Speaking Back to Theory: Community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia

Colleen Mary Carlon

Edith Cowan University

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School of Arts and Humanities

Edith Cowan University

Speaking Back to Theory: Community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia

Colleen Mary Carlon

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2016
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

I. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

II. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or

III. contain any defamatory material;

Signature:

Date: 16/09/2016
Abstract

This thesis explores how everyday knowledge of community development practices can inform the theorising of community development in Australia. The literature of community development offers a rich source for understanding and explaining the tensions and dilemmas of collective endeavour in context, yet arguments for particular approaches to community development can serve to evaluate practice in context. In this research, however, case studies are positioned as a source of knowledge. The power of case studies lies in their ability to portray collective action and collective action is what differentiates community development from other approaches to problems. The capacity to work in context is also pivotal to community development and case studies are adept at showcasing practice in context.

The research reported in this thesis uses case studies of community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia to explore ways in which theoretical arguments for particular approaches to practice represent community development in the literature. A multiple case study design is used to establish twelve cross-case findings about how community development happens in four local communities. Each case is focused on the community development practice of a community group from the south west region of Western Australia. The thesis reports how the four community groups practice community development and then explores how the knowledge of these communities can inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context.

The research found that the case studies have the potential to inform the theorising of community development in ten different ways; for example, through unsettling the idea of the bottom-up approach to community development, by identifying the ‘threat’ that context may pose to the tenets of community development, and by unmasking the imperceptibility of process. The research also highlights ways in which community development practices are storied in the literature and offers fresh insights into the obligations of the narrator of community development stories. The thesis concludes by arguing that greater integration between case studies and theoretical propositions for practice, could reinvigorate the way the literature
supports and encourages community development practices in the Australian context.
Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to the loving memory of my partner

Jon Dobbs
1961 – 2011

And to the loving memory of my parents

Gloria Mary Carlon
1927 – 2013

Francis Joseph Carlon
1932 – 2016
Acknowledgements

I start by acknowledging the passion and commitment of people working for their communities to improve access, position and quality of life through diversity of perspective and endeavour. Particular acknowledgment of the community groups known as Northcliffe Youth Voice, the Early Years Network of Bunbury, Vintage - A Home Town For Life in Balingup and Northcliffe Community Development Inc. I offer again my sincere thanks for your willingness to trust me with your knowledge of community. I acknowledge your contributions make this thesis possible and I thank you for your time and effort in participating.

I thank Jim Ife my initial supervisor for being open to the idea of the research. I thank Angela Fielding my supervisor at Curtin University for her manner, encouragement and perseverance. I owe much to my current supervisors at Edith Cowan University. I thank David Hodgson for his active encouragement, insightful feedback and steadfast support. I thank Kathy Boxall firstly for convincing me it was possible to complete this thesis and secondly for her approach to supervision. Through a process of responding to your questions and writing chunks to argue for various aspects of my research I have been able to see what was needed and gain the confidence to complete. I also thank Katie Dobbs for efficient and effective proofreading of my thesis.

Thanks to my professional colleagues at Edith Cowan University firstly for your ongoing support through the often-repeated claim of ‘it is nearly there’. Special thanks to my colleagues in the social work program and to Wendy Giles and Lyn Farrell from the south west campus of Edith Cowan University in keeping me going through difficult times. Your unflinching support and encouragement has helped me greatly in life as well as thesis completion.

To my baby brother Matt, my Aunty Anne and dear friend John – the only ones brave enough to always ask – have you finished yet? Thanks for your persevering interest and encouragement.
To my Dad, Frank, and my siblings Wayne, Clem, Chris, Matt and Mon thank you for your stable and consistent love and support throughout my life – never more needed or appreciated than in these past five years. To Monnie, Darren, Tyler, Joe and Baby Girl thanks for bringing Oscar and I love and joy when we needed it most.

To my son Oscar and his partner Bronte I greatly value and appreciate your love and support - thank you both. Oscar you have lived with this thesis for a very long time and throughout you have kept me grounded to what is real - I value this above all else.
Preface

I use personal pronouns in a number of ways in this thesis. The central purpose is to make a connection between my writing and identity (Thomson & Kamler, 2013); thus pronouns are used to position myself in the research, the thesis, the discipline and the academy. Being able to locate myself in the research, the discipline and the academy is crucial to being able to complete the thesis. Personal pronouns did not come easily. I first included references to myself in the text for clarity; that is, to distinguish between my own research and other research referred to in the thesis. This is particularly important in distinguishing between the way I am speaking about and using case study and case studies in the community development literature. The pronoun I, for example, is used to identify my actions. These include my actions in community practice, in the brief account of personal professional experience that motivated my research, my actions in the research, and my actions in the thesis.

The personal pronoun my is used to identify ownership, as in the instance of my research or my understanding. This usage reflects the pragmatic purpose of personal pronouns in academic writing — to organise the writing (Harwood, 2005) — as well as the identity building purpose, “writing the researcher into the text” (Thomson & Kamler, 2016, p. 149). Locating myself in the research and the thesis supported the work of scholarly identity building, yet did not locate me effectively as part of the academic discipline in which I was positioning my research. Initially I found it difficult to question key works in the Australian community development literature. This was complicated further by the nature of the problem I was investigating and my experience, as a practitioner, of seeking guidance from the academic literature. Guidance was available, yet it came with a strong critique of the practice in which I worked. I was proposing research, which would perhaps unsettle knowledge that had clearly contributed to community development practice. It was difficult to position myself within the discipline yet at the same time question the discipline. I found inserting the inclusive personal pronoun (Harwood, 2005, 2006; Hyland, 2008) our facilitated the shift in identity required to cross this space. At the beginning of my research, I was positioned in community development as a practitioner. Using the inclusive our and we helped me to position myself in the academic writing and research of the discipline. Positioning myself within community development as a
researcher gave me a sense that my own research could contribute to the discipline. I needed to position myself as part of the problem and as part of the solution. Referring to our theorising in the text of the thesis was central to this task.

Inclusive personal pronouns speak directly to the reader by displaying “solidarity” (Harwood, 2005, p. 363) and demonstrate a “collective” approach to academic argument (Hyland, 2008, p. 18). Adopting such a stance in the writing of this thesis was crucial to being able to speak about community development. I needed to bring the qualities of community development practice into the writing of the thesis and using inclusive personal pronouns supported this task.
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Chapter One: Introduction

Theory is first; practice follows. (Thomas, 2007, p. 71)

This thesis explores both the everyday practices and the theorising of community development in the Australian context. I use the term *everyday practices* to refer to community development as it happens on the ground in local communities, and my consideration of the theorising of community development focuses on arguments presented within the literature for particular approaches to community development. My exploration focuses specifically on the everyday practices of four community groups in the south west region of Western Australia, and arguments for particular approaches to community development proffered by academics in the Australian context. These two bodies of work are clarified further through the progress of this thesis. The interchange between theory and practice in community development is commonly understood to flow both ways. Yet I will argue that propositions for particular approaches to community development are guides for everyday practice and, as such, place theory in the dominant position. The opening quote highlights the order of knowing that commonly occurs once theorising takes hold in a discipline. While Thomas (2007) refers to theory in the context of education, his central point is relevant to my research. My research reverses the expected order to ask the following question:

**How can community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context?**

The research question is answered by addressing three sub-questions, each of which directs the focus of the investigation. The three sub-questions are:

- How is community development theorised in the Australian literature?
- How is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia?
- How do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development?
I came to this question through two experiences of working with communities. Whether or not these experiences reflect community development is open to conjecture, but both involve community practice and strong commitments to particular theoretical approaches. I briefly outline these experiences to explain the genesis of my research question.

I was employed in teacher education at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education in the Northern Territory of Australia from 1992 to 1998 (the Institute was known at the time as Batchelor College). The approach to education was guided by the theories of Freire (2005, p. 48), in which “oppression and its causes [are] objects of reflection by the oppressed, and from that reflection will come their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation.” Indigenous peoples from across the Territory studied through the Batchelor Institute. Many were employed as teacher assistants in their local schools. The schools were bilingual. People’s knowledge of language, culture and pedagogy were undervalued in the role of teacher assistant, and their wages were low. The purpose of teacher education at the Batchelor Institute was to fight these inequities. The curriculum was embedded in the knowledge of local communities (White, 1998) through action research and “both ways” education (Ober, 2004, 2007). Students and staff at the Batchelor Institute required endorsement and ongoing support from community elders.

The second experience was in Bunbury, the regional centre for the south west of Western Australia. I was employed on a project established to undertake community wide planning for the healthy development of young people from 2000 to 2003. The project was called Investing In Our Youth. The approach to community planning relied on prevention science; that is, epidemiological research of risk and protective factors for young people (Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002). The research gave communities a way of identifying and addressing local issues. Prevention science relied on the strength of rational logic to mobilise communities (Cahir et al., 2003). The people central to setting up the project were heads of government departments and agencies. The prevention science model, known as Communities That Care (CTC), was from the United States of America (USA) (Brown, Hawkins, Arthur, & Briney, 2002; Hawkins, Catalano, Arthur, 2002). An Australian CTC was established in the state of Victoria through a collaboration between the Women’s and
Children’s Health Network and the Rotary Club of Melbourne (Carlon, 2002c; Communities That Care, 2003; Fiske, 2000; Toumbourou, 1999). My role was to bring people together to establish a community wide plan for Investing in Our Youth and a collaborative network that could implement such a plan in Bunbury, Western Australia.

These brief introductions show that my work with communities was embedded within strong theoretical frameworks. Not frameworks of my own choosing but frameworks central to the context of the work. Both areas of practice are highly regarded in their own spheres and were not simply one-off ideas, both continuing today (Batchelor Institute, n.d.; Communities That Care: 5 phases of CTC, n.d.; Investing In Our Youth Inc., n.d.). What is important about these experiences in helping to explain this research is not what transpired in each instance or the effectiveness of either approach but the stark contrast between the two. Campfens uses a continuum to frame case studies of community development (Campfens, 1997a). He describes the ends of the continuum as conservative and radical positions (Campfens, 1997c, pp. 25-40). Rational science-based knowledge represents the conservative position and approaches underpinned by critical social theories represent the radical position (Campfens, 1997c). The radical and conservative positions of Campfens’s continuum reflect the theoretical frameworks for each experience. The contrast between the two frameworks and my attempts to work thoughtfully with the relationship between theory and practice led to this research.

At the Batchelor Institute the approach was well established and Freire’s (2005) Pedagogy of the Oppressed was a ready-made guide for practice which was supported by the experience of many practitioners in the field. At Investing In Our Youth the CTC approach was not well established in the Australian context. The guiding theory focused on measures of risk and protection rather than the practice of community, as that was something for which I was responsible. As the project developed, so the limits of collaborative intent were reached (Carlon, 2002a, 2002b). I needed guidance and I turned to the theorising of community development, the texts of Kenny (1994, 1999) and Ife (1995, 2002). Both included ideas that supported my work along with a heavy dose of disapproval. The prevention science
and the top-down approach were clearly wrong from the perspective argued in the theorising yet both came with the context of practice.

This raised questions for me about the theorising of community development in the Australian context. It seemed there was no room for working with people with perspectives from the rational end of Campfens’s (1997) continuum. I could see the reasoning behind this but thought that there would always be people with this perspective in any community context. The theorising of community development indicated community projects initiated from the top retained the character of this initial action; that the practice could not somehow be made to work for the local community. Again, I could see the reasoning, but thought surely this closed off opportunities at the local level. I was looking for ways to work with competing tensions in practice. The texts readily identified these tensions and ways of working with them but overall the solution was to position yourself on ‘the right’ side of the tension. Working at the Batchelor Institute I was positioned on the right side of the tension but when working with the prevention science I was not. I tried to take a middle line (Carlon 2004). This led me to see the similarities more than the differences between the two approaches. Advocates of prevention science demand strict adherence to the logic of the approach. When working with the prevention science I accepted the usefulness of the research and also tried to emphasise its limits by differentiating between the community making a decision based on prevention science and the community following their own logic. Advocates of community development demanded adherence to a particular position, to universal principles. The censure I felt made this clear. My position when using the community development literature was to take what was useful, emphasise its limits and differentiate between these prescriptions and the community making a decision based on their own understanding and context. This was how I tried to take the middle line (Carlon 2004). Freirean philosophy and prevention science both engendered strong reactions, passionate advocates and strong opponents central to the practice in both contexts. There was however a third group of people who saw an opportunity to improve life in their local communities (Carlon 2004). These were community members ambivalent about theory and focused on their communities. The particular commitments of this group motivated me to look at the theorising of
community development from the perspective of everyday practices and to undertake this PhD.

The research reported in this thesis investigates how stories of community practices from the south west region of Western Australia can inform our theorising of community development. The preceding pages introduce the central aim and the experience that motivates my research. I will account now for the chronology of my research in particular the timespan between the fieldwork commenced in 2004 and submission of this thesis in 2016. This is followed by an introduction to the central concepts of the research; community development and case study. Both are fluid and contested concepts. They are introduced in this chapter and clarified further as the thesis progresses. Finally, I conclude the introduction to this thesis with an outline of the chapters that follow.

**Chronology of my research**

My research has not followed the expected timeframe for PhD completion. This section outlines the chronology of my research from the fieldwork commenced in 2004 and submission of this thesis in 2016. Initially my research question and design focused on the tension between critical and rational approaches to community development. The incongruence between theory and practice, noted above, appeared to rest in this tension. The research question in 2004 was: can the tension between rational and critical approaches to community development inform practice? And if so, how? The case study design relied on Yin’s (1994) multiple case replication logic, a design that was suited to the comparison of contrasting types of practice. Over time I found the focus on describing critical and rational approaches to community development held the research at the level of “concrete description” (Merriam, 2009, p. 187). I was unable to integrate “data and interpretation” (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006., p. 184) to answer the research question or to meet my ambition of investigating ideas in the literature from the perspective of local practices. A mix of this conundrum and personal circumstances contribute to the significant timespan between the fieldwork and the submission of this thesis. The outline below accounts for the timing of key aspects of my research, including ethics approval, case selection, data collection and data analysis.
Ethics approval for the fieldwork carried out in 2004 and 2005 was obtained through the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University, and data was collected at four different community sites in the south west region of Western Australia. All fieldwork was complete during 2005 and all contact with participating community groups was finalised by 2007. The history of ethics approval for the research was reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University in late 2015 when I submitted an application for a PhD place. The information letters and consent forms used in the research are shown in Appendix One. The processes of case selection and data collection were carried out under the 2004 research question and case study design. Both are described in detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

Data analysis was undertaken under the research question introduced at the front of this chapter and in the lead up to submission of this thesis in 2016. An example of community research reported some years after fieldwork supports my presentation of this thesis in 2016 from fieldwork carried out in 2004/5. Eversole (2003) reports findings from data collected in fieldwork undertaken 1994/97. Within-case and cross-case data analyses were undertaken, both described in detail in Chapter Six. The first process of within-case data analysis is narrative analysis. The narrative analysis is reported as four practice stories of community development in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven of this thesis. The second process of within-case data analysis is thematic analysis. The themes identified for each case study site are reported in Chapter Twelve of this thesis. Samples of the process of narrative analysis are shown in Appendix Two and the thematic analysis in Appendix Three. The cross-case analysis focuses on the practice stories and the themes across the four case study sites. The cross-case findings are reported in Chapter Thirteen.

From 2008 to 2014, I made very little progress due to flaws in my research design, which I explain above. In addition, my personal circumstances changed significantly in 2011. In retrospect, I should have suspended my enrolment from 2011 to 2014, as no realistic progress was made during this period. In 2014, I decided to withdraw from Curtin University. In the meantime, Edith Cowan University (my employers) appointed a new Professor of Social Work who suggested I change my research question. I could see that changing the research question would free up the research
design and could potentially provide a way out of the epistemological mire in which I had trapped myself; but I was very unsure about returning to the thesis because of the emotional connotations it held for me. Edith Cowan University (ECU) agreed to an additional six-month period of enrolment (because of my particular personal circumstances between 2011 and 2014) and I eventually enrolled with ECU in 2016 to complete my PhD. Table 1 below, outlines the chronology of my research noting the key steps described above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Application for ethics Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University</td>
<td>Ethics approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information letters and consent forms shown Appendix One of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Case selection</td>
<td>Case selection is outlined in Chapter Seven of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2005</td>
<td>Fieldwork</td>
<td>Data collection is outlined in Chapter Six – Methods of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2007</td>
<td>Reporting on fieldwork to local communities</td>
<td>Process to finalise data collection is described in Chapter Six – Methods of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 – 2014</td>
<td>Lack of progress due to epistemological confusion and personal circumstances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Period of non-enrolment</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ethics approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Required for enrolment in 2016 no additional fieldwork carried out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>The first process of within-case data analysis – narrative analysis</td>
<td>Practice stories – see Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>The second process of within-case data analysis – thematic analysis</td>
<td>Themes reported for each community site – see Chapter Twelve of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Cross-case data analysis</td>
<td>Twelve findings from the cross-case analysis reported in Chapter Thirteen of this thesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Completion of thesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Chronology of my research
The next section introduces the two concepts central to the inquiry: community development and case study. This is followed by an introduction to the overall thesis with an outline of the chapters that follow.

**Community development – profession, practice, method, process**

The practice of community development is long established in Australian and international settings. The name appears self-explanatory: communities involved in development. Yet descriptive statements of community development are open to broad interpretation. When people come together, such as in the Community Development Society, to talk about community development they describe it this way:

> We view community development as a profession that integrates knowledge from many disciplines with theory, research, teaching, and practice as important and interdependent functions that are vital in the public and private sectors. (“About CDS [Community Development Society],” n.d.)

Based on this description, community development is a profession that operates across the public and private spheres with an eclectic approach to knowledge. While this statement applies to activities and ideas people identify as community development, it could apply equally in other circumstances. The idea of working across difference (knowledge and sectorial) is the strongest theme in this description. When people come together in the International Association for Community Development (IACD), they describe community development in this way:

> Community development is a set of practices and methods that focus on harnessing the innate abilities and potential that exist in all human communities to become active agents in their own development and to organise themselves to address key issues and concerns that they share. (“About us,” n.d.)
The idea of people taking action for change is the strongest theme in this description. It applies more specifically than the previous description yet does not identify the people involved and the type of change. The United Nations terminology database provides a concise description of community development as “[a] process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems” ("Community development," n.d.). Community members, collective action, problems and solutions – we are beginning to see the nature of community development. These statements clarify the breadth of interpretation possible. The first is empty, indicating nothing about the nature of what may emerge. The second is more assured, associating community development with active human communities. The third offers three elements of community development.

The IACD joined with the Combined European Bureau for Social Development and the Hungarian Association for Community Development in 2004 to establish a “common statement” of community development. Known as the Budapest Declaration, the statement offers more on the nature of community development; particular values and problems are stated.

Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities, and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities, taken to mean both geographical communities, communities of interest or identity and communities organising around specific themes or policy initiatives. It strengthens the capacity of people as active citizens through their community groups, organisations and networks; and the capacity of institutions and agencies (public, private and non-governmental) to work in dialogue with citizens to shape and determine change in their communities. It plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It has a set of core values/social principles
covering human rights, social inclusion, equality and respect for diversity; and a specific skills and knowledge base.

(International Association for Community Development., Combined European Bureau for Social Development., & Hungarian Association for Community Development, 2004, p. 1)

The nature of community development emerges as the statement progresses: civil society, empowerment, different forms of community, active citizens, dialogue, change, democracy, vulnerable communities, skills and values. The Budapest Declaration seeks to establish limits for community development.

The preceding descriptions indicate a multiplicity of action is possible under community development; it is an open concept (Campfens, 1997a; Miller, 2004). It is difficult to describe an open concept without also restricting it. Notions of human community, collective action, empowerment, dialogue, and change are all open to interpretation. Campfens’s description of community development emphasises the open and contextualised nature of the notion: “[s]imply put, community development is a demonstration of the ideas, values and ideals of the society in which it is carried out” (Campfens, 1997c, p. 27). The way in which values and ideals for community development are established — through everyday practices, through arguments for particular theoretical approaches, and through a combination of the two — is central to this inquiry. The opening quote for this chapter indicates the possibility of theory leading the discipline. The purpose of this research is to consider how the everyday practices may inform theory.

**Community development – an intervention**

A key aspect of community development indicated in the Budapest Declaration but not especially clear in the earlier descriptions is its role in poverty alleviation. International attention on differences in the economies of nation states post World War II was the catalyst for thinking about development as an intervention. Poverty alleviation through strengthening the economies of impoverished nation-states came to epitomise development as an intervention (Rist, 1997). The use of the terms
developed, developing and underdeveloped to categorise the economic circumstances of nation-states are products of development intervention. The terms minority and majority worlds attempt to unsettle the social evolutionary assumptions in such notions of development to highlight the proportions of the world population living in contrasting economic conditions (Nisbet, 1969b). These terms, of unclear origin (Punch, 2003), label nations wealthy in economic terms as the minority world, and all other nations as the majority world (Roth, 2001). Such is the political nature of development thinking (Hettne, 2009). Community development is a derivative of this broader practice and hence carries an implicit connection with poverty relief and social protection (Rist, 1997; Sihlongonyane, 2009). Social protection regimes are a pivotal aspect of context in the practice of community development.

Social protection in broad terms is the way nation-states safeguard people from the risks of poverty (Standing, 2007). The term is contested (Standing, 2007), and policies that come under the broad banner of social protection characterise societal attitudes to poverty and the particular histories of nation-states (Barrientos, 2011). Social protection ideals in the Australian context have traditionally been embedded in economic and industrial policies rather than social policies (Marston, McDonald & Bryson, 2014). The first section of Chapter Three outlines the interaction between community development and ideas of social protection in the Australian context.

Theory and practice – community development in the Australian context

My research question draws a distinction between the everyday practices and the theorising of community development. Kelly and Sewell (1986c) offer a starting point for considering such distinctions. They talk about the “vernacular” as knowledge that is close to action and communicated in stories, and “technical” knowledge, which is established at a distance from action and communicated through argument and analysis (Kelly & Sewell, 1986a, p. 1). More recently, Ife (2013, p. 304) equates the notions of practice and theory with action and understanding and argues against a separation of the two. He refers to the Marxist notion of praxis as representative of action informed by theory and the two working together (Ife, 2013, p. 304). Westoby and Dowling (2013, p. 4) identify the
“interplay between theory and practice,” which they equate with ideals and descriptions, as central to community development. Eversole (2015, p. 31) argues that the central foundation of any approach to community development can be described as the “theory of change”, which explains the logic of action.

The points raised above indicate the discussion of theory in community development is frequently contained to the relationship between theory and practice, rather than the meaning of theory itself in the context of community development. An article focused on theory in community development does not offer, for example, a definition of theory yet argues “[t]heories can provide a framework to community developers to help them comprehend and explain events” (Hustedde & Ganowicz, 2002, p. 2). Popple (1995, pp. 31-32) raises the contested nature of theory and a general lack of discussion of its meaning in the social sciences as a caveat to his account of theories for community work in the UK. An examination of the idea of theory in education supports the contention that the notion of theory is contested (Thomas, 1997, 2007).

My research holds theory and practice separate, not as a proposition for such an approach in community development, but for the purpose of investigating the possibility of stories of community development speaking back to the theorising of community development. The ambition stems from the experiences outlined at the front of this chapter. It also assumes theory is the dominant notion in the theory practice nexus, an idea encapsulated in the opening quote and supported, in the discipline of education at least, by Thomas (1997, 2007). As indicated at the front of this chapter, the notion of practice referred to in my research question comprises the practices of four community groups in the south west region of Western Australia, and theorising refers to the particular approaches to community development. The community groups are introduced in Chapter Seven and the theoretical propositions, which I will argue are established patterns in the theorising of community development, are introduced and explored in Chapter Three.

The distinction between theory and practice is held in my research for two reasons. The first is to pull practice free of theory to explore the possibility of stories of community development speaking back to established patterns for theorising of
community development. As indicated above and in the opening quote to this chapter it is possible that we have lost the balance between theory and practice and that, just as Thomas (1997, 2007) argues for education, theory leads community development. This would appear to be one explanation for my experience of finding the theories for community development helpful yet chastising. While the literature talks about holding the two together, the balance between books displaying stories of practice and books arguing for particular approaches to practice indicates the latter lead (this assessment of the literature is argued in Chapter Three). Both Weeks, Hoatson and Dixon (2003) and Ingamells, Lathouras, Wiseman, Westoby & Caniglia (2010b) argue case studies offer the field reflections on practice necessary to building the traditions and theory of community development. This point brings me to the second purpose for holding theory and practice separate in my research: to revitalise the role of case studies in community development. As Kelly and Sewell argue, “[l]ife is earthed in recognisable people and events, and case studies provide a safe passage to that world of experience” (1986b, p. 155). Case studies, or practice stories, tell us about the everyday happenings of community development. Hence “case studies contribute something very special” to the knowledge of community development (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 155).

**Case study – the term**

Case study is used across a number of disciplines — sociology, anthropology, education, business, medicine, law and social work — and fulfills a number of roles, including teaching tool, professional case history, practice development tool, research site, methodology, method and research design (Merriam, 1998; Meyer, 2001; Simons, 1996, 2009; Thomas, 2011b; Yin, 2009). There are substantial differences in the purpose of case study and the way it is conceptualised (Anthony & Jack, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Johansson, 2005; Meyer, 2001; Thomas, 2011b). The use of case study as a teaching tool, professional case history or practice development tool can be separated from the use of case study as a research site, method, methodology or design. The use of case study as a teaching tool, professional case history or practice development tool ostensibly illustrate scenarios for the purpose of learning, whereas the use of case study as research design, methodology or method investigates phenomena. Case study research may be used
for teaching, yet educational case studies do not necessarily follow research methodologies or methods. Accounting for the purpose of case study as something more than simply case illustration for the purpose of learning is central to articulating case study research, as to be research it must do more than illustrate (Thomas, 2013).

The goal of illustrative case studies is to offer the vicarious experience of real-life situations for thinking about practice (Anthony & Jack, 2009; Meyer, 2001; Yin 2009). The integrity of such a case study is held in its capacity to stimulate thought and debate or demonstrate theory within a discipline. Case study as a form of social research may do the same and has the added element of producing an empirical base through the systematic application of research method/s (Yin, 2009, pp. 4-5). Simons (2009, p. 4) argues case study research is an “authenticated anecdote,” the product of a systematic approach to telling the story of the case in contrast to anecdotes developed outside a research framework. This distinction is particularly important in community development where the prominent use of case study is illustration (Mowbray 1996; Onyx 1996). Illustrative case studies are not driven by a research question and do not include research design, but do provide accounts of practice often told from the perspective of those involved (Mowbray, 1996; Onyx, 1996). A lack of methodological discussion of case study research indicates the central purpose of case study in community development is illustrative. Illustrative case studies are a product of practice more so than a product of research. The use of case study in community development in the Australian context is discussed at length in Chapter Three. The following focuses on conceptualising case study as research by exploring definitions of case study research.

**Case study – as research**

The literature offers a range of definitions for case study research (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). A central figure in the discussion of case study research, Flyvbjerg (2011) prefers to rely on the dictionary definition of case study: “an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment” (Case study, n.d.). Such a definition, Flyvbjerg (2011, p. 301) argues, reflects case study more accurately than the sociological
dictionary, which defines case study in terms of the positivist perspective of social research and effectively describes what it is not. Other case study theorists establish definitions of case study that reflect varying approaches to research design (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Yin (2009), for example, emphasises the empirical, contextual and contemporary nature of phenomena investigated by case study research, defining it as: “…an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Yin (2009) argues these features separate case study research from other forms of research such as survey, experimental or historical. Stake (2005, p. 443) takes a different approach, claiming case study is “a choice of what is to be studied.” Simons (2009) offers a definition that incorporates the contemporaneous nature of case study research as well as its intent.

Case study is an in-depth exploration of multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular…system in a ‘real life’ context. It is research-based, inclusive of different methods and is evidence-led. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic…or system to generate knowledge and/or inform…professional practice and civil or community action. (Simons, 2009, p. 21)

Stake (2005) is focused on whole systems. Yin (2009) emphasises the empirical; Simons’ (2009) complexity and particularity. The contextualised nature of case study research is highlighted by Simons (2009) and Yin (2009) and taken for granted by Stake (2005). As these definitions indicate, a distinguishing feature of case study in social research is its suitability for investigating complex contextualised practices (Anthony & Jack, 2009; Meyer, 2001; Yin, 2009); that is, the capacity to capture phenomena in social contexts empirically (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005).

Another approach to definition is to situate case study in the landscape of social research. “case study is a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that
involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected…” (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 80). This definition emphasises the flexibility of the approach. Unlike Simons (2009) and Yin (2009), Thomas’s definition of case study research (2011a, 2011b; Thomas & Myers, 2015) clarifies the role of theory, hence distinguishing research from illustration. Thomas (2011a) uses the notions of subject and object to articulate the theoretical interest in case study research.

Case studies are analyses of persons, events, decisions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods. The case that is the subject of inquiry will be an instance of a class of phenomena that provides an analytical frame – an object – within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates. (Thomas, 2011a, p. 513)

The latter definition (Thomas 2011a) is adopted in this research. These definitions help strengthen understandings and are indicative of the possibilities for case study research. The term case study refers in research to the methodology, method, design, approach or report. Confusion between notions of case study as an investigation, or case study as the product of the investigation, is common in the literature and stems from poor delineation between illustration and research (Anthony & Jack, 2009; Merriam, 1998). Thomas’s definition (2011a,) is shaped to address this key confusion. My research uses a case study design this is articulated fully through reference to Thomas’s typology (2011a) in the Methodology Chapter of this thesis (see Chapter Five).

**Case study and community development**

A key strength of case study methodology upon which case study researchers agree is the capacity to capture social phenomena in the whole and in context (Anthony & Jack, 2009; Meyer, 2001; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009). This strength corresponds with the importance of the collective in community development (where practice is a collective endeavour not simply the result of one
person’s thinking or action) and with the open nature of community development and the influence of context on practice (Ife, 2002; Kenny, 2011a; Miller, 2004; Weeks et al., 2003). Hence case study is a popular vehicle for showcasing community development practice. The central tenet of analysis in case study research is the understanding of the case (Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2006; Yin, 2009). This is what distinguishes case study from other forms of qualitative inquiry. Working with practice in the whole and in context is integral to knowledge in community development (Miller, 2004, p. 151). The knowledge base of community development relies on the use of case studies to showcase the vicarious experience of practice (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 155).

The thesis

The final section of this Introduction to my thesis outlines the order of content for the thesis. This thesis has fourteen chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction. Chapters Two, Three and Four are a three-part Literature Review. The central purpose of Chapter Two, is to consider the difficulties of defining community development through an exploration of community and development as essentially contested concepts. The chapter looks outward to social theory to reexamine the conceptual fabric of community development. This task begins by introducing the terms community and development, along with Gallie’s criteria for the essentially contested concept (1964). The chapter proceeds by examining community and development with these criteria in order to identify the way meaning is shaped in these notions, with the purpose of exploring the theorising of community development in the Australian context. I will argue that this analysis explains the open nature of community development in context and that when arguing for a particular theoretical approach to community development, the same processes occur to prescribe normative and descriptive meanings of the notion.

Chapter Three, the second of three literature review chapters, explores the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The chapter outlines changes in social protection relevant to community and community development in the Australian context from the 1960s through to the present day. This is followed by a review of the case studies and practice frameworks that I will identify as the
theorising of community development in the Australian context. This is combined with the proposition established in the preceding chapter, to argue understanding of the contested and contextualised nature of community development are recognised in our theorising but not especially emphasised.

Chapter Four examines two bodies of work from the Australian community development literature. One is the research of community development in the Australian context (for example: Dixon, 1990; Hoatson, Dixon & Sloman, 1996; Hoatson, 2001; Hudson, 2004; Ingamells, 2002; Kenny 2002; Sickers, Carter, Boyd, Cooper and Sonn, 2003; Rawsthorne, 2005). The other concerns the observations of Mowbray, a prominent academic in the field (for example: Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1983,1985, 1992, 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011). The separation of this work from that explored in Chapter Three enables a contrast which further clarifies the approach to theorising community development in the Australian context. The boundaries between these tasks are permeable; I will refer to Mowbray and to community development research in Chapter Three but I will retain a thorough exploration of both for Chapter Four. The Literature Reviews proposed in Chapters Two, Three and Four combine to answer the first sub-question of the research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

Chapter Five outlines the methodology of the case study research reported in this thesis. My research question requires a design through which knowledge from the field of community development probes knowledge from the literature of community development. Chapter Five locates notions of case study research in the broader landscape of social research and outlines the ontology and epistemology to meet this task. The specific design of my research is outlined through reference to a case study research typology. The final section of methodology accounts for the broad principles of ethics. Chapter Five sets out the perspectives that underpin my research. Chapter Six then outlines the methods I present as the actions of these theoretical foundations. The notion of case is important to data collection and the ideas of plot, within-case and cross-case, are central to explaining the data analysis processes of my research.
Chapter Seven reports on the context of the community development case studies and introduces the participating community groups. The within-case analysis of the community development practices of these groups are presented as practice stories in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven and as themes in Chapter Twelve. Findings from the cross-case analysis (that is, the practice stories and the themes across all four community sites) are presented in Chapter Thirteen. Chapters Eight through to Thirteen combine to answer the second sub-question of the research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? The term *findings* refer to what can be learned from the community development practices of the participating community groups. These are in turn applied in further exploration to the theorising of community development in the Australian context to answer the third sub-question of the research: how do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development? Figure 1, below, illustrates the layout of the thesis by showing the chapters, which address each of the sub-questions of my research in order to answer the central research question. Chapter Fourteen posits ten clear ways in which the practices of the south west region inform theorising of community development; responds to the central research question; and offers final thoughts and future possibilities.
Research question: How can community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context?

Figure 1. Thesis layout - chapters and research sub-questions
Chapter Two: Community and development essentially contested concepts

There are myriad ways of describing community development. A common feature of descriptions of community development is the statement of several central ideas which characterise the notion yet leave it open to interpretation. Descriptions from international associations, outlined in the introductory chapter, hint at the breadth of ideas and the open character of community development. The United Nations terminology database offers the most concise description, and the Budapest Declaration is the strongest in characterising the notion. Yet to say either defines community development is to overstate the accomplishment. The notion is easier to describe than to define (Bell & Newby, 1971). Texts of community development usually start by separating the terms, discussing each individually and then articulating what each offers when brought together. This chapter undertakes this task, not with the intention of defining community development but of exploring the difficulty in doing so.

This chapter is the first of three Literature Review chapters in this thesis. The elusive nature of community development is central to why there are three Literature Review chapters. The following indicates the focus of each. The first Literature Review chapter explores the difficulties of defining community development by examining the notions of community and development as essentially contested concepts. Gallie’s criteria (1964) of essentially contested concepts focus on the way meaning is shaped in such concepts. The understandings argued in this chapter inform an exploration of the theorising of community development in the Australian context by establishing insights into the notion. These insights, I will argue, are acknowledged in the literature but not emphasised. The second chapter undertakes a chronological review of theorising of community development in the Australian context from the 1960s to the present day. It examines trends in the theorising of community development through changes in social protection. Texts that present illustrative case studies of community development practice and texts that propose theoretical frameworks for practice are identified, and their approach to theorising community development explored. The third chapter reviews two significant bodies of work in the Australian context: Mowbray’s critique of community development
and the research of community development. This exploration includes case study research as well as illustrative case studies. While the two overlap to some extent, the point of making this distinction is clarified further through this discussion. The third Literature Review chapter advances the exploration of the theorising of community development by returning to the essentially contested concept as applied to sustainable development, and to the theorising of community development in the international context. It then concludes by combining these understandings with those established earlier to answer the first sub-question of the research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

This thesis has fourteen chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to my research. Chapters Two, Three and Four are a three-part Literature Review. Chapter Five accounts for methodology and Chapter Six for methods. Chapter Seven reports on the context of the community development case studies and introduces the reader to the participating community groups. The community development practices of these groups are presented in practice stories in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven, and the community development themes from each site is reported in Chapter Twelve. The cross-case findings from the practice stories and themes are presented in Chapter Thirteen. The term findings refers to what can be learned from the community development practices of the participating community groups. The cross-case findings from the case studies of everyday practices of community development answer the second sub-question of my research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? The case studies in my research are positioned as a source of knowledge for informing the theorising of community development. Hence the cross-case findings are central to exploring established conventions in the theorising of community development. Chapter Fourteen posits ten clear ways in which the practices of the south west region inform theorising of community development in the Australian context. Hence Chapter Fourteen answers the third sub-question of the research: how do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development? Chapter Fourteen closes with a response to the central research question and offers final thoughts and future possibilities.
The central purpose of this chapter, Chapter Two, is to consider the difficulties of defining community development through an exploration of community and development as essentially contested concepts. The chapter looks outward to social theory to reexamine the conceptual fabric of community development.

**The concepts of community and development**

The terms *community* and *development* are significant in contemporary social and political discourse (Bennett, Grossberg, & Morris, 2005). The idea of community has a long and industrious history (Brint, 2001; Creed, 2006; Delanty, 2003, 2009; Yudice, 2005). A likely explanation for its durability is the familiarity of the notion. Community contributes to how we know ourselves, who we think we are, and how we arrange ourselves socially (Brint, 2001; Creed 2006). The term development signifies change and growth or the unfolding of something new (Frankovits, 2005; Rist, 1997). It has broad application across domains as diverse as design and human biology, and has been part of the English language for centuries (Frankovits, 2005, p. 78). The long and well-documented history of development is indicative of the contested and contextual nature of the notion. Development “has meant different things from one historical situation to another and from one actor to another” (Hettne, 2009, p. 1). Both terms are well known and familiar yet not easily defined.

The idea of community shifts as it is conceptualised from different perspectives and for different social and political purposes (Creed, 2006; Delanty, 2003, 2009). It is shaped by the intention of those that use it (Plant, 1974, 2010). Yet ideas of community are part of everyday experience and such familiarity warrants investigation (Creed, 2006, p. 4). The notion of development similarly evades clear definition as Hettne argues “[t]here can be no fixed and final definition of development; only suggestions of what it should imply in particular contexts” (1990, p. 2).

Community is identified as under-theorised in comparison to justice, freedom and democracy, concepts of equivalent import (Mason, 2000; Plant, Lesser, & Taylor-Gooby, 1980; Taylor, 1982, p. 2). There is however considerable social theory aimed at clarifying the notion, which I combine here with social theorising of development.
stemming significantly from the application of the notion since the mid twentieth century, to explore the essentially contested nature of both. Gallie’s criteria are first explained (1964).

Essentially contested concept – the criteria

The idea of an essentially contested concept draws attention to the qualities of concepts that are contested yet, despite uncertain meaning, retain popularity and reflect the broader social and political values of the time (Gallie, 1956a, 1956b, 1964). Gallie (1964, p. 158) describes essentially contested concepts as those that invoke “…endless disputes about their proper uses on the part of the users”. He identifies seven criteria (Gallie, 1964) that elucidate the way multiple meanings rest within such concepts (Swanton, 1985), and explain the way meaning is shaped under such concepts (Collier, Hidalgo & Maciuceanu, 2006; MacIntyre, 1973; Waldron, 2002). The distinction between concept and meaning is crucial to clarifying this focus (Connolly, 1974). The notions concept and meaning are often used interchangeably yet concepts that are essentially contested carry multiple meanings (Connolly, 1974, 1983; Swanton, 1985). The notion of the essentially contested concept is widely accepted as a viable analytical tool in our social and political discourse (Connolly 1974; Collier et al., 2006; Gray 1977; Mason, 2000; MacIntyre 1973; Okoye, 2009; Plant et al., 1980; Waldron, 2002). As indicated above, concepts such as justice, freedom and democracy are broadly accepted as essentially contested (Collier et al., 2006; Gallie 1956a, 1964; Plant et al., 1980; Waldron, 2002). The criteria do not stabilise definitions but emphasise volatility. Despite this (Gallie, 1964), they assist in working with the real life concepts of political discourse (Connolly 1974). While acceptance of concepts as essentially contested confronts ambitions for workable definitions in sociological inquiry, it opens inquiry to the humility that such uncertainty brings (Waldron 2002).

The essentially contested framework draws attention away from the content of concepts such as community and development, to focus on the way that contested meanings hold together within such notions. Waldron argues the distinction between contested and essentially contested sits within the “location of the disagreement or indeterminacy” (2002, p. 149 [original emphasis]). Such concepts hold contest at
their very centre, there is no one essential meaning that all agree carries the notion (Waldron 2002, p. 149). The criteria for an essentially contested concept account for the characteristics that build such indeterminacy. The limitations of the framework are argued around semantic distinctions between concept and conception (Swanton, 1985); contested and contestability; the ontological concerns of “radical relativism” (Clark, 1973, p. 126); and implications for the pursuit of stable knowledge in social and political theory (Clark, 1973; Gray, 1977; Swanton, 1985). Perceived shortcomings of the essentially contested concept do not necessarily detract from the analytical capacity of the criteria, rather they simply direct the focus of inquiry to “whether use of this framework adds insight in analyzing [sic] these concepts?” (Collier et al., 2006, p. 236). I employ the concept here to highlight the way in which meaning fills the terms community and development for the purpose of exploring the theorising of community development.

Community is well established as an essentially contested concept (Diamond 2004; Mason 2000, p. 19; Plant et al., 1980, p. 209). Development is more commonly examined, not as an essentially contested concept, but through the contemporary notion of a similar bent: the buzzword (Cornwall, 2007; Rist, 2007). Buzzwords (Cornwall & Brock, 2005; Cornwall, 2007) are described as “terms that combine general agreement on the abstract notion that they present with endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice” (Cornwall, 2007, p. 472). The discussion of development as a buzzword will be cited in this application of the essentially contested concept criteria on the assumption that it is a comparable examination (Cornwall, 2007). An important difference is that the notion of the buzzword has a stronger tone of derision than is usually associated with the essentially contested concept. Nonetheless, considering community and development within Gallie’s framework (1956a, 1956b, 1964) helps to step back from the multiple and emotive meanings both terms invoke.

The essentially contested concept has seven criteria, each of which identify different elements that culminate in a range of meanings being accepted under the banner of one term. The purpose here is not to argue that community and development are indeed essentially contested; as noted above that has been argued elsewhere for community (eg., Diamond 2004; Plant et al., 1980, p. 209; Mason 2000, p. 19) and
for development (eg., Connelly, 2007; Hettne, 2009; Rist, 2007). The intention is to use Gallie’s criteria to illuminate the conceptual character of community and development for the purpose of exploring the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The criteria highlight particular aspects of community and development, which are not immediately recognisable when examining descriptions of either notion.

**The essentially contested nature of community and development**

Gallie’s first criterion argues essentially contested concepts represent an achievement that is universally valued. Broad agreement that a concept denotes an achievement worth pursuing, the specific features of which are contested, is indicative of an essentially contested concept (Gallie, 1964). The positive regard for such notions aligns with recognisable aspirational goals (Collier et al., 2006; Gallie, 1964; Okoye, 2009; Waldron, 2002) and taps into contemporary values in social and political discourse (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1047). The first criterion indicates that essentially contested concepts enjoy “automatic approval” (Standing, 2007, p. 514) and bring with them a “feel-good factor” (Cornwall, 2007, p. 475) that is broadly accepted.

Community enjoys such appeal. There is broad agreement community is desirable. The term is rarely used unfavourably (Bauman, 2001; Blackshaw, 2005; Williams, 1988; Yudice, 2005), and its capacity to evoke positive regard for the user is well documented (Creed, 2006; Delanty, 2003, 2009; Plant 1974, 2010). The appeal of community has a long history in scholarly thought: “[E]very community is established with a view to some good” (Aristotle, 1996, p. 11). Tonnies’ influential notions of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, translated as community and society (1955, 1974), established community as a valued achievement from as early as 1881 (Bell & Newby, 1971; Effrat, 1974; Ife, 2013; Kenny 2011a; Plant, 1974, 2010; Wild 1981). Tonnies’ dichotomy positioned community as the opposite of, and preferable to, society. Favoured and unfavoured social arrangements were juxtaposed to argue the value of community. Moral authority was claimed for the notion through analogies of right or wrong and good or evil (Bell & Newby, 1971; Plant, 1974, 2010; Wild, 1981).
A young man is warned against bad Gesellschaft, but the expression bad Gemeinschaft violates the meaning of the word. (Tonnies, 1974, p. 7)

Significant scholarly works argue the desirable quality of community is central to its relevance and longevity as a central idea in social and political discourse (Bauman, 1991, 2000; Bell & Newby, 1971; Tonnies, 1955, 1974). Achievement is held in the “promise” (Minar & Greer, 1969, p. xi) of the notion, characterised by invoking either a romanticised past or an idealised future (Creed, 2006; Delanty, 2003, 2009). Community represents the “good life” (Bell & Newby, 1971; Wild 1981, pp. 24-25).

Development carries a similar appeal. The appeal of development rests with the potential it holds for poverty alleviation, a goal that does not invite challenge (Eade & Williams, 1995, pp. 480-514). The achievement of development is associated with improved living conditions through provision of public infrastructure, health, education and business opportunities; appealing notions of progress (Rist, 1997). Development hence carries the assumption that such achievement is possible and worthwhile (Ziai, 2013, pp. 126-127). This is the crux of its appeal. The poverty alleviation ambitions of development are broadly valued. One explanation for the popularity of the notion is that development met the ambitions of the three groups central to the processes of decolonisation: those who fought for self-rule, the population they represent, and the colonisers (Rahnema, 1997). As Rahnema notes: “…this temporary meeting of otherwise highly divergent interests gave the development discourse a charismatic power of attraction” (Rahnema, 1997, p. ix). The attraction being, the assumption of universal benefit in the processes of change.

The recognition of development rests in the notion of transition (Hettne, 2009). The idea that development moves a community, society, nation or peoples from one place to another is consistent and underpins the appealing ambition that development represents a “better life” (Rist, 1997, p. 11).

While the scholarly discussion of community overwhelmingly agrees on the warm embrace of the notion, negative connotations are also argued. Negatives centre on the way the creation of community excludes through aspirations to inclusivity (Godway & Finn, 1994); the heavy expectation of security offered by community
(Bauman, 2001); and the easy occupation of the positive valence of the notion by a diverse range of users (Plant, 1974, 2010). Similarly, while the bold ambition of development is generally applauded, the characterisation of such ambitions by the colonialist mindset and social evolutionary notions of progress proffer its downside (Hettne, 2009). The schism between ambition and application have over time undermined the promise of development (Illich, 1997). Critiques from social movements and post colonialism of Western hegemony and the policies of the World Bank force the question of who benefits from development (Hettne, 2009; Norgaard, 1994; Rist, 1997). Ziai (2013) argues the social and political histories of societies were ignored in the enthusiastic application of the notion.

Gallie’s first criteria highlights the normative meaning of community and development, often expressed in terms of the “good life” and a “better life.” This aspect of meaning goes beyond description to assert a moral position (O’Neill, 1996). Normative meanings “make claims”: they identify what is right or wrong and when we invoke normative meaning we position ourselves to make such claims on others (Korsgaard, 1996, p. 8 [emphasis in original]). While both community and development are credited with a dark-side, the sense of achievement remains. The universal appeal of development tarnishes more readily than that of community. There is a strong critique of action carried out under the broad sweep of development in a way that is not reflected with community (Sachs, 1992; Ziai, 2007). The idea of transition is central to development. The achievement of development is held in the transition out of poverty. Development is an intervention and the failure to alleviate poverty, a failed intervention, undermines the agreed value of the notion. Community’s achievement, implied by Gemeinschaft, is restorative, and despite a recorded dark-side (Bauman, 2001; Godway & Finn, 1994) the lustre remains. While community has been identified as culpable in assigning positive value to less than visionary purpose, the blame for such shortcomings are assigned to the user (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981) and the gloss of community rarely fades.

The second and third of Gallie’s criteria (1964) are commonly paired (Collier et al., 2006). The second argues essentially contested concepts are internally complex and consist of a range of features that come together in various ways (Gallie, 1964, p. 161). The third refers to the capacity to be described in a number of ways yet remain
recognisable (Gallie, 1964). Hence these criteria argue that essentially contested concepts are recognisable through common features, and that the way these features combine and are emphasised and interpreted from different perspectives creates variation in meaning (Mason, 1996, 2000). Such variation in meaning leaves room for movement in the way essentially contested concepts are applied and for disparate and contradictory versions to be held in unison (Cornwall & Brock, 2005, p. 1056; Cornwall, 2007, p. 474).

Various attempts to define community have identified a range of common features (Hillery, 1955; Stacey, 1969). Only one such feature, the involvement of people, consistently emerged (Hillery, 1955, p. 117; Scherer, 1972). Contemporary discussion argues the simple presence of people is not enough; the experience of belonging is also needed (Creed, 2006; Delanty, 2003, 2009). Other common features of community include social relationships, interaction, common ties, place, shared values, unity, reciprocity and security (Bell & Newby, 1971; Hillery 1955; Scherer, 1972; Taylor, 1982, pp. 26-33). These features combine in different ways to establish the meaning of community in any instance, hence establishing the internal complexity of community.

Development is used for diverse purposes, hence the transition sought is characterised in different ways. Confining development to notions of economic change, for example, narrows the application of the notion but does not diminish the variety of meaning possible (Todaro, 1997). A key concern in economic development is the capacity to quantify or measure development, and this is not possible without some agreed common features (Todaro, 1997). The focus on development as the alleviation of poverty includes features pertinent to quality of life.

Development must therefore be conceived of as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty. (Todaro, 1997, p. 16)
The nature of development in any instance is characterised by the combination, emphasis and interpretation of the features that combine to articulate the transition sought. McMichael (2012) points to the central position of colonisation in understandings of development and maps ideas across the decades from 1940s to the present to argue that the range of approaches to development have moved with globalisation to address issues of inequality, food supply, and sustainability to take the focus off economics and onto social change.

The fourth criterion is the ability to adapt to different contexts without loss of conceptual integrity (Gallie, 1964). This highlights the often unpredictable fluidity of essentially contested concepts in context (Collier et al., 2006, p. 218). These concepts have great appeal and application yet are indefinite when it comes to content; they are open to context and will take on particular meaning in each context in which they are applied. The specific qualities of normative meaning and the ways in which descriptive meaning is established are all determined in context (Cornwall, 2007; Gallie, 1964). The discussion of community and development in regard to this fourth criterion stems directly from the preceding criterion. The combination of common features, the emphasis on each, and the perspective that informs their characteristics are all determined in context. The appeal of normative meaning is stable in essentially contested concepts. The qualities that occupy this position are open to context, such that notions of the good life and a better life, while endowing the concepts with universal appeal, are characterised in context. The “diverse describability” (Collier et al., 2006, p. 223) of the features of community and development emphasise the adaptable nature of both concepts. The descriptive meaning of essentially contested concepts is stabilised in context. The common features of community come together and the nature of the transition sought through development is characterised. The particular combination, emphasis and interpretation of the features of community and development emerge through context.

The fifth criterion is acceptance of the contest through recognition of different renderings of the notion and a subsequent preparedness to assert a particular rendering “aggressively and defensively” (Gallie, 1964, p. 161). I will address this aspect of the essentially contested concept with the final of Gallie’s criteria, which
refers to the continued clarification of the concept from an identified historical exemplar. Collier et al. (2006, p. 226) make the point that continued clarification stems from acceptance of the contested nature of such notions. Hence the fifth and seventh of Gallie’s criteria (1964) work hand-in-hand. Gallie describes the latter as progressive competition, although the notion of “progressive clarification” is more instructive (Collier et al., 2006, pp. 220-221). Gallie (1964, p. 188) argues that the more “moderate” users of an essentially contested concept demonstrate the genuine nature of the competition and progressive clarification between variations. “Moderate” (Gallie, 1964, p. 188) users readily recognise different understandings exist and may even be open to conversion if a persuasive enough argument is presented. Alternatively, he describes strict advocates of a particular interpretation of an essentially contested concept as unwilling to accept the essential and ongoing nature of the contest, and even goes so far as to identify such a position as the “lunatic fringe” (Gallie, 1964, p. 188).

The search for definitions of community in the field of community studies offers a strong example of rival claims to community (Clark, 1973; Hillery, 1955; Pahl, 1970; Scherer, 1972; Stacey, 1969). While an empirically functional definition remains elusive, the process of seeking to define community clarified common features of the notion and established an understanding of community as an ambivalent, contested, paradoxical and fluid notion (Bauman, 2000, 2001; Bell & Newby, 1971; Delanty, 2003, 2009; Effrat, 1974; Plant, 1974, 2010; Plant et al., 1980; Wild, 1981); thus affirming rival concepts of the term.

Rival claims to the notion of development are the subject of ongoing debate. The viability of the concept itself is under question (Sachs, 1992). Ziai (2013), for example, calls for an abandonment of the term development demanding instead direct statements of action. The confidence that surrounds development belies results (Ziai, 2013, 124). Ziai’s argument reflects Stacy’s (1969, p. 140) argument for adoption of the “local social system” in place of community. While the contest that is community is largely accepted in the theorising of the notion, the same cannot be said for development. An entire body of work, the Post-Development literature, has emerged to argue this very point (Ziai, 2007). Gallie’s fifth and seventh criteria highlight the conceptual strength of community in comparison to development.
The sixth criterion (Gallie, 1964) argues a connection between contemporary usage of a concept and an historical exemplar (Collier et al., 2006, p. 219). The idea of one original exemplar from which the meanings of all contemporary uses stem suggests a “golden thread” runs through the historical development of an essentially contested concept (Plant et al., 1980). The exemplar signifies the difference between contest and confusion (Collier et al., 2006, p. 219) by holding competing versions of the concept together. The origins of community are attributed to a number of influences (Bruhn, 2005, 2011; Delanty, 2003, 2009; Plant, 1974, 2010), from the philosophical ideals of the Greek Polis (Robinson, 1995; Schwartzman, 1994), key moments in social theory such as Tonnies’ Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft (1955), Durkheim’s suicide (1952), and the imagery of fiction as found in Austen (1980) and Gaskell (2011). Tonnies is cited by many as the point of departure for the idea of community in our social and political discourse (Bell & Newby, 1971; Effrat, 1974, p. 28; Hoggett, 1997; Plant 1974, 2010; Wild 1981). Two aspects of Tonnies’ work (1955, 1974) clarify the link between historical and contemporary ideas of community. Interest in community in the late eighteenth century stemmed from disquiet with the condition of society at the time. Theorists invoked the qualities of preindustrial rural communities to consider what was lost with the shift to urbanisation (Plant, 1974; Plant et al., 1980). The notions of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, highlighted earlier as community and society, draw distinctions between the two. Through Tonnies’ notion of Gemeinschaft (1955; 1974), and imagery such as of the Greek city-state (Robinson, 1995; Schwartzman, 1994), community is associated with the nostalgia for a past era (Bell & Newby, 1971; Brint, 2001; Effrat, 1974, p. 28; Hoggett, 1997; Plant 1974, 2010; Wild 1981). This association positions community as the preferred alternative for social arrangements, such that community provides an “answer” to the shortcomings of contemporary society (Scherer, 1972, p. 12).

The positioning of community as a preferred alternative continues to define the notion (Brint, 2001, p. 3). The preferred status rather than the primary meaning is what remains of Tonnies’ exemplar in contemporary discourses (Brint, 2001). The theoretical perspective that inhabits community may vary from Tonnies’, yet the notion of community as the preferred form of human association remains (Plant, 1974, 2010). This is what makes Tonnies’ dichotomy a particularly strong exemplar for community and underpins the appeal of the notion (1955, 1974). While Tonnies
(1955, 1974) relied on community with a particular set of features, it is his positioning of community as the preferred option that resonates with the users of community no matter the common features evoked.

The discussions of development in contemporary writing identify the historical precedent for the notion as the use of the term underdevelopment by US President Truman to describe impoverished nation states (Rist, 1997, pp. 69-75). At the time, post World War II, reconstruction of Europe, the establishment of what is now known as the World Bank, and the subsequent shift in world politics saw colonised nations seek independence (Hettne, 2009; Nederveen Pieterse, 2010; Rist, 1997). At this point development moved from being an idea that explained differences between nation states, to one that suggested action for change was possible, with modernisation theory the key instrument (Hettne, 2009; Rist, 1997). The idea of development as an intervention ignores the influence of context and identifies particular societies as underdeveloped. The focus of contemporary criticism of development challenges the Western notion of progress — the movement from agrarian to industrial society — embedded in this relatively recent conceptualisation of development. The challenge to development asserted, for example, through ideas of minority and majority worlds (Roth, 2001), as outlined in Chapter One, is a case in point.

