Abstract
There exists an unsettling relationship between Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and formal schooling today that remains under-researched and largely unproblematized. This article draws on semi-structured interviews with state level policy actors as they implement a federally funded, small-scale grant to develop Restorative Practice in four Australian schools. The approach – as a form of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) – was intended to guard against student behaviours deemed ‘at risk.’ The data suggest that policy makers are vigilant in conducting their work in relation to a conception of risk and draw on a repertoire of skills when operating in an ‘in-between’ space between federal prerogatives and local communities. Beck’s work on risk and Bourdieu’s notion of habitus inform the analysis. We focus on how the habitus of policy actors is brought into tension as they navigate the politicized space of their employment by focusing on four overlapping areas – evidencing the affective dimension, guarding against stigma, strategic use of language and coordinating institutions.

Keywords: policy enactment; Countering Violent Extremism (CVE); risk management; habitus; case study

Introduction
Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) continues to be a topic of international concern and debate and remains an important part of modern governance. It is also increasingly becoming a part of modern schooling as government agencies and ministries are tasked with addressing radicalization and developing strategic approaches to combat it. In 2010, a Countering Violent Extremism Centre was established in the Commonwealth Attorney General’s Department in Australia and subsequently a national CVE strategy launched in 2011. This development has led to well-funded efforts in Australian federal policy to find and implement solutions to ensure young people are not vulnerable to extremist ideology. One of the main ways CVE funding has been implemented is through a series of grant schemes. Specifically, a robust package called Living Safe
Together ($13.4 million) in 2014 with $1.6 million to community-based projects (see Cherney et al 2018 for more detail). Mainly these projects are administered at the state level and may involve depending on circumstance – an amalgamation of civil servants, community organisations as well as schools.

This article presents findings from a small-scale research study exploring policy enactment and school-based approaches to CVE in one Australian state (Baak et al 2020; Stahl et al 2020). While the funding was referred to as CVE, it is more representative of what Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier (2018: 1) call “soft-power approaches aim[ed] at intervention before violence occurs” – or Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). CVE and PVE can be used interchangeably though CVE is the more common terminology in the Australian context. As Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier (2018: 1) note PVE is an effort to exist “outside of a security-driven framework” and is more present in the caring professions (2). We seek to understand the work of policy actors and the skills they acquire and utilize in their employment where such work, we argue, involves the ‘management of risk’ (Beck, 2009).

Drawing on the data, we foreground the tensions each policy actor experienced as they both engaged with and simultaneously resisted dominant narratives associated with CVE along with wider discourses of ‘risk.’ Given the complex nature of the job, we are interested in their employment skills as well as the personal values – or dispositions – which motivate them to perform their job at a high level. To explore their experiences as they work to enact a CVE/PVE program in schools, we draw on Bourdieu’s conceptual toolkit, specifically habitus in relation to capital and field, where fields are conceived of as social rather than geographical space – with a local, national and global character (Bourdieu, 1997; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Risks, Beck (1992) argues, “contain a peculiar political explosive: what was until now considered unpolitical becomes political” and “the public and politics extend their rule into the private sphere” (24). Within the field of CVE/PVE, it is widely documented how particular populations are often framed through policy development and funding determinants – as at ‘risk’ (Abdel-Fattah, 2019; Jayasuriya, 2002). The research illustrates the shared habitus of policy actors (Lingard, Sellar and Baroutsis, 2015) as a ‘system of dispositions’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) which has implications for enacting policy within this ‘risk society’ framework. We are interested not only in the skills they draw upon as they work to implement policy but also the key dispositions of policy actors.
The research contributes to a line of inquiry concerning how government policy actors respond appropriately to issues related to violent extremism in Australian schools (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Smith, 2019; Aly, Taylor and Karnovsky 2014). The analysis contributes to our understandings of ‘risk management’ in a neoliberal state, and wider shifts in the New Public Management of education (Tolofari, 2005). The paper is structured in three parts. We briefly recount Beck’s influential work on risk making connections to neoliberal governance – specifically neoliberal forms of educational governance – before drawing on recent scholarship which focuses upon Bourdieu’s use of habitus as a conceptual lens to explore the work of policy actors. We next describe the methodology defining the parameters of the case study and the use of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with various stakeholders. The latter half of the paper presents the empirical findings, where the habitus of our participants is brought into tension as they navigate policy enactment as a politicised space before considering the set of skills required to conduct this work.

