth empowerment program.

While by no means perfect or without its contradictions, D-SPEAK as an experiment in countering violent extremism provides insights into the challenges local government workers operating in the space of social welfare and social service provision are forced to navigate. These include policies that undermine their equity and diversity-informed practice. It might be considered by some to be incongruous, contradictory or even a conflict of interest to use a CVE program that targets Muslim youth to address Islamophobia and racism, and their potential to radicalise Muslim youth to violent extremism (H. Jones, 2013). However, the specific relationships between participants, collaborating agencies and staff, nested within a local government context already campaigning against associated national security hysteria, including fear mongering over refugees and asylum seekers, provided for a complex engagement. This
experiment can be seen to have allowed for a politics of difference, through a redistribution of power that simultaneously incorporated marginalised youth voices while allowing for autonomy of the social program, funded through state and local government. Importantly, program outcomes have led to improved service provision, extended to the broader Dean Somali community.
Chapter 7: Conclusions

7.1 Summary

This thesis has been concerned with the national security paradox. This paradox is made visible across geographies of scale, between ideas and their operationalisation, and definitions of national identity. Principally, this thesis has focused on the contradictions and gaps found within and between national security policy and multiculturalism in Australia, and the implications for those tasked with policy implementation (Czaika & De Haas, 2013). I have examined discursive and implementation gaps between federal, state and local government policy and rhetoric which have had direct implications for policy development, interpretation, reception and effects. The previous chapters document these contradictions and gaps, in the literature and in a multi-scaled case study that centres on a single municipality, Dean, in Melbourne, Australia. However, by adopting an approach that cuts across multiple scales, it becomes clear that when paradoxical national security policies trickle down to the local, municipal scale, significant consequences are felt on the ground. Under Australian national security policy, Muslim communities are targeted, anti-Muslim sentiment and suspicion of Muslims is endorsed, and belonging and access to welfare services is rendered conditional upon self-identification as “at risk” of radicalisation. However, I have also found evidence of resistance, dissent and subversion at the level of state government, and even more meaningfully, at the local government scale. This thesis has highlighted the conditions under which local government—as an institution and as a collection of individuals—can afford resistance to the securitisation of Muslims, extend new spaces of belonging, and promote a meaningful politics of diversity.

There remains a scarcity of in-depth qualitative and ethnographic research exploring the challenges faced by local government workers implementing countering violent extremism (CVE) programs. Agreement over root causes of radicalisation to violent extremism also remain elusive—to researchers and policy makers alike—while policy and programs continue to be developed based on what has become “conventional wisdom” (Githens-Mazer, 2012; Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). Because CVE continues to receive substantial investment in numerous Western multicultural states, there is a need to better comprehend the complexity and challenges involved in implementation, and its effects. This is all the more crucial given that the conventional wisdom these policy responses draw upon developed in the aftermath of a series of
Islamist terror events. Policy practitioners or “groundworkers” (Ahmed, 2012) are the interlocutors responsible for local translation of national policy, as well as direct interfacing with “targeted” communities. Their experience provides invaluable insight into what national policy looks like, when implemented locally. The compromises, negotiations and disagreements inherent in this work are too easily lost, thanks to an institutional memory and a counter-terrorism industry that prefers to document success and best practice. Through thick description and close-range analysis, this thesis has recovered some of this texture and institutional complexity.

