Religious visibility, disadvantage and bridging social capital: a comparative investigation of multicultural localities in Melbourne's north

Final Report

Assoc. Prof. Val Colic-Peisker
& Assoc. Prof. Karien Dekker

Centre for Global Research
RMIT University

Acknowledgments

Project advisory committee (PAC)

The project advisory committee (PAC) consisted of primary researchers, partner investigators from the Islamic Council of Victoria (ICV), Moreland City Council and Hume City Council. The PAC's primary role was to ensure that the research was conducted in a culturally appropriate manner and effectively disseminated to end users: the community services sector, local communities and the general public.

The initial PAC meeting was held in Coburg on 11 May 2016, in order to discuss the project plan and respective roles of principal investigators and partner investigators, and to provide advice and practical assistance, primarily in facilitating local access to survey and interview respondents.

The second PAC meeting took place in Coburg on 9 Nov 2016. Project partners were informed about the progress of the fieldwork and some preliminary observations from the nearly completed Survey of residents.

The third meeting of the PAC was held at RMIT University, City Campus, on 11 April 2017, to discuss the preliminary data analysis presented in the Interim report (March 2017).

The fourth meeting of the PAC will take place at the final project workshop on 14 June 2017, where PAC members will be able to provide feedback on the draft Final Report.

Dissemination of results

1 March 2017: The interim report presented early findings and was communicated to partner investigators, PAC and key stakeholders for comment.

11 May 2017: The draft final report was presented to the funder and communicated to partner investigators for comment and to a colleague external to RMIT for peer review.

14 June 2017: The final workshop is a face-to-face forum to present and discuss project findings with academic colleagues, project team members, local participants, partner investigators and other stakeholders. A limited number of hard copies of the penultimate draft is distributed at the workshop. The draft incorporates feedback from the PAC, the funder (the DPC, Victoria) and a peer reviewer.

4 August 2017: Final debrief meeting with the project partners; planning the dissemination of project findings through Final Report and media releases.

14 August 2017: The project Final Report finalised and released on the RMIT website. The media release summarising project's findings will be issued following the release of the report.

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Executive summary

This project explored neighbourhood experiences of residents in two ethno-religiously diverse suburbs in Melbourne's north, Fawkner and Broadmeadows. The two localities were chosen because they both have large Muslim minorities (25 and 30 per cent respectively at the time of the 2011 Census, and 32 and 36 at the time of the 2016 census) and the project's primary focus was on the impact of (primarily Muslim) 'religious visibility' on the local bridging social capital.

Bridging social capital is an important aspect of social capital, especially in large, diverse and socially anonymous urban contexts. It refers to interactions and connections among people with different demographic, ethno-cultural and socio-economic characteristics. Bridging social capital is crucial for (but not limited to) local community cohesion, which translates into friendliness, neighbourliness and safety of (sub)urban communities.

Literature on social cohesion and social capital in the context of ethnically diverse Western cities is extensive and its findings are varied, depending on the specific characteristics of the local context under investigation, as well as wider national and international contexts at any given time. Some studies found that urban ethnic diversity tends to decrease social capital and social cohesion, while other studies came up with different conclusions. One of the reasons for the inconclusive findings is not just real differences between localities but also methodological difficulty of precisely measuring social capital and social cohesion. Our study was informed by theoretical and methodological insights of Australian and overseas studies, as well as our own earlier research on diverse neighbourhoods and the impact of 'visible difference' in Australian urban contexts. The project also built on our recent (2012-13) empirical research in Melbourne's diverse north.

Case-study locations

This project set out to explore and compare two localities where large Muslim minorities have different characteristics, including different levels of 'religious visibility': in Fawkner, many recently arrived Muslims, predominantly from South and Central Asia, are publicly identifiable as Muslims through their traditional attire, whereas in Broadmeadows, in spite of a somewhat larger proportion of Muslim residents, predominantly from Turkish, Lebanese and Iraqi backgrounds (many of them Australian-born and/or bred), the Muslim presence is less publicly visible. There are other differences between two suburban Muslim populations, including the length of residence in the locality and in Australia in general, and socio-economic characteristics, with Fawkner Muslims being more highly educated and more recent arrivals, on average.

Research question

The central research question (RQ) guiding this project was:

How does religious visibility (as opposed as religious diversity per se) impact on social cohesion in case-study localities?

The central RQ was operationalised in our methodology through following specific questions:

1. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to local Muslim residents; does visibility have an impact on their lifestyle, values and general integration?
2. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to non-Muslim locals; what are the assumptions and perceptions, and are they based on everyday local experiences (rather than media reports)?
3. How strong is bridging social capital, and consequently community cohesion, in the case-study localities? What kind of contact and interaction between local Muslims and non-Muslims is typical?
4. How do locals assess their neighbourhoods in terms of safety, inclusiveness and neighbourliness?
5. How can bridging social capital and community cohesion be enhanced, according to local residents and service providers?
6. How do residents of various backgrounds perceive and assess existing community development, community cohesion and other programs?

Methodology

In order to address these questions, the project employed mixed methodology of data collection and analysis. We started with the background analysis of the Census and other available quantitative information about the two localities. The empirical data collection for the project developed in three stages:

- key informant interviews (May-June 2016)
- the survey of residents (September-November 2016)
- follow-up interviews with residents (December 2016-March 2017).

The key informant interviews (the total of 16) were conducted by principal investigators and targeted professionals and services providers working in Fawkner and Broadmeadows. These interviews helped identify key issues and sharpened our research focus. They also informed the development of the key research instrument, the survey questionnaire.

The total of 301 residents participated in the survey. Once the questionnaire was drafted and piloted, seven community-based bilingual research assistants (BRAs) were engaged to administer the survey face-to-face to a sample of residents of the two suburbs. The sample was balanced by suburb, gender and religion (Muslim / non-Muslim). The sample was appropriately diverse in terms of participants' ethnicity, length of residence in their suburb and socio-economic background. The sample is not representative for the population of the two suburbs, because Muslims were overrepresented in our sample.

The follow-up in-depth interviews (the total of 36) were conducted with residents of the two suburbs who previously took part in the survey and expressed interest to be interviewed later on. The sample included people from a variety of ages, ethnic backgrounds, religions and walks of life.

The large data set consisted of quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were checked for quality, entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) and cleaned. We used descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyse the data. The narrative interview data were professionally transcribed and thematically analysed. The quantitative and qualitative analyses are complementary and combining them is the best way to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Key findings

The impact of Muslim visibility on bridging social capital

Our analysis did not confirm our starting assumption that a higher presence of visible Muslims in a locality may lead to lower bridging social capital and consequently lower community cohesion. Based on our survey sample, the comparison of the two localities showed that the bridging social capital was higher in Fawkner than in Broadmeadows in spite of the more pronounced presence of visible Muslims. Bonding social capital was also stronger among the Fawkner respondents. These findings cannot be generalised to other (sub)urban contexts because it may be due to a number of specific local factors associated with characteristics of local populations.

In general, the Fawkner sub-sample scored higher than the Broadmeadows sub-sample on most other neighbourhood experience indicators we measured in the survey: the 'suburb attachment' (a feeling of local belonging); local participation (using local services, programs and facilities, taking part in local initiatives); and bonding social capital (close connections with similar people, such as extended family and ethnic community), while scoring lower on Islamophobia (fear or dislike of Muslims), which may be related to the on

average higher education of the Fawkner sub-sample.

Meanings and interpretations of Muslim visibility

Our data indicate that for Muslims, being visible is often associated with positive values like being accepted and respected in their ethnic communities in Australia; strengthening the feeling of belonging to the community; transmitting elements of their traditional culture onto the next generations; keeping their personal religious focus in their daily life; creating a feeling of spiritual fulfilment and happiness (maintaining 'relationship with God'). Visible Muslim respondents felt that their religious dress reminded them of good Muslim values of being an honest and charitable person, of being open to other people and of giving service to the community.

In general, non-Muslim locals did not have any concerns about encountering 'visible Muslims' in their daily life. However, some respondents from specific backgrounds, especially Christians from Middle Eastern countries, could feel apprehensive towards visible Muslims in their neighbourhoods. For example, recent diverse intakes of Syrians into Broadmeadows contain Muslims but also Kurds and non-Muslim minorities such as Christian Yezidis. A stand-out element of the local attitude towards Muslim visibility in both suburbs was a widespread dislike, among non-Muslim, but also some Muslim respondents, of facial coverings worn by some Muslim women.

Neighbourhood experience

When neighbourhood experiences of the Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were compared, we found that Muslim

respondents in both suburbs were more attached to their neighbourhoods than non-Muslims. Not surprisingly, the Muslims in our sample had a significantly lower Islamophobia score than non-Muslim locals. The scores on local participation, as well as bonding and bridging social capital were at similar levels for Muslims and non-Muslims in both suburbs. Muslim respondents in Fawkner reported having more religiously diverse networks than non-Muslim respondents in the same locality. Narrative answers indicate that most Fawkner Muslim respondents liked the suburb and felt safe and accepted there.

Our data indicate that for Muslim residents, especially the 'visible Muslims', living in concentration areas with other Muslims was a choice based on lifestyle preference and convenience (e.g. intra-ethnic support, availability of halal foods, places of worship, having grown up there) but also on apprehension about being isolated and discriminated against in other areas. Muslim respondents from Fawkner and Broadmeadows reported similar, both positive and negative outcomes associated with living in a Muslim residential concentration.

Both the survey and interview data show that a large majority of residents of Fawkner and Broadmeadows were satisfied with their suburbs in spite of being aware of the 'objective' socio-economic disadvantage.

The in-depth interviews revealed that the Broadmeadows respondents tended to mention problems with safety relatively often, which is in their view associated with the easy availability of drugs (especially 'ice'), youth loitering in the neighbourhood and incidents of dangerous driving. In Fawkner, traffic issues were often mentioned (including 'hooning', frequently also in relation to traffic and parking jams around the Islamic college and mosque. Both sub-samples of residents commented that cleanliness of public spaces (e.g. parks, streets) and facilities (e.g. swimming pool) could be improved.

The experience of local diversity
The picture of local sociality in two diverse and socio-economically disadvantaged suburbs that emerged from our study is overall positive. Most people knew their diverse neighbours and had positive interactions with them. Sometimes they visited each other and helped each other in their daily lives when needed. In general, a vast majority of our respondents valued local diversity. An analysis of the responses of residents as well as professionals in these suburbs highlights the ongoing desire to create and maintain a cohesive community. Some respondents, both residents and professionals, stated they experienced exclusion from local services (council, schools, police).

Our findings contradict an opinion often stated in public debates that Muslims tend to 'self-segregate' and do not integrate with the wider society. Our analysis of local circumstances shows that in localities with high concentration of Muslim residents, Muslims and non-Muslims alike interacted with people from different cultural backgrounds and also built strong communities within their own cultural and religious groups. Our Muslim respondents, more so than non-Muslims, reported participating in the local community in a wide variety of ways, such as volunteering, using local shops and services and participating in local programs where Muslims and non-Muslims interact.

Considerations for future policy and programs

1. Continuous and increased funding for community development and diversity programs and services in the two localities. As overseas immigration into these areas continues, supporting mutual understanding of Muslim and non-Muslim residents should be the focus of the social cohesion policy.

2. Continuous and increased communication of community events and programs for all groups, including those with no or poor English.

3. Employing more people from minority backgrounds, women and people from local ethnic minorities (e.g. people of Muslim backgrounds and Aboriginal people in the local police force and as teacher's aides) in order to facilitate cross-cultural understanding.

4. Continue and if possible strengthen youth programs. Alongside existing programs featuring sport, music-related and other programs could be expanded.

5. A consistent support by local councils of multi-faith community celebration, especially around main religious holidays, has a potential to increase inter-faith knowledge, familiarity and a feeling of belonging among minority populations.

6. Inter-faith programs with an explicit educational content should be continuously funded and supported. These programs could be delivered in local schools, community organisations, neighbourhood houses and places of worship. Such programs have potential to increase tolerance and promote local harmony.

7. Employment programs focused on reaching out to local youth could tackle entrenched socio-economic disadvantage that may run in families, leading to social ills such as drugs, delinquency, inter-ethnic tensions and a potential attraction to violent extremism.

Introduction

This project explores local experiences of residents in two highly ethno-religiously diverse suburbs in Melbourne's north, Fawkner and Broadmeadows. The two localities are chosen because they both have large Muslim minorities and the project set out to explore the impact of (primarily Muslim) religious visibility on everyday suburban encounters. Such encounters are an important part of many people's lives and also a basis for people's social perceptions and consequently their actions in the local and wider social contexts. Our guiding research question was: *How does religious visibility (as opposed as religious diversity per se) impact on the development of 'bridging social capital' and ultimately social cohesion in case-study localities?*

Why was this project conducted in localities with large Muslim minorities? In affluent Western societies with high levels of immigration and diversity, including Australia, 'visible minorities' have always been at the centre of research and policy attention. A century ago, the 'Chicago School of Sociology' gathered the first generation of American sociologists and developed the first ever program of empirical social research. Its purpose was to develop an understanding of social processes in fast growing mid-western American cities, especially among the urban and immigrant poor. At the time, the cities experienced high intakes of Southern and Eastern Europeans, mostly peasants, from Sicilians to Russian Jews, fleeing destitution, violence and religious persecution in their homelands and investing their hopes in a better life in the 'promised land'. The new arrivals were highly visible in their host cities and had to adjust to a very different socio-cultural environment, as they were quickly transformed into the American industrial working class (Thomas and Znaniecki 1996/1918-20). The burgeoning cities had to accommodate the new arrivals, who were in turn exposed to considerable levels of mainstream prejudice. The Chicago sociologists' paramount motivation was to assist policymakers in improving life in the cities and especially in the 'slums' where the new arrivals, most of whom laboured in backbreaking jobs, concentrated (Waters 1990). The social science therefore started as an attempt to, as we say today, 'provide evidence for policy', specifically on immigrants and diversity.

The 21st century Australian context is significantly different of course, but also comparable on many counts. Immigrants arrive with similar motivations and hopes and concentrate in large cities, often in their less salubrious and more affordable areas, at least initially. Even though today's 'visible' immigrants arriving in Australia are usually well educated and the backbreaking industrial jobs have vanished from large cities, many encounter obstacles in their economic incorporation, including prejudice and discrimination, and find themselves at the bottom of the labour market, in low-paid service jobs such as taxi driving, security and aged care, at least temporarily (Ho and Alcorso, 2004; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007). They often residentially concentrate seeking settlement support from their 'co-ethnics'. Visible minorities, and especially those at the receiving end of the mainstream prejudice, also find 'safety in numbers' in their areas of residential concentrations. Because of this, they are often accused of voluntary self-segregation, creating 'ghettos' and not integrating.

In Australian cities, however, levels of income are the key determinant of the choice of settlement location, primarily through housing prices. For recent arrivals that cannot

immediately secure good jobs and may therefore live on below-average incomes, low housing affordability severely limits the choice of residential location (Waxman 2001; Waxman and Colic-Peisker 2005). Therefore, they often follow their co-ethnics who already settled in affordable locations (Flatau et al. 2014).

Just like a century ago, highly diverse urban areas, especially those with high proportions of recent arrivals, are usually also areas of socio-economic disadvantage (Burnley et al. 1997; Flatau et al. 2014). We should add, however, that, so far, Australian gateways cities have been considerably less segregated by ethnicity than the equivalent cities in the US and UK (Johnston et al. 2007). The higher levels of 'mixing' have positive potential to facilitate the mainstream integration of recent arrivals through the creation of bridging social networks. This is not equally easy for all migrant groups. Stereotyping and prejudice affects different groups to different levels and the levels of 'visibility', as indicated in previous research, seem to significantly impact on mainstream integration and building of bridging social capital (Colic-Peisker 2009; Hoddin and Pedersen 2012). Over the past decades, and especially after the 9/11 terrorist attack, Muslim minorities, especially those whose religion is publicly visible, have been the main recipients of the mainstream prejudice in Western countries (HREOC 2004; Hoddin and Pedersen 2012; Hussain and Bagguley 2012).

Overseas and Australian research indicate that prejudice and negative attitudes towards minorities increases if they are ethnically or religiously 'visible' (Schmidt 2011; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006; 2007; 2008; Colic-Peisker 2009; Salleh-Hoddin and Pedersen 2012; Havekes, Dekker, Coenders and Van der Lippe 2014). The visibility of people from Muslim backgrounds is especially worth further exploration given the public perception of their 'Otherness'. While Islamophobia has spread in Western countries, including Australia, after 9/11, there has been little empirical research that attempted to measure it at a local level and determine its local social correlates. Research on racism and xenophobia shows that lower socio-economic status (SES), and especially education as its component, predict higher levels of prejudice, stereotyping and 'symbolic boundaries' towards minorities (Hjerm 2001; Bail 2008).

This project contributes to filling the void in Australian empirical and especially mixed-methods research on Islamophobia and its association with religious visibility at a local level. Specifically, there is no research on how visible (at group and individual levels) Australian Muslims share suburban spaces and build 'bridging social capital' and community resilience with their diverse non-Muslim neighbours. The Australian pragmatic multicultural model of active recognition and respect for diversity has been one of the globally most successful ones, but in the dynamic society, policy development has to be ongoing and based on solid research evidence. In spite of the absence of major upheavals such as ethnic riots and violent extremism, managing ethno-religious diversity and multiculturalism more broadly remains an ongoing Australian challenge.

The case study localities: demographic and socio-economic profiles

Our two case study localities have a high concentration of the overseas-born people and according to ABS census-based classification (Table 1 and Figure 1 below), are also socio-economically disadvantaged. A special feature of their diversity is that they both have large proportion of Muslim residents. It should be noted that the 'Australian Muslims', as well as 'Victorian Muslims' are a highly diverse demographic. In the 2011 Census, 38% of the respondents were born in Australia, and the rest originated in 183 countries. The top source countries (accounting for 40% cent of arrivals) were Lebanon, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Bangladesh, Iraq, Iran, Indonesia and India (Hassan 2015). Australian Muslims speak many different languages and adhere to different strands of Islam. Importantly, some are recent arrivals and others have grown up in Australia. In some cases, their settlement in Australia extends to several generations.

Our two case-study localities, Fawkner and Broadmeadows, have comparable total population sizes and proportions of Muslim residents (36% in Broadmeadows and 32% in Fawkner, ABS 2016, see Table 1). However, Muslim residents in these two localities are different in terms of their time of arrival, ethnic backgrounds and levels of visibility. Fawkner has had a considerable recent intake of Muslim-background migrants, mainly from South Asia, and there is a group of earlier settlers from Iraq (ABS 2016, see Table 1). Muslims in Fawkner are highly visible, in group terms and many also in individual terms. The 'group visibility' is related to the presence of the Islamic college and a mosque in Fawkner since 1997. The individual visibility is associated with wearing traditional Islamic dress and/or head gear, mostly by women but also by a considerable number of men. In Broadmeadows, the largest Muslim groups are of Lebanese and Turkish ancestries, many now Australian-born and therefore the second or even third migrant generation.[1] While the 'group visibility' represented in Islamic institutions such as mosques and schools is quite strong (e.g. Broadmeadows Turkish Islamic and Cultural Centre, the nearby Campbellfield Mosque, several Islamic schools) the prevalence of individual 'Islamic visibility' is lower than in Fawkner. In this context, we set out to explore whether in the atmosphere of widespread apprehension directed at Muslim minorities in Western countries, including Australia, Muslim visibility may negatively impact the development of locally-based bridging social capital.

The project started with the assumption that the different levels of religious visibility in two localities may influence everyday local life, for example the levels of neighbourhood attachment, participation in local life and local levels of social capital, including local networks, a sense of belonging and trust among locals. Above all, we were interested to explore the levels of 'bridging social capital' that is, the levels of local mixing and interaction among people from different ethnic (cultural, religious) backgrounds.

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[1] The 'second generation' migrants are not necessarily born in Australia. In this category we include all those who arrived in Australia as children and did most of their schooling in Australia, and therefore speak with a native Australian accent.