**Theorizing Risk, Reflexivity and Implications for Policy Actors**

According to Ogawa (2013), risk now connotes “few opportunities for gain and a greater possibility of loss” (134). The idea of risk means something different in the present globalized world than it might have previously. Notions of risk have given way to ‘the production of risks” (Beck, 1992: 13) where, as Ekberg (2008) asserts, risk is always omnipresent. Drawing on Beck, Ogawa (2013) writes risk is “broadly considered as involving a threat, hazard, danger or some form of harm. Furthermore, risks today refer to unquestionable uncertainties where they have become more global, less readily identifiable, more problematic, less easily managed and more anxiety-provoking” (134). Beck concerns himself with socially manufactured risk and risk management. Emphasizing the relationship between the production of risk, inequality and perception, Beck (2014) writes:

Risk presumes a decision, therefore a decision-maker, and produces a radical asymmetry between those who take, define the risks and profit from them, and those who are assigned to them, who have to suffer the unforeseen side effects of the decisions of others, perhaps even pay for them with their lives. (115)
As risk permeates global discourses, this “brings into being supra-national and non-class-specific global hazards with a new type of social and political dynamism” (Beck 2014: 13). Therefore, within the continual production of risk there are sensitivities embedded in not only risk but the management of risk. Such sensitivities require careful reflexive deliberation.

Building on Beck’s (1992) reflexive modern risk-society, the ‘management’ of the risks associated with an increasingly globalized and technologically advanced world are becoming a significant part of public discourse, as is the process of “discovering, administering, acknowledging, avoiding or concealing such hazards with respect to specially defined horizons of relevance” (19). While Beck tends to focus on the risks and hazards associated with “techno-economic development,” the analysis presented in this article suggests that both the real and perceived threats posed by violent extremism – along with issues regarding their management through education – can be productively framed through drawing on Beck’s arguments. The increasingly securitized and mediatized public policy sphere directly influences how CVE/PVE is addressed and administered by policy actors, or as Beck (1992) asserts, “[t]he promise of security grows with the risks and destruction and must be reaffirmed over and over again to an alert and critical public through cosmetic or real interventions” (19-20).

Rizvi (2004) writes how the ‘war on terrorism’ has contributed to how “issues of welfare, social and cultural policy, including education policy, [are] increasingly subservient to the umbrella narrative of security” (163). Research on the pervasive technologies of neoliberal governance (Peck and Tickell, 2002; Harvey, 2005) remains robust and there is increased attention to the influence of neoliberalism on educational governance (c.f. Fusarelli and Johnson, 2004; Wilkins, 2016) which, in turn, privileges certain forms of responsibilization and selfhood. In demonstrating the relationship between neoliberalism and personhood, Nikolas Rose (1996: 35) writes “[t]echniques of relating to oneself as a subject of unique capacities worthy of respect run up against practices of relating to oneself as a target of discipline, duty, and docility.” Bansel and Davies (2010) call attention to how individuals are required to take up the technologies of neoliberal governance (e.g. self-discipline and self-surveillance, etc) in order to position oneself as a viable and valuable subject (134). As education policy makers take up technologies of neoliberal governance, they are compelled to engage in careful self-management and self-surveillance. Beck claims that, for societies to really evolve, modernization must become a reflexive process – where modernization involves not just structural change, but a change of the
relationship between social structures and social agents. With this in mind, we are interested in how policy actors reflexively engage in their work. We consider how the research presented in this paper speaks to how the state ‘both constitutes and regulates its citizens’ and how, in terms of risk management, the neoliberal state invests in propagating notions of risk and, simultaneously, investing heavily in risk-averse strategies.

**The Habitus of Policy Actors and Implications for Policy Enactment**

Bourdieu’s theory of practice shows how relations of privilege and domination are produced through the interaction of habitus and field. Habitus is understood as a system of internalized dispositions that shape how individuals operate in the social world and with regard to various forms of capital that can be economic, cultural, social or symbolic. Field reflects social contexts. Habitus is where choices are bounded by the framework of opportunities and constraints the person finds him/herself in (Reay, 2004) or where Costa, Burke and Murphy (2019) assert habitus must be accounted for in a “particular context, and, as such, the dispositions which are chosen are understood to be related to a particular field” (29). Moreover, the habitus of any given individual will never be coherent or free of tensions, but constitutes different levels of fragmentation. In *Pascalian Meditations* (1997), Bourdieu emphasizes that “the degree to which a habitus is systematic (or, on the contrary, divided and contradictory) and constant (or fluctuating and variable) depends on the social conditions of its formation and exercise” (64). The primary habitus, is produced through socialization within the home while a secondary habitus – commonly associated with education, training and employment – is layered upon the dispositions of the primary habitus. This period of inculcation can be seamless but can also feel uncomfortable depending on the distance between the ‘home’ habitus and the secondary habitus, resulting in scales of intensity regarding new learning experiences.