In introducing the inter-scalar methodological approach and fieldwork I conducted, I demonstrated that by fixing upon a local node, I was able to trace the journey from national security policy to local implementation. Through tracing this pathway over time, I have sought to show its non-linear trajectory—that there have been points of push-back and diversion. The final result of my work is not an evaluation of terrorism prevention programming. Rather, I have probed the interface between social and security policy, and national security and multiculturalism, across scales. I have found that groundworker experiences may appear to be local and insulated, but are in fact connected to the complex circuitry of national security policy. In this way, this thesis builds on previous work by scholars like Charles Husband and Yunis Alam (2011) and Hannah Jones (2014) who have studied British social cohesion policy and its implementation through CVE programs. In both cases, these scholars highlighted complexity, personal discomfort, conflicts of interest, and affective dimensions of local government workers. This thesis has broken conceptual and empirical ground by taking up these arguments, complicating and extending them through the application of a multi-scalar lens. This approach has brought into stark relief the situatedness of policy implementation—specifically, how the relationships between three tiers of government influence the operationalisation of soft security interventions. Through my immersion and physical location in a single local government, I have provided a reading of a local government agency from the inside, and I have been able to see the local state not just as an institution, but as a collection of individuals with unique motivations, experiences, networks and capacities. The intimacy afforded by an extended research relationship with Dean City Council’s Equity and Diversity (E&D) Unit, over more than two years, rendered visible the everyday challenges, compromises, and working contradictions involved in engaging Muslim youth in a youth empowerment program funded by a national security grant.
Chapter 4 examined the federal context in which national security is defined in policy and political messaging. National borders are defined at the federal scale, and reinforced by policies of border control, immigration policy, and security threats. In the Australian context, it is at the federal scale where explicit links between immigration, integration, and terrorist threats are narrated in rhetoric and in the location of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs within the Department of Home Affairs. Before unpacking the ways in which institutions and actors are responding to national security trickling down from the federal scale, I outlined how hard national security strategies undermine soft approaches. I described the extensive and expanding legal frameworks that emerge in the aftermath of terror events, authorising weakened civil liberties, and the targeting of Muslim communities. At times when political rhetoric around “successful multiculturalism” has simultaneously with direct calls for an Australian public inclusive of Muslim communities, because they are crucial partners in terrorism prevention. In this way citizenship and inclusion are demarcated for Australian Muslim Others contingent on participation in, and acceptance of, threat narratives and “risky subjectivities” (Heath-Kelly, 2012, p. 70).

I showed how, over time, Australian conceptions of multiculturalism have become enlisted incrementally by the national security regime. Immigration policy—particularly asylum policy—has also been entangled. All the while, multiculturalism has remained a constant marker of Australian identity, coexisting with an immigration regime and political rhetoric frequently punctuated by the vilification of Muslims. These conditions have served to alienate and disenfranchise Australian Muslim communities (Akbarzadeh, 2016). However, while terrorism prevention and multiculturalism are each defined at the federal scale, they are both delegated to states and territories to operationalise. Delegation to the second tier of the Australian federalist system produces a gap, or opening, wherein the states are able to exercise a degree of agency in changing the terms of each respectively.

The arrival of national security and multiculturalism at the state scale is examined in Chapter 5, where I show how the Victorian government attempts to demarcate itself as a field of multicultural inclusion and belonging. Tensions and dissensus across federal and state scales reveals how policy and rhetoric can be influenced by inter-scalar relations. For example, I considered the Victorian Multicultural Policy Statement, *Victorian. And Proud Of It* (2017), which establishes new terms of reference that directly inform the interpretation of terrorism
prevention within Victoria. State government workers explained their positioning in relation to the federal government, describing fresh relationships unsullied by the negative and even toxic associations Muslim communities had with the federal Attorney General’s Department, federal leadership and foreign policy. The jurisdictional distinction between federal and state governments means that while the states are bound to define counter-terrorism policies and multicultural policies aligned with the federal policy, they may each articulate their own priorities and actions. As such, I have argued that state government works as a filter for federal policy. To varying degrees, therefore, state government policy presents an alternative vision. On the one hand it offers a state-defined geography of belonging as opposed to national belonging—Victorian. And Proud Of It—and acknowledges the polarising conditions of contemporary settler societies in which there is a need to have “difficult conversations.” The Victorian state government’s extensive and progressive social policy regime also provides evidence of a willingness to support social welfare initiatives. For the most part, Victorian state political leaders have reinforced this inclination and explicitly rejected federal interventions that have resulted in the vilification of African-Australian communities.

While the state government’s terrorism prevention regime in many ways echoes the federal level, its implementation is carried out in consultative and nuanced ways, with the active engagement of researchers and close face-to-face relationships with funded community organisations. These close relationships have, however, been tested in cases where political rhetoric by leaders concerned with “optics” has undermined patiently-built relationships of trust and collaboration. While relationships between state government workers and community organisations might be longstanding and nuanced, a single statement by the Victorian Premier (i.e. ICV Safe Spaces) is a reminder of the stigma associated with soft security engagements.

Upon arrival at the local government scale in Chapter 6, I found there to be more scope for nuanced partnerships and robust community engagements. The bulk of my empirical fieldwork features in Chapter 6, across two parts. In the first section I conceived of the local state as potential advocate within a national context. While national security policy travels from the federal to the local scale, its journey is neither linear nor complete at the point of “arrival.” Looking at both precedents and examples from elsewhere, the potential for local state advocacy and activism is explored in studies of networked cities that called for nuclear disarmament in the 1970s-1980s, and more recently, sanctuary cities seeking to protect undocumented migrants and
asylum seekers. These short case studies exemplify possibilities of inter-scalar local state agency, where cities must grapple with their jurisdictional limits in the face of destructive and unjust federal policy. Resistance to citizenship ceremonies on Australia Day is offered as a local example of dissent and activism against the federal government. Local governments, including Dean, who refuse to hold ceremonies on the 26th of January were subsequently stripped of their ability to do so at all.

