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Volunteering at the edge of chaos: A case study on the self-organising of younger volunteers during the Rena oil spill crisis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the self-organising of younger volunteers during the 2011 Rena oil spill crisis in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It builds on emerging research that considers the relationships between volunteering and activism and focuses on the ways in which younger volunteers carved out a ‘volunteer-activist’ space for themselves on the edge of the formal crisis responses.

The research adopts a case study approach and uses an interpretive lens to investigate three research questions: (1) How was volunteering conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the Rena crisis?; (2) How did the generational dynamics of younger volunteers affect the various organising responses to the Rena event?; and, (3) How was self-organising conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the Rena crisis?

The data comprised interviews with 53 participants, 38 of whom were classified as younger volunteers (16-29 years of age) and 15 who held positions of authority in the Rena crisis response and who had high levels of engagement with the younger volunteers. By examining the intersections and overlaps of self-organising, younger generations of volunteers, and crisis events through a social constructionist methodology combined with an interpretive lens and reflexive position, the thesis makes several theoretical and practical contributions.

At a theoretical level, the thesis challenges traditional crisis management approaches dominated by command and control, formal, or top down organisational structures and arrangements. The thesis demonstrates how, as active members of society, younger volunteers developed alternate forms of participation to strengthen crisis response.

Power tensions between younger volunteers and crisis officials were grounded in a deep sense of frustration resulting from negative societal views toward younger generational cohorts and the structural workings of a risk society. By reconciling social and institutional grievances through self-organising, younger volunteers could take advantage of their marginalised position and enact self-reflexive responses in ways that were not readily available to them in everyday life. This sense of empowerment helped younger volunteers navigate the structural

uncertainties they faced as they transitioned towards a competitive labour market and also to take greater control of their lives during a crisis.

From an Aotearoa/New Zealand, perspective, the thesis also provides insights into how younger Māori participants made sense of and enacted their ‘volunteer’ experience and how this experience was influenced by culturally embedded principles. Importantly, there appeared to be no generational differences between how younger and older Māori participants made sense of their ‘volunteer’ experience. Both groups were driven by collectivist orientations, which highlights the importance of contextualising culture in volunteer sector research.

The social constructedness of the media technologies used by participants exposed broader power structures that existed within their generation-specific social worlds. To this end, media multiplexity showed how use of different communication technologies (1) supported the maintenance of relationships between participants and (2) was fundamental to the meaning participants attached to the different forms of technologies. These findings indicate the need to move away from the current literature’s focus on the tools of communication technologies used by younger people during crisis events, towards the meanings that exist behind the use of such technologies as well as the digital relationships fostered among volunteers.

This thesis contributes to the scholarship on volunteering and activism by showing how self-organising emerged as an alternative form of activist—or activator—approach to volunteer participation within a crisis response. This approach enabled young volunteer-activators to move beyond their perceived sense of marginalisation and avoid those formal organisational forces that limit their sense of freedom and personal development. The result was an alternative crisis response of self-organised volunteering on the edge of chaos.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On 5 October 2011, Aotearoa/New Zealand faced an unprecedented maritime and environmental crisis when the *MV Rena (Rena)* grounded on Astrolabe Reef off the Bay of Plenty and leaked over 350 tonnes of oil into the ocean. Deeply saddened by the event, communities in the area were determined to restore the shoreline to its previous state. Despite some reluctance to engage volunteers in the response, Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) responded by establishing Operation Beach Clean (OBC), a programme which gave the public the opportunity to be recruited, trained, and dispatched as volunteers under formal MNZ supervision. The volunteer clean-up that followed was considered a success by both organisers and volunteers (Sargisson, Hunt, Hanlen, Smith, & Hamerton, 2012) and pollution levels across Omani and Papamoa beaches were reduced significantly within 3 months of the spill (Donald, 2012). However, the OBC volunteers were not alone in their clean-up efforts. During this time, a large number of younger volunteers self-organised their own crisis response independent of the formal OBC operation. Over time, many young people withdrew from the OBC to take part in these self-organised responses.

While the emergence of younger people who respond to crisis events is not a new phenomenon (Johnson, 2011; Lewis, 2013; Mutch, 2013; Plummer et al., 2008; Starbird & Palen, 2011; Toivonen, 2011), there is currently little research that considers the generational influence on the organising behaviours of these volunteers. Nevertheless, some such research is now beginning to be undertaken. Within Aotearoa/New Zealand, for example, research on self-organised younger volunteers who responded to the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes examined the Student Volunteer Army (SVA)'s display of interaction rituals (Lewis, 2013), citizenship (Mutch, 2013), resilience (Bourk & Holland, 2014; Giovinazzi et al., 2011; Hayward, 2013; Mamula-Seadon, Selway, & Paton, 2012; O'Steen & Perry, 2012), service learning (O'Steen & Perry, 2012), and use of social media (Bunker, Ehnis, Seltsikas, & Levine, 2013; Howell & Taylor, 2011). Following the *Rena* crisis, a relatively small study focused on volunteers who participated in the OBC (see Hunt, Smith, Hamerton, & Sargisson, 2014;

Sargisson et al., 2012). However, there has been no research on the self-organised volunteer response to the crisis. Internationally, research focusing on younger volunteers has been dominated by a technological focus on tools of organising (Delli Carpini, 2000; Montgomery, Gottlieb-Robles, & Larson, 2004; Raynes-Goldie & Walker, 2008; Starbird & Palen, 2011) rather than on the organising behaviours or generational influences of the volunteers.

The lack of attention to crisis volunteering from a generational perspective is surprising for three reasons. First, organisational communication scholars agree that generational differences have a significant impact on organising behaviours in the workplace (see Gibson, Greenwood, & Murphy Jr., 2009; Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Martin, 2005; Wong, Gardiner, Lang, & Coulon, 2008). Secondly, scholars have shown that age is an influential factor in relation to volunteer engagement, motivation, and participation (see Marta, Guglielmetti, & Pozzi, 2006; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Principi, Schippers, Naegele, Di Rosa, & Lamura, 2016; Rehberg, 2005). Thirdly, the changing nature of volunteering has theorised young people as situated within a frame of reflexive modernisation (see Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Read, 2010) where they evidence both a shift from a collective community volunteer mind-set to an individualistic or reflexive approach (see Grönlund, 2011; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000, 2003; Read, 2010; Rehberg, 2005; Weller, 2008) and a growing trend in episodic volunteering (see Auld, 2004; Glasrud, 2007; Handy, Brodeur, & Cnaan, 2006; Styers, 2004). Despite these studies, there has been no research that investigates the intersections of younger volunteers, crisis events, and organising dynamics during a crisis, from a generational perspective.

There is a need for this intersected examination of crisis response. With the world's experiencing an increased crisis risk due to urban development, population growth, and climate change (Chapman & Arbon, 2008; Horita, de Albuquerque, Degrossi, Assis, & Zipf, 2013; Whittaker, McLennan, & Handmer, 2015), informal volunteers are often the first on the scene of crises and support many crisis response needs (Twigg & Mosel, 2017; Whittaker et al., 2015). Nonetheless, acknowledgement of informal crisis volunteers seems to be limited to research on how they can be integrated within official response efforts in order to mitigate risk (see McLennan, Whittaker, & Handmer, 2016; Skar, Sydnese, &

Sydnes, 2016; Twigg & Mosel, 2017; Waldman, Verga, & Godsoe, 2016; White, 2016). Meanwhile, the efforts of the volunteers who continue to engage in the crisis response independent of any official response capacity often go unacknowledged and forgotten in research studies that have the potential to provide learning insights into crisis response (Whittaker et al., 2015). Consequently, rather than viewing these volunteers as a nuisance or a risk to crisis response procedures (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zudin, 2002; Helsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004; Scanlon, Helsloot, & Groenendaal, 2014), this study attempts to develop a deeper understanding about younger volunteers who respond to crisis events, in order to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge to aid future response efforts. More specifically, a case study examination of the self-organised younger volunteers who responded to the *Rena* crisis presents an opportunity to provide a novel contribution to organisational communication scholarship that focuses on not only the emerging phenomenon of a self-organised, younger volunteer response to crisis events, but also to offer insights for crisis management practitioners into the crisis response behaviours of younger people. Such an examination can provide both academics and practitioners focused on crisis response management with “usable knowledge – knowledge that is both accurate and politically tractable” (Haas, 2004, p. 572).

In the following sections, I provide a background to the *Rena* crisis and explain how the different volunteer responses evolved. I then outline the approach and focus of the thesis and explain some key definitions. Thereafter, I detail the research origins and researcher positioning, including my own background within the volunteer sector. The final section of this chapter details how the thesis is structured.

The Background to the Thesis: The *Rena* Crisis and Volunteer Response

Facing the prospect of a costly delay at sea if he failed to make a boarding deadline (Magone, 2012), the captain of the *MV Rena*, a container ship owned by the Greek shipping company Costamare, decided to deviate from the ship’s planned route and, rather than preceding to Napier, to head instead for Tauranga. Confident that the plotted shortcut around the Aotearoa/New Zealand coast would

result in the vessel's meeting its pilot vehicle on time, the captain failed to notice that the Astrolabe Reef stood directly in the way of his shortcut. When the *MV Rena* struck the reef at 17 knots per hour, the front of the ship immediately became firmly stuck on the reef and began leaking heavy fuel and marine diesel oil into the ocean (Sailworld, 2011). This situation placed the crew members, 1,700 tonnes of heavy fuel, 200 tonnes of diesel, and 1,368 containers with items such as timber, milk powder, plastic, and polypropylene ropes in a highly dangerous situation. Unfavourable weather and high seas prevented any rescue efforts from taking place and, within 4 days, a 5-kilometre oil slick had emerged from the vessel, threatening the area's rich fishing waters and marine life (BBC News, 2011). By October 10, the crew were forced to evacuate and unfavourable weather caused the vessel to shift further onto the reef. It was estimated that a total of 350 tonnes of oil leaked from the ship and between 30 and 70 containers fell into the ocean (Davison, Morton, & Theunissen, 2011).

In the days that followed, the extensive environmental impact of the ship's grounding became evident within affected communities: hundreds of seabirds and penguins covered in thick, black oil began washing up on the coastlines and it was estimated that the tragedy caused 2,000 seabird deaths (Backhouse, 2011b). Local residents were warned that spilled oil could lead to nausea, vomiting, and rashes and were urged to keep their distance and take precautions to prevent fumes from entering their homes (Cowlshaw, 2011). Additional environmental risks were posed not only by the 110 tonnes of hazardous goods known to be inside damaged containers, but also by the Corexit dispersant that MNZ controversially applied to the spill in an attempt to disperse the oil (ScienceLearningHub, 2012). Overall, MNZ used 3,000 tonnes of Corexit, despite evidence of its deadly effect on marine life when mixed with oil (Muncaster, Jacobson, Tairui, King, & Bird, 2016).

The oil spill also had a crippling effect on the local tourism industry and economy. Local fisheries and tourism operators were forced to lay off staff and lost significant clientele, as images of thick, tar-like oil along the popular coastline were broadcast across the nation and overseas.

From a cultural perspective, many Māori (indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand) felt violated and offended. In particular, the 40 residents of nearby Mōtītī Island, located 9.4 kilometres off the Papamoa coast, were most acutely affected by the *Rena* grounding, as they inhabited the nearest land mass to the oil and debris spill and relied on the coast for their *kaimoana* (seafood) and water. There was widespread feeling amongst Māori that their *kaitiakitanga* (the obligation of stewardship or guardianship) to look after the *rohe* (area) of their people for future generations was tarnished and that while the wreckage remained on the reef it would insult their *mauri* (the force that binds all things together) (Marsden & Henare, 1992) and damage their spiritual connections to the reef itself (Mikaere, 2014).

Public emotions ran high and the public desire to be involved in response efforts increased after the then Minister for the Environment, Nick Smith announced that the *Rena* represented the worst oil spill in the nation's history (Donnell, 2011). However, there were many factors for officials to consider before engaging members of the public. First, there were significant health risks associated with handling the oil and other potentially hazardous goods from washed up containers. Secondly, there were well-documented negative consequences resulting from volunteer engagement in oil spills overseas. For example, previous crisis response events had identified: conflict surrounding monetary compensation to both paid workers and volunteers (Palinkas, Downs, Petterson, & Russell, 1993); issues related to lack of specific volunteer training (Griggs, 2011); an inability of volunteers to cope with the labour-intensive tasks; and, resistance to accepting supervisory directions from authority (Moller, 1997). Despite these factors, the public demand to be involved in the *Rena* response effort persisted, and some informal volunteer activity started to occur. MNZ decided to allow controlled volunteer participation in the clean-up by encouraging motivated members of the public to register through the OBC. Through this system, training and equipment were provided to volunteers in beach clean-up operations that were monitored closely by MNZ personnel. Within 7 days of its establishment, 2,000 members of the public had registered with the OBC (Harper & Lundy, 2011), a number which eventually swelled to 7,950 registered volunteers who collectively contributed 19,725 hours to beach cleaning (Backhouse, 2011a).

Overall, the OBC was hailed a success and described as the first ever effective volunteer response following an oil spill (Gillespie, 2011). However, despite its initial success there were multiple administrative glitches (Gillespie, 2011), and soon it became clear that many individuals were becoming disillusioned and frustrated with the arduous registration and inflexible processes. Furthermore, a significant number of people who had registered via the correct channels were never contacted by the OBC. Others found that their availability did not suit the strict timeframes available for participation, and some felt that their skills and capabilities were not being utilised. Consequently, many young people withdrew from the OBC and instead initiated or participated in separate self-organised efforts. Examples included: delivery of food parcels sourced and dispatched via helicopter to Mōtītī Islanders; informal gatherings of Facebook friends for beach cleans along the main coastline; groups from the surfing communities ferrying together to pick off debris along the stretch of Matakana Island; and, other fundraising and cleaning initiatives.

In the next section, I explain how I approached this case study theoretically and methodologically.

Approach and Focus of the Thesis

In order to explore the theoretical intersections of volunteering, generation, and self-organising within the context of a crisis event, I adopt a social constructionist perspective (Andrews, 2012; Burr, 2015; Creswell, 2013; Cunliffe, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). More specifically, I use the lens of interpretivism (Cuthill, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2012; Putnam & Pacanowsky, 1983; Putnam, 1983; Schwandt, 2003), which allows me to look at how participants socially construct their volunteer experience through their interactions with each other and in relation to the situational context.

Epistemologically, social constructionism emphasises the subjective relationship between the research participant and the researcher in a co-construction of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997). The methodological approach of this thesis further enhances this meaning-making process through the use of reflexivity which gives me an opportunity to scrutinise my own role in the construction of interpretations, and also *question* how these

interpretations come about (Hertz, 1997; Mason, 2002; Primeau, 2003; Wallerstein, Duran, Minkler, & Foley, 2005).

Research questions were developed following an iterative process that emerged following my own experience during the *Rena* crisis event and a subsequent immersion in the literature on crisis volunteering, self-organising, and generational theories in the context of contemporary society. After reviewing the literature in the three key areas of crisis volunteering, self-organising, and generational theories, it became evident that a study which intersected all three areas could provide unique insights into the emerging phenomenon of younger volunteers responding to crisis events.

For example, in terms of the volunteering literature, self-reflexive changes in volunteering can result in a complex interplay, or interdependence, of structural and organisational changes at two levels: 1) the social structures and relations that make up the volunteers' individual biographical situation, on the one hand and 2) the organisational structures in which the volunteering takes place, on the other (Behr, Liebig, & Rauschenbach, 2000; Hustinx, 2010b). In interpreting and analysing present day volunteering, broader structural and transformational relationships between volunteers and the organisational environment must be considered.

There are significant aspects of the literature on volunteering, self-organising, and generational theories that need deeper exploration. The first is the tension between the articulation of the notions of volunteerism and activism in contemporary times. Many scholars have argued, over the past decade, that in a quest for greater individualisation and flexible capitalism, neoliberal markets have ultimately damaged social norms associated with purist volunteer notions such as altruistic tendencies, social compassion, and collectivism (see Dean, 2014, 2015; Eliasoph, 2013; Hall, 2001; Hustinx & Meijs, 2011). In her book *The Politics of Volunteering*, Eliasoph (2013) defines neoliberalism as the “economic and political system that tips the Tocquevillian balance all the way over to the market and voluntary sector, and away from government” (p. 126). Using this definition, the author claims that under a neoliberal agenda, non-government organisations have shifted their focus from providing programmes that respond to charitable

demands or needs, towards a focus on delivering empowerment strategies which emphasise transparency, innovation and personal responsibility. Within the volunteer domain, one result of these market-oriented shifts has been greater emphasis on the instrumental benefits to volunteering (ie. to enhance job prospects through skill enhancement) as opposed to the purist or altruistic benefits to the individual and collective good. As a consequence of volunteering following the markets (Dean, 2015), organisations have changed the ways in which they recruit and manage their volunteer workforce. The potential for these social and economic neoliberal tensions to inflict long-term effects on the traditional nature of volunteering is significant. As stated by Sennett (1998), these tensions have delivered societies “which provide human beings no deep reasons to care about one another” (p. 148). Given that crisis events are often embroiled with serious risk or damage to people and their surroundings, an inquiry that focuses on the conceptualisations of volunteering among individuals who informally respond to crisis events, is important. This study does so by using an interpretive lens to examine the politicisation of social issues that exist within both volunteer and activist domains.

Secondly, the literature on self-organising indicates the need for better understanding of how this self-organisation, individuality, and self-confrontation can be understood within contemporary contexts of crisis volunteering. For example, whilst self-organising can be resistant to traditional forms of leadership, these also represent a contradiction or tension between the discourse of leaderlessness and organisational practices in which leadership continues to exist. These tensions, Gerbaudo (2012) argues, are primarily due to the fact that self-organisation in social movements inevitably requires focal points for offline assembling and mobilisation. Therefore, while self-organising during crises may create a unique “opportunity for doing new things, for innovation and for development” (Folke, 2006, p. 253), self-organising directly contrasts with the bureaucratic and administrative-centric responses typically offered by official crisis response organisations (Crossley, 2003).

Thirdly, the literature on theories of generations identifies significant structural transformations which have affected the lives of today’s younger people (Du Bois-Reymond, 1998; Harris, Wyn, & Younes, 2010; Vinken, 2005, 2007a,

2007b; Zinnecker, 2002). Here, research draws on developments stemming from Mannheim's notion of a fresh lens and the work of other researchers of generations. The literature suggests that the sociopolitical and historical context of a crisis event acts as a backdrop to the unique organisational response exhibited among younger volunteers. Consequently, the actions of these volunteers have the potential to instil lifelong change at a time of acute generational development (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998).

At a practical level, using a generational lens within this study provides an opportunity for organisational leaders to predict motivations, behaviours, and attitudes of individuals by acknowledging the hopes and fears that exist within generational cohorts. This approach also supports theorising and analysing of the behaviour of younger people who engage in crisis volunteering that moves beyond the rhetoric of disruption and chaos (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002; Helsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004; Scanlon, Helsloot, & Groenendaal, 2014).

Focusing on the intersections of the literatures on crisis volunteering, self-organising, generational theories, and exploring the tensions that exist at these intersections, this research set out to answer three research questions:

1. How was volunteering conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the *Rena* crisis?
2. How did the generational dynamics of younger volunteers affect their various organising responses to the *Rena* event?
3. How was self-organising conceptualised by younger volunteers during the *Rena* crisis?

According to Charles Fritz, a renowned disaster sociologist, crisis events disrupt "habitual, institutional patterns of behaviour" (Fritz, 1996, p. 55) which redefine and restructure "the situation in accordance with present realities" (p. 55). From this disruption, he argues, new ideas, perspectives, and a fundamental restructure of action and reaction can emerge. Therefore, this study presents a unique opportunity to expose the context, perspective, and influences that create the new ideas, perspectives, and a restructure of action and reaction from emergent research on a relevant and timely topic that is currently little understood. Indeed, crisis response has traditionally been the domain of professional officials and

emergency organisations, and yet the integration of volunteers into crisis response plans is becoming more prevalent (Palen, Vieweg, Liu, & Hughes, 2009). More specifically, the efforts of informal younger volunteers have been identified as being more effective than those provided by official response organisations (see Helsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004; Hunt et al., 2014; Sargisson et al., 2012).

In order to capture rich insight from participants about their experiences, a semistructured interview protocol guided questioning around categories related to the research questions. In consideration of the reflexive approach of the study, I kept a reflective journal that was transcribed to enable an exploration of my own ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions about knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Consistent with my interpretive lens, the journal writings also considered the nature of the relationship – and how I experienced and made meaning out of that relationship – between myself and my research participants (Ortlipp, 2008).

The scope for this research comprised interviews with 53 participants who talked about their experience during the *Rena* crisis event. Twenty-seven women and 26 men between the ages of 16 and 29 were interviewed; 38 of the interviewees fell within that age bracket, while 15 participants did not. These individuals were, however, included because they held positions of authority in the volunteer response and had high levels of engagement with these younger volunteers. Using a snowball sampling technique, I was able to use the networks of the younger volunteers themselves to engage others in the data collection.

Of the participants, nine identified themselves as Māori, with five of these falling within the 16-29-year-old age bracket I specifically sought to recruit for this study. The other four were older volunteers (aged over 30 years) who had high levels of involvement with the younger participants in their respective self-organised groups.

At the time of designing this research study, I had not anticipated that culturally significant findings would emerge, and my primary interest was in locating and interviewing young volunteers irrespective of their cultural identities.

Consequently, I did not consider engaging a cultural advisor as part of the research process. On reflection, this was an oversight as the interview data did in

fact reveal that Māori participants responded to the Rena crisis in very different culturally informed ways than non-Māori participants. This outcome raised important issues for me about preparing for and conducting research in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The acknowledgement of both my position as a non-Māori researcher in this domain, and considerations for interpretation of my findings, is discussed in chapter 3.

In total, the data collection included over 49 hours of audio interview files, approximately 370 pages of transcribed text, a detailed reflective journal, and a small selection of photographs from social media feeds.

Having explained the background to the thesis, its approach, and its focus and scope, I next describe how key terms have been used and applied throughout the study.

Definitions

Central to my thesis are three core terms: *younger people*, *volunteer*, and *crisis*, each of which is defined below for the purposes of my study. A more comprehensive overview and background of each term is provided in chapter 2.

For the purposes of this research, *younger people* are defined in this study as individuals ranging between 16 and 29 years of age at the time of data collection. Categorising what it means to be *younger* can complicate conceptual questions about the meaning of being young and raise questions as to whether *young* is merely a social construction or the mind-set of a group of people themselves (Bayat, 2017). It is, nevertheless, operationally necessary to designate an age range for the practicalities of data collection. The age range of *younger people* in this study comprised individuals who fall under the label of *adolescents* and/or *young adults* within the literature (see, for example, Marta & Pozzi, 2008; Parks, 2000; Obradović & Masten, 2007; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Arnett, 2000; Arnett & Tanner, 2006). However, there is some fluidity in the exact age range applied by these scholars in their studies. For example, in their research which examined *adolescent* and *young adult* volunteers' transitions to adulthood, Marta and Pozzi (2008) used subjects ranging in age from 18 to 28 years of age. Parks (2000) defines *young adults* as being 17-30-year olds and, examining the

antecedents of civic engagement among *young adults*, Obradović and Masten (2007) focused on individuals aged between 14 and 25 years old.

According to Marta and Pozzi (2008), one of the main limitations within volunteer research is the lack of focus on *adolescents* and *young adult* volunteers. This oversight is surprising given that both adolescence and young adulthood have been identified as critical stages for preparing younger people for civic engagement (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Arnett, 2000; Arnett & Tanner, 2006). In an attempt to address this lack of attention, this study also looks to acknowledge the current social context of participants, that is, one which is markedly different from that which exists for individuals within later life stages. Indeed, today's *adolescents* and *young adults* exist in a world characterised by great risk and insecurity and, therefore, have experienced a rapid development of technology and a weakening of social relations (Chen & Farruggia, 2002; Henn, Weinstein, & Wring, 2002). As a result, these influences have resulted in younger people' approaching complexity, risk, and uncertainty in increasingly individualised ways (Hustinx, Cnaan, & Handy, 2010; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Miles, 2000; Read, 2010; Weller, 2008).

Despite extensive attempts to define what exactly is meant by the term *volunteer*, researchers have failed to agree on a definitive explanation (Handy et al., 2000). This lack of agreement is further complicated by factors such as volunteers' own understanding of the term and whether the voluntary lens applied is in terms of activity or personhood (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009). For this study, I have drawn on existing scholarship (see Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005; Haski-Leventhal, Ronel, York, & Ben-David, 2008; Hustinx et al., 2010; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Omoto & Snyder, 2002) to define a volunteer as a person who participates of his or her own volition, on an unpaid basis, in tasks which contribute to a cause with which he or she has emotional connection.

Within the context of a crisis response, the public response that emerges is largely referred to in terms of an *informal* volunteer capacity. Defined by Whittaker et al. (2015) as "people who work outside of formal emergency and disaster management arrangements to help others who are at risk or affected by emergencies or disasters" (p. 361), volunteers may comprise individuals or groups

of people operating in an undefined duration of time and space. Indeed, whilst informal volunteers might typically engage in situ, they may also participate off site or online through digital volunteering (see Hughes, Palen, Sutton, Liu, & Vieweg, 2008; Palen, Starbird, Vieweg, & Hughes, 2010; Palen et al., 2009; Starbird & Palen, 2011).