Table 1. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics (2011 and 2016)

	Fawkner		Broadmeadows		Victoria (state)	
	2011	**2016**	**2011**	**2016**	**2011**	**2016**
Population	12,597	14,043	10,578	11,970	5,354,042	5,926,624
Median weekly household income ($)	$ 865	$1086	$ 746	ND	$1,216	$ 1,419
Median monthly mortg. ($)	$ 1,625	$1,733	$ 1,300	$1,322	$ 1,700	$1,728
Median weekly rent ($)	$ 281	$330	$ 231	$ 290	$277	$ 325
Australian-born (%)	47	45	49	44	68	65
Country of birth: top responses (%)	Italy 13.1	9.7	Iraq 5.5	5.7	England 3.2	2.9
	Pakistan 4.3	8.9	Turkey 4.3	4.9	India 2.1	2.9
	Lebn 3.3	2.8	Lebanon 4.3.	4.9	China 1.8	2.7
	India 3.2	3.6	Pakistan 3.7	3.7	NZ 1.5	1.6
	Iraq 2.6	Greece 2.3	India 3.0	3.1	Italy 1.4	Vietnam 1.4
English only spoken at home (%)	33	31	33	29	72	68
Religious affiliation: Islam	25	32	30	36	3	No data
Unemployed (% of population over 15)	8	ND	13	ND	5	ND
Tertiary educated (% of population over 15)	11	16	8	13	15	18
Professionals (% of population over 15)	16	ND	9	ND	22	ND
Detached house (% of dwellings)	90	86	85	67	77	73
SEIFA rank (1-10)	2	ND	1	ND	n/a	n/a
SEIFA percentile (1-100)	11	ND	2	ND	n/a	n/a

Source: ABS, 2011 and 2016 Censuses, Basic Community Profiles

It is known from the Australian census and social research that many highly diverse areas in Australian metropolitan cities are also areas of socio-economic disadvantage (Bouma and Hughes, 2000). High unemployment, especially among recent migrants and youth, is an especially detrimental correlate of socio-economic disadvantage and a risk factor for community polarisation and marginalisation (Colic-Peisker et al. 2013). Government-supported community programs addressing existing and potential problems usually have to rely on anecdotal evidence. Little systematic social research has been conducted in the two case-study localities. Our earlier (2012-2013) study that also had Fawkner as one of the case-

study locations was focused on employment, housing, gentrification and community cohesion (Colic-Peisker and Robertson 2015; Colic-Peisker et al. 2013).

Table 1 lists some key demographic facts (population size and ethno-linguistic and religious background) and socio-economic indicators (education, occupation, income, SEIFA rank). These data are presented against the data for the State of Victoria as a reference.

Figure 1. SEIFA* scores of Melbourne's north: Fawkner, Broadmeadows and surrounding suburbs
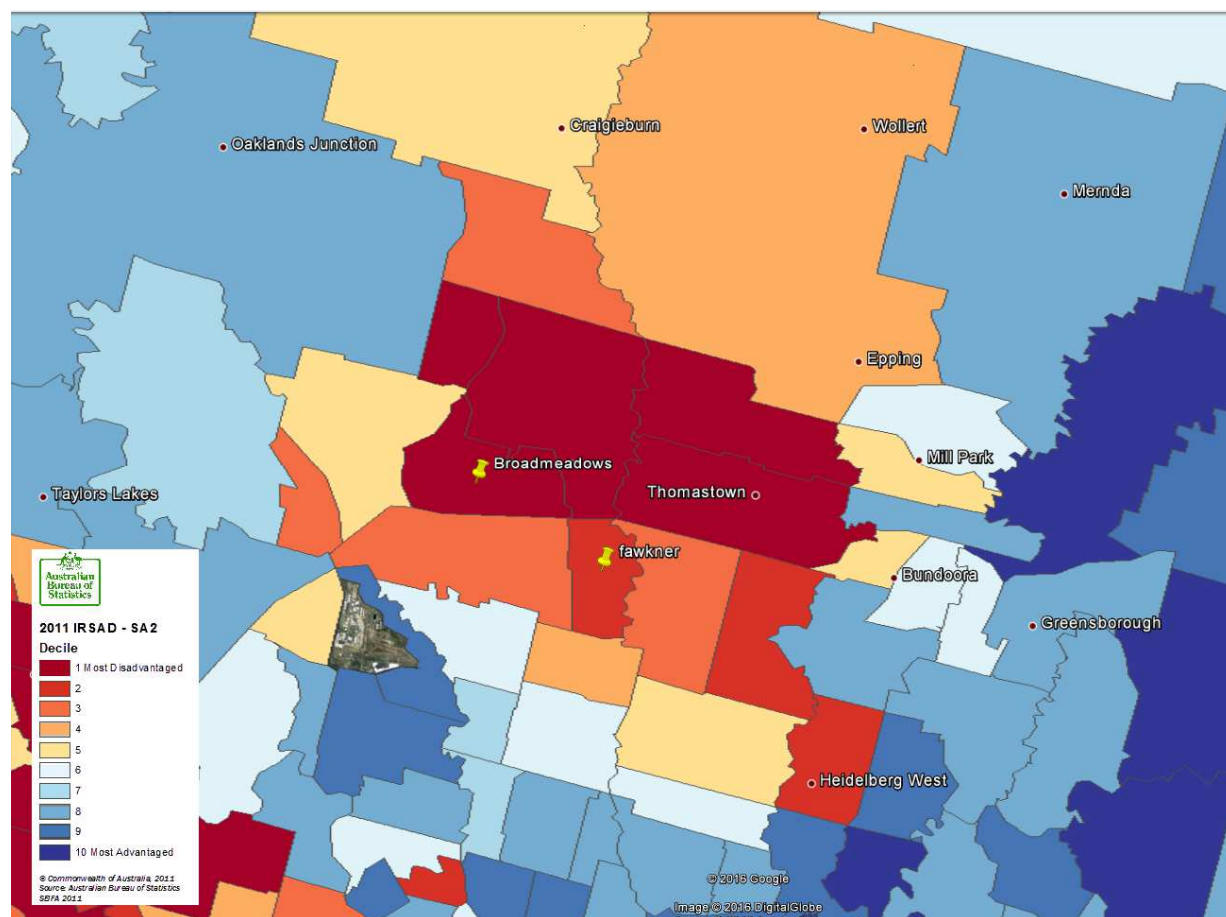
Source: ABS, 2011 Census
*SEIFA: Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

Figure 1 shows that localities with extremely different SEIFA (Socio-economic indexes for areas) scores, from the highest (10) to the lowest (1) are not geographically far from each other. Our target localities sit on the bottom of Victorian SEIFA ranking: Broadmeadows has SEIFA rank 1=bottom 10% and Fawkner has SEIFA rank 2=bottom 20% of Victorian population (ABS 2013, more details on p. 25).

Literature review and key concepts

Given the intensity of the public debate on the integration of Muslim minorities in Western societies, there is extensive Australian and overseas literature associated with central themes of this project. The insights from the literature have informed the project from its inception, including its conceptual and theoretical scheme and the creation of research instruments. Since the commencement of the project in mid-2016, a number of new relevant publications have appeared, including our own publications from previous research projects, focused on the treatment of Muslims in the Australian media (Colic-Peisker et al. 2016; Mikola et al. 2016).

Muslims in Australia are a heterogeneous population in terms of their ethnic origin, time in Australia, socio-economic profile and religious visibility (Pajalic and Divaroren 2013). One of the project's starting assumptions was that the widespread Islamophobia may not be about Islam as religion per se, but about religious visibility that, through mainstream stereotyping, comes to symbolise the differences in lifestyle and presumably also values, between Muslims and non-Muslims in Western social context. These differences are for many people symbolically represented in women's clothes, including head and face covering, and also in men's dress and grooming that marks them out as 'visibly different' (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2007; Dunn et al. 2007).

Australian literature on ethnic relations, race, racism and Islamophobia as its variant, as well as on multiculturalism and related topics, paints a diverse and somewhat contradictory picture. There is considerable critical literature that posits a clear presence of racism and Islamophobia in Australian media and public discourse, as detailed above, but there are also publications that represent Australia as a largely harmonious multicultural society (e.g. Bouma 2016), including the influential Scanlon-Monash report that has been published annually since 2007. The most recent of the Scanlon-Monash reports shows improvement in a number of indicators compared to previous years (Markus 2016, see also Bouma 2016).

Possamai (2015) argues that in political and policy terms, the increasingly secular Australian society cannot afford to ignore religion as a 'private' issue. Instead, an active policy of socially cohesive multiculturalism requires management of the presence of religious groups in the secular public sphere, in the form of modern 'multifaith pragmatism' (Possamai 2015). Such an approach is currently being proven as a better model for diverse societies, as opposed to the French model of strict republicanism and secularism (*laicité*) which is experiencing deep crisis, including an upsurge of violent extremism in recent years.

An influential Australian book by Markus, Jupp and McDonald (2009:141) argued that indicators of alienation in high immigrant concentrations in Australian cities were minimal. Yet, the levels of social capital are shown to be lower in areas of high immigrant concentration (ibid: 142). There are twin issues—Islamophobia and a renewed threat of violent extremism—feeding off each other and potentially affecting social cohesion in areas of high Muslim residential concentrations (Grossman et al. 2016). Markus et al. (2009:149)

argued that there should be no complacency about 'successful multicultural Australia': social cohesion requires active engagement of government and citizens, and ongoing policy development based on systematic empirical research evidence.

Social cohesion is a contested concept with many different definitions. For example, Forrest and Kearns (2001) identify five domains of cohesion within a neighbourhood context: (1) common values and a civic culture; (2) social order and social control; (3) social solidarity and reductions in wealth disparities; (4) social networks and social capital; (5) place attachment and identity. These dimensions are based on a broad reading of the literature, and have been used in many studies since their publication in 2001. Dekker and Bolt (2005) used these dimensions to test the impact of ethnicity and socio-economic status (SES) on social cohesion in two multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in the Netherlands and found that ethnic minorities tended to have stronger local networks, lower tolerance towards deviant behaviour and stronger feeling of attachment to the neighbourhood than the native white Dutch population. This study found no differences between higher and lower SES groups. Clearly, social cohesion at neighbourhood level is related to the population composition of the neighbourhood.

When investigating social processes in ethno-culturally and religiously diverse neighbourhoods, local bridging social capital is an important element of what is often termed 'social cohesion'. As noted by Markus, Jupp and McDonald (2009:141) social cohesion does not operate on the abstract level of the 'nation' but rather at the community level. Even though it can, and has been usefully measured at a national level (e.g. by the Scanlon-Monash project 2007-2015), local situations vary significantly and specific local circumstances need to be explored in order to develop evidence for policy (Dekker and Van Kempen 2008; Colic-Peisker and Roberston 2015).

Literature on social cohesion regards it to be primarily (1) the absence of social conflict, and (2) the presence of social bonds (Kawachi and Berkman 2000, Chan, To and Chan 2006; Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014). First, the absence of social conflict is more likely if the social contexts where the disparities in wealth and income are not too great (lower inequality also predicts lower crime rates); where there are no ethnic and racial tensions; no disparities in political participation and other forms of polarization. Second, the 'social bonds' include: mutual trust between people; generally accepted norms of reciprocity; social divisions being bridged by social associations; and a presence of institutions that manage conflict. The ties between individuals can be either attitudinal (fear, trust) or behavioral (real contact, working together). Social networks include association of people from similar backgrounds (bonding networks) or from different backgrounds (bridging networks). Social networks and the resulting social capital bind people together in more cohesive communities. Social cohesion can be observed at the macro level of a national society, but also at the micro level of the neighbourhood. At the neighbourhood level, social contacts can take place as interactions with neighbours and friends or casual encounters with acquaintances and strangers. Social contacts also include unpleasant experiences with others (Koopmans and Veit 2014). Recent studies focused on local social capital include Forrest and Kearns (2001), Dekker (2007) and Crowley and Hickman (2008).

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neighbourhoods, local bridging social capital is an important element of what is often termed 'social cohesion'. As noted by Markus, Jupp and McDonald (2009:141) social cohesion does not operate on the abstract level of the 'nation' but rather at the community level. Even though it can, and has been usefully measured at a national level (e.g. by the Scanlon-Monash project 2007-2015), local situations vary significantly and specific local circumstances need to be explored in order to develop evidence for policy (Dekker and Van Kempen 2008; Colic-Peisker and Robertson 2015).

Phillips (2006) investigates why Muslims tend to be concentrated in deprived areas. She found that Muslim families in a medium-sized city in North England often mention the advantages of living with other Muslims in terms of access to Muslim specific services such as halal food, mosques and Muslim schools. In addition, most of her respondents also mention the perceived threat and fear of discrimination if they were to live in predominantly 'white' non-Muslim neighbourhoods. Living in concentration areas with other Muslims is thus the result of preferences but also fear about discrimination by the neighbours. Phillips also mentions the potential negative consequences of living in a predominantly Muslim area, as some employers use negative postcode labelling when appointing new employees. Some of Phillips' respondents expressed a desire to interact more with 'others', and how difficult it is to do so in concentration areas. There are indications in our data that the Muslims in Fawkner and Broadmeadows have similar reasons to live in these residential concentrations, and that they experience similar consequences, positive as well as negative.

It should be noted that neighbourhoods do not live in isolation from the rest of the world. The media are an important factor in the creation of anti-Muslim sentiment. Negative media reporting on Muslims inevitably has an impact on the way Muslims are seen by non-Muslims within neighbourhoods and more generally (Lubbers, Scheepers and Wester 1998; Havekes, Coenders and Dekker 2013). As noted by Sohrabi and Farquharson (2016), negative reporting on Muslims is also widespread in Australia and Muslim leaders strongly believe that these negative reports may hamper Muslims' integration, participation and upward mobility. Consequently, Muslim leaders have made it part of their mission to provide alternative positive imaginaries about Muslims as law-abiding, productive, peaceful and tolerant mainstream Australians. Dunn, Atie, Mapedzahama Ozalp and Aydogan (2015) found that many Muslims felt that Islam was negatively portrayed in the media without evidence to support the negative claims. Kassimeris and Jackson (2012) found that negative stereotyping of Muslims in the press were used by that same press to campaign against the construction of a Mosque in a West-Midlands UK neighbourhood.

Social networks and social cohesion influence the way people experience their neighbourhood. This means that similar neighbourhoods will be experienced differently by different people, depending on their various social characteristics and their local social capital. Social capital has many positive results such as civic participation in the neighbourhood (Dekker 2007; Hrast-Filipovic and Dekker 2009; Dekker and Van Kempen 2008), and community organizations in the neighbourhood (Dekker, Völker, Lelieveldt and Torenvlied 2010), as well as general increased neighbourhood satisfaction (Dekker, De Vos, Musterd and Van Kempen 2011). All studies point out that there is an impact of the characteristics of the residents on their social networks and hence on the experience of the

neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood mix or heterogeneity is based on various criteria such as race, ethnicity, ancestry, citizenship, migration status, colour, religion, or language. Robert Putnam famously stated that people tend "to hunker down – that is, to pull in like a turtle" (Putnam 2007, p.149) when they live in heterogeneous neighbourhoods. He made his observation in the United States, and many sociologists and urban geographers have tested Putnam's hypothesis with seemingly different results. Many studies of the impact of diversity on social cohesion provide inconclusive results (see for example Ariely, 2014). However, a meta-analysis of the impact of neighbourhood heterogeneity on social cohesion reveals that only in the United States heterogeneity leads to lower levels of social cohesion. Negative effects of heterogeneity on social cohesion seem less pronounced in Australia, Canada, New Zealand or Europe (Van der Meer and Tolsma 2014).

Theoretical explanations for the impact of heterogeneity on social cohesion shows mixed findings. There are four competing but also complementing theories that can increase our understanding of the dynamics of social cohesion. First, conflict or threat theory states that groups compete over scarce resources, which potentially leads to conflict between the groups (Blumer 1958; Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2008). Second, contact theory states that the presence of different groups at the neighbourhood level creates more positive attitudes towards diversity (Allport 1954).

Hayward et al. (2017) undertook three quantitative American studies, including experimental design, in order to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex and multifaceted intergroup contact between majority and minority groups. They found a 'contact asymmetry' between positive and negative intergroup contact: while a subjective experience of positive contact reduces prejudice and increases the feeling of empathy towards the other group, negative contact experience may increase prejudice and negative emotions at a stronger rate. If a minority group is often exposed to majority prejudice, the members of the disadvantaged group can become anxious and hostile towards further contact with the majority group, for example black Americans towards white Americans, and avoid future contact. These two theories have been tested extensively but the findings are mixed and highly dependent on the specific characteristics of the groups and the neighbourhoods in which they are tested. In other words, there are many intervening variables whose significance shifts from one context to another.

The third and fourth theories provide more certainty about the ways in which neighbourhood population composition influences interethnic attitudes. The third theory, belief congruence theory, states that the degree of similarity or difference between groups plays an important role. Ethnic groups that share similar beliefs and values are regarded more positively than those that are very different (Rokeach, Smith and Evans 1960). In the case of Fawkner and Broadmeadows, this could for example result in positive attitudes between the various cultural groups with Christian backgrounds such as Italian-Australians, Greek-Australians and Anglo-Australians. It is also possible, however, that more religious people have a more positive attitude towards other religious people based on a shared belief in a God and its foundations in the prophecy recorded in holy scriptures (Mansouri and Johns 2017 make a similar observation). Alternatively, belief congruence can lead to negative attitudes between

Muslims and non-Muslims due to difference in values, norms and lifestyle associated with dress, dietary rules, alcohol consumption and family and gender norms and relations.

The fourth theory, social identity theory (SIT), proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) posits that the social and/or economic status of the other group plays an important role: people tend to have more positive attitudes towards high status groups, and more negative attitudes towards lower status groups. This is not always the case, however, as prosperous minorities can attract considerable mainstream hostility, exemplified in widespread anti-Semitism in Europe over the past centuries which reached its peak under Nazi Germany; another example is ambivalent and often hostile attitudes towards Chinese 'diaspora' and minorities in South-East Asian countries.

Feijten and Van Ham (2009) found that an increase in the share of a specific ethnic group may negatively impact on residents' general interethnic attitudes and neighbourhood satisfaction. It is clear, however, that every neighbourhood is different, and that contact and feelings of threat between ethnic groups depend on the specific ethnic and cultural composition of the population. Havekes, Coenders, Dekker and Van der Lippe (2014) did not find consistent evidence for the conflict, contact, SIT, threat or congruence theory on the basis of analyses of a nation-wide sample amongst the four main ethnic groups in The Netherlands. They concluded that inter-ethnic attitudes depended on the specific population composition as well as reporting in the press. For example, Turks tended to have more negative feelings about living in areas with high shares of Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans, whereas other ethnic groups do not show this kind of negative attitude towards these groups (ibid: 2014).

Dunn, Atie, Mapedzahama Ozalp and Aydogan (2015) conducted a study that explored the experiences of Australian Muslims in Sydney. Their survey of 600 Muslims clearly indicates that Muslims are 'ordinary people'. They are involved in the mainstream society, rather than being marginalised or 'radicalized'. The vast majority of the Muslims, despite high rates of experienced discrimination, had a strong feeling of belonging to Australia and high shares of civic participation. They were connected to non-Muslims in their social networks and felt that their values were compatible and similar to Australian values. The report also shows that Muslims do not want to self-segregate, similarly to Phillip's (2006) UK findings. Vergani et al. (2017:75) found a positive association between 'Islamic organised religiosity and civic engagement in Melbourne, but found that negative stereotyping of Muslims creates ambivalence towards conforming to the mainstream expectations of political participation, especially among young people. A recent study by Mansouri and Johns (2017) showed that young Muslims may experience some obstacles to engagement with non-Muslims from their families and communities, but the central problem is their experience of mainstream prejudice and discrimination that is more injurious to the second generation than to those who migrated to Australia as adults (see also Hage 2011).

Wickes et al. (2013) used an extensive dataset from a survey of 4000 residents living in 148 Brisbane suburbs to test Putnam's 'constrict thesis' which claims that ethnic diversity tends to increase social withdrawal and decrease social capital in urban settings. They found some evidence to support the thesis among the general population, but no support when they analysed only the immigrant sub-sample. This implies that immigrants are more open to

building 'bridging social networks' than the native population, which may not be a matter of preference or higher tolerance of diversity but a matter of sheer numbers, as it is harder to limit one's social network to one's own ethnic group if this group is not of substantive size and residentially concentrated. The way their survey is conducted (over the phone, calling people's landline numbers) may have skewed the sample towards older and less residentially mobile residents (e.g. owner-occupiers) who are more likely to have a landline phone. Therefore, further research is needed into the relationship between ethnic diversity and social capital, which would include other relevant variables such as socio-economic status, education, residential mobility etc.