How dispositions are formed within the habitus requires attention to the dialectic of competing fields. As a set of durable and transposable dispositions, the habitus is not ‘set’ but evolving, as the field too is in constant flux. Emphasising the permeability of habitus, Reay (2004) shows how it informs individual subjectivities and how agents position themselves. As the product of previous experiences and interactions, habitus “may be changed by history, that is by new experiences, education, or training (which implies that aspects of what remains unconscious in habitus be made at least partially conscious and explicit)” (Bourdieu, 2002: 29).
Investigating the work of European policy actors mediating and constructing educational policies across governmental projects and networks, Lawn and Lingard (2002) observe similarities with what they call a habitus of “mobile global elites” where they “have a feel for the same policy game” (292). Such policy actors can adeptly deploy and work within global political discourses to both position themselves advantageously and influence educational policy in their nation-states. Lingard, Sellar and Baroutsis (2015) document the shared, middle-class habitus of five elite policy actors, who all had confidence in both science and technology as well as identifying strongly with a cosmopolitan outlook and sensibility. Such actors sought to understand the social through quantitative social science methods and referred to ‘legitimated evidence’ to inform decisions. The participants in the research we conducted are not what would be considered elite policy-makers, or what Sklair (2001) calls ‘globalising bureaucrats’ (26). Rather, they are mid-range policy actors. While their work may bring them into contact with people at the federal level, their employment responsibilities and daily work is primarily at the localized level involving daily interaction with school leaders, students and families as well as long-term and short-term strategic planning, securing grants and liaising with non-governmental actors such as community-based service providers.

We focus on where the habitus of CVE/PVE policy actors is brought into tension as they manage risk. Habitus allows for a consideration of the structuring forces of life experiences as well as the dispositions that these experiences produce. The case study illustrates some of the skills involved in enacting policy within a ‘risk society’ framework. The work of these policy actors highlights the “network of expert knowledges” that Lupton (1999) reminds us has been one “outcome of the emergence of the modern system of liberal government, with its emphasis on rule and the maintenance of order through voluntary self-discipline rather than via coercive or violent means” (4). In analysing the policy actors’ work, skills and values, we gain insight into some of the tensions they negotiate as professionals in the CVE/PVE space. Our analysis highlights the power relations in which our participants are ‘imbricated’ through exploration of their habitus and subjectivity where habitus is deployed as both the object of study and a theoretical tool (Wacquant, 2011; Reay, 2004; Costa and Murphy, 2015).

**Methods**
**Case Study Approach**

Merriam (2009) contends that a case study is “an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (40) while Creswell (2007), writes that case studies represent “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual materials, and documents and reports)” (73). The four participants in our case study were responsible for policy enactment in this one Australian state. In terms of ethical considerations, two of the actors do not have a front-facing profile and their work is largely secret from the public. The other two actors were part of the Department of Education and were therefore publicly accessible. In conducting the interviews, we were conscious of the politicised language in the CVE/PVE space.

**Context and Methods**

The study was entitled *Vulnerability, Resilience and Extremism: Investigating the Restorative Practice Framework*. It investigated a federally-funded CVE trial of the Restorative Practice Framework in four schools with high levels of disengaged young people (two rural/remote, two metropolitan). Three of the sites were secondary schools and one was a primary school. Disengagement was deduced quantitatively using school attendance records. While the policy actors sought to avoid stigmatising any specific community, in the end, they went for a ‘spread’ of schools where some degree of social marginalisation became the common thread.

Elsewhere we have critiqued the use of CVE funding to counteract socio-economic disadvantage, especially when there is no evidence of extremism in the schools (Stahl, et al. 2020). We have also noted that Restorative Practice, as a theory, focuses on preventing harm from reoccurrence through focusing on healing as opposed to punishment. Restorative Practice refers to the diverse strategies, frameworks and models used in mediation between the offender and the victim. The onus is on the offender becoming accountable for their behaviour and taking steps to repair harm. For this study, Restorative Practice was used as a whole school approach to foster belonging following critical incidents such as bullying, harassment, student-teacher conflicts, suspensions or exclusions and often involved circle work and building relationships.

