



Understanding Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism: A Standardised Research Measure

FINAL RESEARCH REPORT

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Introduction

This research project has developed and validated a standardised 5-factor, 14-item measure, Building Resilience to Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14) for identifying and understanding young people's resilience to violent extremism at community level. The measure was based on two precursor studies in Australia (Harnessing Resilience Capital in Culturally Diverse Communities to Counter Violent Extremism, CVESC/ANZ CTC, 2013-14) and Canada (Barriers to Violent Radicalisation: Understanding Pathways to Resilience among Canadian Youth, Kanishka Project, 2014-15). Both studies aimed to shift focus away from a central concern with community level *vulnerabilities* to violent extremist radicalisation, and concentrate instead on what resources and capacities helped people, and especially youth, to resist narratives of and social network influence toward violent extremism.

The BRAVE-14 measure was trialled with 475 young people from a wide range of culturally diverse backgrounds in Australia and Canada (75 more than the original proposed sample size). The results of this project have provided a robust standardised measure that can serve as a tool for establishing baseline and post-intervention measures of resilience to violent extremism for young people across a broad range of culturally diverse and general youth populations. It will also help deliver stronger insights and knowledge about how youth situated in particular neighbourhood localities and settings are faring in relation to resilience protections and vulnerabilities concerning violent extremism.

The proposed research is firmly grounded in contemporary resilience theory and literature, which has increasingly moved towards understanding resilience as a social process supported (or inhibited) by a range of 'everyday' intersecting external and contextual factors at individual, family, social, institutional and economic resource levels (Masten 2001; Ungar 2008, 2011; Sherrieb, Norris & Galea 2010; Southwick et al. 2014). However, a continuing gap in the field of understanding resilience to violent extremism has been the collection and analysis of statistically valid data to provide scientific evidence for how young people from a broad range of culturally diverse backgrounds in multicultural settings operationalise resilience to violent extremism through their everyday, multilevel social and institutional interactions. Both Australia and Canada, with similar histories of multicultural policy implementation over time, have dense and highly culturally diverse urban populations that served as ideal comparative locations in which to investigate these issues further.

Validated cross-cultural, transnational measures of general child, youth and adult resilience such as CYRM-28 (Ungar & Liebenberg 2011), developed by Canada's Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University, have been successfully used around the world. Efforts to develop resilience

indicators measures specifically addressing violent extremism have previously focused on single ethnicity youth groups, such as the Building Resilience to Violent Extremism Amongst Somali-American youth in Minneapolis-St Paul, USA (Weine, 2012; Weine & Ahmed, 2012) or multiple specific ethnic adult population groups, such as Harnessing Resilience Capital (Grossman & Tahiri, 2014). In Australia, a number of other measurement instruments have been developed for local and regional governments that focus on general population assessments of resilience, including the Community Resilience Scorecard (Arbon 2014), the Queensland Resilience Profiles Project (Malcolm et al. 2012), and the Victorian Indicators of Community Strength (Pope 2011). All of these measures have contributed to understanding various aspects of general population community resilience in crisis, disaster and social wellbeing contexts.

However, there has been no measure to date that explicitly deals with hypothesised links between cultural identity and connectedness; the presence of both bridging and linking capital; violence-related behaviours, and violence-related beliefs as indicators of stronger or weaker resilience to violent extremism. The absence of a standardised measure addressing these domains currently limits the efforts of communities and agencies to develop effective and meaningful youth-focused policies and programs that can identify both what young people in communities already possess as resilience resources (but which may be unrecognised or under-utilised), and what vulnerabilities or gaps they may need to address, and how. As a 2016 systematic literature review on social cohesion, community resilience and violent extremism noted:

There are significant research gaps in the development of indicators or measures of community resilience relating to violent extremism, especially those that can create understanding of why people *don't* turn to violent extremism, rather than on why they *do*. More work is needed in particular on identifying the preventive and protective factors at work in community resilience contexts, with detailed assessment of their multi-level systemic processes. (Grossman et al., 2016)

Accordingly, the current research has both extended previous work in the field and generated new knowledge through the project data in order to develop and validate a cross-cultural standardised measure applicable to a wide spectrum of culturally diverse, general population youth that for the first time explicitly addresses this gap. The measure can serve as a diagnostic toolkit and resource that allows communities and government agencies to work together to identify the following:

- What resilience protections and capacities young people in specific communities may already possess that can be preserved or further strengthened; what vulnerabilities or needs may be present that can be addressed;
- What difference various interventions may make in enhancing resilience capacity by using BRAVE-14 as a pre-and post-intervention measurement tool, and

- As a knowledge platform for developing effective strategies and programs that can strengthen resilience to violent extremism amongst young people in locally relevant, innovative, and culturally and contextually sensitive ways.

Background to the research

In Australia, the Victoria University-Victoria Police project 'Harnessing Resilience Capital in Culturally Diverse Communities to Counter Violent Extremism' (CVESC/ANZCTC, 2013-2014) explored Australian comparative ethno-cultural dimensions of community resilience in four ethnic Australian communities (Indonesian-, Somali-, Lebanese-, and South/Sudanese-Australian). This project used a strengths-based theoretical framework that highlighted the cultural dimensions of resilience to violent extremism for a national qualitative sample of 87 adult participants aged 18 and over. The study yielded valuable data and insights regarding existing culturally based resilience assets, vulnerabilities and risks in these communities relating to violent extremism, and also provided the platform for a draft 13-factor, 55 item measure based on indicators derived from this data relating to resilience to violent extremism (Grossman & Tahiri 2014).

In 2014-2015, the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University was funded by the Canadian Government's Kanishka Project (Public Safety Canada) to investigate 'Barriers to Violent Radicalisation: Understanding Pathways to Resilience among Canadian Youth'. This mixed-methods study examined the social ecologies that prevent violent extremism, using innovative research methods to uncover unnamed or unrecognised protective processes that are part of young people's lives when they are exposed to, and resist, violent extremism.

Integral to both studies was the effort to identify individual, social, economic and political factors that can promote positive and prosocial development, social cohesion, cultural adherence, relationships, powerful identities, individual and social efficacy, and other influences on behaviour by answering the following questions: How do people experience the psychosocial benefits associated with resilience without resorting to violence? What pathways do they follow, and what do their families, communities and governments provide them with that make it more likely that they will become resilient without turning to violent extremism? What, if any, roles do culturally grounded identities, practices and beliefs play in fostering community resilience to violent extremism? How can resilience-building be contextually operationalised in culturally diverse and pluralist settings, what do we need to understand and who do we need to work with in order to achieve this?

Theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of the study

From theory to practice: grounding resilience theory in local contexts

One of the major challenges in the field of developing resilience-based approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE) lies in the difficulty of moving the discussion away from conceptual

definitions of resilience to consideration of how to operationalise and apply resilience concepts in meaningful and context-relevant ways (Clauss-Ehlers, 2008: 199). In other words, how do we move beyond academic debates and towards a useful policy tool? Some scholars have argued that until researchers and practitioners go past the definitional debate and 'get on with developing something useful in the field, resilience will remain nothing more than just another good concept and meaningless buzz-word' (Longstaff et al., 2010: 17). We would add that until researchers and policy makers develop and trial approaches that are 'useful' (or at least usable) 'in the field', we will continue to lack the ability to test and refine the efficacy of such conceptual approaches based on robust empirical data. The development of BRAVE-14 is one such response to this challenge.

Essential in this regard is adopting an approach that allows community leaders and policymakers to begin to think about resilience as it pertains to their own community's specific or even unique circumstances (Longstaff et al., 2010: 2). The current project has been responsive to such critique in deploying a social-ecological interpretation of resilience (Ungar, 2011) that specifically seeks to account for and develop explanatory frameworks and measures that can help pinpoint cultural context, local circumstance and culturally relevant responses in the context of resisting the appeal of violent extremism. In so doing, we have chosen to focus the development and standardisation of the BRAVE-14 measure specifically on youth populations across a wide range of ethno-cultural backgrounds and community locations in two different countries. The focus on young people is well justified by evidence suggesting that young people aged 16-30 represent a large number of those who support or engage in politically motivated violence (Thomas, 2012; Urdal, 2006).

The social-ecological paradigm of resilience

As did the two precursor studies leading to the present research, we have situated the conceptual foundations that informed development of the measure within the social-ecological paradigm of resilience (Ungar, 2011). This strand of resilience theory argues that the capacity of individuals and groups to cope in adverse or challenging circumstances is facilitated by the interdependent individual, social, economic and political resources they are able to access and mobilise. Resilience involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and operationalised by anyone; as a response to coping with collective experiences of adversity, it 'is not the exclusive property of any nation or group' (Bean et al., 2011: 429). Resilience research has increasingly moved from concentrating on vulnerabilities alone towards understanding and assessing protective processes and features that contribute to resilience, a shift that highlights the sustained competence and access to resources for individuals and communities under threat. This points in turn to the importance of understanding resilience not as a fixed trait or characteristic but as a *process* (Hunter 2012), one in which the capacity to draw on 'multiple sources of strength and resources...allow[s] people to face, live with, manage and overcome challenges' (Kirmayer et al., 2009: 69).