Schmidt (2011) conducted ethnographic research into 'Muslim visibilities' in an ethnically diverse district of Copenhagen. This neighbourhood (Nørrebro) has been a 'battleground of identity politics' (p.1221) and focus of the national debate about multiculturalism and Islam in Denmark. She proposed that Muslim visibility may mean different things in different context, from 'consciously and actively advocating' one's religious identity in the mainstream community, to the visibility simply being a product of a desire to being perceived as a 'good Muslim woman' within 'more secluded social fields' of one's own Muslim community (p. 1227) and earning acceptance and respect this way. We report on these issues below.

Key concepts

This project is grounded in a unique conceptual scheme in order to explore and compare the two ethnically diverse localities. Below we briefly explain the conceptual framework of our study.

Social capital is a concept that first appeared in the work of Granovetter (1973), Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988), and was popularised further through the work of Fukuyama (1995), Portes (1998) and Putnam (2001). Its frequent use, however, has resulted in a wide variety of definitions and interpretations. We will use the definition as given by Putnam (1993: 35): 'By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital… social capital refers to features of social organisation such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate co-ordination and co-operation for mutual benefit. Social capital enhances the benefits of investment in physical and human capital.' Putnam (1995; 2001) also deplored a weakening of social connectedness in America (that he termed both 'social capital' and 'community') using a powerful metaphor of 'bowling alone'. Among other factors, according to Putnam (2001, 2015), aspects of social capital can be weakened by wealth disparities, cultural diversity and residential mobility.

Social capital has been theorised through two aspects: 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital.

'Bonding' social capital, also known as 'strong ties', consists of close friends, family and co-ethnics and therefore binds together people with similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics, and especially those among the latter who care for each other and offer assistance where needed. While bonding social capital is crucial for individual's ontological security, bridging social capital, also known as 'weak ties' (Granovetter 1973) consists of connections with people from other groups, often with different demographic and socio-

economic characteristics. Bridging social capital includes processes of creation and mobilization of a network within and between organizations to gain access to other social actors' resources (Knoke 1999: 18) but also processes of creating social connections in diverse neighbourhoods and other, broader social fields, including via social media. Bridging social capital allows integration into a wider society, which is especially important for immigrants, and provides networks necessary not only for a more expansive sense of belonging but also for social advancement and success in its various guises, including employment (Granovetter 1973).

From a societal point of view, bridging social capital connects heterogeneous networks and therefore contributes to generalised trust which is crucial for social cohesion and harmony. Bridging social capital is crucial for (but not limited to) local community cohesion, which translates into friendliness, neighbourliness and safety of (sub)urban communities. Nurturing of the bridging social capital is especially important in anonymous urban contexts where ethno-culturally, religiously and socio-economically diverse residents live in spatial proximity to each other and which are settings where the first impressions and experiences of the 'host society' become imprinted on immigrants. On a local level, bridging social capital that develops through daily interactions is indispensable for safe and friendly neighbourhoods. The latter seems especially valued by recently arrived migrants from non-English-speaking and refugee backgrounds in Australia who find it important and comforting to 'know their neighbours', but are often taken aback by the mainstream lack of interest in neighbourly interaction (Hebbani, Colic-Peisker and McKinnon 2017). For those who spend most of their time around home and in their neighbourhoods, such as stay-at-home parents, children attending local schools and retired people, having multiple and positive interactions with diverse neighbours may be of utmost importance (Hebbani et al. 2017). In immigrant societies such as Australia, and particularly in metropolitan migrant gateway cities, developing bridging social capital is one of the important correlates of successful migrant settlement and integration in the mainstream community. On an individual level, the bridging ties with diverse acquaintances, including neighbours, are important for being socially included in many ways, from accessing relevant information to having a feeling of local and national belonging (Dekker 2007).

Concepts of 'social cohesion' and 'community cohesion' are closely related to the concept of social capital, as elaborated in the literature review section. In our study, we attempted to measure local community cohesion through two concepts, 'neighbourhood attachment' and 'local participation'. *Neighbourhood attachment* refers to the feeling of belonging to a smaller-scale locality, such as suburb or even part of it. A feeling of neighbourhood attachment is related to 'feeling at home' in one's neighbourhood and to connectedness with other local people, which can contribute to a positive feeling of self (Taylor 1988; Altman & Low 1992; Crow 1994). Neighbourhood attachment is not limited to social interaction but also includes the attraction to the physical aspects of a locality (Dekker, 2007). *Neighbourhood participation* refers to local activities of individuals or groups which improve either social or physical characteristics of the neighbourhood. Often, people that feel attached or connected are more active in the neighbourhood, and vice versa, being active in the neighbourhood creates feelings of connection to and 'ownership' of the local area. The literature often differentiates between formal and informal participation: formal participation

means that individuals take part in processes organized by the government, NGO's or registered civic organizations (Verba and Nie 1972), while informal participation take place in seemingly organic or spontaneous events or actions (Lelieveldt, 2004). For example, a group of mothers can organize a summer barbeque with children in the local park; groups of retirees can regularly meet in a local coffee shop; regular diners in a local restaurant can develop a friendly relationship with staff and owners; neighbours can chat over the fence or in the street and exchange small favours.

Visibility is a concept introduced in Australian social research in the past decade, following the Canadian policy concept of 'visible minorities' (see Colic-Peisker and Tilbury 2006; 2007; 2008). Visibility is a more versatile and value-neutral concept than the essentialising and often controversial concepts of 'race' and 'ethnicity'. The reason for this is that visibility is a relative rather than essentialising concept: everyone is visible in certain social contexts where their physical or cultural markers make them different from the majority population. 'Religious visibility' is an application of the broader idea of visibility, focused on the fact that a person may be recognisable in public as a member of a certain religious denomination through their name, dress, grooming, or even through assumptions made on the basis of their physical characteristics (e.g. 'Middle-Eastern appearance' sometimes used in media reports). Religious visibility may have less overtly public manifestations, where a person's religion is only known to those close to them (e.g. work colleagues, neighbours) through their religious practises such as praying, fasting and attendance of religious worship. In our project, the religious visibility also has a group aspect, exemplified in the presence of religious symbols, places or religious worship and denominational schools, as well as architectural elements on private residencies.

Over the past decades, religious visibility seems to have had the most social relevance for Muslim minorities in Western countries, where it has assumed predominantly negative connotations, especially after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the US. This event was followed by the launch of the so-called 'war on terror', which invigorated the 'clash of civilisations' thesis proposed in the early 1990s by S. Huntington. In the predominantly non-Muslim Western social context, the group visibility of Muslim minorities in certain locations has attracted adverse reactions from local mainstream populations e.g. the opposition to building new mosques and opening Islamic schools and even banning of building mosques, for example in Switzerland. Members of other minority religions have also been publicly visible in Western contexts—e.g. Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and certain Christian sects such as Mormons and Amish. Sikhs experienced harassment in the US because they were sometimes mistaken for Muslims on the basis of ethnic markers or confusion about beards and headdresses. Jews have suffered physical and verbal attacks, discrimination and harassment based on religious visibility in Christian-majority countries for a long time, which culminated in the mid-20th century holocaust. While the visibility of these religious groups may still lead to experiences of street harassment and discrimination today, the gender factor—the fact that among traditional Sikhs and Jews men are more often visible than women—may mitigate against such incidents. Among Muslims, the opposite is the case, and women are easier targets of public harassment than men; in addition, at present, Muslims are the main 'Other' in the West, especially after 9/11 terrorist attack. In consequence, other visible non-Christian denominations have not invoked the same level of prejudice and discrimination in Western countries in recent years.

Socio-economic disadvantage. Nationally and internationally, the concept of 'socio-economic disadvantage' is often used for comparative purposes. In statistical representations and social research, the size and spatial scale of populations can vary from nations to the 'mesh block units', the smallest spatial units of analysis in the Australian census, containing 30-60 dwellings. Income (usually expressed as individual, family and household weekly income) is considered to be the primary indicator of socio-economic disadvantage. However, there are many other indicators that are taken into account to produce a statistical 'score' for an area. For example, Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) are developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in order to rank statistical areas according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. SEIFA consist of four indexes: The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD); The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD); The Index of Education and Occupation (IEO) and The Index of Economic Resources (IER) (ABS 2013). The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census of population and housing and SEIFA maps are an excellent way to observe the spatial distribution of relative socio-economic (dis)advantage.

The SEIFA indexes are a composite of a large number of indicators based on census variables. The indicators are occasionally updated and have comprised variables such as income, education, occupation, the size of dwellings, household composition, tenure (e.g. people over 65 who rent or own homes outright), overcrowding, proportion of people from non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB), proportion of single-parent families with dependent children, proportion of families with children where both parents are unemployed, proportion of separated or divorced people, proportion of people who require assistance with their core activities, number of cars per household and proportion of household with broadband internet connection (Wise and Williamson 2013). In this project, we collected information on education, occupation, tenure, language background and residency status of our survey respondents and combined these data in a new variable 'socio-economic status' (SES). The two case study suburbs, Fawkner and Broadmeadows, are both areas of low SES and high proportion of NESB residents (Table 1), which usually, but not always, coincide in Australia.

Islamophobia (literally: 'the fear of Muslims'). In a broadest sense, in the media and research publications, Islamophobia denotes a version of racism, where a fear of or prejudice against Muslims can lead to discrimination (HREOC 2004; Sayyid 2011; Klug 2015; Hassan, Martin et al. 2015). In this sense, the concept is comparable to the concepts such as anti-Semitism (fear and/or hatred of Jews) and Sinophobia (fear and/or hatred of Chinese) (Klug 2015). Islamophobia can be considered a variety of the more recent version of racism often referred to as 'cultural racism', as opposed to the 'old' racism based on biological markers. While these two 'types' of racism are not mutually exclusive and indeed have considerable overlap in many specific cases, including the case of Islamophobia, cultural racism focuses on prejudice against a group of people based on their cultural narratives and practices, including those associated with religion and values more broadly (Fozdar et al. 2009; see Grossman et al. 2016: 5, 25-33 for a more detailed review).

The concept of Islamophobia has been widely used over the past two decades to describe anti-Muslim sentiment in Western countries, appearing in an increasing number of research

publications (e.g. Halliday 1999; Poynting and Mason 2007; Dunn, Klocker et al. 2007; Marranci 2004; Hussain and Bagguley 2012; Akbarzadeh 2016; Dunn et al. 2016; Peucker 2017). Reflecting the transition from 'biological' to 'cultural' racism, the Scanlon-Monash national survey showed that the number of people experiencing discrimination because of their skin colour or ethnicity has declined in Australia since 2013, but Muslim minorities remain the main targets of suspicion and apprehension and therefore the main Australian 'Other' (Markus 2016). Our project started with an assumption that public visibility of Muslims can potentially trigger Islamophobic reactions or contribute to it (see Salleh-Hoddin and Pedersen 2012). There are numerous media reports and research accounts about public verbal and physical attacks on visibly Muslim women in Australia (HREOC 2004; Dunn et al. 2016).

There were attempts to measure Islamophobia in Australia at a national level. A preliminary report by Hassan, Martin et al. (2015), based on a telephone survey of a randomly selected sample of 1000 Australians conducted by the Social Research Centre at the Australian National University in Sept–Oct 2015 found that 'Almost 70 per cent of Australians appeared to have a very low level of Islamophobia and are not concerned about it. Another 20 per cent are undecided. Less than 10 per cent fall in the highly Islamophobic category. These findings indicate that a large majority of Australians are not Islamophobic' (p. 10). However, this survey result presents a stark contrast to a highly publicised and discussed online survey conducted by 'Essential Research' a market research company, in Sept 2016, on a sample of about 1000 Australians, which found high levels of Islamophobia expressed through views on Muslim immigration to Australia. According to this poll, almost half of Australians (49%) support a ban on Muslim immigration, including 34 per cent of the left-leaning Greens votes. The survey methodology and the way questions were asked (yes/no options) has been criticised (see for example http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-27/beware-survey-that-found-1-in-2-favour-muslim-immigration-ban/7880526), but the public impression of widespread Islamophobia remained. What is clear from those two survey examples is that reliably measuring Islamophobia on a national level is a difficult task.

In his review article on Islamophobia, written before the watershed 9/11 terrorist attack, Harrison (1999) problematised the concept of Islamophobia, arguing that 'anti-Muslimism' would be a better term because it would convey that the prejudice is directed against people, mainly Muslim immigrants in the West, rather than the Islamic religion and culture as such. While there are valid points in his critique and general treatment of the issue of Islamophobia in Western countries, for example his argument about homogenising effect of the term, it remains unclear how would his proposed (also linguistically clumsier) alternative address the problems he attributes to the term 'Islamophobia'. In any case, 'Islamophobia' has become established and is widely used 'umbrella term' that covers various manifestations of anti-Muslim sentiment and discrimination against Muslim minorities in Western societies. This project takes an in-depth look at Muslim--non-Muslim relations in smaller-scale (sub)urban contexts with large Muslim presence, where Islamophobia, or the lack of it, may be primarily a response to everyday face-to-face encounters with diverse neighbours rather than to political and media rhetoric, including politically motivated fear-mongering from right-wing anti-immigration parties.

The basic conceptual framework of this study is presented in the figure below.

Figure 2. Project's conceptual model
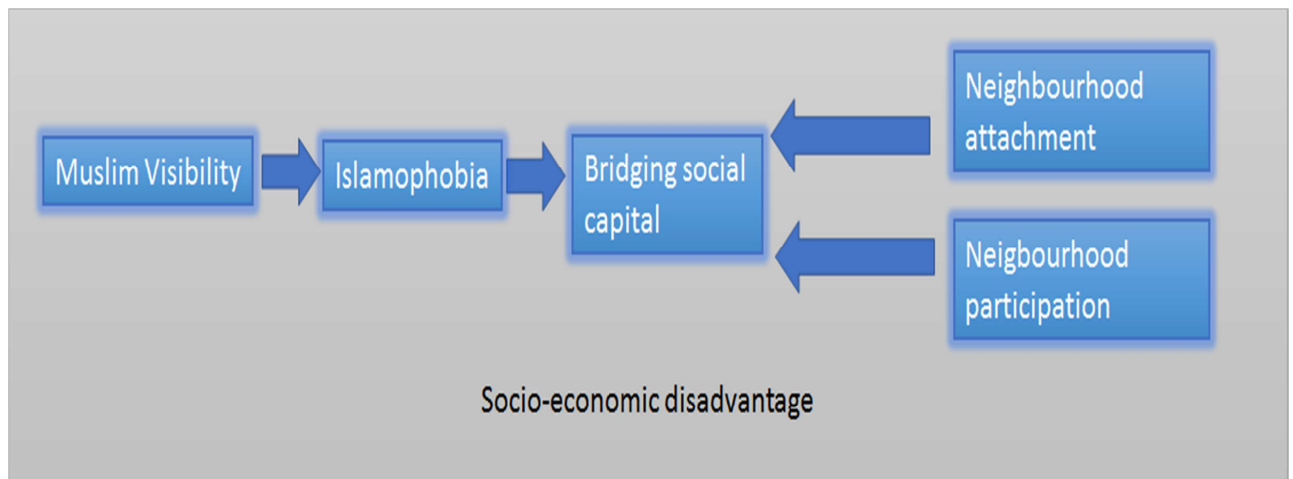
The conceptual model summarises the relationship among central concepts that frame the project's analysis. The bridging social capital features as the central concept and our main dependent variable. The conceptual schema is analysed in local context that feature a high degree of socio-economic disadvantage. The assumptions are that:

1. Muslim visibility may create or strengthen Islamophobia amongst non-Muslims;
2. Bridging social capital is negatively impacted by high levels of Islamophobia and positively impacted by neighbourhood attachment and local participation.

Methodology

Research design

This study adopted a mixed method approach of data collection and analysis. We collected quantitative and qualitative data through a written, face-to-face administered survey of residents, two waves of interviews, one before and the other after the survey. The detailed description of the data collection follows below. We also used mixed methods of data analysis. Numerical data were analysed by statistical methods and some descriptive and inferential statistics are presented below. Interview data were analysed thematically.

The project was guided by following central Research Question (RQ):

How does religious visibility (as opposed as religious diversity per se) impact on social cohesion in case-study localities?

This central RQ was operationalised in our methodology through following specific questions:

1. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to local Muslim residents? Does visibility have impact on their lifestyle, values and general integration?

2. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to non-Muslim locals? What are the assumptions and perceptions, and are they based on everyday local experiences (rather than media reports)?

3. How strong is bridging social capital, and consequently community cohesion, in the case-study localities? What kind of contact and interaction between local Muslims and non-Muslims is typical?

4. How do locals assess their neighbourhoods in terms of safety, inclusiveness and neighbourliness?

5. How can bridging social capital and community cohesion be enhanced, according to local residents and service providers?

6. How do diverse residents perceive and assess existing community development, community cohesion and other programs?

Data collection

Consultation interviews with key informants

Principal investigators conducted interviews with key informants. This was a sample of service providers and professionals who worked in Fawkner or Broadmeadows and had close familiarity with one of the localities from their particular professional perspectives. Eight interviews were conducted in each locality (16 in total) in June 2016. At the initial five

interviews both principal researchers were present. The remaining eleven were conducted by one of the principal researchers, including one over the phone. The respondents were drawn from the local councils, churches, schools, community organisations, police and private businesses. These interviews informed further data collection by identifying issues to be included in the construction of the key research instrument, the survey questionnaire. To inform ourselves further about the diversity in Broadmeadows we attended a meeting of the Hume City Multicultural Working group on 25 Aug 2016.

Survey of local residents

The survey questionnaire has been created by principal investigators. It has been informed by several previously used and tested surveys. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions divided in four sections. Section A of the questionnaire dealt with administrative demands of the survey, e.g. allocating a number to the questionnaire, a code to each respondent and identifying the interviewer. Section B contained questions about demographic and socio-economic characteristics of respondents. Section C asked about their 'religious visibility'. Section D consisted of four scales ('batteries') that incorporated 5-6 items (questions). They measured levels of Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and bridging social capital. Finally, Section E asked about residents' perception and experience with local government programs, as requested by the research partners. The survey questionnaire was presented to research partners for comments and also checked question-by-question for clarity and cross-cultural appropriateness with bilingual research assistants (BRAs). The penultimate draft of the survey questionnaire was also distributed to the Hume City Multicultural Working group for comment at their August meeting. The questionnaire was piloted by principal investigators before finalising it.

Assisted by research partners, principal investigators advertised the positions of bilingual research assistants (BRAs). The key role of BRAs was to administer the survey of residents through questionnaire-based face-to-face interviews. We received a large number of EOIs from highly qualified bilingual and multilingual people living in the two localities. We selected seven BRAs and provided one-day training for them at RMIT University on 1 Aug 2016. The training day, planned and executed by principal investigators, was focused on the recruitment of respondents, interview process and research ethics. The BRAs were from Iraqi, Egyptian, Pakistani, Turkish, Lebanese and Anglo-Australian backgrounds, matching most of the largest ethnic groups present in the two localities.

The survey debrief session was held on 14 Nov 2016. Six out of seven BRAs attended. Prior to the session, observational notes by BRAs were submitted, compiled and distributed to the project team. The debrief session and the notes were valuable in assisting us to detect any potential data quality issues.

The survey of a sample of local populations took place September – November 2016. The respondents were recruited with the assistance of partner investigators. Bilingual Research Assistants (BRAs), who were local community members, started with respondents from their own local networks, 'snowballed' the sample and also attended community gatherings and liaised with local community organisations in order to identify further respondents. The target

sample was a minimum of 75 Muslim and 75 non-Muslim respondents in each locality (300 in total). The survey was conducted face-to-face through questionnaire-based interviews conducted by BRAs in English. BRAs were bilingual or multilingual and assured that respondents fully understood questions and were able to respond in language other than English (LOTE) if necessary. The recruitment of BRAs also ensured that the survey was conducted in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner. Such considerations secured that the survey resulted in a high-quality data set.

The survey data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software as 49 questions. Of those, four questions also had a qualitative component, asking for a narrative answer in addition to a 'tick-box' answer. Seven questions collected purely qualitative data, which means only narrative answer was required. The latter questions included asking about respondents' first language, ethnicity and job, which were later numerically coded in order to be used in quantitative analysis. All narrative data from the survey were transcribed and added to the quantitative data.