Another term often used to categorise informal volunteers during a crisis is *emergent volunteers*. While emergent volunteers typically engage over a few days or weeks following the crisis (Majchrzak, Jarvenpaa, & Hollingshead, 2007), they are distinguishable from the broader category of informal volunteers due to their significant levels of innovation and improvisation (Harrald, 2006; Palen, Anderson, et al., 2010). Consequently, emergent volunteers are likely to appear in the aftermath of a crisis event when individuals or groups believe that the formal response organisations are not meeting the needs of persons affected by the crisis. While literature on informal and emergent volunteers contributes to the current study, I refrain here from specifically categorising the younger volunteers as either, in order to prevent established definitions from obscuring the social, cultural, and contextual factors that influence the organising response of the younger volunteer.

To limit the parameters for this research, the term *crisis* also requires defining. While the terms *disaster* and *crisis* are often used synonymously in the literature because they both deal with unexpected and undesirable events (Hewitt, 2014; Quarantelli, Lagadec, & Boin, 2007), the choice of terminology used differs according to the human, natural, technological, and/or societal effects of the event (Perry & Quarantelli, 2005). As a result, the particular use of a term may prompt different questions that require different approaches to research (Quarantelli et al., 2007). For example, disasters are commonly defined as episodic events that are collectively construed, very harmful (Boin, 2005; Perry & Quarantelli, 2005), and cause both infrastructural damage and human suffering (Quarantelli et al., 2007). Accordingly, research on disasters is often based on the causes of destruction, how these can be prevented and mitigated in the future, and the consequences of such events (Quarantelli et al., 2007). These events include natural forces such as earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, and hurricanes (Stallings, 2005), and man-made events such as technological, economical, and ethnic conflict events, and terrorism

(Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2016; Perry & Quarantelli, 2005). Crisis research differs from disaster research because the focus is generally on a perceived threat that exists (see Rosenthal, Boin, & Comfort, 2001; Shaluf, Ahmadun, & Mat Said, 2003; Wrigley, Salmon, & Park, 2003) about high-uncertainty events where information is not always readily accessible (Seeger, Sellnow, & Ulmer, 2003). In this sense, crisis events can be understood as remaining agnostic to the source or cause of the threat (Quarantelli et al., 2007). Because of this uncertainty, crisis researchers accept that the outcomes of a crisis are generally socially constructed, and academic work in the area focuses on the response, vulnerability, resilience, and outcomes that can still be averted if people, institutions, volunteers, systems, and communities are capably resourced (Quarantelli et al., 2007).

The different approaches taken by academic researchers to crises and disasters are “revealing of the sociotechnical change arising in this area” (Palen et al., 2009, p. 11). In other words, they adopt a different lens for the examination of organisational and institutional responses, social arrangements, and interactions that emerge following an event. By adopting a *crisis* approach, this research study focuses on the intricacies of the social orderings and organisational dimensions of an event, whilst also positioning the findings alongside the practitioner-based, disaster management paradigm.

The next section provides background information on how I became inspired to undertake this research and, in doing so, details my own positioning within the project and my professional role at the time of the event.

Situating the Researcher in the Research

From early 2010 to 2012, I worked with Surf Life Saving New Zealand (SLSNZ) in Mount Maunganui as a regional business manager, having held various other management roles since 2008. Part of my SLSNZ role involved managing a large volunteer membership (4000+) within the wider Bay of Plenty, Coromandel, and Gisborne areas.

When the *Rena* hit Astrolabe Reef, SLSNZ became actively engaged with the communication and facilitation of resources between MNZ and the local surf clubs. Despite my professional position, I was overwhelmed by the enormity of

the situation, and it was difficult for me to perform my operational duties without being affected by the tragic consequences of the crisis for the community. I noticed that young people were becoming restless about the lack of urgency from authorities to act and were beginning to respond in creative ways. For example, 3 days after the *Rena* was grounded, local young graffiti artists Owen Dippie and Mr G collaborated to vent their frustrations through a mural with the words ‘*LESS HUI [MEETING], MORE DOEY*’ on a large shipping container set up on the busy roundabout intersection in Papamoa. Mr G said his aim was “to create some urgency and provoke some action...it’s a way of doing what I can to help protect my island” (Yalden, 9 Oct, 2011).

Alongside my professional role, I registered my interest to participate within the OBC. Two weeks later, I was phoned by MNZ personnel and invited to join a small group of registered volunteers to help with the clean-up efforts on Mōtītī Island. During our 5-day stay, we scrubbed and cleaned the rocky shores of the island, and by night we helped in the *wharenuī* (meeting house), cooking and cleaning for the permanent residents whose lives had been upturned by the events of the *Rena* grounding. Here, I saw how the crisis had captured the spirit of younger people. Our team leaders were local Māori teenagers, who had been purposely given these roles because they were very familiar with the island’s access points and were culturally sensitive to local island practices. On multiple occasions, I heard negative remarks from older residents about how these younger people were generally so “lazy” and “immature”. However, I was impressed with their maturity and the innovative ideas they developed in response to tracking and locating washed-up debris. It was a fast-moving and unpredictable situation they were dealing with, and I noticed that they were really thriving and succeeding in their team leader roles. When I returned to the mainland, I continued to observe younger people providing innovative ideas to the crisis response.

These key experiences and interactions both prior to and during the *Rena* crisis motivated me to undertake this research. The next section details how this thesis is presented.

The Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. This introductory chapter has provided a background to the *Rena* oil spill, described the impetus behind the research, and offered a brief introduction to my theoretical and methodological approach and use of key terms.

In chapter 2, I build a platform for the study of self-organised responses to crises by younger volunteers by systematically reviewing the literature on volunteering, self-organising, and generational theory.

In chapter 3, I explain the philosophical and theoretical framework that underpins and shapes the study. Specifically, I outline the social constructionist epistemology and interpretive lens for framing and focusing the research in consonance with a reflexive approach. This chapter discusses how the propositions underlying the goals of the research are operationalised by setting out the methods and analysis procedures used. Issues relating to limitations of qualitative data are also presented.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I present and discuss younger volunteers' experiences in the *Rena* event on the basis of the three research questions. Chapter 4 analyses how younger volunteers socially constructed volunteering as an avenue of opportunity related to employment, a novel experience otherwise unavailable in their everyday lives. In some cases, these constructions were influenced by the cultural values and practices of Māori. Underlying the participants' constructions were tensions relating to structural uncertainties, boundaries, and perceived stereotypes, which evidenced a unique approach to understanding how and why younger volunteers might gravitate towards crisis volunteering.

Chapter 5 analyses the cohort dynamics that impacted upon and influenced the communicating and organising behaviours of younger volunteers during the *Rena* crisis. The chapter explores how the social constructedness of technology was embedded within participants' experiences and, in particular, within the relationships they established and maintained with others in their response efforts. This chapter also analyses how the younger volunteers approached their volunteering activity with a practical outlook, through which they sought

experiences that had a sense of immediate gratification, and where they were able to apply creativity and innovation in their responses. These findings point to a novel perspective for understanding the attraction of crisis volunteering from the perspective of a generational lens.

Chapter 6 analyses how self-organising was conceptualised by participants and how this hinged on the ability for self-organising to navigate the structural and bureaucratic frustrations that the participants experienced within formal organised responses. The analysis also extends the structural focus by identifying that the individual agency of the volunteers was a critical factor related to their alternative modes of participation during the crisis event.

The final chapter reflects on the key findings of the study and synthesises the contributions it makes to the research literature. The chapter also identifies the implications that these findings have for organisations involved in crisis response.

In summary, in this introductory chapter I have articulated that this study was inspired by my personal involvement with the volunteer response to the *Rena* oil spill crisis. The purpose of the study is to provide a unique insight into the growing trend of younger volunteers who are responding to crisis events through self-organisation. Using my reflexive researcher positioning to a methodological advantage, I hope that this research will support both academic and crisis response practitioners to better understand why younger volunteers respond to crisis events in the way they do and how this understanding might translate within crisis response plans.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

VOLUNTEERING, SELF-ORGANISING, AND GENERATIONAL THEORY

Given the significant role that younger volunteers play in crisis response in Aotearoa/New Zealand and other industrialised nations, it is important to assess how these people conceptualise volunteering and how generational dynamics may influence how and why they volunteer. Moreover, analysis is needed of how the experience of crisis volunteering may influence these volunteers' conceptualisations, and in turn, affect their organising response. In this context, it becomes important to consider how broader social, economic, and technological effects might engender this volunteering.

In this chapter, I systematically review the literature on volunteering, self-organising, and generational theory and identify gaps and limitations in the literature. The first section outlines contributions that have been made in an attempt to develop the field of broader volunteer, and more specifically, crisis volunteer research. Secondly, an examination of the literature on younger volunteers considers ambivalent societal perspectives towards young people. In doing so, this examination challenges traditional volunteer frameworks and explores how new forms of participation are engaging these people. Thirdly, the chapter reviews literature that considers how the biographical and individualised quest of the self-reflexive volunteer might help to further understand younger people's conceptualisations of volunteering.

The second section addresses the literature pertaining to self-organising and focuses on emergent groups that respond to crisis events. The discussion then shifts to exploring the advantages and challenges in recognising self-organising as a predictor of group behaviour in the aftermath of a crisis event and illustrates how this topic has been researched within Aotearoa/New Zealand and international contexts. The chapter then considers how self-organising positions technology and individuals as coevolving forces in crisis response.

In the third section, I move the study's attention to literature which examines generational theory and how researchers have studied generations within organisational communication scholarship. This review includes age-based approaches (Erikson, 1950; Howe & Strauss, 1991; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978) that focus on cultural identities of generational cohorts and Mannheim's (1952) notion of a fresh lens. This section then looks at today's generation of younger people and considers how different sociocultural, economic, and technological shifts have affected individual and social relationships in this demographic. Finally, the chapter examines how the pervasiveness of new media and technology and an increase in alternative forms of civic engagement outside of traditional structures have positioned today's younger generation within a unique context of social change.

Volunteering

This section identifies the social significance of volunteering, outlines how it has been defined, and details some of the assumptions and perspectives on it in the research literature. This review is followed with an explanation of crisis volunteering, technological influences in crisis response, and volunteering among younger people. Finally, a review of the literature on self-reflexivity and how this is situated within the context of younger volunteers is presented.

Since the publication of *The Volunteers* (Sills, 1957) more than 60 years ago, researchers from a broad range of disciplines have acknowledged that volunteering acts as a key function in achieving community connectedness and social integration (Clary et al., 1998) and is a vital function for government agencies to achieve their goals (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Volunteering is a matter of interest to governments, corporates, and organisations, given its far reaching and lasting impact on cost reduction and social well-being (Haski-Leventhal, Meijs, & Hustinx, 2010a; McDougall, 2011). According to Salamon, Sokolowski, and Haddock (2011), there are nearly one billion volunteers worldwide, which represents a workforce worth \$1.4 trillion. From an economic perspective, these authors claim that if "Volunteerland" (p. 219) were a country, it would be the second most populated country in the world and the seventh largest economy. Annually, 84 million volunteers in the United States contribute more than US\$239

billion to the economy, and 6.3 million Australian volunteers contribute tens of billions of dollars to their economy each year (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009). The attention given to volunteering by academics focuses typically on the following: the motivation to volunteer (MTV) (Brown, 2005; Dekker & Halman, 2003; Edwards, 2005; MacNeela, 2008; Ralston & Rhoden, 2005; Wilson, 2000); volunteer determinants (Grano, Lucidi, Zelli, & Violani, 2008; Taniguchi, 2012; Van Ingen & Dekker, 2010); the nature and processes of volunteering (Handy et al., 2006; Macduff, Graff, & Millgard, 2004); aspects of commitment (Cuskelly, 1995; Green & Chalip, 2004); comparisons between volunteers and paid staff (Handy, Mook, & Quarter, 2008; Mook et al., 2014; Netting, Nelson, Borders, & Huber, 2004); and, volunteer contexts (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Omoto & Snyder, 2002; Penner, 2002).

Over the past two decades, scholars have attempted to define what constitutes a volunteer and volunteering (Handy et al., 2000), but the differing activities and situations used to describe the volunteer often create confusion (see Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996; Ganesh & McAllum, 2009; Handy et al., 2000). For example, Lewis (2013) argues that the term *volunteer* incorporates a complexity of motivations, relationship, needs, experiences, and expressions which makes it challenging to define. Others' suggestions are rather ambiguous, as they constitute volunteering as a hybrid form of helping (Snyder, 2001; McAllum & Ganesh, 2011). Cnaan et al.'s (1996) comprehensive study has, however, helped to underline some of the confusion and to delineate the definitive boundaries of the term volunteer. In an in-depth literature review, the authors analysed over 200 definitions and concluded that volunteering centred on four key aspects: (1) free choice; (2) availability and nature of remuneration; (3) the proximity to beneficiaries; and, (4) structure. Each of these dimensions incorporates a continuum for constituting criteria for what a volunteer is, whilst also constraining the identity of the volunteer and limiting its potential for negotiated construction across contexts (Cnaan et al., 1996). For example, the first dimension – free choice – focuses on the nature of the act which extends from individuals who perform an act relatively uncoerced to those who are obliged to undertake the voluntary activity (i.e., under court order). The second dimension is the nature of the reward. At one end of the continuum, the authors describe the purist approach to volunteering, which contends there should be no reward (or interest in a

reward) for the volunteering activity (see Andreoni, 1990) and, at the other end, describe individuals who, in addition to volunteering their time, also pay for their own volunteer-related expenses (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1990). The third dimension concerns beneficiaries of volunteering and accepts that strangers to the volunteer and, in some situations (such as self-help groups) the volunteers themselves, can be considered beneficiaries. The final dimension considers the context of the volunteering. This context includes both formal, organised volunteering undertaken through government or nonprofit organisations, as well as informal volunteering such as helping elderly friends or family. Each dimension consists of acceptable and unacceptable categories in defining a volunteer, while also offering some leeway, for example, in the dimension of free choice. The authors explain, “Whereas all definitions would accept category 1 (free will) as relevant in defining a volunteer, pure definitions would not accept category 2 (relatively coerced), and only the broadest definition would accept category 3 (obligation to volunteer)” (Cnaan et al., 1996, p. 370).

Whilst Cnaan et al. (1996) point out that the four dimensions do not sharpen the focus on how the social construction of a volunteer is formulated, they can help to determine a conceptual analysis of the costs and benefits of volunteering to the individual. This conceptual analysis represents the public perception of a volunteer and is equal to the total cost of volunteering minus the total benefits to the individual. Thus, the authors argue that the individual who incurs a higher net cost is likely to be seen as more of a volunteer than the individual whose net cost is low. The outcome of this analysis can, therefore, help ascertain how volunteers and volunteering are understood (Cnaan et al., 1996). This analysis was later developed by Handy et al. (2000) who took a cross-cultural approach to understanding perceptions of volunteering using surveys throughout India, the Netherlands, Italy, America, and Canada. While the findings broadly concurred with the earlier contention that the perception of a volunteer is dependent on the net cost (Cnaan et al., 1996), Handy et al. (2000) also found that what constitutes benefits and costs was “a complex calculus requiring further research” (p. 64). Other researchers such as Hustinx et al. (2010) have pointed out that some of the dimensions vary in consistency. For example, because informal and self-organised volunteers are typically not aligned with any formal organisation, they are often excluded from volunteer studies such as these. More recent categorisations of

volunteering have helped rectify some of these challenges. For example, Lewis (2013) presents two types of volunteering: one which is typically performed at an informal, individual level and the other, which can involve a group of people, and is usually undertaken within a formal organisational setting. In addition, Lewis (2013) also proposes that volunteering can be understood in relation to time, for example, short-term and sporadic commitments that are typically associated with emergent and spontaneous volunteer experiences and more traditional volunteering that reflects an ongoing commitment to an organisation over a significant period of time.

Despite the usefulness of Cnaan et al.'s (1996) and Lewis' (2013) attempts to aggregate some of the ambiguities and complexities of volunteering, there remains a lack of consensus across different disciplines on what constitutes volunteering (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). For example, from a sociological perspective, the social profile of volunteers has been identified as a fundamental expression of belonging and identity, representing a form of social solidarity that binds society (Musick & Wilson, 2008). In contrast, a psychological perspective centres on the prosocial behaviours of volunteers (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Omoto & Snyder, 2002) and the identification of personality traits that differentiate volunteers from nonvolunteers (Carlo, Okun, Knight, & de Guzman, 2005). From a political science perspective, volunteering is a fundamental requirement for active civil societies (Theiss-Morse & Hibbing, 2005), while financially, volunteering is seen as a paradox which defies the cost-benefit and supply-demand suppositions (see Hackl, Halla, & Pruckner, 2007; Ziemek, 2006). Although the research shows that volunteering *can* be understood from a variety of complex perspectives (see Cnaan et al., 1996; Handy et al., 2000; Wilson, 2000), there is no integrated theory of volunteering (Hustinx et al., 2010). This absence of an integrated theory often results in criticism that there is a lack of scope and dimension in the attempts to construct a theoretical account of volunteering (DiMaggio, 1995; Hustinx, 2010b) and of cross-cultural interpretations of volunteering (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009; Hustinx, 2010a; Randle & Dolnicar, 2009). It is also argued that the multitude of perspectives used to research volunteering has in itself resulted in a failure to define precisely what volunteering is (Handy et al., 2000).

Two key issues within the volunteer literature are of particular importance to this study. The first concerns issues of power. While some studies support the notion that individuals can use volunteering as a source of empowerment (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Cicognani, Mazzoni, Albanesi, & Zani, 2015; Helve & Wallace, 2018; Paton, Johnston, Mamula-Seadon, & Kenney, 2014; Tatsuki, 2000), others suggest that volunteering can actually perpetuate power imbalances (Evans et al., 2017; Ngo, 2013; Zimmerman & Rappaport, 1988). For example, a study by Tatsuki (2000), which explored the reemergence of volunteering in Japan following the 1995 Kobe earthquake, highlighted the empowering role of volunteering for Japanese university students. During the critical stages of the earthquake response, managers and supervisors often found themselves too busy to provide detailed instructions and, in turn, delegated students as active “role makers” (Tatsuki, 2000, p. 186). Here, students were given the authority to make roles for themselves based on their own perceptions of what was needed. As the students came to realise that “rules and regulations of everyday life are just the constructions of fellow human beings” (pp. 186-187), they forged their own rules. It became evident that through working under their own rules and providing improvised solutions to the changing needs of the crisis response, the students were highly effective at building rapport with the crisis victims. For example, the students organised bath-taking tours – a popular Japanese past time – for elderly victims. Because there was no petrol or hot water available in the weeks following the crisis event, the elderly victims were grateful for these trips. According to Tatsuki (2000), being in charge of a positive change in society gave the students a sense of empowerment and social connectedness.

There are also examples of how volunteering can present power imbalances which, in turn, create challenges for managers of volunteers (Stebbins & Graham, 2004). In an interdisciplinary review of the literature, McAllum and Ganesh (2012) found that volunteering within for-profit organisations was often communicatively framed as the inferior variant of paid work. According to Ashcraft and Kedrowicz (2002), this power inequality is perpetuated by organisational communication research, which views paid employment contracts as a form of employee empowerment. In doing so, such research is criticised for disregarding prevailing logic for what constitutes valued work within organisations (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002).

Other assumptions related to power within organisational communication studies also conflict with volunteer research. For example, the assumption that empowerment naturally translates into specific organisational structures (e.g., flatter structures) can neglect how individuals *experience* empowerment (Chiles & Zorn, 1995). This experience is often explained as an outcome of the self-governing exhibited by volunteers who act independently of conventional or formal organisations.

Another key issue emerging from the literature is the varying cultural interpretations of what constitutes volunteering. Here, some researchers argue that some ethnic communities are often not recognised for their informal volunteer efforts due to these activities' being excluded from what mainstream society understands volunteering to be. This lack of recognition has caused some authors to express critical views (see Ganesh & McAllum, 2009; Williams, 2002) towards the argument that all subsections of society would greatly benefit from formal volunteer involvement, in order to enhance their levels of social inclusion and to prevent marginalisation (Miller, Schleien, & Bedini, 2003; Miller, Schleien, Rider, & Hall, 2002; Segal & Weisbrod, 2002). These perspectives are important to consider, as they reveal particular ideologies within different social contexts. In the context of the current study, there is, therefore, a need to consider research into how volunteering is understood in the context of crisis events.

Crisis volunteering.

In the 100-year history of crisis and disaster management research, the literature typically investigates the sociological role of the public in responding to crises (Palen et al., 2009; Simon, Goldberg, & Adini, 2015). From a sociological perspective, a crisis is defined as a social phenomenon which is socially constructed and rooted in the social structure of the community affected by the event (Quarantelli, 2005). From this perspective, crisis events can be understood as the result of social constraints, social choice, and societal action and inaction (Paul, Dewald, & Gerrit, 2016). Indeed, Lavell et al. (2012) argue that it is inaccurate to consider crisis events as purely physical phenomena, i.e., as disasters, as this view ignores the impact of human decision making and the influence of the built environment and modern technology. Furthermore, this view

undermines individuals' own response capacities, coping strategies, social vulnerabilities, and solutions to the event (Fordham, Lovekamp, Thomas & Phillips, 2013; Pelling, 2003; Shaw, 2013). In other words:

the physical and social realms are so intimately intertwined that it is impossible to separate them: the social system appears to humans within it in the form of physical things and it is by means of those [physical] objects that our social practices are organized, and such practices take their meanings from those objects themselves. (Mariyani-Squire, 1999, p. 102 citing Vogel, 1996)

Sociological perspectives on crisis events position them as being socially produced and rooted in social structures which reflect processes of social change (Lavell et al., 2012; Paul et al., 2016; Quarantelli, 2005). These sociological perspectives were later enhanced with a focus on organisational theory following the creation of the Disaster Research Center in Ohio in 1963. In what was later described as the “boom years of sociological research” (Britton, 1988, p. 366), researchers argued that a human response to crises was a natural phenomenon (Halpern, 1974; Stallings & Quarantelli, 2005; Tierney, Bevc, & Kuligowski, 2006) resulting from an interaction of social, institutional, psychological, and cultural processes (Paul et al., 2016). From a practical perspective, this view recognised the spontaneous convergence on the site of a disaster or emergency event of people who were able to offer various forms of response, relief, and assistance (Dynes, 1970; Fritz & Mathewson, 1957; Wachtendorf & Kendra, 2003)

According to Charles Fritz, a renowned disaster sociologist, crises disrupt “habitual, institutional patterns of behaviour” (1996, p. 55) and redefine and restructure “the situation in accordance with present realities” (p. 55). From this disruption, he argues, new ideas, perspectives, and a fundamental restructure of action and reaction can emerge. This disrupted social structure is the primary focus for sociologists in studying crisis response behaviour (Fischer, 2008). Often referred to as emergent behaviour (Bardo, 1978; Gardner, 2013; Lowe & Fothergill, 2003; Parr, 1970; Wenger, 1991), these public responses typically emerge when traditional crisis response structures are insufficient and/or when demands are not being met by officials (Auf der Heide, 1989; Stallings & Quarantelli, 2005). Importantly, a social constructionist perspective challenges

previously held assumptions that the collective action of individuals who respond to crisis events results in disruptive, unruly, and antisocial behaviours (Argo, 2003). Instead, the literature reinforces the idea that crisis response volunteering is typically made up of well-meaning, cooperative, goal-oriented, and rational individuals (Britton, Moran, & Correy, 1994) who respond in emergent and informal ways (Goltz, Russell, & Bourque, 1992; Quarantelli, 1993). While these volunteers are considered to be making an essential contribution to crisis response (Brennan, Barnett, & Flint, 2005; Drabek & McEntire, 2002), interestingly, these “irregular and incidental volunteer commitments” are becoming increasingly popular among individuals who may not otherwise choose to undertake volunteer activity (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 174). Research from Lowe and Fothergill (2003) indicates that this response may be due to crisis volunteers’ having a compelling need to do something meaningful that has intangible and intrinsic qualities.

From an economic perspective, emergent volunteers are extremely important (Argo, 2003; Orloff, 2011), because they seek intangible rewards which can lead to improved organisational social cohesion and financial efficiency (Lawrance & de Bussy, 2012). These volunteers offer further benefits. They are, for instance, often trusted by those locally affected by the crisis (Fulmer et al., 2007), because they are familiar with the communities within which they respond and can often access resources that formal response agencies may not be able to (Arroyo, 2008). Emergent volunteers are also highly motivated and responsive to changing and emergent needs; showcase relevant skills and apply innovative and adaptive uses of at-hand resources (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2003; Lindell, Tierney, & Perry, 2001; Palen et al., 2009) and assist official response efforts by contributing local knowledge and coordination networks to local decision making (Brennan, Cantrell, Spranger, & Kumaran, 2006; Pfeil, 2000). Wachtendorf and Kendra (2003) point out the benefits of emergent volunteers and summarise such volunteers as those:

...[who] bring certain abilities that do not exist in sufficient quantities in the established response organizations; they may already be close enough to damaged areas to provide immediate assistance; and they may provide for the flexibility that is needed when organizations confront rapidly changing conditions. (p. 2)

However, emergent volunteers who respond to crisis events are also met with criticism. Studies have argued that these volunteers can become a legal liability for crisis response organisations, because they can create significant accountability issues and administrative headaches (Barsky & Horan, 2014). Others have argued that they may have the wrong or insufficient safety gear (Barsky, Trainor, Torres, & Aguirre, 2007) and that the volunteers' unpredictable presence and lack of training can drain the crisis victims themselves of official resources (Aleccia, 2010).

Despite the criticism of volunteers in crisis contexts, they also bring significant benefits. Helsloot and Ruitenberg (2004) maintain that these volunteers, particularly within the initial response phase, respond to crises in ways that are often more effective than the official response. This was the case in a study undertaken by Murphy (2007) who found that in two crisis events in Canada and the United States, community-level initiatives were key success factors in forming resilient communities, despite having government-led crisis response initiatives in place. Nevertheless, crisis response organisations continue to omit volunteer integration and inclusion from their crisis response plans (Schweer, Ohder, Sticher, Geißler, & Röpcke, 2014, Paul et al., 2016). According to Helsloot and Ruitenberg (2004), this omission has led to crisis response officials being criticised as disconnected to, and distrusting of, volunteers. Furthermore, this omission prevents the ability to transform volunteers from “a problem that must be handled” (Wenger, 1991, p. 12) to a resource that can assist organisations to achieve better outcomes, particularly given that they are often the first responders to a crisis (Barsky & Horan, 2014).