Gallie’s exemplar implies a longer history than that stemming from Truman’s speech. While much of the literature is focused on this point because of its relevance to contemporary contexts, a longer view of the history of the term suggests this is simply the latest framing of the notion. Hettne traces notions of development back to the history of the modern nation states, to ideas of “transformative” “transition” from traditional to modern societies (Hettne, 2009, p. 30). It is this notion of transformative transition, present in the use of development from the twentieth century but also carrying greater historical legacy, that perhaps meets the sixth of Gallie’s criteria for development. In a similar vein to Tonnies’ community as the preferred alternative, the idea of transformative transition establishes the desirability of development and fuels continued use of the notion.
A proposition for the essentially contested nature of community development

Gallie’s criteria illuminate the conceptual character of community and development in ways that are not readily recognised. The criteria draw attention to the difference between normative and descriptive meaning. The preceding analysis expresses the normativity of community as the good life, and development as the better life. This moral authority travels with community and development, yet the character of the good life and the better life are constructed in context through the perspectives that come to community and development, or when theorising through the particular perspective argued as underpinning community and development. Hence normativity is stable, yet the way it is characterised is open. Wild’s account of this feature of community is especially helpful.

Community became everybody’s ideal notion of the good life and consequently ended up as a ragbag into which was put whatever each sociologist thought constituted the good life. (Wild, 1981, pp. 24-25)

To characterise and assign the features of community out of context is to talk about what community might be, thus explaining the prospect that community is a conduit for particular social, political and theoretical perspectives to occupy moral authority (Mason, 2000, p. 17). It is only in the actual event of community that perspective is acquired (Mason, 2000; Plant et al., 1980).

The criteria for the essentially contested concepts emphasise volatility of meaning in the concepts of community and development and as such caution a certain humility in how we use these notions. The criteria draw us back to the historical precedents of community and development to explain the appeal of both, and underscore the limitations of current incarnations to move from these early influences: community as the preferred social arrangement and development as transformative transition. Hence Gallie’s criteria remind us to hold these notions lightly. We may be inclined to attach particular meaning to community and development, yet Gallie’s criteria argue it is only in the context of application that descriptive meaning is built and
notions of the good life and the better life are characterised. Corollary to the articulation of community and development in context, moral authority of the notion is occupied and the ragbag filled.

Gallie’s criteria also help explain why community and development are together. The conceptual character of community and development illuminated by Gallie’s criteria provides a way of talking about how the two notions come together in community development. There are parallels between the conceptual trajectory of community and development, although the latter has not emerged untarnished from its use in contemporary contexts in quite the same way as the former. This may be due to the nature of the achievement each represents. The notion of transformative transition in contemporary context implies intervention. The preferred status of community, on the other hand, comes with the notion-it does not appear to be attached to a secondary action in quite the same way. Interventions can fail but the preferred position of community does not. Blame for the misuse of community typically rests with those that use the term, such as that apportioned to the government regarding community-focused policy; a point highlighted by Devereux (1993), whereas the blame for lack of achievement of development rests with the user as well as the concept. Hence development carries the legacy of past performance more heavily than community. Calls to reject community are underpinned, for example, by the desire for an empirically stable notion, whereas the abandonment of development is argued on the ground of past failings. Arguments for retaining development rely on qualifying adjectives, such as the practice for the essentially contested concept of democracy (Collier & Levitsky, 1997, p.431). For example, social and human when coupled with development direct the focus of action, and bottom-up and endogenous direct the way development is initiated (Rahnema, 1997); all strategies for characterising the notion before it is applied in context. This is indeed the point of community and development coming together. Past failings of development are softened by the concept of community. Community is the stronger of the two.

Finally for this chapter, by highlighting the way meaning is shaped in essentially contested concepts, Gallie’s criteria (1964) helps us see the way the perspective of the user characterises the normativity and the common features of community and
development. Gallie’s essentially contested concept (1964) explains the way particular theoretical and political perspectives may characterise the normative and descriptive features of community development. Once inhabiting the notion, particular perspectives are in a position to prescribe the vision and content of community development. Hence filling Wild’s (1981) ragbag.

The preceding analysis supports the prospect that community development is established in context. However when theorising community development as a practice, rather than a specific instance in context, the particular theoretical and political perspectives capture the vision and features of community development. Community development is shaped in context by the theoretical and political perspectives people bring to engage in collective action. When theorising community development as a practice, it appears the notion is shaped by the theoretical and political perspective argued as a possible approach. Gallie’s “moderate” users (1964, p. 188) accept that to occupy an essentially contested concept is to characterise the notion both descriptively and normatively and also that another user may characterise it differently, thus supporting the contention that when particular theoretical and political perspectives inhabit community development, free from context, those perspectives would appear to occupy the authority to prescribe the vision and content of community development. This point is applied in the following chapter.
Chapter Three: Theorising of community development in the Australian context

The central purpose of this chapter is to explore trends and customs of theorising community development in the Australian context. The chapter begins by outlining the type of literature central to the task. A chronology of social protection and its relevance to community and community development in the Australian context is presented. This is followed by an exploration of illustrative case studies and practice frameworks to identify approaches to theorising community development in the Australian context. This is combined with the proposition established in the preceding chapter to argue that an understanding of the contested and contextualised nature of community development is evidenced in our theorising but is not duly emphasised.

The thesis has fourteen chapters: the first is the Introduction; Chapters Two, Three and Four form the literature review of the thesis; the preceding chapter explored the way meaning is shaped in the concepts of community and development through Gallie’s (1964) essentially contested concept. This chapter explores the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The following chapter examines the research of community development in the Australian context (eg., Dixon, 1990; Hoatson, Dixon & Sloman, 1996; Hoatson, 2001; Hudson, 2004; Ingamells, 2002; Kenny 2002; Sagger et al., 2003) and the observations of Mowbray, a prominent academic in the field (eg., Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011). The review of the community development literature presented in Chapters Two, Three and Four combine to answer the first sub-question of the research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

Purpose of the chapter

As stated above, the central purpose of this chapter is to explore trends and customs of theorising of community development in the Australian context. Theorising simply described is “what one does to produce a theory” (Swedberg, 2014, p. 1). Westoby (2014, p. 19) describes his own attempt to theorise community
development in the South African context as “an interpretive process of seeing and understanding the field of community development writing and practice.” While this description is specific to Westoby’s task, it helps to clarify the focus of this chapter. The purpose, to map the theorising of community development in the Australian context, is necessarily an interpretive process and the scope of the endeavour is limited to community development writing; that is, the literature of community development in the Australian context. Of course the writing under exploration is focused on community development practice; however, my task in this chapter is to explore the theorising of community development through its writing. Westoby’s task was to theorise the field in South Africa (2014); mine is to explore the theorising of the field in the Australian context. The central purpose is to explore the way that particular theoretical and political perspectives inhabit the notion of community development throughout theorising and in so doing gain the authority to prescribe the vision and content of community development in the Australian context.

**The type of literature central to the theorising of community development**

There exists a range of literatures relevant to the task of exploring the theorising of community development in the Australian context. Thus the first step in this chapter is to clarify the focus and scope of the literature. The following includes texts that focus on community work, community practice, community building and community development. The same texts will often argue that these terms identify particular approaches to communities, however the broad discussion of the literature of community development in the Australian context includes texts that use all four terms (Mendes, 2009b; Mowbray, 1996, 2004a). The next distinction to make is the particular way in which literature supports practice, whether that is by providing theoretical frameworks, illustrative case studies that stimulate learning about practice, or techniques for carrying out practice. While the boundaries between these foci are not impermeable, I will focus on texts with the first two as their strongest purpose. Thus the chapter is focused on theoretical frameworks and illustrative case studies of community development. Throughout this thesis, and especially in this chapter, I will refer to these bodies of work as *illustrative case studies* and *practice*
frameworks. The former is defined in the Introduction to this thesis and I clarify the latter as follows.

Westoby (2014) makes a distinction between community development being influenced by a tradition, and a framework that assists the exploration of a tradition in the practice of community development. Traditions of community development emerge from location, method or intellectual sources (Westoby, 2014, Westoby & Dowling, 2013). Such traditions sustain notions of community development over time and inform thinking about practice. Practice frameworks may be inspired and influenced by a particular tradition or a mix of traditions, but it is a lower order concept focused on articulating a framework for practice (Westoby, 2014, Westoby & Dowling, 2013). Westoby (2014) makes a distinction between practice frameworks propagated by organisations and those argued by academics; the latter he notes are more widely recognised in the field. My exploration is focused on such practice frameworks (those posited by academics) and illustrative case studies in the Australian community development literature. There is no attempt to encompass the broad range of manuals outlining the techniques of community development (eg., Emergency Management Australia, 2003; Frank & Smith, 2006; STARTTS, 2012).

Both practice frameworks and illustrative case studies are central to theorising community development in the Australian context, yet one or the other has dominated the literature at different periods. The case studies were prominent from the 1960s through to the mid 1990s. Case studies portrayed the experiences of people working to improve community life, and the purpose was to educate and inspire the field. They also served to document the community work of the era in the Australian context. Some practice frameworks were published in the 1980s and were introduced with case studies, however the mid 1990s saw a spike in the publication of texts dedicated to theoretically framing community development. The practice frameworks were presented as guides for action in community development. The frameworks were also inspirational and served to clarify the theoretical and political intent of community development. Case studies have been published during this period; they are, however, either small tokens within theoretical texts, or rare when compared to the earlier period.
Chronology of social protection as relevant to community and community development in the Australian context

The following offers a chronology of the interaction between community development and the central themes of social protection in the Australian context from the 1960s to the present day. The story is articulated through reference to sources which describe and analyse social protection and community development in the Australian context. The importance of social protection to the framing of community development was outlined in Chapter One.

Community development activity is said to have peaked in the Australian context in the 1970s, and this era is commonly identified as precedent to current notions of practice (Hornby, 2012; Kenny, 1996; Onyx, 1996; Webster, 1993). This chronology commences just prior to this period in the 1960s in order to encapsulate the shift in thinking that emerged to characterise community development in the 1970s (Hornby, 2012; Kenny, 1996; Onyx, 1996; Webster, 1993). The level of interest in the early 1960s is evidenced by the focus of the Second National Conference of the Australian Council of Social Services on community development in both rural and urban settings (Australian Council of Social Services, 1962), and an international seminar on community development reported in the Australian Journal of Social Issues (Nelson, 1964). It is important to note that histories of the voluntary sector indicate that notions of community development or its antecedents did exist in Australia prior to 1960 (Australian Association of Social Workers, 1947; Australian Council of Social Service, 1960; Donovan, 1956; Oppenheimer, 2008, pp. 167-169). Australian society of the sixties was considered egalitarian and the key instruments of social protection were full employment and the minimum wage (Chamberlain, 1978; Mendes, 2008). These arrangements, established in the early days of Federation, became known as the wage earner’s welfare state (Castles, 1994; Mendes, 1999) and were central to Australian liberal democracy up until the 1970s (Everingham, 2003, p. 63). Community development from this period reflects the broader belief in the opportunities provided by full employment and the key impetus was the “integrative function” it served (Mowbray, 1985, p. 50, 1992, p. 59). Public processes of participation such as local area planning or expressions of civic responsibility characterised community development of the era (Mowbray, 1985, 1992).
The late 1960s saw emerging recognition of poverty and inequality of communities outside the construct of the wage earner’s welfare state (Mendes, 2008). Sociologists began to argue that the prosperity of the so-called “lucky country” (Horne, 1964, p. 239) did not flow to all sectors of the population. Measures for poverty were developed and efforts to identify and address poverty gained momentum, culminating in the *Australian Commission of Inquiry into Poverty* in 1972 (Chamberlain, 1978; Mendes, 2008). The changing perspective of equality in Australia, the influence of social movements and the election of the Whitlam Government in 1972, raised the prospect of community development as a strategy for social change (Everingham, 2003). Trade unions sought to voice environmental and social concerns and unionised workers imposed so-called Green Bans (Burgmann & Milner, 2011; Everingham, 2003, p. 75; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1995, p. 141). The power base of the union movement within the wage earner’s welfare state was central to the significance of this activism (Burgmann & Burgmann, 1998, p. 6; Everingham, 2003, p. 75). Equally important was the challenge of social movements to the class focus of social protection. Rights-based discourses of equality for groups marginalised by dominant views on race, gender and sexuality came to prominence in Western democracies across the world. Social movements in Australia sought avenues for voicing their demands through various forms of community action and protest (Onyx, 1996). Issues of fairness and social justice inspired a diversity of community action, participation and social policy reform (Dixon, Hoatson, & Weeks, 2003b; Onyx, 1996; Webster, 1993). Community participation evoked notions of empowerment and social justice and established the seventies as the halcyon days of community development in an Australian context (Everingham, 2003; Kenny, 1996; Onyx, 1996).

(Chamberlain, 1978; Everingham, 2003, p. 66; Graycar, 1976; Ife & Camilleri, 1979, p. 48; Kenny, 1996; Thorpe, 1985; 1992). The policy relied on the notion of community as a site of participatory democracy and sought the redistribution of power from the state to the people (Chamberlain, 1978; DeMaria, 1975; Graycar, 1978, p. 358; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1995, p. 141). Despite strong critique of the AAP (Chapman, 1975; Ife & Camilleri, 1979; Jones, 1975; Graycar, 1974), the policy regime of the Whitlam government supported such ambitions. The role of the AAP in community development is acknowledged up until the present day (eg., Barry, Clohesy, & Smith, 1985, 1992; Dimech, 1985; 1992; Hornby, 2012; Kenny, 1996; Onyx, 1996; Webster, 1993). Hence the 1970s mark a shift from integrative ideas of community development as a largely pluralist venture (Mowbray, 1985, 1992; Thorpe, 1985, 1992), to a practice which sought to unsettle power relations between government and the people or business and the people. The theorising of community development as “‘bottom-up’ processes of change and action” was central (Onyx, 1996, p. 100). The 1970s established community development in Australia as an emancipatory practice of social change (Kenny, 1996, p. 105).

The policy imperative of economic rationalism in the 1980s saw community development lose momentum (Onyx, 1996, p. 101). “[T]he discourse of community development seems to have died” (Onyx, 1996, p. 101), such was the fall from favour. It is identified as a time when community development went underground (Weeks, Hoatson & Dixon 2003b, p. 1). Economic rationalism positioned fiscal matters as central to policy and imposed economic modeling on all areas of government activity (Mendes, 1999; Pusey, 1991). The policies spanned both major parties in Australia and effectively unraveled the wage earner’s welfare state (Castles, 1994; 2001; Kenny, 1996; Mendes, 1999, 2009a; Pusey, 1991). The notion of community was distanced from the state and viewed as the default position for social protection detached from government responsibility, hence “privatising social problems and provision” (Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, p. 338, 1995, pp. 141-142).

During this period, community development lost favour with both the political Left and Right in Australia. The inability to conform to economic performance models fuelled censure from the Right while the limits of revolutionary intent, inherent in the redistributive ambitions of the 1970s, disillusioned the Left (Onyx, 1996, p. 101).
Bryson and Mowbray’s analysis of community as a “spray on solution” (1981, p. 255) refers to historical and theoretical ideas of community (Plant, 1974) to argue the “evaluative ideological assumptions of the user must be seen as integral” to characterising the achievement of community development (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981, p. 256). Thus the economic rationalism of the 1980s inhabited community as a technical rather than political strategy, producing an innately conservative communitarian tradition as opposed to a process of “developing community” (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981, p. 261). Hence the policy context saw community development shed the political aspiration that characterised the practice of the 1970s (Kenny, 1996).

Community returned in the shape of civil society and social capital to the Australian policy discourse in the mid 1990s (Adams & Hess, 2001; Alston, 2002a, 2002b; Cox, 1995; Dixon et al., 2003b; Mendes, 2009a; Mowbray, 2004a, 2011). Key features consistently associated with notions of social capital are trust, participation, connection and social norms (Alston, 2002b; Dixon, 2003; Onyx, 2005). Hence social capital is usually taken to be a good thing, although various forms identified as “bonding, bridging and linking” (Brooks, 2009, p. 82) have been shown to have negative influences (Everingham, 2003, p. 116). The first exists within a community context of shared values, the second runs to other domains and is more open to diversity, and the third runs to government and business structures and the influence of power (Brooks, 2009). The negation of these differences through reference to the dominant form — that is, bonding — diminishes the capacity for social capital to deliver its claims (Brooks, 2009; Mowbray, 2009).

The notion of bonding social capital, associated with the seminal work of Putnam (2000), represents common usage of the term in Australian policy discourse (Brooks, 2009; Everingham, 2003). The concept of bonding social capital relieves government of responsibility and accountability in the community sector (Alston, 2002b; Brooks, 2009; Everingham, 2003). Bryson and Mowbray (2005) again raise the issue of the ideology of community in arguing that conservative political agendas underpin Putnam’s notion of social capital (2000). Social theorists argued this was not a return to the community of the Whitlam government, which was embedded in the action of the state, because the separation of state and community, a hallmark of
economic rationalism, was retained (Alston, 2002a, 2002b; Everingham, 1998, 2003, Thompson, 2009). The increasing impact of globalisation on the government’s capacity to control localised economies, and the concomitant need for change in the welfare regime, combined to generate notions of the third way or the enabling state (Botsman & Latham, 2001; McClelland & St John, 2006), thereby placing community in partnership with government in the policy discourse. The separation between state and civil society softened perhaps, or obscured, by notions of partnership or “social coalition” (Alston, 2002b, p. 94; Everingham, 2003, p. 58).

At the start of the millennium, neoliberalism and the notions of mutual obligation for welfare recipients were central to Australian social protection (McClelland & St John, 2006). Underpinned by the political values of “economic libertarianism and social conservatism” (Stewart & Maley, 2007, p. 277), and espousing the principles of self-reliance and individualism (Collits, 2008), the Howard Government from 1996 to 2007 worked against social activism (Wear, 2008) and community development (Alston, 2010). Community development was confined to service provision and governments made over-inflated claims on the back of the actions of local communities (Mowbray, 2004a, 2011). Community came to the policy discourse with ideals of trust and inclusion, yet the policy agenda undermined community advocacy and activism, a situation identified as the “revival of community paradox” (Mowbray, 2004a, pp. 13-14) and attributed to the consensus approach to community development (Mowbray, 2011, p. i134) influenced by Etzioni (1994; 1998), Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Putnam (2000), conservative communitarians from the United States.

The change of government in 2007 saw some shifts in social policy amenable to community development. Social inclusion emerged as a central concept (Marston & Dee, 2015), although narrow application of the notion to participation in paid employment diminished opportunity (Kenny, 2011a, pp. 66-69). Similarly, an increased focus on housing affordability (Nicholls, 2014) heralded a return of poverty to the political agenda (Saunders, 2015), another sign that community development focused on the participation of disadvantaged communities may be supported. The Rudd government’s response to the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) in 2008 again marked a move away from neoliberalism to see government intervention
in the economy as protection against increased disadvantage in the international context (Bell & Quiggin, 2014, p. 150). A further indicator of shifting policy paradigms from the new millennium Labor governments was the focus on the third sector supported by a Productivity Commission’s report on the contribution of the sector (2010). The social policy legacy for Labor in this period of government from 2007 to 2013 was overshadowed by power struggles that plagued the party, and likely contributed to the particularly Australian experience of the world wide trend of people’s increasing distrust of democratic government (Weymouth & Hartz-Karp, 2015). The conservative Abbott government was elected in 2013 without a clear agenda on social policy beyond the retention of education and disability reforms from the previous government (Marston et al., 2014). Social inclusion and the focus on the third sector have been abandoned (Marston et al., 2014; Marston & Dee, 2015). The Turnbull Government, a result of a party instigated change in 2015, appears to reflect the Abbott Government in terms of social policy, at the time of writing.

The preceding review indicates the political intent of community development, ignited in the 1970s, has been buffeted by policy contexts since this time. The following review of theorising for the same period indicates growing recognition of the need for theorising to assert the political intent of community development in policy contexts.

The theorising of community development in the Australian context

The purpose here is to articulate the theorising of community development with this backdrop of trends on social protection in the Australian context. The review focuses on illustrative case studies and practice frameworks published from the 1960s to the present day. The illustrative case studies were the dominant form of such literature from the 1960s to the mid 1990s.
Illustrative case studies

A literature review of community work in Australia written for a special edition of the *Community Development Journal* (Mowbray, 1996) identifies Halliwell’s edited collection of practice case studies, *People Working Together*, published in 1969, as the earliest book in the Australian community development literature. Halliwell’s (1969b) text was the first in a series of three volumes (Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c). The following review demonstrates the three volumes are indicative of the increasingly political theorising of community development in Australia from 1969 through to the mid 1990s. This review outlines key case study texts and describes their approach to theorising community development from the 1960s to the present day (eg., Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Butler & Cass, 1993; Halliwell, 1969b; Ingamells et al., 2010b; Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993; Weeks et al., 2003). The majority of these texts were published between 1969 and the mid 1990s. Webster’s publication (1993), an annotated bibliography, highlights the proliferation of case studies during this period. The following is focused on the theorising of this early era and moves through to explore the two edited collections of case studies published since 2000.

The human factor

The illustrative case studies published from 1969 to the mid 1990s emphasise people’s experiences of community development at the community level.

The best way of gaining an appreciation of the importance of these human factors [courage, risk, commitment, perseverance, acumen and capacity to draw strength from others] is from the narratives of those who have participated directly in social action and observers’ accounts of the actions and characters closely studied campaigns. (Vinson, 1991, p. 16)

Written or narrated by people directly involved in the community practices portrayed, the case studies represent a way for practitioners to develop and document
their work (Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Butler & Cass, 1993; Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c; Webster, 1993). The terms community development (Butler & Cass, 1993; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993), community action (Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Halliwell, 1969a), community practice (Kelly & Sewell, 1986c), community work, social change (Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992), community building (Kelly et al., 1997) and social action (Baldry & Vinson, 1991) are used in the edited collections of case studies, yet all are identified in the community development literature (Webster, 1993; Mowbray, 1996). The strength of case studies to speak to the field is emphasised and the limitation of insider accounts acknowledged (Kelly & Sewell, 1986a, pp. 1-2). Audiences are typically identified as practitioners, students and academics (Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Butler & Cass, 1993; Halliwell, 1969a; Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993). The prospect of people in the community outside these roles being excluded from the knowledge of the literature is acknowledged (Kelly & Sewell, 1986c), and the focus on the “vernacular” over the “technical,” an argued strength of the case studies, helps to reduce this likelihood (Kelly & Sewell, 1986a, p. 1). The editors argue that authors and readers alike are educated and inspired by the illustrative case studies of community development (Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Butler & Cass, 1993; Halliwell, 1969b; Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993). The term case study is used across all publications (Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Butler & Cass, 1993; Kelly et al., 1997; Kelly & Sewell, 1986c; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993), with the exception of Halliwell’s (1969a) preference for case histories and Thorpe and Petruchenia’s (1985, 1992) for case examples. The value of these collections as histories of community development in Australia is also acknowledged (Webster, 1993).

The bold ambition

Reviewing the practice case studies demonstrates the changing focus of community development from the 1960s through to the mid 1990s. The central ideas of integrative community development in the 1960s relied on notions of “collective action” to “improve lives” (Halliwell, 1969a, p. 3). The hardening policy contexts of the 1980s took the ambition of community development to a new level, the second volume of People Working Together articulating the goal to “challenge the way things are done” (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 147). Thorpe and Petruchenia place
greater emphasis on the importance of macro level analysis to argue the limitations of consensus models of community work (1985, 1992). The socialist tradition was necessary, they argue, to community development. They recognise much of the work portrayed in their text reflected consensus ideology (Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992). As hostile policy narratives gathered momentum in the late 1980s so too as did the ambition of community development. Baldry and Vinson link community work to the “moral superiority” of social action and identify opposition as the central driver of practice (1991, p. 13). Hence as the reform agendas of the 1970s faded, theoretical and political perspectives became central to theorising community development (Thorpe, 1985, 1992; Vinson, 1991; Ward, 1993; Webster, 1993).

The missing metanarrative

Difficulty in establishing a meta-analysis across the case studies is identified as a significant weakness in their contribution to community development knowledge (Mowbray, 1996). The inability of the case studies in the first volume of People Working Together to provide “a single pattern of analysis” is countered, Halliwell argues (1969a, p. 4), by the diversity of examples on display. Contrastingly, the editors of the second volume question the usefulness of the case studies without an overarching analysis; yet such an analysis, they argue, undermines the central position of people (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, pp. 147-148). The editors settle their unease by focusing on the interpretive nature of case studies and offering five ways for the reader to engage with the material (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, pp. 148-149). The trio of head, heart, and hand is originally offered as a framework for clarifying the “learning gains” of case studies (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 150). Two years later, Kelly and Sewell expand the theoretical framework of head, heart and hand for community development (Kelly & Sewell, 1988). To publish a text focused on theory without illustrative case studies was rare in the community development publications of the 1980s. Case studies were central to the theorising of practice at the time.

Good community development – it’s in the frameworks

The rigors of the policy context fuelled the need for a meta-narrative to assert the politics of community development and practice frameworks came to prominence in
the case study publications. The frameworks enable key ideas to be adopted in
different contexts. The annotated bibliography, for example, introduces a framework
to clarify the scope of community development (Webster, 1993) as does the related
publication by Butler and Cass (1993). The third in the series of People Working
Together, which focused on people’s practice experiences as cases, linked
experience to theory such that, “…each story needs to display the principles and
processes of community development practice in a way that is easily recognised”
(Kelly et al., 1997, p. 3).

A number of collections placed greater emphasis on articulating the theoretical and
political underpinnings of community development (Thorpe, 1985, 1992; Vinson,
1991; Ward, 1993). As indicated earlier, Thorpe articulated structuralist, pluralist
and consensus ideologies to identify the limitations of practices current at the time
to argue for the ambitions of the Feminist and Socialist perspectives (Thorpe, 1985,
of case studies to demonstrate connections between community action, macro level
social movements and oppressive societal structures. The practice frameworks
typically sat like sentinels at the front of edited collections of case studies,
articulating the tenets of community development.

Alongside increasing use of practice frameworks came the notion of good practice.
Kelly et al. maintain that the narratives in their collection exemplify “good practice”
(1997, p. 2), as do Butler and Cass (1993). The following statement indicates the
achievement of good practice is not necessarily linked to outcomes: “we have
published projects which illustrate good community development practice,
regardless of the outcomes. It is our contention that while good practice does not
guarantee intended outcomes, it will always result in positive achievements” (Butler
& Cass, 1993, p. 7). The achievement of good practice is articulated through “the
community development framework” (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 7), rather than
people’s experiences (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 10). The achievement of community
development lay therefore in practice frameworks, not people or outcomes. The
assumption being that if the elements and values of community development as
articulated by practice frameworks were evident in case studies then it was “good
community development” (Butler, 1993, p. 14).
Good practice in community development is about putting the elements of the Framework of Community Development in place in an effective way. It is quite possible that good practice will not achieve the outcomes of some concrete benefit and a more powerful community. (Butler, 1993, p. 14)

The framework to which Butler (1993, pp. 9-10) refers in the above quote identifies processes, objectives and values for community development.

The case studies, it is argued, inspire the field through the tales they tell and the way they inform theory “[g]ood theory in community building comes from good practice” (Kelly et al., 1997, p. 144). The value of the case studies shifts to their capacity to articulate theory. Kelly et al. (1997, p. 3) argue the “dialogical nature” of case studies is key to this capacity to ignite theory and hence to inspire the field. That which inspires community development contributes further to the knowledge of the field. The normativity of the framework is clear; it is offered as an evaluative tool for determining if action qualifies as community development (Butler, 1993, p. 9).

Theorsing community development- illustrative case studies

The case studies are referred to as illustrative throughout the preceding discussion. The distinction between case study research and illustrative case study was outlined in Chapter One of this thesis. While this distinction is perhaps easier to describe than apply it appears to be effective in this instance. Ideas indicative of case study research, such as research questions and methodologies, are not featured in the texts reviewed. The third in the series of People Working Together claims a “methodology” identified as “orthodox case study approach” was used to compile the practitioner’s stories presented in the collection (Kelly et al., 1997, p. 3). Other than this one instance, the research methodologies of the case studies are not addressed, in the publications from the 1990s. There is some discussion of knowledge. The subjective (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 7; Kelly et al., 1997, p. 3) and interpretive nature (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 149) of the case studies is identified.
The correlation between the form of knowledge in the case studies and the values of community development is argued as a rejection of objectivity (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 7).

Illustrative case studies are essential to articulating people’s voice in community development. The voice of the people is a central concern. As Vinson’s quote at the start of this section highlights, the “human factors” of community development are portrayed in stories of practice (Vinson, 1991, p. 16). This is a central rationale for the use of case studies in community development. The case studies highlighted above are commonly written, or at least told, by those directly involved. They are insider accounts of community development. The limitations of case studies are clearest in the urge to tell only the good bits, the “simplified success stories” of community development (Ingamells, 2010, p. 8). The notion of good practice supports this proposition in that the failure to achieve outcomes does not diminish the practice portrayed. If the bold ambition of community development seeks to address macro level power achievement relies on macro level change. The “struggle” (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 7) and “frustration” of community development (Kelly et al., 1997, p. 3), in striving to achieve macro level change, is alleviated by the framework of community development. The idea of struggle establishes an authentic voice in the portrayal of community development (Kelly et al., 1997) and the association between theoretical frameworks and good practice redefines achievement in the implementation of community development frameworks.

The common approach when presenting cases studies with theoretical frameworks is to argue that the case studies demonstrate how the framework can be applied and hence support the use of a particular framework. Used in this way the strength of case studies is the way that stories bring the practice frameworks to life. The idea that community development is an essentially contested concept emphasises the volatility of its meaning. The earlier case study publications display the range of interpretations of community development present in the field. The introduction of theoretical frameworks stabilise the meaning of community development across a range of contexts. The frameworks serve to define good community development and hence characterise normativity and descriptive features of community development regardless of context.
The mid 1990s saw a shift in the literature to publications where the theoretical frameworks were central to the text. The balance between illustrative case studies and practice frameworks moved to the latter. Examples of such texts are explored below. There are two further edited collections of case studies published in the new millennium that will be considered in this section as well.

**Practice frameworks for community development**

This section turns to the theorising of community development at the point when the practice frameworks came to prominence in the Australian context. The notion of practice frameworks was introduced at the front of this chapter. The texts explored here include samples of illustrative case studies but their central purpose is to articulate a theoretical framing for the practice of community development. Texts devoted to arguing for practice frameworks came to prominence in the Australian context from Kenny’s publication in 1994 and remain so to the present day. The following review considers the particular theoretical perspectives of key texts with the aim of identifying the vision and content they assign to community development. To summarise a text down to a number of key points is of course to miss much of the content. While the following highlights aspects of each text’s particular argument for community development, some elements are not addressed. The first three texts examined below focus on the role of community development workers. This aspect of the work is not considered in depth because the focus here is on describing community development practice as distinct from the role of community development practitioners. Eversole’s text (2015) is written for community development practitioners, yet the approach described does not position the practitioners as central.

The 1996 literature review of community development in Australia cited above (Mowbray, 1996) argues there is scant theorising of community development in the Australian context. The discipline looks internationally for leadership in the theorising of community development (Mowbray, 1996). Two publications noted in this review, although given little attention and even less credit by Mowbray (1996), did herald proposals for practice frameworks without accompanying case studies. Creed and Tomlinson (1984) argued ideologically driven practice was needed to
address weakening policy support for community development in the early 1980s. They proposed Leftist and Feminist ideologies as a theoretical foundation for community development (Creed & Tomlinson, 1984), an attempt perhaps to redeem the emancipatory intent of the previous decade. As mentioned above, Kelly and Sewell (1986c), feeling unsettled by the capacity of practice case studies to inform community development, expounded the trio of head, heart, and hand to offer a practice framework without accompanying case studies, a rarity in the Australian community development literature of the 1980s (Kelly & Sewell, 1988).

The entry of Kenny’s 1994 publication *Developing communities for the future: Community development in Australia* was recognised at the time as a solitary effort to position practice within broader social theory (Mowbray, 1996, pp. 176-177). The first edition of Ife’s *Community development: Creating community alternatives – vision, analysis and practice* (1995) was published the year after. The authorship of this text has moved from Ife, to Ife and Tesoriero in the third edition and Tesoriero in the fourth editions, although much of the content remained the same (Ife, 1995, 2002; Ife & Tesoriero, 2006; Tesoriero, 2010), and has returned again recently to Ife (2013). Given that input from Tesoriero is excluded from the fifth edition, I will from here refer only to Ife (1995, 2002, 2013). These texts (Ife 1995, 2002, 2013; Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a), along with *Community practices in Australia* (Weeks et al., 2003), are identified as community development textbooks for the Australian context (Mendes, 2009b, p. 256; Mowbray, 2004a, p. 12). The emergence more recently of Ingamells et al. (2010b), Westoby & Dowling (2009, 2013), and Eversole (2015), indicate shifting approaches in the theorising of community development articulated in the Australian literature.

The central purpose of these texts is to posit a practice framework for community development. Case studies are included (Eversole, 2015; Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a; Westoby & Dowling, 2009, 2013) but are secondary to the articulation of the framework. Case studies are vignettes (Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a; Westoby & Dowling, 2009, 2013) formed from direct practice experience or observation (eg., Westoby & Dowling, 2009, 2013), and in some instances are fusions of practice (Kenny, 1994) and are used to demonstrate theory. These texts direct much of their argument to community workers, that is, people working in community
development; this point is however not central to the focus of my research. As outlined in Chapter One, the case studies presented in this thesis emphasise the collective and contextualised nature of community development. The case studies presented in this thesis do not position community workers as central to practice. Hence the following analysis does not focus on the role of workers outlined in these texts. I will commence by exploring the notions of community development offered by Kenny (1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a) and Ife (1995, 2002, 2013), as the two authors who marked a significant shift in our approach to theorising community development in the mid 1990s and remain current to the present day. Both theorists, through the texts cited above and various other publications, are significant contributors to the field of community development in the Australian context. The following discussion is focused on central features of their core texts (Ife, 1995, 2002, 2013; Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a) hence the scope is necessarily limited and does not attest to the full opus of either theorist.

Kenny and Ife each argue for a particular conceptualisation of community development. Both indicate that their proposal for community development is specific. Kenny talks about “my understandings and my emphases” and counters the possibility of prescription through reference to community development as a “living discipline” (Kenny, 1994, pp. xiii-xiv, 2011a, p. xxi). Ife talks about his proposition for community development as a particular approach and his expectation that each community worker will establish their own “practice framework,” and the material he presents may assist (Ife, 1995, p. 249, 2002, p. 265, 2013, p. 365). I argue that despite these caveats, theoretical proposals for community development largely unanchored by case studies (that is, using case studies as illustration rather than researched case studies) necessarily prescribe notions of community development due to the way meaning is shaped in essentially contested concepts. The following discusses the elements of Kenny and Ife’s proposals which help us to understand the qualities of meaning highlighted by the essentially contested concept criteria in their conceptualisations of community development. The exploration attends to: the theoretical and political perspectives each argues underpin their approach, the descriptive features that set parameters for the scope of community development, and the central concept that encapsulates normativity in their approach.
A humanist modernist concept

Kenny argues community development is a modernist construct. She draws a distinction between “instrumentalist” and “humanist” modernity (Kenny, 1994, pp. 252-253, 2011, p. 120-121) and associates the policy context with the former and community development with the latter. Community development is thus characterised as a project of emancipation in the policy contexts dominated by rationalism. Kenny’s practice framework was the first to accommodate the competing discourses of modernity and postmodernity (1994, pp. 252-257, 1996, p. 112). In a marked shift from full reliance on structuralist ideologies, Kenny considers what poststructural social theory offers community development (Onyx, 1996). Distinctions are drawn between oppositional and reactive postmodernism; the first emphasising uncertainty, multiplicity and strategic resistance and the second rejecting grand theories (Kenny, 1994, p. 256, 1996, p. 111; 1999, pp. 316-319; 2006, pp. 101-104; 2011a, pp. 118-121). Kenny argues resistancepostmodernism offers community development the space and inspiration for “new politics” to replace the glow of the seventies (Kenny, 1996, p. 112). Postmodernist ideas are presented as a support to concepts of community development; the “…correctives to modernity provided by postmodernist critiques” recommended to the field (Kenny, 2006, p. 104; 2011a, p. 121) rather than fully endorsed. This enables a broader view of community development than the ideologies of the 1980s (Creed & Tomlinson, 1984; Thorpe & Petruchenia, 1985, 1992), yet it continues a heavy reliance on structural power analysis (Ingamells, 2002, 2007) through the “natural links with critical social theories” (Kenny, 2011a, p. 23). Marxism is noted as the “pre-eminent” (Kenny, 2011a, p. 92) theoretical influence on community development, along with critical social theories of Feminism and Social Movement Theory (1994, pp. 63-7, 1999, pp. 82-101, 2006, pp. 83-99), and Green perspectives in the latest edition (2011a, pp. 92-115). Human rights and the peace movement, and the commitment to conflict for change, are identified as specific social movements that “overlap” with community development (Kenny, 2011a, p. 29).

Kenny’s proposition for community development draws on such grand theories to argue for the transformation of power structures thus “[c]ommunity development aims to transform unequal, coercive and oppressive structures in society” (Kenny, 2011a, p. 29). Kenny acknowledges the essentially contested nature of community
development throughout her text by presenting the multiplicities such grand theories offer and consistently arguing the dilemmas and contradictions possible when theorising in practice contexts. It is easy to lose sight of this broad range of critical social theories, resistance poststructuralism and social movements as Kenny’s “understanding” and “emphases” of community development (2011a, p. xxi). Kenny’s persuasion is such that they appear simply as community development. Kenny fights against such a reading of the text. For example, the latest edition points to the possibility of community development being both “radical and conservative” (2011a, p. xx). Yet if we accept that the particular theoretical perspective proposed for community development characterises its normative and descriptive features the grand narratives cited above inform the vision and content of community development as proposed by Kenny (2011a). The descriptive and normative features that characterise community development are presented below.

Chapter Two of this thesis argues that community and development each have a common feature present in all manifestations of the notion; for community, that is people, and for development, the notion of transition or change. The argument that community development “…is committed to improving the lot of ordinary people” (Kenny, 2011a, p. 23) encapsulates ideas of people and change in Kenny’s proposition for community development. Ordinary people are defined as disadvantaged and without ready access to societal power structures (Kenny, 2011a, p. 23). Change is focused on the transformation of power for ordinary people (2011a, p. 12).

The avenue to change is delineated by principles and processes, which Kenny argues are universal to community development. Principles and processes characterise the progression of action. The principles of community development offered by Kenny are characterised by the theoretical and political perspectives of the grand theories cited above. Ideals that purport the transformation of power for the ordinary — such as social justice, human rights, diversity, liberation and empowerment — and ideals that characterise the approach to change — such as collective action and conflict — are central (2011a, pp. 21-32). These principles of community development clash with notions in contemporary contexts, such as rationalism and individualism. The central goal of process is implementing the values of community development in
contradictory contexts and to do so, Kenny argues, is transformative (2011a, pp. 32-36). The elements of process Kenny describes embed visions for change in the collective action of ordinary people (2011a, pp. 32-36). Hence the influence of context on the meaning of community development is acknowledged and the idea of process is central to grappling with context for change.

Community development is open to context and process is the feature of practice that accommodates such uncertainty. Kenny illustrates this quality of community development through a series of vignettes (2011a, pp. 4-5). Other ways in which Kenny clarifies aspects of context are the notions of “common identity,” as a tangible anchor for the fluidity of community (2011a, p. 45), and “subsidiarity,” as a starting point for practice (2011a, p. 6). The latter is explained through reference to the bottom and the top. The importance of “bottom-up” decision making as opposed to “top-down” is stressed (2011a, p. 6). Hence notions of bottom-up and top-down clarify the direction of community development. “[B]ottom-up development” is identified as a central influence on community development (Kenny, 2011a, p. 41). The meaning of this notion is explored further below; it is important to note here the roles Kenny attributes to the idea.

The final words on Kenny’s proposal for community development will focus on the way she addresses normativity. The preface to the fourth edition includes a bold admission of “the heavy normative baggage that I have a tendency to load into community development” (Kenny, 2011a, p., xiv). Kenny attributes this realisation to, among others, Ife and Mowbray, central theorists of community development, yet I will argue further into this chapter and the following that any argument for a particular theoretical and political perspective of community development, such as Ife and Mowbray offer, is inclined to normativity. Kenny (2011a) has in the fourth edition tempered some of her claims for community development; for example, in the first three editions of her text, she refers to Wild’s (1981) warning of the normativity of community to argue this aspect of meaning be embraced and used as a force for transformation (Kenny, 1994, p. 33, 1999, p. 43, 2006, p. 41). This proposal is dropped in the latest edition. Kenny is caught, as we all are, in the essentially contested nature of community development, whereby to fill the notion
with a particular political or theoretical perspective is to occupy its normativity and characterise the ‘right way’ for community development.

At the end of it all, Kenny argues there are three basic tenets necessary to community development: that the location of the power to define and describe sits with the community in question, that communities are resourced adequately for action; and that people working with communities strive to reduce their role as the communities take control (Kenny, 2011a, p. 399). While this provides an anchor to the notion of community development, the way this plays out in context may not fulfill Kenny’s (2011a) vision of community development. Mendes (2004), for example, describes an instance of community development driven by social exclusion that could be argued to meet these three commitments. It is the particular theoretical perspective from which such actions are characterised that safeguard Kenny’s tenets in context. Similarly, Kenny’s notion of a “qualitatively better society” (2011a, p. 12), a comparable idea to the good life and the better life, holds the crux of normativity in her argument for community development. Kenny (2011a, p. 12) stipulates that such a society is decided, in each instance of community development, from the “bottom-up.” Yet the notion of the qualitatively better society could be occupied by perspectives opposite in nature to that offered by Kenny (2011a).

My aim here is not to say it is all a waste of time, but to consider the point raised in the previous chapter that when particular theoretical and political perspectives inhabit community development, free from context, those perspectives occupy the authority to prescribe the vision and content of community development. Hence when we fill the space theoretically we preempt context. Kenny (2011a, pp. 255-256) argues for a clear and particular approach to community development, an approach that is necessarily normative, and yet she is wary of the danger of identifying a single approach as community development and thus identifying some practices as community development while excluding others. Kenny (2004; 2011a, pp. 398-400; 2011b) uses the idea of “pure community development” to iterate her point, arguing that such a notion emphasises the heroism of community development and positions practice “within a framework of moral certainty, where right and wrong are always easy to identify” (Kenny, 2006, p. 355, 2011a, p. 399). Arguing
for particular theoretical and political perspectives for practice stabilises notions of community development.

**Change from below**

Ife’s (2013, p. 8) text for community development starts with ruin. The first chapter argues there is a crisis in human services and community development is proposed as the “missing ingredient” (Ife, 2013, p. 20). Ife’s proposal (1995, p. 21, 2002, p. 20, 2013, 30) is that community-based human services, focus on “social change” underpinned by “a philosophy of sustainability, social justice and community development” as a credible alternative to current trends in social policy. Ife (2013, pp. 31-103) identifies three theoretical perspectives as the bedrock for his approach; ecological and social justice perspectives, and what he calls “beyond enlightenment modernity.” The latter has been added to the mix with Ife’s latest edition (2013, p. 82-103), which highlights postmodernism, understandings of reality as relational, holism and Indigenous understandings. Ife (2004, 2009, 2010) argues postmodernism’s challenge to the grand narrative of international human rights, for example, opens up the possibility of such notions being articulated in context and through community. A vision for community development is proposed through the “integration” of the three perspectives, which Ife (2013, p. 110) argues by way of the limitations of each and the strength gained from bringing them together. The proposed integration offers a “holistic approach of a critical paradigm of social sciences” (Ife, 2013, p. 304) which enables “a vision of a better society” (Ife, 2013, p. 110).

Ife also clarifies his proposal for community development by building on Taylor-Gooby and Dale’s (1981) classifications to identify four approaches to social issues: “individual, institutional reformist, structural and poststructural” (Ife, 2013, p. 59). Ife (2013) identifies individual and institutional approaches as those most commonly underpinning social policy and institutional and structuralist perspectives as those most commonly underpinning community development. Ife (1995, pp. 51-56, 2002, pp. 48-53, 2013, pp. 59-63) affirms the value of all four and identifies structural and post-structural as the underpinning perspectives of his proposal for community development. Thus community development as argued by Ife (2013) is underpinned by critical social theories articulated through a range of conceptual frameworks that
highlight different aspects of the approach. Ife (2013, p. 365) emphasises his proposition is a “particular framework” rather than the framework for community development. The previous chapter argues that particular theoretical perspectives characterise the descriptive features and normativity of community development. As such, the grand theories integrated by Ife (2013) inform the vision and content of community development in his text. The following explores the way this approach pictures community development, with a particular focus on Ife’s (2013, p. 138) notion of “change from below,” the tension between global and local practices, and the process and principles of practice. I will start with the characteristics of community and development that appear to be relevant in all variations of each notion; that is, change for development and people for community.

Ife (2013) argues that geographic communities are stronger sites for community development. Communities based on identities other than geographic location can work against the tenets of ecology, holism, diversity and social justice (Ife, 2013, pp. 112-116). Parameters for concepts of community are established by articulating five characteristics. People are present in this conceptualisation through the notion of “whole people” as characterised by Gemeinschaft, the idea that community occurs at the human level and that at this level identity, belonging, obligations and culture are shaped by people as distinct, for example, from “mass culture” (Ife, 2013, p. 113). Such a proposition emphasises humanness and positions people as central to community development. Ife’s (2013, p. 156) proposition articulates change as a process that comes from below; that is, “bottom-up practice.” Ife (2013, p. 138) argues this is a “natural consequence” of the perspectives that underpin his framework and represents “the heart of community development.” The approach is described by notions of valuing the local, solidarity and articulating theoretical traditions that support change from below. The bottom-up approach is a direct challenge to the expectations of contemporary contexts where expertise and wisdom typically travel from the top-down. The emphasis on the local, supported by the work of Freire (1974, 2005), characterises development in Ife’s framework (2013, p. 121). Such an understanding of development relies on notions of “transformation” (Ife, 2013, p. 392) articulated by the vision of integration of the three perspectives. Humanness is emphasised and people are positioned as central and characterised as local and “oppressed” (Ife, 2013, p. 122).
Ife acknowledges the essentially contested nature of community development; for example, his approach is identified as *particular* and community development is noted as more commonly underpinned by structural and institutional approaches to social issues. Another way in which Ife (2013, p. 195-197) demonstrates the contested nature of community development is through the tension between “universal and contextual issues.” Ife (2013, p. 196) argues that community development is supported by universal principles articulated in his text but also through global social movements, and that the knack of community development is in constructing the meaning of these principles in local contexts. While this contradicts the point made earlier regarding the challenge of postmodernism to universality, Ife (2013, p. 196) nonetheless argues that “universal principles and locally specific realities are both part of the context, and must be held together.” Ife (2013, p. 197) argues principles are a “middle-level notion” between the macro and the micro. Ife (2013, p. 197) thus makes the point that “middle-level” principles are stable and can be prescribed for community development, whereas micro level practices and macro level analysis cannot.

The principles of community development encapsulate the vision for community development established through the analysis of contemporary contexts, integration of theoretical perspectives, the articulation of bottom-up practice and the dimensions and process of community development (Ife, 2013, pp. 267-299). Rather than repeat Ife’s (2013) principles here, my focus is on the way Ife identifies the principles and the role he assigns principles in theorising his particular approach to community development. Having said that, it is important to note that human rights are woven into the essential principles of community development established by Ife (1995, pp. 180-181, 2002, pp. 210-211, 2013, pp. 279-280). Ife (2004, 2009, 2010) has developed the association between community development and human rights in dedicated papers and texts that argue human rights are innately collective, and therefore synergistic with community development, because their recognition and fulfillment requires enactment within human community.

While universal, “[e]ach situation calls for a process of seeing how the important principles of community development can be applied within the specific local context” (Ife, 2013, p. 267). This supports the proposition that while the imposition
of values is counter to the notion of change from below, the imposition of the values of community development is “legitimate” (Ife, 1995, p. 255, 2002, p. 271, 2013, p. 371). More emphatically, Ife (2013, p. 197) argues the principles of community development outlined in his particular approach “are essential to good community development, and apply in different contexts.” This last point is made very differently to the 2002 edition and appears to be anticipating a critique of the prescriptive nature of the approach, something that has emerged in the literature since 2002.

Ife (2013, p. 197) acknowledges contradictions posed by the idea of imposing values through a practice espousing a bottom-up approach by skillfully balancing the demands of edicts of change from below with the rather contradictory proposition of universal principles for community development. He addresses, for example, the criticism of consciousness raising as the imposition of a particular set of values and politics by emphasising the need for the interaction between community worker and community as “genuinely dialogical” (Ife, 2013, p. 165). He also highlights the moral dilemmas facing the community worker when the values of the community clash with the values of community development. One example is between local communities seeking to keep jobs in industries that clash with ecological principles. Such a proposition is a moral and ethical dilemma for the community worker (Ife, 2013). It is not as clear cut, for example, as clashes on racial intolerance which, as legislation in the macro context in Australia indicates, are readily recognised as unacceptable (Ife, 2013, p. 373). Ife (2013) highlights the way such ethical dilemmas ascribe community workers with moral authority over the community. The discussion assumes community workers are thus central to practice. This makes sense in that the text is written largely for community workers but it also assumes community workers are the moral guardians of “good community development” (Ife, 2013, p. 197). The approach taken in my research is to focus on the collective action of community development rather than the role of community development practitioners, a strategy deliberately adopted to emphasise the contextualised nature of community development and unsettle the central positioning of practitioners in the theorising of community development. Finally, on the subject of principles Ife (2013) highlights that these need to be read in the context of the frameworks he proposes for community development. While he is keen in other sections of the text
to warns against a “cookbook approach” (2013, p. 301) for community development, he rather contradictorily identifies the principles as a “convenient checklist” (2013, p. 299).

Process is, like the bottom-up approach, a “fundamental principle” for Ife’s (2013, p. 158) proposition for community development. Ife (2013, pp. 159-161) argues the two principles seriously confront the usual ways of working in contemporary contexts. He equates means with process and ends with outcome, and argues the two should be understood together rather than separately, as is more common. Ife argues principles do not simply justify outcomes but that “good process” also reflects the principles of community development (2013, p. 161), and “good process is [itself] the most important outcome that can be achieved” (2013, p. 182). This proposition is supported by the theoretical perspectives that underpin Ife’s particular approach that “community development is, essentially, a process” (2013, p. 161). Given that principles encapsulate the approach, the relationship between principles and process is thus circular, each essential to the other and to good community development. The essential nature of process is underpinned by the principles of community development. Everything hinges thus on the principles of community development, the bottom-up approach and the integrity of process.

When turning to articulate the action of community development, Ife acknowledges the potential for theorising to “reify or mystify” the action of community development (2013, p. 300). Central to the position Ife maintains on the action of community development is an understanding of the non-linear nature of practice, hence Ife argues community development action is not constrained by “predictable [progressions of] beginning, middle and end” (2013, p. 302). Further to this he argues action in community development is “horizontal,” in direct contrast to the action of government characterised as “vertical” (Ife, 2013, p. 287). Such characterisation of action is at odds with notions of bottom-up practice, a term that I will argue further into this thesis as indicative of a particular starting point, position and direction in community development.

The final words on Ife’s particular proposal for community development will focus on normativity. Throughout the text, Ife makes it clear that his argument is for a
particular approach to community development which foregrounds: the need for all community workers to establish their own practice frameworks; the need for universal principles to be brought together with local context; that change from below is pivotal; there is “no one ‘right’ way to do community development” (Ife, 2013, p. 271); and warnings of the “modernist trap” of seeking “the best way to do community work” (Ife, 2013, p. 365). Despite all the caveats and ways of stepping back from normativity — the even handed tone of the text, consistent acknowledgement and affirmation of other approaches to community development — the moral positioning of Ife’s particular approach (2013) leaves the reader in no doubt as to right and wrong in community development. The preceding analysis highlights the points at which Ife’s proposals for community development fulfill notions of the good life or the better life. The normativity of community and development seep into Ife’s proposal. The requirements of “good community development” (2013, p. 3) and “genuine community development” (2013, p. 393) are clear. The outcomes of community development through the integration of the three perspectives propose a “vision of a better society,” a “new whole” even “greater than the sum of its parts” (Ife, 2013, p. 110). The “missing ingredient” (Ife, 2013, p. 20) for the ruin of our contemporary context, community development offers the prospect of a “better society” (Ife, 2013, p. 393).

Kenny and Ife have held firm in the theorising of community development in the Australian context now for two decades. Only relatively recently texts that posit alternative practice frameworks for community development have appeared in the Australian context. I turn now to explore two such texts. The following explores proposals for community development from Westoby and Dowling (2009, 2013) and Eversole (2015), works which demonstrate a shift in the theorising of community development in the Australian context. Westoby and Eversole are significant contributors to the field of community development in the Australian context, through the texts explored below and a range of other publications. The scope of the following discussion is limited to the approaches to community development articulated in the texts cited above. This section explores the theorising offered by these texts. I look firstly at Westoby and Dowling (2013), then go on to explore
Eversole (2015), before making some key points regarding the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The final section of this chapter returns to case studies to discuss two published since 2000, and identifies key points from the chapter.

**Dialogical community development**

The dialogical approach has emerged through the practice of community development established by Halliwell (1969b) and Kelly and Sewell (1986c, 1988) in Queensland. Also referred to as the people centred approach and the developmental approach (Daveson, 2002; Ingamells, 2002, 2007, 2010), Westoby and Dowling acknowledge the bedrock of practice that underpins their proposal for community development (2009, 2013). and name their approach “dialogical community development.” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 1). Westoby and Dowling (2013, p. 4) emphasise the distinctions between traditions and frameworks, outlined earlier, to make the point that their approach is one among many. They acknowledge that dialogue is a key aspect in other approaches to community development, such as Ife (2013), but argue that in their proposition dialogue is “explicit and central” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 4).

When talking about theory Westoby and Dowling (2013) emphasise uncertainty and nuance and use various devices throughout the text to characterise their engagement with theoretical traditions as delicate. For example, they talk about Freire’s (1974) notion of the restrictions of language and Gadamer’s (1998) approach to theory thus highlighting the limitations of describing without prescribing and the importance of retaining uncertainty. While Westoby and Dowling (2009, 2013) call on a range of traditions to articulate their approach, they do not present these traditions as a theoretical foundation for community development. What they claim rather is a “meandering wander through the crucial work on dialogue that we have concluded is relevant to community development theory and practice” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 31). This meandering results in identifying theories of dialogue and encapsulating key principles from such theories as the inspiration of their approach. Westoby and Dowling make clear distinctions between “normative” (2013, p. 22) and “historical” (2013, p. 29) conceptualisations of dialogue. The term *normative* is understood as the authoritative articulation of “norms and customs,” a declaration of
what “should be” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 21). They draw distinctions between “shallow” and “deep” normativity, the first described as the presentation of ideas as if disconnected from traditions and unproblematic; the latter exposing the underpinning tradition (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 21). Normative understanding clarifies the ethics of dialogue and is supported by a historical understanding which illuminates the “social and political” and transformative power of dialogue (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 30).

Westoby and Dowling (2013, p. 21) argue the limits of their claim for dialogue in community development is clarified by acknowledging the “particular tradition” from which they stem. Core commitments are articulated through reference to the traditions of Buber (1958) and Friere (2005). The first offers lightness of touch and the second a critical edge; “[h]olding both is the trick” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 19). Westoby and Dowling emphasise the normativity of dialogue as central to their proposition for community development. The following explores the way Westoby and Dowling (2013) construct community development within their stated normative frame.

Community and development are conceptualised in particular ways in order to shape the approach. Westoby and Dowling (2013, p. 8) argue that in bringing together community and development the former signifies collective action and the latter action for change. The approach relies on four conceptualisations of community, each of which supports dialogue: “hospitality,” “ethical space,” “communitas” and “collective practice” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, pp. 5-8). Their proposition calls on the normativity of development by proposing the notion as a “metaphor signifying a qualitative change” (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 9), and they argue the vision for change is identified through pluralist interaction (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 10). The avenue to change is delineated by “re-imagining” practice in terms of “love, participation, place and social problems” (Westboy & Dowling, 2013, p. 33) and the actions of the “transformative community processes” of the developmental approach (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 61). The developmental approach identifies different types of action at different levels within the community: horizontal interaction across the community, building a collective analysis, conflict and building community structures (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, pp. 61-90). Three factors that weaken the
possibilities of dialogue are identified as: ideology, reliance on clinical interventions and widening inequality (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, pp. 91-98). Their approach to ideology reflects their claimed light touch, arguing that while there is value in the energy of particular ideological perspectives for community development, people unaware of, or too strongly committed to, their ideological perspective weaken the potential for dialogue. A point that reflects Gallie’s notion (1964, p. 188) of the “moderate” user.

Westoby and Dowling (2013, p. 3 [original emphasis]) emphasise their proposition for community development as “one approach among many”. They refer to theoretical traditions of dialogue and principles that stem from these traditions (Westoby & Dowling, 2013). While they are emphasising the need to hold theory lightly to be open to dialogue, they admit also to trying to “persuade” the reader to a particular approach to community development (Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 19). Westoby and Dowling’s (2013) proposal for community development is clear in offering one approach in which normativity is articulated. They strive to leave context open, although they do try to persuade. They leave the reader clear, although slightly less certain than does Ife (2013), in regards to how community development should happen.