Follow-up interviews

Follow up in-depth interviews with residents of Fawkner and Broadmeadows were conducted after the survey data collection was finalised in order to tease out the central themes: the personal and social meanings people attributed to religious visibility and their neighbourhood experience in the context of ethno-cultural diversity. The sample of respondents was drawn from the survey sample. In-depth semi-structured interviews were the essential complement to the survey: while quantitative data give a sound basic overview of social phenomena, the complex phenomena can only be fully understood when qualitative in-depth data are included in the analysis. By focussing on the local lived experience of participants, we aimed to gather and explore new original narratives of the experiences of diversity in specific, socio-economically disadvantaged contexts.

A training session to prepare BRAs for follow-up in-depth interviews was held on 16 Dec 2016. Five BRAs who were recruited for follow-up interviews attended. The training included mock interviews, where BRAs were coupled with experienced researchers as mock respondents.

Out of 301 survey respondents, 77 registered their interest to participate in a follow-up interview. From this pool, a selection of 36 respondents was interviewed. About 50 respondents were contacted but not everyone could be reached, and in some cases respondents declined the invitation for a follow-up interview. This, and the fact that follow-up interviews were conducted by seven BRAs with differential time flexibility and success in reaching their list of contacts, resulted in an overrepresentation of respondents from Fawkner when compared to Broadmeadows (23 / 13). The respondents were diverse in terms of ethnicity, age, and religion. The aim was to create a gender-balanced sample that included similar representation of Muslim and non-Muslim residents of the two localities. The non-Muslim respondents included Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Middle-eastern Christians, Anglicans and non-religious locals. In terms of ethnicity, we sought to include the largest local ethnic groups: Anglo-Australians and people from Turkish, Lebanese, Iranian, Iraqi, Pakistani and Italian backgrounds.

Data entering and analysis

In November 2016, the survey data were entered into SPSS and controlled for quality. Six version of the dataset and creation of several new variables resulted in the quantitative dataset being finalised in January 2017. In the period January–March 2017, both descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, cross-tabulations), and inferential statistical methods (multiple regression) were used to establish relationships between (independent) demographic and socio-economic variables (age, gender, religion, religious visibility, ethnicity, socio-economic status, residency status, homeownership etc.) and (dependent) neighbourhood experience variables. The latter were measured on multiple scales. The follow-up interview data were professionally transcribed in February-March 2017. The interview data were thematically analysed (see below).

Research ethics

The project received ethics approval from RMIT University in three stages: for the key informant interviews; the survey of residents; and finally, for the follow-up in-depth interviews. Ethical concerns continuously informed the project's activities. Study participants were informed about the nature of the research and the result of their participation at the first point of contact. They were invited to confirm their consent before the interview, after it was explained to them that they could withdraw their participation at any stage. There was a great focus on anonymity and confidentiality, which means that none of the respondents should be in any way identifiable in publications from the project. This is managed by deleting participants' names and professions from the survey data and replacing them by pseudonyms or general descriptions. Both BRAs and participants were briefed about a special importance of confidentiality and discretion given that the fieldwork was conducted in neighbourhoods where most BRAs also lived, and some participants knew each other personally.

We were aware of the potential public and local impact of studying bridging social capital in deprived neighbourhoods with large Muslim minorities, including a risk of drawing attention to negative stereotypes about Muslims. This consideration includes the way some survey questions were asked and reporting the research findings. We addressed this risk by asking participants about their positive as well as negative local experiences. Our concerns about the perception of negative stereotyping that could potentially upset participants informed the way in which the project, and particularly the sensitive survey questions, were introduced to the participants face-to-face. The meaning and purpose of the project were explained to the participants in writing ('Plain language statement and consent form') and also orally, by trained bilingual interviewers who could use required community languages and were aware of, and sensitive to, cultural nuances.

Another concern was that respondents might report the upsetting past incidents involving racist harassment that they might have experienced. We therefore meticulously trained the BRAs to handle such situations. Since BRAs were recruited from the communities involved in the project and had experienced racism themselves, they were sensitive to the participants' feelings and could provide support as needed. Some respondents were hesitant to participate in the study because of previous negative experiences with governments (overseas) and concern about the ways in which data might be used. Our research assistants were trained to

respond to these kinds of concerns and reassure respondents that the study has a purely research purpose, and no political or commercial purposes. BRAs were instructed to refer respondents to the counselling and other support services if needed. The contacts of these services were offered in the consent form which stayed with the participants. However, none of the respondents or BRAs indicated that this was needed.

Methodological limitations

This study aimed to find out if religious visibility of diverse cultural groups and individuals, primarily Muslims, influences cross-cultural and interfaith communication and the formation of bridging social capital in the neighbourhoods with large Muslim minorities. These complex matters can best be studied in a case study design, focusing on the 'lived reality' of the participants, while including information about other variables which may be important for the participants, but which are unknown as yet (Yin 2013). The project's aim was to compare two different local contexts, one with more and one with less visible Muslim groups. Therefore, a multiple case study approach was chosen. This kind of approach is ideal to answer the 'why' questions while taking the context into consideration.

There are potential drawbacks of this kind of approach. First, the findings from the survey of cannot be generalised to the total populations of Fawkner and Broadmeadows because we did not draw a random, fully representative sample of the population. Consequently, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to Muslims or non-Muslims in the broader society either. The sample was constructed starting from BRAs' existing networks, which could have produced a sample bias. For example, the high number of tertiary educated professionals in Fawkner (considerably exceeding the proportion recorded in the last census) is likely to have come from the fact that all BRAs were tertiary educated. However, during the survey fieldwork, we continually monitored the sample composition and intervened when it was needed in order to secure a balanced sample in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity and socio-economic background.

Second, a bias in the research findings is a general research limitation of social research including interpretive analysis, which also applies to this project. This bias is due partly to the way data are collected (e.g. who collects the data) and the way data analyses were performed. We aimed to reduce the data collection bias by engaging multiple interviewers who used the same research instruments. This reduces the impact of the bias of a singular interviewer and increase data quality. In terms of a potential analytical bias, all analyses were complemented by an ongoing consultation by several (minimum of two, mostly three) researchers, which increased the quality and reliability of the analysis (Baxter and Jack 2008). The findings were further strengthened by triangulating different data sources (interviews with policymakers and local service providers as well as residents, a questionnaire-based survey as well as semi-structured in-depth interviews and observation). The findings were interpreted, compared and checked against to findings of similar studies (Knafl & Breitmayer 1989).

While our sample was not randomised and therefore not fully representative of the explored localities, the size of our sample is sufficient to allow a comparative analysis of the two localities and sound quantitative and qualitative analyses of the relationship between variables through statistical and qualitative methods, as detailed below.

Findings

Key informant consultative interviews

The project fieldwork started with the 'key informant interviews' conducted by principal researchers in Fawkner and Broadmeadows. The interviews were semi-structured to allow the key informants to focus on issues of special relevance to them, in their particular line of business, and on the issues that concerned the communities and particular demographics they worked with. The interviews were recorded and analysed thematically. Observational notes were also part of the data.

The key informant respondents included local teachers and school principals, religious leaders, interpreters, community media journalists and presenters, local police, council employees, local community development and diversity program workers, ethnic community 'leaders' and 'activists' and local business people.

The purpose of key informant interviews was to inform the further stages of data collection. This was achieved through identifying local themes and issues from different viewpoints, in conversation with people who had substantive work experience in the two localities. Some of the key informants also lived in the area which increased the depth of their experience and knowledge of the area. The issues we identified through the key informant interviews informed the construction of the survey questionnaire as the basis for the next stage of data collection. The principal researchers travelled to the two localities several times and also engaged in ethnographic participant observation in local streets, shops and restaurants.

The interview schedule consisted of three parts:

1. Key informant's demographic and professional background;
2. Key informant's perceptions and experiences associated with their professional work role in the area;
3. Key informant's observations about local community cohesion and issues associated with interethnic and interfaith relations, as well as problems stemming from local socio-economic disadvantage.

Diverse key informants saw the local situation from considerably different professional and personal vantage points and expressed a range of different views. Given that our respondents' professional roles were often singular in the two suburbs (e.g. a principal of a specific school, priest in a specific church, presenter in a specific community radio-station), for confidentiality reasons we cannot include direct quotes from these interviews (apart from very short ones, in inverted commas, see below) and we cannot identify the source of the insights by her/his demographic or professional role. Therefore, for the purpose of this report, we limit our analysis of key informant interview data to identifying the themes that emerged strongly, as well as novel insights that we took from these consultative interviews.

When asked about the effects of local socio-economic disadvantage, the following themes emerged:

- Youth delinquency and 'high crime rates but no violent crime'. For example cars get stolen and driven late at night, doing 'burnouts'. Respondents commented that youth delinquency was associated with low socio-economic background. If youth do not go to school and 'have time on their hands' they may get 'involved with the wrong crowd'. We were told that in some cases parents were not working and 'problems may come down to family history'. Sometimes alcohol and drugs (especially 'ice') problems were mentioned. For example, a 'car stealing competition' has taken place among local youth through 'Snapchat' (a social media 'app'). Our key informants pointed out that these behaviours were not related to ethnicity or religion.
- Family violence. Several respondents made an association between low socio-economic background and family problems such as domestic violence and drug abuse, but pointed out this was not related to 'ethnicity' or 'culture'.
- Informal economy ('cash in hand' work). This practice was described as widespread. For example, extended family members, especially youth and recently arrived migrants, may work in local businesses 'off the books'. Some of our key informants told us this practice may be normalised in the countries of origin where they are considered a way to survive economically and also to fulfil one's obligation towards extended family and community members. Therefore, such practice may not be seen as negative or as 'cheating' but rather as a way to cope with disadvantaging circumstances migrants may encounter in Australia (e.g. lack of English preventing job success in the mainstream labour market, high youth unemployment, employment discrimination of recent arrivals by mainstream employers).
- Local settlement of recently arrived Christian Syrian refugees (e.g. Chaldeans and Assyrians) in Broadmeadows is bound to be challenging given a lack of employment opportunities in the area. The new arrivals need considerable settlement support that may or may not be available longer-term. Often, it is assumed that such support will come from 'ethnic communities' in the area, while these communities are usually defined through the country of origin. This may be unwarranted because recent refugee arrivals may be from different ethnic and religious backgrounds than earlier arrivals from the same country.

A suggested remedy for these social issues was primarily government-funded preventative work. One respondent praised a local school already doing 'fantastic job' with youth, but 'more was needed': more community engagement work and preventative work in schools. For recent arrivals, especially those from refugee backgrounds, a longer settlement support may prevent the development of social problems stemming from unemployment, low income, inadequate housing and refugee trauma. In terms of general engagement in addressing local issues, it was suggested that local governments may engage more intensely in consultations with diverse local populations, especially with recent arrivals and emerging communities in the area(s). A respondent suggested that one way of deepening the local government engagement with local communities may be to preferentially employ people from diverse backgrounds and people who reside locally, both in temporary programs and initiatives and in ongoing positions at local councils.

When asked about inter-ethnic relations, including Muslim—non-Muslim relations and inter-Muslim relations, the following themes emerged:

- 'Women's facial covering (usually *niqab*, rarely *burqa*) is considered to preclude inter-

ethnic communication. 'People may think they know the person, but are not sure that they can identify her correctly'. Also 'there is fear: who is beneath the black robe? It can be a man'. 'The high visibility [of women wearing facial covering] makes them in a way "invisible" to other people, as they do not know how and whether to communicate [with these women]'.

- Some 'secular' (non-practicing or non-religious) people of Muslims backgrounds, as well as 'moderate' and non-visible Muslims (those who grew up in Australia and are not identifiable as Muslims in public) were critical of people who they saw as 'militant' or 'proselytising' Muslims. Respondents made the connection between recent migrants and 'visible Muslims'.
- Some respondents indicated that they felt that women and girls from recently arrived Muslim families may be quite isolated, 'closed off' and local free 'English classes may be the only chance for them to get out of the house'. Some of these families may 'keep to themselves' and rely on their ethnic 'bonding capital'. The parents may insist that their children strictly follow Muslim traditions because they 'may be worried they'd 'lose their children' [to Australian culture and customs].
- Muslim-non-Muslim relations are generally improving [in Fawkner], as people 'get used to the new situation [demographic changes in the local area, primarily the high influx of Muslims]'

Survey of residents in Fawkner and Broadmeadows

Characteristics of the survey sample

In total 301 respondents filled out a questionnaire, 150 in Broadmeadows and 151 in Fawkner. In both neighbourhoods close to 30 per cent of residents identifies as a Muslim, while our survey sample aimed to have 50 per cent of Muslim respondents. The purpose of overrepresentation of Muslims in our sample was to account in-depth for their neighbourhood experiences. The high proportion of Muslims in our sample automatically also resulted in an overrepresentation of certain ethnic groups when compared to the residential composition of the neighbourhoods (in Fawkner there is a slight overrepresentation of Pakistani migrants in the sample population; in Broadmeadows there is a slight overrepresentation of Turkish-origin respondents in the sample population when compared to the neighbourhood population). Slightly more than half of the sample population in both neighbourhoods was born outside Australia.

The aim of the sample was to survey as many Muslims as non-Muslims and this aim was achieved. This means, however, that the sample is not representative for the population in the research suburbs; we cannot generalize the findings to all other residents in the research suburbs, nor can we generalize to other, similar suburbs. It is possible, however, to analyse the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. In doing so, it is important to take other demographic characteristics (age, gender, time in Australia and in the suburb) and socio-economic characteristics into account (education, employment, homeownership).

Table 2. Sample of survey respondents by suburb: demographic information (N=301)

		Fawkner (n=151)	Broadmeadows (n=150)	Total
Gender	M	77	67	144
	F	74	83	157
Australian-born		53/151 (35.1%)	47/150 (31.3%)	100 (33.2%)
Permanent resident or citizen		138/151 (91.4%)	143/150 (95.3%)	281 (93.4%)
Owner-occupier		87/151 (57.6%)	61/ 150 (40.7%)	148 (49.2%)
Residency in suburb(years)	Average Median	14.6 8	14 10	

Women are slightly overrepresented in the sample, and so are non-Australian born respondents. Most respondents have lived in the suburb for many years. The median age of the respondents is somewhat higher than the median age of the residents in both suburbs.

Table 3. Age and age group of respondents

	Fawkner (n=151)		Broadmeadows (n=150)		Total	
Age average (range 18-86)	45 (median 41)		44 (median (42)			
Age group	N	%	n	%	n	%
18-30	27	17.9	35	23.3	62	20.6
31-55	87	57.6	82	54.7	169	56.1
56+	37	24.5	33	22	70	23.3

Figure 3 and 4. Age group of respondents in Fawkner and Broadmeadows
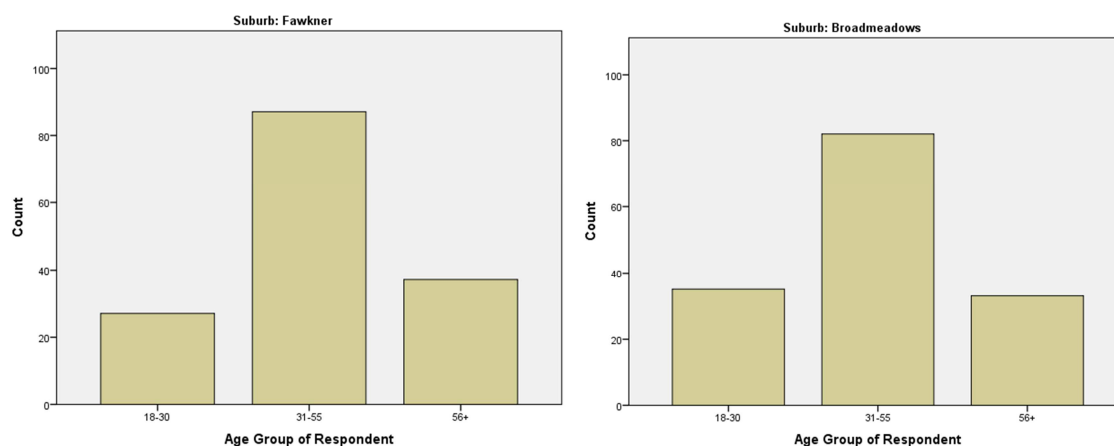
Table 4. Education, English proficiency, work status by suburb

		Fawkner (n=151)		Broadmeadows (n=150)		Total	
		n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Education	Primary/Incompl. High	23	15.2	64	42.7	87	28.9
	Year 12	27	17.9	30	30	57	18.9
	TAFE	22	14.6	24	16	46	15.3
	Bachelor or higher	79	52.3	28	18.7	107	35.5
	Missing	0	0	4	2.7	4	1.3
English proficiency	No English	4	2.6	15	10	19	6.3
	Survival level	6	4	46	30.7	52	17.3
	Good knowledge	42	27.8	22	14.7	64	21.3
	Native or fluent	99	65.6	67	44.7	166	55.1
Work Status	Employed	70	46.4	35	23.3	105	34.9
	Outside labour market*	81	53.6	115	76.7	196	65.1

*'Outside labour market' category includes: unemployed, not in the workforce and retired

A relatively large share of the sample population was not employed. Employed people were underrepresented in our sample, compared to the total population of the two suburbs. In Fawkner, more than half of the respondents were higher educated and therefore overrepresented in the sample, compared to the total suburb population. In Broadmeadows, the majority of respondents have not completed high school, yet nearly 19% of the respondents have completed tertiary education. That means that both low-educated and

highly-educated people were overrepresented in the sample population when compared to the total population of Broadmeadows.

Figures 5 and 6. Education of respondents by suburb
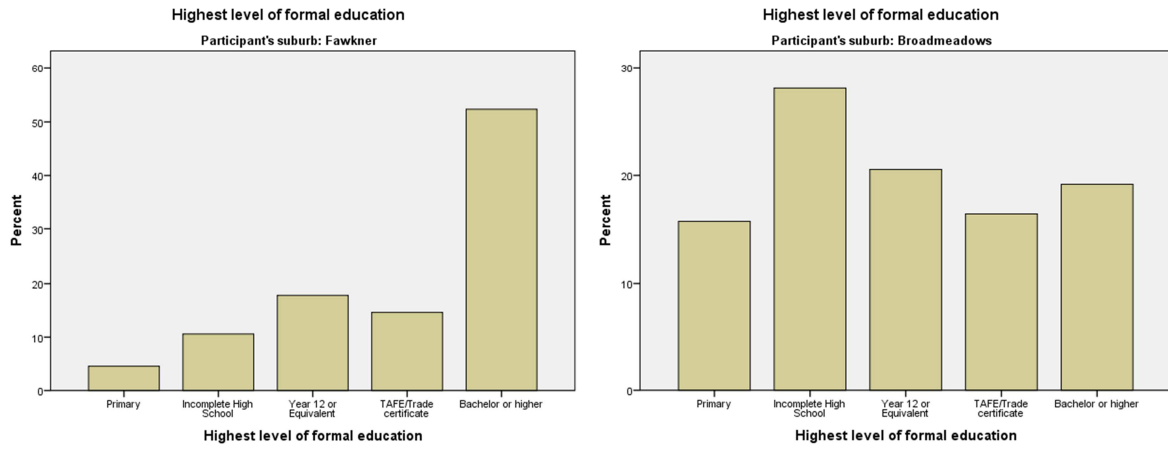
Figures 7 and 8. English proficiency level of respondents by suburb
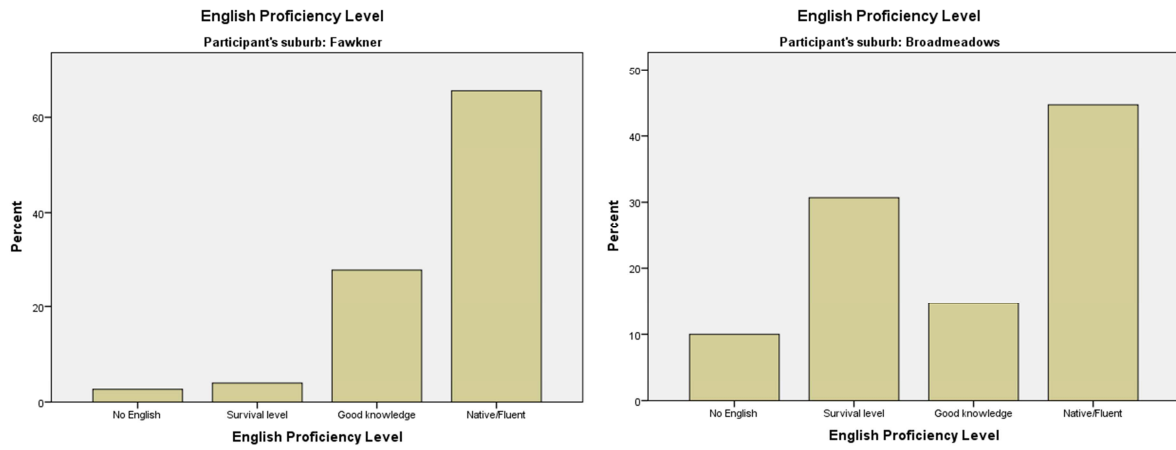
Table 5. Ethnicity, ethnicity group and religion by suburb