The social-ecological approach to resilience demonstrates that aspects of individual, family and community resilience can be learned and reinforced (Bonanno, 2005), but they can also be eroded or weakened, depending on the dynamic interplay of various forces and influences in the social ecology of an individual or a group. This means that while factors at the level of the individual, family, community or institutions may strengthen resistance to harms or the ability to overcome adversity in one context, the same factors can promote vulnerability and erode coping abilities in others (Rutter 1990). This in turn invokes consideration of what domain-specific considerations and trade-offs are relevant in how any given factor may affect resilience capacity (Iarocci, Root & Burack, 2008). In other words, resilience factors and features cannot be isolated from their context-dependent circumstances and matrices without risking a misunderstanding of the processual dimensions of the social ecology of resilience as it is lived in real time and place.

Moreover, resilience cannot develop without the presence of both adaptive functioning *and* exposure to risk or adversity (Hunter, 2012: 2). As some scholars have noted, resilience remains meaningful primarily in the context of vulnerability, against which definitions and frameworks of resilience are then constructed and measured (Bean et al., 2011: 451). Understanding the dialectical relationship between vulnerability and resilience therefore offers a constructive way of understanding the social conditions and dynamics that can spur or threaten resilience for culturally diverse communities. In the context of assessing resilience specifically to violent extremism, it is thus important to identify the nature and circumstances of exposure to the risks of violent extremist influence and appeals if we are to understand what elements of adaptive functioning young people can bring to bear in their response to these risks.

Five factors underpinning youth resilience to violent extremism

Below we consider some of the relevant literature that informs a conceptual understanding of the salient factors for measuring resilience to violent extremism, as validated through the analyses conducted for the BRAVE-14 measure.

The five factors are:

- 1. *Cultural identity and connectedness:*** Familiarity with one's own cultural heritage, practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms (can involve more than one culture); knowledge of 'mainstream' cultural practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms if different from own cultural heritage; having a sense of cultural pride; feeling anchored in one's own cultural beliefs and practices; feeling that one's culture is accepted by the wider community; feeling able to share one's culture with others
- 2. *Bridging capital:*** Trust and confidence in people from other groups; support for and from people from other groups; strength of ties to people outside one's group; having the skills, knowledge and confidence to connect with other groups; valuing inter-group harmony; active engagement with people from other groups

3. **Linking capital:** Trust and confidence in government and authority figures; trust in community organisations; having the skills, knowledge and resources to make use of institutions and organisations outside one's local community; ability to contribute to or influence policy and decision making relating to one's own community
4. **Violence-related behaviours:** Willingness to speak out publicly against violence; willingness to challenge the use of violence by others; acceptance of violence as a legitimate means of resolving conflicts
5. **Violence-related beliefs:** Degree to which violence is seen to confer status and respect; degree to which violence is normalised or well tolerated for any age group in the community

Factor 1: Cultural identity and connectedness

Culture consists of the symbolic, ideational and intangible aspects of human societies (Banks, Banks and McGee, 1989: 8). The development and experience of 'culture' in an everyday sense involves a set of shared practices, attitudes, values and beliefs that are iterated and refined over time in ways that reflect dynamism and change as well as tradition and continuity. Culture is also a 'story' that people within a community tell and re-tell across generations that helps reinforce and sustain the ways in which cultural groups understand, negotiate, interact with and adapt to the worlds in which they live.

Cultural identity and connectedness are particularly significant in this context. The literature on community and cultural resilience emphasises the strong links between resilience and the maintenance of cultural identity, continuity and traditions for both individuals and groups (Reynolds et al., 2006; Brendtro et al., 2001; Zimmerman et al., 1995, 1999). The value of shared narratives in community identity formation and maintenance is a key theme in the resilience literature (Sonn and Fisher 1998: 461). Connection to and pride in cultural and religious heritage has been shown to be a resilience protective factor that can help individuals and communities negotiate challenges, adversities and inequities (Grossman & Tahiri, 2014; Nassar-McMillan et al., 2011; Law et al., 2014; Theron & Liebenberg, 2015).

In multicultural pluralist societies, sense of cultural identity, connectedness and cultural security can fray in response to the demands of adapting to culturally diverse social settings and the uneven relationships between dominant and minority cultural formations. A prerequisite for resilience among ethnocultural minorities, including but not limited to those who are recent migrants who have resettled, is familiarity with one's own cultural traditions *in addition* to knowing the culture where one is living (Gunnestad, 2006: 11). In understanding their way of 'coping and hoping, surviving and thriving', it is important to consider how culturally and linguistically diverse minorities navigate the cultural understandings and assumptions of both their country of origin and their country of domicile (Ungar, 2006: 12). There is evidence to suggest that people who master the rules and norms of their new culture *without* abandoning their own language, values

and social support are more resilient than those who tenaciously maintain their own culture at the expense of adjusting to their new environment. They are also more resilient than those who forego their own culture and assimilate completely with the host society (Gunnestad, 2006: 14).

However, resilience is also linked persuasively to those individuals and groups able to draw on *multiple* cultural resources and affiliations, choosing strengths and discarding weaknesses or liabilities associated with different cultural values and practices in particular contexts (Reynolds et al., 2006; Strand & Peacock, 2002). The resilience protections afforded by close cultural, ethnic or religious identification do not limit, compromise or preclude the formation of strong multi-level ties and identification either with countries of resettlement or with those from different ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds (Dunn et al., 2015; Bullock & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013).

In addition, such multiple cultural resources and affiliations can prove helpful in coming to terms with the past, navigating the present and maintaining optimism for the future, all key protective features of resilience. For example, in Peru, Giselle Silva (1999, cited in Grotberg, 2004) explored the role parents played in helping their children deal with the aftermath of political violence. Many parents became poor as they escaped the trauma and proceeded to adapt to a new life in a new setting. Some of the families focused on the violent events they had experienced and tended to dwell on the past. The children of these families did not become resilient and, in many cases, developed severe social and psychological problems.

By contrast, other families focused on the new environment and sought out jobs, education and social networks. They remembered the sad experiences of the past but used them to encourage progress. The children of these families were resilient. They were optimistic about the future and took full advantage of the educational, social and other resources their new environment had to offer (Grotberg, 2004: 215).

A UK study of acceptance, belonging and youth identities also notes that a crucial element of how urban minority youth negotiate belonging and acceptance relies on their capacity to develop 'new forms of solidarity' with racially and culturally different others that help challenge and sustain resilience against 'narrowly defined' hierarchies of racial or ethnic affiliations and stereotypes (Clayton, 2012: 1688). In so doing, they 'draw upon a range of resources and identities from the immediate to the global...navigat[ing] landscapes of risk and opportunity...to 'find a way through' (Clayton, 2012: 1689). The capacity to 'find a way through' by mobilising an array of coping resources reflects a hallmark of resilient functioning. These resources include interpersonal and community connections; attachment to place across ethnic, religious and racial lines; local institutional affiliations (community centres, schools, sports teams, religious organisations), and drawing on religious or cultural heritage values (Clayton, 2012; Mauro, 2013; Nassar-McMillan et al., 2011; Law et al., 2014; Bullock & Nesbitt-Larking, 2013).

Clauss-Ehlers et al. (2006) also found that strong ethnic and cultural identities directly correlated with greater resilience. In their study with college-age women from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, those who exhibited most resilience had a positive attitude about their cultures. They enjoyed family, social and community networks that helped foster a sense of pride in their cultural and ethnic identities, but they also actively participated in learning about the cultural codes of the majority culture. Cultural *flexibility* and *adaptiveness* combined with features of cultural *robustness* and *continuity* thus emerge as key features of community resilience for specific groups. In the context of resilience against violent extremism, this suggests that being *culturally robust*, *culturally flexible* and *culturally open to and tolerant of others* can yield significant protection against susceptibility to violent extremist appeals (Grossman et al., 2016).

However, if the combination of both valuing one's culture as well as learning about the cultures of others produces greater resilience and adaptive capacities, problems can nevertheless arise when a majority culture tries to acculturate a minority by diminishing or denying the presence, enactment and values that provide continuity and meaning for minorities in culturally diverse settings. Higher levels of prejudice and profiling at community level may erode resilience linked to sense of cultural security when this questions or damages the normative status of minority ethnic and religious affiliations (Nassar-McMillan et al., 2011). This is compounded when people are denied their original cultural resources outright, because 'they do not automatically gain those cultural strengths that the majority has acquired over generations' (Gunnestad, 2006: 14).