**Knowledge partnering**

Eversole’s (2015) articulation of knowledge partnering as an approach to community development is exacterly simple. The text opens with notions of “poverty and disadvantage,” making the key purpose of development clear (Eversole, 2015, p. 1). Eversole (2015, p. 47) positions her discussion within development policy and differentiates between economic, social and integrated development policy to argue “…new approaches and methods for doing development that integrate knowledge about local contexts” are needed. Eversole’s (2015) focus is on articulating and justifying such an approach in its simplest form. The approach is argued through reference to “the anthropology and sociology of development” (Eversole, 2015, p. 26). Eversole (2015) is proposing a particular approach in this text, an approach informed by a specific positioning of development as an institution of society and of a study of that institution, thus the sociology of development (Long, 2001). This is a different positioning to the three approaches outlined above. Sociology of
development does not position the structural perspective of power, for example, as the foundation for good community development, but rather seeks to establish “theory from below” (Long, 2001, p. 4) through a focus on development actors. While anthropologists work in varying roles in development, research, applied research and practice (Nolan, 2002), a key focus of understanding is the interface between the people on the ground and development agencies or practitioners (Olivier de Sardan, 2005, pp. 212-215); or what Mosse refers to as the “ethnography of policy and practice” (2005, p. 1). While Kenny (2002) and Westoby (2014) are both researchers of community development, they adopt a position of ownership of their particular proposition for community development. Eversole (2015) positions herself outside the practice for which she argues; her emphasis is instead on the agency of people involved in development.

Eversole (2015) argues different approaches to development are underpinned by different theories of change. Modernisation theory, which relies on change through improved infrastructure and technology, dominates notions of development in both historical and contemporary contexts. Eversole (2015, p. 16) argues that current policy shifts in development are opening the space for understandings from community development to take precedence where once development focused on “technology transfer.” Hence Eversole (2015) identifies community development as an alternative to the dominant development discourse underpinned by modernisation theory. Community development, Eversole (2015) argues, locates the understandings and values of development in community and within such an understanding she offers a particular approach.

Development is the central force for change rather than community (Eversole, 2015, p. 3). “Development can be defined as the processes through which communities and societies change” (Eversole, 2015, p. 3 [emphasis in original]). The notion of community is articulated very simply: “people sharing common ties of residence, identity and/or interests” (Eversole, 2015, p. 2). Greater attention is given to the idea of “communities as change agents” (Eversole, 2015, p. 4). This is a strong contrast to the three approaches described above, which proffer complex considerations of community and position agency with community workers. The approach Eversole (2015) argues is anchored by notions of place and partnerships. Eversole (2015)
refers to tradition and techniques only as far as needed to support the argument for her knowledge partnering approach.

Eversole (2015, p. 32) argues varying “theories of change” underpin different approaches to development and embed particular ideas and assumptions in practice from which methods are adopted. The “theory of change” (Eversole, 2015, p. 31) in any instance of development needs to be explicit in order for the success of development to be assessed. The outcome of a given development project, for example, can be clarified by identifying “indicators of change” assumed by the underpinning theory of change (Eversole, 2015, p. 34). Hence the theory of change underpins the internal logic in any instance of development (Eversole, 2015, p. 33). Eversole (2015, p. 35) argues “a confluence of ideas and theories of change from different frameworks and traditions” underpin community development and are often not explicit in any particular instance of practice. She notes the contested nature of development and the capacity of the notion to be inhabited by different perspectives and hence promote different interests (Eversole, 2015, pp. 1-8).

Eversole’s (2015) attention rests with the implementation of development policy through development projects to focus on partnerships that come together in local contexts for the purpose of change. Eversole (2015, p. 4) emphasises the agency of communities in development and expresses puzzlement that this is often unrecognised by development practitioners. Hence notions of participatory development are central to the approach. Eversole (2015) explores the record of participatory approaches to development, arguing the assumptions, critique and limitations of participation in development. Turner’s (2009) argument that the language, for example, of bottom-up development is occupied by the top-down perspective is a case in point. Similarly, the strengths and weaknesses in partnerships are explored and a “partnership analysis framework” using the anthropological notions of “development actors” and “development interfaces” (Eversole, 2015, p. 80) proposed. The first notion identified as those relevant to any instance of development and the second as the locations of their interaction in context. The framework highlights three domains through which partnerships succeed or fail as: strategic, cultural and political (Eversole, 2015, p. 82).
Ultimately, Eversole (2015, p. 21) argues, innovative solutions to complex problems are generated by the authentic exchange of knowledge between a range of “development actors” in context. The diversities of knowledge that come together in any instance of development are abstract, local and networked knowledge (Eversole, 2015, pp. 89-103). Eversole’s (2015, pp. 144-160) proposal for community development is to value and bring these forms of knowledge together; hence the approach of “knowledge partnering.” The approach carries three central principles; development is social, all forms of knowledge are valued and included, and innovation occurs when knowledge is combined effectively (Eversole, 2015, pp. 147-152).

Eversole (2015) argues for a clear and particular approach to community development. An essentially contested concept of community development assumes the approach entails normative and descriptive meanings. The power of Eversole’s (2015) argument rests in the logical explication at the level of approach. This is in contrast to the preceding examples explored, which are each underpinned by logical arguments at the theoretical level. The theory of change is offered as the point of entry for theoretical and political perspectives, the space through which different agendas infiltrate development. The particular normativity of the approach is highlighted by the opening question: “[w]hat can be done about poverty and disadvantage?” (Eversole, 2015). Theoretical perspectives will come through context, an approach which relies on the commitment of those in context to the alleviation of poverty and disadvantage.

Case studies in the new millennium

I return to edited collections of case studies now to review two such texts published since 2000, Weeks et al. (2003), and Ingamells et al. (2010b). Both retain case studies as the key vehicle for theorising community development. Weeks et al. (2003) frequently refer to “our research,” but there is no further detail as to the nature of the research (see, for example, Hoatson, 2003, p. 23). Research questions and methodologies are not addressed (Weeks et al., 2003). The publication edited by Ingamells et al. (2010b) identifies sharing stories as central to the methodology of the developmental approach, indicating the case studies are products of practice rather than products of research.

The earlier of these publications, *Community practices in Australia*, includes a practice framework and a series of case studies (Weeks et al., 2003). The editors use the terms *case study* and *community practices*. Community development is described as one such practice (Dixon et al., 2003b, p. 5). The framework offered by Weeks et al. (2003) includes the scope of practices along a continuum of interaction between the state and civil society spanning conflict and consensus approaches. Six modes of boundary spanning, each varying in how civil society interacts with the state, are identified (Hoatson, 2003, p. 30). Elements of practice are described within the scope of Rothman’s variables (2001) and the lack of consistency between practitioner ideology and practice (Dixon, 1990) is emphasised (Hoatson, 2003, p. 24). Weeks et al. (2003) do not use the framework in a normative sense to identify or declare “good” community practice. Weeks et al. (2003) do not, for example, describe consensus in order to help explain conflict and then argue for conflict as the approach of choice. This varies from the use of practice frameworks with case studies mentioned above (eg., Baldry & Vinson, 1991; Thorpe & Petruichencia, 1985, 1992). Rather, the case studies in *Community Practices in Australia* offer a view of the “top-down, bottom-up and side-to-side practices that animate the state-civil society relationship” (Dixon et al., 2003b, p. 2).

The later case study, *Community development practice: Stories, methods and meanings* (Ingamells et al., 2010b), is located in the “story-telling tradition” (Kelly, 2010, p. x) established by Halliwell (1969b). It offers an approach that breaks further
from the illustrative case studies of 1980s and 1990s. The theoretical precepts of community development as advocated by the authors are woven throughout the text. Ingamells (2010, p. 1) talks about “narratives and commentaries” rather than case studies. The level of integration between practice frameworks and narratives is remarkably different to earlier edited collections. The “narratives and commentaries” are identified as representing a tradition of practice built in Queensland. Ingamells (2010, p. 1) is overt about the normativity of the approach which she argues “resides in the conceptualisation of who the primary actors are and how change happens”. The primary actors are the disadvantaged and change is described as “bottom-up” with practice moving horizontally initially.

The complexities of using theoretical frameworks in the field of community development are refreshingly acknowledged and through this admission the place of stories in the community development opus is affirmed.

The stories show how people draw eclectically on a range of resources to respond to or shape the moment. Hopefully the stories indicate that a tradition can guide practice, but a tradition or approach is not something that can be applied. (Ingamells, 2010, p. 5 [emphasis in original])

Normative and descriptive meanings of community development are recognised and argued. The interaction between theory and experience is much closer than in the earlier case study publications, and the integration of both through events in context is central.

While small case studies or vignettes are used by Kenny (2011a) and Westoby and Dowling (2013) to illustrate particular approaches to community development, Ingamells’ (2010, p. 5) expectations vary as she argues that the case studies highlight the limitations of practice frameworks and the momentary nature of community development. By holding the frameworks lightly, Ingamells (2010) creates a space for looking not just at the practice itself but at the way we talk about practice, thus repositioning the strength of case studies in the opportunity to display the interaction
between theoretical ideals of community development and contemporary contexts of practice (Ingamells, 2010, p. 7).

A tradition of practice inherits ideas from the past – truths that were shaped by past conditions. To defend core beliefs against change, is to become irrelevant to living in the present. Only through stories can we discern the continuities and discontinuities of tradition as it informs the present practice. Each instance of practice then is a determined effort to take the accumulated wisdom of the past and transform it through action in the present. (Ingamells, 2010, p. 7)

When reflecting on their own stories of community development Ingamells, Caniglia, Lathouras, Westoby, & Wiseman, (2010a) recognise familiar narrative structures in the way we talk about community development. “[T]he heroic quest of western mythologies” are recognisable and “tend to prescribe the roles and qualities of the hero” (Ingamells et al., 2010a, p. 113). Such roles and qualities may be articulated through the actions of local people, the local community, practitioners and in some instances government. This latter point is taken up in Chapter Four when considering Mowbray’s analysis of government assuming the role and qualities of the hero under the ideology of community. The role and qualities of the hero may also be assigned to the particular theoretical approaches to community development through the connections made between the approach and the notion of good community development, such as argued above in the inclusion of frameworks in the case studies of the 1990s and highlighted in the normative aspects of Kenny’s (2011a) humanist modernist concept of community development and Ife’s (2013) change from below. The roles and qualities of the hero in our stories of community development would thus appear to be central to notions of normativity. Weeks et al. (2003), and Ingamells et al. (2010b) continue the tradition of *storying* in the theorising of community development. Both texts unsettle the certainty of arguments for particular approaches to community development by highlighting the contextualised nature of practice. Ingamells et al. (2010a) further unsettles the practice frameworks by demonstrating the limitations of theorising and the heroic agency in our storying of community development.
The dictum of bottom-up

The preceding discussion indicates that trends in the theorising of community development have emerged from societal change and in response to social protection regimes in the Australian context. The notion of bottom-up is a strong mantra for community development encouraged by the social reform context of the 1970s and continues to be influential to the present day. The idea of development and community development as being bottom-up has a long history. The Australian literature indicates the idea took hold in the 1970s. The bottom-up approach is central to community development and invoked to argue against a top-down approach to practice. Both are key descriptors in the theorising of community development. Notions of bottom-up and top-down are characterised through a range of associations and the contrast between the two clarifies meaning. The difference between the two is “obvious” (Ife, 2009, p. 30). Ife and Fiske (2006), in arguing for the connection between community development and human rights, identify the bottom and the top as sources of knowledge. The bottom refers to the community level sometimes identified as the “grassroots” (Ife & Fiske, 2006, p. 7), the “micro-level” (Turner, 2009, p. 233) or the everyday. The top in contrast refers to the “macro-level” (Turner, 2009, p. 233) not simply the leadership within a community but institutions and structures of society. Kenny (2011a, pp. 41-43) argues the bottom-up approach has emerged to emphasise empowerment for people through decision-making and action on issues that affect their lives.

The notion of bottom-up is commonly articulated through reference to its opposite, top-down. Cauchi and Murphy (2004, p. 48) question whether the language of bottom and top itself reinforces the power differential in the relationship between community and government. Top-down approaches, it is argued, are the common response of modernity, hence the idea of issues from the bottom-up as challenging the status quo (Ife & Fiske, 2006) and as outside the usual ways of doing things (Kenny, 2011a, p. 41). Thus Cauchi and Murphy’s (2004) point is only important in the context of an acceptance of the usual way of doing things, whereas the term bottom-up, in theoretical discussion at least, implies taking a different approach (Ife, 2013; Kenny, 2011a). A bottom-up approach to community development positions the “wisdom” of people, ordinary people (Kenny, 2011a) or the oppressed (Ife, 2013), as central to community development. Although it is important to note that
the theoretical approaches reviewed in this chapter also require the universal principles of community development be the guiding force of such wisdom. A top-down approach in contrast locates power and knowledge in the institutions of society, which from a community development perspective amounts to an “imposition” of knowledge and action (Ife & Fiske, 2006, p. 8). The bottom is thus associated with the community and the top with professionalised service delivery. The idea of bottom-up is important to the arguments for particular approaches to community development in the Australian context.

**Conclusion to Chapter Three**

The preceding discussion indicates the notion of bottom-up is a strong dictum for community development encouraged by the social reform context of the 1970s, and continues to be influential to the present day. The hardening policy context of the 1980s and 1990s spurred the use of ideological perspectives and notions of process and principles to argue specific tenets for community development. Such propositions were contained initially in texts predominantly presenting case studies of practice. The frameworks supported the bold ambitions of community development and established a meta-narrative beyond the contextualised perspectives of people participating in practices. The notion of good community development was established and concepts of community development were stabilised before entering context.

The need to identify community development more consistently than was possible in the earlier case studies led to the publication of texts focused on the theoretical framing of community development from the mid 1990s. Small case studies in these texts enliven practice frameworks. Vignettes demonstrate how the framework can be applied and hence support the argument for a particular approach. The practice frameworks published from the mid 1990s to the present day stabilise the essentially contested notion of community development across all contexts.

Gallie’s (1964) criteria reveal the capacity for particular theoretical perspectives to inhabit community development and prescribe the normative and descriptive features of practice. Strategies for addressing the normative propensity of community
development confined to a specific approach are evident in the theorising of community development. Proponents name the particularity of each approach, emphasise the importance of context, identify dialogue as central, advocate a light hold on theory and name the propensity for normativity and address it directly. Such strategies help to clarify the difference between arguing for a particular approach, and asserting an approach as community development; yet it is a fine line and particular approaches are argued persuasively.

Two case study collections published in the new millennium reinvigorate the strength of case studies to articulate community development practices. Case studies play a central role in these publications; they are not included simply to support a theoretical argument for a particular approach. The strength of these case studies rests in the possibility of revealing the limitations of theoretical frameworks in practice settings (Ingamells, 2010). Such a proposition shifts the focus from clarifying or supporting a particular approach to community development to challenging and questioning our theorising of community development. Talking about the way we talk about community development pinpoints the hero’s quest in stories of community development. Narrative understandings of the hero’s quest embed patterns and qualities into stories of community development (Ingamells et al., 2010a).

The contested and contextualised nature of community development is recognised in the literature, yet frameworks for practice are vigorously argued, and while the limits of such frameworks in the contexts of practice are understood, this point is not especially emphasised. It appears the way meaning is shaped in essentially contested concepts and the qualities of heroism combine in notions of good community development. Notions of good community development are theoretically laden and appear to pre-empt context and bolster moral sureness. Such are the limitations of our theorising. The practice frameworks are the heroes of the story. Our ragbag is full.
Chapter Four: Approaches to theorising community development in the Australian context

The central purpose of this chapter is to bring the argument from Chapters Two and Three together with four bodies of work from the community development literature. The first two bodies of work that offer key insights to theorising community development in the Australian context are Mowbray’s observations of community development, and the accumulation of community development research. The third is Connolly’s (2007) analysis of the theorising of sustainable development as an essentially contested concept. The fourth are international perspectives on theorising community development. These four points of discussion strengthen our capacity to talk about the way we talk about community development. A brief overview of the narrative patterns of the hero’s tale is introduced in the concluding section of this chapter, to support exploration of heroic qualities in the way we talk about community development. The conclusions of this chapter are combined with those from Chapters Two and Three to answer the first sub-question of the research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

The argument so far...

Chapter Two argues Gallie’s (1964) essentially contested concept criteria highlight the way meaning is shaped in the notion of community development and as such explain the way particular theoretical and political perspectives inhabit community development, characterising the normativity and the common features of the notion. The influence of context is recognised in this analysis, yet it is argued that the process of theorising, beyond an instance of contextualised practice, captures the moral authority of community development. The understandings established in Chapter Two are applied through an exploration of trends in the theorising of community development. Chapter Three argues theorising stabilises the contested and contextualised nature of community development. There is a fine line between arguing for a particular approach and arguing an approach as community development. The distinction between the two is made in the community development literature, although not emphasised. Notions of good community development were established in the 1990s through positioning practice frameworks as key identifiers of success in community development. The characteristics of
meaning in community development, and strength of argument in proposals for particular approaches to community development, combine to substantiate this position for practice frameworks. This propensity for normativity serves to lace our theorising and stories of community development with moral certitude. The theorising of community development where the case studies play a central role, not simply to support propositions for a particular theoretical approach such as Weeks et al. (2003), and Ingamells et al. (2010b), reveal the limitations of practice frameworks.

**The purpose of this chapter**

The chapter begins by arguing Mowbray’s socialist perspective emphasises the gap between the normative ideals of community development and action at the local level. As a prominent academic in the field, Mowbray’s observations over a period of many years are incisive and central to understanding the theorising of community development in the Australian context (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011). Mowbray’s analysis draws our attention to the disconnect between the assertions of community development and contextualised practices. The socialist perspective provides a firm foundation for examining the way conservatism inhabits community action, yet fails to recognise the normativity it too confers on community development. The chapter moves then to consider community development research in the Australian context and argues such research falls into two categories: research that investigates the contexts of practice, and research that investigates the conceptualisation of community development. The findings of both point to the influence of context on practice. The separation of these two bodies of work, Mowbray and the community development research, from that explored in Chapter Three, enables a contrast and clarifies further the approach to theorising community development in the Australian context.

The third section of this chapter returns to Gallie’s (1964) essentially contested concept criteria by referring to four ways, identified by Connolly (2007), in which theorists handle the essentially contested nature of sustainable development to consider how similar volatility of meaning in community development is handled.
The fourth section of this chapter looks briefly to international approaches to theorising community development and considers how each manages the essentially contested nature of the notion. The chapter concludes with key points from Chapters Two, Three and Four to answer the first sub-question of the research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

Mowbray’s commentary

Mowbray focuses on the observation and critique of the literature and practice of community development in policy settings and as such his insights highlight particular features of the theorising of community development in the Australian context. An argument first posited over thirty years ago by Bryson and Mowbray (1981) highlights the ideological nature of community, through reference to Plant (1974), to argue government use of community reflects policy ideologies. The same argument is prosecuted over twenty years later when social capital enters the policy discourse (Bryson & Mowbray, 2005). The 1981 article appears to have been particularly influential in the discussion of community development. Mowbray claimed it is the “most quoted article concerning Australian community work” (1996, p. 178). Google Scholar numbers the citations at 175 and the Web of Science at 37 up to July 2016. This can perhaps be explained by what Bryson and Mowbray (1981) reveal about community and the extent to which this revelation is obscured in the theorising of community development in the Australian context.

Bryson and Mowbray (1981, 2005) invoke the ideology of community to understand the way values are embedded in the notion, ultimately arguing that government enthusiasm for community promotes conservatism. Local action, Mowbray (1985) argues, is underpinned by the history of development as a capitalist alternative to socialism and the seemingly natural association drawn between participation and empowerment (Arnstein, 1969). The historical legacy of development and the association of participation with power combine to sustain a potent mix of localism and conservatism (Mowbray, 1985, 1992). Community development from the late 1980s onwards relies on theoretical frameworks to fuel bold claims. The traditions drawn on by Kenny (2011a), Ife (2013) and Westoby and Dowling (2013) progress argument for community development to transformative conclusions. The central
position of powerful traditions in arguments for particular approaches to community development establish strong connections between practice and success. Hence the theorising of community development draws our attention to the benefits of community and participation. Bryson and Mowbray’s (1981, 2005) arguments unsettle this connection.

Mowbray emphasises the distance between the bold ambitions of community development in the literature and the evidence of practice in the field (1996). He regularly counters the claims to work in opposition to government and notions of radical practice. The stark contrast between the assertions in the literature and achievements in the field enables conservative political action to be couched in the language of transformative change of critical social theories (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981, 2005; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2005, 2010), and facilitates the easy occupation of community development by conservatism (Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 1996, 2000b, 2005, 2010, Meekosha & Mowbray, 1995). This perspective paints a bleak picture of community development in the Australian setting, especially in terms of achievement. I call on these insights not simply to cooperate with Mowbray but in order to talk about the way we talk about community development. While the articles published with Bryson may be standard fare in the Australian community development literature, the remainder of the opus is less frequently called on by those publishing texts that argue for particular approaches to community development. Dixon, Hoatson and Weeks, for example (2003a, p. 142), make a point of declaring their text refutes Mowbray’s argument that community development is smaller than its claims.

Mowbray’s constant surveillance of community development, even if wearisome, reflects the socialist perspective of his analysis. This is not revelatory, as Mowbray is clear about his position from the 1981 article (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, pp. 263-265). Halliwell’s apolitical approach to writing about community work is considered a mistake (Mowbray, 1996, p. 175). Mowbray applies the same analysis to Canadian community development (2000a). The analysis, Wharf argues, was more about Mowbray’s, “interpretation of the nature and objectives of community development” than the practice of community development in Canada (2001, p. 75). In this statement Wharf captures the essence of how the ideology of community works in
conceptualisations of community development. Notions of community embody the perspectives of those that use it. Mowbray’s insistence that a socialist perspective underpins community development is subject to the same condition. Arguing for a socialist perspective as the foundation for community development is easy. The socialist perspective fills community development, and characterises its normativity and descriptive features. Yet as research outlined in the following section of this chapter will show, asserting a socialist perspective as a central tenet of community development is no guarantee of implementing this perspective in context.

Bryson and Mowbray (1981, 2005) downplay a key point of Plant’s analysis (1974). Plant (1974) cites Bell and Newby (1971) in their analysis of the mix of normative and descriptive meaning in community. The community studies theorists argue “[t]he subjective feelings that the term community conjures up thus leads to a confusion between what is (empirical description), and what the sociologists felt it should be (normative prescription)” (Bell & Newby, 1972, p. 21). Plant (1974, 2010) follows this quote with the point that while Bell and Newby (1971) suggest an ambition to address this aspect of meaning in the empirical work of community studies, it is innate, to the notion, Plant (1974, 2010) argues, and cannot be ameliorated.

Mowbray’s work shows a socialist perspective offers a position from which to assess the practices described in the literature. It enables an analysis of the ideological nature of the government’s use of community development. It does not however override the ideological nature of community. If community is open to the ideology of those that use it, then the theoretical and political perspectives that underpin community development emerge in the contexts of practice. Mowbray’s opus of work consistently identifies this phenomenon when conservatism fills notions of community development (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011), yet does not grapple with this point in relation to the socialist perspective. Mowbray’s position is supported by constant and consistent analysis and on the occasion when Mowbray reports on a successful strategy of collective action (1991) the superior morality of the cause is emphasised. Mowbray’s ideological position, socialist left, underpins his
commentary such that community development practices which achieve anything less than socialist terms is left wanting.

A second issue with Mowbray’s argument is the inability to apply the structuralist perspective without undermining the actions of people in local communities. To demonstrate the way government employs the ideological nature of community to install neoliberal policy agendas through community development, Mowbray (2004a, 2005, 2011) cites the Victorian Government’s Community Capacity Building Initiative (CCBI) as a case study. When demonstrating the way in which government takes credit for, and over-inflates the achievements of, local communities (Mowbray, 2004a, 2005, 2011) he emphasises that his attention rests with the actions of government rather than people involved at the local level: “I do not make any negative judgment about the activities themselves or the volunteers and facilitators behind them” (Mowbray, 2004a, p. 15). The process of recasting local practices through a socialist perspective is very effective at identifying the way government occupies community development, yet this necessarily diminishes the actions of people at the local level. I make this point to emphasise the positioning of people in a structural analysis not to imply that such analysis should be abandoned — it is patently effective — but to emphasise what it misses when considering the action of community development.

Mowbray consistently bemoans the lack of a left, socialist or transformative position in the articulation of community development in the Australian context (Bryson & Mowbray, 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1996, 2000b, 2005, 2010;), yet the practice frameworks of community development from small beginnings in the mid 1980s to the present day consistently argue that community development is based on such commitments. The particular frameworks offered, for example, by Kenny (1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a) and Ife (1995, 2002, 2013) rely heavily on structural perspectives of power and critical social theories. Despite this, and as articulated eloquently for many years by Mowbray, this does not come through in the practices of community development in the Australian setting.

Mowbray (1985, 1992, 2000b, 2005, 2010) draws our attention to the dreamy sense of accomplishment running through the literature that stems from an emphasis on the
values and principles of community development disconnected from context. The socialist perspective provides a firm foundation against such slippage yet it is also subject to the ideological nature of community and the way it positions people undermines a central tenet of community development. It does however draw our attention to the gap that exists between local action and normative ideals of community development. Publications that focus on case studies carry reduced frameworks and those that argue for practice frameworks carry reduced case studies. Each body of work is driven by its own momentum, whereas more integration of the two, such as shown in Weeks et al. (2003) and Ingamells et al. (2010b), may go some way to reducing the gap so consistently articulated by Mowbray. The notion of case study as used by Mowbray (2004a, 2005, 2011) is different again from those outlined earlier and from case study research as discussed in the following section. Mowbray uses the terms case study and data and has a clear purpose in examining particular examples of policy engagement with community (Mowbray, 2004a, 2005, 2011).

**Community development research**

This section of the chapter outlines community development research in the Australian context. This body of work investigates questions for the practice of community development in contrast to arguing for a particular approach to community development; hence the research is distinct from the literature covered thus far in that it asks questions of community development practice and practice contexts. This is a very different orientation to the illustrative case studies and practice frameworks cited earlier which tend towards providing answers. A central theme in the research is the influence of context on the practice of community development. Most of the research in the following review reflects this theme in one way or another, either by investigating the degree and type of influence context has on practice, or by producing findings that point to the influence of context on practice. The Introduction to this thesis argued illustrative case studies are best described as products of practice rather than research. The purpose of illustrative case study in community development is to showcase stories of practice. The case study research referred to in this section is established, on the other hand, to investigate a research question focused on community development. The distinction
is clarified further below. The following provides a brief overview of community development research in the Australian context and its key findings, and identifies the insights it brings to the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The research included in this review falls into two categories; the first is research that seeks to understand the contexts in which community development is practiced, and the second investigates conceptualisations of community development.

**Research into the contexts of community development practice**

I commence by considering key findings from research focused on organisational and policy discourses, that is, the contexts of community development practice. Hoatson, Dixon and Sloman (1996), for example, examined the changing role of the state from welfare to contract paradigms in the early 1990s. They interviewed a range of people involved in community organisations in the State of Victoria to investigate the impact of the shift from welfare to contract notions of state. The findings show a diminution in the capacity of community organisations to engage in community development (Hoatson et al., 1996, p. 130). Comparisons with similar research in the United Kingdom (UK) expanded the schema to include the Third Way paradigm of state to draw similar conclusions and identified the response of community organisations to these changing conditions as “retreat,” “adaptation” and “rebuilding” (Hoatson, 2001, p. 18).

Burkett’s research (1998) investigates the perspectives of local level community development practitioners in responding to the demands of local and global contexts. The research identified five challenges, each of which stems from “a simplistic dualist interpretation” of the relationship between the local and global contexts (1998, p. 344). The research recognises the “culture of despair” that afflicts community development theorising focused on global challenges at the local level, and Burkett offers the notion of “loom logic,” a weaving metaphor, for breaking down dichotomised responses to the global-local connection (Burkett, 1998, p. 366).

Research which explores community development practices across a range of international sites identified four types of organisational contexts (Kenny, 2002).
The four types are each characterised by particular values and assumptions described and identified as “charity, welfare state industry, activist and market” (Kenny, 2002, p. 286). Practitioner responses to working with the “fused discourses,” the situation where concepts carry contested meaning, were investigated (Kenny, 2002, p. 295). Responses were categorised as: a willingness to work with hybrids; adopting hybrids for strategic purposes; assessing hybrids as importing neoliberalism; and wariness towards hybrids (Kenny, 2002, pp. 296-297).

Ingamells (2002, p. 6) investigates the question of how community development works in contemporary contexts, which she identifies as “advanced liberalism.” Ingamells (2002) seeks to temper Ife’s arguments (1997, 2001, 2002) for a “strong unifying framework” (Ingamells, 2002, p. 38) for “examining complicities in power” (Ingamells, 2002, p. 39) and carries out poststructural analysis of community development narratives to identify and examine how power operates in micro contexts. Ingamells research (2002, 2007) takes a significantly different approach to the analysis of context and power in community development. The poststructural perspective of power concentrates on ground level happenings of community development to draw attention to the limitations of the structural power analysis that dominates the theorising of community development in the Australian context. A poststructural analysis of stories of community development highlights the normativity of the structural power analyses, which Ingamells (2002, 2007) argues undermine action at the local level through binaries that categorise people and judge community development. The classic binary of top-down and bottom-up community development a case in point (Ingamells, 2002). The post structural readings of stories of community development very effectively show the ways in which the broader patterns of power relations are mirrored in the action of each site, despite structural understandings of power being a central tool of community development. As such, the research unsettles the “metanarratives” of community development articulated on a foundation of critical social theories (Ingamells, 2002, p. 5). Ingamells (2007, p. 246) argues that the avenue to action is somewhere between the two, where “…local people [have] power to read the dynamics occurring in their localities and to ‘play’ those dynamics rather than get caught up in them.”
Shevellar (2011) applies a multilevel analysis to understanding practitioner perspectives of working on community development practiced in bureaucratic settings. The findings of the research point to the negative impacts of bureaucracy on community development and an unpreparedness of workers for the difficulties of the experience; the former something that was well known within the field and the later surprising given the former. The power dynamics of such contexts were identified, as was the adoption by practitioners of different forms of heroic agency, argued to be both a way of coping with the rigours of context and counter to the values of community development (Shevellar, 2011, pp. 5-8).

The research reviewed above sought in different ways to examine the contexts of community development. The research assumes community development has established values which invariably clash with the dominant values of organisational and policy contexts of practice. The difficulties of working to assert the values of community development in context are emphasised.

Research that investigates conceptualisations of community development

The research reviewed in this section investigates issues other than the influence of context on community development yet produces findings that point to such influences. The first example sought to investigate the alignment between practitioner’s beliefs and the character of the community development they practice. Dixon (1990) argues that the proposals for socialist and leftist practices from the mid 1980s lack clarity and were not supported by research. The research found that in the case of practitioners espousing liberal perspectives there is some “congruency,” but not so for other political perspectives (Dixon, 1990, p. 91). The mix of contextual influences that is “the interplay between the practitioner, the state sponsor, the employer and other constituents” determined the style of practice rather than practitioner beliefs and commitments (Dixon, 1990, p. 99). The object of the study was to verify the connection between theoretical perspectives held by practitioners and practices.
Saggers et al. (2003) investigated ways of measuring community development in local government settings but found that issues of definition were more immediate. The research found that the prominent idea in the literature, the conceptualisation of community development as a bottom-up process of social change, contrasted with practice settings where concepts of community development varied (Saggers et al., 2003). The culture of the local government authority was found to be predictive of the character of community development practiced (Saggers et al., 2003, p. 28). Hence organisational perspectives were the paramount influence on community development practiced in local government contexts. The research set out to investigate the measurement of community development in local government settings, however this question could not be addressed due to the fluidity of concepts of community development.

Hudson (2004) investigates practitioners’ concepts of community development in local and state government settings to identify different discourses of community development in the academic literature to that found in practice settings. While both the academic literature and government statements, for example, acknowledge the central position of “local communities,” they differ in that the former emphasised “social justice” while the latter emphasises “social responsibility” (Hudson, 2004, p. 255). The findings indicate the notion of a “situated discourse,” where the interplay between the practitioner, organisation and broader environment creates a discourse of community development particular to each site (Hudson, 2004, p. 261). Hudson (2004, p. 264) argues that this insight is “hidden” in the literature, due to the ideological nature of community development. Focus groups exploring understandings of community development were carried out at two sites, one local government and the other state government. Each is identified as a case study and referred to as the “Local Case” and the “State Case” (Hudson, 2004, p. 255). These are however quite distinct from the illustrative case studies reviewed in the previous chapter. Hudson’s (2004) case study research articulates a clear research question and reports methodology and ethics. The research sought to investigate understandings of community development in government community services.

Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) investigate the way community workers use traditions in their practice. As mentioned earlier, three types of traditions are
identified in community development: geographical, methodological, intellectual (Westoby & Hope-Simpson, 2011). Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) argue that practitioners are influenced by traditions. The purpose such traditions serve in community development are identified as explaining or arguing concepts, ideologies and history. Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) refer to Kelly and Sewell’s (1986a) notion of the vernacular and the technical and the way both inform practitioners; they identify the two, respectively, as practice wisdom and formal knowledge. The research shows a “process of synthesis of various traces of traditions is occurring amongst the sample of practitioners interviewed” (Westoby & Hope-Simpson, 2011, p. 223). Hence practitioners cherry pick from a range of traditions with which they connect emotionally and or intellectually to establish a practice that is right for them. Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) point out the importance of the vernacular in communicating the accumulative knowledge of community development. Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) focus on traditions and the ways these become embedded in practice to position the practitioners and the traditions as central.

The findings of community development research

The research identified in the first category, focused on the contexts of practice, assumes that community development is characterised by particular values, while the research identified in the second category, investigating conceptualisations of community development, finds — with the exception of Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) — the influence of context is the only constant (Dixon, 1990; Hudson, 2004; Saggers et al., 2003). Research focused on the macro level contexts of practice (Burkett, 1998; Hoatson, 2001; Hoatson et al., 1996) and organisational contexts (Kenny, 2002; Shevellar, 2011) identifies a clash in the stated values of community development and the discourses of policy and human service organisations. Research that assumes community development is identifiable and can be measured in the field (Hudson, 2004; Saggers et al., 2003), and research with an interest in the link between the practitioner’s beliefs and practice (Dixon, 1990), finds that notions of community development are contested and fluid and characterised by practice contexts. Westoby and Hope-Simpson (2011) focus on how community practitioners work in practice rather than community development itself.
The essentially contested nature of community development affirms what at first appear to be contradictory findings; that is, community development has clear values yet it is open to context. Arguments for a particular approach to community development establish values for practice, but such interpretations of community development only hold in theoretical discussion. The values that emerge in any particular instance of practice do so through context. The transitory nature of particular approaches to community development is further demonstrated by the research which points to the limitations of structural power analysis for the practice of community development (Ingamells, 2002). Research identifies heroic agency as a key strategy for coping with the transitory nature in context of values argued as central to community development and notes the incongruence of heroism to the values of community development (Shevellar, 2011).

Four approaches to theorising essentially contested concepts of development

Understanding community development as an essentially contested concept highlights the way in which different theoretical and political perspectives characterise the normative and descriptive features of community development. Thus the theorising of community development as a humanist modernist concept (Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a); as change from below (Ife, 1995, 2002, 2013); as dialogical (Westoby & Dowling, 2013); or as knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015), stabilise the meaning of community development before it is applied in context. Contrary to this, the research literature suggests that context is the central influence on practice. The importance of context is recognised in theoretical propositions for community development, although the focus is on working to apply a particular approach to community development in context rather than working with characterisation of community development that emerges from context. Arguments for particular conceptualisations of community development attempt to articulate a practice that can be taken to context. Hence the full volatility of meaning in community development is under recognised in our theorising.

Similar issues of meaning are well documented for another form of adjective enhanced development; that is, sustainable development. Under recognition of the
internal complexity of sustainable development diminishes effective theorising of the notion (Jacobs, 1999; Connolly, 2007). A risk of this under recognition is the capacity for opposing perspectives to be “cloaked within the comforting rhetoric” of sustainable development (Connolly, 2007, p. 259); an issue in community development that Mowbray has consistently been arguing for over thirty years (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011), and which is evident also in Kenny’s notions of fused discourses (2002). Connolly (2007) argues that the unifying element of sustainable development is found in the triangular representation of environment, economic and social justice ideals, which combine to encapsulate the ambition of the notion. While community development does not have such a clear symbol of unity the triumvirate of bottom-up, process and principle similarly captures the notion. Connolly (2007) identifies three ways in which the volatility of meaning is handled in the theorising of sustainable development and offers a fourth possibility that works with the full extent of the internal complexity of the notion.

The first approach is simple: just ignore the contested complexity of the notions and act as if it does not exist. The second approach acknowledges complexity in meaning, asserts a resolution to the ambiguities and argues the preferred perspective of the notion. The third approach is to fully explore the contested complexity, identify a continuum or typology of possibilities, and locate the preferred position on the continuum. If we consider these three approaches in relation to the theorising of community development, the first is not evident in any of the approaches examined in this thesis thus far. The second approach corresponds to the shift in case studies in the 1990s to include theoretical frameworks. Unease with the capacity to apply knowledge from the case studies across a range of contexts saw the introduction of “A Framework of Community Development” (Butler, 1993, p. 9). The framework resolved the contested nature of practice in the case studies and served to identify good community development. Theorising community development as a humanist modernist concept (Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011a), as change from below (Ife, 1995, 2002, 2013), as dialogical (Westoby & Dowling, 2013), or as knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015), all equate to some extent to the third approach, which is the “more overtly analytical response” (Connolly, 2007, p. 261). The contested nature of community development is recognised in these four propositions for
practice. A range of possibilities for practice are identified, in some instances with typologies, and a particular approach is argued.

Connolly (2007, p. 268) proposes a fourth possibility, one that “…build[s] on these analyses in a way that unpacks the ambiguities and tensions, rather than attempting to either suppress or oversimplify them.” Willingness to accept the contested nature of community development is essential to such an approach. The approach used by Weeks et al. (2003) could qualify as such an attempt. Weeks et al. (2003) propose a continuum of interactions between the state and civil society to identify a range of possible approaches to community practice rather than arguing for a particular approach. They do not claim this broad spectrum for community development but nonetheless their approach demonstrates the level of openness Connolly (2007) advocates.

To support such analysis it is necessary to acknowledge the intellectual legitimacy of alternative interpretations of the concept, in order to appreciate how and why they can be strongly held and defined – an acknowledgement hampered by approaches that insist that alternatives are not just undesirable (perhaps politically illegitimate) but definitionally incorrect. (Connolly, 2007, p. 262)

Mowbray’s (1985, 1992, 1996, 2000b, 2005, 2010) positioning of community development as a practice underpinned by the socialist perspective demonstrates theorising that works against such an approach. There is evidence that the fourth approach is emerging in community development texts in the Australian context. Notions of dialogical community development (Westoby & Dowling, 2013) and knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015) hold greater uncertainty in theoretical position, and while arguing for a particular approach, manage also, to leave the reader feeling some confidence that other approaches may be not just viable but acceptable for practice. Westoby and Dowling (2013, pp. 91-94) talk very literally about the problem of holding tightly to ideological positioning for community development. Dialogical community development (Westoby & Dowling, 2013) and knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015) retain the commitments to process and
principles but shift away from the anchor of the 1970s, the notion of bottom-up community development. Such a shift releases community development from the bottom-up/top-down dichotomy to focus on the horizontal dynamics of practice. Ingamells (2007, p. 246) similarly moves away from the strong binaries of the structural power analysis to situate the theorising of community development in the “dynamics” of power at the local level.

Community development theorists do not claim to be non-theoretical or non-political. On the contrary, they argue that community development is political, hence their approach is based on showing their hand and arguing that the very idea of community development is reliant on a particular politics. This is an effective tool for establishing principles for community development. But it also serves to stabilise notions of community development away from the contexts of practice. An essentially contested notion of community development indicates that people out in communities are carrying out community development based on their collective political and theoretical positions. As Hudson’s research demonstrates;

…ambiguity allows community development to be created and recreated in-line with particular political contexts and purposes. This insight tends to be hidden in the academic literature, which claims ownership of community development for the purposes of achieving social justice and for relieving forms of structural oppression. (Hudson, 2004, p. 264)

The normativity of particular approaches to community development harbour the potential to evaluate the theoretical and political positions present in practice contexts; such as in Ife’s (2013) discussion of the dilemma for community workers when the values of community development clash with values held in local communities. Hence, Ife (2013) argues, context is global and values established globally for ecology and social justice are thus legitimately pulled through to local contexts. The power of community development is held in the theoretical frameworks that underpin propositions for a particular approach. Context is a dangerous place and it is not guaranteed that politically appropriate forms of
community development will emerge through local contexts, as demonstrated by Mendes’ example of community development based on social exclusion (2004). Miller (2004, p. 148) argues the reliance of community development on an overarching theory, whether Marxism or human rights discourse, represents a “heroic model of transformative change for social justice” which is at odds with the realities of contextualised practices. Our capacity to not just accept but fully explore the contested and contextualised nature of community development is central to my research exploring community development in the south west of Western Australia.

How the essentially contested nature of community development is managed in theorising in other countries

This leads to the final point of the literature review of this thesis, which is to consider what happens in other countries. This final section of the chapter refers to a number of key theorists of community development in Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Particular aspects of the way in which community is conceptualised in the Australian context come into sharper focus when looking at aspects of international discussion. I look firstly to Canada, the USA and Ireland, then finish by drawing links with the literature from the UK. The intention is not to provide detailed overviews of the theorising of community development in these locations, but to review the work of key theorists in terms of the way in which they approach the essentially contested nature of community development.

In a similar vein to Kenny (2011a) and Ife (2013), Canadian academic and community organiser Shragge (2013), differentiates between political perspectives in order to advocate the specific politics of his approach. There is a difference, however, in that Shragge (2013, p. xxiii) articulates the contradiction between the power of the worker and the “tension” of working with a community to mobilise action and the capacity to reflect on the power inherent in that role. Shragge (2013, p. xxiii) extends this argument to the predetermined position of political and theoretical perspectives for social change, such as the “authoritarianism” of Marxism. Striking a “balance” between engaging people in local issues and pushing for broader forces of social change is central (Shragge, 2013, p. xxv). This point is obscured in the Australian literature up until very recent publications. The Marxist
theory or, more recently, the overarching framework of human rights provides the impetus for change. The discourse around community, common interest and notions of the oppressed and ordinary bring local people into the situation in the Australian context, however the assumption is that structural theories of social change support action. With the exception of Mendes (2004), the chance for slippage between the two is not explicitly raised and hence not addressed in the Australian context, except to reaffirm the overarching framework (Mendes, 2004). Another key theorist and researcher from Canada, the editor of an international collection of case studies, Campfens (1997a), highlights the connection between the context and the theoretical or political positioning of community development. Campfens (1997a) demonstrates the fourth position identified by Connolly (2007) with particular reference to the need for community development in international settings to reflect the social, historical and political context of practice rather than theories established in the minority world.

The discussion in the United States reflects the first approach identified by Connolly (2007), with a focus on models and techniques for community development rather than obvious theoretical or political positioning. Rothman (2001) is the ultimate example when it comes to apolitical models for community practice. Rothman (2001) eschews the politics of community practice and identifies descriptors of action which indicate the possibility of embedding a particular political stance, but falls short of identifying politics as a variable of community practice. The dominant voices in theorising community development in the Australian context from the mid 1990s use the term community development, and the practice they describe corresponds with Rothman’s notion of community organizing, with an emphasis on process as indicated by Rothman’s model of locality development and called community development by Sites (1998). The notion of Assets Based Community Development (ABCD) is an example of a technique. Again, the notion of politics or broad theoretical frameworks do not enter the narrative, in fact the key text of ABCD does not include a reference list (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). The work would however appear to be inspired by the strong communitarian traditions in the USA. Hence the theorising of community development in the USA is quite different to theorizing emerging from Australia and the UK. The focus is very much on the moral, social and physical aspects of community change (Ganapati, 2008; Sites,
Recent attempts to define community development indicate the apolitical nature of the notion in the US context (Matarrita-Cascante & Brennan, 2012, p. 297). Notions of community organising referent to Alinsky (1971) are more likely to carry clear political and theoretical commitments for community practice (Sites, 1998), but these do not dominate the literature.

New millennium research in Ireland theorises community development with reference to global development practice (Powell & Geoghegan, 2004; Geoghegan & Powell, 2006). This, surprisingly, is not an oft-used avenue to theorising practice, the exception in the Australian context being Eversole (2015). The focus is more often overwhelmingly on the more amenable notion of the two, community. The difference between theorising in Ireland and the USA is illustrated by the following anti-definition.

This is very significant, as it is this ability to mean different things to different people, the ability to draw people from different backgrounds – in fact the very elusiveness of absolute definition that, oxymoronically, defines community development. (Powell & Geoghegan, 2004, p. 176)

Powell and Geoghegan’s (2004, pp. 30-33) research found community development corralled between oppositional and cooperative forms of action, thus indicating the presence of a structural power analysis and an apolitical approach to community development. This appears to be supported by their summation of the literature, much of which is “based upon descriptive empiricism and pre-given theory” (Powell & Geoghegan, 2004, p. 2), and as such is likely to be indicative of the first and the second of Connolly’s approaches (2007) to theorising. Powell and Geoghegan’s (2004) research however, shows more complexity is present than may be expected from this positioning. While the research indicates these two positions exist in the practice of community development it also shows the latter to be the most prominent experience; while this would indicate cooption by the state, a healthy critique of state action is also evident.
The mismatch between practitioner beliefs and practice, highlighted by Dixon (1990) in the Australian context, was identified in the United Kingdom in the late 1980s (Barr, 1987). Barr (1987) was particularly critical of the divergence between the evidence of community development practice and the “radical self-image” (p. 16) of practitioners and argued an emphasis on “values and ideological dispositions” (p. 17) comes at the cost of skill development. More recently Barr (2005) argues “[c]ommunity development requires a theoretical base that encompasses knowledge derived from the sum of evidence of relevant research and that explores both its contradictions and consistencies” (Barr, 2005, p. 458).


…the socialist discourse [of community development] of transformation and empowerment has tended to operate at a rhetorical level, it has generally concealed a much more conformist and conservative reality. (Shaw, 2008, p. 26)

The way in which the ideology of community constrains community development is more overtly articulated in the UK context. The position of preferred alternative that is community may be occupied by “backward-looking romanticism,” as exemplified by Tonnies (1955), or “forward-looking socialism” driven by the emancipatory intent of critical social theories (Shaw, 2008, p. 25).

These competing rationalities are embedded in community development and help explain its deeply ambivalent nature. …whatever the contingencies of context. (Shaw, 2008, p. 27)

This identifies the danger of context for the theoretical approach to community development. The risk is that a practice attuned to context could go in any direction
once embedded in a specific location (Miller, 2004). The “deeply and fundamentally contextual and temporal” nature of community development creates uncertainty (Miller, 2004, p. 151). This motivates the assertion of a particular theoretical and political perspective, such as critical social theories and the concomitant set of values for community development thereby alleviating the uncertainty of context. Destabilisation of the political frameworks of critical social theory, such as Socialism and Marxism, have shaken the transformative visions of community development, and the human rights discourse assists in re-establishing such a meta-narrative in the context of globalisation (Miller, 2004).

How is community development theorised in the Australian literature?

Looking across Chapters Two, Three and Four of this thesis we can see that a particular approach to theorising community development has emerged in the Australian context. The case studies from the 1960s to the 1990s emphasised the people involved at the community level working for positive change in their communities; the case studies were a vehicle for voicing their knowledge to educate and inspire the field. Changes in policy contexts and uncertainty about the capacity to offer a meta-narrative saw the introduction of frameworks to the case study publications. The frameworks served to complete the picture of community development such that when practice did not achieve the expected outcomes the framework served to promote the idea of good community development. Publication in the mid 1990s of texts focused predominantly on practice frameworks, rather than illustrative case studies, looked outward to the emancipatory tradition of social theory to inspire and educate the field. People were positioned as central only as far as they were identifiable as ordinary or oppressed. Case studies were reduced to vignettes and the voice of community development was espoused through the transformative oratory of critical social theories. While these arguments for particular approaches to community development highlight the singularity of the approach, “it is difficult to disentangle description from prescription” (Ingamells, 2002, p. 22).
Mowbray’s commentary points to disconnection between visions and outcomes, unwarranted radical self-image of practitioners, and the easy embrace of conservative action within radical ambitions. Clarity of the impact of the ideology of community is clear when analysing the actions of conservative forces, yet screamingly absent when it comes to radical assertions of visions for community development. The frustrations of the field are evident in the topics investigated in community development research, yet the influence of this body of work appears under utilised. This could perhaps be explained by an innate understanding that the results of research will find context to be the greatest influence on practice, yet the preoccupation with asserting particular theoretical and political positions for practice seeks somehow to alter that basic condition.

The theorising of community development focuses on arguing for particular approaches to community development rather than on the trajectory of ideas or the particular way in which community development has emerged in Australia. The 1996 edition of the Community Development Journal did this to some extent, as does Lane (2013). Illustrative case studies and practice frameworks inspire and educate the field. Both contribute to the narratives of the field, yet the essential separation of the two shapes the theorising of community development in a particular way in the Australian context. The case studies position people as central to community development, and the practice frameworks position particular theoretical and political perspectives as central to community development in order to identify which people are important. The two complement each other in characterising community development, yet the dominance of one or the other in the literature indicates some difficulty in the integration of the two. The work led by Ingamells (2002, 2007, 2010) is beginning to break this nexus.

Gallie’s (1964) essentially contested concepts criteria facilitate a stepping back from current trends in the theorising of community development to highlight very specific aspects of meaning in notions of community development and hence provide a way of talking about the way we theorise community development. Movements in the field are easier to see when thinking about the essentially contested nature of community development; as is the normativity of community development. Emefulu (2011, p. 383) for example, argues normativity is embedded in community
development through the assumptions that particular approaches to practice “will always work in the best interests of marginalized [sic] groups,” and also by positioning community development itself as “a self-evident transformative process for those who participate in it,” and hence as the hero of the piece when there is “no real evidence” to “support this claim.” Miller (2004) highlights the way in which arguments for particular approaches to community development underpinned by grand theories of social justice, such as outlined in Chapter Three, exacerbate normativity and instill heroic trajectories in our theorising of community development.

An overview of the stages of the heroic quest in storytelling assists in exploring the implications of heroism in the way we talk about community development. The notion of the hero’s quest is emerging as a consistent feature in the theorising of community development; both in the way we talk about practice, such as demonstrated by Ingamells et al., (2010a) and through the theories we hold as central to community development, such as demonstrated by the propositions of Kenny (2011a), Ife (2013) and Westoby and Dowling (2013). The hero’s quest highlights the prescriptive potential of our narratives of community development. The following description offers a way of thinking about the hero’s quest developed by Campbell (1993) through the study of mythology genres, and adapted by Vogler (1998) as a guide for fiction writing. The notion that the hero’s quest has three central transitions, identified as separation, initiation and return, is well established (Campbell, 1993; Vogler, 1998). The hero’s journey is characterised by twelve stages, each relevant to the protagonist (that is, the hero) of the story moving through the three transitions, identified as three acts (Campbell, 1993; Vogler, 1998). I will briefly outline the three transitions as these are relevant to understanding the way heroic agency enters our narratives of community development. Separation is the first act in the hero’s story and involves the hero realising there is a problem to be addressed in their “ordinary world” (Vogler, 1998, p. 10). Separation is spurred by the need for change and may include false starts and self reckoning. The second act, identified here as initiation, is the stage of the hero’s journey characterised by commitment. The central characteristic of this phase of the story is action; that is, action required to achieve change. The final act of the hero’s journey is return; the outcome may not yet be clear but the hero has travelled as far as possible and
typically faces one final test before triumph. From here the hero returns to the ordinary world transformed and with new wisdom and power (Vogler, 1998). Ingamells et al. (2010a, p. 113) highlight the influence of “the heroic quest of western mythologies” in the stories of community development. The notion of heroic agency is a key point of discussion in the normativity of community development (Kenny, 2002; Miller 2004), and emerges in practice contexts where the values of community development are under threat (Shevellar, 2011). A central feature of the hero’s journey that is particularly relevant to exploring this aspect of community development is the notion of polarity (Vogler, 1998, pp. 315-338). Vogler (1998, p. 315) identifies the persistence of polarisation in the hero’s journey. He argues this feature stems from the sense of unity required in story and maintains that the immediate impact of identifying unity is to manifest its “polar opposite” (Vogler, 1998, p. 315). This quality of heroic tales has clear parallels with processes of identifying community in the context of community development (Brent, 1997; Devereux, 1993).

The thesis moves on from here to consider the central proposition that if particular theoretical and political perspectives characterise the normativity and descriptive features of community development when theorising practice free of specific local contexts, then we would expect case studies of community development (practice stories) to show us things about community development that are obscured in our theorising. Chapter Five and Six articulate the methodology and methods that underpin my case study research of community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia. The community groups participating in this research are introduced in Chapter Seven; their practice stories appear in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven; and a thematic analysis in Chapter Twelve.
Chapter Five: Methodology

A case study design is used in this research to investigate how community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia can inform community development theorising. Stories of community development practice from the south west region are the fount for exploring the theorising of community development under the following research question: how can community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context? The concepts of community development and case study are central in my research. The two have a strong connection as case studies are an essential tool in the theorising of community development. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology of the case study research reported in this thesis. Methodology accounts for the logic of the research, as demonstrated by the link between ontology and epistemology, the feasibility of the research question and the action of the research (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1317; Crotty, 1998, p. 3). The central task of methodology is the justification of methods (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1317) employed to understand the phenomena under investigation, through the collection and sense making of data as a way of answering the research question. My research relies on action that investigates community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia, and the theorising of community development in the Australian context in such a way that the latter can be explored from the understandings of the former. Hence the methodology of my research relies on a design through which knowledge from the field of community development probes knowledge from the literature of community development. As such, this chapter argues the notions of reality and knowledge that underpin case study design in this instance.

I will start by locating the concept of case study in the broader terrain of social research. The first section outlines schools of thought in social research to position the practices of case study design in the social research landscape. This includes an overview of social research through reference to the broad debates surrounding the entry of qualitative approaches to social research. The place of case study in the research milieu is outlined as a lead up to articulating the ontology, epistemology and methodology of my use of the case study approach. Definitions and design
features of case study are examined to further clarify the approach of my research. A typology helps to clarify my research design and articulate further the custom of case study in community development. The final section of my methodology accounts for the broad principles of ethics that underpin my research.

The landscape – social research

There is division in social research between applying the methods of the natural sciences where reality is observable and knowledge once discovered forms a stable basis for truth, and the challenge presented to this tradition by relativist ontology, interactive epistemology, holism and fluid notions of truth (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b, 2000b, 2005a, 2011a; Seale, 1999, 2004, 2007; Verschuren, 2001). This division is typically characterised as a chasm, with differences between the opposing sides considered irreconcilable. Crotty talks about the “great divide” (1998, p. 14), and Denzin and Lincoln identify when “battle lines were drawn” in the 1960s (2005a, p. 2). Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000, p. 1) talk about the risk inherent in this situation, with social researchers of the scientific method remaining “in the same old rut,” untouched by the challengers, who in turn hold positions of the “opposite extreme.” This chasm is drawn in varying places: between epistemologies (Crotty, 1998); between quantitative and qualitative social research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a, 2000a, 2005b; Janesick, 2000, Travers, 2001); between the empirical and theoretical focus of social research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009); and between reductionist and holistic approaches to social research (Verschuren, 2001).

Arguments about points of difference, and the commensurability or incommensurability between these approaches in social research, have developed and been refined as the debate continues (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Guba and Lincoln talk, for example, about competing paradigms, with a particular focus on the distinction between qualitative and quantitative (1994). They argue that criticism of their work in the first edition of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994) diminished their perspective to a clash between qualitative and quantitative research, whereas the crux of their argument sat with the tension between axiological positions.
(Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Along with this change in emphasis, the notion of battle between paradigms is softened to an exploration of “where and how paradigms exhibit confluence and where and how they exhibit differences, controversies, and contradictions” (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 192; Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 164; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 97). A brief account of each side of this debate, and an indication of the myriad positions that lie between, assists in articulating the methodological approach of my research and locates case study in the social research landscape.

The traditional mode of social research follows the natural sciences and relies on objective knowledge sought through observation. The empirical focus of the natural sciences based on the scientific method claims to produce objective truth (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This position is reflected in the early endeavours of social research and is most commonly associated with quantitative social research and qualitative social research of the empiricist tradition (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, pp. 12-51, 2009, pp. 53-89). The application of the scientific method to social research relies on reducing the social world to observable patterns effective for generalisation (Verschuren, 2001). Social research of the positivist tradition continues to hold particular appeal in rationalist approaches to social issues (Denzin, 2011). The Cochrane Collaboration, for example, is an international organisation whose aim is to support the process of systematic review of health care research with the purpose of maintaining empirical research of the scientific method as the evidence base for health care (Denzin, 2011; Higgins & Green, 2008). The positivist claim to certainty was challenged within the natural sciences through the work of Popper (1968), Kuhn (1970), and Feyerabend (1987). This challenge was intensified in the social sciences by questions of the suitability of the scientific method in social research (Crotty, 1998, pp. 29-41; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a, 2000a, 2005b, 2011b).