Throughout our discussions Restorative Practice – as an approach to PVE – was seen to improve the culture of the school and the policy actors we spoke with perceived it as an important
safeguard. Central to the program was the role of school personnel learning to use Restorative Practice to reduce conflict and foster social cohesion through a whole school-community approach. As is representative of wider shifts in New Public Management of education (see Fusarelli and Johnson, 2004), the training in the four schools was delivered by a consultant who ran a private business facilitating Restorative Practice.

In the Australian state where this research was conducted, the field of CVE remains new, with no major reported incidents that would be classified as Violent Extremism to date. The capital city has experienced an increase in migrants and refugees from the Middle East over the past 20 years (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016), which has increased the Muslim population and led to cultural competence issues in certain institutions. Addressing the needs of vulnerable young people involves a multiplicity of agencies including youth justice, child protection, education, and child and adolescent mental health. Within this Australian state, CVE/PVE is not centred in the policing or security space but housed in the government division of human services.

**Participants and Data Sources**

To gain a wider perspective, we conducted interviews with a variety of stakeholders working in the vulnerability, resilience and extremism space within the state. Some of the interviews echoed past research on the CVE/PVE field, with participants reflecting on the tensions of CVE policy and practice (see Cherney, 2016; Cherney, Sweld, et al. 2018). In total, we interviewed four policy-officers, five school leaders, two youth workers and one private consultant who was an expert in Restorative Practice (Table 1). This provided us with a cross-sectional understanding of policy implementation. The research was exploratory, and the conversations were wide-ranging, covering personal biographies to professional practices and values. We then invited all the interviewees to a focus group which the majority attended.

This paper focuses on the four policy actors, as they engage in intermediary work between the prerogatives of the federal government and their daily work with schools. The research involved significant ethical and political sensitivities and each policy actor we interviewed required permission from their superiors to speak with us.

< Insert Table 1 here >
Findings

Here we focus on the shared habitus of the policy actors and how they draw on a repertoire of skills to operate in an ‘in-between’ space between federal prerogatives and community constraints. In considering the technologies of neoliberal governance and how the state “both constitutes and regulates its citizens” (Bansel and Davies, 2010: 134), we glimpse some of the ways in which the PVE space is constructed by policy actors and the demands and constraints of their employment. Each policy actor was aware of how performing their duties could contribute to a climate of fear. Considering the politics of fear, Jayasuriya (2002) observes, “new forms of risk management involve applying risk profiles to a set of relationships, institutions, and even geographic sites, rather than endeavoring to manage to transform the behavior of people” (140). We consider how the habitus of policy actors is brought into tension as they navigate politicised spaces, before considering the key skills required to effectively conduct this work. Their words speak to the socialization practices commonly associated with training and employment where this may, depending on the circumstance, sit uncomfortably with the dispositions formed in their primary habitus.

The work of these policy actors involves sensitive negotiations because, in Daniel’s (see Table 1) words, “we had to have a CVE intervention program, because the federal government contracts us to do that” but, in reality, the funding marked for CVE/PVE is also targeted at vulnerable young people. Daniel’s words highlight a central tension of these policy negotiations between the demands of governments wanting to effectively reduce the ‘risk’ of ideologically based violent extremism, and the complex needs of vulnerable young people who do not ‘fit’ easily within existing service frameworks. His words also highlight the task of negotiating the combative language of ‘CVE’ against language more suited to ‘PVE’, which exists in “the realms of care, social work, and education” (Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier, 2018: 2).

The most significant policy enactment overseen by our participants was funded from the Living Safe Together government initiative, which involved giving grants to community organizations. Within this Australian state, the delivery of CVE/PVE services typically involves a staff member at the school level, or community member, contacting the Department of Education. The case is logged in an ‘incident management system’ by Peter or Barry who then makes the decision to reach out to Daniel in the Department of Social Inclusion. Daniel’s main
remit is then to integrate and personalize services for vulnerable young people. Daniel described this work as problematic due to the stigma of ‘CVE’ and how programs associated with it could therefore be interpreted as ‘securitized social cohesion’ rather than a more tailored one-to-one intervention. It was unclear why, in terms of terminology, PVE was not more widely adopted. In considering how the participants navigate these politicised spaces, we now turn to four overlapping areas – evidencing the affective dimension, guarding against stigma, strategic use of language, and coordinating institutions. This is followed by attention to the key disposition the policy actors: caution and restraint.