This section has outlined the foundations of crisis volunteer research from a sociological perspective and the social and economic benefits that can result from a public response to crisis events. This section has demonstrated that, whilst an emergent or spontaneous response can present challenges for crisis response organisations, the opportunities these volunteers present to the response efforts are often omitted within crisis response policy (Shefali, 2009). The next section builds on the literature surrounding volunteer responses to crisis events by exploring the influences of technology on the organising dynamics of these individuals and groups.

Influences of technology within a volunteer response to crisis events.

Modern communication technology is often credited with contributing to the development of an emergent volunteer response to crisis events (see Heinzelman & Waters, 2010; Horita, de Albuquerque, Degrossi, Assis, & Zipf, 2013; Ludwig, Kotthaus, Reuter, van Dongen, & Pipek, 2017; Starbird, 2011). Handy, Brodeur, and Cnaan (2006) describe communication technology as “taking the field of volunteer research and management by storm” (p. 31). Consequently, the last decade boasts an abundance of literature focusing on how technological innovations often result in more proactive and productive networking and organising responses by crisis volunteers (see Barsky & Horan, 2014; Kleinebrahn, 2014; Ludwig et al., 2017; McDonald, Sonn, Sun, & Creber, 2012; Trainor & Subbio, 2014). For the most part, this literature argues that modern technology enables extended possibilities for how volunteers can communicate, coordinate, and organise themselves prior to, during, and following a crisis (Gao, Barbier, Goolsby, & Zeng, 2011; Ludwig et al., 2017). With a focus on younger volunteers who respond to crisis events, the literature is dominated by the application and inclusion of social media technology serving as a key function in their organising dynamic (Çoban, 2016; Dabner, 2012; Delli Carpini, 2000; Fuchs, 2014; Howell & Taylor, 2011; Johnson, 2011; Plummer et al., 2008).

While it is important to acknowledge the impact of technology within volunteer crisis responses, this concept is not new. For example, the influence of print technology was largely accounted for in the rise of social movements throughout the 1990s (see Tarrow, 1994). Furthermore, technological innovations such as the megaphone, flyers, television, newspaper etc. have also been instrumental in the organising and communication aspects of social movements (Gerbaudo, 2012). It is, therefore, important for the purposes of this study to avoid reducing the organising process of social movements to the material affordances of the technologies of the time and, thus, disregard the construction of identities, shared meanings, and narratives involved in the organising process (Johnston & Klandermans, 1995).

The opportunity for volunteers to participate in crisis response efforts via social media is increasing both the visibility of these volunteers' online behaviour and the growing number of volunteers who respond to crises (Simon, Goldberg, &

Adini, 2015). This phenomenon is described by Palen et al. (2009) as moving “patterns of communication from the ephemeral to the traceable” (p. 2) and has expanded the field of crisis response research by establishing new ground for organisational arrangements (Palen et al., 2009). While communication is hailed as one of the fundamental tools in effective crisis response (Simon et al., 2015), communication via social media during response efforts is specifically thought to: catalyse social connectedness (Abbasi, Hossain, Hamra, & Owen, 2010; Hampton, Witte, Wellman, & Haase, 2001); strengthen communities, (Pigg & Crank, 2004); and, engage some public through information access, gathering, and dissemination (Bird, Ling, & Haynes, 2012; Huang, Chan, & Hyder, 2010; Hughes et al., 2008; Simon et al., 2015). It is said that social media supports users’ ability to interact “within and outside the spatial bounds of the crisis event” (Palen et al., 2009, p. 2) and to assist them in making quick decisions which suit the demands of crisis events (Hughes et al., 2008; Shklovski, Palen, & Sutton, 2008; Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008). Consequently, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are complementing traditional response efforts from emergency services, governments, nongovernment organisations, the public, and volunteers alike (Sarcevic et al., 2012; Simon et al., 2015). For example, a study by Howell and Taylor (2011), which focused on volunteers associated with crises in Australia, Aotearoa/ New Zealand, and Japan in 2011, reported that 89 per cent of respondents used social media every day during the course of the crisis event. Facebook usage averaged 15 hours per week, while use of other social media averaged 6.6 hours per week.

Crowdsourcing platforms on social media (such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook) have been particularly successful in providing users with accessible forums for problem solving in times of crisis (Brabham, 2008). Crowdsourcing describes the behaviour of volunteers acting in groups (crowds) who are able to communicate socially-related information with each other both horizontally (between and among people such as via Twitter and Facebook) and vertically (between people and other machines , for example, comparing in-house costs with Amazon costs), thereby disputing the notion that optimal, rapid information flow is required via upward, hierarchical-based communication (Boulos et al., 2011; Sagl & Blaschke, 2014). By rapidly gathering updated information from remote users, crowdsourcing provides opportunities for digital volunteers to contribute

valuable information to crisis response efforts that is often useful to both (offline) volunteers and officials. Unprecedented crowdsourcing behaviour occurred during the 2010 Haiti earthquake. In this event, international communities that were physically distant from the geographical location were able to help the crisis response through online workgroups such as *CrisisCamps*, *CrisisCommons* (Simon et al., 2015) and through various crowd maps that formed shared social crisis response tools (Abbasi et al., 2010; Starbird, 2011). These examples demonstrate the extent to which traditional information dissemination pathways of crisis response management models can be altered. No longer does information necessarily flow one-way from response organisations through to the public (Low et al, 2010). Castells (1996) suggests that such convergence of information, people, and technology in social interactions creates *new* spaces of flow. Consequently, Lievrouw (2011) believes it is not possible to think of these social movements without also considering the role that social media play in them.

The organising effects that social media and crowdsourcing platforms can present to crisis response efforts in connecting online and offline communities is significant (Ludwig et al., 2017; Reuter, Heger, & Pipek, 2013; Starbird & Palen, 2011). This sharing of responsibility between online and offline volunteers is now considered an established feature of crisis response (Starbird & Palen, 2013) and has removed many of the complexities and challenges such as rapid information flow that on-site volunteers face (Howe, Jennex, Bressler, & Frost, 2011). Because the online tasks are considered relatively low burden, it is often typical for online volunteers in particular to take responsibility for much of the coordination and many of the communication tasks in the crisis response (Cobb et al., 2014).

Another important aspect within the literature pertaining to the organising role of technology within crisis events is whether it is the people (who are embedded in the ideological structures of society) who mobilise, organise, and coordinate the social movements during times of crisis (see Fuchs, 2012, 2014) or whether it is the functions of technology that achieve this end (see Castells, 2012). Shirky (2008), for example, points out that social media applications strengthen the ability of volunteers to organise and coordinate themselves. The notion that social media strengthens coordination was exemplified with the success of the Facebook

site generated by the self-organised SVA following the Christchurch earthquakes in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Despite an official response already being in place, the SVA Facebook page became the main source of information dissemination among student volunteers and was considered a success due to the fact it was administered by younger people, for younger people (Lewis, 2013). This finding is consistent with research from Howell and Taylor (2011) which found that younger volunteers placed higher levels of trust in social media sites such as the SVA site, compared to other formal channels, during the Christchurch earthquake response.

It is difficult to challenge the assertion that social media has become “centralized in proclamation, organization, [and] mobilization” (Çoban, 2016, p. vii) in its capacity to create communication opportunities that other media tools are unable to duplicate. For example, much of the information dissemination and tactical and logistical arrangements that were previously managed at a physical crisis site can now be done remotely (Palen et al., 2009). Therefore, it seems inevitable that the use of these technologies will completely reorganise centralised control-and-command information processes within crisis response (Palen & Liu, 2007). This assertion adds weight to the argument that crisis response organisations should incorporate both the social requirements of the event and the socially generated communication channels and organising processes that emerge from the event into their response planning (Paul et al., 2016).

The field of crisis informatics seeks to bridge the research which pertains to the functional relationship between how technology transforms people and vice versa (Hagar, 2006). Crisis informatics is defined as the “interconnectedness of people, organisations, information and technology during crisis” (Hagar, 2010, p. 10) and focuses on the complex environment of crisis events in terms of communication, organisation, and access to information. In terms of volunteers, crisis informatics research acknowledges the critical role of technology within an “expanded social system where information is disseminated within and between official and public channels and entities” (Palen et al., 2009, p. 3). Starbird (2012) argues that the relevance of younger volunteers during crisis events, with a focus on the role of technology, will further augment research in this domain.

This section has outlined the role that technology can play within the organising response of crisis events and how it has acutely affected networking and communication structures and channels among crisis response personnel. The literature has demonstrated that not only have these advances brought new opportunities for both volunteers and practitioners in their response efforts, but also that the traceable and visible nature of this technology has also developed a novel perspective for academic research in the field. The aim of the next section is to gain an understanding of both the environmental and the humanistic factors that influence the particular organising dynamics of younger volunteers.

Younger volunteers: A more focused approach.

The current body of knowledge on younger volunteers is often criticised for palling in comparison to the abundance of literature which focuses on older volunteers (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008; Oesterle, Johnson, & Mortimer, 2004). While there have been many attempts to classify what constitutes young, youth, or younger volunteers, these definitions remain inconclusive. For example, Nassar and Talaat (2008) define young volunteers as being between 17 and 22-years old; McBride, Johnson, Olate, and O'Hara (2011) classify youth volunteers as those between the ages of 15 and 24, while Kim and Pai (2010) offer a much wider age bracket in their study on younger volunteers, classifying them as individuals who fall between 25 to 44 years of age. Despite a lack of consensus as to what defines a younger volunteer, many scholars have criticised studies of volunteering for focusing an incomparable amount of attention on adult volunteers (those aged approximately between 30 and 49 years of age) and older adult volunteers (those aged 50 +) (Bradley, 2000) (Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008; Hustinx et al., 2010; Marta, Guglielmetti, & Pozzi, 2006; Rosenthal, Feiring, & Lewis, 2010). This concentration on categorising the age bracket for 'younger' volunteers continues despite research revealing that adults who began volunteering during their adolescence were twice as likely to be volunteers later in life than those who did not volunteer when they were younger (Oesterle et al., 2004). Moreover, research suggests that, compared to adult and older adult volunteers, younger volunteers have higher levels of optimism, self-efficacy, self-esteem, personal growth, and employment aspirations (Fletcher, Elder, & Mekos, 2000; O'Steen & Perry, 2012;

Pancer, Pratt, Hunsberger, & Alisat, 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Perry, 2011; Simons & Cleary, 2006).

While relatively little is known about what draws younger people to volunteer, a longitudinal study undertaken by Oesterle et al. (2004) does provide some insights. They randomly selected data from 1,000 Minnesota-based 9th-grade students who had taken part in the Youth Development Study (YDS) – a longitudinal study that began in 1988. The authors focused their analysis on the students' volunteering activities covering the 9-year period throughout their late adolescence (18-19 years of age) and into young adulthood (26-27 years of age). Their hypothesis was based largely on the life course perspective, which postulates that the meaning of role and activities differ as individuals' pass through different life stages (Elder Jr., Johnson, & Crosnoe, 2003). The authors revealed significant continuity of volunteering in individuals from adolescence through to adulthood and also identified particular life stages that hindered and promoted volunteering. For example, they found that full-time work and having children in early life stages hinder volunteerism. By contrast, involvement in religious institutions and regular school attendance promote volunteerism. To capture potential volunteers before they transition into adulthood, Oesterle et al. (2004) recommend the inclusion of service-learning programmes throughout schools. These programmes, the authors suggest, expose students who otherwise might not be connected to institutionalised programs to volunteerism, whilst also providing the potential for valuable experience for individuals with low orientations to volunteering (Power & Vladimir, 1999).

A study by Marta et al. (2006) examined the motivations of 461 young adult Italian volunteers aged between 24 and 31. Their research found that the motivational configuration of younger volunteers varied greatly. For example, those who were motivated by career considerations were more likely to manifest a temporary commitment to the volunteer activity and/or organisation, whereas individuals who were motivated by both career interests and social values appeared to be willing to remain active in volunteering for longer. Additionally, the authors found that decisions to become a volunteer were closely related to professional self-improvement. Although this study highlights that not all younger people act on the basis of the same motivation or combination of motivations, the

research is limited in terms of understanding how motivational patterns can guide younger people to volunteer during their transition to adulthood.

Other studies of volunteering focusing on younger people have included student volunteering on campus (Bringle, Games, Foos, Osgood, & Osborne, 2000; Edwards, Heald, & Mooney, 2001; Gray, 2010; Hinck & Brandell, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000); service learning (Gray, Ondaatje, Fricker, & Geschwind, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Youniss et al., 2002); community-based learning initiatives (Edwards et al., 2001); and, student activism (Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1999). Many of these investigations support the argument for tertiary institutions to implement a more responsive curriculum and point to research which demonstrates that engaging in service learning can improve students' academic achievement, increase their ongoing volunteer participation, and enhance their personal growth (see, for example, Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Moely, Mercer, Ilustre, & McFarland, 2002; O'Steen & Perry, 2012; O'Steen, Perry, Cammock, Kingham, & Pawson, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Successful curriculum integration following a crisis event was demonstrated when the University of Canterbury used volunteer service in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 to account for one-third of its *CHCH101* course credit. While this initiative was designed as an engaging curriculum to provide students with an academic opportunity to reflect on their volunteering experiences, the most significant learning outcome for the students was their improvement in critical thinking in relation to previously held assumptions about volunteering (O'Steen & Perry, 2012). This finding suggests that, for these students at least, their crisis volunteering experience influenced how they (re)conceptualised volunteering itself.

While the literature reveals a myriad of benefits and positive outcomes that volunteer participation can impart to younger people, there remain challenges in representing younger people within a positive framework. This challenge was highlighted in Stanley Cohen's influential work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1972), where he argued that the media construct a sensationalised, villainous narrative when reporting on the deviant behaviour of younger people. As the following quote summarising the efforts of students following the 1923 Tokyo

earthquake from Professor Izutaro Suehiro indicates, these conflicting societal views have been around for some time:

It is my great pleasure as an advocate for young students to observe that those who have been often criticised for selfish conduct and Epicurean inclinations by older generations, have united their efforts, to the point of selflessness, and have been able to make considerable achievement in response to public need. (Suehiro, 1923)

Underlining these perspectives, on the one hand, is a social view that positions younger people as being noncontributing, problematic, uninvolved in community life (Andolina, Jenkins, Keeter, & Zukin, 2002; Gaskin, 2004), uninterested in the needs of others (Roker et al., 1999), and often in conflict with their elders (Spencer & Woolley, 2000; Weller, 2006). On the other hand, other literature frames younger people as highly capable members of the public who positively contribute to community improvement (Jennings, Parra-Medina, Hilfinger Messias, & McLoughlin, 2006; Nichols & Good, 2004; Valaitis, 2002; Valaitis, 2005), as agents of change in their community (Roger, 2008), and as an integral element within volunteer efforts (Cnaan & Cascio, 1998; Hart et al., 1997; F. Jones, 2000; P. Jones, 2000; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Contrasting opinions about younger people suggest that they face a conundrum whereby negative connotations and high expectations may often obscure the less conventional forms through which they participate in volunteering (Adams, Tasmania, & Picone, 2009). To demonstrate this conundrum, Wood (2010) conducted a review of the literature based on civic participation of younger people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The author revealed that younger people were often polarised throughout the research process and she questioned the regulatory role that older people had in defining the nature of participation and participatory spaces. Her critique reflects an earlier argument by Harris, Wyn, and Younes (2007), who suggested that the participation of younger people in society has largely been defined by older-midlife adults and focuses on certain public measures of participation.

Indeed, research from Ormond (2001) warns that analysing the volunteer participation of younger people must be carefully interpreted, as their engagement may not always be presented in a formal capacity – an intentional strategy by younger people to retain power and knowledge within their own communities in which they place greater value on trust and intimacy. For example, Smith et al.

(2002) noted that “youth voice—when it is expressed in society—is often regarded as publicly available, open to ongoing censorship and correction” (p. 178). This idea suggests that younger people may shun traditional and formal organisations in favour of independent and self-governed organisations in order to avoid criticism and retain power and knowledge within their own communities.

Other studies indicate that younger people are no less engaged in volunteering than older generations are, but that they participate in new and less traditional ways (Cremin, Warwick, Harrison, Mason, & Arnot, 2009; Gaskin, 2004; Vromen, 2003; Weller, 2006). For example, after the 2011 Japanese tsunami, younger volunteers encountered entrenched stereotyping from the Japanese media who labelled them as problematic parasites (Goodman, Imoto, & Toivonen, 2012). These volunteers, however, retaliated by demonstrating at various public events and during media interviews that they not only had more positive energy than established response efforts, but that their creative minds allowed them to respond more effectively to the diverse needs of the crisis (Toivonen, 2011). Their participation in the crisis resulted in a significant shift in the established cultural mind-sets of many Japanese (Toivonen, 2011).

One study conducted by Harris et al. (2010) found that younger people were becoming increasingly disengaged from civic volunteer organisations because they felt marginalised as a result of age discrimination; they noted that they were not being “heard” and that others “don’t really care what we have to say” (p. 14, 22). Indeed, Gerbaudo’s (2012) book *Tweets and Streets* describes contemporary youth movements as a reflection of younger people’s “fight against institutions which they criticise for being bureaucratic, alienating, pyramidal, over-structured and opaque” (p. 162). Supporting this view, multiple studies have shown that younger people prefer to engage in informal and localised opportunities that feature intimate interactions with their peers, because they believe that these will offer favourable organisational cultures through which to express their voluntary interests and support individual modes of action as opposed to formally organised activities more typically favoured by older volunteers (Harris et al., 2010; Roker, 2008; Vromen, 2003).

While ambivalent attitudes among society may view younger people as being problematic and disengaged, or as highly valued and effective contributing members, little attention has been paid to younger people's *own* conceptualisations of crisis volunteer engagement. These self-reflections are critical if organisations are to move from frameworks for managing younger volunteers towards more useful practices of actively engaging youth (Hilfinger Messias, Jennings, Fore, McLoughlin, & Parra-Medina, 2008). In 2001, the Secretary-General of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies expressed how the capabilities of younger generations during a crisis response were unmatched insofar as their ability to bring about “meaningful change in social behaviour and attitudes...we must not underestimate their potential to make a real difference in the time of disasters” (Bekele Geleta, 2011). Bekele Gelata went on to describe the “unique role and value they can provide as innovators, inter-cultural ambassadors, peer-to-peer facilitators, community mobilizers, and advocates for vulnerable people” (para 6, 2011). Notwithstanding challenges associated with engaging younger generations within crisis events, this viewpoint does support the multiple scholars (see Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Larson & Verma, 1999) who argue that crisis events present an empowering and visible opportunity structure through which young people can engage their practical, creative, and innovative approaches.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of how and why today's younger people might conceptualise volunteering differently to that of others, the next section will examine the social context in which these younger volunteers are situated.

Self-reflexive volunteering.

Many studies have examined how individuals conceptualise their volunteer engagement (see Graff, 2002; Hustinx et al., 2010; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000, 2003; Pantea, 2013; Vinken, 2007a, 2007b). Within these studies, there has been significant focus on the changing structural and social pressures that have contributed towards different perceptions of volunteering among younger people (Pantea, 2013). While these perceptions may challenge previous volunteer models that conceptualise volunteering as altruistic, helpful, and giving (see Carpenter &

Myers, 2010; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary et al., 1998; Unger, 1991), they do not necessarily imply any lesser moral value. Rather, they indicate that organisations should reconsider conventional approaches to volunteering to one that includes wider social motives (Pantea, 2013).

The dominant theme that has emerged from these discussions is that present day younger volunteers are becoming increasingly *self-reflexive* (Jakob, 1993; Kühnlein, 1998). Self-reflexivity is understood as the individual reflection of changing institutional conditions “which involves a shift from former heteronomous or collective monitoring of agents to the autonomous, active, and permanent self-monitoring of individual life narratives” (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 169). Put simply, younger people are becoming increasingly individualised and proactive in their approach to volunteering. In this respect, *reflexive volunteering* (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003) represents individuals whose worlds become the principle frame of reference, and their decision to volunteer is “dependent on personal considerations in the context of highly individualized situations and experiences” (p. 172). For example, Hustinx and Lammertyn (2003) state:

The self-reflexive biographical quest becomes the driving force for primarily self-centred volunteer attitudes...On the one hand, volunteering is used as a tool to cope with biographical uncertainties and personal problems; on the other hand, the volunteering field is seen as a “market of possibilities” (Evers, 1999, p. 55) for self-realization and the setting of personal goals. (p. 173)

In other words, younger volunteers are moving towards more episodic or short-term volunteering in consideration of their own potential for self-improvement and skill acquisition (Graff, 2002; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000, 2004; Musick & Wilson, 2008; Pantea, 2013). With these reflexive changes comes a preference for autonomy, freedom, tangible results, responsibilities in voluntary roles (Hustinx, 2010b), and noncommittal and self-oriented forms of participation (see Beher et al., 2000; Cnaan & Handy, 2005; Hacket & Mutz, 2002; Handy et al., 2006; Rehberg, 2005; Wollebæk & Selle, 2003). Put simply, “the ethos of the volunteers, that is, their subjective dispositions and preferences, have changed dramatically” (Hustinx, 2010b, p. 1).

These new forms of volunteering are seen as highly individualised and self-organised (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003), with flexible and decentralised structures (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000). Consequently, some organisations have tailored volunteer tasks to be more flexible and have adjusted their recruitment and marketing strategies to suit (Meijs & Brudney, 2007). This approach is not commonplace, however, particularly within crisis management organisations which still by and large focus on top down organisational approaches to managing volunteers (see Andriole, 1985; Billings, Milburn, & Schaalman, 1980; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Neal & Phillips, 1995). While this move towards more individualistic orientations has been critiqued as an avoidance of commitment and responsibility (Hustinx, 2001a), it nevertheless is seen as “the most significant and substantive shift in volunteering” (Graff 2002, p. 3).

There are two key areas of the social environment that the literature positions as essential to self-reflexive volunteering: biographisation and altering conditions of modernity. First, is the fundamental notion that biographical match underlies reflexive volunteering (Jakob, 1993; Kühnlein & Mutz, 1999), which refers to the idea that volunteer experiences need to be reconciled to match the individual’s particular biographical life stage (Hustinx, 2010a) by paying particular attention to their changing attitudes, cultural values, and motivations (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Kühnlein & Mutz, 1999). Biographical match is primarily concerned with how individuals engage in ways that are entrenched in both their objective-structural availability and their subjective-cultural willingness (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Meijs, Ten Hoorn, Brudney, & Goodman, 2006). For example, because many younger volunteers have limited availability between study and work commitments, Du Bois-Reymond (1998) argues they are more likely to participate in temporary volunteering that is often unplanned, unpredictable, uncertain, and exciting. This style of volunteering is likely to result in the formation of informal and localised groups with a preference for social and individual types of action (Harris et al., 2010), which, Vinken (2007b) argues, is reflective of their self-organised individuality and dynamic life course. Other reasons for this temporary volunteer commitment are the direct attempt by younger people to use volunteering as a work experience opportunity to increase their job prospects (see Pantea, 2013) and as a vehicle for enabling personal goal setting (Hustinx, 2010a).

The second key to understanding self-reflexive volunteering is the altering conditions of late modernity which have resulted in some individuals — mainly younger people — subverting institutionalised and individualistic currents (Bauman, 2001; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Wood, 2010). To this end, these authors argue that younger people are merging individualistic orientations such as egoism and self-realisation alongside demands for social networks that feature a sense of belonging and meaning (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Because these two orientations were previously considered mutually exclusive within studies of volunteering, their merging has profoundly affected the social environment which influences how today's volunteers communicate, organise, and behave (see Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000; Lorentzen & Hustinx, 2007). For example, traditional notions of family, gender, and class are losing their meaning and being increasingly replaced with individualistic living conditions and lifestyles (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000). According to Hustinx and Lammertyn (2000), this shift has led to individuals' designing their lives in more consciously reflexive ways that, in turn, affect their volunteering choices in terms of levels of commitment, risk, and opportunity.

The phenomenon of individualisation was observed in a study by Harris et al. (2010) which focused on the changing nature of civic participation of 907 young Australians aged between 15-18 years of age. Framing the research within the fragmentation of traditional institutions and the increasing unpredictability of life trajectories, the authors found that many of the young people were disenchanted with the political structures which they felt did not respond to their needs. Rather than disengage completely, however, they remained interested in civic issues by developing individualised and informal strategies grounded in networks where they felt comfortable and heard. This response was similarly observed with the creation of Youth 3.11, a spontaneously formed, autonomous volunteer organisation that responded to the 2011 Japanese tsunami. The members of Youth 3.11 negotiated existing social structures to mobilise their volunteers swiftly via social media. Their process in recruiting and dispatching university students to various locations around the crisis area, skilfully leveraging social media to bypass existing authority structures, has been compared to social enterprise models (Toivonen, 2011). This example illustrates the potential for highly networked and motivated younger volunteers to tactfully negotiate resistance to

change across multiple levels whilst creating innovative solutions to social dilemmas (Toivonen, 2011). It also illustrates the informal and individualised strategies of younger people which Vinken (2007a) describes as being consistent with their distinctive dynamic life course which emphasises “self-organization, individuality, self-confrontation” (p. 53). Thus, it seems that younger volunteers in these contexts are shaping their volunteer experiences around these same biographic life values.