The shift in the claim to certainty of the scientific method combined with the growth of qualitative social research and its accompanying theoretical eclecticism has seen the positivist approach move to adopt what Crotty calls a “post-positivist” perspective (1998, pp. 29-41). This represents a position of less certainty described by Crotty (1998, p. 40) as the “…humbler version of the scientific approach, one that
no longer claims an epistemologically or metaphysically privileged position, that has come to be known as post-positivism.” Post-positivism (Crotty, 1998) retains the emphasis on the empirical. Broader perspectives in the social sciences sought to balance the focus on empirical with theoretical concerns (Lewins, 1992). Such arguments emphasise the philosophy of knowledge and highlight political processes and the values base of social inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, Lincoln & Guba 2000). Inquiry underpinned by critical social theories for example, holds strong tenets on the political intent of social research and seeks to expose and challenge power and domination through the process and outcome of research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009; Crotty, 1998; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, 2005). Post-modernist perspectives push against the grand theories of the scientific method, and of critical social theory, to draw attention to multiple and contradictory features of the social world (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, pp. 148-199, 2009, pp. 179-225; Crotty, 1998, pp. 183-213; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Lincoln & Guba 2000). Research of the critical and post-modernist perspective has found a vehicle for growth in qualitative social research. The incorporation of theoretical and political concerns humanise the scientific method and have come to represent qualitative social research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994a, 2000a, 2005b, 2011b). Hence qualitative approaches to social research are usually non-positivist and anti-foundational (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, 2005; Lincoln & Guba 2000). Under this division, qualitative social research tends to be associated with relativist ontology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994b, p. 13, 2000b, p. 21, 2005a, p. 24, 2011a, p. 13), although a more nuanced picture of these distinctions has emerged in time, with Crotty (1998) and Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, & Karlsson (2002) arguing, for example, that a social constructionist epistemology is not incommensurable with realist ontology.

Despite this trend, not all qualitative research is non-positivist. The empirical tradition of grounded theory and ethnography epitomise qualitative social research of the positivist, or post-positivist tradition (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, pp. 12-51, 2009, pp. 53-89). The classic community studies are an example of qualitative research of the positivist tradition, such as in the Australian context, *Bradstow: A study of status, class and power in a small Australian town* (Wild, 1974), and *Smalltown: A study of social inequality, cohesion and belonging* (Dempsey, 1990).
The development of critical ethnography demonstrates how these traditional empirical projects have moved with the broader trends in social research (Thomas, 1993). The push to humanise social research has also seen positivist researchers utilise qualitative methods in minor roles. Qualitative methods, for example, may be used in epidemiological research, although knowledge within such research is based on the positivist tradition (Denzin, 2011, pp. 649-650; Noyes, Popay, Pearson, Hannes, & Booth, 2008, p. 576). Locating the split in social research with the qualitative / quantitative divide does not account for the philosophical differences across qualitative research, such as demonstrated by the debate around the classic ethnography *Street Corner Society*, written by Whyte (1955) and defended by Whyte (1992) under heavy critique from Denzin (1992) and Richardson (1992).

These variances in social research have produced argument and counter argument to refine and expand our ideas until we come to our present context, where the extreme polarisation of positions appears no longer tenable. As mentioned, Guba and Lincoln moved from articulating “competing paradigms” (1994) to seeking “confluences” (Guba & Lincoln 2005, p. 192; Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p. 164; Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011, p. 97). While the third edition of *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* notes the idea of mixed methods as a form of resistance to qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005a, pp. 9-10), the inclusion in the fourth edition of two chapters on mixed methods research (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011) is indicative of how far the discussion has moved (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b). The need to justify the epistemological variance of qualitative research appears to have passed, and in some instances the quality of the debate is judged harshly (Byrne, 2009; Deetz, 1996; Seale, 2004, 2007). The juxtaposition of competing methods, methodologies and philosophies is considered by some as counter to the overall project of social research (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, 2009; Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2011; Flyvbjerg, 2001; Layder, 1998; Morgan 2007; Seale, 1999, 2004, 2007; Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2004, 2007).

This movement has driven efforts to span the empirical theoretical divide in a number of ways. One of which is the previously mentioned mixed methods social research (Creswell, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011), whereby qualitative and quantitative research are conceptualised as approaches influenced by particular
epistemologies yet not tied to them and therefore able to be “integrated” (Bryman, 2006). A second values the capacity of different perspectives to provide a “repertoire of interpretations,” as in reflexive methodology (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000, p. 250, 2009, p. 273). While for “situated methodology,” the demands of the research context inform methodological choices rather than broader arguments of social research (Seale et al., 2004, p. 7, 2007, p. 8). My case study research sits within this contemporary context. The following section outlines the history of case study research and clarifies the place of case study within the terrain of social research. This lays the foundation for articulating ontology, epistemology, methodology and ethics of case study research, a discussion of design in case study, and the specific approach taken in this research.

**The place and position of case study in the social research landscape**

Debating approaches to social research relies on characterising the key features of research such as paradigm, ontology, epistemology, methodology and method. The same features around which the methodological distinctions described above are argued. Central to clarifying the character of these features in my research is pinpointing where case study fits. While case study is not usually described as an ontology or epistemology, there is considerable debate around whether case study is paradigm, methodology, method or design. The literature commonly accounts for case study under the heading of methods (Crotty, 1998, p. 5; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Hyett, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, 2014), yet there are strong arguments that case study is a methodological approach (Carter & Little, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Eisenhardt, 1989; Hyett, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, 2014; Meyer, 2001; Simons, 1996, 2009) and that case study is a research paradigm in its own right (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 5). The discussion is driven by broader social research debates, outlined above (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Johansson, 2005; Meyer, 2001; Simons, 1996, 2009; Stake, 1978, 1995, 2000, 2005; Thomas, 2011a; Yin, 2003, 2009) and influenced by the way in which ideas such as paradigm, methodology, method and design are conceptualised. This section explores the ways in which notions of paradigm, ontology, epistemology, methodology, method and design are conceptualised in my research.
I start with conceptualisations of paradigm because paradigm is central to issues of commensurability in social research. Morgan’s framework (2007) identifies four conceptualisations of paradigm, the first being paradigm as worldview. This is a prominent understanding of paradigm in social research purported by the influential *Handbook of Qualitative Research* in Guba and Lincoln’s (2005, 2011) classifications of social research. Paradigm as worldview encompasses ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Morgan’s (2007) second notion of paradigm stems from epistemology, a conceptualisation demonstrated by Crotty’s (1998) framework, where epistemology is identified as a higher order than paradigm. Crotty (1998), for example, identifies positivism as a paradigm and as a theoretical perspective stemming from epistemology, whereas Guba and Lincoln’s (2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) paradigm as worldview encompasses ontology and epistemology (Morgan, 2007). Guba and Lincoln’s comparative table of the features of social research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 2000) indicates strong boundaries between paradigms (Creswell, 2011, p. 276), whereas Crotty (1998) implies flexibility between paradigms. Neither Crotty (1998) nor Guba and Lincoln (2005) identify case study at the level of paradigm. Crotty identifies case study as method (1998, p. 5). Guba and Lincoln identify case study as a technique for reporting knowledge within a constructivist epistemology (1994, p. 144).

Two extra notions of paradigm argued by Morgan are paradigm as model and paradigm as “shared beliefs among members of a specialty area” (2007, p. 53). The former, refers to “paradigmatic examples” that demonstrate the expectations of a discipline or approach to research (Morgan, 2007, p. 53), and the latter is most relevant to articulating case study research. The notion of paradigm as the beliefs of scholars is closer to Kuhn’s use of the term (Morgan, 2007, p. 53) and is better able to accommodate the way ideas develop in social research.

Paradigms in social science research methodology are not abstract entities with timeless characteristics; instead, what counts as a paradigm and how the core content of a paradigm is portrayed involves a series of ongoing struggles between competing interest groups. (Morgan. 2007, p. 61)
Morgan argues all four versions of paradigm have a role and can be used for different purposes (2007). Conceptualising paradigm as a set of beliefs argued by a community of scholars better reflects the process of methodological debate (Morgan, 2007) evident in the historical development of ideas in case study research.

The history of case study research reflects the broader trends of social research (Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993; Platt, 1992). Johansson (2005) identifies a first and second generation of case study. The first generation represents anthropological field studies, predominantly using participant observation, from the early 20th century (Johansson, 2005, pp. 33-34). Case studies from this era emphasised positivist empirical social research. The second generation spans from the 1960s to the present day and focused initially on strong procedures for inductive social research such as grounded theory (Johansson, 2005, pp. 34-35). The second generation developed further in the 1980s when Yin (1984) introduced strategies for applying the logic of experimental research to case study (Johansson, 2005). Platt (1992, p. 46) identifies this as the point when case study was established as a research strategy in its own right in contrast to ethnography or grounded theory. Further developments in research pulled the second generation of case study toward naturalistic approaches (Johansson, 2005) around the millennium through the work of Stake (1995, 2006) and Flyvbjerg (2006), prompting the claim that the range of approaches to case study in the second generation “now bridges the methodological gap in the social sciences” (Johansson, 2005, p. 34). The gap to which Johansson (2005) refers is that created by the methodological debate outlined at the front of this chapter. Johansson (2005) is not alone in attributing such an achievement to case study research (Byrne, 2009; Luck, Jackson & Usher, 2006; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Case study research is described as accommodating a “diversity of epistemological starting points” with a capacity for “analytical eclecticism” (Thomas, 2011a, p. 512), a quality that is more readily explained by thinking about paradigm as “shared beliefs” within a community of scholars (Morgan, 2007, p. 53) rather than as an all encompassing world view.

The varying roles that case study can fulfill in research, combined with its capacity to span methodological division (Johansson, 2005, p. 34; Thomas, 2011a, p. 512), may also create difficulties in accounting for the approach (deVaus, 2001; Gerring,
2004; Johansson, 2005; Meyer, 2001; Thomas, 2011a). As such, case study is said to be in a state of “methodological limbo” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). While such an assessment has negative connotations, this situation is also presented as a strength of case study research (Hyett et al., 2014; Meyer, 2001, p. 329) such as the acknowledged flexibility of the approach (Byrne, 2009; Luck, Jackson & Usher, 2006; VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007). Thinking about paradigms as worldviews emphasises the “methodological limbo” (Gerring, 2004, p. 341) of case study research, whereas thinking about paradigms as “shared beliefs” (Morgan, 2007, p. 53) enables the possibility of case study research bridging the methodological divide of social research (Johansson, 2005). Thinking about paradigm as a set of beliefs frees the notion paradigm from ontology and epistemology as argued by Guba and Lincoln (1994), and from epistemology as argued by Crotty (1998), but does not free case study researchers from the responsibility of articulating the ontology and epistemology. I move now to clarify the ontology and epistemology that underpin the methodology and my approach to case study in this research.

Just as with paradigm, there are diverse ways of conceptualising ontology and epistemology. The notion of methods is less contested, although the idea that case study could be considered a method (Crotty, 1998) indicates very different understandings of case study to that used in my research. The usual order of such discussion is to start with ontology as the highest order concept and work through to the lower order concepts. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 193), for example, list ontology, epistemology and methodology as the first three descriptors in their 1994 table of paradigms. Crotty (1998), alternatively, does not address ontology directly; he argues there is considerable confusion between ontology and epistemology in social research and his framework focuses on the latter to clarify the philosophical underpinnings of social research. My approach is to discuss ontology and epistemology in this chapter as part of the methodology of my research.

I commenced articulating the methodology of my research in the Introduction to this thesis through an exploration of definitions of case study and by drawing a distinction between illustrative case study and case study research. In this Methodology Chapter, I have outlined the position of case study in the broader landscape of social research and emphasised an understanding of paradigm that I
argue is relevant to the way the practices of case study research have emerged and
the range of “epistemological starting points” (Thomas, 2011a, p. 512) of the notion.
I will follow up on this point initially by exploring epistemology through
generalisation in case study research. This exploration assists in articulating my
initial case study design and its limitations for answering my research question. This
is followed by an account of ontology and epistemology and an explanation of how
these metaphysical notions are grounded in the content of my research. The chapter
is finalised by bringing these theoretical concerns together in the case study design.

Epistemology and case study research – generalisation

Epistemology is the “theory of knowledge” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). When talking about
epistemology in research we are explaining knowledge (Carter & Little, 2007, p.
1317), the central concern being “how can what exists be known?” (Higgs & Trede
2010, p. 32). Epistemology includes how knowledge is produced and the truth claims
of research. All research carries epistemological assumptions which directly
influence choice in theoretical framing and methods. Before accounting for the
epistemological claim of my research, I will review the way case study research has
generally addressed issues of knowledge. The following paragraphs offer an
overview of the connection between case study research and generalisation. This is
not the claim I make for my research but rather I offer an elucidation of the issue of
epistemology in case study research more generally. My own claim to epistemology
follows this discussion.

The epistemological claims of case study research have historically, from 1900 to
1990s, been situated within the positivist tradition of social research (Johansson,
2005). Hence justification of case study research has focused on meeting the
demands of reductionism and the ambition of establishing general understandings
 garnered from large numbers. This led to preoccupation with the epistemological
question of generalisation (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Ruddin, 2006; Thomas, 2011a,
2011b), a central concern for case study research during the twentieth century
(Bassey, 1999; Byrne, 2009, pp. 15-16; deVaus, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg,
2006; Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Simons, 1996; Stake,
1995, 2000; Travers, 2001; Yin, 2009). Movement to naturalistic approaches in the
1990s and 2000s (Johansson, 2007), such as Flyvbjerg (2006), Simons (1996) and Stake (1995, 2000), continued to argue for case study research through reference to the tenets of reductionism, and most specifically generalisation.

The notion of generalisation stems from positivist approaches to social research and rests on the premise that knowledge produced through research carries external validity if it can be applied to situations removed from the research context (Gomm et al., 2000; Yin, 2009). Generalisations drawn from survey research rely on procedure to identify representative samples and produce trustworthy results confidently generalised to the broader population. Those drawn from experimental research where the issues of representation are more vexed rely on controlling variables. Reductionism is a central strategy in the verification of knowledge in these situations (Gomm et al., 2000; Yin, 2009). The issue of embodying the ideal of generalisation in case study research was until recently the strongest epistemological theme in the case study literature (Bassey, 1999; Byrne, 2009, pp. 15-16; deVaus, 2001; Eisenhardt, 1989; Flyvbjerg, 2006; Gomm et al., 2000; Merriam, 1998; Simons, 1996, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2000, 2005; Travers, 2001; Yin, 1994, 2003, 2009). I would argue this preoccupation with generalisation contradicts the claims of case study research to holism and to investigating phenomena embedded in context. If for example the emphasis on context is a strength of case study research, as often argued (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009), focus on the tenets of research that seeks to counter the influence of context, such as required for generalisation, is a contradiction. So too are claims that case study research is holistic yet case study methods rely on reductionism (Yin, 1994, 2003). For example, while Yin argues a central purpose of case study research is “to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (1994, p. 2), his approach to multicase research is reductionist in that cases are described and analysed through the deductive application of theory based variables.

Preoccupation with generalisation in case study literature is addressed in different ways, although positivist notions of the idea anchor the discussion. Yin seeks to translate the procedures of scientific method to the case study approach by using the replication logic of experimental research in multiple case study design (2003, 2009, 2014). The generalisations produced are analytical as distinct from numerical (Yin,
Analytical generalisations are established by embedding theory in the case study design as a “template with which to compare the empirical results” (Yin, 2003, p. 32; 2009, p. 38). Each case is selected in anticipation of showing either similar results to established theoretical propositions, “literal replication”; or contrasting results, “theoretical replication” (2009, p. 54). The replication of results across a number of case studies strengthens the claim to generalisation. Similarly, Gomm et al. (2000) look to statistical generalisations of survey research as a premise for case study research. The “empirical generalisations” of survey research rely on the extrapolation of knowledge from a sample population to a broader population (Gomm et al., 2000, p. 104). While survey research relies on statistical procedures, the issues of representation can be addressed by looking at the level of heterogeneity in the population of the case study and the likely representativeness of the sample (Gomm et al., 2000). Gomm et al. (2000, pp. 106-107) argue the “systematic selection of cases” that are demographically typical for the circumstances under investigation strengthen the claim of case study research to empirical generalisation. Yin (2003, 2009, 2014) and Gomm et al. (2000) hold a place for case study in post-positivist social research by demonstrating the tenets of this perspective through the case study approach (Platt, 1992).

Other scholars argue for alternative conceptions of the nature and role of generalisations in case study research. Flyvbjerg argues generalisation is possible from the single case, the power of which is currently “underestimated” in the post-positivist tradition of social research (2006, p. 228, 2011, p. 305). The notion of “fuzzy generalisations” is an argument for allowing uncertainty to rest with generalisations (Bassey, 1999, pp. 51-54). A condition that would not be tolerated in the scientific method yet is apt, Bassey (1999, pp. 51-54; 2001) argues, in education research. These efforts demonstrate case study research theorists have not sought to position themselves in the anti-foundational perspectives of social research from where they could actively argue against the tenets of generalisation, but rather they have sought to justify their approach within the tenets of generalisation. Stake (1995, pp. 85-88, 2000, p. 442, 2005, p. 454), for example, sits most comfortably in this position and argues for a particular type of knowledge production that is removed from the need to extrapolate across contexts, yet retains the language of
generalisation through the concept of naturalistic generalisations. Simons also (2009, pp. 164-167) argues against narrow perceptions of generalisation to incorporate Stake’s (1995) naturalistic generalisations, as well as cross-case, concept, process and situated generalisations; each of which may be relevant according to the particulars of the case. The arguments of Stake and Simons demonstrate that even when case study researchers move away from narrow notions of generalisation, they continue to articulate knowledge produced through case study research in terms of the ideals of positivist research. The problem with this focus is that it works against the central strength of case study research: the capacity to capture a holistic perspective of phenomena in context. The preoccupation with generalisation may be explained by the contrast between reductionism and holism, the dominance of the former in the natural sciences, and the struggle in social research between science and anti-foundational concepts of research.

Generalisation is key to the epistemological discussion and has been the central focus for justifying case study research. For example, Stake and Yin, both prominent in the field of case study research, are often referred to together as underpinning the application of case study research, yet the two represent very different epistemologies (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick & Robertson, 2013). Such cross-pollination demonstrates how the community of case study theorists build case study research, however epistemological eclecticism is recognised as a problem for novice case study researchers (Boblin et al., 2013). The case study fraternity of Stake (1995), Yin (2009) and other significant case study theorists such as Bassey (1999), Merriam (1998) and Simons (1996) frequently refer to each other without highlighting their epistemological differences, and all argue the epistemological claims of case study through reference to generalisation. The result is that Stake’s work on case study is frequently used interchangeably with Yin’s, despite the different epistemologies they represent (Boblin et al., 2013). Stake and Yin talk about the processes and design of case study research and at this level their ideas are interchangeable. For example, Stake’s (1995) notions of intrinsic and instrumental case study are referred to by Yin (2003) and by other case study researchers (eg., Thomas, 2011a), yet epistemological differences are rarely discussed. Stake (2006, p. 24) identifies his own position as other than the scientific method, which he aligns with Yin (1994). Such comments are made in passing rather than emphasised and the
epistemological argument of both theorists are centred on generalisation. Hence there is considerable confusion on the perspectives of social research reflected in the work of Yin and Stake. For example, in a critique of the use of case study in business, Stewart (2012) identifies the emphasis of Stake’s cross-case analysis as comparative whereas Stake himself emphasises situationality: “[m]ulticase study is not a design for comparing cases” (Stake, 2006, p. 83). Stake (2006) argues comparison can get in the way of the purpose of multiple case study research, which he proposes relies on the situationality of each case. This exploration is important to my account of my own epistemology as a background to the initial case study design of my research.

The case study design in the proposal for my research was based on Yin’s (1994) descriptive replication logic multiple case study. As outlined in the Introduction to this thesis, I attempted to investigate ideas in the literature from the perspective of practice by focusing on the tension between critical and rational approaches to community development. Yin’s (1994) multiple case study design was suited to the comparison of contrasting theoretical ideals and as an evaluation framework used a replication logic to assess practices. I sought to use the framework but channel the focus of assessment away from community practices and onto theoretical ideals. Apart from the folly of this endeavour, I also found a clash between my own and Yin’s epistemological expectations. I would never have approached communities as a community development practitioner with the assumptions embedded in the replication logic multiple case design, yet as a novice researcher Yin’s (1994) framework offered a way of articulating my research. I could not at the time effectively differentiate the epistemologies of case study theorists. Stake’s (2006) text on multiple case study was not published until 2006. The dominant view of research determined my approach as a novice researcher, whereas in the field my own epistemological position prevailed. The original research design focused on variables and replication, yet my approach on the ground was holistic and inductive.

The discussion of epistemology in case study research has moved significantly in recent years. The outline of the social research landscape at the front of this chapter points to the easing of the need to justify the epistemological variance of qualitative research. As this strengthens, discussion of case study research leaves behind
attempts to fit case study into reductionist epistemologies pursuing generalisations (Gomm et al., 2000), or the contradictory position of asserting holism yet continuing to justify in terms of generalisations (Yin, 1994). The case study theorists instead argue, “…case study should be judged by its offer…” (Thomas, 2011c, p. 33). Such a shift provides an opportunity to articulate case study epistemology relevant to the central strengths of case study research. Such a shift relies on the theoretical traditions of holism (Verschuren, 2001) and the forms of knowledge it emphasises, such as knowledge of the particular (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2005), and knowledge of the example (Thomas, 2011a, 2011b).

Ontology and epistemology for the case study research reported in this thesis

Ontology

Returning now to the metaphysical claims for the research reported in this thesis, I will describe the ontology and epistemology of my research. To talk about ontology in social research is to consider the nature of existence. Research questions and research design rely on a form of being that can be identified enough to be researched and understood in some way; and thus involve holding a perspective on the “nature of reality” (Trede & Higgs, 2009, p. 18). The aim of my research is to investigate the ways in which community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform community development theorising in the Australian context. As such my research relies on the existence of both practices of community development in the south west region and the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The ontological assumption is that community development exists both as a practice in the field and as a theoretical endeavour.

Restricting our acceptance of reality to the basis of scientific fact is to ignore that we live in a day-to-day world where understanding comes through narrative (Bruner, 1991, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1988; White, 1973, 2010). Story is an essential route to understanding and as such is active in constructing reality. This proposition for
ontology relies on notions of “narrative fact” (Bruner, 1998, p. 17) and accepts a range of “universals” as central to reality (Bruner, 1996, p. 131).

The notion of narrative fact accounts for the way reality is shaped by narratives. While scientific reality is based on observation and verification, narrative reality in contrast is based on the way the story comes together. Such a construction of reality relies on an acceptance of established patterns in the elements that underlie stories (White, 1973, 2010). The underlying elements of, for example, heroic stories are well established (Campbell, 1993) and painstakingly analysed for the writing of fiction (Vogler, 1998). The plausibility of narrative constructed reality relies on this “underlying form” (Bruner, 1998, p. 22) rather than the surface content of the story. Central to this is the subservience of the necessary underlying elements of the story to the structure of the story as a whole (Bruner, 1998; Polkinghorne, 1988; White, 1973, 2010). Bruner (1998) argues that while scientific notions of verification are forcefully argued, notions of truth are underexplored. The narrative construction of reality, he maintains, relies not on verification of facts but on the “truthlikeness or verisimilitude” of facts; that is, the notion of plausibility (Bruner, 1998, p. 23). Hence the narrative construction of reality relies on “whether the illusion of reality is working” or not (Bruner, 1998, p. 23).

The so-called “universals” (Bruner, 1996, p. 131) central to narrative constructed reality support the notion of “narrative fact” (Bruner, 1998, p. 17). Bruner’s (1996) nine universals are summarised here as explanation of the shape of narratively constructed reality for the purpose of stating the ontological assumption of my research. Narrative construction of reality relies not on chronology but on established patterns such as beginning, middle and end. Narratives portray the particulars of events in expected ways and plausibility is garnered by whether the narrative is in accord or in contrast to such expectations. The structure of the story, narrator and context are tantamount to believability. Narrative is powered by “trouble” (Bruner, 1996, p. 142). While the pattern of beginning, middle and end denote a particular progress in narrative, reality rests in the reasoning of actions to address the trouble of the narrative rather than casual explanations. As the notion of fact rests in the way story holds together, thus reality is ambiguous, pliable and
enables continuity in a similar vein to meaning in the essentially contested concept (Bruner, 1996, pp. 133-147).

The theorising of community development is situated within the writing of the field and community development practices from the south west region of Western Australia are in this research captured, just fleetingly, in written case studies; thus the existence of both is apprehended for the purpose of my research through narrative.

**Epistemology**

Assumptions about reality lead to assumptions about the nature of knowledge. If we accept something as real, we rely on our capacity to understand it in some way; that is, we accept a form of knowledge that convincingly describes its existence. As noted above, all research carries epistemological assumptions and an established way of accounting for epistemology in case study research has been through notions of generalisation. Generalisation relies on notions of scientific verification and, while case study researchers of naturalistic epistemologies have argued the knowledge of case study in this way, I rely on the “diversity of epistemological starting points” attributed to case study (Thomas, 2011a, p. 512) to expound the epistemological assumptions of my research. The theorising literature and the narrative organisation of data describing the practices of community development from the south west region of Western Australia are the knowledge of my research.

The historical development of the methodologies of social research, outlined at the start of this chapter, identify the influence of the natural sciences on the practices of social science. Reductionism, a perspective that relies on breaking down phenomena to its constituent parts in order to increase knowledge, is central to the natural sciences. Such an approach is characterised as “linear,” “deductive” and “analytic” (Verschuren, 2001, p. 392). The focus on generalisation stems from this perspective, whereby the study of large numbers of phenomena through the properties of their subparts (understood in research as variables) nullifies context and identifies general rules. Socrates’ notion of the pursuit of knowledge as “simile in multis” (Thomas, 2011b, p. 47 [emphasis in originals]), and the ideas of seventeenth century
philosopher Descartes (Verschuren, 2001, p. 389), are the antecedents of reductionism. The epistemological assumptions of this research are argued in contrast to reductionism through holism, a notion more in accord with the narrative construction of reality. Holism understands phenomena intact and in context.

The idea of holism can be traced to Ancient Greece and has featured in a range of methodological writings including, not unsurprisingly, case study research (Thomas, 2011b; Thomas & Myers, 2015; Verschuren, 2001, p. 390; Verschuren, 2003, p. 124). Verschuren (2001, p. 390) argues that while holism is an enduring concept in qualitative social research and in case study in particular, the notion is poorly defined and appears as “an implicit axiom” rather than a philosophical or conceptual foundation for methodology. The notion of holism in the 20th century is attributed to Smuts in the 1920s (Lawrence & Weisz, 1998a), and the popular saying more than the sum of its parts is central to Smuts’ explication (1926). When arguing the difference between holism and mechanical perspectives, Smuts (1926, p. 103; emphasis in original) argues “[a] whole, which is more than the sum of its parts, has something internal, some inwardness and structure of function, some specific inner relations, some internality of character or nature, which constitutes that more.” The role of plot in the narrative construction of reality corresponds to such a feature.

Smuts (1926, p. 100) talks about holism as a way of understanding the world and he asks the reader if he claims too much for the notion, which he identifies as having at the very least a “methodological” purpose. Methodological purpose is central in my research.

Thomas (2011b, p. 46) characterises holism as suited to research where phenomena “…have to be understood as a whole, rather than as a set of interrelating variables.” Holism draws our “attention to linkages and continuities” (Lawrence & Weisz, 1998b, p. 2) by “emphasising rather than denying interconnectedness” (Thomas, 2011b, p. 59). Verschuren (2001) identifies examples in the physical and social world, where holism is the foundation for knowledge such as chemistry and sporting teams; both instances where, Verschuren argues, the “whole is more than the sum of the parts” (2001, p. 400). Verschuren (2001, p. 394) argues the focus of epistemological holism in research rests on investigating the “collective characteristics” of phenomena “as a whole.” The application of this idea in the social
world is particularly relevant to my research, because the strength of people coming
together rather than acting as individuals is fundamental to community development – it is the collective that is the central concern in community development and my research relies on knowledge that enables an understanding of the collective in context. Holism, in my research, holds the tension between the ontological claims of narrative and the empirical demands of case to emphasise plot as the source of plausibility for collective stories of practice in micro contexts in the south west region.

Multiple case study design

A typology that delineates the essential elements of case study research as the subject, the object, purpose, approach and process (Thomas, 2011a) is used in this section to clarify the case study design of my research. It is important to emphasise the non-linear nature of the typology in that the decision-making behind each element does not necessarily follow simple steps as they are outlined here. The typology identifies the phenomenon of the case study site as the subject of the research (Thomas, 2011a). The subject takes its lead from the theoretical interest or the object of the research (Thomas, 2011a).

…the subject of the research will be selected because it is an interesting or unusual or revealing example through which the lineaments of the object can be refracted. (Thomas, 2011a, p. 514 [emphasis in original])

The subject is the phenomenon through which the object is explored, and its capacity to elucidate the theoretical interest of the research is central (Thomas, 2011a).

A case study investigation of community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia is central to answering the question of my research. While the multiple case design is not crucial, as the question could be addressed from a single case study, the multiple cases provide insight that may not be possible with a single case investigation. Four community groups with varying approaches to community development were engaged in the research. The community development
practices of these four community groups are the subject of the case study design. The object of case study research is not as easy to identify and may “thicken” as the research progresses: “[i]t is the way that this “object” develops that is at the heart of the study” (Thomas, 2011a, 514). The object is the point of theoretical interest at the heart of the inquiry. The way in which practices in the south west region can inform theorising of community development in the Australian context is the central theoretical interest and hence is the object in my case study research design.

Other components of the typology include the “purpose, approach and process” of the research (Thomas & Meyers, 2015, p. 58). The purpose of case study research in the typology serves to clarify further the analytic intent of the research (Thomas, 2011a). The classifications of intrinsic and instrumental case study (Stake 1995, pp. 3-4) are identified as indicators of purpose in case study research (Thomas, 2011a, p. 516). The analytic focus of intrinsic case study pertains to the unique features of a particular phenomenon identified as the case study site, whereas instrumental case study investigates an issue external to the phenomenon (Stake, 1995, 2005). The purpose of the case study design in my research was instrumental in that the central interest of the research is implicit in, though external, to each case.

The approach is explained in the typology as the expected focus of the research, whether it is theoretical or descriptive (Thomas, 2011a, p. 516). Identifying the approach lays the foundation for methods of data collection and analysis (Thomas, 2011a). The approach of my research is interpretive. The central purpose is to empirically describe community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia as a foundation for examining the theorising of community development in the Australian context.

The final element of the typology, the operational process of the research, refers to the nature of the subject as either singular or plural. The focus for single cases is characterised as “retrospective, snapshot and diachronic” (Thomas, 2011a, p. 517) and for multiple cases as “nested, parallel and sequential” (Thomas, 2011a, p. 517). This research involved four case study sites researched in parallel. A snapshot of the practices at the time of fieldwork for each site was investigated. All the community
sites were engaged at the same time and data collection proceeded simultaneously with entry and exit times guided by the process of each site.

**Ethics**

The principles of human research ethics (National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Research Council, & Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee, 2007) were enacted in this research through reference to the ideal of democracy as an ethical guide (Bassey, 1999; Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009) and an understanding of ethics as a situated practice (Simons, 2009; Simons & Usher, 2000). The ideal of democracy in research balances notions of respect for knowledge with respect for people, so that the pursuit of knowledge is endorsed but not at the expense of participants. Power is a key concern of the democratic ethic in case study research: power in the relationships between people at the research site, between the participants and the researcher, and between the participants and the public domain through the publication of results. Central to this concern is the need for balance between the privacy of people participating in the research, the public interest in knowledge (Simons, 2009, p. 101) and the ownership of the data (Simons, 2009, p. 101). Particularly important to multiple case study research is the notion of research ethics as a “situated” practice (Simons & Usher, 2000, p. 2). Situated ethics highlights the unique nature of each site and fosters regardful consideration of the particular application of ethical principles for each location (Simons, 2009, p. 96; Simons & Usher, 2000). The nuances of place and position were central to embedding ethics in the process of the research (Stake, 1995, 2005).

The data was collected in the south west region of Western Australia from late 2004 to 2005. Ethics approval for the field work was obtained through the Human Research Ethics Committee at Curtin University in 2004. All field work was complete during 2005 and all contact with participating community groups finalised by 2007. The Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University granted ethics approval on the basis of the historical record of ethics coverage prior to enrolment at Edith Cowan University in 2015. Ethics are described further in the following chapter.
Chapter Six: Methods

Methods are the “research action” (Carter & Little, 2007, p. 1318), the steps taken to carry out social research; that is, the “techniques or procedures” (Crotty, 1998, p. 3) that guide data collection and analysis. Case study research draws on the methods of other forms of qualitative research. What distinguishes qualitative case study from other qualitative research is the notion of case and a focus on investigating phenomena in situ. Understanding the case and its context is the first priority in single and multiple case study research. Multiple case study research requires attention to each case before attention to findings from the collection of cases (Stake, 2006, p. 2). Within-case analysis is carried out before cross-case analysis can be undertaken. The central focus of data collection for individual case study sites is the story of each case and what each case tells us about the research question. There is an innate tension in multiple case study research that stems from the focus on each case as a whole and the research question to be answered from the findings across a number of cases (Stake, 2006, p. 107). This point is central to distinguishing between case study research and other forms of qualitative research. Qualitative methods are used in case study research but in such a way as to gain understanding of the case. The case study approach places the emphasis on each site in context and as such is particularly suited to investigating the way community development happens in practice (Hollander, 2011).

The purpose of this research is to investigate how knowledge from the field can inform the theorising of community development. Four case studies of community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia are central to this purpose and are the subject of my research. Each case portrays the community development practice of a community group. The object of my research is to investigate how these case studies inform the theorising of community development. The four participating community groups are briefly introduced in the following chapter (see Chapter Seven). The story of their community development practices are each portrayed in a chapter of this thesis (see Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven). Thematic analysis of the practices of the four participating community groups are reported in Chapter Twelve. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods undertaken to investigate the community development practices of these
four community groups. The methods of my research focus on case as central to data collection, and plot as central to within-case data analysis. The particular notion of cross-case data analysis as relevant to my research is also reported. Case and plot are pivotal to implementing the ontology and epistemology outlined in the previous chapter. The regional context of community development investigated in my research is outlined in the following chapter, as is the process for engaging the community groups’ participation in the research (see Chapter Seven).

The case

The range of interpretations and applications of the notion of case study, reviewed in the introduction to this thesis, highlights the flexibility of the approach. The pivotal concept of case study research, the notion of case, is also open to a range of interpretations and uses. To start the discussion, Stake (2006, p. 1) claims “[a] case is a noun” which implies only tangible things, such as people or organisations. Yet explorations of the notion focus on abstract as well as physically identifiable cases. The case studies cited in the Literature Review, for example, describe the processes and events of community development. As an essentially contested concept community development is open to many interpretations. Different ways of conceptualising the notion of case in research are explored in the text What is a case? (Ragin & Becker, 1992). A range of responses, rather than a definitive answer to the key question, are provided.

Cases can be conceptualised as an “instance” either of a population, such as we might expect when a member of a community group is identified as a case, or as an “instance …of a conceptual class,” such as when a function carried out by a community group is identified as a case (Abbott, 1992, p. 53). Similarly, Ragin (1992b, p. 9) argues that cases can be understood as “empirical” or “theoretical constructs.” The boundaries of theoretical or conceptual cases are more difficult to define than population or empirical cases. Stake (2006, p. 2) concedes that not all cases are nouns but he maintains commitment to the noun by arguing that in case study research “when our main focus is on a phenomenon that is a function …we choose cases that are entities.” The boundaries of cases that are functions stem from the entity from which the function flows (Stake, 2006). Community development
practice is the function under investigation in my research. Community groups are the entities that carry out this function. The cases in my research are thus “instances” of a “conceptual class” (Abbott, 1992, p. 53) or a “theoretical construct” (Ragin, 1992b, p. 9). As such, the boundaries of each case are shaped by the way each community group talks about their practice of community development.

**Casing**

Ragin (1992b, p. 9) combines the difference between cases understood as “empirical” or “theoretical constructs,” and cases conceptualised as “specific” or “general,” to offer a four type framework for clarifying the notion of the case. This framework provides four “starting points” for exploring conceptualisations of case (Ragin, 1992b, pp. 9-11). The starting point for case in my research aligns with Ragin’s category, built on the notion of case as a specific theoretical construct that states “cases are made” (1992b, p. 9). The cases are specified in terms of the notion of community development. While this is an essentially contested concept, the community groups in my research identified their practice as community development as part of their inclusion criteria for participating in the research. Ragin’s (1992a, p. 217) framework assumes the ultimate purpose of inquiry is understanding the case; as such, he poses the question “[w]hat is this [community development practice] …a case of?” (1992b, p. 9) as indicative of the process of “casing.” Using the term “casing,” Ragin (1992a) describes the way cases emerge through an interaction of theory and data in the process of research.

The notion of casing, Ragin (1992a) argues, stems from the interaction of theory and evidence in social research. Ragin’s (1992a) explanation of cases commences with the highest order concept, which in this research is community development. Community development is thus the central category of my research. The location specified in the research question reduced the scope of the category to practices in the south west region of Western Australia. The next category central to clarifying a case, in 2004 when case selection was carried out, were the notions of critical and rational community development. This is what Ragin (1992a, p. 221) refers to as the “second casing.” In my research the second casing established a contrast in practices, although it is important to note there was no intention under the original case study
design, as there is not now, to compare cases. Specific cases were identified from all the possible cases that may fit the conceptual casing by direct knowledge. The cases were identified not as typical or randomly but as recognisable examples of the categories noted above. This process is described in more detail in the following chapter under the heading *Case Selection in the Region*.

The agreement of specific community groups to participate in the research, the final process in casing, relied on consultation with a number of possible sites about the purpose of my research. The essentially contested nature of community development indicates the notion is applied variously, as are descriptions of practice as critical or rational. Possible sites were identified through specific interpretations of community development and notions of critical and rational approaches to practice. However the final authority to identify the case sat with the participating community groups. The final casing process undertaken in my research clarifies the data relevant to the inquiry as that which describes how community development happens at the site. The boundaries for the function of community development at each case study site were established by the way in which members of the group responded to the question of how community development happens at the site. Maintaining the boundaries of the case gave the participating groups greater control over descriptions of their practice.

**Case / variable**

The contrast between notions of case and variable are central to mapping the terrain (Ragin, 1992b, pp. 4-7). Case is commonly associated with holism, and variable with reductionism. Yet the preceding discussion of generalisation in case study research indicates the boundaries between case and variable are not always clear. To focus on the case is to look at the phenomena, not in its entirety but as a whole. To focus on variables is to break down the phenomena into its component parts. Identifying the component parts of phenomena may be an effective strategy for gaining further understanding but it also marks a shift away from considering the case as a whole. The application of variables established external to the case, or the extrapolation of variable analysis across a number of cases, sees the component parts take precedence to understanding the case. Shifting the focus of research from case to variable
necessarily diminishes knowledge of the case as a whole and departs from holism. The point made in the previous chapter regarding the contrast between Yin (1994) and Stake’s (2006) multiple case study research is an example. Yin (1994) focuses on variables for comparison across multiple cases; Stake (2006) relies on understanding each case as a whole and accumulating the understandings across cases. Stake (2006) advocates thematic analysis as part of multiple case research yet the focus of such analysis is further understanding of each case as a whole. Whereas Yin’s design (1994) uses established variables and focuses on cross-case analysis through which understanding is gained of the variable rather than the case.

Case / narrative
As indicated above, Abbott (1992) clarifies the purpose of different forms of case study research by focusing on whether a case is identified as one of a number or conceptually. Population cases align with variables and conceptual cases with narrative (Abbott, 1992, p. 53). While the distinction between case and variable is commonly invoked to account for case study research, Abbott (1992, p. 53) argues the need to also “disentangle the population-versus-case distinction from the analysis-versus-narrative one.” The population/analysis form of case study research ontology rests in the case, whereas for the case/narrative approach ontology rests in the narrative. The description below of narrative analysis explores and clarifies this point in my research.

The data collection
Common methods of data collection for qualitative research are used in qualitative case study. As indicated in the opening paragraph of this chapter, data collection focuses on understanding the case in context. The data collection methods described below were used in my research to focus on each case within the multiple case study design (Stake, 2006). A range of data collection strategies common in other forms of qualitative research were undertaken (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006). The three broad approaches of observation, interviews and the collection of documents were carried out at each site (Wolcott, 1994, p. 19). The use of multiple methods of data collection supports the efficacy of case study research (Yin, 2003, pp. 97-101). Data collected through one method can be supported or unsettled by that gathered through
different methods (Patton, 2002). The verification of data was also supported by a range of members from each group participating in the research (Yin, 2003, pp. 97-98). Using a range of methods and including a range of perspectives from the site pertains to the integrity of descriptions of community development within each case (Stake, 2006, p. 38). Strict adherence to the same data collection procedures is not necessary in qualitative multiple case study (Stake, 2006, p. 30). Each group identified events for observation, documents relevant to describing their practice and the process for inviting members to participate in interviews.

The purpose of data collection at each of the community sites was to describe how community development happens at the site. Two questions guided data collection. The first was based on Wolcott’s (1994, p. 12) question for description, “what is going on here?” This was put to community groups as: “how does community development happen here?” The second was Wolcott’s (1994, p. 21) question for the researcher: “am I attending as carefully to what is going on as I am attending to what I think is going on?” These two questions served to direct the attention of the research to the “ordinary happenings” of community development at each case study site (Stake, 2006, p. 29). The following provides general descriptions of the three methods of data collection used in my research; it starts with observation, outlines the collection of documents and interviews, and finishes with the way ethics were applied when using these methods.

Observations were open. Participants of each community group were aware the research was being undertaken and the presence of the researcher, as an observer, was acknowledged at group events. The researcher was a participant at the case study site but the key purpose of their presence was as a researcher as indicated by Merriam’s (2009, p. 124) notion of “observer as participant.” Notes taken during the observation were transcribed and returned to the group before being used in data analysis. Observation, it is argued, is the default method for data collection in holistic approaches to research (Verschuren, 2001). The capacity to rely on observation is however limited by the function of the phenomena under investigation. The community group’s practices of community development in this research could only be observed on particular occasions such as meetings. The groups were not observable between such events as, for example, a school classroom
might be (Verschuren, 2001, p. 394). Therefore, data collection for investigating the practice of community development at each site relied more heavily on documents and interviews.

Data was also collected by gathering documents at each case study site. The community groups were asked to identify written records that demonstrated the way in which community development happened at the site. As community development practice is a public process, the documents sought were of a public nature, at least within the confines of the community group. Given this context, all the documents collected could be described as “public records” (Merriam, 2009, pp. 140-142) or as “archival records” (Yin, 2003, pp. 88-89). Archival records are usually internal to the group, although in this research participating community groups actively informed people in their local areas or associated organisations about their action, thus many of the archival records were available to the broader community. Public records are those generated outside the action of the group yet relevant in some way to describing their practice. Archival records collected across the four sites included documents generated by the group, including constitutions, minutes, press releases, newsletters, historical documents, rosters, membership registers and information sheets. Public records collected across the four sites included newspaper clippings, local histories, policy documents, research reports, community consultation reports and other local or state government reports. None of the documents collected were generated specifically for the research. Establishing the “authenticity of documents” was central to their inclusion in data collection (Merriam, 2009, p. 151). Documents were suggested by group members to clarify particular events of community development and were verified by the group. People were able to provide the document because it was something that all members held, or they directed the researcher to access the document from the relevant person, such as a secretary, community worker, or someone who held historical documents after long involvement with the group. The criteria for inclusion of public records pertained to their relevance to answering the question of how community development happens at the site.

Interviews provide a way of collecting data that cannot be observed directly due to the context or events that happened before the researcher was present (Merriam,
They also served in my research to provide a way of understanding the perspectives of different people within the group, providing access to the past practices of community development at each site and the range of perspectives within the group. Unstructured interviews (Merriam, 2009, p. 89) were used to keep descriptions of community development open to interviewees’ particular responses to the broad question: how does community development happen here? The question helped to focus the interview on the practice of the group, rather than the individual experience of being part of the group (Stake, 2006, p. 31). Specific questions about elements of practice such as project funding, conflict resolution and relationship to government were asked when clarification was required.

Interviewees were active members of the participating community groups. People made their own decision about participating in an interview or not. There was some group discussion at some sites about the best mix of people to be interviewed, although ultimately the decision was left to each individual; this is outlined in more detail below. The duration of interviews varied from thirty to ninety minutes. Each interview was recorded and transcribed and returned to participants for checking.

Data collection was undertaken in parallel across the four community groups. The timing for the commencement of data collection at each site was determined by the group’s process of agreeing to participate. As indicated above, the community groups were not active daily. They each operated differently, and the participants at each site identified the way their group came together and the best opportunity for the researcher to observe their practice (Merriam, 2009, p. 117). The data collection process fell in line with the structure and energy of the community group and their practice (Stake, 2006). Time spent in the field was guided at each site by the function of the group. Data collection continued until no further new information emerged (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The chronology of data collection for each community group is outlined in more detail below. A case study document was produced to show each of the participating community groups the way the data was interpreted to answer the data collection question of how community development happens at the site. A central understanding of their participation was that their practices would be described rather than evaluated. A key factor in the research stalling after data
collection concerned efforts to retain this intended purpose of the research under Yin’s multicase replication logic design (2003).

The data analysis

Data analysis in case study research, as with data collection, draws on the established methods of qualitative research. Hence data analysis in case study research can be described as “…a complex process that involves moving back and forth between concrete bits of data and abstract concepts,” and “…between description and interpretation” (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). As with data collection, the distinction between case study research and qualitative research more generally is the focus on the unique features of the case (Eisenhardt, 1989; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995, p. 78; Yin, 2003, p. 134). The data analysis for multiple case study research retains this focus on each case and also requires clarification of the way in which the analysis of the multiple cases comes together to answer the research question, a process commonly referred to as cross-case analysis. This section of the Methods Chapter articulates the approach to cross-case analysis and to the analysis of data for each case. The purpose of my research is the investigation of how practice knowledge from the field can inform the theorising of community development. This is the central concern of cross-case analysis. The cases are the community development practices of four community groups in the south west region of Western Australia. The data analysis of each case is guided by the same question asked of participants in data collection: how does community development happen here? Data analysis for each case was completed in turn and before cross-case analysis. The data for each community group was examined to understand their unique approach to community development (Stake, 1995, p. 78; 2006, p. 11). This point is central to data analysis in case study research. The following outlines the conceptual notions that guided a systematic approach to analysing data in my research. Cross-case analysis is the first concept to be addressed because it provides a context for data analysis at the level of the single case.

Cross-case analysis

The notion of cross-case analysis is unique to multiple case study research. The term implies analysis that involves a number of cases. As outlined earlier, gaining an
understanding of the case as a whole is where case study research differs from other forms of qualitative research. The cross-case analysis requires an analysis of each single case prior to examining the cases as a collection. Single case data analysis is described by Eisenhardt as “within-case” analysis (1989, p. 540). Multiple case study research involves more than a single case thus, once within-case analysis is complete, attention turns to the collection of cases, commonly referred to as cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998, p. 195; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014, p. 165) or as multicase analysis (Stake, 2006); or sometimes described in more specific terms such as cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2014), across case analysis (Ayres, Kavanaugh, & Knafl, 2003) or “searching for cross-case patterns” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). Cross-case analysis can be shaped in many ways. One definition is “…a research method that facilitates the comparison of commonalities and difference in the events, activities, and processes that are the units of analyses in case studies” (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008). This particular definition assumes comparison is essential and also relies on a particular definition of the unit of analysis, neither of which necessarily applies in every instance of case study research (Stake, 2006; Thomas, 2011b).

Put more simply, cross-case analysis is analysis that spans a number of cases, which could be part of a multiple case study or could be from different studies. The nature of cross-case analysis changes with the purpose of the research. Just as the term analysis covers a vast diversity of approaches in qualitative research, cross-case analysis is undertaken in different ways. The constant is the examination of data from more than one case. Cross-case analysis is the accepted term in the discussion of multiple case study research (Merriam, 2009; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). Despite this, the notion is often missing from multiple case study reports where it appears that a cross-case analysis has been undertaken (eg., Boviard, 2007; Kaufman, 1981; MacDonald, Adelman, Kushner & Walker, 1982). This indicates some uncertainty about the utility of the term when articulating the accumulative result of multiple case study research.

Cross-case analysis is perhaps best understood through consideration of the elements of multiple case study design. For example, Thomas’s typology (2011a, 2011b, 2013, Thomas & Myers, 2015) applies the ideas of the subject and the object of
research to case study design. Thomas’s typology was used in the previous chapter to articulate the design of my case study research (see Chapter Five Methodology). The object is that which the research seeks to explain or understand, and the subject is the “the thing doing the explaining” (Thomas, 2013, p. 594). This framework applies to single and multiple case study designs, with the case/s fulfilling the role of the subject in both circumstances. Thomas (2013, p. 596) describes the object as the theoretical interest of the research and argues this is what makes case study research, rather than simply illustrative, such as with a “case history.” The theoretical interest of my research is how the practices of local communities inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context. The four case studies located in the south west region each identify their practice as community development and together are the subject of my research. The cross-case analysis is the process undertaken to capture what these four cases show us about the theorising of community development.

Another way of looking at the elements of multiple case study design is Stake’s (2006, p. 4) notion of the “quintain.” The term quintain is adopted by Stake (2006) to help explain the focus of multiple case study research. The quintain is the focus of the inquiry. It parallels the object in Thomas’s typology (2011a, 2011b, 2013, Thomas & Myers, 2015). The cases are “manifestations” of the quintain (Stake, 2006, p. 6). In my research the quintain is theorising of community development, and the cases are expressions of community development situated in the south west of Western Australia. Within-case analysis is central to investigating each case and the cross-case analysis is central to investigating the quintain. Stake (2006, p. 7) describes within-case and cross-case analysis as two parts of the whole in multiple case study design and names the tension between the two the “case-quintain dilemma.”

The notions of within-case and cross-case analysis provide a way of organising the data analysis processes of multiple case study research. Multiple case studies concentrate initially on “within-case” analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540), then expand to the collection of cases through some form of cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2003). Within-case and cross-case analyses are important markers of the focus in particular stages of multiple case
Having clarified the position of cross-case analysis in multiple case study design, I turn now to how it is implemented.

Distinguishing between the notions of case and variable helps to clarify variation in cross-case analysis (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008; Yore & Rossman, 2010). Defining the case is a crucial step in multiple case study research (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). What makes a case in any particular study is guided by the needs of the object or the quintain of the research. As the object of my research is how the practices of local communities inform the theorising of community development, cases centre on the action of community groups who identify their practice as community development. When thinking about the case in my research the action of the group is viewed as a whole. As will be described in more detail below, different perspectives within the group are held together in cohesive stories of practice. In contrast to the holistic view of the case, a variable in multiple case study research is identified by isolating a particular aspect. Variables may, like cases, be identified in relation to the object of the case study, but encompass a much smaller scope (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2014). For example, a particular aspect of community development practice such as “conception of the beneficiary role” (Rothman, 2001, p. 45) could be identified as a variable in this research. Cross-case analysis may emphasise cases and/or variables. The degree of emphasis given to case or variable changes the nature of cross-case analysis. Case study researchers of the neo-positivist tradition emphasise variables (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2014) and those of the naturalistic tradition emphasise the case (Simons, 2009; Stake, 2006). Comparison in cross-case analysis is by far the more “variable-oriented” (Burns, 2010, p. 265) approach. The importance of comparison in cross-case analysis directs the strength of emphasis on the case or variables. Stake (2006) argues that too much emphasis on examining variables in cross-case analysis questions the suitability of multiple case study design. Yet for other case study researchers the identification of variables is central to rigour in case study research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2014). It is important to note here that Stake (1995, 2006) does advocate identifying themes, both in single case and multiple case research. This last point is outlined further below under the heading ‘Thematic analysis.’
The emphasis placed on the situated and holistic view of cases, and the levels of reduction sought in examining variables that run across the collection of cases, indicate different approaches to cross-case analysis. For example, Stake (2006) identifies three distinct approaches to cross-case analysis. The first emphasises the case, the second merges the findings from the collection of cases and the third emphasises particular “variable[s] of interest” (Stake, 2006, p. 64). The first approach focuses on each case in relation to the quintain — or in my research the object — rather than comparing cases. The second compares and contrasts the findings from each with the others and in relation to the quintain (or object) while the third approach relies most heavily on comparison of the cases. Cross-case analysis, in which comparison is central, searches for patterns in a variety of ways, such as through a focus on themes; on pairs of cases; or by examining the findings from different sources of data such as interviews or observations across the cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Stake (2006) describes cross-case analysis with a strong emphasis on the case, which takes an accumulative approach to bringing together the understandings from each of the single cases in response to the research question (eg., MacDonald et al., 1982). While the investigators in this example could be said to be looking at the multiple cases, they focus on the way in which each contributes to understanding the object of the research rather than looking for intersection between cases (MacDonald et al., 1982). The strongest relationship runs between the individual cases and the quintain or the object of the research.

Such an approach relies on the integrity of each case study being maintained in the report in order to support the cross-case findings. Correspondingly, Eisenhardt (1989) and Miles and Huberman (1994) describe cross-case analysis with a strong emphasis on variables of interest and using comparison as the key analytic tool, which takes a reductive approach to developing understandings in multiple case study research (eg., Ericksen & Dyer, 2004). The investigators in such research focus on the intersection between cases. Such an approach relies on comparison of variables across the cases and looks from one to the next to assess points of similarity and divergence. The strongest relationship runs between cases. In the example cited, the strength of cross-case analysis rests with the focus on particular
aspects of team development across the six cases (Ericksen & Dyer, 2004). Holistic
descriptions of individual cases are not reported. These alternatives indicate the
range of approaches that may be taken to cross-case analysis. The term cross-case
analysis appears more at home in the multiple case study reports where comparison
is key (Ericksen & Dyer, 2004).

Cross-case analysis in my research is undertaken after within-case analysis. The
relationship between each case and the object of the research is central. Cross-case
analysis focuses on the situated knowledge of each case rather than variables running
across the cases. The first approach described by Stake, “emphasising the case
findings” (2006, p. 50), is the model for cross-case analysis in my research. The
findings from the cross-case analysis in my research are reported in Chapter
Thirteen.

**Within-case analysis**

The unique features of the case are the focus of within-case data analysis. Within-
case analysis in my research is underpinned by the question: how does community
development happen here? The following data analysis methods were guided by this
question to investigate the contextualised practices of community development at
each case study site. The purpose of my research is to consider how practice
knowledge from the field informs the theorising of community development. The
case study sites are the community development practices of four community groups
in the south west region of Western Australia. The purpose of data analysis for each
case is to articulate the community development practice at the site. Two methods of
within-case data analysis are central to this task: narrative analysis and thematic
analysis. These methods of data analysis are outlined below. The sequence and
timing of these two methods of within-case analysis, and the products produced from
each process, are shown in Table 1, the Chronology of my research, in Chapter One
of this thesis. The narrative analysis and the thematic analysis were carried out
immediately prior to submission of this thesis and both are reported in this thesis, the
narrative analysis in the practice stories of community development (see Chapters
Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven) and the thematic analysis in Chapter Twelve. The
process of data analysis can be likened to a conversation or an engagement with the
data in which the researcher asks questions, makes comments, and notices connections (Merriam, 2009). The two methods of within-case data analysis are each very different conversations. The following outlines the conceptual foundation for engagement with the data to undertake a systematic approach to within-case data analysis for each method. Each method was undertaken with each case.

**Narrative analysis**

The notion of narrative is widely used in qualitative research. Its application in my research relies on a specific notion of “narrative analysis” outlined by Polkinghorne (1995, p. 15). An assumption of the importance of narrative in human understanding (Bruner, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1988) is the key ontological claim of my research. Narrative analysis of within-case data is the linchpin to this claim. Polkinghorne (1995, pp. 8-12) clarifies this approach to analysis by considering both paradigmatic and narrative reasoning. These approaches correspond to the preceding discussion in this thesis of variable and case. Paradigmatic reasoning focuses on identifying concepts in data. Concepts may be predetermined by relevant theory or identified directly from the data. Narrative reasoning alternatively brings data together into a narrative form, as opposed to breaking down data. Polkinghorne (1995, pp. 13-15) labels the process of applying paradigmatic reasoning to data in narrative form as “analysis of narratives,” and the process of applying narrative reasoning to data as “narrative analysis” (Polkinghorne 1995, pp. 15-21). It is the latter that is the focus of within case analysis in my research. Narrative analysis requires the researcher to pull data together to form a story of the phenomena under investigation. Narrative analysis synthesises data. The process positions the researcher as narrator. The notion of plot is central to the organisation of data in narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995, pp. 15-21). Before exploring these notions of narrator and plot, the term narrative is considered.