Research investigating the negative consequences that result from the loss of core cultural identities through oppressive socio-political practices has found that these include self-hatred, the internalisation of negative group identities and low self-esteem (Sonn and Fisher, 1998: 461). This aligns with theorisations that see the turn to violent extremism in terms of, amongst other factors, reversing or defending against experiences of humiliation and loss of dignity (Kruglanski et al., 2014; Khosrokhavar, 2013).

This thus becomes a potential gift to terrorist recruiters, who exploit feelings of humiliation, powerlessness and grievance created by modes of cultural oppression and denialism by using these to reset the thinking and behaviour of young people toward coping with such feelings by taking violent action against others. Previous research supports this, showing that engagement in terrorist activities is often preceded by alienated individuals who withdraw from the larger community in search of a sense of home and belonging 'in the company of small collectives of similarly angry individuals' (Pickering et al., 2007: 105).

More recently, terrorism scholars have noted that joining such collectives promise to recover the dignity of individuals who feel humiliated by repositioning them as 'avengers' and lone heroes (Roy, 2017: 48). Contemporary recruitment strategies deployed by violent extremist groups use polarising, often apocalyptic, narratives of heroism and violence (Roy, 2017) that include bonding

icons (Wignell et al., 2017) to appeal to humiliated young people and encourage fixed, black and white thinking. Online, new forms of social capital through processes of what Khosrokhavar (2017) terms 'symbolic acculturation' appeal to young people through social networking sites. Through social media, IS campaigns have disseminated propaganda designed to target and exploit young people's desires and curiosities. The 'mobilisation of symbols' (Khosrokhavar, 2017) associated with these platforms and culminating in violent acts has assumed prominence in mainstream media accounts, which contributes to the glamorisation of terrorists as negative heroes. Embarking on a trajectory of violent extremism thus becomes a high-profile prospect that affords disenfranchised young people a powerful identity society cannot ignore.

Context-informed investigation of resilience is thus essential for understanding and operationalising youth resilience in culturally situated contexts. In order to avoid bias in how resilience to violent extremism (or indeed resilience more generally) is conceptualised, and to design meaningful interventions to promote resilience, research, policy and program development 'need to be...participatory and culturally embedded to capture the nuances of culture and context' (Ungar, 2006: 17). Designing and implementing resilience strategies in communities without first testing the concepts of resilience to violent extremism (informed by nuanced understanding of localised relevant 'push' and 'pull' factors) in culturally diverse contexts will limit policy and programming efficacy and outcomes for participants and government alike.

The discussion of cultural identity and connectedness above speaks to the ways in which 'culture' functions as part of the broader array of *social capital* (Putnam, 2000) that exists within and across communities, a renewable resource on which people draw in forging relationships with others and with the world at large. Social capital is a property not merely of individuals, but of a 'social system or ecological unit such as a community' (Sonn and Fisher, 1998: 461).

Factor 2: Bridging capital

Thinking about a community or group's social capital as a dimension of community resilience acknowledges the ways in which 'resilience is a "clustered" phenomenon that is not randomly distributed among individuals in a society or community but occurs in groups of people located in a web of meaningful relationships' (Kirmayer et al., 2009: 72). This understanding of social capital focuses attention in particular on the importance of social networks, comprising both in-group dynamics as well as relations with the wider society, and including dimensions such as trust, reciprocity, collective participation and access to resources (Kirmayer et al., 2009: 73).

In the well-known formulation developed by Robert Putnam (Putnam, 2000), *bonding capital* consists of ties that friends, family or close social groups share with one another (Putnam 2000), and can provide both positive and negative influences in relation to preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism (Harris-Hogan 2014). These ties provide emotional and functional support to members, but they can have a negative impact on communities when they are nurtured

at the expense of external connections with other community groups or members (Tolsma & Zevallos, 2009: 10).

Borrowing from Putnam's work on social capital, Mignone and O'Neil (2005) formulate social relations in three ways: i) bonding relations, or intra-community connections; ii) bridging relations, or inter-community connections, and iii) linkage relations, or those between communities and governments, institutions and other official organisations (Mignone & O'Neil 2005: S51-52). For a community to be truly resilient, all three forms of social capital must co-exist. If a collective possesses strong bonding (within group) relations, but has no connections either with members of other communities or with government and multi-community organisations and institutions, its capacity to thrive will be diminished.

Without extra-local ties and networks, or 'bridging capital', a community runs the risk of missing out on the knowledge, resources and skills available in other networks. This can lead in turn to feelings of isolation and disenfranchisement among minority groups. Forging relationships with people in alternative social networks who have access to different resources not available in one's immediate social circle is essential in helping people 'get ahead' in life, but these relationships also expose people to difference, thereby broadening an individual's identity and enhancing their capacity to work, live and socialise with others (Magis, 2010: 407).

However, mere exposure to cultural difference or otherness is not sufficient to constitute 'bridging capital' – there must be an inter-cultural exchange of resources that are seen to benefit both or all groups before bridging capital can be established. Bannister and Kearns (2013, cited in Grossman et al., 2016) argue that 'social identities have become more fragmented and social relations more unequal as the transnational mobility of populations increases, creating more intensive experiences of both proximity to and separation from 'different others' than previously. The frequency in modern urban life of encounters with socio-cultural difference creates uncertainty about "who we will meet and how they will behave" (Bannister & Kearns, 2013: 2701). This can lead to profound anxiety about and antipathy towards cultural others by seeing socio-cultural difference itself as inherently anti-social and threatening. This is especially problematic in societies that "couple solidarity [i.e., bonding capital] with others like yourself to aggression to those who differ" (Sennett, 2012: 3, cited in Bannister and Kearns, 2013). Chronic perceptions of uncertainty and insecurity can lead to efforts to reduce complexity and seek coherence in "fundamentalist world views, often contextualised by simplifying narratives" (Ashmore et al. 2001, cited by Cameron et al., 2013) with potentially catastrophic outcomes for community cohesion' (Grossman et al., 2016: 32-33).

Factor 3: Linking capital

Community-level adaptation or resilience is also dependent on 'linking social capital', or what Mignone and O'Neil (2005) term 'vertical capital'. Sometimes referred to as 'state-society

relations' (Chen and Meng, 2015), linking capital encompasses the vertical relationships that individuals and groups establish with those in positions of power and authority, and is particularly important for socio-culturally disadvantaged or economically resource-poor communities.

The distinction between linking capital and bridging capital can appear thin, and there continues to be debate about how scholars conceptualise distinctions between these two dimensions of social capital. One conceptual distinction between the two posits that 'bridging capital' refers to relations of reciprocity, trust and respect between people or groups of roughly equivalent social status but ethnically or culturally different social identities. Linking capital, on the other hand, refers to 'norms of respect and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal or institutionalised power or authority gradients in society' (Szreter & Woollock, 2004:655).

This focus on uneven relations of power and status as part of social capital's composition is especially apt in the context of resilience to violent extremism, given the prominence and exercise of power and authority by government and civil society institutions when addressing countering violent extremism at community level. Without sufficient 'linking capital', communities remain at a persistent disadvantage in being able to either grasp or intervene in the policy structures that shape their social relations and identities and govern their everyday lives. The absence of linking capital correlates to an absence of trust in institutions and services (Putnam, 2000), and the trust gap in turn accelerates vulnerability to alternative influences that can make people more vulnerable to social harms. As Magis observes, the more communities can 'link with sources of power and wealth, the greater their access to resources, the more opportunity they will have to make their voices heard, and the better situated they will be to take advantage of opportunities' (Magis, 2010: 407) and develop stronger networks and resources for coping with challenge and adversity.

Factor 4: Violence-related behaviours

There is long-standing evidence that disenfranchised individuals and groups who resent their lack of agency in remediating social disadvantage may go on to use violence as a means of redressing perceived inequalities. The rise of criminal enterprise-based youth gangs in areas of intersecting social and economic disadvantage undergoing industrial transformation would be one example (Jackson, 1991). However, the lack of evidence for consistent differences between the social background of violent extremists and their peers is mirrored in the finding that there is no common type of participant in other forms of violent behaviour (Munton et al., 2011: iv).

One commonality in the trajectory taken by both violent extremists and those engaged in other forms of violent behaviour, however, is a steady intensification of feelings of powerlessness in the face of absolute authority. According to Hellyer, 'Violent extremists of all types, from jihadists to neo-Nazis, feel "alienated" from the world in which they live' (2008: 9). The urge to violence

accelerates if the alienated person aligns themselves with a small group of similarly angry people (Pickering et al., 2007: 105). As we have seen, this group membership, in turn, serves to reinforce a sense of alienation from mainstream society, perpetuating a 'them and us' mentality (Munton et al., 2011: iv). This highlights the role that emotions and feelings can play in either promoting or weakening resilience, and it is important that strategies designed to build resilience find ways of addressing perceptions and experiences around power and powerlessness.