There are other significant effects on volunteering that result from biographisation and altering conditions of modernity. These include the emergence of an unpredictable and intermittent type of volunteer commitment (Cnaan & Handy, 2005; Hacket & Mutz, 2002) and the use of volunteering as a tool for individual self-actualisation. On the one hand, this approach has led to volunteers’ carefully matching their biographies with particular volunteer opportunities and bringing high levels of motivation and specialised skill sets to organisations. On the other, it has also created tensions between paid staff and volunteers and increased organisational demands for efficiency, performance, and accountability, given the decreasing gap in expertise between highly skilled volunteers and paid employees (Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994, p. 94). These findings reflect the complex interplay of self-reflexive volunteering and structural and organisational changes at two levels: the social structures and relations that make up the individual volunteer’s biographical situation, on the one hand and the organisational structures in which the volunteering context takes place, on the other (Behr et al., 2000; Hustinx, 2010b).

This section has highlighted the critical importance of considering the broader, structural, and transformational interdependent changes between volunteers and the organisational environment when analysing and interpreting the contemporary volunteering of younger people. Furthermore, it has demonstrated that approaching the study of younger volunteers from a self-reflexive perspective opens new opportunities for understanding not only how they conceptualise volunteering, but also their communicating and organising behaviours. The next section reviews the second key area of the literature relative to this study – self-organising.

Self-organising

In this section, I first outline how self-organising has been researched and theorised in a variety of disciplines. I then delineate how the mechanics and characteristics of self-organising offer useful applications for studying younger volunteers' engaging in crisis response and the influence of technology in self-organised crisis responses.

An organisational approach to self-organising.

Research into self-organising, broadly speaking, seeks to explain the emergence of behaviours that occur during a state of disorganisation (Contractor, 1994). The phenomenon of self-organisation has been the subject of research in many disciplines across the natural and social sciences. Within scientific fields, self-organising features have been studied in: mathematics (Lendaris, 1964; Mandelbrot, 1983); engineering (Kohonen, Oja, Simula, Visa, & Kangas, 1996); thermodynamics (Nicolis & Prigogine, 1977); cybernetics (Beer, 1972; Heylighen, 2001; Von Foerster, 2003); synergetics (Haken, 1981); and, biology and ecology (Cohen & Stewart, 2000). Although the study of self-organising within the social sciences is less widespread and has been criticised for lacking analytical rigour (Leydesdorff, 1993), it has, nevertheless, featured within language, economy, society, psychology, and philosophy and management research (Fuchs, 2003a, 2003b; Fuchs, 2005, 2006; Hayek, 1976; Helbing, Molnár, Farkas, & Bolay, 2001; Marris & Mueller, 1980). Much research into self-organising has been driven by the works of Niklas Luhmann (1990) who introduced the concept of self-referentiality as a sociological application of self-organising theory. He argues that the elements of a social system are dynamic, self-producing communications which can be interpreted as a self-organising process (Fuchs, 2003). Within the field of economics, constructs such as the invisible hand (Marris & Mueller, 1980) are used to explain how self-organising underpins capitalism and the limits of formal organisation within economies (Hayek, 1976). Environmental and planning studies have also looked at how the nonlinear interactions and behavioural patterns of pedestrians can be interpreted as self-organising (Helbing et al., 2001). The interactive process of self-organising is useful for understanding how local, or lower-level interactions, can affect the

adaptability of an organisation. Hence, self-organising is often used in research into organisational adaptation, knowledge, innovation, creativity, decision making, human performance, and crisis relief (see Buckle, 2004; Coleman, 1999; Conradt, Krause, Couzin, & Roper, 2009; Contractor, 1999; Eoyang, 2004; Laihonen, 2006; Leydesdorff, 1993).

In the past two decades, a transdisciplinary approach to self-organising theory has emerged. Influenced primarily by the works of Fuchs (2003a, 2003b; 2005, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2014), a transdisciplinary approach describes systems in a permanent state of movement and change that produces novelty or emergence. As a system that reproduces itself based on its own internal components and logic, this sense of emergence from an old system to a new system means that self-organising systems cannot be reduced to singular elements which express one-dimensional, linear, and deterministic thinking (Fuchs, 2006; Gershenson & Heylighen, 2003; Heylighen, 2001; Liska, Petrun, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2012). In relation to social movements for example, self-organising would mean that the emergence of a protest is the complex result of resource, cognitive mobilisation, and self-production, rather than of a singular social condition such as deprivation or resource mobilisation (Fuchs, 2006). In other words, self-organising is produced by the emergence of interacting system elements. These interactions, Fuchs (2006) argues, make self-organising particularly valuable in studying the social movements of people, because they consider both the internal and external structural and action-based aspects that take place during these types of social phenomena. By contrast, a system-theoretic approach to social movements (Ahlemeyer, 1995; Hellmann, 2013; Japp, 1984, 1986, 1996; Luhmann, 1987, 1990, 1995a, 1995b) ignores the productive relationships between human actors and social structures in processes of social self-organisation.

The emergence of informal, self-organised participation among community groups has recently been examined from both social and political perspectives (see Liska et al., 2012; Nan & Lu, 2014; White, Palen, & Anderson, 2014). The central motivation for these studies is the belief that the modern world is inherently dynamic and complex, with permanent changes and networked forms of organising (Fuchs, 2006). A study by Howell, Brock, and Hauser (1992) focused on a group of 14-25-year olds who came together in an attempt to rebuild

their youth community following the Detroit riots of the 1980s. While the ideology of the group was based on the premise that communitarianism and political activism were essential in order to revitalise a more compassionate and productive future for younger people, they maintained a very loose organisational structure, which allowed the group to respond to the shifting forces and concerns facing young people.

To better understand how foundations of self-organising fit within organisational studies, and more specifically crisis response, it is useful to consider four underlying characteristics that make up all complex organising systems (Amagoh, 2008). The first characteristic is the dissipative structures that operate with nonlinear logic (McElroy, 2000). This characteristic means that, while small influences can result in organisational instability or disorder, the structure holds the organisation together and dissipates the energy coming into it (Adcroft & Mason, 2007; Ferlie, 2007; Paraskevas, 2006). The second characteristic is the ability for the system to adapt and self-organise independently of being driven by a central control unit (Price, 2004; Sherif, 2006; Styhre, 2002). This adaptation usually occurs when various parts of the system are attempting to respond to environmental changes which may challenge its efficiency (Amagoh, 2008), competitiveness (Fioretti & Visser, 2004; Montuori, 2000), and/or creativity. The third characteristic is seen in the large numbers of elements within the system which constantly interact with each other. In doing so, the interaction produces feedback loops which enhance nonlinearities throughout the system (Morel & Ramanujam, 1999; Price, 2004; Sherif, 2006). Finally, the fourth characteristic is the collective nature of group behaviour resulting in emergent properties (McElroy, 2000). This characteristic is concerned with the organisation's taking on new properties after being pulled in different directions following disorder created from change. The organisation learns from this experience which, in turn, influences future behaviours (Ferlie, 2007; Paraskevas, 2006). These four characteristics are at the core of any adaptive organisation and provide the basis for understanding how self-organising can be applied to communication research (see Adcroft & Mason, 2007; Foster, 2005; Sherif, 2006; Styhre, 2002; Sullivan, 2004; Wang, 2004; White, 2000; Yoon & Kuchinke, 2005).

While some scholars applaud the freedom and adaptive nature exhibited by self-organising structures (see Nonaka, 1988; Weick, 2002), others critique their unstable, ever-changing, and disruptive nature (see Daft & Lengel, 1983). Thietart and Forgues (1995) describe these structures as a “maelstrom in perpetual change and revolution” (p. 23), and, given belief in the need for stability and order if organisational goals and missions are to be achieved, the usefulness of applying self-organising to organisational studies is questioned. Indeed, Heylighen (2001) critiques the application of self-organising within social contexts, citing the potential for organisational unpredictability and lack of control.

Notwithstanding this critique, an understanding of self-organising can help organisational leaders and decision makers to predict possible or likely behaviours of groups. Indeed, the literature pertaining to self-organising teams can offer a useful understanding of the organising dynamics of younger volunteers who respond to crisis events. Self-organised teams are defined by Highsmith (2004) as groups that comprise “individuals [who] manage their own workload, shift work among themselves based on needs and best fit and participate in team decision making” (p. 259). Although self-organising teams have a common focus and are characterised by a sense of mutual trust and respect among members, they have the freedom to self-manage and organise themselves around their own tasks (Cockburn & Highsmith, 2001), because self-organised teams avoid clear or predetermined leadership by managing the decision-making authority at an operational level among individuals (Hoda, Noble, & Marshall, 2010). According to Takeuchi and Nonaka (1986), this type of freedom not only empowers group members, but also provides them with cross-functional skills and enables decision making to be adaptive to new challenges as they arise, which, in turn, facilitates motivation among members (Takeuchi & Nonaka, 1986).

Self-organised teams are not uncontrolled through their lack of leadership. Rather, this unique decision-making process means that self-organising teams can be significantly more efficient than traditional hierarchy-based organisations (Hoda et al., 2010). They are, therefore, well suited to the intrinsic demands of crisis events which involve rapidly changing environments and demands for adaptive and flexible decision making. For example, whilst Sam Johnson took on a leadership role within the SVA during the 2010 Christchurch earthquakes, he

circumvented power and authority by structuring the organisation organically and deliberately avoided creating any sense of bureaucracy and hierarchy (Lewis, 2013). In addition, Johnson dealt with external pressures (such as interactions with authorities) behind the scenes. These interactions often involved power struggles based on the different organisational approaches taken by the Student Volunteer Army compared to those taken by the Civil Defence officials regarding structure, information sharing, and flexibility. To have imposed a visible command and control leadership style, Lewis (2013) argues, would have contradicted everything the SVA embodied and “detracted from its very real source of student power” (p. 825). The reluctance of leaders of volunteer groups to be “invisible” (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 156) does not, however, totally eliminate the notion of leadership within self-organising, because individual participants are often decisive in collective action and determining the group’s sense of direction or the location of a gathering. So, whilst self-organising can be resistant to traditional forms of leadership, it also represents a contradiction between the discourse of leaderlessness and organisational practices in which leadership continues to exist.

This style of collaborative management, which places a significant level of trust within the organisational team culture, is in direct contrast to the traditional command and control style leadership (Sillitti, Hazzan, Bache, & Albaladejo, 2011) typically found in crisis response management. Indeed, in Gerbaudo’s (2012) book *Tweets and Streets*, the author describes contemporary youth movements as a reflection of younger people’s “fight against institutions which they criticise for being bureaucratic, alienating, pyramidal, over-structured and opaque” (p. 162). Gerbaudo (2012) goes on to describe the organising of younger people as one which strives for “directness...disintermediation, [which is] visible in the movements’ distrust towards traditional organisations’ mechanisms of delegation and representation and in their embracing of liquid forms of organising” (p. 162). The notion of liquid organising, based upon Bauman’s (2013) theory of liquidity, describes a “rapidly changing order that undermines all notions of durability” (Lee, 2005, p. 61) which has “eroded social institutions” (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2018, p. 3). It describes the response to a period “of increasing dissolution and dissipation of not only structures and institutions, but all expressions of organized sociality” which, in turn, “imposes a mode of

organizing that actively destroys social institutions...organizations become liquidated” (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2018, p. 2). Social media, argues Gerbaudo (2012), acts as a conduit for these liquid organising practices to develop. This development is done by exploiting the participatory and interactive nature of modern technologies such as online administrators and technological functions that set the scenes for social movements, construct common identifications, and gather participants. Consequently, the linear, authoritarian tendencies of solid, bureaucratic organisations are superseded by a more fluid style of organising (Gerbaudo, 2012). While some aspects of liquid organising are similar to aspects of self-organising, there are some fundamental differences which limit its usefulness within this thesis’ research.

First, liquid organising implies that any forms of social bonds are obstacles to be cleared out of the way and, thereby, dissolved (Bauman, 2013). Secondly, liquid organising is borderless, readily absorbed, and adulterated. By contrast, self-organising has strong social bonds that “synergetically interact” and “communicatively link human individuals” (Fuchs, 2006, pp. 130, 131) within a system that is neither borderless nor closed. Instead, self-organised systems are more self-producing; that is, they “produce their own identity, structures, goals, and collective practices in cyclical, reflexive and self-referential processes” (Fuchs, 2006, p. 111). When this process is applied to social movements, Fuchs (2006) argues that the actors and systems that make up the dynamic self-organising process represent a form of defiance or protest against existing structures. In other words, they are connected to social problems and a search for shared goals, something which is in direct contrast to the lack of optimism that makes up liquid organising processes.

In summary, this section has examined how understanding self-organising can assist in analysing and theorising the behaviour of individuals and groups of people. This section has also outlined how self-organising differs from liquid organising, despite the fact that both terms are often referred to within a context of younger volunteers. The next section will address how self-organising provides a useful approach to understanding spontaneous and informal volunteer responses to crisis events.

Self-organising in crisis events.

Traditionally, a command and control organisational approach is considered the most effective crisis management strategy due to its centralised decision-making processes and effective coordination of resources and information sharing (see Andriole, 1985; Billings et al., 1980; Mitroff & Pearson, 1993; Neal & Phillips, 1995). This military-style approach assumes a weak view of civil society incapable of dealing with the devastating effects of a crisis event (Dynes, 1990) and, consequently, argues that an authoritarian structure is required for the individuals and organisations that comprise social structures (Dynes, 1994; Neal & Phillips, 1995). This model advocates strong, centralised leadership as the most effective process for decision making and communication following a crisis event (Neal & Phillips, 1995). Despite the widespread use of this strict approach throughout the history of disaster response, from the 1980s onwards scholars began to criticise its effectiveness in responding to the unpredictable and spontaneous environments of crises (Drabek, 1986; Dynes, 1983, 1994; Perrow, 1984). During this time, researchers were also pointing out that ordinary citizens were often the first people on the scene of a crisis event and remained long after crisis response organisations had ceased operation (Whittaker et al., 2015). Not only did the traditional approach fail to account for the value of these citizens, it also lacked the flexibility to incorporate the role of these first responders in helping crisis victims and assisting in the initial stages of the crisis (Whittaker et al., 2015). Individuals who operated outside of the official crisis response procedures continued to be viewed primarily as a liability or a disruption (Fritz & Mathewson, 1957; Helsloot & Ruitenbergh, 2004; Stallings & Quarantelli, 2005).

One attempt to cater for this activity of ordinary citizens was through the development of the Emergent Human Resources Model (EHRM) (Drabek & McEntire, 2002). In contrast to the centralised command approach which disregards the use of emergent groups (Schneider, 1992), the EHRM recognises the importance of incorporating flexible and spontaneous citizens within crisis response procedures. As Quarantelli (1982) puts it, “It is far better to plan on the basis of what people and groups usually do in normal situations and what they will probably do in emergencies than to expect them to change their behavior drastically in disasters” (p. 24).

Over the past 30 years or so, many scholars have looked to organisational theory to gain a deeper understanding of the collective behaviour of emergent groups in crisis response (see, for example, Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Fuchs, 2006; Gardner, 2013; Lowe & Fothergill, 2003; Stallings & Quarantelli, 2005; Wenger, 1991). More recently, however, research has pointed to the self-organising literature as a way to understand the complex, dynamic, and evolving nature of such emergent groups (Liska et al., 2012; Shirky, 2008; Starbird & Palen, 2011; White et al., 2014). To this end, it has been argued that self-organising around crisis events creates a unique “opportunity for doing new things, for innovation and for development” (Folke, 2006, p. 253) despite its being in contrast to the bureaucratic and administrative-centric responses typically offered by official crisis response organisations (Crossley, 2003). Indeed, there is significant support throughout the literature for organisational leaders to embrace the complexities of self-organising during crisis events (Adcroft & Mason, 2007; Houchin & MacLean, 2005).

Within Aotearoa/New Zealand, the SVA that responded to the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes is the most well-known example of a self-organised response to a crisis event. Due to its flexible nature, the SVA was able to adapt to the changing needs of the crisis, and by adopting a loose organisational structure, the team members were able to make decisions as they felt necessary:

As the crisis grew, our team members encouraged friends to participate in person, declare their support by ‘liking’ the SVA page, and spreading the word by posting our events and status updates on other people’s Facebook pages... The organisation was built on a team approach. We trained our team leaders to use their common sense, prioritise safety, and ensure that the volunteers enjoyed themselves. Most importantly, we gave individuals responsibility and trusted them to make the right decision, and we accepted that this wouldn’t always happen. Working organically, we established new teams for different purposes (equipment, funding, welfare, food, logistics). (Sam Johnson, as cited in Mamula-Seadon, Selway, & Paton, 2012, p. 19)

An analysis undertaken by Bunker, Ehnis, Seltsikas, and Levine (2013) on the social media activity of the SVA in the first few weeks of the February 2011 earthquake highlighted the significant level of self-organising interaction between the SVA and crisis response agencies. The authors also found that the SVA was able to develop situational awareness and act and react accordingly, resulting in an

optimisation of resources and high levels of community ethos, goodwill, motivation, and momentum. Consequently, self-organised responses were able to adapt and innovate according to the changing local needs following the crisis (Aldrich, 2012; Comfort & Okada, 2013). Comfort and Okada (2013) describe how the “edge of chaos” (p. 22) within crisis events provides the space for self-organising systems to become functionally capable and creative, inspired, and adaptive. In this view, James, Kendra, Clay, and Gill (2018) argue that crisis response is a creative process where groups affected by the crisis envision the future of the community and move towards this new formation.

Other crisis researchers are more direct in their support for self-organising during crisis response. Boin, ‘t Hart, and Kuipers (2018), for example, consider self-organising a central feature of coordination in response efforts, and Wheatley (2007) proposes self-organising as the *primary* means for managing crises and other similarly unpredictable and unanticipated events. She argues that because self-organising has the capacity to respond continuously to change, this change essentially becomes the “organizing force” (p. 33). Thus, the structures and strategies that are exhibited during the process of self-organising are inherently temporary, because the system “understand[s] their organization [is involved in] a process of continuous organizing” (p. 33). From an organisational perspective, self-organising raises an interesting contrast to traditional forms of leadership by proposing that self-organising is flexible, robust, and able to function autonomously with minimum need for supervision and planning. As a result, Wheatley (2007) argues that “self-organizing systems have what all leaders crave: the capacity to respond continuously to change” (p. 33). As such, these systems override self-organising’s more problematic attributes of limited predictability and lack of control (Heylighen, 2001).

In order for self-organising structures to flourish during times of crisis, Wheatley (2007) argues that the three conditions of identity, information, and relationships must be carefully considered. The first necessary condition of identity within self-organising refers to the rhetorical interaction between the contested and negotiated exchanges of both the internal and external organisational identity. For organisational members, this condition means acknowledging that “everything we know is determined by who we think we are” (p. 37). It is this sense of identity, in

being part of the process of self-organising, which is pivotal in determining individuals' responses to information and events as they arise. The second necessary condition for effective self-organising relates to the role of information sharing. This sharing is an essential element within crisis events, because "only when information belongs to everyone can people organise rapidly and effectively" (p. 40). The final essential condition is relationships, because it is through these that "information is created and transformed...[and] the organization's identity expands to...become wiser" (p. 40). Liska et al. (2012) believe these three essential and interconnected components position self-organising as the "ultimate level of successful response to crisis" (p. 193).

Despite the benefits offered by self-organising during crisis events, it also brings some limitations and challenges, and there is little practical understanding as to how to best manage the coordination of self-organised volunteers and emergency services (Ludwig et al., 2017). Whilst a self-organised approach can assist in predicting and understanding the dynamics of group movements (see Couzin, Krause, James, Ruxton, & Franks, 2002; Parrish, Viscido, & Grünbaum, 2002; Seeley, 2002; Sumpter, 2006), much like formal organising, predicting such behaviour assumes that all members act according to the same set of rules (Dyer, Johansson, Helbing, Couzin, & Krause, 2009) and that there will be no conflicting interests between members (Couzin et al., 2002; Parrish et al., 2002; Sumpter, 2006). To better understand how conflicting interests within self-organising groups might implicate members and influence their direction, Conradt et al. (2009) found that it is possible for individuals to influence group movement direction through small adjustments such as increased assertiveness and work speed reduction. First, their study found that, if some members felt the benefits of reaching a particular target destination outweighed the importance of remaining in a group, this feeling would exert a strong influence over the whole groups' movement direction. Secondly, they found that if these members felt the importance of remaining in a cohesive group was more important than reaching a target destination, then the remaining members would likely have a strong influence on the whole group's direction. Thirdly, if the benefits of either parameter were equal, this situation would result in group movement being influenced by most members. These findings have implications for studies into

self-organised crisis volunteers, because they indicate that internal forces influence the direction and behaviour of self-organised groups.

This section has examined the progression of crisis response from the traditional command and control approach towards an approach that considers the role of the public in responding to crisis events. This section has illustrated that, despite the challenges associated with self-organising during a crisis event, the ability for the system to continuously change and adapt positions self-organising as a promising form of organising among public responders. The next section hones in on the topic by looking more closely at how modern technologies influence how this self-organising emerges during crisis events.

The influences of technology on self-organising during crises.

There is no shortage of literature about the internet as a self-organising system (see, for example, Chen, Schuffels, & Orwig, 1996; Fuchs, 2005; Starbird & Palen, 2011). Fuchs (2005), however, argues that technology is not a replacement for organising; rather technology *enables* people to self-organise. In other words, it is the social embeddedness derived from the knowledgeable human activity, rather than the technology itself, that makes self-organising work. Castells (1996) argues that the temporary social structures or new spaces of flow created through technology allow people to organise themselves in different social orderings. By reorganising formal organising structures, these different forms of orderings can establish “new social arrangements at all levels of social organization” (Palen et al., 2009, p. 2). In so doing, they challenge conventional crisis management centralised command and control information dissemination (Castells, 1996; Palen & Liu, 2007). For example, Gerbaudo (2012) argues that social movements organised through social media facilitate the rise of self-organising processes because they are not reliant on these linear command and control processes. Instead, they can rely on a collective form of intelligence geared towards superseding the authoritarian tendencies of formal organisations.

In recent years, the well-documented ability of digital volunteers to undertake roles and perform tasks in aid of crisis response efforts via remote participation demonstrates how new social arrangements can challenge traditional structures of crisis organisation (see Montgomery et al., 2004; Starbird, 2011; Starbird, 2012;

Starbird & Palen, 2011; White et al., 2014; Whittaker et al., 2015). For example, a study by Starbird and Palen (2011) in the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake analysed a group of digital volunteers who, despite being distributed across continents, self-organised over Twitter to fundraise and donate resources to those affected by the crisis.

The impact of social media on the self-organising behaviours during crisis events is being increasingly documented and critiqued (see Gerbaudo, 2012, 2014; Li & Rao, 2010; Ludwig et al., 2017; Palen & Liu, 2007; Palen et al., 2009; Starbird, 2011; Starbird, 2012; Starbird & Palen, 2011; Vieweg, Hughes, Starbird, & Palen, 2010). The use of technology has not only increased the visibility of self-organising during crisis events, but has also enabled the expansion of rapid (and traceable) social interactions (Palen et al., 2009). For example, Kendra and Wachtendorf (2003) explored how bystanders who witnessed the 9/11 attacks voluntarily improvised evacuation strategies for victims. This crisis also saw a group of volunteers labelled Clarkson Village assign themselves responsibility for the dissemination of donated goods to those in need (Voorhees, 2008). Palen et al. (2009) explored how students used established social media applications such as Facebook to organise the safety of their peers following the 2007 Virginia Tech school shootings. A recent study by Ludwig et al. (2017) found that using online crowdsourcing to recruit volunteers can not only improve the management and organisation of spontaneous volunteers, but can also improve the collaborative resilience between official crisis response stakeholders and spontaneous volunteers. Additionally, research undertaken by Nan and Lu (2014) in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan earthquake concluded that self-organising represented a viable approach to crisis volunteering. In their analysis of online postings following the crisis event, these authors concluded that organisational order can actually *arise* through the seemingly disorganised and spontaneous actions of self-organising in online environments.

Studies such as these have highlighted two key areas. First, they demonstrate that large numbers of decentralised individuals can collaborate effectively in the virtual environment without relying on any form of central control. Secondly, unlike traditional crisis response which views technology as a distinct entity, self-organising positions technology and individuals as coevolving forces in crisis

response (Nan & Lu, 2014). Therefore, technology-enabled self-organising challenges long-standing assumptions of centralised command and control approaches to crisis management that macrolevel order requires microlevel seeking behaviours (Nan & Lu, 2014).

In summary, this section has examined how self-organising can be understood in both online and offline behaviours of individuals and groups. Within the context of a crisis event, self-organising theory provides a useful way of addressing the informal and spontaneous response of emergent volunteers that cannot be accounted for in traditional crisis response organisational approaches.

Furthermore, this section has demonstrated that the ability for self-organised groups to adapt and innovate, whilst enabling members to be both dynamic and creative according to the changing and ongoing requirements during times of crisis, locates self-organised groups in a unique position within the field of crisis response. Moreover, through modern technologies, self-organising has enabled new social orderings, which, without the need for central control or leadership, disrupt formal organising structures.

Although a self-organised understanding to crisis response provides a useful framework for analysing an informal volunteer response to crises, there is criticism that this research is limited in terms of its lack of consideration for the broader social contexts in which the crisis occurs and the external influences that occur within such variable environments (Rizzuto & Maloney, 2008). The following section will address this concern by reviewing the third key area of the literature relative to this study which addresses younger people from a generational perspective. Within this section, consideration is given to the innate attraction that younger people have towards the structural and social nuances inherent within crisis volunteering and self-organising.

Theories of Generation

This section begins by exploring literature that points to several complex approaches in examining theoretical accounts of generations. An overview of how the study of generations has been applied within organisational contexts then follows. Finally, the section concludes with a detailed exploration of today's

generation of younger people and the unique characteristics, behaviours, and values that scholars argue set this generation apart from others.