Theorists of narrative draw distinctions between the notions of chronicle, narrative and story (Czarniawska, 2004; White, 1973; Polkinghorne, 1995). Chronicle is a record or list of events that have happened; they may be in chronological order but are not written in such a way as to provide explanatory details or description (Czarniawska, 2004, pp. 17-20). A narrative may contain the same information as a
chronicle but with more descriptive and explanatory detail. A narrative is not simply a list; it describes and explains events more fully. While the notions of narrative and story can be used interchangeably, narrative theorists draw distinctions between the two arguing that story is narrative with plot that is an “emplotted narrative” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7 [emphasis in original]). Mattingly (1998) reverses these roles of story, but it is Polkinghorne’s (1995) definition that is applied in my research. Case study research where ontology rests in the narrative conceptualises “…cases as engaged in a perpetual dialogue with their environment, a dialogue of action and constraint that we call plot” (Abbott, 1992, p. 65). The purpose of narrative analysis is to engage with within-case data in order to shape a story. The products of narrative analysis in my research are the practice stories of community development (see Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven). The notion of plot in narrative analysis draws attention to the explanatory power held in the way the story is told (Polkinghorne, 1995; White, 1973).

Polkinghorne highlights the association of the term story with fiction and while there is great discussion of the use of fiction in research this is not the focus in this instance. The practice stories are researched, underpinned by the data from the four community sites. While the researcher as narrator has made decisions about how to pull the data together in the practice stories, the text is not fictionalised. The term story is used in this thesis to indicate an emplotted narrative built from the data. Czarniawska (2004, p. 13) equates story with the search for meaning, a pursuit she attributes to whole communities as well as individuals. The meaning being pursued through the researched stories in my research are of community development practices in the south west of Western Australia. While each individual participating in the community groups has their own perspective on practice, the practice stories presented in Chapters Eight to Eleven are written to reflect descriptions of community development from the group as a whole.

The notion of plot is central to the function of narrative analysis in “synthesizing [sic]” data (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). Plot brings events and happenings together. Narrative analysis relies on plot as the conceptual foundation for bringing data together to portray the story of the phenomena under investigation (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 7). The point being that in telling the story, events and descriptions are
instilled with a type of plot which adds to the meaning communicated by the story. White (1973, p. 7) refers to this as “explanation by emplotment.” Stories are convincing not just by virtue of the information portrayed but by the type of plot employed in the portrayal (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 8; White, 2010). Abbott (1992, p. 68) argues that stories emphasise contingency and explain by linking events together in plausible ways. For example, theories of deviance and class conflict are theories which rely on the narrative of the proposing analyst (Abbott, 1992, p. 66). The use of plot in the portrayals of human events is central to epistemological holism (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 7; Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 19).

White (1973, p. 7) argues “[e]mplotment is the way by which a sequence of events fashioned into a story is gradually revealed to be a story of a particular kind,” and identifies four types of plot as romance, comedy, tragedy and satire. The plots familiar in Western culture may each be applied to the narration of events (White, 2010, p. 230-231). Romance plots centre on the actions of a hero. The hero is typically challenged in some way and by rising to the challenge and ultimately triumphing the story is resolved and the world a better place. Humanity is the dominant force in romance. People are capable of facing down the challenges of the world. White (1973) argues that comedy and tragedy are more constrained versions of romance. The hero has a capacity to respond to adverse conditions in the world. The comic hero does so through a series of partial triumphs and learns lessons of the world. The tragic hero fails to reconcile challenges and either learns or demonstrates the limits of humanity. The satirical plot contrasts to this in that humanity is subservient to the challenges of the world. There is no hero and they do not overcome (White, 1973, pp. 7-11). White (1973) argues romance and comedy plots depict transformative forces. This is not to say the ontological status of plot is unproblematic. Key aspects of plot, such as the accepted sequence of beginning, middle and end, the identification of plot types and the three transitions of the hero’s tale (Campbell, 1993; Vogler, 1998) highlight the uncertain ontological status of the notion (Abbott, 1992). Established plot types reflect the cultural contexts in which stories are told (Polkinghorne, 1988, p. 20). The hero’s journey in Western mythology, for example, embodies the expected sequence of events reflected in the romance plot as described above. The expected pattern of the hero’s quest is
introduced in Chapter Four of this thesis to facilitate a discussion of heroic agency as recognised in our stories of community development.

The final point to be addressed as part of the notion of narrative analysis in my research is the position of researcher as narrator. The purpose of plot is to bring form to narrative and hence to create a story. Kvernbekk (2003, p. 273) describes the role of narrator as “ex post or hindsight position, which allows her to select the most important events, trace the connections and judge which actions or events led to which results.” The researcher is the narrator in the stories of community development practice from the south west region. As narrator (Mattingly, 1998, pp. 37-40), I made decisions about plot when portraying these practices. The role of narrator in entering and exiting the field of community development provides the beginning and end for these stories. As the narrator of the practice stories presented in this research I am also subject to the cultural imperative of the hero’s quest. The transitions of the hero’s tale are used as organising features in the stories of practice developed through narrative analysis in my research. The notion of the hero’s journey is used to explore the way we talk about community development.

**Thematic analysis**

The second process of within-case data analysis undertaken in my research was thematic analysis. As indicated early in this chapter, Stake (2006) advocates thematic analysis focused on each case as a whole. The purpose of thematic analysis is to further understand each case. The process relied on categorical aggregation (Stake 1995, pp. 74-85), whereby small segments of data were identified through a line-by-line examination. A sample from the Vintage – A Home Town For Life project is shown in Appendix Three. Up to three hundred small segments were identified for each case. These were collated as described by Stake (1995, p. 74): “until something can be said about them as a class.” The first such process identified around ten to twelve themes for each case. The small segments collated under each theme were examined for further connections and reduced to three to five central themes. A particular segment within each grouping was used to name the theme. Quantity was important only in terms of identifying the strongest themes, rather than in imposing a numerical ranking on data. The researcher was guided by the question asked of
participants during data collection: how does community development happen here? Each case was examined and the analysis process finalised before moving to the next case. The thematic analysis is reported in Chapter Twelve.

**Reporting data analysis**

Multiple case study research enables investigation of social phenomena across a number of locations. The understandings of each case are important, although the research question is answered by the accumulation of findings from all four cases. An important question for reporting multiple case study research is whether to include descriptions of each case. The practice of portraying the individual case studies within multiple case reports is common (Stake, 2006, p. 82; Yin, 2014, p. 183) but is not always necessary. As described above, some multiple case study reports concentrate on the cross-case analysis without portraying each case as a whole (Yin, 2014, p. 183). Reasons for or against including the stories of individual cases pertain to the nature of cross-case analysis (Stake, 2006). As outlined earlier in this chapter, cross-case analysis in my research focuses on each case and the relationship of each with the object of the research is central. As such, the results of the narrative and thematic analyses of this research are reported in this thesis. The narrative analyses are exhibited in the practice stories in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven and the thematic analysis in Chapter Twelve. These reports provide the reader with a foundation from which to judge the integrity of the cross-case findings (Simons, 2009, p. 148). Key attributes in case study reports are the inclusion of a wealth of data and the capacity to transport the reader to the phenomena under study (Merriam, 2009, 258). Presenting the four researched stories in this thesis is central to this goal. Cases are “unique and situated” and the understandings held in each case buttress the findings of multiple case research (Stake, 2006, p. 89). This particular strength of case study research emphasises the importance of holistic analysis (Simons, 2009, p. 147), and the “vicarious experience” that researched stories offer is essential to case study reporting (Merriam, 2009, p. 258). This thesis therefore includes descriptions of the community development practice at each site. The presentation of the four practice stories highlights the interplay between practice and context thus emphasising the “compelling uniqueness” of the work of each community group (Stake, 2006, p. 83).
Confidentiality - the use of pseudonyms

Particular community groups working for community development in the south west region of Western Australia are the focus of the single case studies within this multiple case study design. The individual research participants were people involved in these community groups. Confidentiality in this research is considered on two levels. The first is confidentiality for individuals and the second is the confidentiality of the group itself and its location. Confidentiality is key to protecting people from harm. When participating in social research key issues are safeguarding the identity of research participants and the security of research records as well as the way in which participants are represented in the public reports of the research (Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2008). Anonymity, described as “the process of not disclosing the identity of research participants” (Vainio, 2012, p. 687), is central to confidentiality. The following strategies were undertaken to secure anonymity in this research.

Identifying people’s roles supports anonymity when a number of people fulfill the same role, such as community participant, but not when only one person performs a role, such as project coordinator. Community studies research offers strong evidence that “anonymity among fellow members of a community… is difficult to achieve” (Crow, 2013, p. 273). People are recognised particularly within their local communities by the identification of their role (Crow, 2013). The use of pseudonyms is a common method for anonymity (Vainio, 2012, p. 687). Pseudonyms are used in my research when people are referred to by name in quotes used in the thesis. While this offers people a level of anonymity it is likely that they remain recognisable in their local areas (Wiles et al., 2008). Individuals participating in the research were asked to consider the implications of these limitations as part of informed consent. Ensuring participants were aware of these limitations was central to establishing clear expectations regarding anonymity and its limitations within each community group.

Pseudonyms are used in this research for individuals at each case study site but not for the community groups as a collective or for their location in the south west region of Western Australia. The community groups as collectives are identified in...
the research. The name of the community group is noted, as is its location. In contrast to the practice in community studies research (Dempsey, 1990; Wild, 1974), community level pseudonyms are not used. The assumed anonymity gained from using pseudonyms for location does not have a good track record in community studies research. Pseudonyms for community names have not protected participants from what they perceive to be the negative portrayal of their community in research reports, and the identity of the community is invariably revealed over time. While the perception is that pseudonyms protect participants this is often not the case (Crow & Wiles, 2008; Nespor, 2000). The identity of communities is invariably revealed, and if the expectations of the community regarding the purpose of the research are at odds with those of the researcher, negative reaction from the community is acute (Crow, 2013, pp. 268-269; Scheper-Hughes, 2001, p. 325).

The purpose, the community group and the place of practice are commonly named in community development case studies. Using pseudonyms for communities disconnects practice from context (Nespor, 2000); the purpose of case study in research is to reveal practice in context. The legacy of anonymity in community studies research highlights the risks inherent for local communities in case study research. The reflections of Scheper-Hughes (2001, p. 325) that “the same degree of courtesy, empathy and friendship [is required] in writing that we generally extend to… [people and communities participating in research] face-to-face in the field,” places the notion of doing no harm at the forefront through all stages of my research. This ambition is carried out by positioning the participating community groups as a source of knowledge in the research design, focusing on protecting the community group as a collective in research ethics and focusing on holistic cases in the cross-case analysis.

This chapter outlines the thinking behind methods in my case study research. The chapter commences with the notion of case, outlines the process of casing undertaken and clarifies the distinction between a focus on case and variable. Data collection methods for case study research are outlined and the three central methods used in my research described. A description of data analysis commences by articulating different approaches to cross-case analysis and the focus on holistic cases in my research identified. The notion of within-case analysis is introduced and
two forms of analysis undertaken in this research are outlined. Finally, two key considerations in reporting data are explored.
Chapter Seven: Prelude to the practice stories

The region

This multiple case study research was carried out in the south west region of Western Australia. Located in the south western corner of the state and the nation, the region is easily accessible from the West Australian capital city of Perth and as such is the most populated and least remote of all regional areas in Western Australia, as shown in the map below (South West Development Commission [SWDC], n.d.). Noongar people are the traditional owners of the south west region of Western Australia. Britain invaded Noongar country in 1829 through the establishment of the Swan River Colony. Colonisation struck the south west region early in the development of the state now known as Western Australia (Carter, 2005). Full recognition of the traditional owners of the south west region of Western Australia continues to be subject to contestation. After years of the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council (SWALSC) negotiating with the State of Western Australia, Noongar people in the region agreed to Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) for all Noongar Native Title in 2015. It is anticipated the legal framework for these agreements will be established by July 2016 (South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council, n.d.). The wealth of natural resources and proximity of the region to the Swan River Colony was recognised from the early days of colonisation (Department of Local Government and Regional Development, 2003). Logging was established as a key industry in the 1800s, and an attempt to populate the region and develop agriculture, particularly dairy, was established in the 1920s under the Group Settlement Scheme (Blond, 1987; Gabbedy, 1988). While this scheme was initially considered an expensive policy failure with particularly harsh consequences for the people involved (Blond, 1987; Gabbedy, 1988), the development of agriculture was what sustained the region in the long term.

When research for this thesis commenced, economic diversity was identified as the key strength of the south west region, with agriculture, forestry and fishing the strongest industries (Department of Local Government and Regional Development, 2003). Current estimations of economic activity indicate continued diversity, with mining as the strongest sector (South West Development Commission [SWDC],
n.d.). Despite this, the region is strongly associated with agriculture, tourism and the beauty of the natural environment. Bunbury is the largest population centre and functions as a regional centre housing state government departments, health and social sector organisations that service the region, and resources such as the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre (State of Western Australia, 2010). The south west could be identified as a functional, economic or administrative region (Beer, Maude & Pritchard, 2003). The boundary for engaging community groups to participate in my research was the south west region under the remit of the South West Development Commission (SWDC, n.d.), that is an administrative region, as indicated in the map below. The Accessibility / Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) (Australian Population and Migration Research Centre, 2011) measures the impact of remoteness on regional, rural and remote communities. The ARIA measure for the south west region of Western Australia at the time of the research ranged between moderate to high accessibility, which indicates access to services and opportunities for social interaction are restricted in some parts of the region (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2004). The Remoteness Structure of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) indicates the impact of remoteness on the local context, and current measures for towns in which the participating community groups are located are noted in the practice stories that follow this chapter (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011).

The map below (SWDC, n.d.), Figure 2, shows the south west region of Western Australia and indicates three sub-regions, two of which are relevant to this research. Two of the participating community groups are based in the sub-region of Bunbury Wellington and two in the sub-region of Warren Blackwood. The economy of the Bunbury Wellington sub-region is underpinned by mining and Warren Blackwood by agriculture and tourism (SWDC, n.d.). The participating community groups in the Bunbury Wellington region are the Early Years Network, located in the regional centre of Bunbury, and Vintage – A Home Town For Life, based in the small rural community of Balingup. Both of the community groups located in the Warren Blackwood sub-region, Northcliffe Youth Voice and Northcliffe Community Development Inc., are located in Northcliffe, a small rural community in the far south of the region. Bunbury is in the State Government electoral district of Bunbury. Balingup and Northcliffe are in the State Government electoral district of
Warren Blackwood. Bunbury and Balingup are in the Commonwealth Government electoral district of Forrest; Northcliffe is in O’Connor. As the fieldwork for this research was undertaken, the conservative Liberal National Coalition had held the Australian Commonwealth Government for the preceding eight years and the Western Australian State Government had recently changed from a conservative Liberal government to Labor. Each of the practice stories that follow indicate the relevance of the political environment to the practices of community development.

Figure 2. The south west region of Western Australia (SWDC, n.d.)
Northcliffe is situated in the Shire of Manjimup, Balingup in the Shire of Donnybrook Balingup and Bunbury in the City of Bunbury. The context of the Local Government Area (LGA) for each community group is outlined according to perceptions within the group in the practice stories in the following chapters. The next section of this chapter provides a brief introduction to the broader political environment at the time the fieldwork was undertaken.

The political environment of the region

The conservative Commonwealth Government of John Howard moved into its fourth term in October 2004 coinciding with the first few months of fieldwork for this research. The impact of Federal Government policy is noted to some degree in some of the case studies although the influence of the Western Australian State Government and Local Government on the practices of community development are more marked. The tenure of the Howard Government is usually associated with a period of economic prosperity for Australia although this does not necessarily follow in the regions. Central to Howard’s regional policy was a focus on the responsibility of State Governments and the direct allocation of funds to local communities for local responses (Collits, 2008). The latter represents a neoliberal policy response based on self-reliance and individualism, which worked to the detriment of rural communities and regional areas (Alston, 2010). Another key theme of the Howard Government context was the negative impact of populist policy agendas on the capacity of social movements to gain traction at the grassroots (Wear, 2008). While the broad approach of localism appears to support community development in regional areas (Collits, 2008), commentary on the Howard years more often points to policy approaches actively working against regional areas and to the detriment of community development (Alston, 2010; Wear, 2008).

The reformist State Government of Geoff Gallop came to power in 2001 in Western Australia. Forest policy was a key issue in the election. The new government’s policy *Protecting our Old-Growth Forest* marked significant change to forestry management in Western Australia (Australian Labor Party, 2000), the subsequent decrease in logging holding considerable consequences for communities reliant on the industry (Houghton, 2012). Similarly, deregulation of the dairy industry in July
2000 (Edwards, 2003) had substantial impact on rural communities in the south west region. While not a direct initiative of the Gallop Government, this nonetheless required a policy response (Economics and Industry Standing Committee, 2003). State Governments in Western Australia have a strong record of employing community development as a strategy (Connors, 2003, p. 53). In keeping with this tradition, the Gallop State Government sought to model itself as a responsive government focused on democracy and citizen participation through the establishment of the Citizens and Civics Unit (Gillgren, 2005), which developed a citizenship strategy to run from 2004-2009 (Citizens and Civics Unit, 2003; Department of Premier and Cabinet Western Australia, 2004). In the Western Australian context at the time of this multiple case study research, the State Government vision for regional development stated:

Western Australian regional communities will be healthy, safe and enjoyable places to live, offering expanded educational and employment opportunities for their residents and a high standard of services. (Department of Local Government and Regional Development, 2003, p. 6)

The stories of community development described in this thesis indicate the action and intentions of people in regional communities in the south west region of Western Australia. In the following sections, I outline the process of case selection and the informed consent undertaken to commence this research, and briefly introduce each of the participating community groups.

**Case selection in the region**

Four community groups were engaged in this research through a process of case selection. Case selection was instigated by speaking with organisations working with communities in the south west region of Western Australia. Community-based organisations, local government, and state government bodies such as the Department of Community Development (DCD), South West Area Health and the South West Development Commission (SWDC) were approached to discuss the research and, where possible, identify community groups that may have an interest
in participating. I refer to the people from these organisations that assisted in the process of identifying possible community groups as the *case selection informants*.

The concept central to the research question — community development practices in the south west region — was the premier concern for case selection (Stake, 2006, p. 26). Given the ambition of the research to investigate how such practices may inform theorising of community development in the Australian literature, it was important the groups engaged in the research were active and had sufficient people involved and willing to participate in the research. An understanding of community development practice stems from telling stories of practice from the perspective of a range of people involved, not just those identified as practitioners (Ingamells, 2007, p. 248). The case study approach enabled a broad range of people to participate in describing community development. It was also anticipated that the diversity of perspectives would limit the influence of the literature. Restricting participation to community development practitioners, for example, might simply reflect the literature they had read about or been taught on entry-level courses of training or ongoing professional development. This consideration was central to my decision to adopt a case study approach rather than, for instance, interviewing community development practitioners.

The identification of community groups to participate in the research was also reliant on each group’s willingness to be part of the research and to grant the researcher adequate access. Case selection was contained within the administrative region of the south west of Western Australia, as indicated earlier and as required by the research question. Locating the research in the south west region facilitated the researcher’s capacity to be onsite for the time required to understand the case (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Thus the central criteria for participating in this multiple case study were community groups identified as practicing community development, the presence of a range of people in the group, their willingness to participate in the research, and location in the south west region of Western Australia.

As outlined in the introduction of this thesis the original research question, from 2004, focused on critical and rational approaches to community development. Hence the intention of case selection in 2004 was to identify community groups using
critical and rational approaches to community development. The case selection informants were asked to identify groups they perceived to be practicing community development and to identify the approach of these groups as reflected by Campfens’s (1997c) notions of critical and rational community development.

The effectiveness of such an approach was challenged in the case selection process by the limits of such labels. For example, a case selection informant from a government department identified a community project that had been instigated by her department as an example of rational or top-down community development. The practitioner working on the project however felt very strongly that she was using a critical or bottom-up approach to community development. She was not comfortable with the case selection informant’s perception of the project and did not want to participate in the research. A second group, identified by a case selection informant as an example of community development, was an interagency collaboration network. When approached, the members of the group did not identify their practice as community development and decided they were outside the scope of the research. These incidents highlight the contested nature of community development. The labels for community development identified by the case selection informants were dropped, and the community groups approached to participate in the research were asked to characterise their own practices.

Seventeen community groups were suggested, of these, nine were approached and six went to the next stage of deciding whether to participate in the research. Two of these six groups decided not to proceed for the reasons outlined above. The following section introduces each of the community groups that participated in my research. The introductions provide a brief description and a short quote from the data hints at their approach, an account of the informed consent and the data collection processes.

**Collective consent**

form is evident at each case study site. Therefore, protecting each community group as a collective was a central concern in the ethics of my research, and maintaining the boundaries of the case through the membership was a key strategy in meeting this ethics requirement. Under the provision of the collective consent of the group, individuals were asked to consent to particular aspects of the research. Individuals participated in interviews or were present at events observed by the researcher. There was an open invitation to everyone involved in the community group to participate in the research; in some instances this included people under the age of eighteen. Ethics approval required written information and written consent (see Appendix One) for all interviews and observations.

Introducing the community groups...

Early Years Network

The most northerly community group was the Early Years Network based in Bunbury, the coastal regional centre for the south west region. As the largest population outside the Perth metropolitan area, Bunbury historically has strong influence on State Government politics (Barker & Laurie, 1992). The Bunbury Early Years Network is a community government partnership formed to promote the importance of the early years of child development. The Network was established within the state level policy initiative, the Early Years Strategy (Early Years Strategy, 2006; Government of Western Australia, 2006). Participants used these terms interchangeably throughout the research process: for clarity, in this thesis the term Early Years Network will refer to the community level group, while the term Early Years Strategy will refer to the state level framework. The intention of community development at Bunbury Early Years Network is to combine local knowledge and international research to plan community level strategies and environments that support early child development. The following quote encapsulates the approach to community development at the Early Years Network.

The research is a good tool to use to convince people around us imploring them to keep focus on our children. It might actually shake people into realising and it’s stuff that many of us have known all along anyway, I think parents have always known it,
deep down - but as a culture, collectively I don’t think we do. For the community to understand the crucial nature of early childhood would be the main aim for the Early Years Network.

The Early Years Network in Bunbury was identified by a regional manager from Department of Community Development (DCD) as a possible group for the research. I met with the Early Years Strategy Senior Project Officer to discuss the study on the 24th of August 2004. I was required to forward information regarding the research to the Principal Policy Officer for the Early Years Strategy, and subsequently present the research proposal to the Early Years Strategy Research and Evaluation Working Group at the Office of Children and Youth in Perth on the 14th of October 2004. The working group communicated consent for the research on the 8th of November 2004. The research was discussed with a member of the Early Years Network in Bunbury, and information forwarded to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was made up of people living and working in Bunbury who were invited to discuss the initiation of the project in the local area. Steering Committee members agreed to move forward in seeking broader consideration for the research and asked me to attend the Early Years Forum in Bunbury on the 19th of November 2004 as an observer. I went to the following network meeting, tabled observation notes from the forum, gave an overview of the study and asked local members if they were willing to participate. The minutes from the 2nd of December 2004 indicate the consent of the group to move forward with the research.

**Vintage – A Home Town For Life**

Moving down the South West Highway, the community group known as Vintage – A Home Town For Life is located in Balingup, a small rural community with an established reputation as a tourist and lifestyle destination. Retirement accommodation is a long-standing issue in Balingup, and Vintage - A Home Town For Life was formed in the years prior to the fieldwork of my research to take up the issue. The group concentrates on innovative and creative responses and as such presents as a challenge to current concepts of ageing and caring services. The following quote captures the intention of community development at the site.
The whole thing is about healthy ageing, ageing in place, intricately linking lifestyle and service delivery with housing options. People spending their entire life cycle in our town with the appropriate physical accommodation and all the services they need throughout their life.

A regional coordinator from the SWDC identified Vintage – A Home Town For Life as a possible participant. I made contact with the convener of the group and attended a meeting on November 9th 2004 to explain the research. The minutes for the meeting show that the group agreed to participate (Vintage A Home Town For Life, 2004).

**Northcliffe Youth Voice**

The final two groups are located in the far south of the region in the small rural community of Northcliffe. One of these groups is Northcliffe Youth Voice, a community group for young people living in Northcliffe. Youth Voice, as it is fondly known, was initiated through local community action and had been running in the town for many years with previous generations of young people now adults in the community. It provides a place for the young people of Northcliffe to meet, socialise, and plan activities in a community setting. Northcliffe Youth Voice seeks to address disadvantage and inequality through participation. The following quote characterises the approach to community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice.

*It’s about young people, it takes a while for people to get their head around what the kids are doing – they may not be doing anything and it doesn’t matter it’s about having a place to be, citizenship, participation, being valued in the community.*

A community development practitioner working in the region identified Northcliffe Youth Voice as a possible group for the research. I approached the youth worker employed by Northcliffe Youth Voice in July 2004 to discuss the research. The youth worker took information about the research to a meeting of Youth Voice on Friday the 6th of August 2004 and members agreed to participate.
Northcliffe Community Development Inc.

Northcliffe has a reputation for an active civil society (Kelly, 2000). The community group known as Northcliffe Community Development Inc. stems from this civil society and promotes the sustainability of the town. The intention of community development at Northcliffe Community Development Inc., is characterised by the following quote.

*Our town was very badly affected by the whole timber debate because there is no clear majority one way or the other - that makes it quite volatile you’ve got equal forces pushing against each other. I think our role is to bring together groups that might not talk otherwise, because of that history. You are not going to move together as a community if you’ve only got one part of the community moving and the rest being left behind.*

Northcliffe Community Development Inc emerged from a community process instigated under the Western Australian Department of Community Development’s Timber Industries Project. The Timber Industries Project was a state government initiative to support communities impacted by change in forest policy in 2001 and is explained in more detail in an introduction to the Northcliffe practice stories that follow. Northcliffe Community Development Inc was identified by a regional manager from the Department of Community Development (DCD) based in Bunbury, and a youth worker based in Manjimup, as a possible site for the research. Under the Timber Industries Project, I was asked to forward a research proposal outlining ethics protocols and methodology to DCD before the research commenced. DCD advised that permission for the research to go ahead at any site within the Timber Industries Project was effective at the local level. I forwarded written information to the Chairperson of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. The group agreed to participate in the research (Northcliffe Community Development Inc., 2004b, p. 2).

**Data collection processes for each group**

The particular emphasis of data collection for each community group is outlined below, starting in the north of the region with the Early Years Network. Observation
of meetings and the collection of public documents were the methods of data collection that offered greatest insight into the way community development happened at the Early Years Network. I attended the Early Years Network meetings and events as an observer on the 19th of November and 2nd of December in 2004; the 20th of January; 15th of February; 1st, 15th and 30th of March; and the 27th of April in 2005. Observations were undertaken at the forum, network meetings and smaller working groups meetings. The central focus of observations was discussion. Given the Steering Committee had been established only two months prior to the research, the discussion was focused on the ambitions and vision of the network and provided access to the practice of the site through the language of participants. Observations at the Early Years Network provided a window to central aspects of practice, such as authenticity in participation and the balance between process and task or vision and action. The observations show the diversity of perspectives in the group.

Documents collected at the Early Years Network describe the intention of community development at the local level, within the broader policy under which practice was initiated. A range of public records such as state level policy documents and brain development research were directly relevant to the practice of the Early Years Network. The public records indicate the thinking that underpins the state level Early Years Strategy. The archival records for the group, which include forum feedback, network and working group minutes and information on local initiatives, demonstrate the way this is translated to the local context. The public records relevant to the Early Years Network demonstrate the focus on early development, while archival records show perceptions at the local level. The exchange of information was a central strategy of practice for the group. I interviewed project participants on the 18th of November 2004; and the 18th, 24th and 28th of February; the 1st of March; and the 11th of May 2005. All interviews were one-on-one with members of the Early Years Network Steering Committee. As indicated earlier, Steering Committee members were involved in the initiation of the partnership between the state government and the local community. The interviews provide insight to local perspectives on the process of government initiation of the group and the focus on early development.
Further south in the region, interviews were the strongest method of data collection for the Vintage – A Home Town For Life group. One-on-one interviews were carried out with members on November 25th and December 3rd 2004, and March 4th and April 5th 2005. Observations were undertaken at group meetings on November 9th and December 19th 2004, and February 2nd and April 5th 2005. The central focus of observation was group discussion. The group had been together for a long time when the research was undertaken; their central goal was well established and their discussions focused on the need to move from their current phase of planning to the action of setting up Vintage – A Home Town For Life as a legal entity, and building accommodation. Meetings were short and irregular. The only public records relevant to the group were the history of Balingup and one government report, which indicated the longevity of the issue of age accommodation. The group held minimal archival records: those collected for this research included minutes, the draft constitution, draft status reports and a report on research commissioned by the group. The amount of material provided in the interviews was far greater than collected in documents or through observation of meetings. Information about the process of community development that led up to the time of the research was held in the recollections of the membership rather than in public or archival records or current discussions.

In the far south of the region data collection fell in line with the operation of the group. Northcliffe Youth Voice operated with Friday afternoon participation sessions, which involved a short meeting with the rest of the evening devoted to “hanging out” (Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004). Members, the youth worker and one or two parent supervisors attended these sessions. The observations recorded at Northcliffe Youth Voice were descriptions of the setting and the participants and their interactions. The researcher visited Northcliffe Youth Voice to observe participation sessions on October 29th, November 5th, and 12th, and December 3rd, 2004. Documents were collected and interviews carried out during the group’s participation sessions. Archival records included conference presentations, parent roster, job descriptions, newsletters and information handouts. Public records were newspaper cuttings and youth consultation reports. Interviews with members were carried out in a room during the participation sessions. Youth members chose to be interviewed in small groups, with the exception of one young person who was
interviewed alone because no one else was around at the time. This reduced the level of confidentiality because everyone could see who was being interviewed. Transcripts were confidential and returned directly to interviewees for checking. Young people had access to the youth development worker and parent supervisors at all times. Interviews with parent supervisors were also carried out during the participation sessions. The Youth Development Worker and a Northcliffe Family Centre staff member were interviewed individually, outside session hours, at the Northcliffe Family Centre. Overall, eleven interviews were carried out and there was great consistency in how participants responded to the question of how community development happens at Northcliffe Youth Voice.

The original ethics procedure indicated that a process of active consent from the parents or guardians of people under the age of 18 was required. This was not appropriate in the field. The decision-making processes of Northcliffe Youth Voice were based on the principles of youth participation as set out by the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (cited in Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004). Young people are the central decision makers in the affairs of the group. The Northcliffe Youth Voice membership, all of who are under the age of eighteen, made a decision to proceed with the research without reference to parents or guardians, and it was not appropriate in this setting to seek active parental or guardian consent for individuals. To gain passive parental guardian consent for the research, the youth worker placed a notice in the School Newsletter and distributed parental / guardian consent forms and participant information before the research started. Very few of these original consent forms were returned. Parents or guardians present at the time of interviews acknowledged consent for young people to participate. The Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee was advised of this change to procedure for participants under the age of 18 years in the Northcliffe Youth Voice community group. Interviews and observations provided greatest insight to how community development happens at Northcliffe Youth Voice.

The aim of community development for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. was to bring together strongly contested views within the community. Participants were concerned that one or other of the positions represented in their group may dominate the portrayal of their practice in the research, therefore balance in the
diversity of perspectives amongst those interviewed for the research was a key concern. It was important to the group that the right mix of people be interviewed to gain the best understanding of practice at the site (Stake, 2006, pp. 28-29). They discussed this issue and sought to clarify amongst themselves that those volunteering for interview represented the group effectively. People volunteering for interview identified themselves to the group through these discussions. I carried out interviews with two participants on the 4th of May, three participants on the 31st of May, and one on the 1st of June 2005. Transcripts were confidential and returned directly to each interviewee for checking. The circumstances of the group also meant that observation was especially suitable for gaining an understanding of the practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc., because different perspectives were active in meetings. Discussion at meetings was the central focus of observations. I observed meetings of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. on the 7th of December 2004, and the 22nd of February, 24th of March and 3rd of May 2005. Archival records collected included the Constitution, minutes, planning documents and a brief overview of the history of the group. Public records pertained mostly to the history of Northcliffe and the policy documents of forest management. These provided context for community development at the site. The interviews and observations provided greatest insight to how community development happens at Northcliffe Community Development Inc.

**Reporting data analysis**

Within-case and cross-case analysis of community development practices from the south west region of Western Australia are reported in the following six chapters. As outlined in the previous chapter, multiple case studies focus initially on “within-case” analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540). Within-case analysis in my research is guided by the question: how does community development happen here? The unique features of the ordinary happenings of community development at each case study site are the focus of within-case data analysis. I used a narrative analysis and a thematic analysis process to analyse the data from each case study site. The narrative analysis is reported in the following four chapters which present a practice story from each site. The following quote captures the intent of the portrayal of
community development from the south west region of Western Australia through practice stories.

Any story, told by one of more narrators, is limited in the possible levels of meaning it can locate itself at and convey. Personal experience, method, technique, purpose, practice orientation, organisational context, funding regimes, conflicting agendas, competing philosophies can be revealed or eclipsed. Each story reflects a telling rather than the telling (Ingamells, 2010, p. 2 [original emphasis])

The practice stories are reported in geographic order from south to north, hence the first two chapters, Chapters Eight and Nine, portray the way community development happens at Northcliffe Youth Voice and Northcliffe Community Development Inc. Chapter Eight begins with a description of the township of Northcliffe as the context for the first two practice stories. The description of Northcliffe sets the scene for community development and locates the researcher in the context of community development by describing my first entry into the town for the purpose of fieldwork in 2004. As the first trip to Northcliffe was to carry out the fieldwork for Northcliffe Youth Voice, this practice story comes first. The practice story for Northcliffe Youth Voice is presented in Chapter Eight and the practice story for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. is presented in Chapter Nine. The practice stories for Vintage – A Home Town for Life and the Early Years Network of Bunbury follow in Chapters Ten and Eleven respectively. The within-case thematic analysis for each case study site is reported in Chapter Twelve. The themes are also presented in geographic order from south to north.

Cross-case analysis is reported in Chapter Thirteen. The cross-case analysis in my research emphasises the case and brings understandings from all four case studies of community development together. Thus understandings from the practice stories and themes, presented in Chapters Eight through to Twelve, are accumulated rather than compared. The relationship between the individual cases and the object of my case study design are the focus of cross-case analysis. The cross-case findings are reported in Chapter Thirteen. Hence Chapters Eight through to Thirteen combine to
answer the second sub-question of the research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? Figure 3, see below, illustrates the four case studies and the process of moving from within-case analysis to cross-case analysis to position everyday practices of community development to speak back to theory. This figure is presented again, with more detail, at the end of Chapter Thirteen and Chapter Fourteen to show the cross-case findings and insights to the theorising of community development.
Everyday practices speak back to theory

Figure 3. Four case studies of community development speak back to theory.
Chapter Eight – Northcliffe Youth Voice practice story

Northcliffe — the place

The community groups known as Northcliffe Community Development Inc. and Northcliffe Youth Voice are located in Northcliffe, a small rural community in the far south of the south west region of Western Australia. The Murrum people are the traditional owners of this country (Read, 2004). The location was identified as a town site in 1923 (Gabbedy, 1988; Kelly, 2000), under the controversial migration scheme known as Group Settlement (Northcliffe Visitor Centre, n.d.; Where we live Northcliffe in a nutshell, n.d.).

The town of Northcliffe is located three hundred and sixty kilometres south of Perth in the south west region of Western Australian. Close to the south coast, Northcliffe is twenty-seven kilometres north of Windy Harbour and thirty kilometres south of the closest service centre of Pemberton. Northcliffe is the town centre for the Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks (Shire of Manjumup Towns and Settlements, n.d.), en route to the easiest access to the south coast for two hundred kilometres. The most isolated population centre in the Shire of Manjimup, Northcliffe is synonymous with the forest.

Figure 4. Northcliffe – the forest (Where we live Northcliffe in a nutshell, n.d.)

The drive down to Northcliffe is long. Bunbury may be the regional centre of the south west, but the residents of Northcliffe would not go to Bunbury lightly, their regional centre is Manjimup. A trip to Bunbury takes commitment. Largely unpopulated and classified as outer regional (ARIA, 2011), this far corner of the south west region of Western Australia has the familiarity of the agricultural Australian landscape. There are two ways to Northcliffe, neither a direct route: you can continue on the South West Highway and then turn west, or turn west off the South West Highway towards Pemberton then south. The South West Highway is
busy. Trucks and traffic are going places to the east and west of Northcliffe. The further south you go the less agricultural the country — the forest breaks through. The people of Northcliffe have traditionally made a living from the forest. The people of Northcliffe have traditionally protected the forest. People from both sides of this forest debate live in Northcliffe. Northcliffe is synonymous with the forest. It’s a passionate and resilient place.

As I drive down to Northcliffe I anticipate the group, or its groups: a group of young people and a community development group. I am here tonight to meet the young people. I don’t have much of a picture of Northcliffe; I haven’t been here before. I wonder how both sides of the forest debate live together in this isolated place. The isolation is relative to the region. It is not remote like some places in the far north or far east of the state of Western Australia, but isolated nonetheless. I have seen the forest debate in Bunbury, people fighting for the forest and people fighting for jobs — both groups committed, determined and angry.

I am not sure as I drive in. The town does not reveal itself immediately. Is this it? Do I keep going? Is there more? I am looking for the Northcliffe Family Centre. Could that be it? There must be more to this place than meets the eye. I’m not sure what I expected — the town to reflect the imposing nature of the forest perhaps. But it looks pretty ordinary, like a small rural community trying to keep going. It stands small in stark contrast to the towering trees I have passed through on the way. It’s a little place diminished further by the forest and the fight over the forest. There’s meant to be a motel somewhere.

The area was colonised in the 1920s through a government-sponsored migration program known as Group Settlement. The program sought to clear the land for agriculture and migrants from the United Kingdom were granted blocks of land (Gabbedy, 1988; Kelly, 2000). Northcliffe was the last site identified; it was furthest from the established population of the state and it was a choice based on political expedience as the scheme was failing to meet its vision (Gabbedy, 1988, p. 1). People came to the site even though it was not ready the “…town [was] yet to be built, [it was] 32 kilometres from a rail head, with roads yet to be constructed”
This move was an attempt to save the political fortunes of the Premier, but it did not save the Group Settlement Scheme.

While 400 to 800 healthy Murrum people lived in the Northcliffe area in the 1820s, one hundred years later the same area could scarcely support 400 malnourished Group Settlers, and this after a huge expenditure of resources and energy. (Read, 2004, p. 258)

History judges the experience of group settlers at Northcliffe harshly (Crawford & Crawford, 2003; Gabbedy, 1988; Kelly, 2000; Northcliffe Community, n.d.; Read, 2004). People came from Britain on the promise of land ownership and opportunity. They arrived instead to a remote wilderness that fought against the taming confines of agriculture. This story of hardship has instilled “the sense of community forged among the families who survived [which] is fundamental to Northcliffe’s subsequent history” (Crawford & Crawford, 2003, p. 87).

A second government sponsored program after World War II, The War Service Land Settlement Scheme, bolstered the flagging population of Northcliffe with returning soldiers (Crawford & Crawford, 2003; Kelly, 2000). A third wave of people diversified the population in the late 1960s when they came to Northcliffe seeking lifestyle change (Crawford & Crawford, 2003). This third group, known as “new settlers” as distinct from the “group settlers” or “soldier settlers” (Crawford & Crawford, 2003, p. 188), came to be with the forest rather than work in the forest (Crawford & Crawford, 2003; Kelly, 2000). For each movement of people into Northcliffe, some stayed and others left because it was too hard. The lifestyle changers were no different in this regard to other settler groups (Kelly, 2000). “You learnt to survive in Northcliffe, Northcliffe’s the hard end of the south really” (resident quoted in Kelly, 2000, p. 193). It’s a passionate and resilient place.

The population of Northcliffe listed in the 2011 census is 282 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011d). The demographics for Northcliffe are significantly different when compared to Western Australia and Australia for some age brackets, income and employment. The proportion of the population of
Northcliffe for age brackets from fourteen years through to twenty-nine years is much lower than the state and national populations, the strongest contrast being for the twenty to twenty-nine year old bracket. The percentage of the population of children and people older than thirty are comparable to the state and national averages. A greater proportion of the working age population in Northcliffe work part time or are unemployed when compared to the employment figures for Western Australia and Australia (ABS, 2011d). Northcliffe also shows in census 2011 zero population with tertiary level education, which compares to the state percentage of 13.5% and the national percentage of 14.3% (ABS, 2011d). A figure explained, along with the diminished population of people aged between 14 and 29, by access issues in the Blackwood for secondary and tertiary education (Eversole, 2001).

The percentage of the population with a weekly income of less than $600 for Northcliffe is 38.5%, compared to Western Australia at 21.1%, and Australia at 23.7%; while the percentage of the Northcliffe population with a weekly income of greater than $3000 sits at 3.8%, which is less than the state figure of 14.1% and national figure of 11.2%, a statistic that underpins research on rural poverty (National Rural Health Alliance Inc. & Australia Council of Social Services, 2013).

The timber and dairy industries have traditionally been the economic base of the town. State and Federal policy have, as with most small rural communities in Australia (Alston, 2010), impacted significantly on Northcliffe. The introduction of quotas in the 1970s benefited the dairy industry in the Northcliffe area (Kelly, 2000). The deregulation of the industry in 2000 did not. Western Australia experienced high decreases in farm income and a high number of farm closures (Cocklin & Dibden, 2002) and increased compensation was required (Economics and Industry Standing Committee, 2003).

Similarly, changes to forest policy throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s held big implications for Northcliffe.

By 1992 the future of the forests was a major subject of debate in Australian public life. Northcliffe was only one of the many areas across the country where locals and outsiders
were profoundly involved in contesting the issue (Crawford & Crawford, 2003, p. 194).

In 1999 the Federal and State Government had agreed to advance a national policy on the forest industry. This was an attempt to strike a balance between conservation and sustainable use of forests (Houghton, 2012). Northcliffe responded as accustomed, with strength and in defiance of the policy makers. “There were groups within Northcliffe that acted on their own views of what should happen to the forests. The isolation of the area contributed to the ethos of independence…” (Crawford & Crawford, 2003, p. 233).

A Labor government was swept to power in the Western Australian state election in 2001 on the promise of implementing the Protecting Our Old-Growth Forests Policy, which saw an immediate end to the harvesting of timber from old-growth forests (Australian Labor Party, 2000; Houghton, 2012). Towns like Northcliffe were considered extremely vulnerable to the social and economic impact of the Protecting Our Old-Growth Forests Policy (Coakes Consulting, 2002, p. 110). A “strong historic and cultural attachment” to the forest industry exists in Northcliffe (Coakes Consulting, 2002, p. 11) and the process of policy change elicited “highly polarised opinions” (Government of Western Australia, 2004, p. 11).

**Northcliffe – the character**

Northcliffe is a small rural community that in the face of isolation and lack of infrastructure has developed an active civil society. Northcliffe is identified as a community familiar with and well equipped in grassroots action strategies (Kelly, 2000). Northcliffe has developed a capacity for community action.

Motivation to be involved in the community at the grassroots level is a strong characteristic of Northcliffe, as reflected in both the number and participation levels of existing local groups. (Kelly, 2000, p. 220)
From the outside Northcliffe may look like a community at odds with itself and certainly it is difficult to characterise the place with a cohesive set of values (Kelly, 2000). Social impact studies around the forest industry have identified Northcliffe as a place of polarisations to the extent that “[w]hile divergent opinions also exists in other south-west [sic] communities, Northcliffe differs in the strength and incompatibility of views” (Australia Department of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries, 1999, p. 88). Yet within this polarisation rests a fierce commitment to the local community.

Northcliffe is often referred to as the end of the earth, but the strength of its community spirit can make its geographical isolation seem more like an asset than a disadvantage.

(Northcliffe Youth Voice & Plante 2002)

People are connected through “sports and kids” (Kelly, 2000, p. 207). The community came together for example in 1998, in the midst of the forest debate, to fight for the local school (Kelly, 2000). Living in Northcliffe connects people: those that remain are the survivors of each wave of settlement. When describing the reaction of people to a poem depicting the forging of the township through adversity, a respondent in Kelly’s study stated that “Northcliffe residents are very proud of their heritage and their town and their love of Northcliffe in that moment was unifying and palpable” (resident quoted in Kelly, 2000, p. 208). It’s a resilient and passionate place.

The preceding description provides the backdrop to the community development practice of two community groups in Northcliffe. The story of community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice is outlined below. The practice story for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. is presented in the following chapter (Chapter Nine).
Northcliffe Youth Voice is a youth group that has been running for many years. The young people of Northcliffe come together every Friday evening to socialise, hang out, plan local events such as camps and develop projects like building a skate park.

Northcliffe Youth Voice was established by local youth in 1993 to provide a meeting place and base from which to organise activities. Participants have been involved in determining the group’s ethos, rules, operation and events. (Panzich, 1996, p. 10)

Northcliffe Youth Voice is focused on empowerment through participation: providing a space for young people to socialise and form connections, voicing the concerns of young people in the community, and increasing their capacity to participate in decision-making processes.

Northcliffe Youth Voice provides a “space” for young people “to be” – it enables ‘hanging out’, access to less structured recreation, and a place from which to organise their own activities, camps, workshops and events. (Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004)

I learned a little about the group during the case selection process. They have a rapid decision-making process. They were the first group to decide to go ahead with the research. They made a decision from reviewing the written information. They did not ask me to meet them before fieldwork commenced. The fieldwork was carried out from October to December 2004.

The group meet on Friday afternoon during the school term and had been running for about ten years when fieldwork commenced. The catalyst for Northcliffe Youth Voice was a consultation in the early 1990s. The Australian Human Rights Commission carried out a national inquiry into young people and homelessness. The inquiry explored youth alienation and assessed service delivery, or lack of, by
government with reference to the international covenants of human rights (Fopp, 2003). The findings of the inquiry were published in the Burdekin Report (Burdekin, Carter, & Dethlefs, 1989). The release of the Burdekin Report focused attention on issues for young people across all levels of government and is attributed with changing the face of youth service delivery in Australia, despite the later assessment that its recommendations remain largely unimplemented (Salvation Army, 2005). A rights-based discourse was ignited by the report and funding was allocated through different levels of government to addressing the issues for young people raised in the report.

The local consultation sought to determine the needs of young people living in the Shire of Manjimup. The findings are outlined in the document, Being Young and Living in the Manjimup Shire, also known as Riders in the Storm (Plante, 1994). The central recommendation of Riders in the Storm was a youth service delivery model that linked National, State and Local Government to youth management committees in each town (Plante, 1994). The Riders in the Storm report chronicles the consultation process as well as the results. The ethics of raising the expectations of young people through the consultation process was identified and momentum for ongoing participation of young people became central to the consultation process. 60% of young people consulted said they would be willing to participate in action groups to address their concerns (Plant, 1994, p. 4). The person who undertook the consultancy was interviewed for this case study, in a community role at the time of data collection, and was able to look back on the government response to the report’s recommendations.

Riders in the Storm had process recommendations, it had a youth service delivery model for them to be able to just implement you know, they could have just done it immediately and to me it’s amazing that government at all levels will put heaps into research dollars but then not into implementing recommendations. (Community Worker Interview 2)
The consultant lived in Northcliffe and explains the difference this made to the interaction with young people in the town. The proximity and trust in the consultation process for young people in Northcliffe resulted in the establishment of an action group named in the report as Northcliffe Youth Voice, and their first priority was to establish a meeting place for young people in the town (Plante, 1994). The young people of Northcliffe took up the challenge and, with the support of the consultant, they implemented the recommendations in Northcliffe in their own way as described below by a member at the time of data collection.

Local youth at the time, I think there were 7 or 8 of them, decided to create a place for everyone to hang out and as the youth driven concept was the way they wanted to go they organised it all themselves. It is not a government-funded body. They approached some people to get grants. They did not actually have a Youth Worker to start. Nora was voluntarily doing it and the idea was that it was youth driven. They decided what happened. They had big meetings and everyone had to agree on an issue before it went forward. Now we have a committee — while it’s still youth driven now we have a Youth Worker to help us with our decisions whereas back then it was just them and Nora.

Members Interview 1

Ten years on Northcliffe Youth Voice is part of Northcliffe’s active civil society. The ethos that guided the early days of the group is recognised as a distinct feature of Northcliffe Youth Voice. The original need that drove the development of the project was that of young people in the community wanting a ‘place to be’: a place to participate as a community in their own right and as part of the broader community of Northcliffe. The community development practice of Northcliffe Youth Voice continues in this same fashion: “the reason Northcliffe Youth Voice works because it is our way all the way” (Munro, 2002).

As I drive into Northcliffe I am not sure where to go. I am looking for the Northcliffe Family Centre – that must be it – rammed earth and down to earth – a
well-loved lived-in community centre. I let them know I am in town, check into the motel and come back to the Family Centre for when school ends. I talk briefly with the Youth Worker employed by the group and a Community Worker from the Northcliffe Family Centre. I will interview them later I am here tonight to see how it works. The school siren sounds and the Youth Worker tells me they are on the way; there should be a parent volunteer or two here tonight as well. “Just go with the flow – you can interview people in the room out at back.”

The practice – what they do

The participation sessions on Friday afternoons after school are central to the practice of community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice. An information statement for members highlights the importance of participation and ownership. The statement characterises the approach of Northcliffe Youth Voice as “youth driven,” and indicates it follows the "Principles of Youth Participation" outlined by the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004). The information statement also indicates the key assumption of the approach is that “[m]embership of a recognised youth specific community organisation gives young people a sense of belonging in the community” (Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004). Members describe what it is they do at these sessions in the following quotes.

*We have a dedicated night where we all hang out together.*
(Members Interview 1)

*It’s basically a base that people go to and from, you can go off, do things here, you can come back it doesn’t matter. It’s the mother ship. We’re all little probes going off.* (Members Interview 7)

*Well I mainly come here to hang out with friends and stuff because otherwise I have to work on the farm in the afternoon. Yeah it’s cool a great place to hang out like organise camps and stuff, which is really good you get to join in and everything.* (Members Interview 11)
Well I guess it’s a place to hang out, have fun, get to know people, help people, eat. I think we’re in charge of ourselves but the Youth Worker looks after us kindish. (Members Interview 9)

Yeah we can use the whole town – you can go out walking and stuff. There’s a good variety of people you don’t just have ten people or so you can hang around with there are about thirty of us. You can get away if you want to relax. Yeah and go and talk like it’s really nice to be in the middle of the road in the middle of the night there’s nothing around just space. (Members Interview 9)

Northcliffe Youth Voice members participate as they wish within the broad parameters of acceptable behaviour established by the group. They identify their needs, express their ideas regarding participation and get involved as they choose. They have control over the function and resources of Northcliffe Youth Voice. Everyone was clear about where the control of the project sits. They consistently referred to the members as being in control of the project.

Well it is run by youth not adults at all. It’s good for the community because it gives teenagers and our age group things to do on a Friday night we’re like drug aware and all that kind of thing. Yeah because there is not much to do in Northcliffe, and it’s based on community, so brings younger people and older people together. (Members Interview 5)

Oh if we have a meeting you can speak up, give opinions, suggest things, organise things yourself that’s the main thing. (Members Interview 9)

Youth leadership and active citizenship that is what we do at Northcliffe Youth Voice you know trying to develop
empowerment, leadership skills all those kind of things.
(Youth Worker Interview 8)

Most people think of it as a place for kids to go and socialise and because there is not much of that in this town it’s a really good idea. (Members Interview 1)

Organising camps, we say where we’re going and then the people that are going they organise what they do and they organise with the people that run the event that we’re going to. (Members Interview 4)

That seems to be a really driving force of Northcliffe Youth Voice that the kids decide what they’ll do on a week-to-week basis and even on camp. (Parent Interview 10)

The participation process of Northcliffe Youth Voice is educative and action oriented, thereby increasing young people’s capacity to participate while simultaneously increasing the broader acceptance of young people participating in local political processes.

We were like one of only two youth organisations in the state that were addressing youth issues by actually talking to people and you know just interacting with them which is what the Youth Workers do. It’s really like a relaxed attitude around here. (Members Interview 1)

Northcliffe Youth Voice along with one other organisation nationally was indicated as being one of the few organisations that really start with where they’re at that is, truly consults with young people. (Community Worker Interview 2)
Because the result of a lot of the workshops is that some of the kids would come to planning meetings — and so a spin off from that is now they are actually invited to things you know people actually access their opinions. (Community Worker Interview 2)

The members decide the rules at Northcliffe Youth Voice, there aren’t a lot of rules, and there is a very clear philosophy on how participation works. Any issues on behaviour are managed through this process.

We go over them — the rules that we want to set and make up our own regulations and stuff for computers. It’s good — because it’s what we want so we have to respect that because we made the decision to make those rules in the first place. (Members Interview 11)

I think they are accountable to themselves, you know the buck stops with them you know that’s the way I have always put it whenever we’ve been doing things — like even the youth worker, she’s accountable to them. (Community Worker Interview 2)

Everyone that is running Northcliffe Youth Voice like all the members have to decide what to do. We all decide at a big meeting what will be the punishment for the people that go against the rules. (Members Interview 5)

Yeah I reckon it’s pretty cool it all functions well there’s not really too many dramas. We’ve copped some flack in the past from being accused of vandalising things but we’ve always overcome that. I think the community really respects us it’s great. (Members Interview 3)
Northcliffe Youth Voice participation structure provides young people with a community forum for collective decision-making and self-expression and thereby validates their voice. The participation process strives to educate young people through the experience of being able to initiate change in their community. The following quote, taken from a document titled Northcliffe Youth Voice – The Model, uses the acronym NYV and describes the elements central to their way of working.

The key to success is constant consultation and inclusion of all young people not just leaders and winners which requires culturally appropriate methodology and processes, openness to change everything if needed to ensure NYV remains a relevant inclusive vehicle for youth involvement, social change and creating community! (Northcliffe Youth Voice, n.d.)

Parents and community members participate in Northcliffe Youth Voice through the Northcliffe Family Centre Management Committee and as volunteers. There is a parent roster to attend the participation sessions on Friday nights. The role of the parents is as back up and support if needed. The parents interviewed at the participation sessions describe the approach at Northcliffe Youth Voice and what they think it does for young people.

_We’re not here to do any disciplinary stuff we’re here in case something goes wrong._ (Parent Interview 6)

_I think it’s a good transition for kids from being kids to adults because here they have to take some responsibility and you see some of them really do it well — so they learn that if they want something to happen they have to do something they can’t just sit back and wait for it to happen._ (Parent Interview 10)
Well I think it’s good because you get kids together and they learn to take responsibility. They do all the running of it. They make decisions. Parents are actually just guides to get them in the right direction mostly they do it. I like the way it’s run I like the way the kids run it. (Parent Interview 6)

The role of individuals, paid staff or parent volunteers is secondary to the culture of practice established at Northcliffe Youth Voice. One aspect of practice where this commitment is most tangible is the role of the Youth Worker. Differences in the personal styles of the Youth Workers exist, for instance, yet the approach of Northcliffe Youth Voice remains constant.

It seems to be very flexible and fluid like whoever the youth worker is or if there are parents in charge it can move. We used to worry about that but really it doesn’t matter, whatever they do, everyone can bring their own qualities to it really and the kids respond. It’s quite surprising how they respond to different people. Like you couldn’t get any more different people than the current youth worker and the one that was here before they’re so opposite but yet it can work with different people I think that’s the beauty of it. (Parent Interview 10)

It’s not like parents or youth workers coming in and organising lots of activities for them and sometimes it’s very disappointing for the youth worker because they might plan something and there’s no interest and they just have to live with that and their work is for nothing sometimes. (Parent Interview 10)

The culture of practice established at Northcliffe Youth Voice is focused on the participation of young people. It can be difficult to see the strength of the approach at first.
It’s frustrating for the adults sometimes we have like a crisis but because everything has got to come from the kids we can’t just go in and take over. I had to baby sit it for a few weeks it was quite interesting. The kids were very cooperative and very respectful towards me they were very good. They gave me advice they told me just how it’s normally done and just quietly pointed out if I had forgotten to do this or that and I thought that was amazing for fourteen and fifteen year olds. (Parent Interview 10)

If the parents weren’t involved it wouldn’t run as smoothly as it does and the parents who sort of don’t really get it at first by the time their kids have been here a year or two they get it. They understand the philosophy it takes a while, it takes a while for people to get their head around what the kids are doing and that they may not be doing anything and it doesn’t matter. (Parent Interview 10)

**But they’re not doing anything!**

Place and participation characterise the practice of community development at Northcliff Youth Voice. The circumstances and needs of the local context are central to the way practice emerged and developed at the site. Northcliff Youth Voice seeks to empower young people by providing a “space” “to be” (Northcliffe Youth Voice, 2004) from which stem opportunities for participation, collective action and advocacy. The Northcliffe Youth Voice participation structure facilitates the expression of young people’s opinions and increases the capacity of young people to participate in planning and consultation processes at a community level. The members of Northcliff Youth Voice have control over the resources and the operation of the group. The practice of community development at Northcliff Youth Voice increases capacity in the community for young people to participate. The organisational context provided by the Northcliff Family Centre further supports this aspect of practice. Participation for empowerment is the central purpose of community development at Northcliff Youth Voice. The model of participation is
clearly articulated in the group’s documents and members are consistent in their interpretation of how things work.