		Fawkner		Broadmeadows		Total	
		N	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Ethnicity*	Pakistani	40	26.5	0	0	40	13.3
	Lebanese	9	6	28	18.7	37	12.3
	Turkish	6	4	30	20	36	12
	Australian	21	13.9	14	9.3	35	11.6
	Iraqi	7	4.6	26	17.3	33	11
	Italian	13	8.6	4	2.7	17	5.6
	Other	55	36.4	48	32	103	34.2
Total		**151**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**301**	**100**
Ethnicity Group**	North Africa & Middle East	33	21.9	112	74.7	145	48.2
	South & Central Asia	50	33.1	1	0.7	51	16.9
	Oceania	26	17.2	18	12	44	14.6
	SE European	24	15.9	4	2.7	28	9.3
	NW European	12	7.9	5	3.3	17	5.6
	SE Asia	3	2	8	5.3	11	3.7
	Other	3	2	2	1.3	5	1.7
Total		**151**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**301**	**100**
Religion***	Islam	70	46.4	73	48.7	143	47.5
	Catholic	36	23.8	16	10.7	52	17.3
	Mid-East Christian	14	9.3	34	22.7	48	15.9
	No Religion	19	12.6	19	12.7	38	12.6
	Protestant	10	6.6	5	3.3	15	5
	Other	2	1.3	3	2	5	1.7
Total		**151**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**301**	**100**

 * As reported in the survey: 6 largest groups
 ** Census categories *** Survey data: largest groups

Figure 9. Ethnic background of the respondents in Fawkner
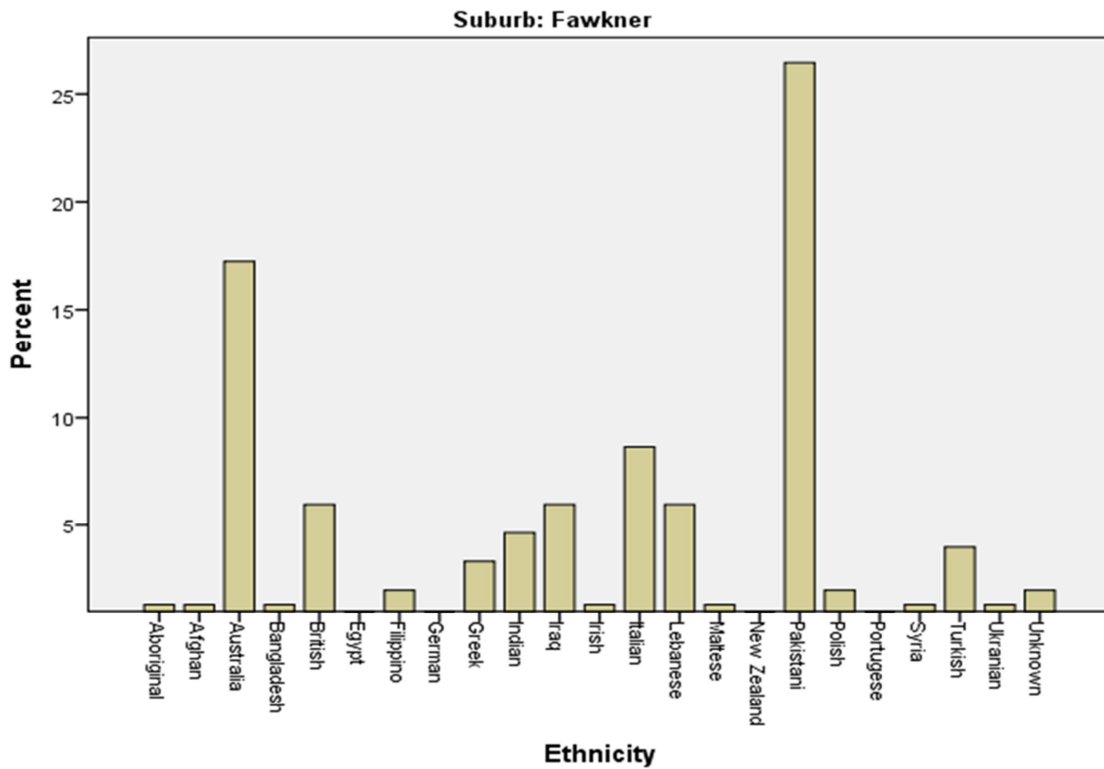
Figure 10. Ethnic background of the respondents in Broadmeadows
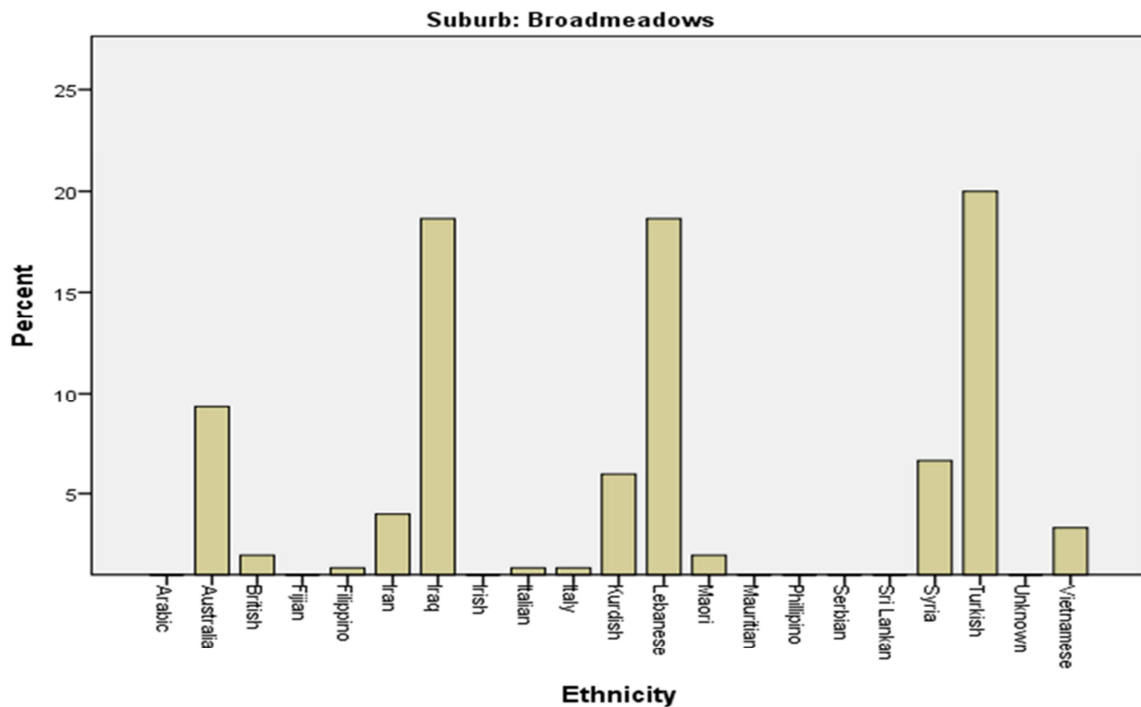
Figures 11 and 12. Religious group of the respondents in Fawkner and Broadmeadows
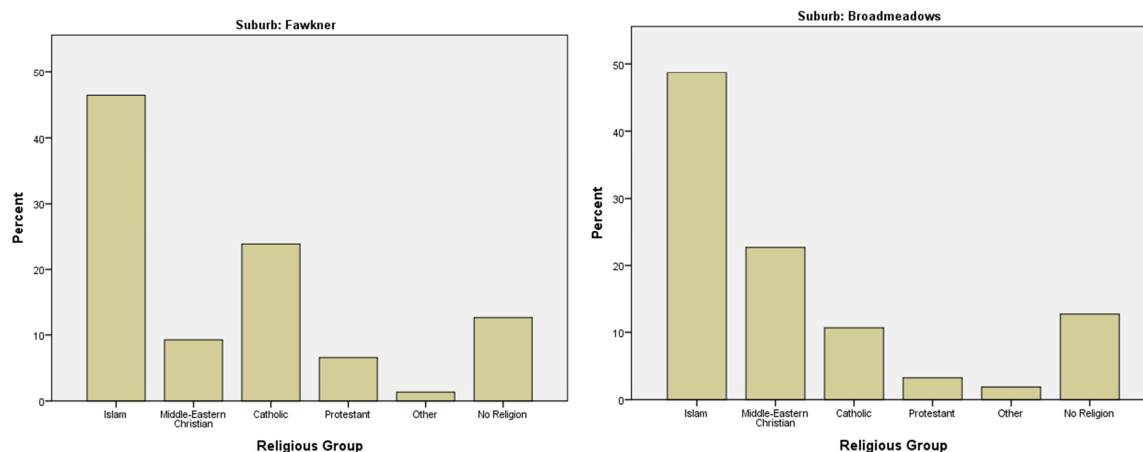
In the two suburbs, 25-30% of residents identified as 'Muslim' (2011 Census), while our sample aimed to contain 50% Muslims. The overrepresentation of Muslims in the survey sample resulted in an overrepresentation of certain ethnic groups when compared to the residential composition of the neighbourhoods (in Fawkner there was a slight overrepresentation of Pakistani in the sample population; in Broadmeadows, there was a slight overrepresentation of Turkish-ancestry residents in the sample population). Slightly more than half of the sample population in both neighbourhoods were born outside Australia.

Table 6. Socio-economic status by suburb

		Fawkner		Broadmeadows		Total	
		n	**%**	**N**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Socio-economic status (SES)	Unemployed/Pensioner	29	19.2	94	62.7	123	40.9
	Low-skilled	54	35.8	29	19.3	83	27.6
	Skilled	8	5.3	3	2	11	3.7
	Professional	60	39.7	24	16	84	27.9
Total		**151**	**100**	**150**	**100**	**301**	**100**

The majority of the respondents in the sample population in Fawkner had either professional or low-skilled work. In Broadmeadows, the majority were unemployed people or pensioners. These shares are much higher than the resident population in both suburbs. This means that high SES residents are underrepresented in our sample and low SES residents are overrepresented.

Figure 13 and 14. Socio-economic status of participants in Fawkner and Broadmeadows
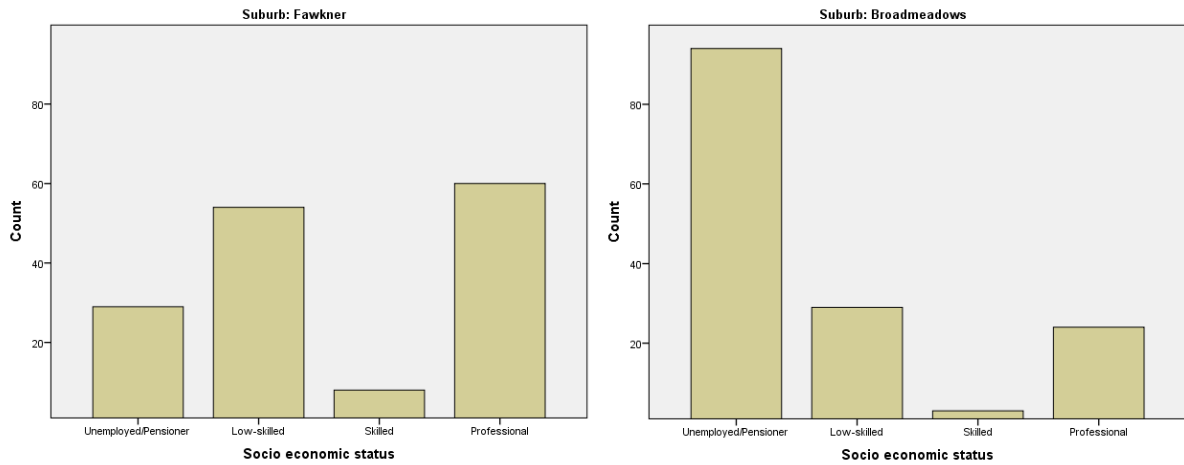
Religious visibility

The first two research questions in this study focus on the meaning of Islamic visibility for Muslim residents. Does visibility have impact on their lifestyle, values and general integration? We also asked non-Muslim locals about their perceptions of Islamic visibility. What are their assumptions and perceptions, and are they based on everyday local experiences (rather than media reports)? Among our respondents in Fawkner and Broadmeadows, 41% and 30% respectively were religiously visible, which means they wore a hijab, niqab, abaya or other traditional clothing. Few Christians reported to be religiously visible by wearing a necklace cross.

Figure 15. Religious visibility of respondents in Fawkner
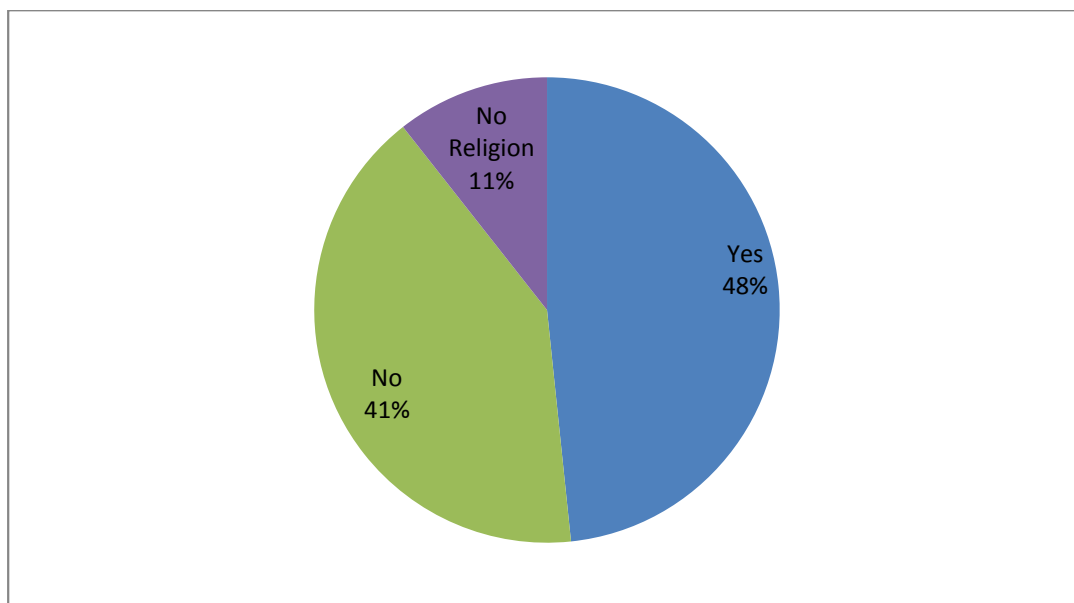
Figure 16. Religious visibility of respondents in Broadmeadows
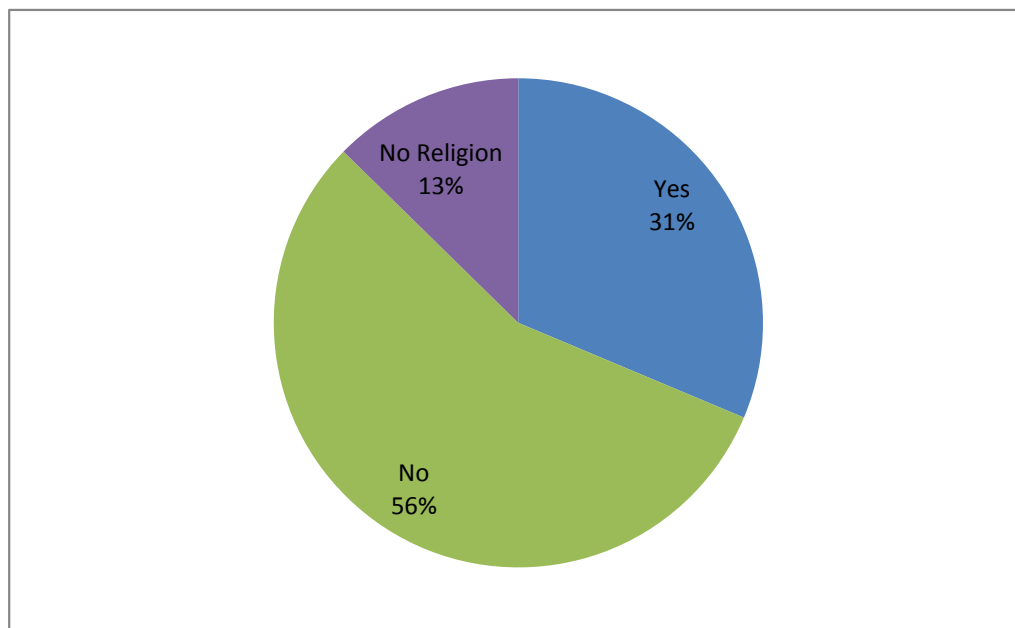
When a 'social-level visibility' is added (people who are religiously visible only to those who know them, through certain religious practices rather than being religiously visible in public places), 48 per cent of the Fawkner respondents and 31 per cent of Broadmeadows respondents were religiously visible. This difference in visibility was in line with our starting assumption about the religiously visible Muslims in the two neighbourhoods. Those who were not religious or had a religion but not a 'visible' one, made up 52 per cent of our Fawkner sample and 69 per cent of our Broadmeadows sample. The difference in visibility is emphasised in light of the fact that there were slightly more Muslims in the Broadmeadows subsample (48.7%) compared to Fawkner (46.7%). These proportions of visibly religious people correspond to the characteristics of the local populations as recorded by 2011 Census: more first-generation Muslim migrants from South Asian countries (mainly Pakistan and India) in Fawkner, compared to more second-generation Muslims of Turkish and Lebanese ancestry in Broadmeadows.

A quarter of our survey respondents (75/301) described themselves as religiously visible. A majority of visibly religious Muslims in our sample were women who wore a hijab; several women who participated in the survey also covered their faces in public. Traditional Muslim clothing was worn by both men and women.

It should be noted that members of other religious denominations (e.g. those grouped as 'Middle Eastern Christians' and 'Protestants') also said they were 'religiously visible' by wearing a necklace cross, for example. While, clearly, visibility is not a unique characteristic of the Islam, in the current socio-political circumstances in Western countries, including Australia, the religious visibility of Muslims has the strongest social impact. Given our project's geographical focus on localities with large Muslim minorities, our analysis focuses primarily on the Muslim visibility.

Narrative responses about the origin, meaning and social effects of religious visibility

Survey respondents were asked about the reasons why they were visibly religious. We received 25 narrative answers about the origin of religious visibility from our survey respondents. Half of those who were religiously visible explained what it meant to them.

The reasons why respondents were religiously visible were similar for Muslims and other denominations. Most people mentioned they had chosen to become religiously visible (25%), while others said they followed the practice of family members or the wider community (75%). The Muslims in our sample were more often religiously visible out of their own choice (30%) than other religiously visible respondents. This indicates that Muslims in our sample more often nominated personal reasons to wear a hijab, niqab, abaya or other traditional clothing.

The reasons mentioned for being visible as a Muslim fall into two categories: individual reasons and community reasons. Respondents were also asked about the consequences of the individual and community visibility.

An individual reason that is frequently mentioned points towards spirituality: happiness, a feeling that results from being visibly Muslim: 'Gives me happiness, meaning to life. Makes me fulfilled' (R153). Other expressions used were 'bliss', 'peace of mind', 'satisfaction' and 'I like it'. Some visible Muslims said that their religious visibility made them feel comfortable: 'I feel comfortable and confident' (R77). Others that also referred to 'comfort' indicated that it gives them a positive feeling in general. The visible Muslim dress gives these respondents a positive emotional state. Some mentioned more pragmatic reasons: they did not have to think about the best way to do their hair as it was covered anyway. Often, reasons of religious duty and faith-based discipline were given; respondents said that the Muslim dress kept them religiously focused, it helped them to stay on the right path: 'It gives me spirituality and abstained me from vice' (R69). Clearly, the way a person dresses influences the way s/he feels, and the individual is reminded of religious values and norms through visible signs.