Evidencing the affective dimension

Daniel describes himself as an “advocate for approaching [CVE/PVE] from an inclusion perspective” which aligns with the other participants. Inclusion, however, is difficult to capture. When we spoke with Patricia, she described herself as being “interested in the sustainability of Restorative Practices as an approach in schools” where she credits the approach for its capacity to “shift the culture in how young people, adults, teachers, et cetera relate to each other.” In terms of the tensions Patricia encounters in her job, she speaks about the importance of the affective dimension of Restorative Practice, how “this kind of practice it’s very people-based. It’s relationship-based” and how this did not sit comfortably with what she perceived as two key barriers to the promotion of Restorative Practice beyond the four schools, namely money and time.

Patricia saw her challenge around finding ways to demonstrate the merits of Restorative Practice to government officials at the federal level and she accepted it was not something to easily document, “I don’t know whether you can fully standardize Restorative Practice, because it’s so organic and it’s so relational.” While the funding that is awarded comes with the label of CVE, Patricia is quick to note it “could address a wide range of other issues that aren’t just in that box… the government’s just fitting a narrow political ideological box for violent extremism.” However, while Patricia acknowledges the effects of Restorative Practice are hard to quantify – in terms of the value-for-money logic – she speaks in conflicted terms about her role as evaluator:

I’ve been trying to find a way to carve my way in, you know? To move away from the boring report to how do we actually impact people who have the say to put their money into something that works, that overall works? It does work.
Because there’s no substantiation there for ... no substantiation of any result. And no-one in politics is interested in long term results. That’s the other thing is that we’re in a conditioned climate that doesn’t call for that.

Patricia’s habitus is honed to the relational aspects of Restorative Practice but due to the requirements of her role, she must frame the work in terms of program evaluation which may not capture its ‘organic’ nature. She notes that she adopts a certain style so that Restorative Practice in schools is deemed valuable:

…[…]I get as much statistical information as I can from the, probably the earliest school, which I’ve started to get. Which is interesting, because there are some indicators that something’s happened, you know? I don’t think we’d be asked to put some sort of quantifiable figure on it.

For Patricia the affective element informs her daily work where, in conducting herself, she asserts: “And my form of evaluation is of course participatory, action-based but also like empowerment-based and collaborative, collaborative evaluation so that it’s [that] relationship.”

**Guarding Against Stigma**

Daniel and Peter emphasized the caution required when working in a space where decisions have to be made about whether vulnerable young people will be referred to the police. This requires balancing the potential threats (or ‘risks’) such people may pose to others with the desire to protect them from unnecessary ‘stigma’. For example, Peter displays an awareness of the legitimate priorities that police have (‘…obviously about their main job is to keep community safe’). Peter also makes clear the need for his department to liaise with and draw on the resources of police where necessary, saying that ‘for us it’s about…okay…if we’ve got an incident or an issue and CVE certainly falls into that space and other threats of fairly extreme violence fall into that space then we would certainly raise that with police to crosscheck those.’

In remaining cautious about balancing a human services approach against potential criminalization, Peter would ‘refer’ borderline incidents to police:
Where we would look at it and think that it’s probably transgressing to criminal type behaviour or somebody’s safety is at risk, we would definitely refer. What we’re very mindful of is not creating unnecessary records for young people so there's a challenge for us as well because this stuff – it sticks.

In terms of policy enactment and managing risk, Peter links this work in the ‘in between space’ with the need to keep thresholds for reporting examples of ‘extreme behaviour’ relatively high, to avoid situations in which a particular event (such as a particular ideologically motivated terrorist attack) is publicly understood as having links to Islamic terrorism. In Daniel’s view, this can “trigger this whole flood of referrals, which you then have to assess and think about.” When we spoke with another policy actor, Barry, he discussed how his most significant concerns were around levels of right-wing extremism he saw in schools. As these issues were flagged by school personnel it was his responsibility to speak with families and attempt to sort out an appropriate course of action:

because you get used to it. I mean, you’ve always got to like, before I ring [on the phone], I will think through and just reflect on what I need to do and say, and like ... I mean, it's really quite interesting but, I suppose, I’ve been in it for a while now, obviously, and so you do learn to do that. Switch and change but, you really need to think it through and you also can’t personalize it because, I mean, some of the stuff they say is quite offensive and you think, yeah, yeah, like ... Yeah.