_I’ve seen it go through a whole generation of kids and it seems to have its ups and downs really at the moment it’s pretty full on you get forty kids here after school. People say but they’re not doing anything and we try to explain to them they don’t have to do anything they just want to hang out with each other and that’s the benefit and it’s better than them doing other things. I suppose it’s a real social thing._

(Parent Interview 10)

People are clear that Northcliffe Youth Voice has a positive impact on the town. As described above people are connected in Northcliffe through children and young people in Northcliffe. It’s a resilient and passionate place.

_I don’t think there is any kid I know that has been born here that has gone away that hasn’t come back at some stage so that will just keep the community going on and on and on. I think Northcliffe Youth Voice is part of why they want to come back because it gives that close-knit community feel that most of them have. And you know we’re grateful, we’ve been very divided as a community but mostly everyone is together especially in a crisis, you know everyone pulls together and I think the young ones pull together more than anyone else._ (Parent Interview 6)

It was easy to know when enough was enough: everyone is very consistent about what they do and how they do it; about how community development happens at Northcliffe Youth Voice. The fieldwork for Northcliffe Youth Voice complete, I head off on the journey to Bunbury, well aware of what they are doing.
Chapter Nine: Northcliffe Community Development Inc.

practice story

Community development in context

I had been to Northcliffe a number of times already. I knew what to expect. The anticipation of this group, however, was a new experience. Northcliffe Community Development Inc. had taken a long time to make a decision just to meet with me and they had not yet decided to be involved in this research. The facilitator was keen but the group uncertain. Northcliffe had experienced a lot of attention lately, and not always for the better. The group asked me to attend a meeting in December 2004 to explain the research and answer questions.

I emphasised the purpose of the research was to describe community development in the field as a way of reflecting on theoretical approaches outlined in the literature. Their practice, as such, would be described rather than evaluated. This was important because Northcliffe Community Development Inc. had only recently become an incorporated body. The Inaugural General Meeting was held in July 2004 (Laing 2004, p. 4). The group was just beginning to bring to life the ideas that forged the establishment of their association. They were at the beginning of something, even though the community development practice that lead to this point commenced some years earlier, as indicated by the following quote.

We got to the stage where we needed to focus on what model or formal legal structure we were going to have and it’s been since last January getting the Constitution ready after finally opting for an incorporated association. (Community Worker Interview 1)

At the meeting in December 2004 they agreed to participate in the research and indicated I should stay and observe the meeting. The fieldwork for this case study was carried out from December 2004 to May 2005. The following section outlines the background to the initiation of the incorporated body.
Northcliffe Community Development Inc. came out of a process of community meetings instigated under the Timber Industries Project. The Timber Industries Project was a State Government initiative established to work with communities impacted by the implementation of the *Protecting Our Old-Growth Forests Policy* (Hepburn & Laing, 2006). The project commenced in 2001 to “support retrenched workers and their families and communities” (Laing 2004, p. 1). Hence the history of Northcliffe, outlined at the front of Chapter Eight, is fundamental to the practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc.

This practice story describes the way community development happens under the incorporated body, known as Northcliffe Community Development Inc., and the community process which led to its formation. The community practice from 2001 through to the action of the incorporated body is treated as one and the same, as it is for many of the participants. Throughout the story of the case, participants often refer to Northcliffe Community Development Group, the name adopted by the group before incorporation. Participants use both names interchangeably. Under the Timber Industries Project, a worker based in Manjimup travelled into Northcliffe regularly to work with the community. The following quotes from community members and the community worker describe this early action, revealing the way the worker was thinking about her role and the response of community members to her presence in the community.

*I was appointed to undertake counselling with workers and to undertake community development work. Looking into the community to see how they were affected by retrenchments. Initially what I did was spend time just getting a feel for the communities Manjimup, Pemberton and Northcliffe.*

(Community Worker Interview 1)

*I was just very aware that they needed a reconciliation approach with the community hurting so much they didn’t want someone going in there and replicate what they were recovering from which had been incredible conflict and*
animosity and division of families over the whole issue.

(Community Worker Interview 1)

In the initial stages she basically spent a fair bit of time coming around to significant groups, like she came to Play Group and she came to the Family Centre and she went to the Telecentre. At the time I was thinking — oh god what is she here for — it wasn’t really clear, but obviously what she was doing was building relationships. I can look back now and see what she was doing. So that was the introduction of where it was all slowly leading she was trying to entice people to come to public meetings to sort of try and make something happen for Northcliffe. (Participant Interview 6)

I think the first meeting was towards the end of 2001 roughly, at that initial meeting there were a large number of community people very, very enthusiastic and very positive about forming a group to move Northcliffe forward and to try and become very positive about the issues that have arisen from the timber closure. (Participant Interview 4)

The participants are all clear that the Northcliffe Community Development Group, which became Northcliffe Community Development Inc., was initiated through the community engagement processes of the Timber Industries Project, which were instigated by a community worker, an outsider to Northcliffe. The participants are equally clear that the idea of the group came from the community rather than the community worker. Participants recognise the government intervention and argue strongly that their practice is grassroots. The following quote outlines a community member’s perspective on the community worker’s role in the initiation of the group.

The actual start of the group wasn’t necessarily Marilyn’s idea it was something that was generated out of those earlier discussions. I don’t think it was actually her coming into the community with an agenda to set up a group. It hasn’t totally
come from the community because you need someone to have the time, an individual would have had to be very passionate and give up a lot of their personal time to get it up and running. (Participant Interview 5)

**A context of politics and passion**

Northcliffe Community Development Inc. works for Northcliffe. The community group seeks to build a unified approach to working for Northcliffe in the broader policy context. The task of establishing a unified approach is a challenge in the context of very different perspectives within the community, as described by the following participants.

*It’s an amazing mix of people, of groups and interests and quite a lot of conflicting interests I guess in a way.*

( Participant Interview 6)

*There is not necessarily a clear majority in terms of philosophy and approach to life, it has its benefits and its down sides. Benefits being, we get exposed to lots of different opinions and down sides being, that there is more tension, it’s very vocal and passionate….here you’ve got a whole army of people who agree and a whole army who don’t so you’ve got to say what you believe in. It’s good, it’s a very committed community and people are prepared to tell you what they think, which is good. No wonder that is going to cause some troubles for a group that tries to represent it.*

( Participant Interview 5)

*Northcliffe I think it’s quite balanced and I think the Community Development Group as such reflects that. Whoever is in the group, even though we have different positions on different things, we are all prepared to get together.* (Participant Interview 5)
The objectives of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. focus on supporting the civil society of Northcliffe to better support local community development and to establish collective articulation of the issues that face the town (Northcliffe Community Development Inc., 2005). The goals of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. are essentially to harness constructive energy through the interaction of local people and community organisations under the unifying interest of sustainable development for Northcliffe. The group brings together diverse forces within the community to take collective action, a task made difficult at times by the very different perspectives that people bring to the group. The participants’ interpretations of the objectives are central to describing the role of the group. The following quotes highlight communication, information and representation as the key roles of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. Lobbying is also identified but with a number of provisos.

*I think it’s about getting good information back out to the community, accurate information, there’s plenty of misinformation it seems. It is more intense you are likely to meet the person that may have started a rumour or may have totally different views in the street so I think it’s got an important role in providing information to the community, accurate information.* (Participant Interview 7)

*I do know that Northcliffe is a small town with small resources in terms of money, in terms of time and people to actually volunteer so I just think that this will help us be more effective. There are times when people put the same events on or are looking to build the same building.* (Participant Interview 5)

*The main benefit I think is as it’s intended, as an umbrella group to get Northcliffe community groups [organisations] talking together.* (Participant Interview 7)

*I feel really strongly that one role this Community Development Group could take on is the spokes group for*
Northcliffe. If something comes up and someone says - well where would I find out about that - we could say well contact the Community Development Group. Mind you, there are eight of us on there that might have totally different views — but you know that’s another role that I would see it having it’s an initial point of contact for connection between Northcliffe and the wider community. (Participant Interview 6)

It has a representational role as well, talking to government or talking to Manjimup Shire or the South West Development Commission. It shouldn’t be the sole means of doing that I wouldn’t like to see it taking on a quasi Shire Council role for Northcliffe but it does have a representational role. (Participant Interview 7)

I would say that is one of the main things it’s a peak body that can work with the other groups to lobby for the roads — for overtaking lanes — for things that are very important to the community. Because that is what it says in our Constitution, social and economic reasons to lobby, although there was a big thing that we couldn’t lobby on behalf of the community because we wouldn’t have the support of all the community. (Participant Interview 3)

Working with the differences within the group is central to the practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. At a workshop in 2004 the group identified the “politics and passion” of Northcliffe as the key to working together as an incorporated body (Northcliffe Community Development Inc, 2004b, p. 3). The following is taken from the workshop notes and shows how people describe politics and passion.

Acknowledge that there are different perspectives on the environment welcome this diversity and try to distinguish between the perspective and the individual… Accept that
different philosophies lead to different politics… Accept that all members of the NCD Inc want the best for Northcliffe, but that we won’t all agree on what a definition of best is… (Northcliffe Community Development Inc, 2004b, p. 3)

The history of contested ideas and values in Northcliffe makes collective action complicated. The preceding quote indicates fundamental differences that exist within the community and are reflected in the group. Belief in Northcliffe is the unifying point for community development. It’s a resilient and passionate place.

Yeah well we do come from very different positions no doubt about that. There are a few people still on their own personal agendas I think although I’d say it’s true that all members of that group believe in Northcliffe too, the bulk of them. Quite likely, none of us would be talking unless we were in that group. (Participant Interview 7)

The following section of the practice story outlines three aspects of practice that highlight different perspectives within the group and how they try to work across these differences for the benefit of Northcliffe.

**The practice — a balancing act**

The decision to establish an incorporated body was central to the group moving from a community process to a formal organisation. This required the development of a Constitution; a process that raised a number of issues for people in terms of how the group would, or even could, represent Northcliffe. The following quotes are indicative of some of the angst that stemmed from the wording of the Constitution.

There were moves to amend the Constitution in every way that you could think of and we spent one whole meeting talking about the word ‘able.’ (Participant Interview 2)
The issue of representation was the biggest stumbling block to getting the group going. We agreed to rewrite some of the clauses in the Constitution. It just seemed to sort of split people and create a bit of a wall at the time of the election of office bearers. (Participant Interview 4)

The strongest point of contention was around the make-up of the committee and the type of representation it facilitated. A central point in the debate concerned whether people should be elected to Northcliffe Community Development Inc. as individuals or as representatives of community organisations. The Constitution at the time of the research allowed for both with the greater proportion of positions designated to people representing community organisations (Northcliffe Community Development Inc., 2004c, p. v).

A question regarding the equity of individual representation on the Northcliffe Community Development Inc. committee was raised at the monthly meeting in December 2004 and this issue was assigned to a working group (Northcliffe Community Development Inc, 2004a, p. 2). The following quotes show different perspectives in the group.

There is still a bit of an issue within the present committee about some people being nominated as individuals but I personally feel that we need individuals as well as community groups because not everybody belongs to an organisation. (Participant Interview 4)

As you know there’s a problem for some people with having individuals on the Committee, they would prefer to see it all groups [community organisations]. I don’t because some people don’t belong to groups [community organisations] or choose not to but have a voice in the town and speak for others who may want to be represented to have the combination is great. (Participant Interview 3)
At the end of the meeting [the AGM] the voting had resulted in such a way that I recognised that the people that I thought were the really diligent hard workers were appreciated by the community and so therefore we should plough ahead. We obviously had the confidence of the community. (Participant Interview 2)

No one is going to take this group [Northcliffe Community Development Inc.] as a serious group to lead Northcliffe forward unless there is ownership where the energy is in Northcliffe. My view is the energy in Northcliffe is in the groups [community organisations] that exist, not so much in individuals with some bright idea. It’s a fantastic community in terms of the amount of groups [community organisations] and the amount of volunteers in groups [community organisations] and what they achieve. (Participant Interview 6)

There is a majority of groups [community organisations] that’s why I am there, I probably wouldn’t be there if it wasn’t for that. (Participant Interview 7)

It’s just that individual versus group thing. The feedback I get is that it should be for groups [community organisations] not individuals. But I do understand I do see the logic of the individual it’s not such an issue that I’m going to say well this group [Northcliffe Community Development Inc.] can’t go ahead. I mean I’m happy to put it aside. I think it’s an equity issue that a person is there representing a group [community organisations] instead of just one particular concern, I just prefer it as groups [community organisations]. (Participant Interview 5)
If it’s an umbrella group [Northcliffe Community Development Inc.] for Northcliffe community organisations then I think a majority of membership should be Northcliffe groups [community organisations] but I’m not really opposed to having individuals on there as well. I think that brings diversity to it they might not be members of a group [community organisation] but have something to contribute and have the passion and drive to be part of it but I think as the Constitution requires the majority should be groups [community organisations]. (Participant Interview 7)

A second issue regarding the Constitution’s requirement for community organisations represented on the Committee to be incorporated was also raised and referred to the working group at the December meeting (Northcliffe Community Development Inc, 2004a, p. 2). There are different views within the membership on this point as well. The following quotes show perspectives for and against the restriction of membership to incorporated community organisations.

The organisations that could nominate had to be incorporated, that again put a restriction on things, and it eliminated a number of groups within the community, the elderly in particular. (Participant Interview 4)

I’m also on a Community Advisory Committee and I know that they are really annoyed because they’re not an incorporated group [community organisation], so weren’t allowed to go on to the [Northcliffe Community Development Inc.] Committee because the Constitution doesn’t allow non-incorporated groups [community organisations]. Immediately they’ve been put on the negative. (Participant Interview 5)

Say you wanted someone on there, an individual who just had some sort of barrow to push they could easily just form a
group of three people….some group with a barrow to push, a ridiculous barrow to push…they stack the meeting, the public meeting, and that group gets voted in….at least if it’s an incorporated group at least it has to come under that auspice, it’s been through a process and has Objects….it is important in my view to be sticking to that. (Participant Interview 6)

The issues of representation are indicative of the contested ideas and values in Northcliffe. Working with these differences to form collective action is the crux of community development practice at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. It’s a resilient and passionate place.

**Balancing process and doing something**

The people seeking to change the Constitution to address issues of representation, as outlined in the previous section, argue these points are important to the process of community development. The following quotes from one participant highlight her perception of the link between process and credibility.

*I was going to hang in there until we had the representative issues sorted and the Constitutional changes so that no matter what happened after that at least you knew that it would be a credible group in some way because it had to be in process terms you couldn’t possibly stack a meeting to that extent. (Participant Interview 6)*

*I guess being a community development worker, I’m quite aware of process and I’m quite aware of functional process and dysfunctional process and some of those meetings I found very frustrating because people just wanted to get on and do something. (Participant Interview 6)*
While the issues are central for some, others did not see it in the same way. They felt the Constitution was functional and they wanted to get on with community development. The following quotes highlight this perspective and assert the need to \textit{do something}.

\begin{quote}
Look, I do think it will work but we haven’t done anything. I had the white board put up there and I’ve got the marker and I left it on the kitchen table to say can we just at the end of this meeting I’d like to put together what we have done. What have we done in a year? Well it’s actually three years, one single thing and for the life of me, I can’t think of one.
\end{quote}

(Participant Interview 2)

\begin{quote}
See what we’re saying is — build a church; don’t sit in the town hall anymore — we’re saying do something.
\end{quote}

(Participant Interview 2)

Members with this perspective are equally concerned about the credibility of the group but they see credibility stemming from tangible action. While ideas of representation are described as process, the idea of \textit{doing something} has come to be associated with action.

\begin{quote}
While you’ve got process you lose grassroots people, you might still be considered to be grassroots… (Participant Interview 2)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I think if you even bring up the word Constitution the grassroots people will all say get stuffed. Leave the Constitution alone. (Participant Interview 2)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
The Northcliffe Development Group would do very very well to have a street stall, a cake stall, a quiz night, give a hundred dollars to someone who’s house had burnt down. A
firewood raffle, a photo display so that people would say — oh, that’s that group, we have no identity, no one even knows we exist. (Participant Interview 2)

I think that is what our main role is, to be a lobby group, and also to let the community at large know what the group is lobbying for, and to encourage individual people within the community to come along to a meeting and say — look I really think this should happen in Northcliffe. Until we get a meeting going like that I don’t think we’re going to get anywhere. (Participant Interview 4)

The strongest difference is that some members see resolving these things as crucial to the practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc., while others see action as crucial and view the focus on the Constitution as a distraction. Participants with a strong interest on process don’t agree with working on action projects.

For me it’s an open forum for discussion and communication between the different groups. I’ve always come from that point of view. Sort of like a round table but it’s a formalised version where different groups can say; this is what I’m doing; what are you doing; how can we work together on that; how can we do it better; what does our community need; how can we put it out to the wider region and advocate for ourselves at a state and national level. I think it is more about that. I can see that some people really want to do action projects and perhaps that’s a good thing as well to sort of galvanise support because lots of people need to see momentum and be doing stuff. (Participant Interview 5)

It is for sharing of information because so much happens here already - it’s not a project development group where they decide what they are going to do - there are plenty of groups in the community doing that already. I think that our
group should be one more for supporting those groups to actually achieve their purposes. (Participant Interview 6)

It should really have a grassroots approach working through Northcliffe people in contrast to say some other groups [community organisations] that have got a specific purpose. Sometimes you need to crash through community fear to get the thing done. Grassroots meaning community organisations too not only individuals. (Participant Interview 7)

There is also room for compromise. Just as the group as a whole agreed to take the Constitution off the agenda for a time, so too they seek to act in ways that work across their differences. As the following quotes show there are action projects that process oriented people agree should go ahead and there is recognition of the different perspectives in the group.

I would see things like some sort of training for people, accessing training opportunities because a lot of people do things completely in the dark in a way. A newsletter, sure that’s fine because that’s about sharing information — that would fit. (Participant Interview 6)

I think the problem is the whole thing will take a while to really get its legs. Maybe they do need to have some projects that happen quicker, just some smaller ones so that people can see some tangible outcomes. I suppose that comes back to that process thing, I guess I kind of sit in the middle because I totally understand about process but I think you’re going to lose all the people who are really action and outcome focused. I mean what’s the point of the process if you end up with nothing as well; I’m sure there’s a way of getting some compromise. (Participant Interview 5)
More for the people outside the group than the people inside the group because people inside the group know the dynamics that we are working with and know the full complexity whereas people on the outside don’t know any of that — so all they are going to see is tangibles and if they are not seeing any tangibles, they don’t care about it.

(Participant Interview 5)

People participating with big differences in positions

The value of the group is that people with different ideas and values are talking together. It’s a resilient and passionate place.

I do lots of study of sustainability in small communities and that’s why I think it’s very important because the only way we will survive is if we work together. I think this group is a good way of making sure that everyone is, not necessarily moving in the same direction, but at least talking about which directions we want to move in. I feel really positive about where we are going at the moment. (Participant Interview 5)

You are not going to move together as a community if you’ve only got one part of the community moving and the rest being left behind. So to me that is definitely the value of the group. (Participant Interview 6)

I think the role of the development group in our case is to bring together groups that we might not talk to otherwise because of the history. (Participant Interview 7)

I don’t mind being in a group with lots of other people from within the community, I really like that, I think it’s good. I actually really like that about the group. I think there’s a
good mix of people on there. I really like working with people that I don’t necessarily have contact with in another forum it’s great, I enjoy that. (Participant Interview 5)

Northcliffe Community Development Inc. pursues sustainability for the town by working with the diversity that exists in the community. All members of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. are driven by their commitment to Northcliffe. The central difference seems to be between linking the survival of the town to the energy and interconnection of the community organisations that already exist in the town, or linking it to collective action around common issues that confront the town.

*I mean there is no one-way to take community development, each town has its own personalities and own history and own particulars.* (Participant Interview 5)

The participants talk about the need to work across values-based differences in the community. The politics and passion that characterise Northcliffe are valued by participants and central to establishing the practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. The diversity of the group requires constant negotiation as people work together. Northcliffe Community Development Inc. creates space for dialogue across contested perspectives in the community.

*I think there’s a lot of value in people participating with big differences in positions, actually if it didn’t exist [Northcliffe Community Development Inc.] it’s quite likely that the individuals in the group wouldn’t be talking to each other.* (Participant Interview 7)

*The people in it are there for Northcliffe; they are there for community development.* (Participant Interview 3)

As I drive out of Northcliffe for the last time as a fieldworker, ideas that I thought I knew well have been unsettled. Who are the grassroots? What is process in
community development? These are the things I contemplate as I make my way through forest and farm back to Bunbury. It’s a long and interesting drive.
Chapter Ten: Vintage – A Home Town For Life practice story

Balingup – the place

The community group known as Vintage – A Home Town for Life is located in Balingup, a small rural town in the south west region of Western Australia. The fieldwork for this case study was carried out from November 2004 to May 2005. The group had been meeting for about three years when fieldwork commenced. Balingup is a scenic town situated on the South West Highway, the inland arterial road for the region.

The town takes its name from Balingup Pool, located on the Balingup Brook which flows through the town. The name was first recorded by a surveyor in 1850, and is said to be derived from the name of Noongar warrior, Balingan.

(Shire of Donnybrook Balingup, n.d.)

Balingup is the kind of place you want to describe as nestling in the foothills, but that would be too cliché and Balingup is anything but cliché.

Figure 5. Balingup – the town (Balingup Community Web, n.d.)
The hills around Balingup are not atypical of Australian rural settings, although the uniformity of the trees shows the ravages of past and present policy. The liveliness of the town belies this history. There is nothing of the empty shop windows of small inland Australian rural towns. Balingup has generated a reputation as a holiday and lifestyle destination through tourism and by hosting significant annual events such as the Medieval Carnivale and the Small Farm Field Day. It’s a lively place.

As I drive down to Balingup – it is always down to go further south from Bunbury – I anticipate the group. Engaged, interesting, doing things differently: that is the image I have of Balingup. Balingup is known for community action, as a community of action. The town does not disappoint as the small yet lived-in main street pulls my car to a halt. Despite the quietness of the location, shops sell to a steady flow of business.

I follow my directions to the meeting. I go left, the views expanding as the road rises and I consider stopping to take it all in as the panorama opens even further. The house I am coming to visit stands tall, entitled to the geographic majesty that stretches before it. This is where they meet; not your typical community development site. Not your typical dusty disused town hall but a stately rammed earth home with magnificent views. The rolling hills are not farm land or old growth forest but plantation. Balingup hasn’t had it all its own way; the uniformity of the trees is testament to that, yet despite this Balingup contrasts with the image of decline in rural Australia. As I pull up in front of the house others arrive: the ordinary, the engaged, living and caring about this community, this town in a beautiful setting, yet grappling nonetheless with the limits of service provision in rural Australia. Balingup, a small rural town that has embraced change and engendered a vibrant and energetic community culture, has weathered the ravages of rural decline (Kenyon & Black, 2001). It is a lively place.

Balingup is 241 kilometres south west of Perth, the capital city of Western Australia, and is located in the Donnybrook-Balingup local government area. The Donnybrook-Balingup Shire covers an area of 1559 square kilometres. Balingup is 31 kilometres southeast of Donnybrook, the largest town in the local government area and where
the council offices are located. Balingup is the next most populated town in the Shire (Shire of Donnybrook Balingup, n.d.).

The area was declared a township in 1898 after pastoralists came to the region through the colonisation of the 1860s (Kenyon & Black, 2001, p. 27). By the 1960s, Balingup had developed into a flourishing agricultural community with a population of over one thousand. Balingup has borne the brunt of policy change common to rural and regional communities in Australia (Alston, 2010; Pritchard & McManus, 2000), and not just in recent decades.

The regulation of the dairy industry combined with the steep terrain of the area made the industry unviable. People left the district (Kenyon & Black, 2001; Manning, 1994). Farmland did not sell easily and the state government bought large tracts of land for pine plantations (Shire of Donnybrook Balingup, 2004; Balingup Community Web (n.d.); Manning, 1994). The subsequent reduction in the rates base of the Shire of Balingup served as a catalyst for the amalgamation of the Shire of Balingup with the neighbouring Shire of Donnybrook in 1969 (Balingup Community Web (n.d.); Manning, 1994; Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, 2004). Amalgamation was on the agenda for some time but when a decision finally came:

Such was the mood of the people of Balingup. They felt they would lose their identity and be completely submerged in the interests of Donnybrook. (Frost, 1979, p. 145)

This dissatisfaction expressed in a previous era is echoed at the time of the fieldwork. When talking about the purpose of Vintage – A Home Town For Life to provide accommodation and assistance for those requiring care, frustration with local government is clear.

Everybody’s saying yes it’s a good idea, yes it’s a good idea, the Shire could of done something itself had it not been focused on government from Donnybrook. (Participant Interview 2)
The strength of the Balingup Progress Association, an “umbrella organisation” for a range of community groups and events, stems perhaps from this history. Described as a “dynamic community forum enabling residents to participate in the direction and planning of the Balingup community,” the Association is a critical element of governance in Balingup and central to the character and energy of the town (Balingup Progress Association, n.d.). Formed in 1979, the Association is “a vehicle for community development” (Kenyon & Black, 2001, p. 28). The vibrancy of Balingup is attributed to planning for growth at the community level, strong belief in the viable future of the community, awareness of the need to balance economic growth with health, environment and social needs of the community, and a willingness to find and use resources outside the community when needed (Kenyon & Black, 2001, pp. 29-30). It is a lively place.

The population decline of the 1960s was abated by people seeking alternative lifestyles in the 1970s. The current character of the town is attributed to the lifestyle seekers (Kenyon & Black, 2001).

*People are very passionate. We talk, we take a vote, and do all this, and compromise and that’s exactly what happens with Vintage. There were disagreements along the way but people were happy to compromise.* (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Research carried out for Vintage – A Home Town For Life indicates “the district is changing” and Balingup, as other rural communities, is adapting to a shift in the economic base and the demographics of the town (Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities, 2004, p. 6). Balingup depends increasingly on tourism and this highlights the lifestyle benefits of the area (Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup, 2004, p. 78). Census figures from 2011 indicate Balingup is a community of 252 households and a population of 560 people (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2011c). The demographics for Balingup are significantly different in the areas of age, income and employment when compared to Western Australia and Australia. The proportion of the population of Balingup for age brackets up to the age of 50 is significantly lower, the strongest contrast being for the 15 to 19 year old bracket.
Conversely the proportion of the population in the 50 to 70 age bracket fits with the Australia wide trend for rural communities of a growing ageing population (Alston, 2010). The 60 to 64 years age range, at 5.4% of the population for Western Australia and 5.6% for Australia, is much higher in Balingup at 14.1% (ABS, 2011c). It appears that people in this age group choose Balingup for retirement or semi-retirement (Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities, 2004; Shire of Donnybrook Balingup, n.d.). While Balingup has suffered the population decline in terms of a decrease in younger age groups typical of rural communities in Australia (Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities, 2004; Kenyon & Black, 2001), it has carved out an alternative economic base which is atypical. People seeking to be part of this change have increased the numbers in the older age groups, yet done so by bringing energy to the town.

They are all pre-positioning themselves for retirement here and they’re pre-positioning themselves as active sixty years olds or fifty-five years olds.... (Participant Interview 6)

It’s a lively place.

**Balingup – a perennial issue**

Vintage – A Home Town For Life seeks to address the housing and support needs of people living in Balingup, to “cater for ‘well-aged’ residents, elders with disabilities and people with disabilities of any age” (South West Development Commission, 2005, p. 53). The immediate need is described as follows.

There are a number of people within the community who have reached that age where they say, my housing needs have changed and I need the opportunity to access certain services but because those options aren’t existing within Balingup, I really have to sell out and move. There are a number of people who are at that critical stage at the moment. (Project Worker Interview 5)
A community process had been bubbling away for many years. Residents had tried previously to solve the problem of people leaving Balingup when their housing and support needs changed. There is no purpose built age accommodation. Home and Community Care (HACC) is available but unable to respond to the particular circumstances of Balingup such as with support to maintain rural blocks to bushfire protection standards. The community and particularly the local branch of the Country Women’s Association (CWA) had worked on this issue for many years.

*The CWA has had a hall and a site in the town probably since the war and they agreed to cede some of that land to the Shire for aged persons housing that was done a long time ago. The discussions on that I’m told had been going for at least 20 years. (Participant Interview 2)*

*It’s the CWA who really started trying to push and kept pushing and also kept joining each new iteration of getting appropriate housing and service within Balingup. Wilma for example has really been involved all the way through and keeps optimistic. (Project Worker Interview 5)*

People were forced to leave Balingup as they aged or became ill and needed low maintenance purpose built accommodation. The commitment of the CWA highlights the importance of this issue to people in Balingup with ties to the traditional rural population, and a participant explains its relevance to people with more recent ties to the township.

*What happens here and we see it all the time, they come down with their dreams, like we did, and they put everything into it, every ounce of energy and ten years later they’re buggered. Then they start saying we can’t manage a hundred and twenty acres, we are going into our late sixties, and so they are leaving. I think if Vintage can prevent that from happening. If this is where they want to be then I think they*
have the right to live their lives out here. (Participant Interview 6)

While the impact of this issue is felt acutely at the individual level, the community as a whole also suffers loss of population and loss of people’s energy and talents.

I know lots of people who have got to their sixties, their health has started to fail and then off they go. And we’ve lost some really really excellent people as a result of that. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Just as perennial plants and flowers come back year after year, so too perennial issues. Community effort to address this issue blossomed at a community meeting where the Shire Donnybrook Balingup announced that aged care housing was available for people from Balingup in Donnybrook. While this may be considered a solution for some individuals, it did not solve the problem as it was felt in the community. It did not support people to stay in Balingup.

I went to a meeting of aged care in Balingup. It was the people in Balingup concerned that we didn’t have any housing. It was quite clear the council wasn’t they had looked at partnerships with Homeswest. We didn’t have sufficient people with that sort of income, or lack of income, and they thought that was the end of the story. (Participant Interview 3)

People live here because they want to live here they don’t want to live in Donnybrook. (Participant Interview 2)

I rang a few people after that meeting and said, look let’s see if we can do something about this and change this attitude. I rang a few of the people that I knew, including Wilma from
the CWA because she was the one that was most concerned. We got together and tried to think about how we would like to care for people. (Participant Interview 3)

The idea of Vintage – A Home Town For Life was born, they seek to make Balingup a hometown for life. The idea of the hometown for life is crucial to the way the issue is felt in Balingup: it is not just about providing options for people within the local government area, it is about Balingup. The name is important to characterising the action of the group and is used in full in the first pages of this practice story to emphasise this point.

Essentially Vintage is about ensuring that the appropriate housing choice is available and also to ensure that people are able to get services when and where they want. (Project Worker Interview 5)

The practice – building an approach

Vintage – A Home Town For Life seeks to address the local issue and to challenge the current approaches to caring for people. The current policy framework has let people down and rather than accept the limitations of the system they defiantly work to create their own solutions. Participants don’t just have a solution, they have an ethos underscored by their name and central to the way they talk about their efforts.

There is a strong common ethos in my view. Strong support for the principles underlying what Vintage is all about. (Project Worker Interview 5)

We are very aware that the generation that are now going into elderly active aging are people who don’t want residential care homes or nursing homes or beds nor do they want to be carted off to another town. So I think the timing was perfect. (Participant Interview 6)
One of the quality of life principles that Joanna introduced us to struck me forcibly, the right to risk, because I think people are put into homes and they have to be so safe that they can’t do anything. They can’t walk on paving that someone locally has laid, because they might fall over and there will be public liability – human qualities I suppose. (Participant Interview 3)

I will follow the lead of participants from here in using the shortened version of the name. Vintage actively engages in the issue of local service provision and challenges the limitations of current responses, particularly in terms of their suitability to small rural communities.

It’s really been an example of social entrepreneurism. The community is not even putting their hand out for the public dollar, they know that the traditional ways of funding and the traditional way aged housing is provided won’t really happen for them. (Project Worker Interview 5)

I think all communities have to look more towards sustainability because government grants are going to be less and less; there is just not enough money to go around, so we’ve got to think smart. (Participant Interview 6)

The participants of Vintage also challenge the current service delivery models and seek to establish a flexible and responsive community based organisation.

What’s different about this project is that the whole thing is about healthy ageing, ageing in place and also intricately linking lifestyle housing and service delivery with housing options. The idea is that the individual needs determine where, how and when the services are delivered. (Project Worker Interview 5)
The notion of the community enterprise is that it works in a typical co-operative process it is about community development and community capacity building as well as an economic objective. The community itself aggregating enough demand to be able to support a certain service or business. A community enterprise model has been around for a long long time there are very many derivations of it.
(Project Worker Interview 5)

The community and the state – sometimes they are one and the same

Defiant in the face of government inaction, Vintage initially focused on ways of providing housing and caring needs independent of local or state government, as is the way in Balingup.

*The strong ethos in Balingup is self-help doing it by itself.*
(Project Worker Interview 5)

*If it’s going to work anywhere it will work in Balingup — we actually won the “Can-Do Community Award” last year.*
(Community Development Officer Interview 1)

*What’s happened is now the Shire is saying — we’d love to help, Balingup is saying, “We don’t need your help, we’ve managed all these years without you.” It’s that sort of scenario.*
(Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Despite this stance the group interact readily with people who work in local and state government; that is, people with strong commitment to the local community. People in the community are also part of the state.

*I ended up doing the secretarial/administrative role. I’m quite happy to do it because I think it’s a fantastic project.*
also live in Balingup and I have a passion for the place. I’m very involved in the community. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

People employed by government with strong commitments to the community of Balingup counsel a pragmatic and strategic approach to working with government, to which the group responded.

To start off they very much wanted it to be the community group thing. But then I think they started to realise they needed outside help. And there was a bit of reluctance with the Shire as well, to be honest. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Vintage acknowledge different levels of power in the network of service provision and, as a grassroots group, have consciously gone out to work with the high end of organisations to create opportunities for influencing services that may not be adaptable at the delivery end.

All of the people in Health [Department of] and HACC [Home and Community Care] and people who would’ve just turned around to us and said — no, that’s not policy, you’re not allowed to do that. Well we’ll be able to do that, because they’re also going to be getting pressure. We’re in fact going to try and get it from their bosses to tell them that we need to think of something new, innovative to get over this problem with aged care in rural communities. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Two key events from the practice of Vintage epitomise their approach. The first is the Inland Rural Ageing Summit, in which the local community hosted a strategic event to explore options for ageing and caring services, the second is a research project in the local community.
We also ran what we called an Inland Rural Ageing Summit. Not knowing anybody at all, I just thought we’d ask anybody who sound as if they would be the leader of some kind of section of community health and we’ll ask them to come together for this. It was amazing the response we got — they actually came when they heard a grassroots idea that we wanted to develop. (Participant Interview 3)

The Alcoa Research Centre carried out research in Balingup Mullalyup in mid 2004. The research focused on the aging and caring needs of the local communities. A central strategy was the training of community members to undertake the research with the view that the skills gained would support the long term ambitions of a community driven approach to ageing and caring (Alcoa Research Centre for Stronger Communities, 2004; Stehlik & Buckley, 2008).

The same skills that they’ve learnt, are really essentially the same as working with someone to assess their needs on a day-to-day basis or for the longer term. (Project Worker Interview 5)

When we essentially move forward on the service side our initial thing will be to get those people to really start listening and trying to identify what sort of services people might need now, next year or the year after, through a networking process in the community — that will relate back to Vintage to get the action done or to get the planning in place. (Project Worker Interview 5)

The summit and the research encapsulate the approach Vintage takes to community development.

If I had been on the project we would have worked from the bottom-up, plugged away trying to get housing and services.
What’s actually happened now is we’ve had these bloomin’ summits and goodness knows what else. We’ve had people, like the boss from South West Area Health here so in fact what’s happening, albeit it very slowly, they know what Vintage is all about and we are now getting a much better idea of what we actually want to do. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Both demonstrate the way in which Vintage has taken hold of the issue: they speak directly to power in government, they do their own research and they value skills in the local community. The community group has engaged with government on their own terms to inspire a fresh view of age care. It is a lively place.

Two communities – the group and the community

At the time of the fieldwork a core group of people met monthly in private accommodation and communicated regularly between meetings. The people involved in the group came with particular interests, such as people with strong commitment to the issue of aged accommodation and community care services, people experienced in building and people representing local and state government. The interests of members were multi pronged: for example, the community development officer is also a local resident and directly affected by the issue. People directly involved build a sense of community within the group through their commitment to the issue and to Balingup.

We needed to have fun while we were doing it and so we’ve also included food and wine and when people came for the meetings here we might have coffee and cake. We always try and enjoy it. And include our partners sometimes, here and there, so that they know what we’re doing. (Participant Interview 3)

This sense of commitment engendered within the group actively working on the project does not necessarily flow to everyone in the Balingup community.
I suppose it’s a mammoth concept in so much as changing people’s perceptions on how things are being done. Things have been done in the same way, almost since colonisation really when you think about it, certainly the last fifty years it’s been the traditional way of caring for elderly people. To try and change people’s expectations it doesn’t come over night, it has to be a long process of education and understanding, and understanding people’s point of view. The laughable thing while Vintage is cracking on with the process we know there are other people in town trying to look at building a nursing home or a residential care home. We are obviously not succeeding entirely in getting through to all members of the community, however, you can take a horse to water. There will always be those that say no we want the traditional sense of that. (Participant Interview 6)

Vintage tries to address local concerns about the project by communicating their ideas to people and emphasising the common interests of people staying in Balingup.

We gave this presentation to the Progress Association and I have to say it really had a great reception people were really thrilled. There are always underlying ideas about how this is going to be, no we don’t need a nursing home, we don’t need a residential care home and we don’t want to attract all these old people into town. There was a lot of that going on without really understanding what it was about. So that was a very good presentation, there were a lot of people who came because they had concerns about how this was going to run they felt very reassured afterwards. (Participant Interview 6)
Two priorities: bricks-n-mortar and process

There are two priorities for Vintage, one is the building of appropriate accommodation options and the other is the development of ideas such as the fresh approach to caring for people and the community enterprise model for the organisation. The first is about bricks and mortar and the second about ideas and process. There is a tension in the group between getting the building task under way and developing the ethos and organisation of Vintage.

We’ve got a committee made up of people with different interests for example, I’m interested in building, architecture and housing and I think that’s the answer to half the problem. The people with backgrounds in nursing or social services will certainly see that half the solutions to the problems are from their background of influence. Out of that comes the rivaling of the idea of what Vintage should do...

(Participant Interview 2)

The building of accommodation is a tangible outcome that meets the immediate need of the community. The presence of housing alternatives would immediately stop people leaving Balingup. Some participants view this as the priority – bricks-n-mortar. This is about defiance.

I’m impatient, so what so is everybody when they are 60 and looking down the barrel of having to go and live in one of those aged person’s beds... (Participant Interview 2)

Getting a number of dwellings up and running is a critical point because there is already a definite need there. (Project Worker Interview 5)

If we were to lay half a dozen bricks on the site for a house, I think that we would go up in everybody’s estimation.
Seriously, even if they sat there for a little while because it appears everybody wants the bricks-n-mortar. That’s the focus for the community. I understand that they’ve all been waiting forever for this so if we could get a start that would be terrific. (Participant Interview 6)

The development of ideas and the organisational structure are less visible outcomes. Some people view these as the priority because they want to get it right. This is bold ambition.

It’s really important I think if you’re an ambassador for the project that you understand the importance of moving away from the traditional aspect. I think it’s an excellent idea. It’s been slow but I think it’s worth it to get it right. (Participant Interview 6)

A twenty five year plan of trying to support people — that wasn’t really about bricks-n-mortar — that was about the concept in people’s minds about how they wanted to live and how they wanted to be supported. And it wasn’t necessarily around sickness, illness and health services, it was more about well-being, support, maintenance, transport, gardening, and whatever to keep people able and independent. So that created quite a stir. (Participant Interview 6)

My feeling is that Vintage is actually about education, and if you are not prepared to try and educate people and if people are not prepared to try to receive education then it won’t go forward but education takes a long time. Everyone has got to be very patient and that’s why I talk about things like terminology. That’s such a simple way we can start, then people don’t have pictures in their minds, and they want to
know more about it. It’s been proven time and time again that if you use a different terminology then it doesn’t bring up a perception, I’m quite fussy about that. (Participant Interview 6)

Such an approach is characterised by a potent mix of defiance and bold ambition. All participants agree that both are necessary. The bold ambition has however taken time and energy from the immediacy of the issue in Balingup, which has been frustrating. It has taken time to sort out the best way to go. The differences are about emphasis and timing.

The way that we’ve done it in fact has really been quite successful. (Community Development Officer Interview 1)

Well there’s something about the town

Just as the beauty of Balingup pulled me in on that first day so too the energy of Vintage has drawn me into a story that at first was simple – land, houses and a small rural town trying to keep its population. The bold ambition of Vintage has revealed a small rural town taking a fresh approach to caring for people – an enterprise based on quality of life principles.

The physical environment reflects the character of community development. The town rests within the surrounding hills. The uniformity of the hills alludes to the power of government to make decisions that override the desires of the local community, yet the township has energy and the landscape holds its beauty. Likewise, uniformity in policy approaches to age care evoke the bland power of government to decide for small rural towns, yet the community has energy, ideas and the land is ready.

There’s probably interest locally here compared to other places and it’s a small enough town that people do actually talk to each other. The Vintage group really is made up of
people you see in other groups. There is a fairly constant level of discussion in the community here that you probably don’t get in bigger communities. (Participant Interview 2)

Inspired by commitment to their community, people in Balingup, some of who have consistently being told it is not possible, come together to decide how to care for people. They work together on the issue of accommodation and in the face of uniformity they take a fresh approach. It is a lively place.
Chapter Eleven: Early Years Network practice story

Bunbury – the place

This practice story portrays the way community development happens at the Early Years Network in Bunbury. The story starts with the context and the issue, followed by a description of how community development happens at the Early Years Network at the time of the fieldwork. Descriptions of practice focus on the ideas and interactions within the group as they forge a collective approach to early development in their local community. The practice story closes with the connection between community and early development. The community group known as Bunbury Early Years Network is located in Bunbury, the regional centre for the south west of Western Australia. The Wardandi Noongar people are the traditional owners of this country (Wooltorton, 2013). Bunbury is an important regional city in the context of Western Australia. A harbour city, Bunbury sits on the coast, 185 kilometres south of Perth (Bunbury Tourism and Travel, n.d.). The South West Highway goes through and around Bunbury. In 2004, when my fieldwork was carried out, Bunbury was on the way to somewhere else, although efforts since that time have seen Bunbury’s status as a destination grow. Bunbury is a regional coastal city and its beauty rests in the sand dunes. The beaches are long, clean and sparsely populated.

Figure 6. Bunbury beaches (City of Bunbury Parks and Gardens, n.d.).

I don’t have to drive far to Bunbury to meet people for this case study – I live in Bunbury. The very first time I drove into Bunbury, which was six years earlier, together with my family I had travelled from Alice Springs staying some months in Esperance on the way. Driving past the Bunbury Homemaker Centre on a Friday
afternoon isn’t the best way to be introduced to the town, especially when one is accustomed to the spectacular coastline of Esperance and the stark magnificence of the McDonnell Ranges surrounding Alice Springs. Nonetheless, the Leschenault sand dunes and miles of ocean beach present themselves when you stay a while. The port also brings character to the place, vast hulls gliding through Koombana Bay and seemingly disappearing into the sand dunes. The same vessels, diminished by the horizon when waiting off the coast, remind us of a bigger world. It’s an easy place to live. There is time and space in Bunbury.

Bunbury is a place of “excellent connection,” whereby the particular location and status of the town in the Western Australian context benefits the place. As a large regional centre Bunbury is important in the politics of the state: it is far enough away from Perth not to be subsumed by it and it has a history of leadership that has been able to harness advantage for the town (Barker & Laurie, 1992). Approximately half of the region’s population lives in Bunbury and the surrounding area known as Greater Bunbury (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2002, p. 30). Greater Bunbury refers to the City of Bunbury and the surrounding population centres of Australind, Eaton and Dalyellup (Department of Planning and Infrastructure, 2005, p. 4). The City of Bunbury has a population of approximately 31,348 with the population of Greater Bunbury, noted in 2015, as approximately 81,628 (City of Bunbury – Bunbury in Profile, n.d.). Bunbury is the regional hub; many agencies and organisations in Bunbury provide services across the south west region. Bunbury is described on the City’s website as “one of the fastest growing regional cities in Australia and has been dubbed the second capital city of Western Australia” (City of Bunbury, n.d., p. 1). The size and regional location of Bunbury are advantages for people in the Early Years Network.

I think there are a whole lot of factors at play because of the size it's big but small. You can't go to Coles without seeing people you know. At that very first meeting people said that was a strength of Bunbury that nowhere is more than fifteen minutes or ten minutes away really. That stands Bunbury in good stead the population and the services that we do have. I think that it is because of those services that we’ve got lots of
opportunity for service integration or contacts at least if we could just set up some way of doing that. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

Bunbury is small enough for people to see possibilities for action yet big enough to have some momentum, with strong health, education and social service sectors. Immediate need is not overwhelming. Bunbury is well serviced in many ways. There is time and space in Bunbury

**Bunbury – the issue**

The Early Years Network was established to address community awareness of the importance of early development to long-term health and to develop ways to support and foster children’s early development. Just prior to the fieldwork commencing, Bunbury was identified as a site under a state level government policy (Early Years Strategy, 2004). The policy is part of an international trend in community and government partnerships underpinned by increased awareness of the importance of the early years of a child’s life to long-term health (Department of Community Development, 2004a; Department of Community Development, 2004b; Department of Community Development, 2004c). The Early Years Network was initiated through policy action, as described in the following quote.

*I was involved in working on a project with young Mums. We had been working on that for about two to three months and we were contacted [and told] Bunbury has been selected as a site for the Early Years. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)*

*I mean we had heard this on the grapevine for months before but hadn’t heard anything official so we were kind of expecting it. We were hearing all these rumours from Perth that Bunbury had been selected. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)*
The Early Years Network is a community group in Bunbury while the Early Years Strategy refers to a state level policy. This practice story describes how community development happens at the Early Years Network. The Early Years Network got started in Bunbury through policy action, although there was a strong commitment in the local community to the issue of early development. The selection of Bunbury as a site under the Early Years Strategy met with great enthusiasm. The timing of government action was right for the community.

The Young Mum’s Group was really travelling very much on a path in the way the Early Years Network was going — we’d all work together. It was immaculate timing. How often does that happen in one’s professional life? (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)

I think everybody feels that the time has come for people to do something differently. People are a lot more receptive to looking around, and I think we have power in our reports [research] to actually go and approach people, and say no it’s not just me on my own. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

People in the Bunbury area were actively networking about growing knowledge of early development and some had tried to establish community action to support child health before the initiation of the Early Years Network. People identified the Reggio Emilia Group and the Young Mums Group as local networks focused on early development.

When I found out from the others what was happening it sounded like it was mirroring, even though it was from the government, what we had been trying to do. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)
I could see so much potential and I have got so much energy now to be able to give back to my community and start drawing people together. My big passion was interagency collaboration that we need to work together and not just with children when they are in crisis. Our focus was being proactive that motherhood and parenting are universal and we need to support everybody there are no degrees there are no guidelines. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

I’m fairly familiar with the brain research in general — that’s what keeps me in early childhood education the fact that research shows it’s such a crucial time. I feel like I’m just at the tail end of it as a teacher of five-year-olds. But, I also feel, that as a teacher of five year olds I’m often dealing with people who have younger children so I try to do as much education as will fit in my role to try and get that information out. What people are doing not only with five-year-olds but any younger children is really crucial. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

People talk about the need for the Early Years Network in Bunbury from the perspective of community support and collaboration for early development.

We’re all one community but there are obviously people that have different needs to others. I was asked to facilitate a Young Mum’s Group and from working with them I realised just how difficult it was for them as a minority group. They are powerless and they don’t have a voice they are really silent in our society they’re really on the margins and they’ve had to put up with people having a negative perception of them and I just thought it was so unfair. They’re just like any other Mum but they are just younger and they are trying their hardest just like anyone else but because of their age, its harder for them, they don’t have the
support. They often don’t have the support of their families; they certainly don’t have the support of the community. If we can redress some of that and give them a bit more balance. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)

People who were already working on the importance of early development bring well-established commitment to the Early Years Network. Interest was active in the community, and people had been trying to generate community-wide collaboration, and the identification of Bunbury as a site under the Early Years Strategy supported these efforts.

Well I don’t know if we were connected enough to be able to do that. A lot of the connections we have been making are relatively new connections. Like with Community Health and that sort of thing. I don’t think we could’ve made those connections without somebody coming down. (Participant Community Sector Interview 4)

Local community members indicated their first steps were to set up a forum to introduce the brain development research, which underpins the link between early development and lifelong health. I attended the forum as an observer, with permission to take notes. I live in Bunbury and I had been to community gatherings at the same venue. I drove to the forum with a sense of anticipation. The roads are busy at certain times of the day in Bunbury, but only in as much as you may be held up for ten minutes or so as everyone gets to and from school and work; otherwise car travel in Bunbury is quick and easy. As I make my way through the familiar streets I wonder what sort of turn out they will get. I expect the usual people who attend health and social service gatherings but when I arrive I see that this group is different and there are a lot of people I do not recognise.

We had a very very good response. People were very positive about it from the moment they heard about it. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)
It was a really successful forum from the point of view that there was a lot of energy that came out of it and it was really fantastic to see so many people positive that we could make a difference in Bunbury. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)

In our community there is a lot of knowledge, wisdom and ideas and enthusiasm. We have a ground swell of support for the early years and with support from the top for that ground swell we can go anywhere. (Observation 1)

The role of government in initiating action in Bunbury is introduced to the local community at the forum and so too is the story behind the policy. A board member from a group known as the National Investment for the Early Years (NIFTeY) talks about government action being instigated by public pressure. NIFTeY lobbied the West Australian State Government to focus on child health (Government of Western Australian, 2006, p. 4). He was clear that government was not the driving force of the initiative.

None of these things happened initially because Government Departments said let’s do this — people said let’s do it. The government came to the party. Well we’re the voting public — we’re the people let’s do it together. It’s us the people — sustainability through the people — governments come and go. (Observation 1)

This direct approach appeals to people with a strong attachment to the importance of early child health.

Everyone was really stirred up after hearing him speak — it really got to our core — it’s sharing our passion.

(Observation 3)
The forum highlights the strengths of the local context for establishing a community-wide approach to the early years.

*Because of the geographic nature of Bunbury, it’s close to Perth but far enough away it’s a large centre, I think there is a really big opportunity for something special to happen in Bunbury in terms of early childhood.* (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

*You have an opportunity to develop a personal relationship with service providers.* (Observation 1)

The forum closed with optimism and with a meeting date set to begin the process of establishing an Early Years Network. The forum was successful in generating broad community interest and highlighting people’s sense of connection and opportunity. There is time and space in Bunbury.

**The practice – policy meets passion**

The focus on the health and wellbeing of children is the unifying theme of the Early Years Network. The vision of the Network was established within a few months of the forum and is indicative of passion in the local community. The stated vision of the Bunbury Early Years Network is…

The Early Years of development are a vital foundation for our children's future. The knowledge, action and communication of this is our passion and priority (Early Years Bunbury, 2005).

The vision of the local group is clearly compatible with the goals of the Early Years Strategy; the promotion of the importance of early development, empowerment and advocacy for children and their carers, creating connections across the community and government sectors (Early Years Strategy, 2006). People focus on the knowledge base of early development and how it can be used to good effect in the
local community. The brain development research establishes the importance of early childhood and authorises action at a policy and a community level.

*It is really around bringing the evidence base together with local knowledge to make sure that projects fit with the community.* (Observation 2)

*I guess I use the research as the evidence base, the theory base to promote what we do, to justify what we do. It’s obvious now, we’ve got the proof that we need to start taking children seriously and putting more money into that area so we don’t need to put it in twenty years down the track or ten years down the track.* (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)

**Balancing tangible outcomes and cultural change**

While there is strong agreement within the group to the broad vision there are, however, a range of perspectives within the group on how best to work towards it. There are people happy to move with the process and the energy of the Network and people that prefer tangible outcomes. Tangible outcomes and objectives support the involvement of some people in the Network, either because it enables them to show the value of involvement in their work roles, or because they personally prefer to have clear direction for action (or simply the promise of a useful resource). The following quotes highlight these types of responses.

*I guess for me... the Early Years Network has real potential for linking a lot of services and letting us work a little bit more collaboratively. A lot of people that I have dealt with in the past have been legal services that kind of thing. The Early Years Network was something really new for me and for the service that I’m involved in.* (Participant Community Sector Interview 4)
Because I work for the government I’m very conscious of how I spend my time, I have to explain myself to my managers. I’m just accountable I have to be accountable for my time. I guess I would be uncomfortable in a meeting that did go round and round and I’m a nurse too and nurses are action-orientated people. (Participant Health Sector Interview 2)

One of the things that we discussed at the initial meeting was a compendium of services available for children in Bunbury. I would find it very useful as a teacher because people come to me, with all kinds of issues that affect children but just keeping that up to date would be a big job. There’s always a lot of stuff happening in Bunbury. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

I think it’s really hard for parents, it’s hard for me as a professional to find out what’s out there. I don’t know how they do it, and I suspect they don’t. I suspect many services and opportunities pass people by because they don’t know they’re there. There is no central co-ordination. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

People who prefer to focus on the broad vision and the energy of the Network express caution about a complete focus on tangible outcomes, viewing processes and cultural change as central to the community development of the Early Years Network. The following quotes encapsulate these types of goals.

I’m a bit wary when people want to have clear objectives because I think there is a danger that things become trivialised and we lose sight of the big picture. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)
What puts me off the Early Years is when I hear people talking about accountability and to measure objectives because that sets me up in the same old framework. I just feel very restricted by that. How do you measure the worth of a conversation and the dialogue of people’s ideas? How do you measure that growth? (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

I still think we only value a product, something we can measure rather than actually seeing the process of the networking or of children thinking. Especially where there is money involved it’s about balancing those two, I think they can work together. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

Start talking about brain development so it’s part of our thinking framework out in the high schools and all that sort of thing and that is something I would love to see. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

What I love about the Early Years is having people speak [guest speakers at the forum for example]. I think it draws people who wouldn’t normally come and inspires them. Even if it doesn’t happen now maybe later on down the track it’s a paradigm shift changing that awareness, to me if nothing else there is all of a sudden a dialogue happening within the community. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

The other outcome I would want to see would be that as a community we really took our children seriously. I think as a culture, and this is not just a Bunbury thing, but I think as a culture we don’t really take our children seriously. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)
The differences in participants’ understandings of change bring balance; some hold firm to a big picture vision for young children and others focus on short-term attainable outcomes.

**The ebb and flow of participation**

The strengths and limitations of community in Bunbury, recognised near the front of this practice story, indicate there are some concerns within the group about who is and who isn’t involved. While the size and location of Bunbury are generally seen to be an asset to the community and effective for collaboration under the Early Years Network, there is also concern about the limitations of involvement and participation that comes with a population the size of Greater Bunbury. Discussions around these issues of participation and representation were ongoing over the time of the fieldwork.

*The challenge for us is that the group will ebb and flow, how do we accommodate that so that people can come and go? It is important to allow flexibility so that people can come and go and not see it as a closed group.* (Observation 3)

*I think the Early Years is really helping if it’s working hand-in-hand with government and community. The challenge I have is when I see the group of people here we are mostly professionals and I wonder maybe if that’s my job, going back to what I’m doing with families. I have networks through the school they can pass that on to other people. You want to be able to attract professionals to a group like this but you also want the grassroots — and that’s an issue and I don’t know how it can be resolved.* (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

*My concern is it is easy to get people here involved but what about other people not in this room or who don’t know this room exists.* (Observation 1)
The following exchange between a number of people at a Network meeting (Observation 2) indicate that some are wanting to address issues of participation immediately, while for others this will develop as the Network becomes more established.

Who is here? All the people that are here and were at the forum as well have a professional interest. Twenty five percent at the forum were there as parents. Six people that were there are young parents without exception they have indicated that they are happy to be involved again. My point was though that none of them are here. They indicated that they were willing to do other things. It should be parent driven not driven by professionals. Well if we start here we can move out to bring in other people and groups. I’m from Breastfeeding Australia I do that as a volunteer.

The distinction between the roles of professional, volunteer, parent and community member sits at the heart of these concerns. Some participants see these roles as distinct while for others the roles are not mutually exclusive. The final comment in the conversation highlights the assumptions that underpin discussion about participation and representation. People who position themselves as professionals and community members, or people who represent organisations as volunteers, don’t see the issue in quite the same way. People are willing to move forward with those in the room and build energy for action. They may look like professionals to someone else but they feel they are part of the grassroots of Bunbury and that over time the representation of the Network will grow. There is time and space in Bunbury.