The visible Muslims (predominantly women) in our survey sample also referred to 'community reasons' to become or remain religiously visible. Some had the feeling of community that resulted from being visible as a Muslim: '[I feel] more accepted in the community, feel connection with other women' (R26). Others referred not only to being part of a community but also the identity that comes with being part of that community, which is expressed in clothing and visible signs of being a Muslim. Often this was mentioned alongside comments on keeping family values and teaching children about their religious and ethnic background and identity.

Negative consequences of being visible as a Muslim were mentioned by a handful of respondents. Some women had experienced harassment in public due to wearing a hijab; some of them emphasised that they were not harassed within the bounds of their neighbourhoods. Some Muslims (both men and women) indicated that they would wear their traditional dress in their own neighbourhood, but not when visiting the city or the 'eastern suburbs' (places where visible Muslim presence is not common) due to a fear of harassment.

As described below (findings from the semi-structured interviews) some Christians felt sorry for women in traditional Muslim clothing because they suspected they may be too hot and uncomfortable in summer. However, none of the Muslim respondents referred to this kind of physical discomfort.

When discussing the visibility of the Muslim community in their localities—the 'environmental visibility' in the built environment (e.g. mosques, signage, symbols, even sounds like call to prayer)—the respondents conveyed that it had both positive and negative effects. The positive effect was mainly about Muslims feeling part of the local community; their visible 'group presence' in the area helped them to feel at home and to feel accepted in the multicultural and diverse communities of Fawkner and Broadmeadows. The mosque was seen as a place where children learned about their faith and their culture and where people found support and discussed social problems and daily life issues (see also Peucker 2017). In both localities, local mosques were instrumental in strengthening the community life and creating a sense of community.

The mosques are popular places to drive to, especially on Friday and during the Ramadan and Eid. This creates parking and traffic problems for all residents, both Muslims and non-Muslims. Strikingly, traffic and parking problems were mentioned by many respondents as some of the biggest problems in the suburb of Fawkner but no-one commented that the problem was caused by local Muslims; respondents merely mention traffic and parking problems as a neighbourhood problem and appealed to the council to do something about it.

The vexed question of Muslim visibility: covering face

Figure 17. Responses to 'I dislike when Muslim women cover their hair (hijab)'
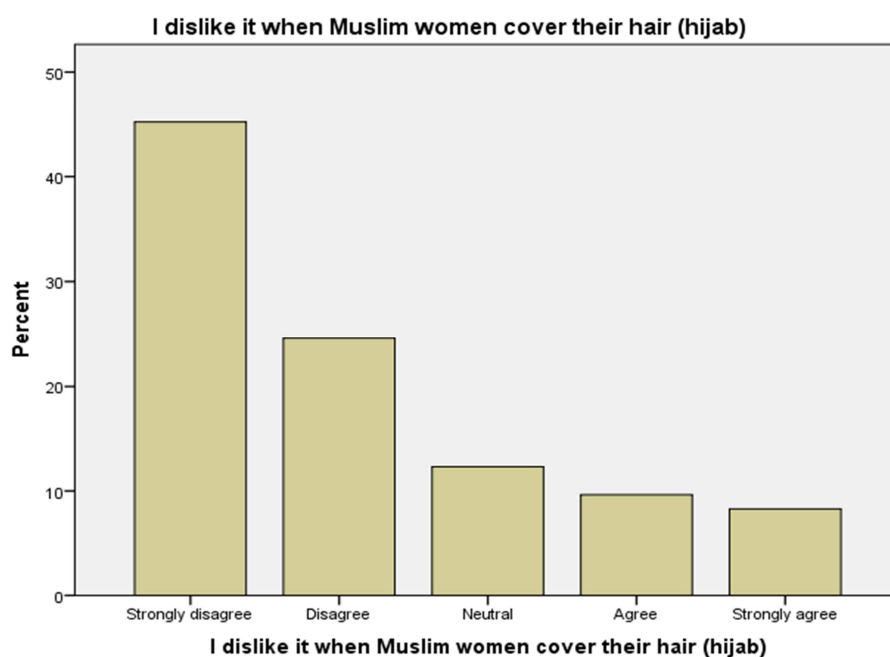
Figure 18. Responses to 'I dislike when Muslim women cover their faces (niqab or burqa)'
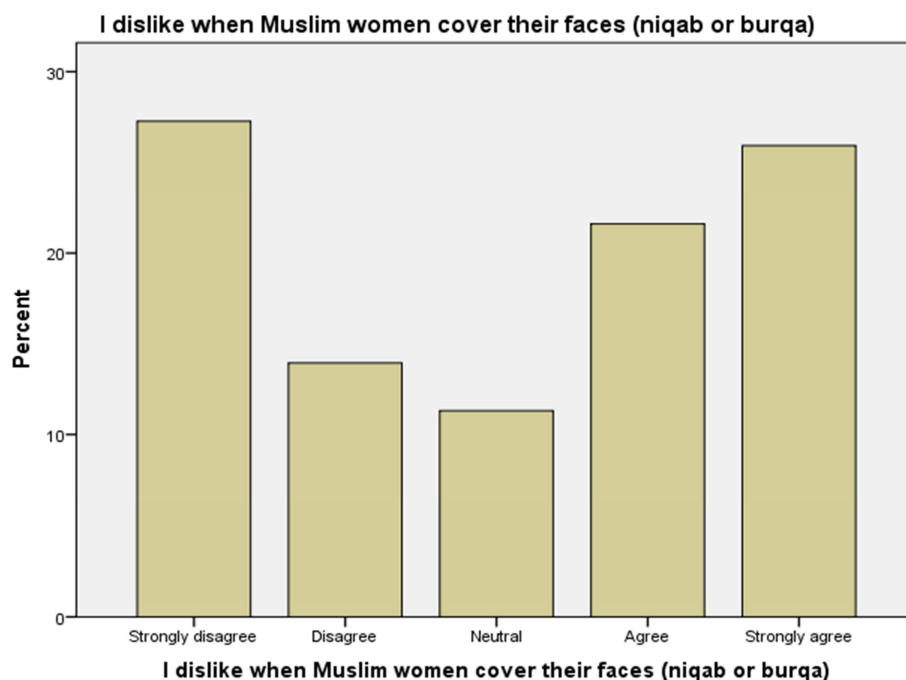
The distribution of responses to these questions is very dissimilar. Figure 17 shows that the vast majority of the respondents do not have a problem with Muslim women covering their hair, whereas Figure 18 shows that the opinions about the face coverings are more divided. Statistically speaking, the responses to both questions are 'abnormally distributed'. In other words, a smaller proportion of respondents chose 'middle' responses (e.g. only about 11% were 'neutral' in both cases. In 'covering face' question, the largest number of respondents chose one of the extreme responses: 25.9% strongly agreed and 27.2% strongly disagreed. This means that the views on this issue are strong as well as polarised. If we look at total agreement and total disagreement, the agreement with this statement was stronger (47.5% of people disliked face covering, while 41.2% did not have a problem with it). The answer to these two questions show significant differences: only 18% of the respondents agreed (including 'strongly agreed') with the statement 'I dislike when women cover their hair', whereas 47% agreed (including 'strongly agreed') with the statement 'I dislike when women cover their face'. From the observational accounts of most BRAs, we know that a considerable number of people expressed verbal dislike for the face covering but did not want to register such an attitude in the survey. Therefore, in reality the dislike for face covering is likely to be stronger than what was shown by the survey data.

It is interesting to note that a considerable number of Muslim respondents (28%) commented about their dislike of face covering. This did not seem to be an expression of Islamophobia among either Muslim or non-Muslim respondents, but rather an expression of concern that the face covering precludes interaction of locals with 'veiled' Muslim women. The dislike for hair covering as well as face covering, and Muslim visibility in general, was strong among

Middle Eastern Christians who have experienced violence from the Muslim mainstream populations in their countries (primarily Iraq and Syria, but also Egypt and Lebanon). Among the Middle Eastern Christians, the dislike for hair and face covering was 71% and 91% respectively.

The perceptions and experiences that relate to Muslim visibility were further explored in follow up in-depth interviews.

Neighbourhood experiences in Broadmeadows and Fawkner

How do locals assess their neighbourhoods in terms of safety, inclusiveness and neighbourliness? The neighbourhood experience of the sample populations was explored through four scales included in the survey questionnaire: 'Islamophobia scale' (6 items), 'Suburb attachment scale' (6 items), 'Local participation scale' (5 items) and 'Bridging social capital scale' (6 items) (see Appendix 1 for details). The first three scales showed good internal consistency on the Cronbach Alpha test. The 'bridging social capital' scale showed low scale consistency, however. Therefore, questions from that scale were separated into two subscales: 'Bonding social capital' (3 items) and 'Bridging social capital' (3 items). When analysed as two scales they showed good internal consistency. Table 7 shows descriptive statistics for the scales exploring the neighbourhood experience in the two suburbs.

Table 7. Key statistics for Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and social capital (bridging and bonding), both suburbs

	Range	Fawkner (n=151) Average (SD)	Broadmeadows (n=150) Average (SD)	All respondents (n=301) Average (SD)
Islamophobia	1-5	2.31 (1.107)	2.93 (1.255)	2.61 (1.221)
Suburb Attachment	1-5	4.11 (.676)	3.63 (.732)	3.87 (.744)
Local Participation	1-5	3.54 (.810)	3.25 (.738)	3.40 (.787)
Bridging Social Cap	1-5	3.89 (.647)	3.63(.678)	3.15 (.898)
Bonding Social Cap	1-5	3.26 (.867)	3.04 (.919)	3.76 (.674)

Figure 19. Average values for Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and social capital (bridging and bonding), the two suburbs comparison
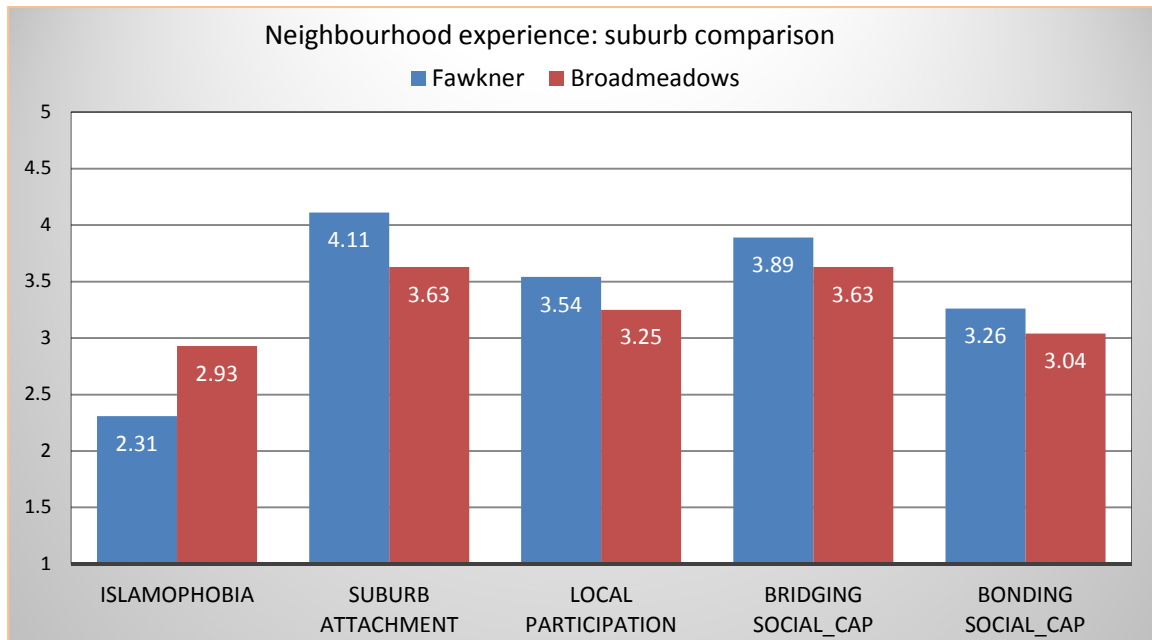
Please note: Islamophobia scores refer to negative attitude towards Muslims. Other scale scores represent 'positive' values: local attachment, participation and social capital.

The results shown in Table 7 and Figure 19 for the five scales conform to our expectations about the relationships among the variables measured by the scales. The Fawkner sample had higher mean (average) scores for suburb attachment, local participation, bridging and bonding social capital, and lower average score for Islamophobia than Broadmeadows (statistically significant, $p > .000$). While we expect that more Islamophobia would result in lower local attachment, participation and social capital, the scores for two suburbs are unexpected in the light of our starting assumption that the presence of a higher number of visible Muslim in the locality would lead to more apprehension towards them. In other words, the project started from the hypothesis that a higher number of religiously visible Muslims in the locality may correspond to higher levels of Islamophobia and this hypothesis was not confirmed.

Local neighbourhoods are complex social microcosms and many other factors can influence levels of tolerance towards diversity and any particular ethno-religious group. Possible factors that explain this result include a higher representation of 'Australian-born' people, as well as those who identify as 'Australian' in the Fawkner sample than in the Broadmeadows sample. In Broadmeadows, a large share of the Christians have fled from the Middle East and are often traumatized by violence in that region that they strongly associate with Muslims. Those who identified as 'Australians' are shown to be more tolerant towards diversity than Middle Eastern Christians and therefore also likely to be less Islamophobic.

This issue was discussed with our bilingual interviewers (BRAs), two of whom were themselves 'Middle-eastern Christians' and community activists with a comprehensive insight into community attitudes. In addition, the 'Australian' respondents may be better aware of social expectations about expressing intolerant views and therefore more prone to respond to questions influenced by the well documented 'social desirability bias'. This was confirmed by BRAs: in the debrief session after the survey, most of them reported (and also conveyed in their written observational reflection) that the social desirability bias was present among the survey respondents, especially in the response to the question about Muslim women's face cover (part of the Islamophobia scale).

Other factors that may explain and contextualise the difference in the level of Islamophobia between the respondents in the two localities were the higher SEIFA score and clear signs of gentrification in Fawkner; higher SES, including education and employment of Fawkner respondents was likely to increase tolerance towards diversity but also increase the social desirability bias in answering the questions.

Respondents in Fawkner had higher suburb attachment scores than those in Broadmeadows (the difference is statistically significant, $p>.000$). The Fawkner respondents showed a higher score on local participation (taking part in local activities) than those in Broadmeadows (the difference is statistically significant, $p>.000$). Bridging social capital was also significantly higher for respondents in Fawkner than in Broadmeadows ($p=.001$); the same applies for the bonding social capital ($p=.043$). This means that the Fawkner respondents tended to interact more with people from similar ethnic backgrounds but also to interact more with people that are different from them, than the Broadmeadows respondents. This makes sense given the local participation rates are significantly higher in Fawkner, which means that locals in Fawkner have created more opportunity to interact.

Below we explore in more detail the relationship between the five 'neighbourhood experience' variables explored through the scales (Islamophobia, local attachment, local participation, bonding social capital and bridging social capital) and respondents' demographic and socio-economic characteristics (gender, age, education, country of birth and home ownership). We performed the Mann-Whitney Test to establish the relationships between variables.

Gender differences: Among Fawkner respondents, the difference in local participation between men and women was statistically significant ($p=0.032$), with women participating less. The gender difference was also significant in bonding social capital scores ($p=0.015$), with men having higher scores for the involvement within their own ethnic group.

Age differences: For respondents in Broadmeadows, the three age groups had significantly different results for Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and bridging social capital. Only the difference in bonding social capital (social connections within one's own ethnic group) was not significant between the three age groups. In Broadmeadows, the middle-aged respondent's group (31-55) had the highest score on Islamophobia, and the young group had the lowest average score. Young people showed the strongest attachment to their suburb, and the middle-aged group the weakest. The local participation was the strongest in the older

and weakest in the young group. Young respondents had the highest local bridging social capital score (interacting with people from different backgrounds) while the middle-aged group had the lowest.

In Fawkner, the three age groups had significantly different results for Islamophobia, suburb attachment and bridging social capital. The age differences were not significant in terms of local participation and bonding social capital (social connections within one's ethnic group). In Fawkner, Islamophobia increased with age and the suburb attachment was the highest for middle-aged people and lowest for older people. Older people in Fawkner also had the lowest score on bridging social capital, which means they interacted with people of different backgrounds the least of all age groups.

Formal education level: The difference in Islamophobia was statistically significant for different education groups within Fawkner (p>.000). The differences in bridging social capital were also statistically significant within Fawkner (p=.008). Islamophobia was inversely correlated with the level of education--those with higher formal education were more tolerant of difference. The bridging social capital was also higher for better educated groups. The difference in local participation in relation to respondents' education was also statistically significant within both suburbs (BM p=0.022, FN p=0.001), with those with higher levels of formal education participating more in local activities.

The Australian-born respondents had lower Islamophobia scores than those born overseas. They also felt more attached to their suburb than those born overseas. The Australian-born respondents had higher bonding social capital scores, which means that they had a higher proportion of similar people in their networks (less bridging, more bonding social capital) than those born overseas. This may be a result of the fact that those born in Australia tend to have a higher chance of spontaneously meeting people like them given they constitute a majority in both suburbs under investigation. The situation was reversed for those born overseas.

Within Fawkner, participants that were owner-occupiers were more likely to have neighbours from the same ethnic background than those who did not live in their own home (statistically significant, *p*=0.020). In Broadmeadows, respondents who owned their own home had lower scores on the Islamophobia scales than tenants (*p*=0.036), higher attachment to their suburb (*p*=0.003) and higher participation in their neighbourhood (*p*=0.005). All differences are statistically significant. This aligns with the finding that those with higher SES are lower on Islamophobia, as they are also more likely to own their own home. In both neighbourhoods, unemployed respondents had higher scores on the Islamophobia scale than the employed respondents. This again may be due to the lower SES (on average) of those who were unemployed. Therefore, the higher Islamophobia score in Broadmeadows can be partly explained by the fact that three-quarters of our Broadmeadows sub-sample was 'outside labour force' (Table 4). In Fawkner, employed respondents felt more attached to their neighbourhoods. Our findings on the demographic correlates of Islamophobia largely match those of a nation-wide survey on Islamophobia (see Hassan, Martin et al. 2015).

Table 8 and Figure 20 below compare the neighbourhood experience of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents.

Table 8. Key statistics for Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and social capital (bridging and bonding) of Muslim and non-Muslim respondents

	Range	Muslims (n=143) Average (SD)	non-Muslims (n=158) Average (SD)
Islamophobia*	1-5	2.02 (.070)	3.15 (.101)
Suburb Attachment*	1-5	4.19 (.506)	3.57 (.586)
Local Participation	1-5	3.51 (.067)	3.30 (.060)
Bridging Social Cap	1-5	3.93 (.054)	3.61 (.053)
Bonding Social Cap	1-5	2.89 (.076)	3.39 (.651)

*difference is statistically significant at p<0.01

Figure 20. Mean values for Islamophobia, suburb attachment, local participation and social capital (bridging and bonding) of Muslim and non-Muslims respondents
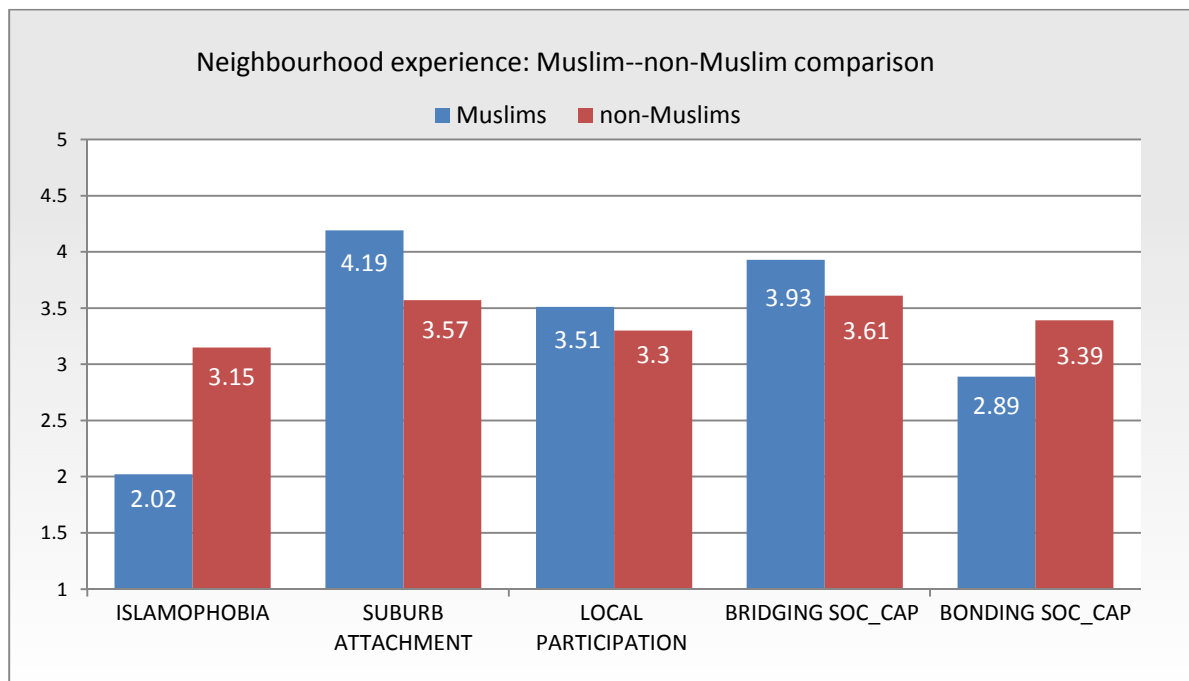
Table 8 and Figure 20 show the average scores for the five scales, comparing Muslim and non-Muslims survey respondents. The results indicate that Muslims in our sample had a significantly lower score on the Islamophobia scale than non-Muslims. This is not a surprising finding, as Islamophobia is measured through statements that refer to negative attitudes towards various aspects of the Muslim presence in the local area. Separate analyses indicate that Islamophobia is highest among non-Muslim in Broadmeadows (3.5 on a scale of 1-5) and lowest among Muslims in Fawkner (1.7) ($p<=0.01$ in Fawkner and $p<=0.5$ in Broadmeadows). Another interesting finding is that Muslim respondents had a significantly higher attachment (4.4) to their suburb than non-Muslims (3.8 on the same scale) ($p<0.01$). Muslims in Fawkner have the highest attachment scores (4.4) and non-Muslims in Broadmeadows the lowest (3.3). The Muslim community in Fawkner is relatively more homogeneous in terms of country of origin, which may partly explain this finding. Narrative answers confirm this interpretation, as some respondents emphasised how much they liked Fawkner, among other things because they felt safe and accepted with many other members of their community being present.