Approaches to the study of generations.

The study of generations has a rich tradition of scholarship across multiple disciplines including technology, sociology, culture studies, and business fields. This literature includes studies which investigate how technological developments provide a basis for generational formation to create cultural differences in the workplace (Korupp & Szydlik, 2005; Kubicek & Wagner, 2002; McMullin, Duerden Comeau, & Jovic, 2007); the impact that generations have on cultural symbols such as music and fashion (Eyerman & Turner, 1998); and, the impact of generations within entrepreneurial identities in the workplace (Down & Reveley, 2004; Joshi, Dencker, Franz, & Martocchio, 2010). From a sociological perspective, a generational lens has been instrumental in bringing new insights into the experiences of disadvantaged youth (see Woodman & Wyn, 2014) and as a way to rethink youth policy (France & Roberts, 2015; Woodman & Wyn, 2013). The mobilisation of youth movements has also been addressed using a generational lens to highlight the empowerment that youth can achieve through unique forms of organising (see Roberts, 2015).

What constitutes a generation sociologically is a complex question (see Biggs, 2007; Butterfield, 1972; Kertzer, 1983; Rosow, 1978; Vinovskis, 1977). Over the past few decades, the term *generation* has had a variety of meanings. For example, it has been used as a synonym for cohort or for the succession of people moving through time together (Elder Jr. et al., 2003; Jacobson, 1964; Kertzer, 1983; Markides, 1978), and a universal sense of kinship (Baxter & Almagor, 1978; Fortes, 1974; Fox, 1967; Jackson, 1978; Needham, 1966; Stewart, 1977). The study of generations has also been used as a way of understanding peer personalities (Howe & Strauss, 1991) and social formations (Scherger, 2012). More recently, there have been calls to update the concept of generation to better reflect how ordinary people conceive and examine it within contemporary organisational settings (Timonen & Conlon, 2015, p. 1).

There are many models and approaches to studying generations. For example, Howe and Strauss (1991) conceptualise generations as a particular biography

which acts as a description of how personalities are shaped and, in turn, shape other generations. Their model defines generation as a linear 22-year span of an individual's "phase of life" (p. 60). Other scholars such as Erikson (1950) and Levinson and Associates (1978) define generations as a particular age. In this view, membership within an age-based cohort is important, because the recognition from one generation to the next – how they each experience social moments formed in relation to particular historic events – alters the social environment of each group.

Another approach to studying generations places less significance on biological age and focuses more on the cultural identity of a generational cohort based on the social, cultural, and historical impacts of events around them (see Aboim & Vasconcelos, 2014; Bourdieu, 1993; Edmunds & Turner, 2002). Consequently, this approach assumes that aging in a particular historical interval impacts on the attitudes and values of individuals born within a similar period (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Thau & Heflin, 1997). This approach suggests that some generations see themselves as more self-reflexive than others (Read, 2010; Weller, 2008) and thus often claim greater social significance than others. This sense of social status among the generational cohorts has been witnessed throughout the past century. For example, Coupland (1991) coined the term clique maintenance to describe how each generation views the generation following it as deficient, so as to enhance its collective ego. In 1949, George Orwell observed that "every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it" (p. 51). This observation suggests that generational identification may actually have little to do with strict age membership and more to do with the cultural identity and social environment of the cohort (e.g., the Sixties generation) (Buckingham, 2006). Conceptualising a generation as a cohort, that is, an "aggregate of individuals who experienced the same event within the same time interval" (Ryder, 1965, p. 845), enables the dispositions, behaviours, traits, and social relationships of individuals to be viewed as a proxy of that generational unit (Ryder, 1965). Therefore, a deeper understanding of generational cohorts can assist when interpreting of individuals' experiences of common events and outcomes (Joshi et al., 2010).

A third approach to the study of generations is offered by Mannheim (1952), who suggests that while a generation is, on one hand, a matter of particular life changes available to individuals at their time of birth, it is, on the other hand, also made up of how people respond to, interpret, and share meanings of these circumstances. Arguably, the most common approach in the study of generations (see Cole, 2004; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998; Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Jeffrey, 2013), Mannheim (1952) notes, is the idea of fresh contact. This idea captures how younger people exist in a pivotal time whereby they enter new forms of accumulated heritage within a shared sociohistorical location in time (McMullin et al., 2007). Schuman and Scott (1989) have built upon Mannheim's work to consider how beliefs individuals establish via their shared formative experiences can later influence their attitudes and behaviours. They used interviews to ask respondents to recall important historical events and to explain their significance. The data revealed that individuals' formative experiences played a significant role in framing their collective memories. Findings also demonstrated that the collective memories of individuals within early adulthood are likely to predict future behaviours and attitudes within organisational workplace settings (Schuman & Rodgers, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002) and, therefore, demonstrate that generations have a particular identity within organisational contexts (Joshi et al., 2010).

In summary, recent scholarship does not offer conclusive support for a single theoretical conceptualisation of generation. There appears to be unanimous agreement that there are challenges involved in unravelling the complexities of generational experiences (Abramson & Inglehart, 1992; Buckingham, 2006). The next section explores the challenges associated with generational research within organisational contexts, and the implications this complexity has for achieving organisational outcomes.

Application of generations within organisational contexts.

Many scholars attest to the importance for managers to have an effective understanding of the different perspectives, values, and beliefs that each generation brings to an organisation (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Schullery, 2013; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Weston, 2001). However, studying generational theory is unlikely

to predict an individual's behaviour. Instead, as Coomes and DeBard (2004) recommend, it can be more useful for organisational leaders to predict the motivations, behaviours, and attitudes of individuals by appealing to their hopes and goals and acknowledging the fears that exist within generational themes.

The extant literature examining generations within organisations is limited due to the concentration on stereotypes of generations (Coomes & DeBard, 2004; Joshi et al., 2010). This concentration often results in studies which present a proliferation of recommendations with regard to 'millennials' or 'baby boomers' in the workplace, for example. Not only can these simplistic characterisations serve to reinforce stereotypical and generalised views, but they also fail to consider cohort effects such as the influence of social institutions and formative events in shaping generations within organisations (Joshi et al., 2010).

In terms of research into volunteering, the literature is inclined to focus on demographic differences such as ethnicity or gender and draw on simplistic generational categorisations rather than examine the effect of generational differences on the volunteer outcome itself (see Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008). It is also argued that the use of generational models for understanding the dynamics of particular subcultures or marginalisation (such as younger volunteers) must be approached carefully due to the age variance within these membership groups often being greater than the age variance between each membership group (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Additionally, interpersonal interactions between different generations play a significant role in the unsuccessful transfers and preservation of knowledge, resources, and skills between each generation and are often overlooked (Joshi et al., 2010). From an organisational perspective, these resistive interactions and tensions can result in power struggles between different generations, whereby accumulation of resources and power by one particular generation serves to disadvantage the other (Irwin, 1998; Turner, 1998). This approach reflects a sociological perspective that situates generations as fundamentally "distinct entities which are structurally at odds with each other" and a view that generations often "aim to secure advantage over other generations" (Irwin, 1998, p. 307). Within workplace and organisational settings resistant intergenerational interactions can be observed in terms of age-based stereotyping (Joshi et al., 2010); generational favouritism

(Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1979); and, mistrust, negative expectations, competition, and conflict arising as a result of preceding and succeeding incumbents (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Dukerich, Kramer, & Parks, 1998; Joshi et al., 2010).

Regardless of how generations are conceptualised, it is critically important for organisational researchers and practitioners to investigate generational phenomena and their implications for organisational outcomes. According to Joshi et al. (2010), generational phenomena account for many of the complex challenges facing organisations. For example, scholars have documented the difficulties associated with the following: managing an increasingly age-diverse workforce (Leibold & Voelpel, 2007); age related workplace outcomes (Lawrence, 1988), understanding generational work values (Twenge et al., 2010); and, intergenerational organisation conflicts (Wade-Benzoni, 2002). In an attempt to better understand the implications of different generational cohorts within an organisational context, a study conducted by Joshi, Dencker, and Franz (2011) claims that “organizational generations cannot exist devoid of the context in which they are embedded” (p. 198). In other words, generational research is essentially context driven.

The two key areas that appear to be significant when approaching the study of generations within organisations are conceptualising generations as cohorts and intergenerational interactions. A third important area considers generational identity and its impact within organisations. This focus stems from Mannheim's (1952) research that suggests that, in order for generations to function as a source of social identity, two essential components of generations must be observed: a distinct consciousness of important events and a common historical location.

There are two important factors to acknowledge here. First, whilst this literature appears to convey a very negative perspective on intergenerational interactions, the successful transfer of knowledge, skills, and resources between generations within the same settings is also possible. For example, these dynamics can be seen when values of cooperation, reciprocity, positive valence, altruism, empathy, and trust emerge between preceding and succeeding incumbents (Bengtson, Elder Jr., & Putney, 2005; Joshi et al., 2010; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007; Tost, Hernandez, &

Wade-Benzoni, 2008; Wade-Benzoni, 2002). Therefore, this literature suggests that, although dynamics inherent within intergenerational interactions may lead to tensions, it is also possible to achieve harmonious interactions between generations in organisational contexts.

Secondly, it is important to acknowledge studies that view generations as discursive constructions and which place less importance on the characteristics of generational cohorts (see Fineman, 2011; Phillipson, Leach, Money, & Biggs, 2008; Thomas, Hardy, Cutcher, & Ainsworth, 2014). Viewing age as a social construction (Gullette, 2004; Kohli, Rosenow, & Wolf, 1983) challenges the notion of generation as an age-based concept and instead moves towards an examination of how cultural practices and social structures are implicated in our understandings of generations (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014).

Multiple studies have unpacked constructions of older workers (Ainsworth, 2002; Ainsworth & Hardy, 2007, 2009; Riach, 2007; Rudman & Molke, 2009) by proposing age as an organising principle that is informed by social structures rather than as a chronological attribute. From this perspective, age can be understood as discursive and “the outcome of active ongoing processes rather than pre-given, fixed entities” (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014, p. 5). In an attempt to unpack constructions of generations within the workplace, Pritchard and Whiting (2014) drew data from UK online news sites collected over 150 days and found that debates about entitlement, responsibility, and consequences revealed particular generational categories relative to discussions about work. The authors conclude that, while both older and younger workers are discursively positioned relative to their familiar cohort understandings of generations, they combine age-related privilege within the workplace to establish certain generational identities (Pritchard & Whiting, 2014).

Throughout the literature, there are calls for further investigations of generations in order to understand the complexities of age in organisations (Thomas et al., 2014) and how generational differences and tensions are experienced within them (Cody, Green, & Lynch, 2012; Foster, 2013; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Pritchard & Whiting, 2014; Thomas et al., 2014). Indeed, there is a significant lacuna when it comes to exploring younger generations within organisational studies (see

Furlong, 2006 for an exception). The next section narrows the focus within the literature by examining the research concerning today's younger generation.

Today's generation of younger people.

To gain a deeper understanding about today's generation of younger people in a situational context, the work of Mannheim (1952) is particularly useful, because he argues that younger people have a vantage point over older generations because they are not yet embedded in social roles which can constrain their life choices. Also referred to as the "formative years" (Mannheim, 1952, p. 298) or "impressionable years" (Alwin & McCammon, 2003, p. 34), Mannheim (1952) believes that during this critical life period, younger people respond to social issues through a fresh lens (see Lubinski, Schmidt, & Benbow, 1996; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007). Critically, in this view, the idea of a fresh lens "stay[s] with the individual throughout their lives and is the anchor against which later experiences are interpreted", fixing people "in qualitatively different subjective areas" (Scott, 2000, p. 356).

It is during this time of generational imprinting (see Corsten, 1999) that younger people face the all-pervasive question of *who am I?* (Erikson, 1968). While particular events may serve as anchors for both individual and collective memory to take shape during these critical years, less dramatic changes and experiences such as a chain of events or more gradual developments within social spheres such as culture, politics, and the economy can also have similar formative effects (Scherger, 2012). Whilst on the one hand, these effects highlight the fact that younger people are less likely to be embedded in notions of loyalty than their older counterparts, on the other, it reminds us that younger people are positioned to take advantage of the new social conditions they are experiencing (Cole, 2004) and are, thus, more likely to rethink the social conditions and dominant structures of society (Jeffrey, 2013).

The effects of experiencing a world markedly different from that of other generational cohorts also has a significant influence on the younger generation of today (Henn et al., 2002). For example, they face new, unprecedented environmental changes (Hayward, 2012) which, combined with the effects of globalisation, are said to have affected the socioemotional transition from

adolescence to adulthood (Chen & Farruggia, 2002). This effect is further compounded by fundamental economic shifts, the weakening of relationships, and the rapid development of technology (Chen & Farruggia, 2002; Henn et al., 2002). As a result, fragmentations of society have led to increases in violence, depression, and suicide among younger people (Cote & Allahar, 1995; Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998).

The radical nature of many of these factors is believed to have increased the complexity, risk, and uncertainty of younger people's life choices and socialisation to such an extent that their route from adolescence to adulthood is considered far more individualised than that of those in previous generations (Miles, 2000). In part, Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) claim that this phenomenon exists because a lack of integration within social roles, norms, and responsibilities has provided younger people with a sense of experiential freedom with which to direct their lives and question social order. This issue has gained the attention of academics who have examined how younger people resolve social issues in ways that shape their adult identities, social and cultural practices, and orientations to the world (Cole, 2004). Indeed, Kubicek and Wagner (2002) have argued that Mannheim's generational perspectives can enhance the analysis of community social networks. However, Edmunds and Turner (2005) have criticised the lack of attention that has been given to applying a generational lens within contemporary sociological research.

Two themes concerning characteristics of today's generation of younger people dominate the literature. These are: 1) the domination of new media and technology which has resulted in younger people who were born in the 21st century being labelled the digital generation (see Bennett, 2008; Buckingham, 2006; Buckingham & Willett, 2013; Montgomery et al, 2004) and 2) the engagement of younger people in alternative forms of participation among community life outside of the traditional structures (see Brooks, 2007; Harris, 2006; Harris et al., 2010).

The digital generation label reflects rhetoric used to describe a generation experientially embedded in the use of digital computer technology (Buckingham, 2006; Jenkins, 2008; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008). The idea of generation gaps and

divides is not new, nor is the idea that technology can influence the way that generations are defined (Jenkins, 1998; Tapscott, 1998; Wark, 1993). Yet, the rhetoric of digital generation implies a fundamental change in society produced through the use of technology. While, on one hand, this conceptualisation complicates the construction and self-construction of generations, on the other, it implies that media can be used to signify a generational affiliation (Buckingham, 2006). For example, the effects of digital technologies within younger generations (in Western contexts at least) are evident in studies showing that younger people feel more comfortable engaging with communities and expressing themselves via social media than doing so interpersonally offline (Boyd, 2007).

Whilst Buckingham (2006) reminds us that younger people are not determined by technology, it is important to consider whether the effects of digital technology have influenced a different world orientation, disposition, or habitus (Bourdieu, 1993) within the lives of younger people. Over the past two decades, organisational scholars have increasingly argued that the effects of digital technology within organisations are socially constructed (Leonardi & Barley, 2010). That is, the effects of technology on an organisation cannot be explained without considering the intricacies of the social context (Leonardi & Barley, 2010). However, there has been no focused exploration thus far in relation to how these technologies influence socially oriented ways of organising specifically among younger generations who respond to crisis events.

The second key theme in the literature is the changing nature of community participation for younger people. This discourse is framed around the increasingly unpredictable nature of life trajectories that younger people face, described by Harris et al. (2010) as an “identification of a crisis in young people’s [civil society] engagement” (p. 9). This disengagement has been blamed on privatisation, deregulation, industrialisation (Bauman, 2001), job insecurity, and neoliberal ideology (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007), resulting in a “widening gap between the outer limits of institutionalized control and the space where the issues most relevant to life are...settled” (Bauman, 2001, p. 203). In these terms, today’s younger generation is seen as living amidst a crisis where, despite having genuine concern for social issues, they feel disenchanting with traditional structures which

are unresponsive to their interests and needs and which marginalise them from community life (Thomson et al., 2004).

There are, however, positive consequences of this apparent marginalisation. A comprehensive study by Harris (2006) argues that younger people *are* participating in their own social worlds, despite their seeming lack of civic engagement. In fact, studies have shown that new forms of participation among younger people have enabled individuals to develop dynamic identities, characterised as fluid, shorter-term, self-organised, and with weaker ties, as they struggle with individualised, unpredictable, unstructured, and self-fashioned pathways into adulthood (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Siruola, 2000; Vinken, 2005, 2007a, 2007b).

It remains important to acknowledge that, like all theories and models, a generational perspective should be employed with caution to prevent undue stereotyping or generalising (Coomes & DeBard, 2004). Nevertheless, generational categories (and differences between them) emerge as a starting point for examining issues such as work ethic and values (Meriac, Woehr, & Banister, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). In the next section, I draw conclusions about the areas covered in the review of the literature and use these to argue a case for this study.

Conclusion

This literature review has explored literature on volunteering, self-organising, and the study of generations. The review of literature on volunteering illustrated confusion, ambiguity, and ultimately, a lack of consensus as to what a volunteer and volunteering are. Whilst some attempts have been made to conceptually analyse volunteering (see Cnaan et al., 1996), there remains a lack of understanding of how a volunteer is socially constructed. The literature also revealed that issues concerning volunteering empowerment and varying cultural interpretations of volunteering are important to consider, as they reveal particular ideologies that can affect the conceptualisations of volunteering within different social contexts.

By narrowing the focus towards younger volunteers and crisis volunteering, this section reveals that understanding crisis events as a social construction can help to gain deeper insight into the emergent nature of volunteers who respond to crisis events. Furthermore, this review provides some context to the broader social, structural, and technological environment in which younger people are choosing to participate in these emergent forms of volunteerism. In doing so, it illustrates that by acknowledging the self-reflexive nature of volunteers — that is one which takes into consideration the biographisation of volunteers and influences of modernity — researchers are better informed when it comes to interpreting how younger generations might enact and conceptualise volunteering.

The review also evaluated the usefulness of self-organising research as a way to understand the complex, dynamic, and evolving nature of emergent groups that respond to crisis events. The gap in the literature concerning the self-organising of younger volunteers who respond to crisis events begs for exploration that attends to the complex interplay between a marginalisation of younger people and disconnection from formal organising processes (and organisations), structural tensions, and their individuated, self-expressive, and transient participatory organising practises which reflect their generational identities.

The final part of the literature review highlighted how younger people have developed new and alternative forms of participating and organising within society in ways that reflect their individual and socially oriented modes of action. In doing so, it argues that younger people are not shirking social issues or conventional forums of organising, but are seeking inclusion in ways that are consistent with their own, adjusted forms of life biography that sit outside of formal, structured institutions, and processes. These alternative modes of participation among younger people highlight the critical importance of understanding the generational differences, and influences, in organising. Indeed, there are currently no systematic accounts that specifically examine a self-organised, younger volunteer response to crisis events from a generational perspective.

While it is acknowledged that the fundamental concepts underlying Mannheim's research are inescapable when studying generations, my study will address these

concepts in context by engaging with the changing structural conditions that have affected the lives of today's younger generation. This examination includes looking at the organisational tensions and conflicts that exist between younger volunteers and officials during crisis response from a generational perspective.

The gaps identified in the literature provide opportunities to contribute to new knowledge and understanding about self-organised responses to crisis events among younger people. However, filling in these gaps requires challenging traditional approaches to the study of crisis response. This research, therefore, takes a multifaceted approach to addressing the gaps in the literature by bringing together insights from “those who hold important knowledge at the local level, individuals who are willing to help, and those with professional resources and training...in order to improve disaster response” (Orloff, 2011, p. xxi). The next section outlines the research questions as well as the methodological underpinnings that guide the study and the methods deployed to undertake the research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

This chapter outlines the methodology and method applied in this research. There are four parts to the chapter. The first section details the research questions that guide the study. The second section traces the philosophical underpinnings of the structure and configuration of the specific methods used to carry out the research. The section includes: a discussion on the merits of, and the rationale for, a case study approach to qualitative research; the principles of social constructionism; the situatedness of reflexivity; and, the reasons for taking an interpretive approach to data analysis. This section also describes how interviews were used and informed by a social constructionist paradigm and sets out the ethical considerations in this research. The third section outlines the sources as well as the data gathering processes, including: how participants were identified and selected; details of the interview process; and, reasons for the use of a reflective journal. Finally, the fourth section explains how the research data was analysed and checked for trustworthiness.

The Research Questions

The focus of this research is the interactions and experiences of younger volunteers during the 2011 *Rena* oil spill crisis in Aotearoa/New Zealand. In this context, the three research questions that guide my study are:

Research question 1. How was volunteering conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the *Rena* crisis?

Research question 2. How did the generational dynamics of younger volunteers affect the various organising responses to the *Rena* event?

Research question 3. How was self-organising conceptualised by younger volunteers during the *Rena* crisis?

The next section outlines the methodological foundations of the research used to address these questions, especially the theoretical influences shaping the research design.

Methodological Foundations

Case study methodology.

I begin this section by providing a rationale for adopting the case study method as a pillar of my methodological research framework. Several scholars have contributed to the development of case study methodology (see Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2009). Case study research is ideal for a holistic, in-depth examination of phenomena (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991; Gummesson, 2000). It enables the researcher to answer specific research questions relating to complex social phenomena whilst stressing interconnectedness between the case and its real-life context (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Gillham, 2000a; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003; Yin, 2009). The key difference between case study and other qualitative methodologies is that a case study offers flexibility with the use of theory and conceptual frameworks that guide the research process and analysis. Because of its inherent flexibility, case study research has been identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2011) as a stand-alone qualitative research approach.

According to Yin (2009), case studies aim to describe, explain, or explore particular events or phenomena. They do so by capturing rich, exploratory information to answer the *how*, *what*, and *why* of research questions. My study aims to understand the following: *how* younger volunteers are organising their response, *how* they conceptualise their volunteering efforts, and *how* their generational dynamics influence these organising responses; *what* gaps exist in the crisis management and volunteer literature; and, *why* younger volunteers responded outside of the official volunteer response. By investigating these questions, the case study aims to improve understanding of the organising behaviours of younger volunteers during crisis events. In doing so, it adds value to other case study-based crisis response literature (see Kaewkitipong, Chen, & Ractham, 2012; Michel, 2007; Qu, Wu, & Wang, 2009; Zook, Graham, Shelton, & Gorman, 2010).

There are three main types of case studies, according to Stake (1995, 2005): *intrinsic*, *instrumental*, and *collective* case studies. An *intrinsic* case study focuses on a unique phenomenon, event, or situation that is interesting in its own right (Crowe et al., 2011). The *instrumental* case study attempts to gain deep appreciation for the broader phenomena under scrutiny. Taking this approach provides a sharp focus on the issue, and so it unlike an *intrinsic* case study which focuses more on the case itself. Finally, a *collective* case study is made up of multiple cases, allowing comparison and/or a broader appreciation of the same issue. My study initially approached the *Rena* event as a single, *intrinsic* case study as a way to understand the phenomena of younger volunteer responses to this particular event using the interpretations of the participants. However, it later developed into an *instrumental* case study which was able to offer a better understanding of younger volunteers' unique conceptualisations of volunteering during a crisis that could potentially be transferable and applicable to other crisis events.

It was important to make sure that the study provided ample scope for considering how participants' understandings of, or experiences within, other crisis events may have contributed to, or influenced, their experience during the *Rena* crisis. For example, I anticipated that participants might draw upon others or their own experiences of the SVA response to the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes. As Stake (2005) explains, a *single, holistic case study* enables exploration of the single case whilst remaining mindful of the influence of other cases and their associated influences on participants' decision making. This exploration, Stake (2005) suggests, enables the researcher to provide a rich analysis with which to illuminate the phenomena. Single case studies do not claim to be representative; rather, they aim to emphasise what can be learned from a single case (Tellis, 1997). Hence, the premise of a single case study is "not to prove but to improve" our understanding of the phenomena (Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan, 2000, p. 283).

Despite the widespread use of case study methodology within organisational studies (see Long, 2005; May, 2013; O'Sullivan, 2016; Sypher, 1997; Xu, 2013), there are also some criticisms that must be considered. For example, Cornford and Smithson (2006) argue that the richness and complexity of data within a case can

lead to differing interpretations and researcher bias. Indeed, Hallberg (2013) and Morse (2011) urge case study researchers to adequately rationalise their methodological decisions and design to prevent their research's lacking quality, integrity, and credibility. For my current study, the inherent value of case study methodology is best understood from interpretive and social constructionist viewpoints which share the goal of understanding the world of lived experiences from the perspectives of those who live in it (Andrews, 2012).

The next section explains why a qualitative research approach provides such a context for these viewpoints to be explored.

The qualitative research rationale.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) broadly define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (p. 4). More specifically, qualitative research attempts “to capture and understand individual definitions, descriptions and meanings of events” whilst emphasising discovery and description, with a focus on interpretation and extraction of the meaning of experience (Burns, 2000, p. 388). In other words, qualitative researchers aim for a close-up, deep understanding where “the phenomena of interest unfolds naturally” (Patton, 2002, p. 39) within a specific context.

Because qualitative researchers embrace both their own role within the research (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2002) and the subjectivity of reality, they acknowledge that they must always interact with the research phenomena: “one cannot be easily separated from the other” (Bansal & Corley, 2011, p. 236). By positing themselves as a research instrument (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002; Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003; Stewart, 2010), qualitative researchers accept that the credibility of their research is highly dependent on their own abilities and that their voice must be visible to the reader (Golafshani, 2003).