This 'them and us' mindset undoubtedly can fuel a desire for vengeance, but those engaged in violent behaviour are also striving for a sense of social status within their group. This raises the question of whether or not maladaptive behaviour can be classed as a sign of resilience. Far from justifying antisocial behaviour, recent research on risk and resilience does indicate that deviant or problem behaviour can help some individuals experience *themselves* as resilient. In contexts where resources including power and agency are limited, negative and troubling behaviour can nevertheless act as a protective mechanism in resilience terms by fostering a sense of meaning, efficacy and achievement. The experiences of a former neo-Nazi in a midsized Canadian city (captured as part of a study of 90 marginalised male street youth) indicate that engaging young disaffected men in any change process would necessitate meeting their needs for a sense of self-efficacy and power. In the participant quote below, it is worth noting that socially normative understandings of the axes of power through both gender (masculinity) and race (whiteness) are mobilised in relation to feeling 'really important' as a redress to perceived grievances about economic marginalisation and social disempowerment:

It was like [Blacks] were to blame for everything and we made them pay for everything. They were the reason we had no money, no jobs, no decent place to live. Being a part of the gang [of white supremacists] gave us a sense of belonging. We felt like we were accepted and someone cared for us. They told us we had an important job to do. We felt really important – because we were white – because we were guys (Totten, 2000, quoted in Ungar, 2004: 357).

Thus, to understand why some individuals, families and even communities become involved in any kind of violent extremism, it is necessary to consider both the push and pull factors that influence individual trajectories or 'pathways' (Weine, 2012; Weine & Ahmed, 2012: 4). Academic and policy debate continues as to whether personal and socioeconomic factors or ideology predominate as primary drivers, but it is clear that 'both exist as key factors' (Hellyer, 2008: 12). Taking into account how violent extremist groups 'offer young volunteers the narrative framework within which they can achieve their aspirations' (Roy, 2017: 5), however, is critical.

Radicalisers often take advantage of adverse social, economic and political conditions to recruit and motivate others using ideologies that resonate with their grievance and frustration. Extremist narratives are particularly attractive to groups who have experienced hardship and marginalisation

from mainstream society and who hold dear a common story of adversity (Tolsma & Zevallos, 2009: 11). For this reason, it is essential to adopt 'a cross-cutting approach' to understand violent extremism 'alongside other forms of violence and radicalism that are very similar to it (generational revolt, self-destruction, a radical break with society, an aesthetics of violence, the inclusion of the conflicted individual in a larger, globalized narrative, doomsday cults)' (Ro,y 2017: 5-6).

As noted above, social polarisation is a key dimension of environments that are conducive to violent extremism, and extremist ideologies are unlikely to lead young people towards violent action without a particular set of enabling cultural, social and political conditions (Coolsaet, 2017: 46, 35). A lack of prospects, 'both real and perceived', and 'feeling trapped' or abandoned are common to many young people who join contemporary violent jihadist movements, for example (Coolsaet, 2017: 24.) This was the case for a high percentage of foreign fighters in the Belgian suburb of Molenbeek, studied as part of a mapping project (Coolsaet, 2017) who came to identify with the 'no-future subculture' that developed there in response to neglect.

Likewise, Farhad Khosrokhavar (2017) sees the emergence of violent extremist movements occurring alongside the decline of social movements connoting political solidarity, such as communism and labor unions, which enabled empowerment of 'the lower strata of society' and provided a sense of belonging and dignity. In the absence of these, he argues that young jihadis gravitate towards the imagined community of a 'neo-Ummah', which they believe will provide respite from their '*anomie*' status as Muslims living in non-Muslim majority countries of the West (Khosrokhavar, 2017).

Accordingly, it is clear that the success of terrorist organisations depends upon their capacity to recruit, which in turn requires particular conditions in which their narratives and recruitment strategies can emerge and grow (Coolsaet, 2017: 7). This highlights the importance of remaining alert to more localised preconditions for violent action-orientation, rather than simply analysing broader geopolitical rises or declines in violent extremist ideology and activity. It also calls for urgent assessment of those socio-cultural resources that young people already possess in local contexts that can be further grown and strengthened to facilitate resilience to violent extremism and reduce the social conditions that can create and maintain vulnerability.

Factor 5: Violence-related beliefs

As the noted terrorism studies scholar Martha Crenshaw has observed, 'Most analysts of terrorism do not think that personality factors account for terrorist behaviour' (Crenshaw, 2000: 409). Violent extremism is largely a 'group activity', in which individual predispositions or experiences must intersect with social, cultural, or political influences and conditions before terrorism as a mode of action and ideology emerges. Thus any discussion of 'violent beliefs' must engage with

the socio-cultural contexts in which such beliefs – whether at the individual or the group level – develop and are reinforced, refined or challenged over time.

In keeping with this view, moral disengagement theory, with its emphasis on the interplay between the individual, the group and the broader society, has gained considerable traction in studies of how otherwise non-violent people can come to cross the threshold from extremist belief into violent action. In a highly cited article, Bandura argues that ‘moral actions are the products of the reciprocal interplay of personal and social influences’ (Bandura, 1999: 207). Moral disengagement occurs when inhumane or cruel acts towards others, which social norms and mechanisms of self-regulation and ‘moral agency’ normally protect against, become cognitively restructured to align with ‘moral justification’ and legitimacy for such acts. The means by which such cognitive restructuring occurs can include ‘sanitising language; advantageous comparison; disavowal of...personal agency...or displacement of responsibility; disregarding or minimising the injurious effects of one’s actions, and attribution of blame to, and dehumanisation of, those who are victimised’ (Bandura 1999: 193).

This leads to what Bandura terms ‘obedient aggression’, in which individuals disavow personal responsibility for their actions (whether by diffusing it amongst others or blaming the victim) in response to the ‘insidious’ but also principled and rationalised (rather than impulsive) sanctioning of violence by regimes of power and influence, what he calls ‘sanctioning by indirection’ (Bandura, 1999: 197). Thus, as Crenshaw summarises it, Bandura posits ‘three major points of development in the self-regulatory process: when reprehensible conduct can be reconstrued as justifiable, its detrimental effects minimised or distorted, and the victim blamed or devalued’ (Crenshaw 2000: 409). All of these developmental points lie at the intersection of how individuals interact with and are influenced by both group-level and broader societal dynamics, values, movements and trends.

This theorisation holds up well in relation to the questions contained in the BRAVE-14 measure for both violent beliefs and violent behaviours. It shows that ‘moral agency’ functions across culturally diverse settings as an indicator of resilience to violent extremism in relation to both rejecting community norms that may sanction violence, especially youth violence, and being willing to both publicly and privately challenge the use of violence by others. This is further supported by findings from Bowes and McMurrin (2013). Their systematic review of studies that examined the impact of violence-related cognitions on non-sexual violence (Bowes & McMurrin, 2013) indicated that beliefs supportive of violence are positively related to violent action. They also found that ‘scores on an expressive aggression scale were inversely related to violence, indicating that loss of control and guilt about behaviour are protective factors against violence’, which reiterates Bandura’s emphasis on the protective dimensions of self-regulation and humanisation of victims (Bowes & McMurrin 2013: 660).

The Maudsley Violence Questionnaire (MVQ) (Walker, 2005) was designed to measure the presence, for a potential variety of individuals and groups, of 'specific thoughts, beliefs and attitudes which may principally relate to violence' (Walker, 2005: 188) Testing and validation of the MVQ was trialled with youth aged 16-18 (n=785) across nine London secondary schools. The ethnic diversity of students engaged in the survey was roughly equivalent to the ethnic mix of London's general population more generally when males alone were considered (Walker, 2005: 191).

The 56 items that formed the final MVQ consisted of two factors:

1. 'Machismo', with 42 items relating to embarrassment over backing down, justification of violence in response to threat and attack, violence as part of being male and strong, and the weakness associated with fear and non-violence.
2. 'Acceptance' of violence, with 14 items relating to overt enjoyment and acceptance of violence (in the media and in sport), and injunctions against or rejection of violence as an acceptable behaviour. (Walker 2005: 195).

These findings both support the BRAVE-14 focus on violence-related beliefs connected to seeing violence as a proxy for strength and respect, and for thresholds of acceptance of violence more generally.

Methods

The data for this report are drawn from surveys undertaken in two countries, Australia and Canada, with 475 young people living in urban environments, aged 18-30. The research did not include 16 and 17 year olds because of the logistical challenges in gaining parental permission to include people under the age of independent consent required by institutional ethics requirements in each country. The focus on young people is well justified by evidence suggesting that young people aged 16-30 represent a large number of those who support or engage in politically motivated violence (Thomas, 2012; Urdal, 2006).

Ethics approval

Applications for ethical approval to conduct the survey in Australia and Canada were successfully made by the research team in each country. Ethics approval was granted by the institutional review boards of Victoria University (where PI Grossman was based at the start of the study) in Australia and Dalhousie University in Canada.

Phase 1: Developing the measure

The surveys asked questions regarding the young participants' resilience to violent extremist influences (see Appendix A for information and sample questions from the YRVE survey instrument).