Barry’s words highlight the caution involved with the work of being a policy actor, not simply with thinking through the course of action but also working to de-personalize the situation in order to de-escalate it.

**Strategic Use of Language**

The language of CVE – particularly the word ‘extremism’ raises challenges for the policy actors, where it is paramount to draw the distinction between CVE as being concerned with the actions people take (or may potentially take), rather than any beliefs they might hold. For all the
policy actors we spoke with, the caution around language was paramount, “the language is really important …we don’t want to create a movement or a policy movement that sort of infringes on people’s privacy and freedom to think whatever it is they want to think, their implied constitutional freedom of political communication” (Daniel). Daniel explains that the language he adopts emphasizes how CVE policies concern monitoring and addressing behaviours that are, “meant to make people uncomfortable and harm them,” as opposed to simply extreme personal views or peaceful activism in support of socially controversial movements. Such use of language is about minimizing stigma in relation to particular groups or individuals:

So, when you go into a school, and this is exactly why, I don’t go into a school and say, “Hey, I’m Daniel, I do CVE. Let's talk about ways that this school can counter violent extremism.” That’s not their job. It’s the police’s job to deal with violent extremism.

…especially in a cohort such as teachers, where there are so many priorities and so many things to worry about between the curriculum and the wellbeing of students. And … a teacher becomes this frontline professional who’s supposed to not only be a teacher, but also be a mandatory notifier, be a counsellor, be a friend, be a coach, all these things. And so, you put countering violent extremism into that mix. And it’s a scary term. It has the words violence and extremism in it. It’s linked to all these things… That’s why when I talk about it, I tend to talk about an extreme behaviour and not violent extremism because it's a sort of almost distracting term…. So, for my money, the better investment is teaching people, practitioners, how to look for isolation at levels of concern rather than trying to teach them this whole new thing which is countering violent extremism.

The issues identified here reflect broader problems within a risk society, in which particular threats or sources of ‘risk’ are solidified in governmental discourse. These constructions may be the product of underlying biases or uninterrogated assumptions, which can trickle down into the social imagination of both school staff and the wider public.

Another dimension of the strategic use of language came to the fore when we asked the policy actors why Restorative Practice was not more widely promoted by schools. Given the early anecdotal evidence, it seemed to have a positive effect on school culture:
See, I find that interesting too because even though I’m a public servant, I actually think it would be a good thing to do. I really do. Because I think, I mean, it says it all because some people think restorative [practice] is just about fixing it up but, there’s rules and consequences, but you've got to be respectful and fair. And, I mean, that’s where it sits, and I don’t see there’s anything wrong with doing that formally, myself. But, you know…

Barry discussed how the word ‘restorative’ could actually “conjure up the wrong ideas in people too” signifying there is something perhaps problematic with the behaviour in the school and hence requires restoration. Based on Barry’s insights, we see how his habitus is at odds with the professional responsibilities of being a public servant which, by all accounts, seems to involve acquiring a disposition toward being cautionary. These words highlight how policy actors manage risks and the politicized nature of education where even the proposed solution can be perceived as a problem.

**Coordinating Institutions**

Another aspect informing the work of CVE/PVE policy actors is how the institutions are coordinated, working together to achieve the best outcomes. In managing risk, Daniel also states the importance of keeping his work around social inclusion-based policy distinct from that of the police, even as they must inevitably liaise. The key skill that seemed essential to this work was developing and maintaining relationships, as the very nature of the work involved working across several sectors in the state from government, to schools, to the police. Daniel describes how ‘policy development’ is central to how these relationships are maintained:

> It’s actually developing policy with an agency. Say, for example, education, and saying if someone comes through us and we assess them to be of concern, we should escalate them. We should have a mechanism to escalate them where they perhaps normally would just be in line. Right? We know that these systems, for vulnerable young people in schools, child protection child, and adolescent mental health, we know that there’s long waiting times to get services.
Daniel’s words resonate with Beck’s perception that modernization is a reflexive process between social structures and social agents. Working within constraints and between institutions, Daniel considers how relationships lead to more effective policies, where he can see the consequences of poor relationships. This draws attention to another dimension of constraints where Daniel is working within and against existing systems.