Dean’s reputation for critiquing and challenging federal authority was extended through their engagement in CVE programming. Although ambivalent about their role as agents of counter-terrorism, local government staff rationalised the program in response to the Muslim community’s (parents’) expressions of concern over the radicalisation and recruitment of a number of young people in the municipality. “Suspect community” stigma was mitigated through deliberate resourcing and co-design, and youth-leadership of the D-SPEAK program. Rather than designing a program responsive to the state government’s programmatic logic, Dean E&D Unit staff posed the questions: “What do you need?” and “How can we help?”

As an institution, Dean encouraged youth participants to engage in activism. In a program I liken to an “activism apprenticeship” (Kirshner 2006), youth encountered community activists, many sharing similar experiences to their own. The commonalities of experience held by some E&D Unit staff, and their largely sympathetic politics, created opportunities for relationship- and trust-building between participants and staff. This in turn has extended to families of the participants involved, who came forward seeking access to resources they had previously been unaware of, or too intimidated to request. In the final part of Chapter 6, I illustrated in empirical detail how the unique and combined circumstances of the local government setting, the staff that populated it, the range of community resources, and the possibilities associated with a youth-led approach, all resulted in “unintended” positive outcomes. Without these elements, the program would have run the risk of replicating a series of "toxic" associations, especially on the part of youth participants.

7.2 Research questions and themes

This study posed three questions related to the national security paradox. First, I asked, how is national security policy articulated and interpreted across scales? In Chapters 4 and 5, I highlighted how the local scale was designated as a strategic site for developing resistance to terrorism through a community resilience paradigm. “Resilience” in this formulation
encompasses both the capacity to recover quickly from terror events and to resist the lure of radicalisation to violent extremism (Coaffee & Fussey, 2015; Grossman & Tahiri, 2015). This localised vision of national security is founded on the notion of a socially bonded or cohesive society (Husband & Alam, 2011). In Chapter 4, I outlined how this notion of cohesion is expressed as “successful multiculturalism,” whereby national loyalties must be developed and proved in order to access or maintain membership in the imagined Australian community, encapsulated in the “Team Australia” catch-phrase (Spalek & Imtoual, 2007; Stratton, 2011). A fixation on multiculturalism in relation to terrorism prevention is consistent with federal policy framing of Islamist extremism as the primary (and, for the most part, only) concern of intelligence and law enforcement. While recognising the history, possibility, reality and risk of ISIS-inspired terror attacks, I argue that such a limited definition of terror threat serves to conflate Islam with terrorism, securitises Muslims and endorses polarising, anti-Muslim sentiments from the top-down.

In recent Australian history, hostile federal-level national security statements that inflame anti-Muslim, anti-refugee and anti-asylum seeker sentiment have wrought widespread, but gradual, trickle down effects. Yet, the sweeping vilification of Muslims by some federal political leaders repeatedly encounters resistance from some state government and local government leaders. The state and local government settings are each fields of reception, holding opportunities for policy adaptation and transformation (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 23). Discontinuities across scales arise where adaptation and transformation occur. At the state scale, discontinuity appears in the form of an alternative geography of belonging: to the state over the nation. In Chapter 6, I show how resistance to federal immigration, asylum and citizenship policies challenge exclusivist national identity discourse, opening possibilities for more locally scaled spaces for belonging. In the Dean case study, I explore the possibility of reducing the stigmatising effects of national security policy through the redefinition of federal policy’s foundational terms, and the debunking of a single narrative of national security and the threat landscape.

Second, I asked a set of related questions: how do state actors and institutions negotiate the two potentially conflicting objectives of national security and multiculturalism on their journey from national policy to local implementation? And, more specifically, how do local government workers negotiate these two policy priorities—multiculturalism and national security—in everyday practice? In Chapters 5 and 6, I described close relationships between state and local
policy practitioners and community organisations and leaders (El Alwa, 2011). These personal relationships were essential to establishing meaningful, trusting state-community partnerships (Hanniman, 2008; McDonald, 2012; Cherney & Hartley, 2017). Moreover, these relationships compensated for imperfect policies and evaluation documents, where securitisation creep can be found. Where they were most effective, these relationships were generally characterised by humility, openness and a consultative approach (Spalek, 2012; Thomas et al., 2017). While again imperfect, applying a productively ambivalent working definition of what constituted terrorism prevention, an awareness of its stigmatising effects and the uneven capacities of already marginalised communities were key to engaging with disengaged communities. Proof of this success is evidenced by the participation in local- and state-level programs of agencies and individuals who had previously refused to work with the federal government, in order to access much-needed resources and support.