The initial 55-item survey was developed based on hypothesised indicators for resilience to violent extremism drawn from an Australian qualitative study, *Harnessing Resilience Capital in Culturally Diverse Communities to Counter Violent Extremism*, conducted by Grossman & Tahiri (2014). All 20 items were used from this scale as this was the main measure being tested by the survey. An additional 35 items were also included based on a number of other validated scales, including the *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM-R)*, the *Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28)*, *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire*, the *McMaster Family Assessment Device*, the *Everyday Discrimination Scale*, the *Maudsley Violence Questionnaire (MVQ)*, the *Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism Scale*, the *4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* and the *Boston Neighbourhood Scale*. Some of the items from these scales were excluded because they either not relevant to the study's research questions, or were modified slightly based on feedback from LAC members to enhance meaningfulness for participants in each country.

The survey was divided up into sections that enabled us to understand: (1) In contexts where some young people are at risk of engaging in violent extremism, what internal and external factors are associated with young people resisting the use of violence? (2) In these same contexts, how do young people access experiences that sustain their wellbeing (resilience) without resorting to violence? and (3) What role do families, schools, religious institutions, social and mental health services, government programs, and other community organisations play in helping young people resist engagement in politically motivated violence?

The role of Local Advisory Committees in developing the measure

A key facet of the approach taken in this project was its involvement of local community partners in each stage of the research to ensure interpretive validity, relevance and inclusiveness across different community and national settings. For this reason, each research setting established a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) in each of the study's field sites, comprising community service providers (including mental health professionals, youth welfare workers and educators), researchers, community elders and youth. Committee members commented on the risk and protective factors relevant to resilience to violent extremism, as well as how best to engage the community and youth in each setting in the research and knowledge mobilisation process. Each LAC enabled the research teams to locate samples of young people who have been exposed to multiple locally relevant risk factors they believe to be related to RVE.

To ensure the survey questions appropriately targeted the communities in question, final selection of items for the measure were determined by the entire research team in consultation with LACs in each setting.

For the Australian component, the Local Advisory Group meeting in Sydney was held on 7 February 2017. In Melbourne, the Local Advisory Group meeting was held on 9 February 2017. The project was unable to convene a face to face meeting for the LAC in Brisbane due to availability constraints of relevant personnel, but received useful feedback via telephone from LAC members from relevant organisations on several dates across February 2017.

For the Canadian component, Local Advisory Group meetings were held in Halifax, 13 December 2017; Montreal, 5 January 2016; Toronto, 19 December 2016 and 12 January 2017; Vancouver, 20 December, 2016 and January 16, 2017. When possible, meetings were conducted face-to-face with members of the research team and LAC members, however, meetings were also accessible via teleconferencing and web conferencing in order to maximize attendance. In cases where LAC members were not able to attend a meeting, feedback was obtained through direct correspondence (i.e., telephone and emails) with the research team.

Based on these consultations, both the Australian and Canadian versions of the survey were successfully reviewed and revised following consultation in February 2017 with Local Advisory Groups as described above. The final selection of items for the measure was agreed upon by the respective research teams after collaborative input by community partners.

Phase 2: Participant recruitment and survey administration

The project sampled a cohort of 475 youth aged 18-30 from culturally diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds in Australia (n=200) and Canada (n=275), having identified participants through our community partner organisations and networks in the relevant field sites.

Surveys were administrated in 3 Australian cities: Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney, and in 4 Canadian cities: Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. These field sites were selected for two reasons: their capacity to provide culturally diverse youth populations as potential participants in the study, and the capacity of the research team in each country to mobilise pre-existing networks in each locale for recruitment of participants through prior research and engagement relationships with local community organisations and contacts.

The specific measures that were used during this phase were based on recommendations from the LACs regarding the most relevant and appropriate variables to assess, building on the precursor studies in Australia and Canada that developed and piloted the measure. By combining data from both sites, a sufficiently large sample enabled us to validate and modify the measure.

The Australian and Canadian research teams recruited youth through a wide range of local service organizations, including youth centres and advocacy groups, immigrant and refugee services, educational institutions, religious centers and groups, and LAC networks. We do not identify here the organisations who assisted with recruitment for reasons of confidentiality and privacy. Recruitment and survey administration was completed in Australia and Canada in July and August 2017, respectively (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Schedule of YRVE survey recruitment and administration		
City	# Participants	Timing
Brisbane	30	May-June 2017
Melbourne	80	June-July 2017
Sydney	90	May-June 2017
Halifax	11	June-July 2017
Montreal	25	May-August 2017
Toronto	165	May-August 2017
Vancouver	74	June-July 2017

The survey aimed for as much gender parity as possible amongst participants in each location, and Tables 2, 3 and 4 below show the gender distribution for all participants and by each country.

Table 2: All YRVE participants (n=475)		
Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	216	45.5%
Male	249	52.4%

Transgender	3	.6%
Other/not specified	7	1.5%

Table 3: Australian YRVE participants (n=200)		
Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	95	47.5%
Male	102	51%
Transgender	1	.5%
Other/not specified	2	1%

Table 4: Canadian YRVE participants (n=275)		
Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	121	44%
Male	147	53.5%
Transgender	2	.7%
Other/not specified	5	1.9%

Phase 3: Administration of the measure

Once youth were nominated to the study by LAC members, the research team contacted the young by phone, in person or email and explained the study to them. For those who decided to participate, the administration of the measure was arranged at a time and place that was convenient and accessible for participants. Some of the surveys were completed in university settings and others in public or community organisation settings, depending on the preference of individual participants. The surveys were undertaken over a 4-month period (see Table 1 above).

Prior to participation in the survey, youth were given a pack with information about the project, a consent form and a sheet enabling those wishing to learn the outcomes of the project the opportunity to remain in contact with the research team. Participants were required to consent by signing a consent form. No parental consent was required for participants as they were aged 18 – 30 years. Upon receipt of their completed surveys, gift vouchers to the value of \$30 were distributed to participants to offset costs of participation (e.g., transportation, meal, etc.). The YRVE survey was administered in public settings such as sports and recreation or community, education and youth centres with relevant permissions that were easily accessible to young people.

Participants took approximately 30-40 minutes to complete the survey. Some participants gave useful feedback on their experiences of undertaking the survey including their emotional

responses when answering various questions and on the meanings of some of the survey's key terms, such as 'community'.

Survey Results

Statistical analyses of the survey data

All models were fit using MPlus 7.31 with full information maximum likelihood used to handle missing data. *First*, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with maximum likelihood estimation to determine the number of factors and obtain an initial sense of the factor structures. We used an oblique Geomin (OB) rotation. We considered any loadings greater than .30 to be indicative of a loading or cross-loading. This was conducted in the sample of Somali youth. *Second*, we used a sample of 475 Australian and Canadian young people to conduct confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). We conducted an EFA in one sample followed by a CFA of the five-factor structure identified in the EFA in another sample because replication of factorial composition in a second sample is an indicator of construct validity (Devins et al., 1988).

For both the EFA and CFA, model fit was determined through root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and comparative fit index (CFI). Model fit is acceptable where the RMSEA is $\leq .06$ with an upper limit of the confidence interval of $< .08$, SRMR is $\leq .08$, and CFI is $> .90$ (Hox, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999).

As indicated above in Phase 1, to examine convergent validity, we explored relationships between the BRAVE-14 and other measures. Specifically, we examined whether greater BRAVE-14 scores were associated with lower levels of discrimination (using the Everyday Discrimination Scale; Williams, Jackson, and Anderson 1997) and delinquency (Delinquency subscale of the 4-H study; Phelps, Balsano, Fay, Peltz, Zimmerman, Lerner & Lerner, 2007; Theokas & Lerner, 2006), and higher levels of resilience (CYRM-28; Ungar & Liebenberg, 2005; 2011). These analyses involved the overall sample, as well as analyses by gender and nationality.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

An EFA was conducted using MPlus 7.31. Both the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (.80) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .001$) indicated an adequate sample size to carry out an exploratory factor analysis. Grossman & Tahiri (2014) theorised that resilience to violent extremism would be comprised of 13 factors within four overarching factors: 1) cultural identity and connectedness (made up of cultural knowledge, cultural continuity, cultural security, and cultural adaptability); 2) relationships and networks (made up of bonding capital, bridging capital, linking capital); 3) community norms, behaviours, attitudes, and values (made up of coping with adversity, problem behaviours, and resources for problem solving); and 4) framing, preventing, and responding to violence (made up of beliefs, values, and resources/strategies for non-violent conflict resolution).