Consistent with the above description of qualitative research(ers), my study seeks to make sense of organisational communication phenomena exhibited and produced by participants through cultural elements, assumptions, and practices such as activity and ritual in the organisational context (Cheney, Christensen, Zorn, & Ganesh, 2010). As organisational communication scholars May and

Mumby (2005) point out, “a particular theoretical perspective is not simply ‘adopted’ by a researcher...rather, it becomes foundational to the way that he or she sees the world” (p. 2). In this research, I assume that knowledge is created and understood within the contexts that give meaning to experiences (Hatch, 2012). I, therefore, focus on how individuals develop meanings, understandings, and subjectivities from both their experiences *and* the environment. The aim is not only to uncover individuals’ understandings of their volunteer experience, but also to address *how* and *why* they described and attached particular meanings to those experiences. Indeed, Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) state: “how one responds to those involved in the study and the topic itself is probably the most elusive but important criterion of goodness or worthy research” (p. 112). I argue that a qualitative research approach enables the procedures required to achieve this end. Furthermore, given the advantages described above, it is hoped that the current study will produce transferable data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Schram, 2003; Schwandt, 2003) that may be useful in wider organisational communication fields.

Having made the case for a qualitative research approach to address my research questions, I now explain some of the specific philosophical approaches I draw on. I begin by outlining how social constructionism informs the research.

Principles of social constructionism.

Social constructionism informs the assumptions that guide my thinking as a researcher. This perspective understands meanings and experiences as produced and reproduced through social interaction, rather than constructed within individuals (Andrews, 2012; Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Burr, 2015).

There are several aspects of social constructionism that inform this research. First, from an epistemological point of view, social constructionism emphasises the subjective relationship between the research participant and the researcher in their coconstruction of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997). This actuality means that “we are not independent of our surrounds; our surrounds inhabit us and vice versa. Nor can we determine, as human beings, the nature of our surrounds and our relationship with them beyond the language we develop together” (Gergen, 1995, p. 48). Accordingly, social

constructionist researchers are expected to maintain a degree of reflexivity (Charmaz & McMullen, 2011) by learning to “position themselves” in the research (Creswell, 2013, p. 25) and recognising they are part of the social world under scrutiny (Jootun, McGhee, & Marland, 2009).

Secondly, social constructionists argue that knowledge and reality are essentially cultural aspects used within social practices (Edwards, 1997); as Scotland (2012) puts it: “we are born into culture” (p. 13). Indeed, the origins of social constructionism can be traced back to an interpretive way of thinking (Andrews, 2012), because, much like constructionists, interpretivists also focus on the process by which meanings are created, sustained, modified, and negotiated (Schwandt, 2003). As Burr (2015) points out, our knowledge of the world is constructed *between* people. Therefore, the constitutive meaning of language plays an important role in the social construction of reality at different levels of the social world (Mumby, 1997; van Dijk, 2001a, 2001b).

Thirdly, social constructionism draws on the Foucauldian (Foucault, 1982; Foucault & Deleuze, 1977) perspective that power is derived from, or at least, tied up with social structures and institutionalised practices. This idea is particularly relevant for my study, because it enables me to challenge dominant interpretations and constructions of both volunteers and younger people. Moreover, it enables an exploration of how younger people are situated in particular social, cultural, political, historical, and economic contexts and how these influence the way they approach and make sense of their volunteer experiences.

Finally, social constructionism acknowledges the interconnectedness of social action and knowledge (Burr, 2015). This interconnection refers to how cultural contexts, social norms, and interactions influence each other (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For example, cultural representations and social norms of volunteering are constructed in interaction among different groups of people and so differ from one another. Consider, for example, individuals who volunteer regularly for the same organisation, specifically for an annual event, or sporadically during times of crisis; those who volunteer on the sports field, the rest home, or the marae. While they are all participating as volunteers, how each socially constructs the meaning of a volunteer differs from one individual or

group to the next. In summarising the assumptions of social constructionism, Burr (2015) states: “when people talk to each other, the world gets constructed” (p. 11).

Within the current study, a social constructionist approach allows for the examination of how younger volunteers *create meaning* through their interactions with each other and in relation to the situational context. That is, the study examines how volunteers socially construct their volunteer experience. While reflexivity is often used by social constructionist researchers, its application varies widely (Burr, 2015).

In summary, my study employs a constructionist approach for two key reasons: first, the study allows the researcher to become an active participant in the research through reflexivity (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Walsham, 1995), and, secondly, it uses multiple data collection methods to provide thick descriptions of the phenomena which are useful in revealing the subtleties of changing and multiple interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Walsham, 1995).

The next section outlines how I address the construction of my *own* accounts through reflexivity.

Reflexivity: Situatedness, explanation, and critique.

Within organisational communication research, reflexivity is seen as a way of improving the quality of qualitative studies (see Jones et al., 2006; Patton, 2002) and, therefore, is something that all interpretive researchers must consider (Nadin & Cassell, 2006; Prasad & Prasad, 2002). Reflexivity is defined as “conscious self-awareness” that requires a “shift in our understanding of data collection from something objective that is accomplished through detached scrutiny of what I know and how I know it, to recognising how we actively construct our knowledge” (Finlay, 2002a, p. 532). In other words, the reflexive researcher not only constructs interpretations based on participants’ experiences, but also *questions* how those interpretations came about (Hertz, 1997).

The central idea of reflexivity is that researchers respect the complexity of the phenomena by carefully scrutinising their own role in the research process and in the conclusions that they draw and construct from the data (Mason, 2002; Primeau, 2003; Wallerstein et al., 2005). While criticism often points to reflexive

researchers becoming overly self-indulgent (see Fournier & Grey, 2000; Weick, 2002; Nadin & Cassell, 2006), reflexivity is essentially “conceived as a process located within, and owned by, an individual researcher” (p. 210). Therefore, “what reflexivity does, what it threatens to expose, what it reveals and who it empowers, depends upon who does it and how they go about it” (Lynch, 2000, p. 36). Rather than limiting the research, reflexivity can, therefore, be seen as an ongoing learning process which encourages researchers “to continue to review and critique our own research practice” (Cassell & Symon, 2004, p. 506). Indeed, research does not occur in a social vacuum (Nadin & Cassell, 2006), and researchers need to acknowledge the social embeddedness of their interpretations from a wider context in order to gain richer understanding of the phenomena.

At this point, it is important to explain that my interest in exploring the organising behaviours of younger volunteers during a crisis stems not only in part from my own involvement with the *Rena* crisis and what I observed in both professional and voluntary capacities (as explained in chapter 1), but also from my previous experience in the volunteer sector. Prior to the *Rena* crisis, I had worked as a volunteer for approximately 11 years. The majority of this volunteering was through my involvement in surf lifesaving, a volunteer community organisation focused on preventing drowning and injury. While I was an active volunteer surf lifeguard over the summer months, I also held positions on the surf club committee such as junior surf club captain and treasurer. It was during my adolescence that my conceptualisations of volunteering were shaped. One of the major contributors to this process, I believe, was the insistence of our club president that one of the three general positions on the club committee must always be reserved for a younger club member. The president had two reasons for this decision: it ensured that the voice of younger people was always considered and represented in the strategic and operational direction of the club, and it ensured there was always a degree of diversity within the committee. From holding my position on the club’s committee, I learned that authority was not necessarily the preserve of older or more experienced people. Furthermore, the position became crucial to the sustainable focus of retaining younger people within the club and, over time, the committee role became highly contested among the younger members of the club.

While my experience as a teenaged committee member for a club of over 1,000 members provided me with organisational socialisation and orientation that I would have otherwise not have been exposed to, it was the perceptions and attitudes that members held towards the younger club members that I found most illuminating. I often observed interesting dynamics unfold when situations demanded that a degree of trust and responsibility be placed on younger members. For example, I vividly remember lengthy committee debates about whether or not an 18-year-old patrol captain could be trusted as a responsible guardian of the club facilities during a weekend patrol. This responsibility also included guardianship over the younger patrolling members (all over 14 years of age) who would be staying in the club accommodation facilities during that time. I found these discussions conflicting, given that the 18-year-old had rightly earned the position of patrol captain through examinations, achievement of accolades, and progression through the varying surf lifeguard ranks. Moreover, in the role as a patrol captain, this individual was in charge of the safety of all beach users between the flags and of leadership of the patrolling team, something which required significant responsibility and maturity. In other instances, I recall older members often blaming younger members for equipment failures (usually concerning the inflatable rescue boat engines) when later it was found that it was the senior members who were at fault. It was through being privy to discussions such as these that I felt a sense of distrust being unfairly directed toward the younger volunteers. On the other hand, these feelings coexisted with a great sense of capability, pride, and confidence as a result of holding varying degrees of responsibility as a volunteer from a relatively young age. I felt that my youthfulness at times gave me an advantage in my role as a coach; I was able to connect with the junior members in a relaxed and fun way, establish roles as a mentor with teenaged members, and gain trust and appreciation from parents quickly and easily.

The impact that my volunteer roles and experiences had on me was profound. Rather than viewing my various roles as part of an extracurricular activity, they became integrated into my everyday life; being a volunteer became part of my identity.

Over the years, I have dabbled in other volunteering activities such as bucket collections for various charities and fundraising events for schools. However, I favoured volunteer opportunities which, I felt, promoted meaningful relationships. For example, as a volunteer tutor for the Young Enterprise Scheme, I enjoyed regular weekly sessions mentoring a group of passionate and motivated high school students who were navigating their way through product development and marketing for an idea they had generated themselves. At this point, I was in my mid-twenties and working in a full-time professional role. I gained a huge amount of satisfaction from the students' achieving their goal of launching a product on the open market and never felt a sense of obligation to them. I felt really satisfied with the skills and experience I had gained at a personal level in undertaking this voluntary role.

Cooper and Rogers (2015) explain that an insider role is a powerful reflexive position from which to gain deeper engagement and insight into participants' lived experiences. I believe my insider perspective (both as a volunteer and in my involvement with the *Rena* crisis) offers deep insight for informing the interpretations of participants' constructions throughout my study.

While some researchers use reflexivity as part of their research design, others argue it is necessary as part of the methodological approach. Attia and Edge (2017), for example, argue there is a twofold advantage for incorporating reflexivity as part of the methodological procedure. First, it opens the possibility of emerging insights and evolving methods, and secondly, it does so whilst seeking out findings that prescribed methodological procedures might have missed.

Reflexivity, as part of the methodological approach used in my study, draws upon Alvesson and Sköldbberg's (2009) interpretive reflexivity and oppositional and betweenness logic (see Cunliffe, 2009). *Interpretive reflexivity* is described as a constant assessment of the relationship between knowledge and the ways of doing knowledge (Calas & Smircich, 1992). This process begins with an appreciation that data is a potential source of descriptive interpretations which enable the researcher to deliver a richer picture of the world from the view point of participants (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). For my study, interpretive reflexivity

is evident in a number of areas including: the thick, rich descriptions that participants communicate via the in-depth, semistructured interviews; the influence of researcher subjectivity in recognising and identifying these themes or patterns as they emerge and develop; and, in the relationship between the researcher and the participants in this meaning-making process of interpretation. Furthermore, I maintained a reflective journal during the data collection. The decision to do so was based on a number of benefits that also helped to facilitate interpretive reflexivity. Journalling provides these benefits by increasing the awareness of researcher bias, examining and clarifying the presuppositions and personal subjectivities of the researcher (Ahern, 1999; Etherington, 2004; Ortlipp, 2008; Scheurich, 1997), and making visible the constructed outcomes that originated from decisions undertaken during the research process (Mruck & Breuer, 2003; Ortlipp, 2008). As Cassell and Symon (2004) argue, a reflective journal is a suitable way of providing the dedicated times, spaces, and contexts for *doing* reflexivity (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003).

Oppositional and *betweenness logic* (Cunliffe, 2003) offer another way to understand how reflexivity fits within my methodological framework. First, reflexivity draws on an oppositional logic which is characterised by tensions between what is or what is not, thereby revealing the instability of language, truth, and power. In my study, for example, I explore the tensions between volunteers and officials and between organising and self-organising discourses. Secondly, reflexivity draws on betweenness logic which is rooted in social constructionism and an understanding that meanings are constituted between us in our everyday interactions and conversations (Cunliffe, 2003). For example, because I already knew some of the study participants through my *Rena* crisis volunteer experience, my anticipation of their possible responses may have influenced the way I asked interview questions. Therefore, it was important that I see beyond the identity and power structures that I bring into the research (being a young, white, middle class, heterosexual female, for example), in order to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives.

The value of self-reflexivity was particularly apparent at the time of the interviews (described later in the chapter). It is self-reflexivity that allows researchers to address the dynamics of power and knowledge during interviews by not only

recording the intensity of the feelings of research participants, but also by giving the participants an opportunity to interrogate the motives and agenda of the researcher. Many aspects of my childhood were multicultural; the schools I attended were considered bilingual (English and Māori), and throughout my primary years one day per week was dedicated to *te reo* Māori (Māori language) and *tikanga* (protocols and practices). Since then, I have maintained a steady approach to learning the language, and I make a conscious effort to integrate cultural values of Māori within the business papers that I teach at tertiary level. Consequently, I use *te reo* in everyday conversation and engage confidently in Māori practices. However, I cannot claim to share the same connection to the land, *tikanga*, or *mauri* (life force) as that of the Māori participants I interviewed.

Whilst I nearly always felt a sense of warmth and connection during my interviews with participants and sensed that they all appreciated being listened to, acknowledged and having their experiences recorded, there was still a power-knowledge relationship apparent at times. For example, on the one hand, many participants told me it was important their efforts were recorded to show an alternative way of approaching a crisis response and to assist in managing volunteer contributions in future crisis events. On the other hand, at times I was asked who was funding my research, who would be seeing the research, and if I worked for anyone. Indeed, by being self-reflexive, these observations instilled an acceptance that “*how* knowledge is acquired, organised, and interpreted is relevant to *what* the claims are” (Altheide & Johnson, 1998, p. 416). Indeed, these questions reflect the point that using reflexivity as a methodological approach also brings with it a moral responsibility to both the participant(s) and the reader. This responsibility is in part due to the crisis of representation (Clifford & Marcus, 1986; Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012; Cunliffe, 2003; Gill, 1998; Pillow, 2003) which constantly forces us to question the responsibilities we bring to the research and how our own social realities shape the research progress (Cunliffe, 2009).

To summarise, reflexivity questions the interplay between theoretical and methodological perspectives and approaches and how they, in turn, affect the research process. For qualitative researchers, reflexivity offers a way to consider how both subjective and intersubjective elements influence their study. In doing so, reflexivity can transform these often-problematic aspects of research into

opportunities by giving us insight as to how we constitute our reality throughout the research (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012). Specifically, reflexivity enabled me to remain attuned to the underlying philosophical framework of my study by acknowledging the socially constructed nature of reality for myself as well as for participants and how these meanings were negotiated in particular contexts (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

This section has described how I embrace the internal logic (Cunliffe, 2003) of my own epistemological assumptions (Johnson & Duberley, 2003), whilst acknowledging and justifying my situatedness within the research. The next section discusses how I navigated the cultural challenges presented throughout the research as a Pākehā researcher engaging with Māori participants.

Participant safety

Conducting research within Aotearoa/ New Zealand requires researchers to be culturally aware of their own cultural identities and of those taking part in the study. However, at the outset of my study, I foregrounded the volunteering of young people in the *Rena* crisis and did not consider the potential for my study to have distinct cultural dimensions. As such, I pushed to the background my lived experiences of growing and working with Māori. Even so, as the research developed, it became apparent that cultural factors were important in the study. In this way, my reflexivity helped to offer a transparent account of the research. Each of these (re)considerations is discussed below.

At this beginning of my research, I relied on my own reflexivity within the research space to gauge differences between me and participants. However, it became clear when I began talking with Māori volunteers that it was essential for me to acknowledge that I was a Pākehā New Zealander conducting research, and to acknowledge the potential implications of this for my study.

My experiences growing up and working in Aotearoa/ New Zealand involved many multicultural dimensions; the schools I attended were considered bilingual (English and Māori), and throughout my primary years one day per week was dedicated to te reo Māori [Māori language] and tikanga [cultural procedures]. Since then, I have maintained a steady approach to learning the language, and I

make a conscious effort to integrate cultural values of Māori within the business papers that I teach at tertiary level. Consequently, I use te reo in everyday conversation at home, with my children, in my workplace, and engage confidently in Māori practices. During my interviews with participants, this meant that I was able to comfortably use te reo Māori in place of English words. For example, rangatahi [younger people], kaumatua [elders], and mahi [to work, accomplish]. However, because I am not Māori, I cannot claim to share the same connection to the land, tikanga, or mauri as that of the Māori participants I interviewed and therefore my ability to actively protect Māori cultural values was limited. Therefore, I looked towards other means of helping to create safe spaces for Māori participants.

The principles (partnership, participation and protection) of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/ the Treaty of Waitangi in practice has been adopted by multiple academics engaging with Māori communities (see for example Reid, Paine, Curtis, Jones, Anderson, Willing, & Harwood, 2017; Webster & Cheyne, 2017; Cram, McCreanor, Smith, Nairn, & Johnstone, 2006). As argued by Hudson & Russell (2009), the ethical concerns and issues raised by Māori undergoing research, can be aligned with the obligations, protection and recognition for the interests of Māori that uphold the treaty. Interpreting the treaty principles within the context of academic research supports the argument that ethical space (Ermine, Sinclair and Jeffery 2004) exists when differing ontologies are able to co-exist in order to facilitate a deliberative process of critical reflection and knowledge exchange (Smith et al. 2008). In terms of my own research, I looked towards ways in which I could uphold these three principles to ensure that tikanga [protocols and practices] and cultural concepts were acknowledged.

The first principle of *partnership* requires a commitment from the researcher to recognise Māori as partners in their research, and create a space where cultural knowledge, rights, language and tikanga are respected (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Within the context of my study, I was mindful that local iwi, hapu and whanau were hurting as a result of the ship's grounding and subsequent spilling of toxic chemicals on top of a tapu [sacred] reef structure. I needed to respect that many Māori had already felt let down by authorities and government representatives who had publicly announced that the hull would be removed, and it was still

resting on the reef. Being mindful of these sensitivities meant I needed to ensure that my own power-knowledge relationship was not creating any further animosity or upset. I therefore made it clear from the outset that I was an independent researcher and that I was not affiliated with any agency or organisation involved in the event. This form of power sharing, I felt, helped to establish the basis of a relationship between myself and the participants, which I felt could help them feel comfortable in sharing their experiences with me. Choosing to specifically only conduct face-to-face interviews (as opposed to Skype), helped create a space of partnership that might have otherwise been limited due to the sense of mistrust that evolved among some participants (Bishop, 2005; Dickson, 2000).

In terms of *participation*, it was imperative that Māori were given the opportunity to assess, make decisions, and negotiate their own levels of comfort (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Wilson & Neville, 2009). According to Durie (1998) this requires an acceptance that Māori worldviews are factored into research strategies. During the interviews themselves, āko Māori [preferred pedagogy of Māori] was observed by recording relaxed and lengthy face- to- face interviews and listening back to these multiple times (Pack, Tuffin, & Lyons, 2016). To further facilitate the principle of protection, I ensured that the participants chose the locations for the interviews. Such locations included a café, their place of work, and their home. I also reinforced at the beginning of the interviews that participants were not obliged to answer my questions if they did not feel comfortable doing so, and that they were welcome to discuss issues that I had not raised. This was important when issues were raised that I was not aware of but were important in terms of the research questions. For example, one participant discussed her anger at the volunteer age restriction and argued that because in her culture, rangatahi [younger generation] are taught by their tuakana [older siblings], it was important that younger people were involved in the clean-up operations.

According to Wilson & Neville (2009) the main function of incorporating the principle of *protection* within research projects is for “safeguarding vulnerable populations from the potential for exploitation, and the danger of research results further reinforcing negative depictions or explanations” (p. 75). Specifically, I needed to be conscious of Māori values norms, practices, and language in the

research process, in an attempt to avoid my Western research epistemologies from excluding others that may exist (Wilson & Neville, 2009). Because protection also focuses on *kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga* [the importance of improving life for Māori by having this discussion and contributing to collective knowledge] (Pack, Tuffin, & Lyons, 2016), I assured Māori participants that the purpose of my research was to present an account of *their* experience and observations during the crisis event, so that it was able to be both a source of reflection and future learning. To this end, I ensured that *tino rangatiratanga* [self-determination] (Karena, 2012) was observed by privileging the participants' opinions over my own and allowing them the time space to divert from the interview schedule as required. In addition, at the commencement of the interviews, all participants were given the opportunity for feedback and to make any corrections to the answers they had provided.

To summarise, following the emergent awareness of the cultural dimensions within the study, in hindsight I would seek cultural supervision for the study. In the absence of cultural supervision, I consciously attempted to create safe spaces for Māori by acknowledging and respecting the three principles of the Treaty of Waitangi prior to engaging with participants. By doing so, I felt confident positioning myself as a Pākehā researcher and endeavouring to approach the study with a conscious and genuine respect towards Māori cultural values, protocols and practices, and to privilege their accounts and experiences of the *Rena* crisis event. However, ultimately, my lack of cultural guidance meant I was underprepared for engaging in more culturally resonant engagement and analysis.

The next section describes the interpretive paradigm that underpins the research.

An interpretive approach

This section describes the interpretive paradigm that underpins the research. The particular paradigm guides the researcher both the conduct of the research process and how research outcomes are drawn (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). My study follows an interpretive approach. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) define interpretivism as “the constellation of procedures, conditions and resources through which reality is apprehended, understood and conveyed in everyday life” (p. 342). More succinctly, Schwandt (1994) defines it as “the complex world of

lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (p. 118).

Accordingly, an interpretive perspective is committed to the philosophy of social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001; Walsham, 1995) where social realities are constructed through meaningful interpretations (Prasad & Prasad, 2002).

Interpretivism argues that all knowledge is relative and value free because it is rooted in an inherently interpretive human social life (Rabinow & Sullivan, 1987). As such, interpretive research privileges understanding over explanation by focusing on participants’ construction of subjective meanings in communication (Bryman, 2007; Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Directed at understanding knowledge from an *individual’s* perspective, interpretivism also investigates interaction *among* individuals as well as the historical and cultural *contexts* in which people live (Creswell, 2013). The goal of the researcher, therefore, is to understand the process through which the social world is constructed on an ongoing basis (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). By understanding this process, interpretive researchers acknowledge that their own values play an important role in determining what they decide to research, how they research it, and how they interpret their data (Andrade, 2009; Edge & Richards, 1998). Hence, interpretive researchers not only present participants’ constructions, but also their own (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Neuman, 1997; Walsham, 1995).

There is widespread use of an interpretive lens in studies of volunteering (see, for example, Aguirre & Bolton, 2013; Broad, 2003; Cuthill, 2000; MacNeela & Gannon, 2014). In these studies, interpretivism provides a social view of the organisation, where people (including the researcher) are considered as active sense makers (Deetz, 1996) in establishing connections between local subjective worlds and macro organisational and institutional phenomena (Prasad & Prasad, 2002). There are two specific advantages of incorporating interpretivism in this research. First, the interpretative paradigm supports the study of volunteering as relational and dialogic (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009), and secondly, interpretivism recognises the integral and influential role of the researcher’s values which affect how questions are asked, the process that is followed, and how the research problem is approached (Lincoln & Guba, 2003). These advantages, Deetz (1996) argues, encourage the research concepts to be developed *with*, as opposed to

applied to, the organisational members under study. The following section describes how using interviews within a social constructionist paradigm can enable these research concepts to emerge.

Interviews in social constructionist research.

Interviews are considered by some as the most important research tool available to qualitative researchers (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 1993). Interviews capture participants' subjective experiences and attitudes and add meaning to the research questions (Peräkylä, 2005) by collecting and examining accounts of social worlds and realities (Miller & Glassner, 2004) inaccessible by other means (Patton, 2002; Peräkylä, 2005; Walford, 2001). From an interpretive perspective, interviews are an interactional process, where meaning making is coconstructed between the interviewer and participant (Bryman & Cassell, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Patton, 2002). For example, interviews allow participants to raise unanticipated, yet important and relevant topics (Cheney et al., 2010). The interview is quite literally an *inter-view*, or an interchange between the views of two different people discussing a subject of mutual interest (Kvale, 2006). This interaction is appropriate within an interpretive paradigm, because it can promote an *active* interviewer role and an *empowering* participant role with each encouraged to reflect on individual experiences in their own subjective terms (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002).

Despite these advantages, two key criticisms of interviews exist: researcher bias (Chenail, 2011; Mehra, 2002) and the inherent power inequality that exists between a researcher and participant during interviews (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Burgess, 2002; Castleden & Garvin, 2008; Nolen & Vander Putten, 2007). For example, Baxter and Eyles (1997) explain that tensions based on perceptions of authority or hierarchy may influence participants' responses to interview questions. Scholars provide various recommendations for dealing with these dynamics. For example, Cooper and Rogers (2015) suggest that by sharing insider information, researchers can help neutralise power relations. Erickson (1973) urges researchers to practise disciplined subjectivity and to build trust and rapport with participants. Others, however, argue that these criticisms merely highlight the interview as an active and natural subjective research process (see Denzin &

Lincoln, 2011; Gubrium & Holstein, 2002; Patton, 2002). These authors suggest that in interviews tensions could be openly explored rather than ignored, although doing so does require participants to have enough confidence to raise and express any concerns they might have with the interaction.

The next section briefly describes the ethical considerations of conducting interviews.

Ethical considerations.