Local government multicultural groundworkers are in the difficult position of trying to do more with less, as social policy and social services budgets shrink (H. Jones, 2013; Kim & Warner, 2016). In Chapter 6, I considered how local government workers were entrepreneurial, adaptive, and flexible as they sought funds to do basic social welfare work. In the case of D-SPEAK, negotiating dual policy objectives meant framing the program in terms of equitable distribution of resources, advocating through programming, and by building-in meaningful pathways for ongoing engagement and participant benefits. Given the often short time-frames allowed for CVE “experiments” (Spalek, 2012), staff committed to pursuing avenues for ongoing engagement. This resulted in cultivating opportunities as they arose from the youth-led program, such as local government mentorships, local government paid employment, participation in youth juries and circulation of the youth-produced Say No To Racism video in public libraries and local high schools. After completion of CVE Community Resilience Unit (CRU) seed funding, and off the back of reported program success, Dean councillors committed to a funding top-up to continue the program, enabling it to transcend its reliance on CVE funds.

As a specific policy solution, D-SPEAK cannot simply be considered a “model” for engaging with marginalised Muslim youth. There are plenty of imperfections of note: from grappling with the challenges of secular-faith tensions, disagreements amongst program staff and participants, and the precarious conditions of employment for the youth-facing groundworkers. However, the achievements of D-SPEAK are notable in the way that local officials strategically acquired CVE
funding but and utilised these resources to undertake broad spectrum social welfare programming. The achievement here, I argue, lay in local government staff using their understanding of the specific challenges impacting a community to carefully reframe and subvert the most stigmatising and suspect-making impacts of a CT-funded program.

7.3 Limitations and future directions

Research on the topic of national security is marked by the ever-present constraints of access and disclosure (O’Hare et al., 2010). My experience in undertaking this research has been no different. From the earliest stages of the dissertation research design and framing I encountered challenges in gaining security clearance and the ambivalence of potential research participants, due to the problems inherent in exposing and disseminating results. As the project took form and research relationships with willing and able partners were brokered, it was in part my positioning as “critical friend” and the salience of the research questions that meant state government bureaucrats and local government groundworkers were prepared to be recognised—not necessarily by name, but by geography and position. These research relationships and participation were brokered largely thanks to having an established reputation, previous professional work experience, and other various personal factors including others “vouching” for me. That I was able to spend an unusually extended period of time getting to know local government staff before and during my ethnographic fieldwork, on site at the E&D Unit office, contributed to the critical development of trust required for this research. This kind of experience is not easily reproduced and has allowed for a situatedness and depth that is uncommon in studies of policy. While it contributes nuance and texture to the fields of critical terrorism and critical policy studies, the generalisability of this study’s findings could be seen to be limited by these factors.

Nevertheless, it is precisely the conditions of “the local” that allowed for the study of how specific policy reception, response, adaptation and implementation to take place. I have made a case for how insights gleaned from this research can expand understanding of the relationship between national security and multicultural policies. Moreover, I have sought to extend the scope for understanding these policy dynamics and considering their implications. A larger study capable of examining more local governments, experiencing different local conditions—particularly in institutional agency and staffing—would provide opportunity to further stress test the findings of this research.
Additionally, this research would be heavily enriched by the voices of those either participating in or targeted by terrorism prevention programming. Throughout this research I felt acutely the absences of the voices of those participating in the program. Due to various constraints noted in Chapter 3, it was not possible to include youth participants in research in a direct way, with the exception of participants who had graduated to leadership roles in the program. Accessing insights into their experiences through program staff, through the D-SPEAK program outputs, and through my participation in the D-SPEAK working group, allowed only glimpses. Any research on national security policy, multiculturalism and concerns over the securitisation of multicultural policy should, I would argue, include the voices of those most directly impacted. Leveraging the findings of this research, I would advocate for addressing this absence in future research. Including marginalised youth in action-oriented research would better centre the importance of the question at the core of this research: what happens when social policy is predicated on fear?

This question is made more urgent with critics calling attention to the potential relationship between Australia’s myopic national security regime, and the recent Christchurch attacks (see Chapter 1). We might also ask, even more sharply: has national security discourse and its operationalisation in Australia (and elsewhere) contributed to creating conditions in which right wing extremist radicalisation can take place?