Another analysis comparing Muslim and non-Muslim experience looked separately at each locality. It showed that non-Muslims in Fawkner had higher scores (3.44) on the bonding social capital scale than Muslims (3.04) ($p<=.05$). This indicates that the non-Muslim residents of Fawkner interacted more with people of a similar cultural background to themselves, while Muslim residents had more ethnically diverse networks. This finding contradicts a public stereotype that Muslims self-segregate and 'do not integrate' in their local and wider communities.

Further analyses of other scales showed no significant differences between Muslim and non-Muslim respondents: the scores for bridging social capital were slightly higher for Muslims (4.1 in Fawkner and 3.7 in Broadmeadows) than non-Muslims (respectively 3.6 and 3.5) but the differences are not statistically significant ($p>0.05$).

Familiarity and satisfaction with government services

The responses in this section address the project's Research Question 6: How do residents of various backgrounds perceive and assess existing community development, community cohesion and other local programs?

The final Section E of the survey questionnaire contained four questions about local government programs. Answers to multiple choice (Likert Scale) questions (25 a&b) are shown in figures 21 and 22. There were also two open-ended questions, the content of which we analyse below.

Figures 21 and 22. Familiarity and satisfaction with community services in Broadmeadows and Fawkner
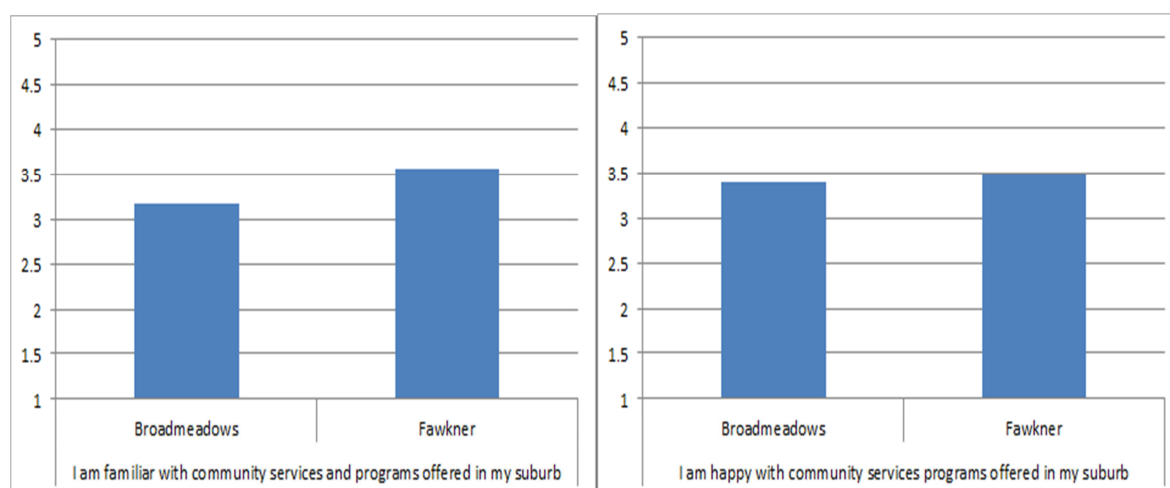
Overall, most respondents were familiar and happy with the community services in their suburbs. Respondents in Broadmeadows were less familiar with the services and programs offered in their area than respondents in Fawkner ($p<.01$). This indicates that these programs could be better communicated to the residents. Unsurprisingly, those with poor or no English were less informed about the programs and services than those with good or fluent English. The follow-up interviews confirm this finding. Our analysis indicates that Muslims and non-Muslims were equally aware of the offerings in both suburbs. Muslim respondents in Fawkner tended to be significantly more satisfied with the community services offered than non-Muslim respondents. In Broadmeadows, Muslim and non-Muslim respondents were equally satisfied with programs and services offered. Women were more satisfied with the services provided than men. We also tested for the impact of age, English proficiency and education but these variables were not related to the satisfaction with community services and programs. It should be noted that most respondents were approached through 'snowballing' which means that they either knew one of the interviewers or they knew other locals. This indicates that residents with local networks, who are therefore likely to be better informed, might have been overrepresented in the survey sample.

In both suburbs, the vast majority of respondents (77% and 81% in Broadmeadows and Fawkner respectively) participated in community events or used community services like the library, the swimming pool, the community centre and local parks, and attended multicultural events, playgroups and or English lessons. One open-ended question asked: 'What else can local government do to further improve life in your suburb and your suburb's environment in general?' Nearly all respondents answered this question, offering a variety of views. In both neighbourhoods about 10% of respondents were completely appreciative of and satisfied with the services provided.

In Broadmeadows, over one-third of respondents (n=57) asked for more services in the area, especially services for specific groups like the elderly and youth. The Broadmeadows respondents frequently complained about rubbish in the suburb (n=38), especially on nature strips and around Olsen Place. Twenty-eight respondents commented on safety-related issues like drugs, youth delinquency, a lack of police enforcement and their resulting feelings of not

being safe. Some respondents proposed that there was a relationship between the lack of activities for teenagers, the availability of illicit drugs is likely to be related to delinquency and crime. A few (n=18) respondents were concerned about the quality of local parks, which they would have liked to be cleaner and greener, and providing more opportunities for children to play. Some (n=16) respondents proposed that the local government would organise more multicultural events to bring closer the diverse population groups. One respondent thought these events should be used to 'teach immigrants about the Aussie way of life'. Other respondents (n=15) said they would like more information about community events or would like to be consulted when such events are planned. Some respondents (n=13) complained about 'hooning' in cars and other traffic safety issues, especially at night. Four respondents said local rates should be lower.

In Fawkner, the most frequent response (n=53) referred to improving infrastructure, amenity and services in the suburb: more public toilets (especially in the library and in parks); a need for a large supermarket; better cleaning of the swimming pool; more and better quality public housing; an upgrade to the aquatic centre; and better services and care at home for the elderly. Some Muslim women asked for women-only public spaces, like a section of the park where they can feel comfortable with their children. Local parks were clearly valued; 24 people shared ideas how to improve the parks, including children's playgrounds. Many respondents (n=31) advocated more community events which would be useful in understanding and bridging cultural differences and meeting other locals, for example young mothers' groups, children's groups, seniors' groups, men's groups and multicultural groups.

Another frequently mentioned problem (n=30) relates to roads and parking issues, especially around the mosque as well as the main shopping strip. Rubbish was an issue for many residents of Fawkner: 20 respondents thought the local government should do more about timely removal of rubbish, also the rubbish left on building sites and similar. Nine respondents asked for better information about community activities and four were advocating lower rates. There were no differences between Muslims and non-Muslims in terms of improvements that could be undertaken by the local governments, apart from the women-only spaces (or times, e.g. at the swimming pool and parks) advocated by Muslim respondents.

Follow-up interview findings

The thirty-six in-depth semi-structured interviews with residents of Fawkner and Broadmeadows gathered a large narrative data set. All respondents previously took part in the structured survey and were self-selected for the follow-up interviews. The self-selection and willingness to take part resulted in the interviewees being generally very engaged with the interview themes. In addition, they were aware of the project's central themes and had an opportunity to consider their views prior to the interview. However, self-selection impacted on the composition of the sample and we could not select the respondents to perfectly 'represent' their neighbourhoods in terms of their demographic characteristics. Also, not all target respondents could be reached at the time we started the follow-up interviews stage of the project (December 2016).

The final interview sample included twenty-five women and eleven men. Fawkner was

somewhat over-represented, with 23 interview respondents from Fawkner and 13 from Broadmeadows. The age of interviewees ranged from 19 to 81 years. The largest age group of respondents were people in their thirties. Even though the interviewees were from a broad range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, all interviews were conducted in English. Interview respondents recorded their ethnic backgrounds as 'Pakistani' (7), 'Australian' (6), Turkish (4), 'Italian' (3), 'Lebanese' (3), 'Palestinian/Lebanese' (2), 'Kurdish' (1), 'Kurdish/Iranian' (1), 'Iranian' (1), English (1), English/Scottish (1), British/German (1), Aboriginal/Balouch (1), 'Egyptian' (1), 'Arabic' (1), 'Filipino/Croatian' (1) and 'Cypriot/Ukrainian' (1). In terms of religious backgrounds, 19 people identified as Muslim and seven as having 'no religion'; two people identified as Christian, two as Anglican and one as Roman Catholic. There were also people from other religious backgrounds, such as Coptic Orthodox, Judean, Dianic Wicca, and 'Religion of Love'. Out of 36 respondents, 13 were 'visible Muslim's and two could be identified in public as Christian because they wore cross necklaces. Three interviewed women converted to Islam as adults and one converted as a child following her parents' conversion. One respondent was Muslim during her marriage to a Muslim man but did not follow any religion at the time of the interview. One interviewee in each suburb had lived there all their life; for others, the time of local residence ranged from two to 66 years. This diverse sample contained a wealth of individual experiences and provided rich narrative data.

The interview was semi-structured and developed through five parts, exploring four broadly conceived themes. In the first part, the respondents were asked about the demographic and socio-economic backgrounds: ethnic and religious background, education and work, family composition and migration history (if applicable). The second part of the interview was devoted to the neighbourhood experience. Interviewees were asked about advantages and disadvantages of living in their suburb and about their interactions with neighbours and other locals. The third part of the interview inquired about the local ethnic and religious diversity and particularly about interaction with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds, that is, the 'bridging social capital'. The fourth part of the interview examined the attitudes towards and experiences with religious visibility—one's own, if applicable, and other people's. The questions in this part of the interview differed according to whether the respondent was themselves religiously visible or not. This mattered particularly in exploring the personal meanings attributed to religious visibility and why the respondent chose to be religiously visible, especially when this could be disadvantageous. For non-Muslims and non-visible Muslims, this part of the interview revolved around their views on the 'Muslim visibility', and their local experiences with 'visible Muslims'. The fifth part of the interview asked about the experience of local disadvantage, including social issues and suburban amenity and built environment.

The analysis started with a detailed reading of the interview transcripts, followed by a series of consultations among researchers during which a thematic analysis table was created. Guided by the thematic analysis table, the interviews were reviewed again. A summary of each interview and summaries of each theme for each interview were entered in the table, including illustrative quotes. The themes selected for the analysis were: religious visibility; views on and experiences of Islamophobia; local diversity and bridging social capital; and local disadvantage. These themes were in line with the project's main focus and its

designated research questions.

Religious visibility

The project focused primarily on the visibility of Muslims, even though it did not exclude other types of religious visibility. For example, a couple of Christian respondents said that they were wearing cross necklaces, but this did not seem to attract much attention of the public. Rather, the main impact of these religious symbols was to serve as a personal reminder of their values. For Muslim respondents, wearing a traditional Islamic dress (*hijab* or headscarf, *abaya*, *burka*, *niqab* for women, *shalwaar* and *kameez*, beards and hats for men) was a personal reminder of their values and beliefs but also perceived as having social consequences, as elaborated below.

All 'visibly Muslim' respondents were women (n=13). There was a sense among the respondents, both Muslims and non-Muslims, that the face covering of Muslim women (niqab) was problematic. The unease about *niqab* had different sources and was articulated in different ways: in terms of uncertainty of the identity of the person; fear and unease, including feeling unsafe from terrorism; finding face covering culturally 'confronting'; preventing communication with a person whose face is covered. Such sentiments were expressed in ten interviews (3 Muslim, 7 non-Muslim respondents). An Australian woman in her 30s commented:

I find it quite daunting when I see somebody wearing something like that. I don't like it. I don't mind the hijab, which I think it's, like, the face is showing, that I don't - that doesn't worry me. But the full face covering does, I don't know why. I don't - I think it's because I can't see their face.

A Muslim man shared this view:

I reckon the burqa, the veil I think, I reckon that's a bit too much, like that's a bit too much just because we can't see the face. It's like it can frighten some people. For me it's okay; I don't mind it, but for some people it's not like that, it's just fearful, like you don't know who they are, you're in a way like you don't know their face, what they look like, so it can be fear from them because of that. (Int #34, M, 38, Turkish background, 16 years in Broadmeadows)

As the quotes above illustrate, covering face was seen as a barrier that precludes intercultural mixing and therefore, by extension, Muslim -- non-Muslim understanding. It was also seen as have a potential to limit successful integration and Muslims 'becoming Australian'. For some respondents, it meant a denial of the equality of women with men.

Not many respondents commented on their experiences with visibly Muslim men. We were not able to attract visible Muslim men to take part in follow-up interviews, which is one of the limitations of the project. Two people expressed dislike for visible Muslim men:

I guess if they were obviously Aussie men, like they had grown up in Australia, you'd probably say 'hi' and joke with them a bit. But I think Muslim men look so serious sometimes when they're in Muslim dress. (Int #8, F, 39, second generation Italian, 11

years in Fawkner).

When asked about reasons and personal meaning of being religiously visible, our respondents offered diverse narratives. One Muslim woman who sometimes covers her face said: 'I am not going to let go of what I believe in for the sake of anybody, no matter what.' She thought that by wearing a face veil she was 'granted more respect from men', and that a veil was a 'shield and a barrier, with which a woman can still go out'. For her, her face cover 'symbolised protection from God'. (Int #10, F, 55, Australian, Muslim, in Fawkner or 15 years).

The issue of being granted more respect and showing the unique identity was repeated in few other interviews with Muslim women who wore hijab:

That's for me, as part of me, that's what I am, so my origin is what I am, and I like to show that for everyone to know that as well, but I'm finding it's very accepted with regards. (Int #15, F, 32, second generation Lebanese, 10 years in Fawkner)

In general, it can be said that respondents felt positive about visible Muslim women with a *hijab* or *kabaja* and had no problems encountering visibly Muslim men, but were less positive about Muslim women covering their faces.

Islamophobia

Two respondents objected to the term 'Islamophobia' as 'too negative'. However, these same people talked about the problem of fear and antipathy towards Muslims. One respondent (Int #10), a visible Muslim woman of Australian background thought that 'non-Muslims move out of Fawkner because Muslims are moving in'. She referred to Fawkner as having 'too many Muslims'. She was of the opinion that Muslims should be more dispersed and not residentially concentrated, which would allow them to 'mix more with others'.

Many instances of 'Islamophobia in action' were reported in the interviews. It needs to be noted that many of these incidents happened outside of the two suburbs, in other parts of Melbourne. Public transport and car parks were most common places where abuse was directed at visibly Muslim women. These were also places Muslim women were most fearful about. One participants told us about her recent experience:

*[T]he problem is you just don't know any more [...] and this is why you have to be aware of your surroundings, it's no longer a case of sit down, forget about everybody on the train. Now, you sit down, where is the button for emergency stopping, who else is around me, where do I choose to sit? We were travelling back on the train yesterday [my husband and I], there was [...] another Muslim lady with her two children, she actually asked if she could come and sit with us, because we were sitting in the [..] three+three rows of seats...so they came and sat opposite us. Obviously, I think, she felt [..] vulne*rable with her two daughters. (Int #20, F, 55, English, Muslims 10 years in Fawkner)

A visible Muslim woman (Int #19) commented about the reality of being a 'visible Muslim' in Australia today and how Islamophobia may seriously affect the people who are its targets:

[P]eople will look and then look away and that, that in itself is a very terrible feeling. You know, or you'll be stared upon or I feel that every action of ours [...] is watched very, very closely. [...] it's not a good feeling to feel as though you're being watched every step of the way. I'm human at the end of the day. I might say something wrong [...]

Australian-born and/or bred people were readier to see and acknowledge Islamophobia, much more so than recent arrivals, as they may feel more entitled to a fair treatment and 'inclusion', given that Australia is their country and 'culture'. They may also be more sensitive to racist behaviour as they apply Australian standards in what constitutes racism, and Islamophobia as a version of it. This has been noted in previous Australian research, for example Hage (2015) and Paradies and Cunningham (2009). Ignorance about Islam was seen as a source of Islamophobia by several respondents, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Media were seen as one of the main contributors to the increased sense of unease about Islamophobia. As one respondent put it, Islamophobia 'sells newspapers':

The media show you the bad stuff about Muslims. I know that. [...] I know, from a cafeteria owner [...] this friend of mine, she tells me she sells the newspaper at her cafe in the morning... she gets 50 copies. On an average day, normal day, she returns half of them, not selling. But when there's anything to do with terrorism and Muslims [...] She told me that. [...] when anything to do with terrorism and Muslims, she makes sure she buys 200 so she can sell them straightaway, in the first hour. So it's just these headlines [that] sell. So the media, that's what they do. (Int #16, M, 38, Arabic, Muslim, 3 years in Broadmeadows)

In line with what other studies (Lubbers et al, 1998; Havekes et al, 201; Sohrabi & Farquharson, 2016; Kassimeris & Jackson, 2012) have found, our respondents experienced a negative impact of negative media responding in their daily lives. One Muslim man thought it was worrisome when 'politicians make ignorant remarks' because of the consequences for his safety. Several visible Muslim women recently arrived from Pakistan and living in Fawkner, were exceedingly positive about their experience of living in Australia as a visible Muslim. However, they told us they felt safer in their suburbs with many other Muslims than elsewhere and offered an explanation for residential concentration, which could be summarized as 'safety in numbers':

[...] there are a lot of Pakistanis here, so we were more comfortable [...] We feel more safe in a surrounding where there are more Muslims or Pakistanis. (Int #6, F, 33, Pakistani, Muslim, 4 years in Fawkner)

Several Muslim respondents volunteered detailed stories about being verbally abused, yelled at or sworn at in the street. In some of these situation they were with their children or/and partner. All reported incidents happened outside Fawkner and Broadmeadows.

The neighbourhood experience: diversity and bridging social capital

Our respondents generally saw local population diversity as a benefit and the high degree of cultural diversity as a significant bonus. Most people had positive interactions with their diverse neighbours. They were, for example, taking each other's bins out, occasionally visiting each other, sharing food, borrowing things, having chats, even babysitting each other's children. A recent arrival in Fawkner also talked about safety and the benefit of knowing one's neighbours:

Yes it's very important to know your neighbours with their names and what they do because in case of having a robbery or in case of having some problems or issues you can go and ask them for help. They are your instant help. (F, 40, Pakistani, Muslim. has lived in Fawkner for 10 years)

Most respondents talked about their friends or neighbours, or both, who were from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds:

Turkish, Kiwis Maoris, Iraqi Christian across the street. The people across the road has six kids like us and same age kids, and they Iraqis, Christian, and we're Muslim, and they visit us, we go to visit them. (Int #16, M, 38 years old, Arabic, Muslim, 3 years in Broadmeadows).