**Getting support and making connections**

The Early Years Network has clear and unambiguous links to government, as demonstrated by government action to instigate the project under the Early Years Strategy. At the Network level the project is seen as an opportunity with the potential to achieve something that has previously been tried but did not take off through grassroots action.
This really interested me because we had got somewhere from a real bottom-up process and it really just got so hard and so long term. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

I was really interested in the process because I had been through this sort of process myself a couple of years ago and hadn’t got anywhere and that’s why we went down the track of the school [an independent school]. We actually had a group of three parents, we had set out being young Mum’s doing something different for people to take parents seriously. We had set up a process with the government and we actually got funding, but with the change of government it all fell in a hole. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)

I’m involved in a bottom-up organisation in which a grassroots group of teachers who are passionate about early childhood education come together to share ideas, experiences and challenges. While it’s great to be a part of this group, it is very difficult for us to influence the wider education community. I sometimes wish that someone in government would recognise what we are doing and say, look at what these guys are doing. (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

I thought you really do need that government and community working hand in hand. Doing the bottom-up is extremely difficult because you get shut doors. And I think working top-down is extremely difficult because people want programs and I’ve done all parenting programs and things like that but when they end, they end you’re on your own. It needs to be self-sustaining and about people trusting themselves and being able to say lets get out there. (Participant School Sector Interview 6)
A central focus of community development at the Early Years Network is connection. The Network supports people’s efforts to generate interest and support for early development at a community level. The Network establishes a hub for networking, sharing knowledge and generating ideas for action in the local community.

*I realised that I was working in isolation. Not within the school system but I was aware that there was all this stuff happening out there but I didn’t know what it was or what they did. So, when Sandra said that it was a government strategy to try and bring some of those things together, that was the thing that really got me interested because there were things out there in the community that I was remote from.* (Participant School Sector Interview 5)

*I think definitely, as a result of the Early Years Network there was a lot more connection.* (Participant Community Sector Interview 4)

*Milligan House and us always thought that we were running quite similar programs, but in reality there is a lot bigger scope than what we really thought. There are lots of ways I think we can work more collaboratively together because we do have some similar services and we do provide the room hire but then we also can complement each other in lots of ways. I think that’s been a real revelation that has come out of this Early Years involvement. With regards to the Community Health we’re so close to each other and so linked but we were not using those connections appropriately. They’re probably the two strongest links for me personally that I’ve picked up. Certainly as well, going along to the meeting, has also got me in touch with a few more schools which has been good in regards to sharing with the schools how our service can help some of the*
We have to do better in what we provide for our children

The Early Years Network is a civil society government partnership formed to combine research and community understandings of child development to promote the importance of the early years of a child’s life. The action of community development in this instance is embedded in the civil society of Bunbury through the formation of a local network. The Early Years Network is supported by national and international brain development research underpinning the importance of early child health. Congruent to this, the value of local knowledge, skills and resources are asserted through the action of the Network to utilise this information at the local level. As the catalyst for change, the brain development research validates participants’ calls for support, community cooperation, and collaboration to promote the importance of the early development of children.

Network participants express a passion for early development. Policy action coincided with community action creating fertile ground for the Early Years Network. Participants vary in their expectations of community development at the Early Years Network: some are comfortable with ideas and processes moving along unencumbered by the need for immediate tangible results, others need the way forward identified with set outcomes. In terms of participation the population of Bunbury is considered small enough to be an advantage in fostering community development, yet the limitations of grassroots involvement in a population the size of a regional centre are well understood and an ongoing issue for discussion in the Network. Community development happens at the Early Years Network through passionate commitment to people and place.

We say we value our children but we can’t wait to get them off to school or back to school when it’s holidays, when we’re in the shop and there's a child screaming it’s really

separated families that are at the school. That has highlighted the service a little bit more amongst other places as well, which has been good. (Participant Community Sector Interview 4)
interesting to watch all the negative looks from others. So I think we’ve got a long way to go as far as putting our children on a pedestal and really valuing them as a culture within themselves. I think the potential for the brain research is that that might happen. People might actually stop and think “Gee, if we haven’t got it right with our children, then we actually haven’t got it right with our community.”

(Participant School Sector Interview 5)

The beauty of Bunbury rests in the natural assets, the sand dunes of the coast and the inlet, and the time and space in the community. The town is outward looking with the port and the boats off shore a central facet of the place. Similarly, people are open to the Early Years Strategy. There is time and space in Bunbury.
Chapter Twelve: Themes of community development from the south west region

This chapter reports themes of community development from each of the case study sites. The themes come from the within-case thematic analysis process carried out for each case study site. The chapter commences with a brief consideration of the place of thematic analysis in case study research and argues that the process of thematic analysis supports epistemological holism. The data analysis process used to identify themes is outlined in Chapter Six – Methods. Examples of the analysis are shown in Appendix Three. The full set of themes from the community development practices from each site, are reported. The themes are presented in geographic order from south to north.

The practice stories presented in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven and the themes presented in this chapter are a result of the within-case data analyses. The cross-case analysis in my research brings understandings from the four practice stories of community development and the four sets of community development themes together. The cross-case findings are reported in the following chapter, Chapter Thirteen. Chapters Eight through to Thirteen combine to answer the second sub-question of the research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia?

This chapter commences with a discussion of the place of thematic analysis in research espousing epistemological holism and reports the within-case themes from each of the case study sites.

Thematic analysis in research espousing epistemological holism

The first point to be addressed in this chapter is the place and purpose of thematic analysis in case study research underpinned by epistemological holism. Thematic analysis may appear to run counter to epistemological holism, yet it is central to Stake’s (2006) non-comparative cross-case analysis. As outlined in Chapter Five – Methodology, distinctions between case and variable are commonly highlighted in
the case study literature but not always followed in proposed case study designs. Yin’s (1994, 2003) replication logic design, for example, focuses primarily on variables and as such is in direct contradiction to claims to holism. Stake’s (2006) cross-case analysis positions the case as the primary foundation for understanding and brings understandings from a number of cases together through a complex process of identifying themes relevant to the object (or as Stake calls it, the quintain) of the research. The exploration of such differences highlights the way in which the application of Yin (1994) and Stake (1995, 2006) as though they were epistemologically consistent is an easy trap for novice researchers, although less likely in our contemporary context with greater emphasis on the articulation of case study through its own strength (Thomas, 2011a, 2011b).

The contrast between the themes and the practice stories in my research was in itself a central understanding gained from the cross-case analysis. The narrative and thematic analyses draw out very different aspects of community development practice. For example, the themes for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. are conflict, unity and representation, described in full below. The practice story, on the other hand, highlights the tensions between process and action; clarifies the purpose of practice through description of place; expands the story of community development beyond an identifiable act of initiation; and emphasises the fluidity of community. There is crossover between the two: the theme of conflict, for example, is present in the description of place, although the way understanding is shaped in each approach is very different. The difference between findings from the practice stories and themes indicate how thematic analysis contributes to understanding of the case, such as argued by Stake (2006). The thematic analysis could be used to strengthen the practice stories, although this has not been done in my research; the two are held separate. Undertaking the thematic analysis in my research did, however, emphasise the understandings held in the practice stories.

The knowledge held in the practice stories is essentially embedded in its presentation. It is more cumbersome to draw a specific point from the practice stories because the data is presented within a whole. Undertaking the thematic analysis and experiencing the ease of identifying particular themes as findings served to emphasise the difficulty of doing so for the practice stories. Contrasting the
thematic analysis with the practice stories brought understandings from the practice stories into focus. Looking at the data of each site thematically highlighted what the practice stories emphasise. Thus the experience of undertaking the thematic analysis affirmed the suitability of the practice stories as vehicles for knowledge in community development. The focus on practice stories as a form of reporting and theorising community development is long established and remains a strong force in the current theorising, despite the dominance of theoretical frameworks. The contrast between a narrative and a thematic analysis of the data affirmed this aspect of community development and served to highlight understandings gained from the former. While both describe community development, each emphasises different aspects of practice. The thematic analysis emphasises specific characteristics, while the practice stories emphasise community development in context, an emphasis we cannot meet in our theorising. The next section of this chapter reports thematic analysis of community development from the four sites.

**Full report of the thematic analysis**

**Northcliffe Youth Voice themes**

Three central themes coalesce to describe community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice: “the kids have the running of it,” “but they’re not doing anything,” and having “a place to be.” As outlined in the practice story for Northcliffe Youth Voice (see Chapter Eight), young people are the focus of community development. While adults are involved in various roles, the central assertion in the data was that “the kids have the running of it.” The types of ideas that sit under this theme are that “the kids decide what will happen,” “they take responsibility,” “they make things happen for themselves,” “they cannot just sit back”; these are all key epithets used by people involved to describe community development at the site. The responsibility and power of the central role of young people is viewed as a key benefit of community development in this context. It was described as an opportunity and as preparing young people to be adults. This results in young people being invited to participate in other community projects. The community development practice of Northcliffe Youth Voice is driven by young people.
The second theme expresses the approach to community development at the site. People involved in Northcliffe Youth Voice say their approach is epitomised by the puzzlement of onlookers stating “but they’re not doing anything.” The concept of “hanging out” is a central characteristic of community development practice at the site. Community development practice at Northcliffe Youth Voice is about people, place and being together; it is not about the things they do. It is accepted that this approach takes a while to understand. The community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice is not reliant on any one person, young people grow and other young people join. The youth worker changes and the process fits around the different qualities people bring to the role. Participation or “hanging out” at Northcliffe Youth Voice is open to all young people in the local area. If there is a conflict between young people, they continue to come to Northcliffe Youth Voice; the space is neutral anyone and everyone participates. The focus of community development is on participation rather than action, hence the statement “but they’re not doing anything.” But what they are doing is “hanging out”: the process of being together is the essence of community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice.

The third theme emphasises the place and space created by the practice of the group in the local community. The central purpose of Northcliffe Youth Voice is the idea of young people having “a place to be” in the community. This maintains the focus on young people and on the process of the group. The members at the time of the fieldwork talk about space, place and time dedicated to young people in Northcliffe. The time was Friday nights and the place was the Northcliffe Family Centre, yet the space used spread out from the centre to encompass the town. People interviewed during the fieldwork described this place and time as instilling a sense of belonging and ownership for young people: ownership and belonging of the group, of Northcliffe Family Centre and of the community and the town. The sense of place young people experience through Northcliffe Youth Voice extends to the town, and people involved at the time of the fieldwork attributed this to the sustainability of Northcliffe. Hence the notion of young people having “a place to be” in Northcliffe supports their connection to Northcliffe, which in turn “will just keep the community going on and on and on.”
The central themes of Northcliffe Youth Voice highlight three characteristics of community development: power, process and place. The power in decision making and responsibility is expressed in the notion of the “kids have the running of it.” The action of practice is held in “hanging out” and in the processes of decision-making and interaction in the group. Hence people unversed in how things work wonder about what is happening, expressed in the epithet “but they’re not doing anything.” The idea of having “a place to be” enables the focus on power and process and is particularly important in the small isolated town of Northcliffe.

Northcliffe Community Development Inc. themes

Three central themes in the data for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. are: “an amazing mix of people of groups and interests”; “all members of that group believe in Northcliffe”; and “makes representation important.” The first theme characterises the essence of the work for Northcliffe Community Development Inc. There is “an amazing mix of people of groups and interests.” The quote continues to clarify what is amazing about this mix of people: “quite a lot of conflicting interests I guess in a way.” This is the crux of practice at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. People that would not usually associate with each other have come together for the purpose of community development. There are people who are together outside of the group, but overall the membership represents very different perspectives within the Northcliffe community. Whenever people talk about the value of the group it is in relation to this feature: people who would not usually do anything together come together to work across their differences for Northcliffe. For some members, the value of hearing each other’s opinion is central; for others the discussion brings things out into the open. The variety of people is both the strength and the Achilles heel of community development at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. The ideas that underpin this theme highlight the mix of people as the central value of the group; it enables contact with very different opinions and perspectives and demonstrates the tensions between “process” and the need to “do something” as central to the realisation that there is “no one-way to take community development.” Trying to balance the tension between action and process is an aspect of community development practice taking considerable energy at the time of the fieldwork. The variety of approaches possible for community development are acknowledged as people try to step away from their own conceptions of practice to
work in ways in which everyone has connection. Hence the first theme concentrates on the feat of coming together across these differences.

The second theme of community development at the site is what unifies the group: “all members of that group believe in Northcliffe.” The ideas that underpin this theme are about the nature of the place. Northcliffe is a “very vocal and passionate place” and the community was “badly affected by the timber debate.” As outlined in the practice story (see Chapter Nine), commitment is a characteristic of the Northcliffe community as a whole; Northcliffe is a very vocal and passionate place. People acknowledge the trouble this may cause for a single group trying to represent Northcliffe. People are committed to the need for community-wide representation to address issues that threaten the viability of the township. There is agreement that the community is “seriously hurting” and that the point of community development in this instance is to build a unified response. People are willing to work together across differences because of their commitment to the town. Everyone believes in Northcliffe. Northcliffe is the binding force that brings this group together.

The third theme is the culmination of the previous two themes as the commitment to work together for the town in the context of contested perspectives “makes representation important.” As outlined in the practice story, issues of representation were contested. While many members agreed with a mix of community association representatives and elected individuals, others did not. Some had strong opinions on the need for a majority of community association representatives, while others held reservations about the restriction of nominations to incorporated associations. The ideas that sit under this theme include “energy in groups” (groups in this context refers to community associations in Northcliffe), “important to gather groups together” (again the broader community groups in Northcliffe), “communication between groups” (community groups in Northcliffe), and “we need individuals as well as groups.” This issue was contentious at the time of the fieldwork and people’s perception was that the debate was affecting their progress, as expressed by the ideas of: “leave the constitution alone,” “it’s not quite melding,” “we’re not progressing,” and “credibility.” The theme encapsulates the focus of community development at the site as the effort involved in working together. Overall, there is a strong commitment to supporting the community organisations of Northcliffe but there was
also a strong determination to see Northcliffe Community Development Inc. do something more to work for Northcliffe as a whole.

The central themes of community development at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. can be described as: conflict, unity and representation. The coming together of people from both sides of a broader conflict felt at the community level is identified by the notion of “an amazing mix of people.” The town of Northcliffe is the unifying force that enables people to work together – collective action stems from their common belief in the town. The final theme is focused on how to best represent a town where passionate commitments diverge on some perspectives and converge on Northcliffe’s sustainability.

**Vintage – A Home Town For Life themes**

The thematic analysis process for Vintage – A Home Town For Life revealed four central themes: “make something happen,” “change their thinking,” “understand the nature of the other” and “just as passionate as they are.” The first theme characterises the need for community development at Vintage – A Home Town For Life. The need for accommodation and support services for people as they age in Balingup was well recognised for many years. The key concern for Balingup residents was that people left the town. The ideas of “we’ve lost some really, really excellent people” and “a number of people who are at that critical stage” highlight the loss to the community and the immediate need for aged housing and support. This theme “make something happen” highlights the longevity of the issue in Balingup. The local branch of the Country Women’s Association (CWA) “started trying to push and kept pushing and kept joining each new iteration,” and the difficulties of “trying to persuade” government clash with the “can-do community” approach of Balingup. The need for action is central. The group known as Vintage – A Home Town For Life has come together to take action and “make something happen.”

The second theme, “change their thinking,” characterises the approach of Vintage to the issue of aged care and accommodation. Neither Local nor State Government have addressed the issue, despite long years of agitation and the donation of land. This situation combines with people’s unhappy experiences of traditional aged care
and knowledge of alternative approaches to make the notion of “changing their thinking” central to the vision of Vintage. A central strategy for Vintage is getting “the terminology right.” The “quality of life principles” and the emphasis on a “home town for life” characterise their response to the needs of an aging population, while the notions of “community enterprise,” “real grass roots operate via networks” and “react and deliver” characterise their approach to addressing community need.

The third theme, “understand the nature of the other,” focuses on working together. While Vintage – A Home Town For Life is a small group with clear goals, the notion of struggle is ever present in the data. It took a long time for the group to “understand the nature of the other” participants yet, with work, “eventually we all agreed.” The struggle is characterised by the “rivalling of the idea of what Vintage should do.” At the time of the fieldwork, the members agreed on many things and were consistent with terminology. The struggles centred on what should happen first: the buildings versus the ideals and structure of Vintage; the buildings versus services for people. The issue was both long-term and urgent. For people who saw the buildings as the priority, “the impetus for this whole thing [was] undermined by it taking so long.” The struggles also centre on approach, such as: working with or against government, challenging versus compromising, plugging away at the bottom versus going direct to the top. The perception is that ultimately the struggle was worth it: “the Vintage group has a much bigger picture in mind, it’s been for the best for sure.”

The fourth theme highlights the nature of the interchange with government: “they know I am just as passionate as they are.” Working with government has been a test for Vintage; given the history of government inaction on the issue their first instinct was to work without government. Yet relationships have facilitated ways of working with government. People who work for government who are already known in the community either as locals or through past experience, have changed the perspective of people in Vintage: “they know I am just as passionate as they are.” The group has had a good reception from higher levels of State Government, which has provided a sense of power on action at the local level. The Home Town For Life vision has supported this because people are not just asking government for the same old thing that they have previously been denied — they are addressing a more universal issue.
of age care and quality of life and in rural communities where the aging population is impacting more quickly than in other parts of Australia. The ideas that underpin this theme include “the history is definitely breaking down,” and if “they can support us in some ways, that would be wise.”

The central themes of community development at Vintage can be described as: action, change, understanding and relationships. The action of the group stems from place and need. The coincidence of Balingup’s reputation as a “can-do community,” and long-standing and acute need for aged care support and accommodation, combine to make action the central focus – “really needs to make something happen.” The second theme is focused on changing thinking and is about articulating change that is more than just the provision of accommodation. The third highlights the role of understanding within the group as crucial to collective action. The final theme highlights the importance of relationships with people working in government.

**Early Years Network themes**

Four central themes came out of the thematic analysis process for the Bunbury Early Years Network: “drawing people together,” “start talking about brain development,” “a really big opportunity for something special,” and “it’s bigger than our ideology.” The idea of “drawing people together” and “approaching people” characterises participation in community development for the Early Years Network. The ideas that underpin this theme are “people,” “participation,” “agencies,” “groups,” “policy,” and “working in partnerships.” Bunbury was identified by government as a site, yet people with an interest in the early years welcomed this event. People with an interest in the early years of child development expressed the idea that “the time has come for people to do something differently.” Government action was, for them, important to making things happen. The initiation of the process from the top-down was viewed as support for their work. The identity of the group within the policy framework of the Early Years Strategy is shaped by their location, Bunbury, and by the universal nature of the importance of early child development. There is ongoing discussion about who is involved and who should be involved. The identities of professionals and parents are most commonly debated. The separation of the terms
does not suit everyone. Professionals in the group also saw themselves as community members and/or parents. A representative from Breastfeeding Australia pushed back the identities being thrown around and identified herself as a volunteer. The idea of “drawing people together” was central to working with these issues of participation.

The second theme focused on the research that underpins the importance of early development. The idea that the community would “start talking about brain development” was central to the community development of the group. The ideas behind this theme include “brain development research,” “early development,” and “the unacceptable gap between what we know… and what we do.” The passion and commitment of people to this knowledge is demonstrated by participant’s aims of “talking about brain development so it’s part of our thinking framework out in the high schools… that is something I would love to see,” and their hopes for the impact on the community: “people might actually stop and think — gee, if we haven’t got it right with our children, then we actually haven’t got it right with our community.” The brain development research is central to the social change being sought through the community development of the Early Years Network. The idea of “taking children seriously” is a defining aspect of purpose. The central action of community development was tied to community awareness and community education in relation to “taking children seriously.” There is acknowledgement that this is known already by parents, and that the work lies at the community and cultural level. The brain research convinces people and local knowledge helps to identify how to move forward with community awareness.

The third theme identifies local commitment in the context of initiation of action from government, with the statement that the Early Years Network was “a really big opportunity for something special to happen in Bunbury.” Community education, awareness raising, integration and collaboration across services were central to the action of the Network and well suited to the geography, population and service sector of Bunbury. The ideas that underpin this theme include “place,” “strengths,” “action,” and “the potential for linking lots of services and letting us work [a] bit more collaboratively.” The place is big enough to have services and momentum yet small enough for relationships to be effective. The “timing was immaculate.” There were initiatives in the community, yet not enough connections. The government
intervention to facilitate community wide attention to the matter is viewed as a fantastic opportunity and, when mixed with the natural attributes of Bunbury, as very special. The association drawn between “getting it right for children” and “getting it right for the community” is where action is located in the community development of the Early Years Network.

The fourth theme in the data of the Early Years Network was the notion that “it’s bigger than our ideology.” The common commitment to early development unifies the group across philosophies and perspectives. The ideas that come together in this theme are “passion,” “opportunity,” “bigger than our ideologies,” “people have to trust themselves,” “dialogue” and “voice.” Notions of passion and opportunity are very strong in the data for the site. The passion is ignited by the focus on the early development of children as many people are already strongly attached to this issue in the local community. Different perspectives and positions in the community come together easily around this issue and people recognise each other’s passion and commitment over and above their differences in approach. People are seeking a community dialogue as part of awareness raising and community education and integration of services. The dialogue is the vehicle for the voice championing the importance of the early years.

The central themes of community development at the Early Years Network can be described as participation, knowledge, place and passion. Participation is established by “drawing people together.” The focus of participation is knowledge hence a central action of practice at the site is to “start talking about brain development.” People’s sense of place in Bunbury makes them enthusiastic. The characteristics of Bunbury as a place are opportune, as is the timing of the approach from government. People see their community as perfectly placed for “a really big opportunity for something special.” The final theme is focused on the passionate commitment to early development encapsulated by the statement “it’s bigger than our ideology.”

**Conclusion for Chapter Twelve**

Chapter Twelve commenced by considering the purpose of thematic analysis in case study research underpinned by epistemological holism and reports the themes for
each case study site. Chapter Twelve concludes the reporting of within-case analysis of my research. Understandings from the practice stories and the themes are combined through cross-case analysis to answer the second sub-question of my research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? The findings from the cross-case analysis are reported in the following chapter, Chapter Thirteen. The cross-case findings are understandings from the everyday practices of community development, identified through the within-case analyses for exploring our theorising of community development.
Chapter Thirteen: Cross-case findings

Cross-case findings in my research stem from the four case studies of everyday practices of community development and offer a perspective from which to explore our theorising of community development. The case studies in my research are positioned as a source of knowledge for informing the theorising of community development. The practice stories, presented in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven, stem from within-case narrative analysis of the community development practice of each community group. The themes, presented in Chapter Twelve, stem from within-case thematic analysis of the community development practice of each community group. The cross-case findings presented in this chapter stem from the accumulated understandings of the practice stories and themes. The within-case and cross-case analyses of the community development practices of community groups from the south west region of Western Australia combine to answer the second sub-question of my research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? The first section of this chapter presents cross-case findings from the practice stories of community development reported in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven. The second section of this chapter presents cross-case findings from the community development themes reported in Chapter Twelve.

The cross-case findings presented in this chapter offer understandings from everyday practices of community development from the south west region of Western Australia for exploring our theorising of community development. Research reports commonly focus on findings and portray analysis and discussion of these findings within the context of relevant theorising. I use the term findings in a very specific way. Findings in my research refers to understandings from four case studies of community development from the south west region of Western Australia. While these findings stem from researching the four community development sites, ultimately the research is not focused on the practices of the participating community groups but on what these practices tell us about community development theorising. The community groups are positioned in my research as sources of knowledge (see Chapter One and Chapter Five). The cross-case findings are thus used to explore the theorising of community development in the Australian context (see Chapter Fourteen).
A holistic focus on the practice of each participating community group is maintained throughout this report. The practice stories and themes from the four case study sites are not, therefore, compared and contrasted; rather, the cross-case findings are from the collection of case studies and run across all four cases or are relevant to specific cases. Each case study site is viewed holistically. The data from each case study site is kept separate throughout this research. Thus the integrity of the practice at each site is maintained in line with the case study methodology outlined for this research (see Chapter Five), and as central to the ethical approach of the research to working with the participating community groups (see Chapters Five and Six).
Everyday practices speak back to theory

Within-case analysis

- Narrative analysis – Practices stories
- Thematic analysis – Themes

Cross-case analysis

- Cross-case finding practice stories
  - Fluidity of community
  - Lead up to community development
  - Role of narrator in deciding beginning, middle and end
  - Heroism in practice stories
- Cross-case findings themes
  - Process, Place, Relationship, Conflict, Understanding, Passion

Everyday practices speak back to theory

Understandings of community development
- Normativity of bottom-up
- Process is imperceptible
- Collective action takes effort
- Fluid boundaries
- Context is a threat to theory
- The threat of theorising

The storying of community development
- The beginnings
- The obligations of the narrator
- The hero’s quest
- The endings
Six cross-case findings from the community development practice stories

This section outlines the cross-case findings from the practice stories. The first four cross-case findings presented are held in the content of the practice stories. The last two cross-case findings stem from the experience of writing the practice stories.

Two cross-case findings on holism and story

The holism of story as a form of explanation enhances portrayal of the contextualised and collective nature of community development. The idea of plot is central to plausibility in the practice stories. If the interchange between phenomena and its environment (Abbott, 1992) is articulated through plot, the practice stories are central to describing the action of the group as a whole and in context (see discussion under Chapter Five – Methodology and Chapter Six – Methods). Knowledge of the place in which practice happens enhances our understanding of community development, as the practice stories bring the interaction between community development practice and context into focus. Community development is a collective endeavour and the practice stories focus on what holds the group together; yet to tell an authentic story an acknowledgement of what separates members of the group is also required. The practice stories enable the portrayal of the actions of the community group as a whole (not just the ideas of some members). Data that describes competing perspectives may be analysed and portrayed to emphasise division in the group or to emphasise the way the group works across difference. The assumption in this research is that emphasising the collective best shows how community development happens. The way in which the group holds together across differences is also highlighted in cross-case findings from the themes reported in Chapter Twelve. The practice stories show the work and effort involved in establishing and maintaining the collective. Emphasising context and the collective are choices made by the researcher as narrator, such choices are indicative of holism in terms of plot and community development practice. The following identifies ways in which holism in story reflects the contextualised and collective nature of community development. Examples for context include all four practice
stories. Examples for the collective are from the practice stories of Northcliffe Community Development Inc., Vintage, and the Early Years Network.

Holism reflects the contextualised nature of community development

This section provides examples of the way in which holism reflects interaction between context and practice in community development. The community development practice of Northcliffe Youth Voice and Northcliffe Community Development Inc. are very different. The first is characterised by process; the second is characterised by working across “conflicting interests” for the sustainability of Northcliffe. Despite these differences, the particular history and character of Northcliffe (see the beginning of Chapter Eight) enriches the descriptions of community development at each site. Knowledge of Northcliffe emphasises the effort required to forge collective action and explains the struggles within the group at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. and it underscores the feat of unity at Northcliffe Youth Voice. Hence, the achievements of community development are more easily recognised with knowledge of the place in which practice occurs. The character of Balingup as a “can-do community,” and the history of the community’s attempts to address the issue of aged accommodation and support, combine to strengthen understanding of community development at Vintage – A Home Town For Life. The history of failure of the usual ways of providing age care help to explain the unique approach of the group. The idea expressed in the data of the Early Years Network, “opportunity for something special to happen,” illustrates the connection between the characteristics of Bunbury and the community development practice of the group. Equally, knowledge of people’s long held commitments to early development prior to the identification of Bunbury as a site clarify the passion. Hence, the broader description of people and place strengthens the account of community development at the site. The practice stories provide an opportunity to establish a motif as a strategy for conveying the character of practice at each site. For Northcliffe Youth Voice the strongest motif stems directly from practice in the idea of “a place to be.” For Northcliffe Community Development Inc., Vintage – A Home Town For Life and the Early Years Network, the motifs stem from the strengths of place and time in each location. For Northcliffe Community Development Inc. ‘it’s a passionate and resilient place,’ for Vintage ‘it’s a lively place,’ and for the Network, ‘there is time and space in Bunbury.’
Holism reflects the collective nature of community development

This section provides examples of the connection between holism in story and the collective nature of community development. The tension between process and action in the practices of community development described in this thesis is a clear example of people working to balance their differences to maintain collective endeavour. The tension between process and action is described in the practice story of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. under the heading ‘Balancing process and doing something.’ A focus on process highlights the nature of participation and issues of membership and representation. A focus on action highlights the need to “do something.” For some members, issues of process are the priority; whereas for others, action is paramount. The Vintage practice story identifies a tension between process and action as the priority for community development, under the heading ‘Two priorities: bricks-n-mortar and process.’ Process oriented participants focus on conceptualisations of care and establishing a responsive and sustainable organisational structure. Action oriented participants want the buildings to get underway. The Early Years Network practice story highlights a tension between process and action under the heading ‘Balancing tangible outcomes and cultural change.’ While the group express coherence around the vision and goals of community development, there are people who seek to bring the vision to fruition through “the process of the networking”; others are self-described as “action-orientated people” who emphasise action.

This tension also plays out around perceptions of the work of the group in the broader community, an issue especially expressed in the practice stories of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. and Vintage – A Home Town For Life. There is a perception in Northcliffe Community Development Inc. that the group lacks credibility and that people outside the group are not aware of the effort going into forging the collective. The practice story outlines perceptions that people within the group have greater awareness of how the group operates and why things take longer to achieve than expected by people outside the group. Equally, the following quote encapsulates concerns about the profile of Vintage in the Balingup community: “if we were to lay half a dozen bricks on the site for a house, I think that we would go up in everybody’s estimation. Seriously, even if they sat there for a
little while; because it appears everybody wants the bricks-n-mortar. That’s the focus for the community.”

It is interesting to note that a tension such as this is not part of community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice, where the group is in unison on the notion of process. This finding supports that reported under themes for Northcliffe Youth Voice, that process is imperceptible to people outside the group. The practice story of Northcliffe Youth Voice indicates imperceptibility may also extend to people new to the group; that is, people inside the group but unfamiliar to working with process.

**Cross-case finding on the fluidity of community**

The second finding focuses on concepts of community in the practice stories of community development. Each of the practice stories highlight the sense of community that forms within the group of participants directly involved in the community development process. This sense of community reflects the collective endeavour mentioned above and will be referred to as the *collective community*. The majority of people in the collective community live locally. The collective community may however include people who do not live in the local context. All of the community development practice stories, with the exception of Northcliffe Youth Voice, include people from outside their local area in their collective community. For example, the collective community of Vintage – A Home Town For Life consists of participants and those supportive of the group, such as the “Friends of Vintage,” the employed community worker and representatives of Local and State Government.

As well as the collective community, another form of community referred to frequently in the practice stories includes other people (not participating in their community development) in their local communities of Bunbury, Balingup or Northcliffe, and also extends to representatives of Local and State Government, and other broader interests. This is another form of community with the capacity to impact on people’s practice of community development. This sense of community reflects broader notions of community and will be referred to as the *broader community*. The broader community consists of those who sit outside but have
influence on the collective community. The broader community may include people from the local context who are ignorant of, or indifferent to, people’s community development action, and it may include people who actively work against the community development. The broader community may also include people that do not live locally yet may influence community development at the site in negative ways. For example, the broader community for Vintage includes some sectors of the population of Balingup and some sections of Local and State Government.

The collective community works for or supports community development, while the broader community works against or is indifferent to the community development. The ideas of the collective community and the broader community in my research demonstrate the fluidity of community in local contexts, even in very small rural communities such as Balingup and Northcliffe. The ideas of the collective community and broader community also highlight the porosity of boundaries between state and civil society and, as such, emphasise the conditions of context and the complexity of community in the circumstances of community development.

Cross-case findings on the lead up to community development

The practice stories presented in this research indicate that a series of events led up to community development at each site. Each of the practice stories support the contention that there is an initiation event for community development. For example, the initiation of community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice stemmed from the unwillingness of government to act on the recommendations of the youth consultation in the Shire of Manjimup. The practice of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. stemmed from the community meetings facilitated under the Timber Industries project. At Balingup, community reaction to a local government meeting in which the Shire reported that aged care was provided for Balingup in Donnybrook ignited the action of Vintage. The Early Years Network community development practice commenced when the State level policy, the Early Years Strategy, identified Bunbury as a site. If notions of bottom-up and top-down characterise community development, the practices of Northcliffe Youth Voice and Vintage, initiated through the actions of community members, could be described as bottom-up, while the practices of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. and the
Early Years Network, initiated through government action, could be described as top-down.

The practice stories of this research portray a more complex story for each site. The initiation actions listed above are each part of a longer story. There is invariably a lead up to these events in each instance of practice. For example, the lead up to community development at Northcliffe Youth Voice was a consultation of young people in the Shire of Manjimup. The findings of a Human Rights Commission investigation into the rights of people with mental illness identified particular issues for young people in rural, regional and remote locations, hence the consultation was encouraged and funded by the Commonwealth Government. If these events are included, the story of community development at the site stems from a long history of government and community interaction, action and inaction. The practice story of the Early Years Network is another example. The lead up to community development was the adoption of the policy of the Early Years Strategy by the State Government. The practice story credits the research group known as NIFTeY (the National Investment for the Early Years) with the adoption of this policy. A researcher from NIFTeY identifies with the people and recounts the need to push government, initially not interested, to act. As such, the community development of the Early Years Network stems from a long history of government and community interaction, action and inaction.

Working with the data to construct the practice stories of community development, it appears that if we think about the initiation of community development in terms of the action identified as simply either bottom-up and top-down we leave out much of the story. Each practice story commenced with a description of the historical, social and political context and the experience of the researcher entering the field. The description of context brings into focus the events that led up to the initiation of community development at the site. The lead up story was volunteered by participants, through interviews and archival records, in response to the broad question “how does community development happen here?” Hence the lead up story was important to people at the site. If we pick up the story of community development at each site from an initiation event that typifies practice as either bottom-up or top-down we lose much of the story of practice.
Cross-case findings on the role of narrator in deciding beginning, middle and end

The role of the narrator is central to establishing an authentic story of the community development practice of each site. The narrative analysis relies on the researcher playing the role of narrator to produce the practice stories. The act of positioning myself in this role highlights the decisions which go into crafting stories of practice and through such stories characterising notions of community development. This finding stems from the process of writing the practice stories. The researcher as narrator is introduced in the description of narrative analysis (see Chapter Six – Methods). The role of narrator is a powerful position in that the narrator makes decisions about how to present the temporal sequence of plot, such as the beginning, middle and end. The role of narrator is also powerful in terms of decisions about the characterisation of community development. While the practice stories are based on the data from participating community groups, the narrator nonetheless has clear influence on the portrayal of the data. The examples given above on the characterisation of collectivity in community development is one such decision.

My central claim to authenticity when writing the practice stories for my research was the experience of being on site to ask people the question: how does community development happen here? The beginning, middle and end of the community development practice at each site could not anchor the practice stories, as the projects were ongoing. While the Early Years Network was only beginning to operate, Vintage and Northcliffe Community Development Inc. had been running for a number of years, and Northcliffe Youth Voice for many years, and all were ongoing. Hence the beginning and ending of the practice stories could not be based on the beginning and end of practice at each site. If then, the role of narrator was one of authority, at least in terms of constructing plot, if the narrator was to guide the reader through the story of community development at the site, the narrator’s perspective as they entered and exited the field was an authentic beginning and end to the practice stories. The practice stories portray community development at each site for the period of data collection.
Cross-case findings on heroism in practice stories

A second finding to stem from the process of writing the practice stories highlights heroism in our stories of community development. The question of how to represent the community development practices of participating community groups is central to the process of writing the practice stories. The idea of telling an authentic story of practice on the whole places the focus on the collective of the group. While differences within the group are exhibited in the practice stories, the intention was not to exacerbate these differences through the action of the research. The ethical tenet of do no harm applied to the participating community group as a whole, as well as to the individual participants. If community development is encapsulated in the collective, the effort of community development is encapsulated in the achievements of the group. The demands of an authentic story of community development, while focused on achievements, needs also include frustrations. Again, the ethical tenet of do no harm applies. Frustrations are important to portraying the practices of community development, yet a heavy emphasis on the frustrations felt within the group ran the risk of exacerbating existing tensions or undermining the future action of the group. The collective action of community development is invariably forged to address a threat or meet a need in the community; to tell a story that moves from some form of adversity to building a sense of collective action and achievement is to tell a heroic story. The commitments of epistemological holism and the research ethic to do no harm are central to heroic qualities in our stories of community development.

The experience of being onsite with each community group also contributed to the notions of heroism in the practice of participating community groups. Being present in context was to observe people trying to work together against adversity, people trying to overcome something that besets their community. Being present in context I observed meetings where people struggled with each other, with their own personalities, with challenges for their communities and the future of their communities. Being present in context was to observe the heroism of community development. There was for me a very strong sense that people engaged in community development are heroic. Throughout the process of my own practice and this research I felt a disparaging mistrust of much of the heroism of community development. I was willing to accept such plots in the portrayal of practices depicted
by community members but not necessarily from outsiders portraying the heroism of community development practitioners’ or theorists arguing for heroic practice frameworks. The experience of writing the practice stories in this research helps me understand this tendency to heroism. I have felt the urge to write in this way in my own portrayal of community development. The commitments of epistemological holism and the research ethic to do no harm, described above, the observation of heroism in the work of community members combine to instil heroism in our stories of community development.

**Cross-case findings from the themes**

This second section of Chapter Thirteen discusses the cross-case findings from the themes of community development reported in Chapter Twelve. The cross-case findings from the themes offer understandings from everyday practices of community development for exploring our theorising of community development. When scrutinising the themes reported in Chapter Twelve to consider how they inform the theorising of community development, the seven themes of power, unity, representation, action, change, participation and knowledge appear to reflect ideas well established in our theorising of community development. The six themes of process, place, relationship, conflict, understanding and passion provide understandings that are not emphasised in our theorising of community development. These six themes are presented as cross-case findings relevant to exploring our theorising of community development.

**Six cross-case findings from the themes of community development**

The six themes identified as findings that is process, place, relationship, conflict, understanding and passion are examined below.

**Cross-case finding on process**

_Process_ is central to practice at Northcliffe Youth Voice. Community development at the site focuses on interaction and being together rather than taking action. The problem being addressed pertains to alienation, and the notion of “hanging out” is the central approach to addressing this problem. As such, practice at the site is
focused on participation and this makes practice stable over the transitory nature of membership of the group. The notion of process and the emphasis it brings to community development is well established in the theorising of community development. What makes this theme important to informing our theorising is the way process looks to people outside the group, as expressed in the comment “but they’re not doing anything.” This comment captures the centrality of process in the community development practice of Northcliffe Youth Voice, and highlights the imperceptibility of process to the uninitiated, such as people looking in from outside the group. It may occur as well for people inside the group but unfamiliar to working with process, as expressed in the following quote from the Northcliffe Youth Voice practice story, “it takes a while for people to get their head around what the kids are doing and that they may not be doing anything and it doesn’t matter.” People new to the group, or from outside the group, would appear to be looking for action and hence cannot see the achievement of community development at the site.

Cross-case finding on place

The theme of place was identified in the community development practice of Northcliffe Youth Voice and the Early Years Network. The central purpose of Northcliffe Youth Voice is the idea of young people having “a place to be” in the community. This maintains the focus on young people and on the process of the group. The place for practice referred to a specific location in Northcliffe (that is the Northcliffe Family Centre) as a central hub. It is clear in the description of the theme that this sense of place expands out to the township of Northcliffe. Thus the focus on providing young people with a dedicated place supports sustainability of the town.

An issue particularly important in small rural communities, the notion of place is important to community development at the Early Years Network in a very different way. The initiation of community development by government was seen as an opportunity for which the regional centre of Bunbury was well positioned. The timing of action and the particular attributes of Bunbury coincide. People see their community as perfectly placed for “a really big opportunity for something special to happen in Bunbury.” Both instances of practice emphasise the importance of place in clarifying the purpose of community development. The theme of place points to the strength of connection between practice and context.
Cross-case finding on relationship

A second theme from Vintage identified as *relationship* develops further the point noted above regarding approach to government. Ideas on whether to work with or against government have shifted through the practice of community development at the site. Action was initially taken to push against a decision by local government. The idea was clearly to work against government. A key change in this approach is expressed in the data as “they know I am just as passionate as they are,” highlighting the way personal relationships with people employed by government have worked to establish trust. The theme of relationship points to the particular circumstances of people in the contexts of practice.

Cross-case finding on conflict

The theme identified as *conflict* pertains to the membership of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. being characterised “an amazing mix of people of groups and interests.” People participating in Northcliffe Community Development Inc. come from different facets of the Northcliffe community. Differences are characterised by the overall history of Northcliffe and events in the community in the years immediately before fieldwork. The differences in people’s interests are characterised as “conflicting.” This is central to community development at the site. The strength of practice in this instance of everyday community development rests with the capacity of people to work with people from their local community with whom they would not usually associate. It is important to recognise the second theme at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. was unity. There is unity in the group as well as this notion of “conflicting interests.” The theme of conflict emphasises the work involved in forming collective action in this instance of practice.

Cross-case finding on understanding

The theme identified as *understanding* highlights the work involved in forming collective action at Vintage – A Home Town For Life. Typified in the data by the idea that people involved in Vintage needed to “understand the nature of the other,” this theme expresses the time and effort involved in reaching a collective approach to
community development. The tension between emphasising process and action and whether to work with or against government are central to the practice of Vintage at the time of the fieldwork. It is important to note these tensions exist within collective commitment to a “strong common ethos.” The need to “understand the nature of the other” is central to the way people work with these tensions.

**Cross-case finding on passion**

The theme of *passion* identified in the practice at the Early Years Network in Bunbury is encapsulated in the description of people’s commitment to early development as “bigger than our ideology.” Something that is bigger than ideology highlights a particular approach to working across differences for collective action. The idea that people would work together across ideologies indicates the high level of involvement with the issues the project is established to address. Such a commitment is unexpected in notions of community development initiated by government. The theme indicates that, in this instance, policy intervention met with great passion in the local community.

**Conclusion for Chapter Thirteen**

Chapter Thirteen reports cross-case findings from the practice stories and themes of community development. The cross-case findings offer understandings from the everyday practices of community development in the south west region for exploring our theorising of community development. The cross-case findings from the practice stories and themes combine to answer the second sub-question of my research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia?

The first six cross-case findings stem from the practice stories of community development presented in Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven. The first four cross-case findings identify understandings from the practice stories of community development. The first two focus on holism and the contextualised and collective nature of community development. The third highlights the fluidity of community and porous boundaries between state and civil society in the community development portrayed in the practice stories. The fourth maintains that a series of events led up to the community development at each site. Thus thinking about the
initiation of community development as either bottom-up or top-down obscures the full stories of practice. The fifth and sixth cross-case findings, reported above, stem from the experience of writing the practice stories. Fifth, is the power of the narrator in deciding the temporal aspects of plot and the characterisation of community development in the practice stories. The final finding reported posits a number of factors that underpin the heroism in our stories of community development.

The second set of six cross-case findings stem from the community development themes presented in Chapter Twelve. The first highlights the imperceptible nature of process in some circumstances of community development. The themes of place and relationship focus on particular characteristics of people and place in any instance of community development to emphasise the connection between practice and context. The themes of conflict, understandings and passion each highlight ways in which people work across differences to form collective action. The idea of passion also unsettles current associations between top-down approaches to initiating community development and the imposition of ideas onto communities. Figure 7, see below, illustrates the four case studies and the cross-case findings, which offer understandings from the everyday practices of community development for exploring our theorising of community development. The cross-case findings from the practice stories and the themes are referred to in Chapter Fourteen to answer the third sub-question of my research: how do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development? Chapter Fourteen uses the cross-case findings from everyday practices of community development in the south west region to explore conventions in the theorising of community development.
Everyday practices speak back to theory

Figure 7. The cross-case findings
Chapter Fourteen: Everyday practices speak back to theory

The central purpose of this chapter is to argue that the findings from the case studies of community development practices in the south west region offer ten clear insights to the theorising of community development. The cross-case findings from researching the everyday practices of community development are applied to the theorising of community development to answer the third sub-question of my research: how do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development? The theorising of community development refers specifically in my research to arguments for particular approaches to community development proffered by academics in the Australian context. The review of the community development literature for this thesis explores understandings of community development, examines specific examples of the theorising of community development, and refers to community development research to answer the first sub-question of my research: how is community development theorised in the Australian literature? The conclusions in the literature review chapters present the answer to the first sub-question (see Chapters, Two, Three, Four).

The everyday practices in my research are four case studies of community development from the south west region of Western Australia. The exploration of the everyday practices of community development was carried out through the within-case analysis; that is, the narrative and thematic analysis of the community development practice of each community group (see Chapters Five and Six). These analyses are reported in practice stories (see Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven) and themes (see Chapter Twelve). Twelve cross-case findings from the practice stories and themes answer the second sub-question of my research: how is community development practiced in the south west region of Western Australia? The twelve cross-case findings (see Chapter Thirteen), six from the practice stories and six from the themes, highlight understandings of community development that unsettle or add emphasis to ideas well established in our theorising of community development.
The four case studies of community development practices are positioned as the source of knowledge for informing our theorising of community development in this research. In contrast to this positioning, the thesis opened with a quote which states that theory comes before practice. Thomas (2007) makes the statement in the context of education, where he argues established theory dominates practice as the knowledge of the discipline. My own experiences of working in communities, outlined at the beginning of this thesis, led me to question the interaction between theory and practice in community development. Hence the focus of my research in positioning practice as the source of knowledge for exploring established patterns in our theorising of community development.

This chapter draws the exploration of everyday practices and theorising of community development together to answer the third sub-question of my question: how do practices from the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development? The third sub-question is answered by arguing the cross-case findings from the themes and practice stories of community development practices in the south west region of Western Australia offer ten clear insights to the theorising of community development. Six insights pertain to our understandings of community development and four to the storying of community development. The following discussion refers to the cross-case findings from the case studies and the arguments of the literature review chapters to explore established conventions in our theorising of community development. The chapter commences with the notions of bottom-up community development, process, collective action, fluid boundaries, the strengths of context, and the threat of theorising. It concludes with four of the key insights around the storying of community development.

1. Normativity of bottom-up

The terms bottom-up and top-down are key descriptors in our theorising and practices of community development. The terms rely on making distinctions between development initiated and practiced from the community level, the bottom, and development initiated and practiced from the societal level, the top. Conceptualising bottom-up and top-down as a simple binary of approaches to community
development reflects Tonnies’ (1955) notions of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* and identifies the potential for normativity.

The everyday practices of community development from the south west region indicate notions of bottom-up and top-down are used to describe the initiating action of community development. The finding identified as the lead up to community development, indicates the practice of the participating community groups includes examples of community development initiated from the bottom-up and the top-down. The practice stories show community development initiated through government action (that is, top-down) describes a more complex and variegated process of community development than is implied by the characterisation of such an approach as merely the impositions of the powerful. People at Northcliffe Community Development Inc. argue action is firmly in their hands. The action of the Early Years Network in Bunbury has adopted the focus of government policy, yet some people involved have been trying to address the same issues from the bottom-up for some time and welcomed government action.

The literature review of this thesis indicates that the idea of bottom-up in community development signifies much more than the initiation of practice. The history of theorising of community development in the Australian context, as outlined in Chapter Two, indicates the “bottom-up” approach (Onyx, 1996, p. 100) emerged in the 1970s with a shift from pluralist ideas of community development (Mowbray, 1985, 1992; Thorpe, 1985, 1992) to a focus on power relations, particularly between people and government. This is ironic in that the Australian Assistance Plan (AAP), a government policy, was pivotal to community development at the time that the preferred political character of community development was associated with the bottom-up approach.

Explanations of bottom-up community development in current theorising indicate the idea is about knowledge, power and changing the way things are done. The notion of bottom-up characterises a particular approach to community development, the opposite of which is top-down. Contrasting the two signifies the importance of the former. The literature review indicates the binary is understood as the distinction between “micro-level” action (Turner, 2007, p. 233) — the actions of the ordinary
and the oppressed in working for their communities — and “macro-level” action (Turner, 2007, p. 233) — action conceptualised and instigated through the institutions and structures of society. The bottom-up approach is conceptualised in opposition to the top-down. The binary strengthens the meaning of bottom-up and establishes the two as mutually exclusive alternatives.

The term *bottom-up* is a central tenet of community development in our theorising. Ife describes the idea of bottom-up as “the heart of community development” (Ife, 2013, p. 138). Hence, the term bottom-up works as a qualifying adjective to development (Collier & Levitsky, 1997, p.431). The notion of the bottom-up approach strengthens the effort of community to guard against the past failings of development. Bottom-up is a key descriptor for stabilising notions of community development regardless of context. Yet the cross-case findings of relationship and passion, reported in Chapter Thirteen, indicate, for example, that some of the assumptions held in the theorising of bottom-up community development are contradicted in the everyday practice of community development. The practice of community development at Vintage – A Home Town For Life indicates effective relationships can be formed with government at the same time as challenging government, a proposition that the binary of bottom-up and top-down obscures in our theorising. Practice at the Early Years Network indicates commitment and passion at the local level can occur in response to government initiated processes of community development, a second proposition obscured by the normative intent of the term bottom-up in our theorising of community development.

The notion of bottom-up has the potential to identify whether practice qualifies as community development and as such is a strong force for normativity in our theorising of community development. Both terms, bottom-up and top-down, appear to overstep their meaning in the field of community development. This raises an important question in our theorising as to whether, once initiated from the bottom or the top, the character of community development in any instance of practice is set. While the practices from the south west region of Western Australia described in my research would indicate this is not the case, the discussion of the ideas in the literature indicate it might be. The notion of bottom-up harbours the political intent of community development and assigns meaning beyond the action that instigated
practice, implying that, once instigated, community development will unfold in a way that reflects the initial action.

Bottom-up is a pivotal concept for community development. Arguments for particular approaches to community development focus on theorising at the macro level to characterise practice. Notions of bottom-up community development and bottom-up decision making (Kenny, 2011) are pivotal to locating macro level arguments at the micro level of practice. The notion of bottom-up grounds propositions for community development top heavy with theory and ideals to the action of local communities and some have argued reinforces inequality (Cauchi & Murphy, 2004). Ife (2013) notes the action of community development is horizontal while that of government is vertical. The binary of bottom and top though holds the vertical in place. The shift to thinking about community development as horizontal (Eversole, 2015; Westoby & Dowling, 2013), and case studies where the actions of community development are grounded in context (Ingamells et al., 2010; Weeks et al., 2003), reduces our reliance on bottom-up.

2. Process is imperceptible – tension between process and action

The cross-case findings from my research point to understandings of process which inform our theorising of community development. The finding connecting holism and the collective nature of community development highlights the intensity of the struggle between process and action in the practices of community development. Stories of the struggle between process and action indicate the tension also plays out around perceptions of the work of the group in the broader community. The theme of process from Northcliffe Youth Voice supports this latter point, as it indicates process may be imperceptible to either people outside the group or to people inside the group unaccustomed to working with process. If process is imperceptible to some people in certain instances, this would account for the intensity of the struggle between process and action.

The literature review indicates that the notion of process became prominent in the theorising of community development amidst growing dissatisfaction with case
studies as the central source of knowledge. I argue that the infiltration of theoretical frameworks into the case study collections of the early 1990s (Butler & Cass, 1993; Webster, 1993) is a significant shift in the theorising of community development. The frameworks came out of the frustration of theorists with a lack of a meta-analysis from the case study collections and the changing policy context. By the late 1990s the frameworks determined what was required in the case studies and especially important were “principles and processes of community development practice” (Kelly, Morgan & Coghlan, 1997, p. 3). The importance of predetermined principles and the centrality of process gathered strength in the theorising of community development from this point onwards.

The focus on process remains current in our theorising “development can be defined as the processes through which communities and societies change” (Eversole, 2015, p. 3 [emphasis in original]). The idea of process is “fundamental” to community development (Ife, 2013, p. 158) to the extent that “good process” is identified as the “the most important outcome” (Ife, 2013, p. 182). Ife’s (2013) particular approach to community development argues process is the vehicle for implementing the principles of community development in the contexts of practice. Process is central to the connection between macro-level theorising and micro-level contexts (Ife, 2013, p. 267; Kenny, 2011, pp. 32-36). Process is thus central to the transformative power of community development (Kenny, 2011, pp. 32-36; Westoby & Dowling, 2013, p. 61). Yet despite process being a central concern in the theorising of community development, understandings shown in the cross-case findings of my research are not part of our current theorising. The theorising of community development is focused on arguing for the primacy of process in practice, rather than understandings about how process works in contextualised practices of community development. The contrast between the concept of community development in our theorising and in the field was noted in research over a decade ago (Hudson, 2004; Saggers et al., 2003).

The exploration of the theorising of community development, presented in Chapter Three, indicates the idea of process ameliorates the contradiction between predetermined values and the contextualised nature of community development. Insights from the themes and practice stories of my research emphasise our lack of
understanding of the role of process in contextualised practices of community development. This is not to say that process cannot be a key idea in the theorising of community development, but to argue for better understanding of the struggle entailed in fostering process at the local level and of the imperceptible nature of the notion for some participants in community development.

3. Collective action takes effort – working across differences

Themes from three of the case studies of everyday practices of community development, conflict, understandings and passion, highlight the effort required to form collective action in community development. The struggle between process and action, mentioned above, is also relevant to this insight. The community development practice of Vintage – A Home Town For Life, while focused on seeking changes external to the community, highlights the effort behind building a collective approach with the theme of understanding. A good proportion of effort in understanding “the nature of the other” went into the struggle between process and action. The core of the work of Northcliffe Community Development Inc., at the time of the field work, was focused on building a collective approach. The theme of conflict highlights what they are working with, rather than what they are working against, at that particular point in their practice. The struggle between process and task was central. The theme of passion in the Early Years Network emphasised the group’s commitment to early development through the affirmation of it being stronger than their ideological differences. Again, reliance on process or action as central to practice was a key point of struggle for the group.

Some ideas in our theorising of community development draw attention to the effort required in building the collective and others obscure this aspect of practice. Notions of struggle in the theorising of community development commonly look outward from the community actively involved in practice to focus on conflict between this community and other facets of society. The assumption being that effort for change focuses on forces outside the community. Three ideas which steer our theorising to this approach are: the appeal of community, the assumption of conflict in macro theories that underpin notions of community development, and the acceptance of universal principles. The first instance is indeed the idea that underpins the use of
community as the qualifying adjective for development. The universal appeal of community, outlined in Chapter Two, emphasises the collective and inclusive nature of the notion. The process of exclusion necessary to inclusion is understood, yet it is the inclusive desirability of community that is central to our reliance on the notion (Bauman, 1991, 2000; Bell & Newby, 1971; Tonnies, 1955, 1974). Ife’s (2013) argument for geographic notions of community addresses this issue, to some extent, by allowing for community to form through location rather than other forms of common ties.

Ideas of conflict are embedded in particular approaches to community development through reference to the macro theories that seek change to the power relations through conflict. Examples include Marxism and social movement theory (Kenny, 2011), and structural perspectives of social issues (Ife, 2013). This point is made not to diminish the importance of such an analysis but to highlight the way it draws our attention away from conflict within the collective seeking change. These aspects of theorising may be balanced by other understandings, such as Ingamells’ (2002) research, which highlights the inadequacy of the structural power analysis and the possibility of communities working with power dynamics at the local level (Ingamells, 2007) as well as ideas for working with the differences and tensions of context, most obviously the notion of dialogue (Ife, 2013; Westoby & Dowling, 2013) and the knowledge partnering approach (Eversole, 2015).

The commitment to universal principles in the theorising of community development assumes a unity of values that may not be reflected in contexts of practice. The practice story of Northcliffe Community Development Inc., for example, challenges this assumption. Unity, in this context, relies on commitment to location rather than principles. The idea in the Early Years Network that their commitment to early development is bigger than their ideologies again demonstrates what separates and unites people in their efforts to form collective action. The theorising of community development supports the principles and ideologies of some of the participants of Northcliffe Community Development Inc. and the Early Years Network but not all. This follows on from the earlier discussion of the struggle between process and action whereby people focused on process are supported by arguments in the literature and those calling for action are not. The ideal, for example, of bottom-up
holds within it an assumption that perspectives and priorities at the bottom are, if not compatible, at least negotiable. This may ultimately be the case, yet the work required to get to that point is underplayed in the theorising of community development up until the more recent inclusion of ideas such as building a group analysis (Westoby & Dowling, 2013) and knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015), which factor in the complexity of local contexts.