7.4 Final reflections

This thesis responds to the critique that terrorism prevention strategies enlist multiculturalism and social cohesion as components of the national security apparatus, to detrimental effect. Though not a question I am able to definitively answer with my research program, this study has been motivated by a pressing concern: what is at stake when social policy is predicated on fear? A D-SPEAK participant who graduated to program leadership explained her sense of resignation at CT program funding. “We’re just used to it,” she told me. Although she sounded adjusted to this reality, it is possible that her optimistic “armour” will decline over time (Johanna Wyn et al., 2018).

Dean’s engagement in CVE and open ambivalence towards it facilitated the emergence of a common critical discourse between both E&D Unit staff and D-SPEAK participants concerning the nature of national security targeting, Islamophobia, and meeting community needs. Although critical discussion over counter-terrorism grants might open space for reflexive practice,
advocacy and activism, it does not eliminate the harmful and stigmatising effects of resourcing social programs with Muslim communities through national security funds. To repeat the words of Youth Worker G, reflecting on her conversation with youth participants about the program funding:

\[
\text{That's been one of the most challenging things to swallow: that that's where the money is coming from...and telling them that, this is also hard for us.}
\]

Throughout the research, I found myself asking the same questions over and over again: why does this funding need to be CVE-specific funding? Why not invest in broad social welfare to achieve the desired social, economic and civic participation outcomes which, by the logics of terrorism prevention, would improve national security? Who does the framing of social services as CVE serve—the wider public or the politicians seeking to demonstrate action on national security?

Though it is not an adequate “solution” to the national security paradox, I have highlighted the unique potential of the local state in mitigating its negative impacts. In the unique example of Dean City Council, we can see how the local state can provide productive, subversive opportunities for expanded political discourse and the production of alternative spaces for belonging. I have outlined this possibility to both provide context for the site of a CVE experiment, and as a critical response to exclusivist visions of Australia’s “multicultural success.” In doing so, I highlight the urgency in preserving this scale of political representation, and its legislated advocacy role that is currently under threat.

For policy practitioners and local government groundworkers some compromises can feel like “small wins” (Jones, 2014). Some might describe these “small wins” as complicity, failures and even betrayals. But in the context of the national security paradox, the bending of language, evasive evaluation reports, creative allocation of resources, pushing youth-led programs and youth-oriented governance arrangements are subversions that can reduce the unintended harmful consequences of CVE.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Schedule – Policy Makers, bureaucrats, administrators

*Introduce self and research project.*

*Obtain informed consent.*

1. What differentiates Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) from other forms of national security (in terms of style, financing, planning, programs, networks)? What is similar between them?
2. How do national security policies and strategies fit with multiculturalism, social cohesion, and social inclusion policies and strategies?
3. What is the rationale behind a community-oriented approach to national security or CVE?
4. Can you speak to the process of policy translation — from national policy formulation to local implementation? What is the process of policy formulation, and how prescribed is local implementation? Is there direct contact between national level policy actors and local level administrators?
5. What challenges are faced in translating national policy to the local scale? How are they resolved or managed?
6. What kinds of evaluation frameworks exist? What are the perceived challenges and limitations associated with evaluating national security and CVE policies?
7. What lessons and successes have you drawn from (in other countries, other projects, other institutions) in developing national security or CVE policies and implementation plans or procedures?
8. What does successful CVE or national security look like? How is it measured? What are the aims for CVE or national security programs and projects at present? And how do you imagine them developing in future?
Appendix B: Interview Schedule – NGOs, community and social service organisations

Introduce self and research project.

Obtain informed consent.

1. How have national security policies and strategies impacted your organization, in terms of planning, program development, and service provision?
2. What does Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) mean in the context of your organization?
3. In what ways has your organization incorporated national security mandates into your everyday practice, or service provision? What challenges and opportunities have you seen in their incorporation and implementation?
4. How does your organization envisage incorporating national security policies and mandates into your future operations and practice?
5. In what ways are these programs or plans locally specific?
6. What challenges are faced in translating national policy to the local scale? How are they resolved or managed?
7. Do you see multiculturalism policy and national security policies as compatible in your organization? If yes, how so? If now, can you expand on some of the challenges that you perceive in current or future organizational operation and practice?
8. What lessons and successes has your organization drawn from (in other countries, other projects, other institutions) in developing and implementing national security or CVE policies?
9. Why does your institution do national security or CVE programs? What benefits does your organization get from undertaking these programs? And what are the opportunity costs?
10. What does successful CVE or national security look like? How is it measured? What are the aims for your CVE or national security programs and projects?