Researchers are morally obliged to conduct research in an ethical way that prioritises the well-being of research participants (Berg & Lune, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2010; Merriam, 2009; Schram, 2003). Because human participants were used in my study, ethical approval was gained from the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee. In line with this approval, consent for audio recording and transcribing the interviews was sought from each participant. To obtain this consent, each participant was given (either in person or via email prior to the interview's taking place) both a *Participant Information Sheet* (see Appendix 3) and a *Consent Form for Participants* (see Appendix 4). These forms outlined the purposes and uses of the research, the participants' rights throughout and after the interview process, how issues of confidentiality would be dealt with, how the research data would be used, and how to access a summary of findings once the research concluded. I used pseudonyms for the volunteers who were involved in this research to avoid revealing potentially identifying information. Because some of the participants in this study are easily identifiable, their approval was sought in order for their names to be included in this research. Specifically, these people included Sam Johnson, (SVA Leader), Pim de Monchy (Operation Beach Clean Manager), and Ryley and Camden (Sustainable Coastlines Leaders).

While only a small amount of data was collected in an online environment (an issue which is discussed in the next section), special consideration was given to ethical issues surrounding online data collection. In this respect, ethical issues surrounding privacy protection, power differentials, data ownership, authenticity (James & Busher, 2007; Nicholas et al., 2010), and maintaining of respect toward individuals (Roberts, Smith, & Pollock, 2004) were considered. One of the main issues in identifying ethical practices for online research concerns the blurred

lines between public and private spaces in virtual environments (Roberts et al., 2004; Waskul, 1996). For example, obtaining informed consent is more problematic as researcher and participant are often geographically distanced, and online participants may be hesitant to reveal their offline identities (Roberts et al., 2004). For my research, Jacobson's (1999) method of implied consent was adopted for data collected from online participants. According to Jacobson (1999) by the very act of responding to an instrument (my online posting) participants are indicating that they give their informed consent.

The next section details the methods used to undertake the research and the rationale behind these, in keeping with the methodology that guided the study.

Data Gathering Sources and Methods

In this section, I outline the methods used in the research and demonstrate how these align with the methodological and philosophical orientations of the research.

Participants.

There were a number of important factors to consider regarding participant selection and process. First, because this research focuses mainly on participants' experiences of one event, it was important that a wide cross section of people was interviewed within the targeted age demographic of 16-29 years of age. Secondly, from an interpretive approach, it was important that different perspectives of younger volunteers were examined. Therefore, individuals who held different positions of authority in relation to the management of the crisis were also considered. Thirdly, given my researcher positioning, it was important that I established a degree of transparency between myself and the participants, in order to prevent bias in the selection process. Finally, there had been approximately a 1-year time lapse between the *Rena* crisis and the interviews. It was, therefore, decided that a snowball sampling offered the most viable process for locating and recruiting participants (Frank & Snijders, 1994). Often referred to as network chain (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002) or referral sampling (Trotter & Robert, 2012), this approach meant that participants would recommend other potential participants who were useful to the study (Trotter & Robert, 2012). These recommendations are important for two reasons: they prevent the

researcher determining participants' value to the study, and they fit within the qualitative research focus on exploring and understanding, rather than testing, hypotheses (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Participant recruitment was based on the following three criteria: 1) participants needed to have engaged in at least 2 days of volunteer work with the *Rena* crisis event; 2) they were between 16-29 years of age *or* they held positions of authority in the volunteer response and had high levels of engagement with the younger volunteers; and, 3) they were available and willing to participate in an oral interview either in person or via a video call.

Patton (2002) argues that the sample size of any research project depends on the aim of the research, how findings will be used, and what resources are available to the researcher. However, because self-organising is inherently spontaneous and unpredictable (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2001; Stallings & Quarantelli, 2005), I was unsure how many participants my sample would include before reaching data saturation, but estimated it would be in the vicinity of 40-80 people. I also maintained a *Participant Detail* spreadsheet which noted the contacts referred to me by each subsequent participant, referencing their pseudonyms, age, location, and whether they were involved or affiliated in the crisis either from a formal organisational or self-organised volunteer perspective. This information helped me to be mindful of the breadth of participants involved in the research.

At a practical level, the snowball sampling method began with Pim de Monchy, the *Rena* Operations Volunteer Manager (who consented to being identifiable). This individual was not a volunteer, nor did he fit within the age demographic of younger people. However, he managed the OBC, had extensive dealings with younger volunteers who participated outside the OBC, and also had significant overall knowledge and contacts regarding different parts of the community that participated in the crisis response. Therefore, he had some level of expert knowledge that was it was important to capture. Pim de Monchy then recommended that handling the snowball sample should thereafter be passed on to a younger volunteer participant.

While there is criticism that snowball sampling invites duplicate referrals and information (Lopes et al., 1996), this possible disadvantage was outweighed by

the benefit of recruiting contacts otherwise inaccessible through other traditional methods (Streeton, Cooke, & Campbell, 2004). Through the snowball method, 53 participants, including 27 women and 26 men, were recruited to participate in the study. Of the research participants, 38 were classified as younger volunteers (16-29 years of age) and of those, 27 were tertiary students. The other 15 participants who did not fall within the age classification were included in the research because of their position of authority in the response and engagement with the younger volunteers. These 15 participants were from groups such as Maritime New Zealand, Ngai Te Rangi Iwi (Māori peoples from the Tauranga area), Sustainable Coastlines, Braemar, and the Penguin Monitoring Programme, some of whom formed their own self-organised responses. Overall, 51 of the 53 participants were actively involved in self-organised efforts, some exclusively and some following an unsuccessful experience after engaging with OBC, and some in addition to their participation in OBC. The remaining two participants were involved in managing the OBC and, therefore, were not actively involved in self-organising efforts. However, they were interviewed because they had high levels of engagement with these individuals and groups.

Interviews.

Semistructured interviews were the primary method employed for data collection because they have the potential to elicit rich, thick descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Willis, 2007). A semistructured interview protocol guided conversation into a framework where participants responded to the research questions by reflecting on their experiences, whilst also maintaining flexibility to allow for deviation and the potential to elicit unanticipated information (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000, p. 51). Because this approach also enables participants to convey information in their own words and from their own perspectives (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hoda et al., 2010; Patton, 2002) and encourages conversational qualities (Holstein & Gubrium, 2003), this method allowed me to identify interesting and useful factors to be further explored and provided opportunities to follow new leads as they occurred (Fontana & Frey, 2003). As a result, responses could be probed so as to reduce ambiguity, to dig deeper into meanings and experiences (Millar & Gallagher, 2009), and thus capture the complexities of the interviewees' own individual perceptions and

experiences (Patton, 2002). Making sense of nonverbal feedback (Sokolow, 1985) was also an important factor to consider during the interpretive interview process. For example, one participant shrugged her shoulders, which might have indicated she was not sure about the question. When probed about this response, she told me that she was so frustrated about the situation the question referred to that she could not stand talking about it. Thus, I was able to interpret this interviewee's nonverbal feedback as being suggestive of tensions between the participant and the OBC. Consequently, this part of the interview developed into a lengthy discussion based on the frustrations the interviewee had experienced as a motivated volunteer who was unable to participate within the structured demands of the OBC. Unlike structured interviews, the semistructured interview's ability to probe allowed participants to respond to questions on their own terms, rather than leading the questions towards preconceived choices (Cheney et al., 2010), whilst still maintaining a degree of control (Creswell, 2013).

The *Interview Schedule* of questions (see Appendix 5) grouped the interview questions into four sections relevant to the identity of the particular respondent. Section A covered generic questions which all participants were asked; Section B consisted of questions specifically for volunteers aged 16-29 years of age; Section C covered additional questions for volunteers involved in efforts outside of the OBC; and, Section D's questions were specifically for participants from an organisational setting involved in the crisis response. Because interview guides offer a degree of flexibility (Kvale, 2006; Patton, 2002), I was able to move between sections in response to the issues raised.

The first set of questions asked respondents for their overall opinions of both the formal and informal volunteering efforts of young people during the crisis. These questions also addressed specific areas related to the following areas: the relationships between younger volunteers, older volunteers, and official personnel; the interviewees' perceptions before and reflections after the event; episodic volunteering; and overall opinions relating to general organisational skills of younger volunteers. These questions aimed to elicit initial opinions related to Research Question 1 from the perspective of both younger volunteers and official personnel.

The remaining sections included questions designed to elicit deeper understandings about the conditions and/or factors enabling volunteering and to gain insight as to the communication and organising processes of volunteer efforts. For example, some questions addressed volunteer recognition and the potential for this to influence volunteer recruitment and retention. The role of technology and the functions of particular software and networking sites also provided insight relating to both Research Questions 2 and 3. The questions related to individuals' perceptions of themselves aimed to address the conflicting literature related to how younger people are viewed within contemporary society (see, for example, Harris et al., 2010; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008; Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008; Schondel, Boehm, Rose, & Marlowe, 1995; Smith, 2000; Valaitis, 2002).

Patton (2002) suggests that questions about the present tend to be easier for respondents to answer rather than questions about the past and the future, as perceptions of these may be less reliable. Because the interviews took place up to 14 months after the *Rena* crisis, I was concerned that this time lapse might have a negative impact on the reliability of respondents' memories. In some cases, I did get the occasional "I can't remember the details exactly". If the topic under discussion was worthy of exploration, I would use probes to elicit further understanding of how they felt at the time, or what actions they took, in order to try and get more insights into their experience. Overall, the lapse in time between the event and the interviews did not appear to have any negative effect; conversely, it gave the respondents valuable time in which to reflect upon their actions in a way that solicited responses which may not have been provided if the interview had taken place directly following the event.

During the interview process, it was important to let the participants feel at ease in describing and labelling their experiences in words that felt comfortable to them. As Patton (2002) explains: "using words that make sense to the interviewee, words that reflect the respondent's worldview, will improve the quality of data obtained during the interview" (p. 39). For example, I would often replace the word *youth* with the specific word choice used by participants such as "*rangitahi*" (young people), "students" or "youngsters", which I felt enhanced the relationship between me and the participant and made the interview environment more

comfortable. It was important to recognise power differentials in an effort to garner trust between me and the participant(s), maintain transparency in my researcher role (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2011), and ensure participants felt comfortable enough to speak openly and honestly with me about their experiences. I, therefore, explained to each participant that I was personally involved as a *Rena* volunteer, and that I came from a professional background in volunteer management. Interestingly, this disclosure often seemed to *empower* participants, with many commenting favourably on being given the opportunity to share their experiences and for their experiences to be listened to and documented. This process of disclosure demonstrates the importance of reflexive analysis, as it identifies how data collection is influenced, in part, by the emerging researcher-participant relationship (Gough, 1999). Castleden and Garvin (2008) explain that trust is closely intertwined with the sharing of power. One way I attempted to achieve this sharing of power was by using participants' choice of venue so that they felt secure and comfortable, as opposed to opting for a setting chosen by me. This venue often ended up being the interviewee's home or place of work.

I found that I had reached data saturation – the point where no new data emerges and where all categories have conceptual density (McCann & Clark, 2004) – when I continued to receive duplicated referral names. In total, 53 interviews signalled the natural end to the interview process. However, to ensure that I had not left anyone out, I decided to seek further participants through Facebook, which, of all social media applications, was the one referred to most frequently by participants. I chose this method for two reasons. First, I suspected that some volunteers might have been apprehensive about meeting in person and, therefore, unlikely to divulge potentially sensitive issues (Nicholas et al., 2010); and secondly, many of the younger people who had volunteered during the crisis were university students and so their geographical location prevented them from meeting in person and, thus, marginalised them from the research (James & Busher, 2007).

The online request was impersonal and used an image of the oil on the beach with a corresponding explanation about the nature of the study and who was conducting it in order to attract attention (see Figure 1). I posted this request on the *MV Rena* Response Monitoring and Action Group Facebook page (1,496

members) and the *Rena Kai Run* Facebook page (522 members). Despite the fact that several people tagged names into the comments section of the post directly after I had posted the advertisement, no one responded, nor did the post gain any likes or comments (other than tagged names). Somewhat disappointed by this seemingly failed attempt, I wondered if there were connections to draw between the poor response rate of my post and the poor response rate of younger volunteers noted in the Sargisson et al. (2012) study which examined motivations of OBC-registered *Rena* volunteers. In my mind, this observation validated my decision to use a snowball sampling method as participants were usually located and recommended to me by their peers and friends, which likely had a bearing on their willingness to participate.



Figure 1. Facebook posting calling for research participants.

It was my intention to collect data from online sources such as blogs, emails, Facebook, and Twitter feeds. I had anticipated rich insight from these sources in terms of how younger people used these communication media to engage in self-organising. I was surprised to learn that, whilst Facebook events pages and private messenger functions were used to invite friends along to self-organised events, text messages were favoured in order to maintain individual contact with volunteers thereafter.

All but four interviews took place face-to-face, with the remaining being conducted via a *Skype* video link. The majority of interviews took place in the Bay of Plenty and the Waikato (which I travelled to in order to conduct the

interview face-to-face), and I planned interviews around the semester breaks for university students who were living away from Tauranga.

Skype interviews were conducted with three participants; one participant was in Auckland and two were in Dunedin. The third was with Sam Johnson, founder of the SVA, who was in Christchurch. While Sam Johnson was not part of the *Rena* crisis response, he is a volunteer figurehead who, given his role as the leader of the SVA following the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes, has come to be seen as an expert in Aotearoa/New Zealand (and internationally). During my interviews, Sam's name and his role in the earthquake response were brought up repeatedly. As my interview process followed a snowball sampling technique, it seemed within reason to contact Sam and to gauge opinions and experiences of his that might relate to the volunteers during the *Rena* event.

Interviewing Sam was consistent in terms of Stake's (2005) explanation of the limited contextual boundaries within holistic, single case studies whereby important and relevant information outside of the event can help to better define the case phenomena (Alexander, Moreira, & Kumar, 2012; Buzzanell & D'Enbeau, 2009; Nairn & Panelli, 2009; Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2012). Although it was not viable for me to travel to the South Island to conduct my interview with Sam and other participants who had relocated to the South Island, I ensured that these respondents were comfortable with Skype technology, because I believed that it offered the next best alternative to face-to-face interviewing. Skyping even allowed camera-to-camera, nonverbal behaviour to be observed, thus lending itself to a type of naturalness which is expressive and comforting to both parties (Shuy, 2003).

All interviews were digitally recorded on my iPhone and uploaded into Dropbox, a cloud-based depository. Although I trialled voice recognition software to aid the efficiency of the transcription process, I realised early on that, although an arduous and lengthy process, typing the transcriptions up myself whilst replaying the recorded interviews allowed me to add noteworthy observations that I had missed during the interview. This transcription process provided the additional benefit of supplementing my reflective journal with thoughts that came to me whilst listening to the recordings. Interviews typically lasted between 35 and 65

minutes, although some carried on for over 80 minutes. As some interviews were conducted at the participant's place of work, the lunch break was typically used as a suitable time indicator for the length of time the interviews would take.

Because my study uses thematic analysis, special consideration was given when questioning participants to ensuring I understood the meanings behind their particular word choice. For example, although the word *informal* was often used by participants, it was applied with varying definitions. Some participants used it to describe the spontaneous behaviours of those volunteers who did not register with OBC. In order to prevent textual ambiguity and misinterpretation (Deetz, 1996) at a practical level, the semistructured format allowed flexibility for participants to add meaning to their words and thoughts and to seek further clarification if required.

While I appreciate that “advocates of any particular construction must rely on *persuasiveness* and *utility* rather than *proof* in arguing their position” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108), this position also means acknowledging that constructions are never incontrovertibly right. To accommodate for this factor, it was imperative that I acknowledged my role and purpose for conducting the research upfront. Much of this information was also covered in the *Participant Information Sheet* (see Appendix 3), which I ensured participants had read and understood prior to commencing the interview. I also indicated in the reflective journal the times when I considered these influences were potentially presenting themselves as a conscious attempt to create further open dialogue with the reader. Despite these hesitations, I was confident that interviews offered a private, safe environment for the study participants to openly express themselves and to discuss some of the more sensitive subject matters.

Reflective journal.

The decision to use a reflective journal was grounded in my own epistemological position of social constructionism and in an effort to make the subjectivities that influence my interpretations more transparent.

The reflective journal was a simple notebook in which I scribbled down my thoughts both during, and then systematically following, each interview (usually

in the car). These notes were then transcribed and imported into my Nvivo software analysis, where they were filed under a code labelled *Reflective Notes*, for later analysis. Typically, these notes included: how I felt after each interview (positive, awkward, defensive, sceptical etc.); any obvious initial themes; contradictions that had emerged during the interview process (both in what the participant might have said compared to stories from previous interviews and/or the interviewee's nonverbal cues' communicating something other than his/her verbal communication); potential theoretical and/or methodological implications of the interviewee's responses; and, finally, any lingering thoughts or feelings I had once the interview had ended.

Used in this way, the reflective journal offered multiple benefits. First, comments related to my initial thoughts following each interview allowed me to consider my own assumptions and values and how these, in turn, may have impacted the interview process. Secondly, noting contradictions, anomalies, dominant themes, and other observations often led to my reexamining my research processes (such as the sequencing of my interview schedule), as well as providing additional content that may have related to participant accounts (such as reflections from my own experiences as a *Rena* volunteer). Thirdly, consistent with my interpretive lens, keeping these notes encouraged me to consider the power-knowledge relationship between myself and the participants who were known to me prior to the interview (Ortlipp, 2008). Here, I was actively able to assess the degree of closeness to participants (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992) and consciously observe how this affected (or did not affect) the interview process. I also maintained observation notes as the interviews took place, acknowledging the disclosure of both verbal and nonverbal information as a more holistic way of collecting data. Following Patton's (2002) postinterview review process, these notes included details such as body language, long pauses, tonality, any laughter, sadness, or any other apparent expression or mood I considered existed during the interview. The notes also kept a record for the level of rapport gained with respondents and any other observation that I considered worthy of noting and which I perceived as adding further meaning to verbal responses and thus potentially offering further insight to help inform the data. Excerpts from my reflective journal pointed to the participants' shifting interpretations of their actions over time and their developing effects on the research process. In summary, maintaining a reflective

journal was aimed at increasing the transparency of the research process and my own role in it for both me and the reader.

After 8 months of data collection, I had approximately 49 hours of audio interview files in approximately 370 pages of transcribed text, in addition to a detailed reflective journal, observation notes, and a small selection of photographs from social media feeds. The following section describes how I analysed this data.

Data Analysis Methods

The main challenge of data analysis involves decisions on how large amounts of data can be collected, managed, and used in a meaningful way that helps to address the research questions. The analysis for my study was consistent with an interpretive approach in using both deductive and inductive methods. First, the analysis was deductive because of the initial categories obtained through the literature review; and, secondly, it was inductive through the coding which occurred as themes emerged throughout the data collection process and alongside a coding system via the Nvivo10 analysis software. From a social constructionist perspective, language plays an important role in the construction of reality at different levels of the social world (van Dijk, 1997). Therefore, it was necessary that the research tools of analysis were chosen in a way that could link social practice, whilst also deconstructing social nuances within the text. The following section describes the specific procedure that was undertaken to analyse the research data and how issues of trustworthiness were addressed within this process.

Tools of data analysis.

Qualitative data analysis is described by Hatch (2002) as a way to process “what has been learned [so that it] can be communicated to others” (p. 148). This process occurs through organising, interrogating, categorising, and synthesising the data in a way that enables the researcher to see patterns, identify themes and relationships, make interpretations, and, ultimately, decide on what is important to tell others (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hatch, 2002). In other words, data analysis is a “systematic search for meaning” (Hatch, 2002, p. 148). With this thought in mind, it was important that I consider the search for meaning through my

interpretations as the researcher *and* through what is experienced and described by the participants. The general inductive approach achieves this result by enabling findings to emerge through recurrent, significant, or dominant themes without imposition or preconceptions that may result in reframing or even obscuring significant themes altogether. While the inductive approach has widespread use within qualitative analysis research, it is often undertaken without explicit acknowledgement (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Dey, 2003). According to Thomas (2006),

the purposes of selecting an inductive approach are: (a) to condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format; (b) establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and (c) develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data. (p. 237)

Specifically, an inductive approach involves the researcher in categorising and organising the data in search of patterns, interpretation of meanings, and emergent themes, in order to understand the data more meaningfully. While often considered simple and straightforward, this approach is widely considered to produce reliable findings in the context of focused research questions (Thomas, 2006).

Thematic coding is an inductive method that identifies, analyses, and organises patterns or themes that have emerged from data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Consistent with an inductive approach, it offers a flexible way to account for descriptive explanations of phenomena, whilst yielding a rich and detailed account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I used thematic coding to analyse the research data because from a constructionist, interpretive framework, I was able to represent somebody else's oral voice in written form (Bird, 2005), including the person's representations of culture and society (Warnke, 1987, p. 111). Thematic coding allows sociocultural contexts and structural conditions to be theorised through individual accounts (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis also provides a suitable bridge which enables researchers from other orientations, fields, and philosophical approaches to understand the observed phenomena at hand (Boyatzis, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln,

2011). For my study, I applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-step procedure of thematic coding. Below, I explain how I approached each step of this process.

Step 1: Familiarising myself with the data. The first step required transcribing each of the 53 interview audio recordings. The act of typing each audio script into a text document allowed me to become actively immersed again in the data, to the point where I was already beginning to see themes and patterns emerge.

Alongside this text, I also added notes and thoughts in response to not only spoken words, but also observations of nonverbal behaviours such as pauses and overlaps which may have been crucial in the interviewees' intent (Silverman, 2011). Once this process was completed, I read through the entire transcription, checking for any grammatical errors or anomalies and then checking back with the audio recording for accuracy. This sequential process is encouraged by Merriam (2009) as a way to prevent the researcher from becoming overwhelmed. From there, I copied both the interview transcripts and my own notes into Microsoft Word to organise the data into columns (date, name, number, transcript) so that it was easy to sort in preparation for importing into the analysis software. I then loaded all the transcribed files into the Nvivo10 computer software program so as to store and organise the data in a convenient manner (Creswell, 2013) prior to analysis.

Step 2: Generating initial codes. This next phase involved generating initial codes based on interesting features that could be assessed in a meaningful way in relation to my research questions (Boyatzis, 1998). The aim of these initial codes was to create categories that would provide a preliminary framework for analysis.

During this systematic process, I highlighted interesting aspects from the data (word, sentence, or idea) that formed the basis of repeated patterns. From there, I began collating these data extracts and then matching them to one (or more) of the preliminary codes. I, however, consciously avoided placing limitations on the number of potential codes; rather, I took cues from the data as a guide to how many initial codes were required (e.g., see Figure 2 below for the codes applied to a short excerpt from the data). It is important to note that these codes were not immovable and often changed during the analysis process in order to attain refinement (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Urquhart, 2001).

Data extract	Coded for
<p>“We rang and tried to get involved but nothing was happening so we went out and did it ourselves”.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resistance 2. Emergence of self-organised initiatives

Figure 2. Example of data extract initial coding.

Step 3: Searching for themes. The interpretive analysis of the data refocused the broader level of themes. While the three research questions provided a focus for approaching the themes, I had to interpretively sort and collate the different codes and think about the relationship between the codes and themes, as well as any potential subthemes that might emerge within themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some of the initial codes went on to form themes, some to form subthemes, and others were discarded. Interpretation plays a key role, as every researcher (and participant) carries *preunderstandings* into every act of *understanding* (Deetz, 1982). By including my reflective notes and thoughts in this analysis process, I could expose my preunderstandings. Because I had already reread transcripts in Step 1 and made reflective notes as I progressed, I felt able to generate the data into meaningful classifications or ideas (Tuckett, 2005). This process continued until clear patterns which were relevant to my research questions emerged.

Step 4: Reviewing themes. This phase involved further refinement of the themes to ensure that each theme could be justified as being significant and meaningful and ensuring that each different theme was distinct from the rest. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this stage requires a 2-part process: The first step involves rereading the collated extracts for each theme to ensure a consistent

pattern is evident. The second step examines the credibility of each individual theme. This part of the process requires checking that each theme is an accurate reflection of the meanings evident within the data set. By the end of this phase, I had a reasonable idea of the themes, how they interacted with each other, and what they contributed to the phenomena.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes. During this phase, the analysis was further refined to ensure that each theme was organised into a “coherent and internally consistent account” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) of what was being captured. Consequently, subthemes also needed to be identified and organised. For example, I identified that constructions of opportunity and risk were an overarching theme in participants’ conceptualisations of volunteering. Within this theme, two subthemes stood out: 1) access to a novel experience; and 2) challenging negative assumptions about the participants’ age. By distinguishing subthemes from an overarching theme, I could demonstrate the hierarchy of meaning within the data and provide structure to the complexity of the theme (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Step 6: Producing the report. The final phase involved writing up the data to create a concise, logical, coherent, and interesting account of what emerged. From here, it was possible to then form an argument in relation to each research question. Extracts from interviews and the reflective journal provided evidence to demonstrate each theme and its significance.

It must be noted that although appearing linear, these six steps were a recursive and interpretive process, which meant I often moved back and forth as themes generated and developed over time. This process added further trustworthiness to the data by actively reviewing and checking the data in an ongoing process.

Issues of trustworthiness.

Interpretive researchers must acknowledge both the social constructedness of their research method (Bryman & Cassell, 2006; Nadin & Cassell, 2006) and the trustworthiness and integrity of their findings (Finlay, 2002a, 2002b, 2012). Based upon Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four components of trustworthiness relevant to

qualitative research, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, my study incorporated several methods to address any limitations.

From a position of *credibility*, I took reasonable steps to ensure participants' perspectives matched my representation of them. This task involved both methodological and interpretive justification (Mason, 2002). From a position of *dependability*, I was careful to ensure that research findings were consistent with the data collected (Lincoln & Guba, 2003) and that the researcher's decision trail was traceable (Rotolo & Berg, 2011). To this end, I presented to the reader a clear process of why I selected particular participants for the study and described and verified how data was collected and interpreted in a manner that was suitable to the overall philosophical paradigms that guided the study. These reasonable steps ultimately give the reader a sense of context-bound extrapolations (Patton, 1990), in other words, whether this research offers *transferability* that may be useful within alternative, similar settings by communicating a holistic and realistic picture. I attempted to offer thick descriptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Geertz, 1973; Willis, 2007) through the participants' own words within the context. From a subjective viewpoint, transferability refers to "the fit or match between the research context and other contexts [which is] judged by the reader" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2015, p. 78), and ultimately, provides the basis for relevance in some broader context (Schram, 2003).