Furthermore, this very ability to manage and influence such complex, overlapping fields arguably highlights Daniel’s capacity for independent agency within a complex system of structural constraints. On the distinctive possibilities of his role and work, Daniel says:

one of the benefits in having this work in a human services agency is that … you have a spectrum where number one is social inclusion or social cohesion, number two is countering violent extremism, and number three is counter terror. When you place CVE in the police or the security space, it looks towards counter terror by default. That’s what police are trained to do. That’s what intelligence is trained to do. That’s the way that they think. That’s what the remit is, to keep the community safe. So that’s how they think. We are free of that burden because we don’t have to think about risk in the sense that police carry the risk for us by triaging our referrals, which means that we can entirely look towards social cohesion in our approach.

It is worth noting that one significant example referenced by Daniel and Peter alike is the process of pursuing a human-services based approach to CVE alongside the necessary, but differently targeted, involvement of police and other security focused agencies. Peter speaks of monthly meetings between the Department of Education and the police liaison composed of:

fairly senior officers from both agencies that meet together so it is reliant upon key people or positions in both corporate environments but it’s an agreed position between commissioner and chief executive that this group will meet, that they’ll report up on their activities so I guess, mutually, it’s a really helpful relationship so we try and be quite strategic about the type of things that we might escalate or we might discuss with police and vice versa.
Peter’s words remind us of what van de Weert and Eijkman (2019) call the potentially “stigmatizing and confrontational” effects of securitized policing on “sections of the communities involved” (208). Therefore, the notion of caution informs the daily workings of these policy actors, where managing risk means supporting vulnerable young people while ensuring the safety of the wider public. Both Peter and Daniel spoke of personalizing their approach where possible and working within “sticky” institutional structures and procedures which contribute significantly to the lived reality of working as a policy actor in the field of CVE.

**Dispositions in the Habitus of CVE/PVE Policy Actors**

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) assert the habitus is a ‘system of dispositions’ which justify practices. In how they manage risk, the participants clearly draw on a repertoire of skills to operate in an ‘in-between’ space between federal prerogatives as well as local and community constraints. Drawing on habitus, as the internalisation of life experiences which informs dispositions and contributes to a way of perceiving and participating in the world, we see the way in which individuals incorporate and discard different practices. Lingard (2013) writes “[e]nlightenment can take time and policy-makers most often will not even be aware of the way such research over time has reframed and constituted their assumptive worlds, their policy dispositions and habitus, which come to bear in the policy process” (122). This echoes how, for Bourdieu, dispositional structures of habitus are continual and less subject to change where dispositions contribute to, or reinforce, an individual’s perceptions of their social world. While the participants came from a variety of different professional backgrounds and a diverse array of training experiences (Table 1), we now focus on one shared disposition of the policy actor which seemed critical which was caution and restraint (Baak, Stahl, et al. 2020), consistently being guarded and not prone to impulse.

The participants’ work reflects an awareness of the potential consequences of ‘escalating’ responses to extreme behaviour. As a dimension of risk-management within a New Public Management era of education (Tolofari, 2005), it was clear they took care to avoid unnecessarily bringing young people into contact with the institutions and processes of securitized counter-extremism or criminal justice. Beck (2009) writes:
In all decisions about socially relevant major risks, in particular about risks concerning intangible values, it is therefore not a matter of choosing between safe and risky alternatives, but of choosing between different risky alternatives, often also between different alternatives whose risks concern qualitatively different dimensions and are therefore hardly commensurable. (297-8)

Adopting a methodically cautious approach could be seen as an effort made around “choosing between different risky alternatives” (e.g. pathologizing certain minority groups, etc).

Another dimension of caution and restraint is balancing the federal prerogatives of CVE with a more personalized approach which considers the local context. Highlighting the agency of the habitus within the field, both Daniel and Peter portray their work as in the pursuit of the best outcomes for vulnerable young people within funding constraints (“…I don’t have a discretionary budget to spend on a client”). It would appear the policy actors often have to work between different governmental institutions and navigate systems which may have different priorities in order to find ways of ‘filling the gaps’ within established services. Within these constraints, there is great importance attached to developing and maintaining relationships – a skill unto itself – where important information is shared.