We tested this with the 55 items making up those factors. However, although it had an eigenvalue of 1.044, the 13-factor model would not converge within 1000 iterations, suggesting that this was not a good fit for the data. We then tried a four factor model to test whether the four overarching factors (cultural identity and connectedness; relationships and networks; community norms, behaviours, attitudes, and values; and framing, preventing, and responding to violence) were a better fit. The four-factor model had a relatively poor fit ($\chi^2 < .001$, RMSEA = .10, CFI = .86, SRMR = .05) and there was no factor consistent with the community norms, behaviours, attitudes, and values factor. Previous qualitative analyses with Pacific Islander and South Sudanese young people (Grossman & Sharples 2010) had suggested that framing, preventing, and responding to violence might be made up of two factors as opposed to three, meaning that a twelve-factor structure was also a possibility, so we then tried the model with 12 factors. As with the 13-factor model, this would not converge within 1000 iterations.

We thus determined that the items did not fit clearly within the original factor structures postulated by Grossman & Tahiri (2014) and instead tested a number of different structures. Based on the indices, we also removed the items relating to community norms, behaviours, attitudes, and values.

The structure that fit the data and theory most closely was a five-factor structure, with five of the thirteen factors posited by Grossman & Tahiri fitting the data. Factor 1 comprised of the cultural identity and connectedness items, Factor 2 comprised of the bridging capital items, Factor 3 comprised of the linking capital items, Factor 4 comprised of violence-related behaviours, and Factor 5 comprised of violence-related beliefs, $\chi^2 = .00$, RMSEA = .06 [95 CI: .05, .06], CFI = .97, SRMR = .03, $\alpha = .90$.

These factors correspond to the literature demonstrating the relevance of cultural identity and connectedness, bridging and linking capital, and violence-related behaviours and beliefs as

indicated in the review of relevant literature above for each of the five factors. This has helped confirm the content validity of the measure.

We then attempted to shorten the measure by identifying those items that were most effective by assessing their variance of responses, cross-loadings, items which did not load strongly on any factor, and those which did not perform well. All items have a mean score between 2.0 and 4.0 and had standard deviations ranging between 0.8 and 1.3. Together, this suggests that participants avoided extreme floor or ceiling constraints for all items and that items captured variability in different aspects of resilience to violence and so no items were removed for this reason.

All items have non-response rates of less than 10%, so none were dropped from analyses due to non-response. The removal of items resulted in a 20 item, 5-factor model with good fit, $\chi^2 = .01$, RMSEA = .04 [95 CI: .03, .06], CFI = .995, SRMR = .01, $\alpha = .83$ (Table 5).

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

We conducted a CFA on the BRAVE-14 on the full sample. Although the internal reliability of the measure ($\alpha = .82$) was good, model fit was poor (Table 6). To see if this poor fit was caused by differences in the sample by nationality, we separated the sample by country, running separate analyses for Australia and Canada. Both models also fit poorly. We then ran separate analyses by gender, with the model showing poor fit for both female and male participants. This indicates that – while this five-factor model of resilience to violent extremism as measured by these 20 questions fit a sample of Somali youth from Toronto derived from the Barriers to Radicalisation study (2015) well, it is not a robust measure in this new population.

Given that the 20-item measure had poor fit, we selectively removed poor-performing items. To this end, we randomly split our sample in half (first half: $n = 236$, second half: $n = 239$) and then selectively removed items until we achieved acceptable fit in the first half (Table 6). This resulted in a 14-item measure, with three questions each relating to cultural identity and connectedness, bridging capital, linking capital, and violence-related beliefs and two questions relating to anti-violence behaviours (Table 7). We then tested the model fit in the second half of the sample, because replication of factorial composition in a second sample would indicate construct validity (Devins et al. 1988). This model fit reasonably well in the second half of the sample, with only the upper confidence interval for RMSEA falling outside of accepted boundaries. As shown in Table 6, this model also fit well in samples comprised solely of women or Australians. The RMSEA was elevated for samples comprised solely of men or Canadians, and the Canadians also had elevated confidence intervals for the RMSEA. Together, these results suggest that this measure performs relatively well at assessing resilience to violent extremism across a range of groups.

We then used the full sample to conduct two multigroup analyses (by gender and country), first with invariant factor loadings and then with invariant common residual covariances (Table 7). The model was just outside of the range of acceptable fit for females/males, suggesting that there may

be factorial invariance across these two genders. The model fit was not acceptable for country, despite reasonable fit when analyses were run separately for Australians and Canadians. This suggests that, while the items measure resilience to violent extremism in both samples, young people in Australia and Canada may respond to individual items within the scale differently. In particular, 'I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community' was more important to Australians in the sample than to Canadians' anti-violence behaviours, while 'Being violent helps me earn the respect of others' was more important to Canadian pro-violence beliefs in the sample than to Australians. See Table 8 for factor loadings for each item by gender (male, female) and Table 9 for each item by country (Australia, Canada).

Taken together, these results suggest that this 5-factor, 14-item measure of resilience to violent extremism is robust. It has acceptable internal reliability ($\alpha = .76$). Scores ranged from 26 to 69 on the measure (out of a potential 14-70), with a mean of 51.98. There was a positive skew on the BRAVE-14, with most participants scoring above the mid-point of the measure (see Figure 1 for a histogram of scores on the measure). An independent samples t-test indicates that Australians in the sample ($M = 53.04$, $SD = 6.46$) had more resilience to violent extremism than Canadians in the sample ($M = 51.13$, $SD = 7.26$), $t(441) = 2.89$, $p < .05$. As there were not enough transgender or other gendered participants to compare, we used an independent samples t-test to assess whether there were differences between female and male participants on this measure; indeed, women in the sample ($M = 52.88$, $SD = 6.13$) had more resilience to violent extremism than men ($M = 51.23$, $SD = 7.47$), $t(432) = 2.49$, $p < .05$.

Convergent validity. The BRAVE-14 was positively correlated with the CYRM-28 in the whole sample ($r_s = .50$, $p < .001$), for males and females, as well as for both Australians and Canadians (see Table 9). It was also negatively correlated with acceptance of violence and delinquency for the total sample ($r_s = -.24$, $p < .001$; $r_s = -.26$, $p < .001$ respectively), as well as the gender and country subgroups. These relationships are consistent with research and theory, which suggests that general resilience factors and processes would be related to the more specific factors and processes protecting against violent extremism (Grossman & Tahiri 2014), and that being resilient to violent extremism would be associated with fewer delinquent and violent behaviours (Walker 2009).

Discussion

The foregoing analysis suggests that the BRAVE-14 measure of young people's resilience to violent extremism is both robust and consistent with the literature exploring both community-level strengths and vulnerabilities to violent extremism. The five factors identified here highlight the importance of key socio-cultural assets that facilitate both personal sense of wellbeing and security, and group-level acceptance, belonging and interaction between different socio-cultural groups and between communities and institutions or authorities. Violence-related behaviours and beliefs are correlated negatively with resilience to violent extremism, a finding consistent with the literature on the relationship between violent belief and violent action (Walker, 2009; Bowes and McMurrin, 2013).

However, there are also findings that suggest directions for further research.

While the two countries do not differ in *resilience* as measured by the CYRM ($t(426) = 1.79, p > .05$), they *do* differ in delinquency, with the Canadian sample engaging in nearly double the amount of delinquent behaviour as the Australians, $t(458) = 2.51, p < .05$. Thus, these samples are similarly resilient generally, but appear to have other differences. The Canadian sample is both more delinquent and less resilient to violent extremism than the Australian sample.

One hypothesis as to why this may be so relates to differences in levels of exposure to terrorism in general. This has intuitive power, given the relationship between resilience and exposure to adversity (Hunter 2012). In the 2016 Global Terrorism Index, Australia was ranked as the 59th country most affected by terrorism compared to Canada, which came in at 66th. While both countries fall into the low impact category, populations in Australia, a smaller and more geographically isolated country than Canada, may experience higher perceptions of persistent threat, calling forth more resilient responses, than do Canadian communities. The hypothesis that resilience to violent extremism is mediated by exposure to perceptions of persistent or chronic threat would benefit from further exploration of the literature on resilience and violent extremism in order to interpret this result.

However, neither sample was representative of the Canadian/Australian population. This could thus be an artifact of sampling, rather than a genuine difference. Further research would help clarify this.

We also found that young people in Australia and Canada may respond to individual items within the scale differently. For example, '*I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community*' was more important to Australians in the sample than Canadians' anti-violence behaviours, while '*Being violent helps me earn the respect of others*' was more important to Canadians' pro-violence beliefs in the sample than for Australians. (See Table 8 for factor loadings for each item by gender [male, female] and Table 9 for each item by country [Australia, Canada]. This suggests that when thinking about Factor 1, cultural identity and connectedness, Canadians

place more value on the maintenance of cultural traditions than Australians do. Why this should be so is again open to interpretation and theory, and would benefit from further investigation.

It also suggests that if the BRAVE-14 were applied to other countries, responses might also vary in terms of what youth in different contexts consider most important out of the items for each of the BRAVE-14 factors of cultural identity and connectedness, bridging capital, linking capital, violence-related behaviours, violence-related beliefs. Future application of the BRAVE-14 as a standardised and validated measure in pre- and post-intervention settings can help gauge both baseline resilience to violent extremism and the difference that various programs and interventions might make to building resilience, in line with the five-factor structure identified through the research. This would help strengthen understanding of both the strengths and vulnerabilities that young people bring to bear in developing and maintaining resilience to the appeal of violent extremism.