The theorising of community development focuses on universal foundations for practice. The assumption being that such a foundation works for the disadvantaged and thereby supports the imposition of values through moral position. A key strategy for working with different perspectives in the contextualised practice of community development in the current theorising of community development is through the imposition of the particular politics and principles of community development. Mendes (2004), for example, describes a situation where the domination of the political Right in the processes of community development excludes people. The example is used by Mendes (2004) to illustrate the necessity of the political Left as the particular politics of community development. Mendes (2004) argues a particular politics for community development rather than strategies for working with political differences at the local level. Macro level theories of power and universal principles hold notions of community development to particular political positions such that when there is conflict or simply different perspectives clashing at the local level, those on the side of the analyses and principles of community development are supported by the theorising, while those at odds with such ideals are not. The focus in the theorising is on arguing for the integrity of particular approaches rather than ways of working with differences in context. Again notions of dialogue (Ife, 2013; Westoby & Dowling, 2013) and knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015) address this issue to some extent.

Strategies for working across the political differences at the local level are not prominent in the theorising of practice. Theorising is focused instead on arguing for a particular politics as central to community development. Such theorising assumes that notions of common ties and unity, key features of community, underpin collective action in community development. The assumption is that communities come together through place, common interest or common identity to undertake
community development. The focus is on locating the power with this group rather than thinking about the political differences and power struggles that may occur within the group and, as such, the effort required to build collective action is obscured in current theorising of community development.

4. Fluid boundaries

Two cross-case findings from the everyday practices of community development highlight the contested nature of community and the limitations of some key ideas in our theorising to accommodate such contestability. The finding named the fluidity of community and the theme of relationship from Vintage – A Home Town For Life highlight the capacity of personal relationships to cross the boundaries established, for example, by notions of bottom-up or top-down community development. As outlined above, strong commitments to the bottom-up approach to community development ties those involved in practice to micro level contexts and assumes the top-down approach involves societal institutions of service delivery (Turner, 2007). The collective community at Vintage includes people representing local and state government, so while practice overall is a challenge to both levels of government, personal relationships between people override the assumptions of the theorising. The boundaries between state and civil society are perhaps more fluid in the context of practice than the theorising of practice. The fluidity of community, described in the previous chapter, highlights the way in which people within the town (geographic notions of community) may work for or against any instance of community development. These findings complicate the boundaries between the powerful and the powerless and may be particularly noticeable in rural and regional contexts.

The theorising of community development assumes the boundaries between the community forming collective action, identified as the ordinary and the oppressed, are distinguishable from people with access to the power structures. This assumption stems from two places: the first is the essentially contested nature of community development, and the second the accepted binaries in our theorising of community development such as bottom-up and top-down or consensus and conflict approaches to community development. As outlined in Chapter Four, Connolly (2007) identifies four responses to contested complexity in the practice of development: ignore it;
acknowledge it and argue for a resolution; fully explore it and argue for a preferred approach; and accept it and accommodate such contestability in theorising of the approach. As I argue in Chapter Four, theoretical arguments for particular approaches to community development in the Australian context reflect the third approach. While the contested nature of community is understood in the literature, there are limits to its application in the theorising of community development. Connolly’s fourth approach corresponds to Gallie’s notion of the “moderate” user (1964, p. 188). The moderate user accepts there are a range of ways of interpreting essentially contested concepts. Frameworks are presented for the purpose of description and interpretation rather than prescription. The continuum of interactions between the state and civil society presented by Weeks et al. (2003), for example, highlights a range of possible approaches to community practice rather than arguing for a particular approach.

The idea of consensus and conflict in our theorising is another where the contested nature of community can be limited or fully explored by particular approaches to theorising community development. Ingamells (2002, 2007) explains this focus in our theorising by identifying two community development narratives, the adversary tale and the consensus tale. The “adversary tale” tends towards powerless pessimism and the consensus tale towards “naive optimism” (Ingamells, 2007, p. 239). The assumption being that communities are either working with or against outside forces, discounting the notion that the boundaries between those inside and outside, or for and against, are fluid. This point may be especially so for regional and rural communities, where the state is tolerated in the collective community due to personal relationships. Ingamells (2002) argues the limitations of such theorising can be addressed through a poststructural reading of stories of practice and a focus on the power “dynamics” at the local level (2007, p. 246). Ingamells’ (2002, 2007, 2010) approach is a clear break in the theorising of community development. Theorising of conflict and consensus approaches obscures the places where the interaction between the two players is effective and diminishes the struggles played out within the community forming collective action.

Insights from the themes and practice stories of my research emphasise the limits of our acceptance of the essentially contested nature of community development.
Strong attachment to the binaries, for example, of bottom-up and top-down, or of consensus and conflict, indicate a want to stabilise notions of community development rather than adopt the attitudes of Gallie’s “moderate” user (1964, p. 188).

5. Context is a threat to theory

This insight focuses on the risk posed by context to the established theoretical perspectives and principles of community development. The foundations for this insight are introduced in the literature review in Chapter Four. An essentially contested notion of community development highlights the contradiction between openness to context and the idea that good community development has established theoretical underpinnings and principles. The ideals established for community development through theoretical argument are thus at risk in each context of practice. Research into community development which indicates context is the biggest influence on practice supports this contention and emphasises the threat of context to the theorising of community development (Burkett, 1998; Dixon, 1990; Hoatson, 2001; Hoatson et al., 1996; Hudson, 2004; Ingamells, 2002; Kenny, 2002; Saggers et al., 2003; Shevellar, 2011). The preoccupation with arguing for particular theoretical and political commitment for community development seeks somehow to preempt context.

The cross-case findings of relationships and fluidity of community, described in the previous insight, are relevant here. These findings emphasise the contested nature of community and the fluidity of the boundaries we use to talk about community and different spheres of society, such as state and civil society or the powerful and the powerless. Also relevant are the cross-case findings of the theme place and the idea that holism reflects the contextualised and collective nature of community development. The theme of place in the community development practices of Northcliffe Youth Voice and the Early Years Network points to the strength of connection between practice and context. The cross-case finding that holism and story emphasise the contextualised and collective nature of community development stems from all four practice stories. Presenting community development within descriptions of practice highlights features which go largely unremarked in our theorising. The stories of community development practice, set within stories of
contexts, highlight the interaction between context and practice. The particular history and character of locations of practice enrich descriptions of community development. The practice stories emphasise the collective action of the group and the conflicts and struggles that form such action, the fluidity of community and of boundaries such as those that identify the state and civil society. These findings emphasise context and support the proposition that community development is best explained through an understanding of context.

Chapter Four argues context poses a danger to theoretical perspectives of community development. If, for example, context is the central influence on the character of community development in any instance of practice, the action of contextualised community development is a direct challenge to the theorising of community development as a humanist modernist concept (Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011); as change from below (Ife, 1995, 2002, 2013); as dialogical (Westoby & Dowling, 2013); or as knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015). These approaches stabilise notions of community development before it is applied in context. Westoby and Dowling’s (2013) and Eversole’s (2015) approaches leave significant room for context. Eversole’s (2015) framework, in particular, could be occupied by a range of theoretical and political perspectives and principles. Thus Eversole’s (2015) framework is less at risk in context than, for example, Ife’s (2013) which, as argued in Chapter Three, is heavy with the requirements of good practice and good community development.

Insights from the themes and practice stories of my research emphasise the strength of connection between practice and context. This highlights the point made in Chapter Two that when particular theoretical and political perspectives inhabit community development, free from context, those perspectives occupy the authority to prescribe the vision and content of community development. The insight that context is a threat to theorising advances the claim that entering context is indeed a threat to theoretical notions of community development. The logic of theory is interrupted in context, and working with context, as argued by Ingamells (2002, 2007), would appear to support practice at least as much as the arguments for particular approaches to community development. The idea that we need to understand and work with context is understood in our theorising of community
development. The purpose of this insight is not to argue against theorising but to argue for clearer articulation of the threat of context to theoretical thinking about community development. This point reflects Thomas’s argument that theory in education is a “security blanket” (2007, p. 11). This insight argues our theorising of community development is driven by the risk of context. Our current theorising of community development focuses on applying a particular approach in context rather than the characterisation of approach through context. Context is uncertain and unpredictable hence context is a threat to theory.

6. The threat of theorising

This insight argues that theorising is a threat to the contextualised practices of community development. A range of findings from the themes and practice stories of my research point to the threat of the theorising of community development to everyday practices of community development. The themes of process, place and relationship, all referred to in exploring earlier insights, are pertinent to the notion that theory is a threat to everyday practices. Findings from the practice stories relevant to this insight include: holism, the lead up to community development (both referred to above), and the role of the narrator. The previous chapter argues the role of narrator is central to the way we story community development. This point is examined in more detail in the last four insights reported below. I refer to the role of the narrator here because I want to emphasise the contrast between the beginning and ending of community development in our descriptions of everyday practices and our theorising. This insight is again a culmination of the previous insights and stems from the normativity of community development argued in the literature of this thesis.

In Chapter Two, I used Gallie’s essentially contested concept criteria to emphasise the way meaning is shaped in the notions of community and development, in order to argue that theoretical arguments for particular approaches to community development establish the normativity of community development. An exploration of this proposition in the texts that theorise community development points to a number of normative ideals, such as bottom-up and process, in community development. The two cited have already been explored in the insights reported above. Further to this, recognition of the normative imposition of community
development was supported by three key propositions outlined in the literature review: Kenny’s notion of “pure community development” (2011a, pp. 398-400), whereby practice is framed in “moral certainty” (Kenny, 2011a, p. 399); Emejulu’s (2011) argument, cited in Chapter Four, that established that approaches to community development carry the assumption they are appropriate to addressing marginalisation without recognition of different forms and contexts of oppression; and Connolly’s proposition (2007), also cited in Chapter Four, that we work effectively with essentially contested concepts only when we fully accept the uncertainty of such notions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central idea in the everyday practices</th>
<th>Central idea in our theorising</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The struggle between process and action</td>
<td>Process is a centre piece of community development practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difficulty of working collectively across differences</td>
<td>Community development is a process of collective action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of community development practice stems from context</td>
<td>The theoretical traditions articulate the purpose of community development through grand notions of disadvantage and power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government action supports what people were trying to achieve in their communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>The values of community development practice stem from context</td>
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<td>The approach to community development emerges from context</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people in the community are supported by community development</td>
<td>The people supported by community development are the ordinary and the oppressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The beginning and end of practice are complicated and not always visible</td>
<td>Community development starts at the bottom and ends in transformation</td>
</tr>
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Table 2. Comparing central ideas of community development
The findings I have cited above as informing this insight into our theorising of community development focus on process, place, context, passion and the beginnings and endings of community development. Table 2 above, shows central ideas in the everyday practices of community development alongside central ideas in our theorising which correspond to the same aspect of practice, thus demonstrating that if applied directly to the everyday practices of community development described in my research, central ideas in our theorising would assess everyday practices as wanting. Hence I argue the threat of theorising to practice. The point of this display is to reveal the normativity of our theorising and should not be taken as an evaluative analysis of the everyday practices in my research. The analysis has not been applied directly to specific case studies due to this very risk. I have used generic descriptions rather than direct quotes to display ideas from everyday practices. This does not disguise which ideas come from which practices — an astute reader will always recognise this — but acts to insert a buffer between the normativity of theory and live practices. Analysis flows, in this instance, from practice to theory to reveal the limitations in our theorising of community. I am not claiming that there is not existing recognition on this point, rather I am seeking to emphasise it.

**Writing the practice stories of community development**

The final four ways in which the findings from my multiple case study research inform theorising all relate to the *storying* of community development and are supported by the six insights presented above. I will start by clarifying the notion of storying community development and then go on to address the final four insights. Case studies of practice are a central feature of the theorising of community development. The term case study is as contested and fluid as the notion of community development. The way in which the term is applied in this research was outlined in the Introduction to this thesis (see Chapter One), developed further through reference to the theorising of community development in Chapters Three and Four, and argued in terms of methodology and methods in Chapters Five and Six. My case study methodology is underpinned by narrative ontology hence stories of practice are central to capturing the world of community development. Holism underpins the assumptions of knowledge in my research and, as such, the contexts of
central features of story, the notions of narrator, plot and the trajectory of the hero’s tale, are introduced and outlined in the Literature Review (see Chapter Four) and methodology and methods (see Chapters Five and Six). Basic elements of plot are found in the temporal construct; that is, the beginning, middle and end, of the story. Once a story is written, the beginning, middle and end may appear obvious, but writers and narrators make decisions about where stories start and end. These decisions are based around the type of story to be portrayed. To use White’s term, introduced in Chapter Five, stories are “emplotted narrative[s]” (1973, p. [emphasis in original]). As outlined in the literature review and methodology, Ingamells et al., (2010a) argues that stories of community development are embedded with heroism and hence describe practice as heroic tales. Thus, as well as performing the function of temporal sequencing, plot characterises story through the expected trajectory of the hero’s tale. Findings from the process of writing the practice stories from the south west of Western Australia draw our attention to the role of the narrator and the generic moves of the hero’s tale in community development. These two findings are supported by the six insights above to highlight four insights relevant to the storying of community development.

7. The beginnings

My experience of writing the practice stories captured an insight to the way we talk about the beginnings of community development. The terms bottom-up and top-down community development suggest that each instance of practice has a discrete starting point and that there are two central alternatives: community development practice starts from either the bottom or the top. The ideas of bottom-up and top-down are well established in our theorising of community development, as indicated in the literature review, and the normativity of bottom-up is argued at length under the first insight reported in this chapter. This insight into the beginnings of community development argues the normativity of the notion of bottom-up in community development entrenches a particular beginning into our stories of...
practice. If plot brings form to narrative to create story, an idea established as the accepted beginning of all stories is a very powerful idea. Once established as the beginning point of community development, the notion of bottom-up takes on a certainty that belies the choices made in portraying stories of practice. As narrators of community development, we make decisions about where our stories of practice begin (and end); yet the power of this idea in the theorising of community development indicates a penchant for particular types of beginnings.

As described in the previous chapter, the stories of practice from the south west region identify a particular point of initiation for community development that could be identified as either bottom-up or top-down, and they also indicate a complex series of events that led up to this point. The idea of bottom-up characterises more than the beginning of community development, but I argue the term indicates literally a location and direction — the location the bottom and the direction up — and therefore implies a starting point, carrying assumptions of the unity of people at the bottom. Including the events preceding the initiation of community development unsettles the importance of the ideas of bottom-up and top-down as starting points for practice, as well as the normativity of the former and the assessment of the latter as innately wrong. Ife’s (2013) notion of change from below, and discussion of community development as horizontal action (Eversole, 2015, Ife, 2013; Westoby & Dowling, 2013), also alleviate the power of the notion as the beginning of community development. If we pick up the stories of community development from an initiation event that typifies practice as either bottom-up or top-down, we embolden these notions in confining our concepts of community development.

8. The obligations of the narrator

The experience of writing the practice stories highlights the obligations of the narrator to the representation of community development practices. This insight may be particularly relevant when practice stories are narrated by a researcher, an outsider to the community, more so, than when participants of community development are narrating. This insight combines the findings of the role of the narrator and heroism in practice sites (reported in the previous chapter) to argue the obligations of the narrator in the portrayal of practice contribute to heroism in our storying of community development. The parallels between forming notions of the
hero and community, the cultural imperatives of the hero’s tale and the heroic trajectories of grand theories of social change, all argued in the literature review chapters of this thesis, further instil heroism in our stories of community development. Kenny (2006) and Miller (2004) each identify the heroic agency in our stories of community development as an indicator of moral certitude. Shevellar (2011) argues the potential strength of heroic agency but warns as well of its hubris. Ingamells et al. (2010a) draws association between heroism in our stories of community development and the mythological traditions of Western society.

The obligations of the narrator point to particular circumstances that produce heroic qualities in stories of community development. Community development is invariably forged to address a threat or meet a need in the community. To tell a story that moves from some form of adversity to building a sense of collective action and to addressing a threat is to tell a heroic tale. The narrator is obliged to balance the tensions within the practices of community development to tell an authentic story of collective action that supports the ongoing action of the group. The collective nature of community development, and the ambition of portraying the practices of such collectives, in the whole combine to bring heroic qualities to the stories of community development, as outlined in the previous chapter. The experience of being the narrator in the portrayal of community development practice in my research helps explain heroism in the theorising of community development.

Being aware of the obligations of the narrator adds to our understanding of the heroic agency in stories of community development. This insight highlights the tentativeness — Shevellar’s (2011) point excepted — in the theorising of community development to embrace heroic agency in our stories of practice. This is not to endorse adopting the imagery of heroism outright but to argue for a more grounded understanding of the role such imagery plays in our telling of practice.

9. The hero’s quest

A third insight from the process of writing the practice stories in my research follows on from the previous, to inform the theorising of community development through an exploration of the intersection of normativity and heroism in community development. The connection between normativity and heroic agency in discourses
of community development is argued in our theorising (Ingamells et al., 2010a; Kenny, 2006; Miller, 2004; Shevellar, 2011), as noted above.

I draw on literary understandings of the hero’s tale, introduced in the literature review, to support the theorising of this aspect of community development. The stages of the hero’s quest (introduced in the conclusion of Chapter Four) include three key moves: separation, initiation and return (Campbell, 1993). Separation refers firstly to the experience of a problem of some sort and the recognition that something needs to happen. The separation is of the hero from the current situation, whether through a physical departure or the process of separating from old ways through recognition of the need for change. A key aspect of storying separation as the first stage of the hero’s journey is the situation from which adversity emerges. Next is the stage of initiation which involves the beginning of action for change and the confrontation of threats. Threats may be personal, such as fear, or external, such as hostile political systems. The hero typically meets mentors who foster their strengths, resources and insight to confront the challenges they face. Finally, the hero returns to the original place transformed from the journey and with a greater sense of power and understanding of the world. Four classifications of plot, introduced under Methodology, are recognised as possible trajectories for the hero’s journey (White, 1973). The romance plot and comedy plots portray transformative heroic stories. The romance hero is challenged, rises to the challenge and ultimately triumphs for the greater good, while the comic hero also prevails but only partially. The hero in the tragedy plot fails to transcend adversity and instead demonstrates the limits of humanity, while satire plots rely on antiheroes (White, 1973). The romantic hero reflects the nature of heroism in theorising of community development and as such instils an expectation of separation, initiation and triumphant return in our stories of community development.

The process of plotting the practice stories indicates that the transitions of the hero’s journey, separation, initiation and return, correspond in stories of community development to context, action and achievement. The context from which community development emerges corresponds to the “ordinary world” (Vogler, 1998, p. 10) of the hero’s journey that is the situation where an issue needs to be addressed. Initiation marks the beginning of the hero’s journey corresponding to the
action or the practice of community development, and return marks the conclusion of
the hero’s journey which corresponds to the achievement or ambition of community
development. If our stories of community development commence with the action of
community development (as indicated by notions of the bottom-up) the context and
circumstances, which portrays the agency of communities, is missing and theoretical
ideals fill the hero’s role.

The shift in our theorising of community development from the reporting of
illustrative case studies of practice to the focus on theoretical frameworks emerged
through the 1990s in the Australian context. Triumph was instilled into our
discussions of community development at the time through the idea that “good
practice” (Butler, 1993, p. 14) “always results in positive achievements” (Butler &
Cass, 1993, p. 7). Triumph in community development was tied at this point to “the
community development framework” (Butler & Cass, 1993, p. 7), rather than actions
of people in practice or the outcomes of practice. As theorising of community
development moved from a reliance on illustrative case studies to theoretical
frameworks, so too the role of the hero moved from people in practice to theoretical
frameworks for community development. This shift is further entrenched by the
normativity of community development, as explained by Gallie’s notion of the
essentially contested concept. The transformative expectations of the theories argued
as a foundation for community development — such as Marxism (Kenny, 2011) and
social justice (Ife, 2013) — further reflects the heroism in theorising of community
development. This positioning of theory in the story of community development
would appear to endure in our present contexts. The characterisation of good
community development through the ideal of bottom-up instills a point of initiation
in the practice of community development. Strong theories of structural power
identify adversity even when the people concerned do not recognise it themselves,
and provide a ready road map to triumph. The assumption being that if we confront
adversity from the bottom-up, through the process of good community development,
we will triumph no matter the outcome. If our stories of community development
start with the particular context where adversity emerges the people in that situation
become the active agents in our stories of community development.
10. The endings
To complete the insights from the experience of writing the practice stories, which commenced with beginnings, I focus as the last point on the endings of stories of community development. If the idea of plot underpins the conceptual integrity of a story, then notions of beginning, middle and end are not randomly identified but follow a conceptual plan; hence, the beginning, middle and end are shaped in unison. Identifying certain types of story beginnings leads to certain types of stories and certain types of story endings. If we accept that the theorising of community development identifies beginnings as bottom-up, it raises the question of how endings are conceptualised. The role of narrator in entering and exiting the field of community development provides the beginning and end of the practice stories in my research. Yet if the bottom-up approach is the preferred beginning established by the theorising of community development, it stands to reason there are preferred endings as well. The previous insight points to such endings as triumphant. The link between a bottom-up beginning and a triumphant ending stems from the customs of our theorising of community development, reliance on transformative theories and the intersection of heroism and normativity.

The preceding insight argues the romance plot tells the most plausible story for community development, if it proceeds from the bottom-up. Romance plots end in triumph. Yet the endings of community development practices are not always triumphant. Miller (2004) points out that tragedy is more likely the ending. Mowbray consistently highlights the failure of local practices to achieve aspired results (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011). Yet despite these clear indications that the stories of community development don’t always follow the stages of the hero’s tale, the theorising of practice consistently alludes to such a trajectory. Polkinghorne (1998) offers insights that help illuminate this contradiction. He draws a distinction between the expected narrative structure of argument and that of story (Polkinghorne, 1998). The endings of arguments, Polkinghorne (1998) argues, are predictable: the nature of the genre is such the author leads the reader to the final conclusion. If the author does so effectively, the end of the argument is obvious and predictable. Contrastingly, and in contradiction to the established pattern of the hero’s quest, Polkinghorne (1998) argues that the endings of stories are not so
predictable. The stages of separation, initiation and return guide the story, yet it is only the romance hero who has an uncomplicated triumphant end. Heroes can be tragic as well.

I have argued earlier that context is a threat to theoretical ideals of community development. Context, like story, is unpredictable. If our stories of community development are contained to simply illustrating community development as a humanist modernist concept (Kenny, 1994, 1999, 2006, 2011), as change from below (Ife, 1995, 2002, 2013), as dialogical (Westoby & Dowling, 2013) or as knowledge partnering (Eversole, 2015), triumph is guaranteed and the endings are predictable. Such conceptualisations of community development are presented as arguments. The purpose of the writing is to convince readers of the particular logic of a theoretical approach to community development. Steeped in the traditions of transformative change, theory faces down challenges and returns, as tradition dictates, transformed and triumphant. The figure below, Figure 8, illustrates the four case studies, the cross-case analysis findings and the ten clear insights to the theorising of community development.
Everyday practices speak back to theory

Cross-case findings – practice stories
- Fluidity of community
- Lead up to community development
- Role of narrator in deciding beginning, middle and end
- Heroism in practice stories

Cross-case findings – themes
- Process, Place, Relationship, Conflict, Understanding, Passion

Understandings of community development
- Normativity of bottom-up
- Process is imperceptible
- Collective action takes effort
- Fluid boundaries
- Context is a threat to theory
- The threat of theorising

The storying of community development
- The beginnings
- The obligations of the narrator
- The hero’s quest
- The endings

Figure 8. Ten clear insights to the theorising of community development
Research question

The final word addresses my central research question: how can community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform the theorising of community development in the Australian context? I have argued that everyday practices of community development from the south west region of Western Australia offer ten insights to the theorising of community development. Everyday practices from the south west region emphasise the uncertainties of context and the complexities of forming collective action, and thereby draw our attention to normativity and argument in academic propositions for particular approaches to community development in the Australian context. The nature of academic argument and the normativity of theoretical propositions for community development combine to situate theory first and practice second, as raised by Thomas’s (2007) quote at the beginning of this thesis.

Propositions for particular theoretical approaches to community development are an effective knowledge base for establishing ideas that support practice, but they are necessarily argumentative, written to convince and hence tied to particular trajectories. When case studies are used to support such propositions they become part of the argument, thus diminishing the capacity for case studies to “contribute something very special” (Kelly & Sewell, 1986b, p. 155) to our knowledge of community development. Propositions for particular theoretical approaches to community development limit our acceptance of community development as an essentially contested concept. Whereas research case studies, written to portray contextualised practices of community development, accept the contested nature of community development, unsettle some of our strongly held tenets and show us patterns in our theorising of community development.

Community development practices located in the south west region of Western Australia inform our theorising in the Australian context by emphasising the vulnerability of people and communities in community development. The risk of failure is imminent in the contexts of practice. The heroism of community development in practice contexts may be more about confronting this risk than the plotted trajectory of theoretical arguments for community development. Practice
frameworks draw heroism from the logic of argument and tradition. Stories of contextualised practices emphasise the risks that theoretical perspectives of community development try to ameliorate.

Everyday practices from the south west region draw our attention to the trickiness of collectives and contexts in community development. While the influence of context and the complications of collective action are understood in our theorising of community development, normativity in the way meaning is shaped in community development and the logic of theoretical persuasion lull us into a false sense of security. A situation to which Mowbray consistently alerts us (Bryson & Mowbray 1981, 2005; Meekosha & Mowbray, 1990, 1995; Mowbray, 1985, 1992, 2000b, 2004a, 2004b, 2005, 2011). Practice stories offer us more nuance and less structure in our understandings of community development. They have their own limitations. Telling authentic stories of community development is tricky. People and communities are vulnerable. Narrators have obligations. As narrators of our own practices, we may have more freedom from these obligations; although community development is never just about one person’s perspective it is about the collective.

The particular emphasis of stories of practices located in the south west region help us recognise the limitations of our theorising of community development in the Australian context and point to ideas which are at present understated. When practice comes first and theory follows, we see beginnings and endings are not so predictable. We see that community development is underpinned by a “confluence” of theories and traditions (Eversole, 2015) and that “people draw eclectically on a range of resources to respond to or shape the moment” (Ingamells, 2010, p. 5). Hence we see the contingent and temporal nature of community development. We see opportunities.

A story’s the way to tell it. (Campbell, 1988, p. xix)
Postscript

Two ideas I would like to investigate further are understandings of process in our practices of community development and storying in our theorising of community development. The idea that process is imperceptible is fascinating. Research into people’s understandings of process in the practice of community development would greatly inform our field. Investigating what drives, for example, the struggle between process and action — whether power, perspective, personality, the problem people are trying to address or something completely different — is a crucial question for community development.

The role of plot, narrator and heroism in our stories of community development is another rich vein of possibilities for research. Working to strengthen the differences between illustrative case study and case study research and our understandings of storying of community development may ignite further enthusiasm for case study research. A chorus of everyday practices speaking back to theory can only strengthen our theorising of community development.

A third ambition that has emerged from my research focuses on community studies research in Australia (eg. Dempsey, 1990; Wild, 1974). Mowbray (1996) argued two decades back that the field of communities studies has much to offer community development. The implications for research concerning the conceptual instability of community and the ethics of representing communities are well documented in the community studies literature. Community studies such as Bradstow (Wild, 1974) and Smalltown (Dempsey, 1990) are classics of their time and provide an opportunity for further research in the same communities (Crow, 2013). I have commenced a small retrospective study of Wild’s Bradstow (1974), an anthropological study of the social stratification of Bowral in the New South Wales Southern Highlands. I have a personal interest in Bradstow (1974) because I grew up in the neighbouring town of Mittagong. The issues of class politics, raised by Wild (1974), were revisited by Cottle and Masterman Smith (2001), who point to the absence of the worker’s perspective. My research is focused on considering this gap through the personal experiences of one person, a worker in the area at the time Wild was researching. I anticipate that the project may offer a model for revisiting the community studies,
particularly from the perspective of people who were young adults in these communities at the time of the original research. The community studies are strong historical records of specific rural and regional communities in the Australian context. Contemporary research in these same communities may prove a rich vein of knowledge for our understandings of community, community development and rural and regional settings in the Australian context.
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Appendices

Appendix A

Ethics statements

The following are samples of the information statements and consent forms for community groups and individuals used in the case selection and data collection phases of the research.

Project Information (General)

Traversing Tensions in Community Practice is a study that will focus on community projects in the south west of Western Australia. The aim of the study is to better understand how community projects work. The researcher, Colleen Carlon lives and works in Bunbury, and is enrolled as a PhD student in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University of Technology.

I am trying to find out more about how community projects work. I would like to look at two different types of projects those that start from the grassroots and projects that are initiated by government. These different approaches are commonly described as top-down and bottom-up approaches to community practice. Top-down refers to community development initiated by government and guided by a rational planning process and bottom-up refers to the initiation of projects from the community level and guided by a structural power analysis of society. In an Australian context these two approaches to community practice have been seen as opposing and incompatible paradigms with practitioners and/or projects expected to work from one perspective or the other. The aim of this research is to explore ways in which community development practice can draw from both these approaches.

To do this I am going to research four community projects in the south west region of Western Australia. I want to research and describe the current practice of two of each of these different types of projects. To facilitate the description of each case two theoretical ideal types have been developed from the community development
practice literature. They reflect top-down and bottom-up approaches. Each case will be described and analysed with reference to these ideal types.

For each case data will be collected over a period of three months. During this time the researcher would expect to be on site for approximately six days of operation. Data will be collected through the exploration of the public documents of the project, interviews with project participants and observations of project meetings / events and the day-to-day operations of the project.

At the end of the three months a descriptive analysis will be available to the project participants. This I hope will be a historical document for the project records and may also be used for project development or to source funds. This analysis and the research data I have gathered would become part of my PhD. This way I hope that community projects would benefit from participating in the research, as I will benefit by getting my study done.

If the project is willing to move forward and take part in the study or simply to discuss this proposal further please indicate what times are suitable for me to visit so we can discuss how the research may happen. If you decide you are not interested in being part of the study, just let me know and thanks for the time you have taken to consider my proposal.

If you have any concerns about the study, and would like an independent opinion, please contact the Secretary of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Office of Research and Development at Curtin University of Technology. The Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee approval number is HR142/2004.

**Project Information (Youth Group)**

Traversing Tensions in Community Practice is a study that will focus on community projects in the south west of Western Australia. The aim of the study is to better understand how community projects work. The researcher, Colleen Carlon lives and works in Bunbury, and is enrolled as a PhD student in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University of Technology.
I am trying to find out more about how community projects work. I would like to look at two different types of projects they are projects that start from the grassroots and projects that start from the government.

Grassroots: One way that community projects get started is when people see the need for something in their community and they start talking to other people about it. Together they try to do things that they think will help make life better in their community.

Government: Another way that community projects get started is when the government sees the need for something and they start working through their own departments (Health Department or Education Department) to try to do things that they think will help make life better in some communities.

I would like to research two grassroots community projects and two government community projects. To do the research I need to find out as much as I can about each project so that I can write a description of how the project works.

I will be looking for information about:

- Where the project operates, the town and the local community
- When and how the project started
- The issue that the project wants to work on
- The goals of the project
- How the goals will be achieved
- The types of actions the project takes
- How the project makes life better in the community
- The role of the project in the community
- How the project works with government or other groups in the community
- Who works for the project and what types of things they do
- Why people participate
- How decisions are made in the project
• Is there a boss?
• How is the project funded?
• Who gets the most benefit from the project?

To find out all these things I will read the public records of the project, do interviews with people involved in the project and watch and take notes at some of the meetings or events that are part of the project.

To make sure that the information I gather can be used by other community groups I need to write it up in a way that fits with all the books that have already been written about community projects. To help me do this I have written two models. One describes the types of things you would expect to find in a grassroots project and the one describes the types of things you would expect to find in a government project. These two models will help me to think of all the questions I need to ask. I will analyse the information I get from your project by comparing how you project works against these two models. I will not be trying to work out if you project is good or bad. I will be describing your project and how it is the same or different from the model in the hope of understanding more about how community projects work.

I will probably take about three months to research your project. During this time I will read about it, talk to people and attend some meetings. I might visit your project for six days during this three-month period. At the end of the three months I will write a full report of what I have found. Your project will get a copy of this report and you may be able to use it to think about how your project works or to help you get funding. I would keep a copy of this report and the research data I have gathered and this would become part of my PhD. This way I hope that your project would benefit from participating in the research, as I will benefit by getting my study done.

If you think this is a good idea and you would like me to come and visit your project to talk further please let me know. If you decide to go ahead and be part of the study we would need to talk about what times suit you for me to visit and we would need to discuss how the research may happen. If you decide you are not interested in being part of the study, just let me know and thanks for the time you have taken to consider my request.
If you have any concerns about the study, and would like an independent opinion, please contact the Secretary of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Office of Research and Development at Curtin University of Technology. The Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee approval number is HR142/2004.
**Participant Information**

Traversing Tensions in Community Practice is a study that will focus on community projects in the south west of Western Australia. The aim of the study is to better understand how community projects work. The researcher, Colleen Carlon lives and works in Bunbury, and is enrolled as a PhD student in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at Curtin University of Technology.

As explained previously the study will focus on two different approaches to community development practice. These different approaches are commonly described as top-down and bottom-up. The top-down approach refers to community practice initiated by government and the bottom-up approach refers to the initiation of projects from the community level. The objective of the study is to research and describe the current practice of two examples of each of these types of projects. To facilitate the description of each case two theoretical ideal types have been developed. They reflect the top-down and bottom-up approaches. Each case will be described and analysed with reference to these ideal types.

Data will be collected over a period of three months for each case. During this time the researcher would expect to be on site for approximately six days of project operation at which time the researcher would interview some project participants and observe some of the day-to-day events of the project.

Should you choose as an individual to participate either in an interview with the researcher or as a participant in project events observed by the researcher you will be:

- required to demonstrate written consent at the time of the interview or observation.
- free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

The interviews and events will be recorded and written up into a transcript or an observation record. The transcripts and observation records will:
be checked with you for accuracy before being used in the study. Any changes you request will be made or if you decide to withdraw from the study at this point you are free to do so without explanation.

not refer to you by name.

identify the project and your role in it. Please be aware that people reading the study report, particularly those from your local community, may be able to recognise you by the content of your interview or your role in the project.

be stored securely in the researcher’s office for the duration of the study. Upon completion of the study audiotapes will be destroyed and electronic copies of all research data will be stored in a secure location at Curtin University for five years after completion of the study.

Your rights as a participant of this study are to:

1. chose whether or not to take part
2. withdraw from the study at any time without explanation
3. have the transcript of your interview or the observation record of your participation changed
4. have the study fully explained.

You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions about the study.

If you have any concerns about the study, and would like an independent opinion, please contact the Secretary of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the Office of Research and Development at Curtin University of Technology. The Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee approval number is HR142/2004.
Consent Form (Adult)

You are being asked to participate in this study by taking part in an interview with the researcher. Doing so will give you the opportunity to explain your view of how the community project you are involved in works. Interviews should take between twenty and forty minutes to complete and will require some time for discussion to follow up on the transcript. You may then be approached for subsequent interviews, which will be shorter in duration.

To participate you are required to demonstrate written consent, by signing this form, at the time of the interview. Once you have agreed to participate and signed this form you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Please be aware

- that the interviews will be recorded and written up into a transcript
- the transcript and any reference to it in the final study will not carry your name but will name the project and the role you play in that project
- it is likely that you may be recognised by the role you play in the project or possibly though the content of your interview, particularly in your local community
- the transcript will be checked with you for accuracy before being used in the study. Any changes you request will be made or if you decide to withdraw all or part of your transcript from the study at this point you are free to do so without explanation
- transcripts will be stored securely in the researcher’s office for the duration of the study and at Curtin University for a period of five years after the completion of the study.

You are being approached to participate in the study because of your involvement in a south west community project.

I …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………
Do / do not voluntarily consent to take part in the Traversing Tensions in Community Practice Case Study Interview that has been explained to me in writing.

Signature  Date
 Consent Form (Under 18)

Because you are under 18 years of age and living with parents and/or guardians consent will also be sought from your parent or guardian for you to participate in this study.

You are being asked to participate in this study by taking part in an interview with the researcher. Doing so will give you the opportunity to explain your view of how the community project you are involved in works. Interviews should take between twenty and forty minutes to complete and will require some time for discussion to follow up on the transcript. You may then be approached for subsequent interviews, which will be shorter in duration.

To participate you are required to demonstrate written consent, by signing this form, at the time of the interview. Once you have agreed to participate and signed this form you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Please be aware

- that the interviews will be recorded and written up into a transcript
- the transcript and any reference to it in the final study will not carry your name but will name the project and the role you play in that project
- it is likely that you may be recognised by the role you play in the project or possibly though the content of your interview, particularly in your local community
- the transcript will be checked with you for accuracy before being used in the study. Any changes you request will be made or if you decide to withdraw all or part of your transcript from the study at this point you are free to do so without explanation
- transcripts will be stored securely in the researcher’s office for the duration of the study and at Curtin University for a period of five years after the completion of the study.

You are being approached to participate in the study because of your involvement in a south west community project.
I ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Do / do not voluntarily consent to take part in the Traversing Tensions in Community Practice Case Study Interview that has been explained to me in writing. (Please delete whichever does not apply)

Signature Date
Consent Form (Parent / Guardian)

Your child has been asked to participate in this case study by taking part in an interview with the researcher.

Your written consent is required for your child to participate in this study. You can consent to your child’s participation in this study by signing this form. Your child will also be asked to demonstrate written consent, by signing a consent form at the time of the interview.

Participating in this study will give your child the opportunity to explain your view of how Northcliffe Youth Voice works. Interviews should take between twenty and forty minutes to complete and will require some time for discussion to follow up on the transcript. Your child may then be approached for subsequent interviews, which will be shorter in duration. Your child will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without explanation.

Please be aware

- that the interviews will be recorded and written up into a transcript
- the transcript and any reference to it in the final study will not carry your child’s name but will name the project in which they participate and the role they play in that project
- it is likely that they may be recognised by the role they play in the project or possibly though the content of their interview, particularly in their local community
- the transcript will be checked with your child for accuracy before being used in the study. Any changes they request will be made or if they decide to withdraw all or part of your transcript from the study at this point they are free to do so without explanation
- transcripts will be stored securely in the researcher’s office for the duration of the study and at Curtin University for a period of five years after the completion of the study.
Your child is being approached to participate in the study because of their involvement in a south west community project.

I …………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Do / do not voluntarily consent for my child to take part in the Traversing Tensions in Community Practice Case Study Interview that has been explained to me in writing. (Please delete whichever does not apply)

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

(Child’s name)

Signature                      Date
Appendix B

Practice stories

The following extract is a sample of the process of building the practice story from the data from Vintage – A Home Town For Life as part of the narrative analysis described in Chapter Six.

Vintage practice story overview

I’m impatient, so what!
So is everybody when they are 60 and looking down the barrel of living in one of those aged persons beds, which they are building in Gosnells at the cost of $1,000,000, which would of built 10 houses. You don’t need to be in a hospital bed just because you need somebody to give you an injection each day.

People are saying
I want to be eighty-five and still living here, I will need assistance with the property
My housing needs have changed; I will need the opportunity to access services
Those options don’t exist in Balingup, I really have to sell and move out

At the moment there are a number of people who are at that critical stage. Getting a number of dwellings up and running is a critical point because there is already a definite need.

It’s about the community taking the initiative to get appropriate housing for an aging population, to ensure an appropriate level of services in the community to support different stages of life. It is a small rural community.

It started donkey’s years ago
The Country Women’s Association trying to get appropriate housing
Those people really started the push, kept pushing, and joined each new iteration to get appropriate housing and services in Balingup.

I know lots of people who have got to their sixties, their health has started to fail and then off they go we’ve lost some really really excellent people as a result of that.

We desperately need some housing
People are leaving town because their properties are too big
Too big for them to manage they can’t burn off in summer
They are still part of the community they want to stay part of the community

We got together to think about how we would like to care for people, it wasn’t about aged people it’s about anyone who needs care in our community, families might need support to continue living in Balingup.

A fresh view of how to care for elderly people
The whole thing is about healthy aging, aging in place, intricately linking lifestyle and service delivery with housing options. People spending their entire life cycle in Balingup with the appropriate physical accommodation and all the services they need throughout their life.

Moving forward with a twenty-five year plan to support people here in the community
- We have the opportunity to do something really creative and innovative
- About how people want to live and how they want to be supported

A Home Town for Life

It’s not necessarily about sickness, illness, and health services
- It’s more about well-being, support, maintenance, transport, gardening, keeping people able and independent
- People's right to risk
- People get put into homes and they have to be so safe that they can’t do anything

The quality of life principles

The focus of Vintage is different we don’t want to get caught up with traditional care
- It was really hard to change their thinking
- You’re not allowed to do that
- No, that's not policy
- You can’t do that
- We can’t change that

I kept saying
- I think we need to forget how it is we need to picture how it might be and then see what changes we can make.

The role of Vintage
- An information broker
- An information seeker
- A co-coordinating mechanism
- A lobby group

My feeling is that Vintage is about education
- A company limited by guarantee
- The company structure is very flexible
- It combines some of the qualities of a housing co-op
- It is set up to rapidly adjust to community need

An umbrella company for Balingup
- An enabling framework
- A body that can facilitate solutions for people to live healthily in this town

Healthily is emotionally, physically, mentally, things that enable a joyous community
- If the need is there Vintage will find a way to meet it

There are existing service providers
- We need to make sure we have the data, we know what we need when they apply for funding to fill in the gaps

It’s really been an example of social entrepreneurship in that the community is not even putting their hand out for the public dollar, they know that the traditional ways
of funding and the traditional way aged housing is provided won’t really happen for them. They are trying to move away from those institutionalised and standardised ways that people perceive aged housing and aged care.

This is the only option for small communities like Balingup in Western Australia. I live in Balingup and I have a passion for the place. Balingup is the perfect town to kick it off; it’s dynamic. It’s attracting huge numbers of the over sixties.

Decisions came through building relationships in the group. Talking around the table. We have achieved with consensus remarkably well. The whole group understands our goals. It’s been difficult, I think we’ve managed because we are all positive people and we all agreed that we would stick in there. There have been disagreements along the way, but people are happy to compromise. The biggest frustration would be the fact that it is moving so slowly.

There are the “Friends of Vintage”. When we’ve got something to announce we hold a meeting to inform people. It’s advertised through the whole community. It’s more about participating than being a client. We want people to give us their ideas about what they want.

This is now a very strong grass roots organisation. Bringing in the expertise from outside where it’s needed. One of the things was we needed to have fun while we were doing it. What we need to do now is get more people on board, we know what we need to do, let’s stop talking about it, we’ve done all that stuff, now let’s make it happen.

**Vintage practice story key ideas**

**Getting started**

The participants of Vintage talk about the group currently known as Vintage as having been formed around 2002 early 2003. They talk about the Country Women’s Association (CWA) looking at housing needs in Balingup for 20 or 25 years before that.

*Prior to Vintage the Country Women’s Association has been trying to get appropriate housing in the community because they saw many people who did not want to leave have to leave, purely because the appropriate housing or the service delivery wasn’t here.* - Vintage Interview 5 Project worker

*Vintage started relatively recently, I guess that was three to four years ago. The CWA has had a hall and a site in the town probably since the war and they agreed to cede some of that land to the Shire for aged persons housing, that was done a long time ago. The discussions on that I’m told had been going for at least 20 years.* - Vintage Interview 2 Participant
The group that came to be known as Vintage picked up on a community process that had been bubbling away for many years in Balingup.

1988 I ran a workshop in Balingup that looked at what the Balingup community wanted to see for themselves over the next 5 to 10 years. A number of projects came out of that some of it was about nowhere for the elderly to go, that was that far back. In the early 90’s, there was a group working on that very issue and they identified some land through the CWA. Vintage Interview 4 Advisor

The issue was alive in the community before the 1988 community-planning workshop facilitated by the South West Development Authority.

My understanding of the history of Vintage is that it goes back, although the terminology wasn’t Vintage, the concept of trying to support people within the community who are elderly goes back twenty five years to the CWA they tried to get aged housing in the traditional sense of the word on their land. Vintage Interview 6 Participant

The housing issue has been an ongoing concern for residents in Balingup. The work of the CWA demonstrates a commitment within the community to act to address the issue however the response from government did not match with the hopes of the local people.

In the early 90’s there was a group working on the issue, we identified some land through the CWA, there was a Labor government and they had a program called the Wise Choice program and we got Homeswest down. The issue for Balingup was people had their own houses but they had to sell them to be able to go into a retirement unit but you couldn’t get retirement units without buying them. We needed the figures to get any sort of housing, you need people to say yes I’ll go in as soon as you build it whereas these people had to wait for their houses to sell. This program Wise Choice was able to fill that gap. It was a joint Homeswest community project, they were going to build the houses, and people were going to be able to come in. The government changed and the program fell in a big hole. Time has gone on and nothing really happened until there was group of people working down there, they saw the need and were really working, trying to address the need. They held an aging summit. Vintage Interview 4 Advisor

I went to a meeting of aged care in Balingup. It was the people in Balingup concerned that we didn’t have any housing. It was quite clear that the council wasn’t. They thought that having looked at partnerships with Homeswest, that we didn’t have sufficient people with that sort of income, or lack of income, and that was end of the story. I rang a few people after that meeting and said look lets see if we can do something about this and change this attitude. I rang a few of the people that I knew, including Wilma from the CWA because she was the one that was most concerned. The CWA had already ceded some land to the Shire to allow aged housing to be on that land. Which was very generous of them, and it was a big effort for them to do that. We got together and tried to think about how we would like to care for people. Vintage Interview 3 Participant
Members of civil society in Balingup formed Vintage as a reaction to a lack of government action.

**Local history and character**

A scenic town on the South West Highway, Balingup presents itself through events such as the Medieval Carnivale and the Small Farm Field Day as a tourist and lifestyle destination. Non-indigenous settlement of the area dates from around the 1800s. By the 1960s, Balingup had developed into a flourishing agricultural community with a population in excess of 1000. The introduction of a quota system combined with the steep terrain of the area made the dairy industry unviable and people left the district. Farmland did not sell easily and the state government Forest Department, now operating as the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), bought large tracts of land for pine plantations. This caused an unsustainable reduction in the rates base of the Shire of Balingup. In 1969, the Shire of Balingup was amalgamated with the neighbouring Shire of Donnybrook. Amalgamation was on the agenda for some time but when a decision finally came.

There was strong protest from the Balingup community and the Shire of Balingup as to the lack of consultation and discussion in the lead up to the amalgamation. The Shire of Donnybrook Balingup has been in place for over thirty years now yet discussions in this case indicate lingering evidence of this early concern.

*Everybody’s saying yes it’s a good idea, yes it’s a good idea, the Shire could of done something itself had it not been focused on government from Donnybrook. The local government set up, with the surrounding satellite towns, they would probably have considered well they are being serviced by Donnybrook. Vintage Interview 2 Participant*

*There appears to be a suspicion almost of getting local government involved. Is that the same for other levels of government? No, just with local government. You don’t have to look too far to understand the reasons. Is it all historical? Yeah, very much so, that’s why Balingup is a “can do community”. What’s happened is now the Shire is saying, “We’d love to help”, Balingup is saying, “We don’t need your help, we’ve managed all these years without you.” It’s that sort of scenario. Vintage Interview 1 Community development officer*

The Donnybrook Balingup Shire covers an area of 1559.8 square kilometres. Donnybrook, where the council offices are located, is the major town centre. Balingup, the next most populated town in the Shire, is located 30 km south of Donnybrook. The perception in Balingup is that Shire services are concentrated in the more heavily populated Donnybrook. The perceived lack of action from the Shire to work with the early attempts to address the housing issue in Balingup no doubt contributed to the momentum for the development of Vintage. The Shire’s work in establishing housing options in Donnybrook is irrelevant to the population of Balingup.

*People live here because they want to live here they don’t want to live in Donnybrook if they don’t live here they won’t go to Donnybrook they’ll go to*
Busselton so it’s not an answer to the problem to say well it’s all provided for in the main town of the Shire. Vintage Interview 2 Participant

Vintage participants talk about a shift in the town’s population.

Essentially Vintage is about ensuring that the appropriate housing choice is available and also to ensure that people are able to get services when and where they want. The challenge is obviously that it is a very small rural community- it’s not the sort of project that the private sector would come into and fund. It’s also an area that would not be high on public housing lists mainly because of the size of the population but also the asset rich people who moved into the community and the notion of them applying for public housing through welfare would not happen, because their assets would preclude them. You have got quite a socio-economic change that has occurred within Balingup over the last ten-fifteen years. But the catch twenty-two is that just because they have valuable assets it does not mean that they are able to sell it or cash it in when they want to. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker

They are all pre-positioning themselves for retirement here and they’re pre-positioning themselves as active sixty years olds or fifty-five years olds who are not really thinking about long-term effects of not having services here or support. What happens here and we see it all the time, they come down with their dreams, like we did, and they put everything into it, every ounce of energy and ten years later they’re buggered. Then they start saying we can’t manage a hundred and twenty acres, we are going into our late sixties, and so they are leaving. I think if Vintage can prevent that from happening. If this is where they want to be then I think they have the right to live their lives out here. Vintage Interview 6 Participant

The demographics of Australian society are pushing a policy shift away from traditional responses to age housing and age care. Combine this with the ‘can do’ nature of the Balingup community and you have the context of Vintage.

Well there’s something about the town. There’s the fact that people in their 50s and 60s have got their superannuation to live on but they’re all at some stage of their life thinking about the same thing “What will I do if I get sick?” So there’s probably interest locally here compared to other places and it’s a small enough town that people do actually talk to each other. The Vintage group really is made up of people you see in other groups. There is a fairly constant level of discussion in the community here that you probably don’t get in bigger communities. Vintage Interview 2 Participant

They know that if it’s going to work anywhere it will work in Balingup because we are such - we actually won the “Can Do Community Award” last year. We went off to Canberra and received it as the State Winners. We just have that sort of reputation if you like. Vintage Interview 1 Community development officer

The Country Women’s Association - the Balingup branch was founded in 1932. The current branch secretary is an active participant of Vintage. She says that the CWA has been working to address the aged housing issues of the community from as far back as 1984. After much work from the Balingup branch the Country Women’s
Association of Western Australia ceded crown land, designated to the Association, to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure on the condition that it be used for aged units. The Donnybrook Balingup Shire is currently responsible for this land.

*It has been evolutionary because bare in mind the CWA were initiating it before grass roots was a buzzword. The CWA were and probably still are one of the original grass roots movements. They are an unseen thing they seem to be outdated and outmode but no, the CWA and a number of individuals have been working on this project and they’ve seen committees come and go and groups come in and promise everything and nothing happens for twelve years but they are still in there. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker*

Vintage does not employ an overt conflict approach to working with this situation. They tend to seek out partnerships that are effective and find ways around obstacles rather than confront them head on.

*It’s essentially about the community having to take the initiative to get appropriate housing for an aging population and to ensure that there’s an appropriate level of services to support the different life stages. What’s different about this project is that the whole thing is about healthy aging, aging in place and also intricately linking lifestyle housing and service delivery with housing options. The idea is that the individual needs determine where, how and when the services are delivered. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker*

*The strong ethos in Balingup is self-help “doing it by itself”. The whole ethos is that Vintage is there as a resource and to do what the Balingup individuals want it to do. There’s a really fundamental difference in that, it is not there to determine, it is there to react and deliver, very different. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker*

*I think all communities are having to look more towards sustainability because government grants are going to be less and less, there is just not enough money to go around, so we’ve got to think smart. Vintage Interview 6 Participant*

Building houses on the CWA land in Balingup resonates as a task goal. Building houses or retirement accommodation provides a tangible service not currently available in the community, is in line with responses to age and caring needs in other communities and it is what some people need and want right now.

*There are a number of people within the community who have reached that age where they are having to say – “My housing needs have changed and I need the opportunity to access certain services but because those options aren’t existing within Balingup, I really have to move and sell out.” At the moment, there are a number of people who are at that critical stage. So in a certain way, getting a number of dwellings up and running is a critical point because there is already a definite need there. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker*

The quality of life principles approach to ageing and caring services and exploring the possibilities of organisational structures resonate as process goals. Working on
the quality of life principles is outside the usual responses to ageing and caring services in Australia and exploring the possibilities of organisational structure places greater emphasis on local decision-making. The participants talk about the need for innovative responses to the issues that face Balingup and the need to establish Vintage as a flexible organisation.

*It hasn’t been like in most communities or towns a local government, beaurocratic, initiated thing it’s really been an example of social entrepreneurism. The community is not even putting their hand out for the public dollar, they know that the traditional ways of funding and the traditional way aged housing is provided won’t really happen for them. They are trying to move away from those institutionalised and standardised ways that people perceive aged housing and aged care.* Vintage Interview 5 Project worker

*It’s a vision that really we want held for twenty to twenty five years. If we don’t get the structure right now we can’t actually go forward with that vision. The structure is really important, vital really. I think it’s really important that people understand here that a community business is not a dirty word. It has to be a business to be sustainable. It’s about putting money back into the community, back into the project, raising standards, perhaps being able to purchase properties and that sort of thing.* Vintage Interview 6 Participant

*It’s really important I think if you’re an ambassador for the project that you understand the importance of moving away from the traditional aspect. I think it’s an excellent idea. It’s been slow but I think it’s worth it to get it right.* Vintage Interview 6 Participant

There is frustration about the time it is taking to work through the process goals and there is a perception in the group that this is stalling the building tasks and impacts negatively on perceptions of Vintage in the broader Balingup community.

*I would say we have been looking at the options for how we should be incorporated for over a year, far too long, I thought it would take three months. I think it would’ve if we had not been waiting for advice from Perth, which has been fairly slow.* Vintage Interview 3 Participant

*Yes, I just think the impetus for this whole thing is undermined by it taking so long. People that we identified about three years ago have either gone or are now talking about going and so if they’re gone we now have to wait for some other people to get old and sick to get that impetus back again. I suppose what I am saying is it should be driven by who we’ve got here today it should be driven by a fundamental understanding this is what has to happen for the health of the community and it should be self evident by now. Whilst the process can be academically correct, logically correct you sometimes have to do things in a different order to sustain the pressure.* Vintage Interview 2 Participant

*It has gone off in different directions. We’ve somehow managed to keep it together. We sometimes get a bit cranky. One person has one idea in mind and particularly the housing when nothing was happening of course, it was all so slow, and there was frustration, a couple of people left the group and said*
“what we really want to do is housing”. A couple of new people drifted in.

Vintage Interview 1 Community development officer

The program’s being hijacked a bit, by the funding that comes with strings attached, and the direction of things to my mind has been steered, probably rightly, but it’s tended to protract it. This has been going on for years now and people who were looking waiting for something to happen are probably thinking well it won’t happen, because they have been talking about this for 25 years at least. Yeah so the hope that something quickly could be done probably in the eyes of anyone from outside would be losing it’s impetus, that’s what I mean a comment on the process, the process is fine but it’s too long. I understand it all I appreciate it all but it is too long. Vintage Interview 2 Participant

If we were to lay half a dozen bricks on the site for a house, I think that we would go up in everybody’s estimation. Seriously, even if they sat there for a little while because it appears everybody wants the bricks ‘n’ mortar. That’s the focus for the community. I understand that they’ve all been waiting forever for this so if we could get a start that would be terrific. Vintage Interview 6 Participant

While this tension has not being completely resolved, it does appear to have been accommodated within the work of Vintage.

We’ve got a committee made up of people with different interests for example, I’m interested in building, architecture and housing and I think that’s the answer to half the problem. The people with backgrounds in nursing or social services will certainly see that half the solutions to the problems are from their background of influence. Out of that comes the rivaling of the idea of what Vintage should do and all of the activities it’s going to do are relegated to being on hold until the corporate structure is ironed out. Vintage Interview 2 Participant

Originally, there was a bit of friction because the original people like the CWA. Quite a few of the original members were just interested in housing but the Vintage group has a much bigger picture in mind, it’s been for the best for sure. I mean, you need people who are visionary’s. You need people who are looking and saying “we don’t just need houses, we also need services to look after people when they’re in their houses.” It started to go along the track that we will provide all these services and to me that was a duplication of what’s already available, we’ve already got HACC. What we need to do is expand and improve on services so that Vintage is actually a lobby group to get more HACC hours in the town, I think that now is the way Vintage is starting to see it. Vintage Interview 1 Community development officer

A community enterprise is essentially one that says we believe there is a certain level of demand and need for a service or a good or a product. It is unlikely that the government or the private sector will come in on their own bat and create it. So the notion of the community enterprise is that it works in a typical co-operative valued process as well as have an economic objective, it is also about community development and community capacity building. The community itself aggregating enough demand to be able to support a certain
service or business or whatever- a community enterprise model has been around for a long, long time- there are very many derivations of it. Whether Vintage itself will become a community enterprise I don’t really know- it may be part of a wider community enterprise but at the moment it really needs to make something happen within the community and that’s basically service delivery and also the accommodation side. Vintage Interview 5 Project worker
Appendix C

Thematic analysis

Figure A1. Example One of the process of thematic analysis.

The photo shown above, Figure A1, is a sample of small segments of data identified as part of the thematic analysis described in Chapter Six. The data shown in the picture is from Vintage – A Home Town For Life.
Figure A2. Example Two of the process of thematic analysis.

The photo shown above, Figure A2, is a sample of small segments of data identified as part of the thematic analysis described in Chapter Six. The data shown in the picture is from Vintage – A Home Town For Life.