Peter also reflects on the issue of how such programs might be defined, by acknowledging that local school communities are likely to see “anti-social behaviour as much broader than just this space.” There is thus a kind of double bind that contributes to this work. On the one hand, the “purpose” of CVE/PVE programs is seen as unclear, thereby making it difficult to justify additional resource investment. On the other hand, though, a key reason for their apparent ‘lack of purpose’ seems to be, precisely, the fact such programs have been targeted in a fairly narrow way toward particular kinds of ‘extreme behaviour’ (associated with extremist ideology) rather than a broader swathe of “anti-social behaviour” stemming from multiple factors.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This article addressed some of the ways policy enactment occurs in relation to risk management, specifically the skills around how risks are socially recognized and managed. With this in mind, the case study speaks to our understandings of ‘risk management’ in a neoliberal state and the effects of neoliberalism on educational and community-based policy (c.f. Kaščák and
Pupala, 2011). Terminology and definitions play an important role here and contribute to how ‘risks’ are constructed where the words used by policy actors – whether aligned or misaligned from the language of policy – can have substantial ‘real world’ consequences. In studying the habitus of policy actors we are reminded how individuals are influenced by neoliberalism but also the ways they become agentic and work within neoliberal policy constraints to perform their work drawing on a range of skills to manage risk. For example, coming from an anthropology background, Patricia’s experiences speak to the epistemological tension between politicians’ dominant drive for immediate, quantifiable forms of data, and the qualitative nature of Restorative Practice, which defies easy quantification. Daniel, Peter and Barry’s experiences speak to the incredibly cautious use of language that is required of policy actors in this space in order to avoid stigmatising students, overburdening teachers or muddying the distinct roles of teachers compared to law enforcement.

In their reflection on the difficulties in capturing the contours of the habitus, Costa, Burke and Murphy (2019) note how ‘participants’ narratives are “anchored in their own interpretations and should therefore be treated as (re)constructions of lived experiences within a given socio-cultural, political and economic context…” (28). Attention to habitus highlights how individuals are required to take up the technologies of neoliberal governance (e.g. self-management, self-discipline and self-surveillance, etc) in order to position oneself advantageously. The disposition of caution could be conceived not only as integral to the work but also as significantly influenced by the field of CVE/PVE. In considering the state as both constituting and regulating its citizens, Rose (1996: 35) writes:

The humanist demand that one deciphers oneself in terms of the authenticity of one’s actions runs up against the political of institutional demands that one abides by the collective responsibility of organizational decision making even when one is personally opposed to it.

While Lingard’s work finds elite policy actors to have a habitus focused on promoting behaviours associated with neoliberalism and capitalizing on measurement and evaluation, the state-level mid-range policy actors we spoke with decidedly voiced a different approach and – while their habitus was brought into tension through this process – they seemed for the most part to find ways to
skillfully navigate the constraints in their employment. This raises the question of what extent there may have been a shared habitus between these state-level policy actors who often worked closely together and who, despite differing roles and experiences, appeared to have similar dispositions which influenced their approach to employment.

There are various connotations CVE/PVE brings with it which requires the policy actors in this study to construct both themselves and the notion of risk in particular ways – specifically in order to secure funding and pursue the best results for students and staff working in schools. Their actions speak to the politicised nature of funding and new forms of expertise involved as the language of risk is negotiated so policies can be enacted, and resources can be employed. Given the low incidents of extremism, it remains unclear if there was funding in place to support Restorative Practice as simply a way to address student disengagement. However, with a CVE spin the money seemed to flow as the one private Restorative Practice consultant was paid handsomely. With this in mind, one consequence of exploring the daily experiences of enacting and monitoring policies aligned with CVE/PVE initiatives is that we are compelled to think about not only epistemological tensions of the work itself but also how these tensions exist in relation to the performativity involved with the work.

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Endnote

1. Our point here is the changing demographics have significant implications for how work is conducted. We acknowledge that problematic connections are often made between Middle Eastern refugees and violent extremism both within the field of CVE and wider society.

2. Peter speaks of his training with RADAR CVE risk assessment protocol (https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/OPSR_TP_CVE-Use-Assessment-
Tools-Measuring-Violence-Risk_Literature-Review_March2017-508.pdf) but he is the only policy actor we spoke with that had this training and it is now considered outdated.

3. Australian teachers are mandated to report in relation to student *welfare*, so the way in which individual teachers do so, may overlap with PVE/CVE endeavours. This is in contrast to teachers in the UK who are ‘mandatory reporters’ of potential ‘extremist threats.’
Works Cited