As indicated above, the limitations of this study include the fact that it is not based on a representative sample. Thus, no conclusions can be drawn about general population youth resilience to violent extremism in either country.

Table 5. Factor loadings for the 20-item measure resulting from the EFA on the Somali sample

Item	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.	1.00	.00	.01	.00	-.01
2. I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices, and values.	.70	-.06	-.02	.00	.02
3. I know where to find cultural instruction and access to leadership.	1.00	.02	.00	.00	.00
4. My cultural identity guides the way I live my life.	1.00	.02	.00	.00	.00
5. In general, I trust people from other communities.	-.03	.78	.00	.03	.02
6. I know where to get help in the wider community.	.03	.78	.05	-.05	-.04
7. I feel supported by people from other communities.	-.13	.72	-.02	.03	.02
8. I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs.	.00	.39	-.10	-.02	.01
9. I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.	.00	-.01	.99	.01	.01
10. I feel that my voice is heard when dealing with government and authorities.	.00	.00	.82	.00	.00
11. I am encouraged to communicate with government and authorities.	.00	-.01	.98	.01	.02
12. I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies.	.00	.03	.81	.00	.01
13. I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.	.00	.01	.03	1.00	.01
14. I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.	.00	.01	.01	1.00	.02
15. Words and dialogue are the best way to resolve disputes.	-.01	-.02	.0	.84	.01
16. I avoid violent situations.	.00	.00	.00	.84	-.03
17. Even if others are violent towards me, I do not respond with violence.	.00	-.01	-.01	1.00	.01
18. My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems.	-.01	-.01	.01	.01	.97
19. Being violent helps show how strong I am.	.00	.03	.02	.00	.99
20. Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.	.00	.00	.00	-.01	.78
α	.88	.76	.89	.84	.75

Table 6. Results summary for confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) of the BRAVE-14 measure, before and after selective reduction of items, using the Canadian and Australian samples

	<i>N</i>	χ^2	df	CFI	RMSEA	RMSEA CI ₉₀	SRMR
20-Item Measure							
Full sample	475	586.89	160	.83	.08	.07, .08	.07
Women only	216	378.91	160	.78	.08	.07, .09	.08
Men only	249	350.64	160	.86	.07	.06, .08	.07
Australian only	200	380.07	160	.79	.08	.07, .09	.08
Canadian only	275	439.57	160	.81	.08	.07, .09	.08
14-Item Measure							
First half	236	134.85	67	.92	.07	.05, .08	.06
Second half	239	145.84	67	.90	.07	.06, .09	.06
Women only	216	113.50	67	.93	.06	.04, .07	.06
Men only	249	137.69	67	.92	.07	.05, .08	.06
Australian only	200	110.55	67	.94	.06	.04, .08	.06
Canadian only	275	168.46	67	.90	.07	.06, .09	.06
<i>Multigroup analyses</i>							
Gender	470						
Invariant factor loadings		310.90	157	.90	.07	.05, .08	.07
Invariant common residual covariances		327.95	171	.90	.06	.05, .07	.09
Country	475						
Invariant factor loadings		374.58	157	.87	.08	.07, .09	.08
Invariant common residual covariances		411.13	171	.86	.08	.07, .09	.11

Note: The 20-item measure was developed through an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using data from Somali 18-30 year-olds in Toronto (results displayed above). In the analyses split by gender, 10 participants were removed as they did not identify their gender ($n = 5$) or they identified as transgender ($n = 3$) or “other” ($n = 2$); in the analyses testing for factorial invariance by gender, the 5 participants who identified as transgender or “other” were removed. Full sample = the entire Canadian and Australian sample collected in 2017 ($n = 475$). First half = random half of the entire Canadian and Australian sample collected in 2017 ($n = 236$). Second half = other half of the entire Canadian and Australian sample collected in 2017 ($n = 239$). CFI = comparative fit index, RMSEA = Root mean square error of approximation, SRMR = standardized root mean square residual.

Table 7. *Final 14-item BRAVE-14 measure*

Item
1. It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.
2. Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.
3. I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices, and values.
4. Being violent helps show how strong I am.
5. My cultural identity guides the way I live my life.
6. I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies.
7. In general, I trust people from other communities.
8. My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems.
9. I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.
10. I feel supported by people from other communities.
11. I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs.
12. I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.
13. I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.
14. I feel that my voice is heard when dealing with government and authorities.

Note: Items are listed in the order that they were presented in the study. There are three cultural identity and connectedness items (1, 3, 5), three bridging capital items (7, 10, 11), three linking capital items (6, 13, 14), two violence-related behaviours items (9, 12), and three violence-related beliefs items (2, 4, 8).

Table 8. *BRAVE-14 loadings by gender*

Item	Women		Men	
	Unstandardized	Standardized	Unstandardized	Standardized
Cultural identity and connectedness				
1. It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.	1.00 (--)	.73 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.76 (.05)
3. I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices, and values.	.92 (.15)	.76 (.06)	.76 (.11)	.66 (.06)
5. My cultural identity guides the way I live my life.	.85 (.14)	.55 (.06)	.95 (.12)	.64 (.05)
Bridging capital				
7. In general, I trust people from other communities.	1.00 (--)	.51 (.07)	1.00 (--)	.64 (.05)
10. I feel supported by people from other communities.	1.24 (.21)	.63 (.06)	1.14 (.14)	.73 (.05)
11. I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs.	1.39 (.25)	.67 (.06)	.95 (.16)	.50 (.06)
Linking capital				
6. I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies.	1.00 (--)	.62 (.07)	1.00 (--)	.73 (.05)
13. I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.	1.09 (.19)	.72 (.06)	1.02 (.11)	.80 (.04)
14. I feel that my voice is heard when dealing with government and authorities.	.93 (.15)	.63 (.06)	.95 (.10)	.72 (.04)
Violence-related behaviours				
9. I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.	1.00 (--)	.78 (.07)	1.00 (--)	.70 (.06)
12. I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.	.81 (.14)	.65 (.06)	.82 (.12)	.60 (.06)
Violence-related beliefs				
2. Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.	1.00 (--)	.74 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.83 (.06)
4. Being violent helps show how strong I am.	1.26 (.21)	.87 (.07)	.84 (.12)	.84 (.06)
8. My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems.	.58 (.15)	.29 (.07)	.44 (.09)	.35 (.06)

Note: Standard errors are in brackets. This is comparing confirmatory factor analyses conducted using only the female participants with one using only the male participants. BRAVE-14 = building resilience against violent extremism. Item numbers refer to the order in which they were presented to participants.

Table 9. BRAVE-14 loadings by study site

Item	Australia		Canada	
	Unstandardized	Standardized	Unstandardized	Standardized
Cultural identity and connectedness				
1. It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.	1.00 (--)	.73 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.75 (.05)
3. I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices, and values.	.82 (.12)	.66 (.06)	.82 (.10)	.71 (.05)
5. My cultural identity guides the way I live my life.	1.25 (.18)	.66 (.06)	.81 (.10)	.60 (.05)
Bridging capital				
7. In general, I trust people from other communities.	1.00 (--)	.57 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.60 (.05)
10. I feel supported by people from other communities.	1.30 (.21)	.66 (.06)	1.12 (.14)	.71 (.05)
11. I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs.	1.01 (.18)	.55 (.07)	1.09 (.18)	.56 (.06)
Linking capital				
6. I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies.	1.00 (--)	.68 (.05)	1.00 (--)	.74 (.05)
13. I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.	1.14 (.14)	.81 (.05)	.92 (.11)	.74 (.05)
14. I feel that my voice is heard when dealing with government and authorities.	.90 (.12)	.67 (.05)	.92 (.10)	.71 (.04)
Violence-related behaviours				
9. I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.	1.00 (--)	.83 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.72 (.06)
12. I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.	.70 (.12)	.62 (.07)	.78 (.12)	.59 (.06)
Violence-related beliefs				
2. Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.	1.00 (--)	.69 (.06)	1.00 (--)	.82 (.07)
4. Being violent helps show how strong I am.	.89 (.15)	.79 (.07)	.99 (.17)	.85 (.07)
8. My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems.	.75 (.17)	.39 (.07)	.42 (.10)	.32 (.06)