A Christian respondent who worked at an Islamic school talked about the fact that she was encouraged by the school management not to hide her religious identity. In a couple of other interviews, however, schools were regarded as places where tensions between diverse students could arise (some of the schools referred to were located in adjoining suburbs rather than in Fawkner or Broadmeadows).

In regards to specific locations where the 'diversity work' of 'bridging' often took place, swimming pools, playgroups, the community house and karate club were mentioned as examples. Beside the diversity of people, the diversity of shops and restaurants, as well as the close-knit, family-oriented community, were mentioned as valuable local assets in both suburbs. However, we were also told that it was not always easy to connect across difference, despite good will. One Australian-born respondent who recently bought the house in Fawkner in order to be closer to the city said:

So, like, when I'm at the community [house] lunch I'm not sure exactly where the boundaries are or like how that works exactly. The [Muslim] women meet in their own room. So I understand I'm not meant to go into that room but like, yeah, just understanding more about, like, how to friendly integrate with everyone [would be beneficial]. (Int #3, M, 32, second generation of Italian background, in Fawkner for 2 years).

Being able to communicate fluently in English was mentioned as an essential prerequisite for cross-cultural mixing, and also for educating people about one's religion and customs:

[…] to mix and talk with people, it's part of our culture. It's part of Islamic culture that we must greet people, whether we know them or not. We should say hello, how are you? And we should talk to people, so that people say "oh they're not so bad,

these Muslims". (Int #10, F, 55, Australian, Muslim, 14 years in Fawkner)

It is worth noting that several respondents referred to 'Muslims' and 'Australians' as separate categories. In their narratives, 'Australian' usually meant 'Anglo Australian' and 'white', while Muslims were imagined as not fitting into these categories.

Local disadvantage

Respondents generally acknowledged the fact that the two suburbs might be seen and officially classified as 'disadvantaged', but mostly they were happy, or even felt privileged, to be living in the areas. One respondent observed:

Yeah...I like it. I like its diversity, I like that it's a low-income area. I think I've kind of learnt more than my... maybe I don't know how to say this...my upper-class peers, who have been a little bit more sheltered than me. I think that it's given me a lot of life experience, and also, and it's made me live a simple life. (Int. #14, F, 30, Croatian/Filipino, Orthodox, in Broadmeadows all her life)

An 'underdog' mentality was also reflected in a couple of other interviews. For example, a mother of three in Fawkner talked about the fact that living in Fawkner requires less pressure to provide children with everything that their peers in more well-off suburbs have.

However, a couple of respondents felt that living in a disadvantaged suburb was problematic. One respondent pointed out that if he mentioned that he lived in Broadmeadows in his job application, he lowered his chances of getting a job. Several Australian-born (or bred) 'gentrifiers', tertiary-educated middle-class professionals, either sent or planned to send their children to other than local schools. The latter were described as under-resourced, in terms of facilities as well as staff.

In Fawkner in particular, the suburban environment or specific facilities were experienced as poor. For example, the problem of rubbish being randomly dumped was mentioned by several interviewees. A 'dirty swimming pool' and library facilities being 'antiquated' also featured in the narratives. A couple of people mentioned that the front gardens were not so well kept, which was seen as a lack of respect for the neighbourhood. Problems with speeding, 'doing doughnuts' and 'burnouts' on the streets were issues reported more by Fawkner, but also by Broadmeadows interviewees:

There are people here in Fawkner, I don't like the behaviour. They get in their cars and they drive up the road a million miles an hour and they do burnouts all the time and trashing everybody else's cars...they go around corners sideways and whatnot. (Int #5, M. 64 Australian, Jewish, 15 years in Fawkner)

A number of respondents from Broadmeadows, and a smaller number from Fawkner, made references to crime and drug dealing in their suburbs. Two respondents, both non-Muslim and relatively young (one mother of young children and one young man who cared for his mother) said they would like to move elsewhere if they had an opportunity. Both respondents lived in public housing units.

I feel closed off from the world, where I live. Because we're all in the same boat,

we're all locked away [in public housing]. […] it's like [...] some sort of drama.
We're all on Centrelink, we're all in public housing. [...]. But at the end of the day, I
just want my kids to know what it's like to live in a normal street again, [...] no
noises, no needles, no fights, you know. (Interviewee #24, F, 29, English/Scottish
background, 6 years in Broadmeadows, previously a Muslim, now having 'no
religion')

In general, respondents felt that facilities have improved over the past few years, especially in Broadmeadows. Some thought their suburbs were safer before. According to our follow-up interview respondents, both suburbs, and especially Fawkner, experienced significant changes in regards to the real estate markets in the last few years, which also impacted on the composition of residents, with many educated Muslim migrants and a number of Australian-born 'gentrifiers' moving to Fawkner. With gentrification, the real estate prices have risen and several respondents mentioned that it was now 'hard to get a good house' and that the 'rents were expensive'.

Neighbourhood attachment

As explained in the theoretical section of this report, neighbourhood attachment refers to feelings of connectedness to the physical and the social environment. Our respondents were generally attached to their neighbourhood, and would be reluctant to leave if offered a hypothetical opportunity to do so:

So I wouldn't, if you gave me a whole heap of money and said you can move out of Fawkner
I'd go, actually this is where I'd like to be. I've really put down roots here and then we've
got sort of networks. (Int. #9, F, 30, Australian, Pagan, 8 years in Fawkner)

Fawkner respondents frequently mentioned the connection with the physical and the social environment. They praised the diversity and tolerance in the area, which is one of the main reasons why some respondents migrated to Australia, and to avoid ethnic and racial tensions in their country of origin. *"Here very peaceful environment, good people you know" (Int. #60, M, 58, Pakistani, Muslim, 3 years in Fawkner). "We like the environment of Fawkner so we can live with our lifestyle very easily." (Int.#77, F, 31, Pakistan, Muslim, 4 years in Fawkner).*

In Broadmeadows, negative perceptions of the suburb were more often mentioned. Few respondents mentioned a 'lack of kindness' in the area in one way or another, as the following quote illustrates:

[…] Sunbury's more better than Broadmeadows because I think it's more cleaner,
environmentally it's more cleaner, not much, even the people I think they're actually are
more, they're more nice than Broadmeadows (Int.#298, M, 38, Turkish, Islam, 16 years in
Broadmeadows)

The negative image of the area, combined with a perception of high crime rates, and a history of a low-income area, all seemed to play a part. Some residents did feel at home or were reluctant to acknowledge that there may have been some downsides. They acknowledged that there was poverty and crime yet they were reluctant to draw consequences out of this:

In terms of safety, I think it's great. I don't see any major problems. Yes, you have crime and issues of drugs or property vandalism, whatever. But that's …" (Int.#146, F, 35, Australian born, Balouch/Aboriginal, Islam, 21 years in Fawkner)

Others were more explicit about the impact of a lack of their attachment to the neighbourhood:

I don't like this area. This area is terrible: trouble Drugs around everywhere. Cocaine. Heroin. More protection [safety] at night is needed. People come knocking at his door late at night, wanting a smoke (Int.#185, M, 62, Egypt, Christian, 4 years in Fawkner)

In general, the follow-up interviews supported the findings of the survey, which indicated that neighbourhood attachment was higher among our Fawkner sample, in comparison to the Broadmeadows sample. The respondents shared their concerns about the impact of drugs and crime on their feelings of safety and hence their attachment to the neighbourhood.

Discussion

In this section, we summarise our findings by returning to our original research questions and responding to them succinctly on the basis of the data analysis presented above.

Our central research question asked about the relationship between (Muslim) religious visibility and social cohesion in two suburbs with large Muslim minorities: 'How does religious visibility (as opposed as religious diversity per se) impact on social cohesion in case-study localities?' In our analyses so far, the data did not confirm our starting assumption that the higher visibility of Muslims in Fawkner, in contrast to Broadmeadows would be related to reduced bridging social capital and closely related social cohesion.

We also succinctly address our detailed RQs, drawing from our diverse data set (interview, survey and observational data):

1. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to local Muslim residents? Does visibility have impact on their lifestyle, values and general integration?

Our data indicate that for Muslims, being visible often refers to positive values like being accepted and respected in their ethnic communities in Australia; strengthening the feeling of belonging to the community; passing their traditional culture onto the next generations; keeping their personal religious focus in their daily life; creating a feeling of spiritual fulfilment and happiness (e.g. maintaining a 'relationship with God'). Visible Muslim respondents felt that their religious attire reminded them of good Muslim values of being an honest and charitable person, of being open to other people and of giving service to the community.

2. What does Islamic visibility mean/symbolise to non-Muslim locals? What are the assumptions and perceptions, and are they based on everyday local experiences (rather than media reports)?

In general, our respondents, living in two suburbs with large Muslim minorities, did not have any issues with encountering 'visible Muslims' in their daily life. However, some respondents from specific backgrounds, especially Christians from Middle Eastern countries, could feel apprehensive towards visible Muslims in their neighbourhoods. This is an issue that may affect recent Syrian influx into Broadmeadows, which is a religiously and ethnically diverse intake containing Muslims but also Kurds and non-Muslim minorities such as Christian Yezidis.

Both non-Muslim and Muslim locals were doubtful about the face covering (burqa or niqab). Most people disliked this form of religious attire and said they would prefer to see the face of a person they meet on the street or need to communicate with. Others mentioned that they expected the face covering referred to unequal gender relationships. Visibly Muslim men were usually regarded by non-Muslims as standing out in one way or another but a vast majority had no problem with encountering visible Muslim men. One female respondent mentioned that she found that Muslim men looked too 'serious' and another noted a lack of respect for elderly women by Muslim men.

3. How strong is bridging social capital, and consequently community cohesion, in the case-study localities? What kind of contact and interaction between local Muslims and non-Muslims is typical?

Our survey data indicate, contrary to our expectations based on the level of religious visibility in two localities, that the bridging social capital was stronger among respondents in Fawkner where local Muslims are more visible, than in Broadmeadows. We also found that Fawkner Muslims had more diverse networks than non-Muslim respondents. This means that Muslim respondents in Fawkner often interacted with people that are different from them and receive help from such people. In both suburbs, Muslims tended to have overall positive experiences with their non-Muslims neighbours.

Bonding social capital was shown to be stronger among non-Muslims and among respondents in Fawkner. This means that non-Muslims in Fawkner more often had neighbours and friends from the same background and knew local people from the same background. We heard similar accounts of neighbourly interaction and collaboration from the Broadmeadows interview respondents.

Most respondents indicated that they were happy to interact with other cultural groups in their street and wider suburban spaces. Most people knew their neighbours and sometimes visited each other at home. However, most interaction took place in public spaces such as shops, playgrounds, schools and libraries. Young mothers tended to meet other mothers of other ethnic groups in the library or playgroups elsewhere. The Fawkner Community House seems to be a focal point of much spontaneous as well as organised cross-cultural interaction and mixing.

4. How do locals assess their neighbourhoods in terms of safety, inclusiveness and neighbourliness?

A majority of respondents reported being satisfied with their neighbourhoods. The scores on neighbourhood attachment were high in both neighbourhoods, although the Broadmeadows respondents were less attached to their localities than those in Fawkner. As elaborated above, Muslims were more attached to their neighbourhoods than non-Muslims.

The in-depth interviews revealed that the Broadmeadows respondents tended to mention problems with safety relatively often: problems with the easy availability of illicit drugs, youth loitering in the neighbourhood, and dangerous driving. In Fawkner, traffic issues were also mentioned, frequently in relation to parking around the Islamic college and mosque.

5. How can bridging social capital and community cohesion be enhanced, according to local residents and service providers?

All respondents (both residents and key informants) agreed that activities where diverse people come together were valuable in creating the bridging social capital and local community cohesion. Services like the library playgroups and community multicultural festivals were mentioned as valuable in bringing diverse locals together and creating more inter-cultural and inter-faith understanding. Most spontaneous interaction between diverse locals took place in the street or in community and public spaces like shops, schools and

parks and during community festivals. Ongoing cross-cultural mixing which can lead to more meaningful contacts took place in the community house and during organised community development programs. Our respondents in Broadmeadows indicated that the communication around events and programs could be improved and that the council should support Muslim groups in publicly celebrating their religious holidays.

6. How do residents of various backgrounds perceive and assess existing community development, community cohesion and other programs?

There are many similarities in the valuation of existing programs in the two localities: respondents valued similar kinds of activities. Women and Muslims tended to be slightly more satisfied with community services and programs than men and non-Muslims. Muslims and those with good or fluent English felt better informed than non-Muslims and those with poor or no English. It is worth noting that Muslim and non-Muslim respondents in both suburbs had similar levels of English proficiency. In other words, the Muslims in our sample did not lag behind in their command of English.

Conclusion

The Australian government's position on the success of Australian multiculturalism is unequivocal and bipartisan. In March 2017, the federal government re-endorsed the ideology of multiculturalism and declared Australia to be 'the most successful multicultural society on Earth'. This sits in stark contrast with many European nations where multiculturalism has in recent years been declared a failure by political leaders (e.g. in UK, Germany, the Netherlands and France). In many European countries, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim parties have strengthened their political support and culturally diverse immigration has been hotly debated. Muslim minorities feature prominently in these debates, including recent (March 2017) Dutch elections and (April-May 2017) French elections.

In spite of a relatively more favourable Australian situation, there is no room for complacency, as the debates focused on diversity and 'integration' simmer and flare up in almost regular intervals. Our study broadly positions itself within this debate, as Islamophobia and a renewed threat of violent extremism seem to be twin issues—they feed off each other and potentially affect social cohesion in areas of high Muslim residential concentrations (see Grossman et al. 2016 for a detailed review of research). For example, immigration, integration and access to Australian citizenship are currently debated in association with the 'Australian values' and the debate over the article '18C' of the Australian anti-discrimination legislation about free speech and the 'right to offend' minorities has been relatively intense since late 2013.

The problem of Muslim integration and purported value discrepancy between 'Muslim' and 'Western' values is often implied and sometimes explicitly debated in the media. Politicians from right-wing parties, especially the One Nation Party, have singled out Muslims as a security risk and an obstacle to social cohesion (e.g. newly elected Senator Hanson's Senate speech in Sept 2016). Our interview respondents often expressed the opinion that the way in which politicians and media refer to Muslims influences the way in which non-Muslims regard them, at the local suburban level and more broadly.

The religious visibility of Muslims seems to be the issue that singles out Muslims in their Western context more than their religion per se. Some European countries have taken issue with such visibility, the assumptions built around it, and its potential social consequences, and banned some elements of Muslim dress, specifically Muslim women's hair and face covering. The Australian debate has focused on the face covering, linking it with security issues. In this context, our project explored the effects of Muslim visibility in specific, diverse and disadvantaged suburban environments and contributed in-depth knowledge of the Muslim—non-Muslim perceptions and interaction in specific communities where Muslim minorities are present much above the state and national averages.

One of the pillars of anti-Muslim prejudice is ignorance and homogenising a heterogeneous category of people. We found that there was an overlap between Muslim visibility and adherence to Islam as a way of life, but this was by no means a full match. We also found that specific ethno-cultural ancestry and immigrant generation significantly determined Muslim Australians' relationship with their host culture and communities, and that this relationship

was not primarily determined by the strength of their religious adherence (see also Mansouri 2017; Ozyurt 2013). In other words, previous research, including our own, showed that living as a practising Muslim did not alienate a person from the 'Australian values' and from meaningful civic participation in the life of the wider community.

The local inter-ethnic relations seem to have improved in Fawkner over the past four years. On the basis of our earlier research project (2012-13), we had described the inter-ethnic relations in Fawkner as 'ethnic segmentation' (see Colic-Peisker and Robertson 2015), which can translate as strong intra-ethnic bonding social capital, but low inter-ethnic bridging social capital. Over the past several years, a demographic transition, due to new migrants moving in and the numbers of older residents from Anglo-Australian and other European backgrounds decreasing owing to natural attrition (Fawkner was a disproportionately old suburb in the 2011 Census). The apparent improvement in inter-ethnic relations in Fawkner may also be explained by positive effects of the inter-ethnic contact as posited by the 'contact theory' elaborated above. The intensification of the local government's community activities and programs in Fawkner may have also played a role. These programs responded to the intense intake of Muslims into the suburb since the 1990s, offering settlement support and community development activities. The interethnic contact between Muslims and non-Muslims and building of bridging social networks in Fawkner may also be facilitated by the fact that a vast majority of recently arrived Muslim migrants are highly educated and proficient in English.

Given the recent intakes of refugees from the Middle East into Broadmeadows, similar programs may be warranted there. Currently, many activities are undertaken in Broadmeadows but a relatively large share of our respondents was unaware of them. Improved communication via various channels in various languages may help to overcome this problem.

Overall, the picture painted by our findings about local sociality in two diverse, socio-economically disadvantaged suburbs with large Muslim minorities was positive. Even though our survey recorded a level of Islamophobia in both localities, these are specific local environments and the results cannot be easily compared to results of a national survey with a different methodology (e.g. Hassan, Martin et al. 2015). While it is not warranted to speculate whether these were 'high' or 'low' scores without a persuasive comparison with other local contexts or with a wider society, such a comparison would be a worthwhile goal for future research.

What our data enables us to say is that in localities with residential concentrations of Muslims, religious visibility did not contribute to Islamophobia amongst local residents, apart from a widespread dislike for the Muslim *niqab* (women's face cover) among our respondents. A vast majority of the surveyed locals positively valued the local diversity. Most of them knew their neighbours from different backgrounds and had positive interactions with them. When the neighbourhood experiences of the Muslim and non-Muslim residents were compared, we found that Muslim residents in both suburbs were more attached to their neighbourhoods than non-Muslims. In-depth interviews provided further understanding of this finding, indicating that Muslim residents felt safe and accepted in their suburbs, but not necessarily in other parts of Melbourne, where 'visible' Muslim women feared or actually

experienced Islamophobic incidents. Further research could not only provide comparative data on different local contexts and shed more light on the prevalence of Islamophobia in Australia, but also deepen our understanding of its demographic and social-economic correlates.

Even though Australia is not as adversely affected by terrorism and Islamophobia as some other Western countries, international political developments and events far away reverberate in Australia. For example, there was a sharp increase in Islamophobic attacks in Australia after the Paris terrorist attacks in 2015-2016 (Hassan, Martin et al. 2015:8). Therefore, there should be no room for complacency, and concerted policy effort and continuous evidence-based engagement at all levels of government, in collaboration with key community organisations, is needed to preserve and strengthen community cohesion and tolerance in Australia, both locally and nationally.

Considerations for future policy and programs

Disclaimer: The following recommendations are based on the survey, in-depth interviews and observational data. They are drawn from our research insights elaborated above but not necessarily adjusted to and in tune with specific local and state governments' modus operandi, which is not our area of expertise. We leave it to our research partners, the two local government councils and the ICV, and our funder, the State Government, to take these considerations on board and possibly incorporate them in their already extensive activities in the area of community development and broader engagement with their constituencies, through community and civic organisations and directly with local residents.

1. Continuous and increased funding for community development and diversity programs and services in the two localities. As overseas immigration into these areas continues, supporting mutual understanding of Muslim and non-Muslim residents should be the focus of the social cohesion policy.
2. Continuous and increased communication of community events and programs for all groups, including those with no or poor English.
3. Employing more people from minority backgrounds, women and people from local ethnic minorities (e.g. people of Muslim backgrounds and Aboriginal people in the local police force and as teacher's aides) in order to facilitate cross-cultural understanding.
4. Continue and if possible strengthen youth programs. Alongside existing programs featuring sport, music-related and other programs could be expanded.
5. A consistent support by local councils of multi-faith community celebration, especially around main religious holidays, has a potential to increase inter-faith knowledge, familiarity and a feeling of belonging among minority populations.
6. Inter-faith programs with an explicit educational content should be continuously funded and supported. These programs could be delivered in local schools, community organisations, neighbourhood houses and places of worship. Such programs have potential to increase tolerance and promote local harmony.
7. Employment programs focused on reaching out to local youth could tackle entrenched socio-economic disadvantage that may run in families, leading to social ills such as drugs, delinquency, inter-ethnic tensions and a potential attraction to violent extremism.

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