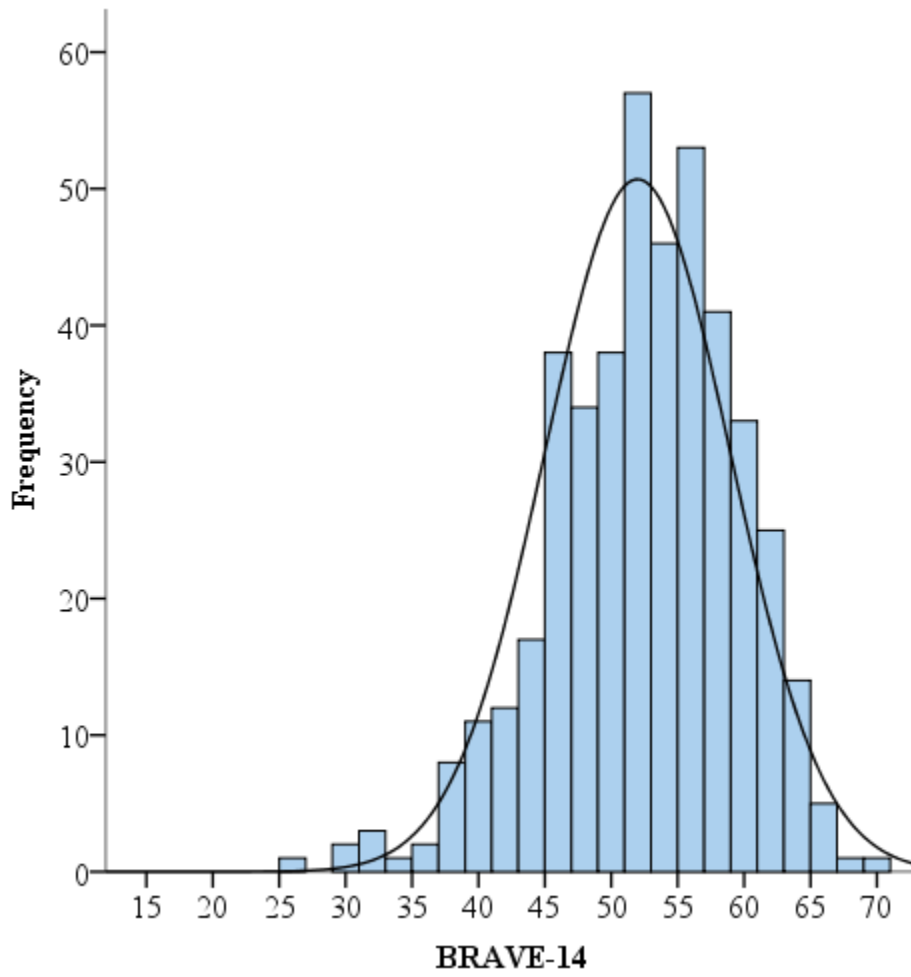
Note: Standard errors are in brackets. This is comparing confirmatory factor analyses conducted using only the participants in Australia with one using only participants in Canada. BRAVE-14 = building resilience against violent extremism. Item numbers refer to the order in which they were presented to participants.

Table 10. *Correlations between the BRAVE-14 scores and indicators of risk and resilience, by total sample, gender, and nationality*

	Full sample	Gender		Country	
		Female	Male	Canadian	Australian
Resilience: CYRM-28	.50**	.44**	.52**	.48**	.52**
Acceptance of violence	-.24**	-.12*	-.23**	-.22**	-.27**
Delinquency	-.26**	-.16*	-.29**	-.24**	-.27**

Note: All correlations are Spearman's correlations due to non-normal data distribution.
 ** $p < .001$, * $p \leq .05$, CYRM = Child and Youth Resilience Measure.

Figure 1. Histogram of scores on the BRAVE-14



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Appendix A - The Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism Scale (BRAVE-14) Manual

What is the BRAVE-14?

The BRAVE-14 is a measure of protective and risk factors for young people's resilience to violent extremism. The measure was developed and validated as part of a collaborative research initiative between researchers at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University (Australia) and the Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University (Canada). The BRAVE-14 was originally developed through government-funded research in Australia (Harnessing Resilience Capital, CVESC/ANZ CTC, 2013-14) and Canada (Barriers to Violent Radicalisation: Understanding Pathways to Resilience among Canadian Youth, Kanishka Project, 2014-15). A subsequent study has trialled and validated the measure with 475 young people (18 to 30 year old) from a wide range of culturally diverse backgrounds in Australia and Canada (Understanding Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism: A Standardised Measure, Australian Government/Attorney-General's Department, 2016-17).

Development of the BRAVE-14

Grossman et al. (2014) theorised that resilience to violent extremism would be comprised of 13 factors within four overarching factors: 1) *cultural identity and connectedness* (made up of cultural knowledge, cultural continuity, cultural security, and cultural adaptability); 2) *relationships and networks* (made up of bonding capital, bridging capital, linking capital); 3) *community norms, behaviours, attitudes, and values* (made up of coping with adversity, problem behaviours, and resources for problem solving); and 4) *framing, preventing, and responding to violence* (made up of beliefs, values, and resources/strategies for non-violent conflict resolution). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed the structure that fit the data and theory most closely was a five-factor, 14-item measure of resilience to violent extremism. The five factors are: 1) *cultural identity and connectedness*; 2) *bridging capital*; 3) *linking capital*; 4) *violence-related behaviours*; and 5) *violence-related beliefs*.

Table 11. *Example items from each of the subscales of the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism Scale*

Example Item	Subscale
It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.	Cultural identity and connectedness
Being violent helps show how strong I am.	Violence-related beliefs
In general, I trust people from other communities.	Bridging capital
I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.	Violence-related behaviours
I feel confident when dealing with government and authorities.	Linking capital

Uses for the BRAVE-14

The BRAVE-14 can be used by researchers, government agencies, policy makers and community stakeholders to:

- facilitate the comparison of protective and risk factors for young people's resilience to violent extremism
- contextualize the ways in which young people are able to resist violent extremism, as well as why they may become vulnerable to using violent extremism as a solution to problems
- systematically identify and strengthen existing resilience resources
- help to identify current vulnerabilities in youth resilience to violent extremism through community partnerships and program development
- support efforts of communities and agencies to develop effective and meaningful youth-focused policies and programs that can identify both what communities already possess as resilience resources (but which may be unrecognized or under-used), and what vulnerabilities or gaps need to be addressed, and how
- support evaluations of strategies and programs for strengthening resilience to violent extremism amongst young people, helping to show the effectiveness of innovative, culturally and contextually sensitive interventions.

Components of the BRAVE-14 have already been used in a published paper investigating how gender and discrimination influence violent behaviours and violent beliefs (Ungar, M., Hadfield, K., Amarasingam, A., Morgan, S., & Grossman, M. (2017).

Translating and/or modifying the BRAVE-14

It is strongly advised that meetings be held with selected members of the local community in which the BRAVE-14 will be used to provide input into culturally relevant ways of administering the scale (e.g., adding site-specific questions, translating into the local language). Although the BRAVE-14 is currently offered only in English, no special authorization is required to translate the BRAVE-14 measure. If you create a translation, we would ask that you please share it with us so your translation can be available to others using this measure as well. We suggest that you conduct a back translation into English to enhance the validity of the translation process. For more information on the process and value of back translation, see Richard W. Brislin (1970) and Van Ommeren et al. (1999).

Implementing the BRAVE-14

Recommended components for preparing the BRAVE-14 for implementation are summarised below. Given the cross-cultural nature of the measure, we recommend following these guidelines to help ensure that the measure remains contextually relevant to the community where your research is taking place.

Community input

We strongly advise that researchers hold meetings with selected members of the community in which the research is being conducted. A Local Advisory Committee (LAC) can provide valuable input on the research implementation, such as suggestions on contextually relevant ways of conducting the study, ensuring that questions are phrased in a way that makes sense to youth locally, and additional site-specific questions to add to the BRAVE-14. They can also comment on findings and help ensure that interpretations of the data are made meaningful in terms of local context. It works well to consult with a group of about five local key informants who have something important to say about children, youth, and families in their community. The group could include youth, parents, professionals, caregivers, service providers and/or elders.

Administration of the BRAVE-14

The BRAVE-14 can be administered to participants in groups or individually. It is important that all questions be read out loud to the youth as they work through the measure to ensure comprehension at all levels of literacy. Administration of the BRAVE-14 takes approximately 5 minutes.

Scoring and analysing the BRAVE-14

Responses are on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1-5, as follows: Strongly disagree (1), disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree (5). Three of the 14 items are reverse-scored.

This scale can be scored by summing the point values of the responses from a participant. The minimum score is 14 and the maximum score is 70. Higher scores indicate greater levels of characteristics associated with resilience to violent extremism. Five subscales can also be scored:

the cultural identity and connectedness, bridging capital, linking capital, and violence-related beliefs subscales are each comprised of three items and therefore can range from 3-15. The violence-related behaviours subscale is based on two items and therefore can range from 2-10. Within each subscale, the score is calculated by summing the point values of the responses from a participant.

Accessing the BRAVE-14

To request a copy and obtain permission to reproduce the BRAVE-14m please contact Professor Michele Grossman, Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia, michele.grossman@deakin.edu.au

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