Once transferability, credibility, and dependability had been established, *confirmability* was sought via maintaining a reflective journal where I was able to practise a self-critical attitude by noting my own biases and insights and how these preconceptions may, in turn, affect my interactions with participants. These musings could be captured, analysed, and discussed as data to enable a big picture view whereby the production of new insights into the research could engender a sense of trust for the reader, offering further confirmability of the research findings and application (Rotolo & Berg, 2011).

Summary and conclusion.

This chapter has explained the epistemological foundations that guided this research and has presented the methodological perspectives that informed the research design. Taking a qualitative case study approach within a social

constructionist paradigm allowed me to interact with participants in obtaining rich descriptions of their subjective experiences relating to the *Rena* crisis and the complex intersections of self-organising, younger volunteers, and crisis management that came through in these descriptions. A reflexive exploration facilitated a deeper understanding of how social constructions were interpreted and produced, and this, in turn, served to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Stewart, 2010). Additionally, this chapter outlined the research process, including the participant selection criteria, methods of data collection, and data analysis.

The three analysis chapters that follow are organised around the three research questions that guide my study and present the findings from the thematic data analysis. Chapter 4 analyses how the younger volunteers conceptualise volunteering; chapter 5 examines the cohort dynamics of younger volunteers and how these impacted their volunteering experiences during the crisis; and, chapter 6 considers how self-organising was conceptualised by younger volunteers.

CHAPTER 4

CONCEPTUALISING ‘VOLUNTEERING’ DURING A CRISIS

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the first research question: How was volunteering conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the *Rena* crisis? Here, I explore how participants draw upon their understandings of volunteering and interpret how these, in turn, impact and influence their experiences. In exploring the various ways that younger volunteers negotiate and construct volunteering, the chapter is organised in line with the themes that emerged from the data.

The first section details how participants’ conceptualisations of volunteering related to constructions of employment, that is, a way to acquire skills related to future career prospects and/or to gain learned skills which they were then able to apply to a real-life experience. Within this section, organisational tensions that affect younger volunteers as a result of increasingly competitive labour and educational markets are explored. The second section considers the significance of the *Rena* volunteering experience as an opportunity for younger people to participate in new experiences that were otherwise unavailable to them outside the context of a crisis event. Here, underlying tensions embedded within generational stereotypes are explored. The third section considers how cultural values and practices influenced the experiences of Māori participants in their crisis response efforts.

Constructions of Employment

The first theme focuses on how participants conceptualised volunteering as an opportunity related to future employment. This section situates the interpretation of this data within the complexities that today’s younger people face in a competitive labour market and the reflexive nature of these individuals in responding to these challenges.

Of the 38 younger volunteers interviewed, 12 directly referred to the impact that their volunteer experience would have on their future employment prospects, for example:

an awesome reference...something amazing to put on the CV...a skill that future employers will think that's awesome. (Susan, 20);

good for your CV. (Kevin, 20);

...it could be good for my CV. (Mary, 27);

...it looks good on your CV and that kind of stuff. (Jodie, 22);

It helped when I applied for schools that I had in my CV that I had volunteered. (Georgia, 19)

The references to CVs in these responses were surprising, given the broadness of the question which asked: *Tell me about your volunteering experience?* Out of the 38 younger volunteers interviewed, 29 were current tertiary students. Because, at the time of interview, many of these students were thinking about future employment and career prospects following their university studies, this perception appeared to have a significant influence on how they made sense of their volunteering experience. For example:

A lot of the younger people want to get more qualifications because it builds them up the ladder and this situation is another thing for them to put on the CV; it gets them up the ladder in that sense as well. (Joseph, 28)

In this excerpt, Joseph is using the word ladder as a metaphor to describe the transition that he and his peers experience when moving from educational institutions and into the labour market. In this sense, Joseph is making sense of his volunteering experience as a rung on the ladder, as something which fills the gap in this fragmented transition from student to employee and which decreases the distance between college and the labour market. According to Pantea (2013), volunteering provides younger people with an alternative to a structural state of instability, that is, a state of limited, or absence of, employment and a chance to reestablish the course of life within these uncertain times (Haas, 2004; Hustinx, 2010b; Pantea, 2013). In his excerpt, Joseph conceptualises volunteering as part of

an intentional plan to direct his life course whilst simultaneously responding to the wider social context of the labour market. According to Du Bois-Reymond (1998), it is during this transition that younger people have to consciously take advantage of training and labour market opportunities, while also remaining mindful about how these choices will be organised into their life course. For Henry (27), there was also a significant connection between his self-organised volunteering experience and his career prospects which eventuated in his being offered full-time employment with one *Rena* salvage companies that he had worked alongside in his role as a volunteer. In his interview, Henry reflected on how his role as a volunteer empowered a route to employment by exposing him to prospective employers and providing him with the skills required for the employment position.

Mary (27), like Henry, also communicated a strong connection between her volunteering experience and the labour market. She was, however, more reflexive in deciding and evaluating her actions at the time of engaging as a volunteer as opposed to later on. Mary explained:

...for me, I started [volunteering] at the Mount with the petrel[s] because I was thinking it could be good for my CV. (Mary, 27)

Here, Mary is communicating that she made sense of her volunteer experience as a conscious choice to acquire skills, responsibilities, experiences, and other qualities that are specifically useful in seeking employment (Pantea, 2013). In doing so, she was able to use volunteering as a route to consolidate, stabilise, and prove her individual identity not only for herself, but also for others (Giddens, 1999). While Mary was highly reflexive in her conceptualisations of volunteering from the outset, the accounts from both Mary and Henry reflect that volunteering has the ability to accelerate individuals' transitions into adulthood (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000).

Drawing on a reflexive orientation of betweenness logic (Cunliffe, 2009), it was important that I further explored participants' connections between volunteering and employability, given that almost one third of participants directly referred to employment when describing their volunteer experience. Within these responses, it was not evident whether participants' conceptualisations of volunteering were

formed upon reflection of their experiences, or rather, whether they were already established at the time of their participation during the crisis. This issue was further complicated by the fact that interviews were conducted up to 14 months after the event and, therefore, that participants' views might have changed in that time. Nevertheless, I was surprised that, despite many participants either studying environmental sciences or being involved in local environmental organisations and/or sympathetic to the natural environment affected by the crisis, they consistently appeared to focus primarily on how their volunteering experience translated into something of value in the labour market. For example, Barry (16) had prior experience as a Department of Conservation volunteer and throughout his interview consistently demonstrated high levels of environmental consciousness. Despite this environmental orientation, he told me:

I wouldn't have missed that opportunity for the world – I mean, being involved in an oil spill recovery – that is something to go on the CV!
(Barry, 16)

Although Barry *does* indirectly address his environmental orientation here, because he later explained that he wanted to forge a career in environmentalism, it, nevertheless, appears that Barry first and foremost made sense of the experience of volunteering as an employment-related prospect.

The excerpts above are interesting because they contrast with studies that explore factors which influence environmental-related volunteering among younger people. For example, the main findings from a Greek study conducted by Liarakou, Kostelou, and Gavrilakis (2011) based on 48 young people aged 18-35 found that learning and contact with nature was the most influential factor for engaging younger people and that younger people recognised the importance of continuing to deepen their environmental knowledge. In their article *Generation green: Understanding the motivations and mechanisms influencing young adults' environmental volunteering*, McDougle et al. (2011) discuss their findings from a study of 2279 Canadian university students aged 18-24. The findings were consistent with previous research (see Gage III & Thapa, 2012; Handy, Hustinx, Cnaan, & Kang, 2009) showing that social relations were the most influential factor in driving younger volunteers to engage in environmental volunteering,

despite Handy et al.'s hypothesising that the environmental orientation of the younger people would be a dominant influence in their volunteerism. While the *Rena* volunteer experience was a crisis event, it is important to consider its environmental nature, given that it was one of Aotearoa/New Zealand's worst environmental disasters (Donnell, 2011). Moreover, given that 17 of the 38 younger volunteers were currently undertaking tertiary level education in environmental and maritime research, with an additional 3 being current surf lifesavers, I had anticipated that these participants would project a heightened level of what Schultz and Zelezny (1998) describe as environmental altruism. This term is used to describe volunteer behaviour which is motivated by an intrinsic value to benefit the natural environment. While participants often referred to their affiliation with the environment (most often through their tertiary study or leisure activities), this affiliation was often superseded with a sense that the crisis presented future employment-related opportunities. This point was aptly demonstrated when Matthew (19), who was studying ocean science, described the crisis as "funny", in that it was both ironic and opportune that the event occurred in his neighbourhood:

I wouldn't have missed that opportunity for the world – I mean, being involved in an oil spill recovery – that is something to go on the CV almost. A good experience for someone interested in wildlife and conservation, and funny that it happened right on my doorstep. (Matthew, 19)

While I recognised that Matthew was reflecting on the coincidental nature of the situation, his accompanying nonverbal communication (smile, relaxed manner, and slight laugh as he was describing this situation to me) came across as quite emotionally disconnected from the level of environmental devastation caused by the event. This response was surprising, given that Matthew conveyed a strong environmental orientation throughout his interview and, as explicitly stated in the above excerpt, saw the crisis event as "a good experience for someone interested in wildlife and conservation". According to Burns et al. (2006), individuals' conceptualisations of volunteering may be prompted by multiple considerations that are not necessarily mutually exclusive of one another (Dekker & Halman, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2008), with environmental altruism likely to be among

them. Therefore, in interpreting Matthew's comments it can be understood that, despite his strong environmental orientations, he also recognised the coincidental nature of the crisis which had a specific relevance to his future career aspects.

Acquisition of skills.

In addition to participants' communicating a significant connection between volunteering and employment, a subtheme emerged that focused on how participants saw volunteering as an opportunity to acquire skills. Here, participants appeared to make sense of their volunteering experience as an opportunity to gain skills that were transferable into future career and educational settings. These included leadership, administration, communication, organisation and problem-solving skills. Consider the following excerpt:

It has definitely grown my leadership skills because I never really had that experience leading before. I had quite a bit of responsibility leading people around the Mount and being responsible for who goes where and what to do once we caught the penguins. That was really interesting. Being one the youngest, 16 at the time, I was leading people in their late 20s and 30s, quite a bit older than me. It was quite an experience. Yeah, so I got a lot of skills and experience (Tracey, 18)

Here, Tracey constructs her experience as a volunteer as providing her with the opportunity to take on a significant level of responsibility that she had not experienced in everyday life. She also exhibited pride in pointing out her position in this role, despite being considerably younger than those around her. The connection Tracey made between her volunteering experience and application of a new skill was not an isolated one. Charlie (20), who was studying towards a Bachelor of Marine Science at the time of the crisis, specifically articulated a connection between his volunteer experience and the opportunity to apply skills he had learnt in tertiary education for the first time.

I wanted to learn and gain experience while volunteering...it related to my course as well, so I wanted to know a little bit about marine life. (Charlie, 20)

He went on to describe how it was “cool” being able to apply what he had learnt in class to the crisis. He also described the thrill of being able to volunteer alongside researchers in his specific subject area: “I was working with penguin experts and biologists; it was just so cool” (Charlie, 20).

Moana (22) similarly conveyed a sense of intrigue and excitement relative to how the crisis event integrated a practical opportunity with the chance to acquire specific skills:

...the fact that this was a way of dealing with a marine response in the field that I study and am passionate about and the effects that people have on the environment and seeing how we could right the wrongs was an opportunity I couldn't miss which is why I took every opportunity I could when it came about. (Moana, 22)

Susan (20) also took full advantage of the many opportunities that being a volunteer offered. These included: signing up for the official volunteer registration programme (however, she never received a call back so did not actually participate in that group); participating in various self-organised initiatives with groups of friends from cleaning oil off the beaches to helping with wildlife response; and, participating in other initiatives established by *iwi* groups within the region, for instance, sending emails and writing newsletters to inform the communities about the situation. The nature of the crisis allowed Susan to apply skills she had been taught, including: documenting the location and condition of oiled species; using marine-specific spreadsheets and grids; and, “taking GPS locations and estimating whether birds were healthy” (Susan, 20).

While participants framed their acquisition of skills via their volunteering experiences positively, there was often an underlying tension evident in the way some individuals spoke frustratingly about not being able to enhance their existing skills and knowledge during their volunteering experience. For example, Wayne (22), who had recently graduated from university, said that it was “annoying” that his volunteer experience was the first time he had been able to apply his course learnings “in the real world”. He felt that volunteering during the *Rena* event had boosted his future employability and, therefore, saw value in integrating opportunities to volunteer within educational structures:

...to the extent of starting a community project or organisation or company that starts volunteering programmes identified towards young people. It should be specifically targeted towards young people and tailored into an education system. It should be real work education not just straight from the book. (Wayne, 22)

In the above excerpt, phrases such as “tailored into an education system” and “real work education” draw parallels with formal, structured integration of volunteering into educational curricula which gives students the ability to apply their educational knowledge through real-world experience (Lloyd et al., 2015; Rawlings-Sanaei & Sachs, 2014). Whilst volunteer-integrated education is still a relatively novel concept, there has been some advancement in this area over the last 5 years within Japan and at the University of Canterbury as a direct result of the Christchurch earthquakes (O’Steen & Perry, 2012). A study by Holdsworth and Brewis (2014) analysing the role of volunteering within universities argues that volunteering should be positioned as a cocurricular activity rather than an extracurricular one. The authors urged universities to invest their students in volunteering as a way of helping students transition into future employment and as a way of forging links with local organisations.

The integration of volunteering and education was discussed in an interview I had with Sam Johnson, founder of the self-organised Christchurch SVA. Sam spoke about how crisis volunteering during the Christchurch earthquakes was used by younger people as a means to gain a competitive edge in the employment market. He explained that there was significant demand from members of the SVA for references from the management team which attested to their volunteer participation:

We wrote a lot of letters of reference for people in the Student Army from people asking: “Can you somehow prove that I did something?” And I see volunteering as something not just helping the community, but as something about personal and professional development and using the community as a tool to learn how the world works. (Sam Johnson, SVA leader, 21)

Consequently, the SVA management team put together what Sam described as:

...more or less a university transcript that our volunteers can print out which shows the number of hours they spent volunteering doing whatever job it may have been. (Sam Johnson, SVA leader, 21)

The certificates, which were verified by Christchurch Education, were keenly sought after by volunteers as additions to their CVs to help credentialise the employment worthiness of the individuals. In other words, the volunteers used their reference as a signalling device for potential employers to identify themselves as a good citizen (Bekkers & Bowman, 2009; Katz & Rosenberg, 2005). Given the increased competition, risk, and uncertainty characterising the current employment market, volunteering used in this way can positively indicate to a prospective employer that the candidate is willing to incur the net costs of volunteering and forgo private interests in order to serve an organisation (Handy et al., 2009; Katz & Rosenberg, 2005; Ziemek, 2006). Indeed, studies have shown that individuals with volunteering experience are not only more likely to be hired, but also command a higher wage (Eliasoph, 1998; Hackl et al., 2007).

The belief among multiple research participants that their volunteering experience enhanced their employability is not isolated to the current study. A Canadian study by Schugurensky, Slade, and Luo (2005) found that 55 per cent of younger people saw volunteering as a way of improving employment opportunities compared to only 16 per cent of older people seeing it in that way. Research conducted by Dean (2015) similarly shows that younger people clearly view volunteering as a vital step into employment. Additionally, Friedland and Morimoto (2005) note an increasing trend in younger people who engage in volunteer opportunities for the purposes of “resume padding” (p. 3). Such resume padding is seen as a direct result of the significant pressure placed upon younger people to achieve tertiary education and gain successful careers, a trend that is well documented within studies on popular culture (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Critically, this trend is thought to account for recent increases in student-aged episodic volunteers (Marks & Jones, 2004).

Within the current study, this prior research highlights the importance of interpreting data in consideration of the situated context of the participants’ responses. According to Mannheim (1952), a younger generation can be

understood as a cohort positioned within the same sociocultural and historical context, characterised by a common consciousness, and shared dispositions. With these considerations in mind, there are two key generational conditions concerning today's younger people which are helpful in interpreting participant responses. First, is the argument that in the Western world today's younger generation has been hit the hardest by neo-liberal capitalism which has resulted in large-scale transformations across education and labour markets, for example, job insecurity and rising unemployment rates when compared to changes affecting older generations (Alves, Cantante, Baptista, & Carmo, 2011; Jardim & Marques da Silva, 2018). Consequently, the current younger generation's transitions into adulthood often deviate from the traditional linear pathways and, instead, often oscillate between work, family, education, and unemployment (Jardim & Marques da Silva, 2018). Interpreted in this way, volunteering may be understood as an "individual reflection of these changing institutional conditions" (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 169) and as a way for the participants to actively self-monitor and reestablish their individual life course (Giddens, 1991; Heelas, 1996) amidst the organisational and institutional uncertainty of their volunteering environment.

Secondly, these responses can be interpreted within today's knowledge society where expectations to succeed within increasingly competitive education and labour markets (Pantea, 2013) require people to develop individualised skills such as versatility, creativity, and an ability to demonstrate self-actualisation (European Commission, 2010; Hoikkala, 2009; Lemert & Elliott, 2009; Pantea, 2013). In this view, the participants' responses can be interpreted as subjects of individualised capitalist demands on the workforce which have forced them to gain experience through unpaid labour.

In summary, participants' accounts of their volunteering experiences convey multiple constructions of volunteering in relation to the labour market. While some individuals were very articulate and direct in making sense of the volunteering experience as a reflexive decision to engage in an opportunity that would serve their future employability, others sought meaning from the practical skills and specific training opportunities that were otherwise unavailable to them in their everyday lives.

Constructions of Opportunity and Risk

The second major theme identified in the data concerned the way that participants constructed their volunteering experience as an opportunity. Two subthemes contribute to this section: a) as an opportunity to participate in an experience otherwise unavailable to them in the real world; and b) as an opportunity to challenge negatively held assumptions of their generation by presenting themselves as respectable and contributing community members.

Access to a novel experience.

First, conceptualising volunteering as an opportunity to experience something new or something different was a recurring theme among participants. In total, 26 younger volunteers used the word opportunity 32 times when describing their volunteer experience. For example, when asked: *“What do you consider volunteering to be?”* responses included:

...things that you normally wouldn't get the opportunity to do. They are quite unique opportunities. (Harriet, 21);

It's given me an opportunity to talk to lots of different people... Without that opportunity we wouldn't be holding penguins at all. You get to see what happens. (Barry, 16)

Here, phrases such as “normally wouldn't get the opportunity to do” and “without that opportunity we wouldn't be holding penguins at all” centred on the notion that volunteering could provide the volunteers with a new experience that they were otherwise unable to access. Tracey (18) told me directly that she decided to volunteer because she wanted to “learn a new experience”. Other responses were more descriptive and at times explained the participants' situation prior to their volunteer experience, while others directly explained the exciting aspects of their volunteering role. For example:

I think there is probably a selfish aspect in that I was getting bored in my role and wanted to do a new challenge and something new and exciting, something I didn't know. (Henry, 27);

Yeah, it was a new experience because we had never really interacted with penguins before. It was so cool to see them up close. (Barry, 16)

While Henry and Barry use a different context to describe what they found exciting about the volunteer experience, both of their responses reflect their emotional responses to the event, that is, how the experience progressed their lives and actual changes in their real world from a state of “getting bored” to something “new and exciting”. From an interpretive perspective, understanding and exposing how these participants viewed their own situatedness is important, because it acknowledges how wider social, cultural, and political conditions can influence how they make sense of volunteering.

For example, Jonty (22) felt that the level of novelty and excitement presented through the opportunity to volunteer was so significant that he left his full-time employment to be a volunteer for 6 weeks during the crisis. When asked why he chose to do so, he described the crisis as “exciting, just the fact that you didn’t know what was coming next”. Here, Jonty positions his experience as a volunteer as distinctly different to other aspects of his life, because the nature of the crisis meant that things could not be predicted or planned. For Susan (20) and Rowan (18), this level of unpredictability and excitement translated into a sense of escapism, whereby volunteering represented a novel experience:

I never want to be stuck in an office so for me that was really cool to explore around the rocks and look for birds. On the first night G and I went out there working as a duo and just kept saying to each other “THIS IS SO COOL!” You just felt like you were away from civilisation and living like the birds. It was so cool. (Susan, 20);

Seeing the containers wash up was pretty cool. Being in the areas where the police where was pretty cool. Being the only person allowed past the cordon at six in the morning was pretty cool. (Rowan, 18)

The extent to which both Rowan and Susan communicated a sense of excitement, as evidenced in their repeated use of the word “cool” and the description of adventure in their comments, is interesting. Whilst some studies have shown that adventure is popular among younger individuals who engage in opportunities to

travel overseas as volunteers (see, for example, Biehn, 2014; Jones, 2011; Nawab & Ali, 2009; Tiessen & Kumar, 2013), there are no studies which relate this sense of adventure among younger volunteers within the context of a crisis event. What is of further interest is the consistent use of the word “cool” in the context of a devastating situation. In particular, Rowan describes a very upsetting reality of the oil spill – the containers washing up onto the shoreline – as “very cool”. While his comments are not intended to discount the negative environmental effects of the crisis event, both participants demonstrate in their excerpts, that in their volunteering experiences, they looked beyond the devastation of the crisis event and focused on the adventurous nature of the experience for themselves in undertaking their volunteer role.

This sense of adventure and excitement was also reflected in the interview with Aimee (27), who had extensive volunteer experience across a range of different causes and events. She described how the *Rena* crisis was more “in your face” when compared to other volunteering opportunities, which she felt, made it much more exciting for young people:

When I was in high school, we used to go down and plant trees in dunes...the *Rena* was this big event that just happened whereas the Coastcare is just ongoing...But the beach isn't closed, and I think that with *Rena* and having the beach closed you couldn't go swimming and all that. With Coastcare you can use the beach, just not one particular part. If it got to the point where the dunes were going to disintegrate, and you couldn't use the beach, maybe that would attract more people to help. (Aimee, 27)

Here, Aimee is making sense of why some of her peers showed particular interest in volunteering for the *Rena* crisis, yet not in other local volunteer opportunities, due to the higher level of excitement associated with the oil spill compared to dune restoration. Aimee went on to explain that once the initial excitement of the *Rena* event quelled, many of those people who initially involved themselves in the response were able to simply walk away from the response efforts without any obligations to continue. This point is significant because the short-term commitment of these individuals is typically theorised in the crisis volunteer literature as symptomatic behaviour of younger individuals who favour episodic

and relatively concise durations of volunteer commitment, with easy entry and exit options (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2000). However, the degree to which participants in the current study viewed their volunteering experience as an exciting and adventurous opportunity otherwise unavailable to them offers a *new* perspective for interpreting how younger people might conceptualise volunteering specifically related to crisis events. This new perspective is particularly revealing, because it suggests that conceptualisations of volunteering are not only dependent on the perspective of those undertaking the voluntary activity, but also dependent on the *type* of volunteering that is being experienced (crisis volunteering, voluntourism, sport volunteering etc.).

Challenging negative assumptions of their generation.

The second subtheme that emerged from the data suggested that the participants saw volunteering as an opportunity to showcase their good character in response to what they perceived were negatively held assumptions and perceptions surrounding their generational cohort. For example:

Older people are always quick to judge us. Quick to make assumptions about young people. For example, drink driving. They always think it is young people. Always quick to judge, quick to make assumptions about young people. Thinking about young people and bad stuff, rather than young people and good stuff. So hopefully this could have shifted some people's perspective with young people volunteering their time for nothing in return. (Grace, 22)

The particular choice of words here such as “judge” and “assumptions” frames the participant response with an underlying sense of there being a wider, societal issue at play. For instance, Grace says in her opening: “older people are always quick to judge us”. Here, Grace is using the word “always” as a form of exclusive language, that is, a form of language typically used to strengthen a certain group's identity, to empower them, and to legitimise this group's conduct, behaviour, and claims and, thereby, exclude other groups (Geysers-Fouche, 2016, p. 1). In this context, Grace uses exclusive language as a screen to express how she feels constructed as a younger person and in doing so suggests that she feels, either as an individual or as part of her peer or generational cohort, that she has

experienced some form of consistent discrimination. She provided an example (drink driving) to demonstrate the form of discrimination that she is referring to, which is helpful in better interpreting the meaning of her words and the intent of her message. The situation is somewhat ironic, given that while directing her comments at older people, Grace is being reflective of what she is attributing older people as being. In other words, she is being quick to judge others and make assumptions on the basis of age. Despite this paradox, Grace situates herself and her actions as a volunteer within this perception, by relating how she is hopeful that her (and her peers') behaviour within the crisis response "may have shifted some people's perspective with young people".

Social constructions within society that position younger people as problematic troublemakers, or employ other forms of negative images, are well documented (HilfingerMessias et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2006). However, these studies are based on older people's perceptions and attitudes towards younger people (Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008) rather than on how younger people *themselves* perceive their role in society. An interpretive lens in the current study is helpful to make sense of why Grace positions herself somewhat defensively when describing her volunteering experience. Here, despite the irony of her comment, this lens enables a deeper insight as to her own representations and perceptions of her generation. According to Hilfinger Messias et al. (2008), such insights are critical to the development of a generational understanding towards the organising dynamics of younger volunteers' during crisis events. This understanding, the authors argue, enables researchers to shift from "deficit-based frameworks and practices" to one which engages younger people as community resources (Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008, p. 160).

Much like Grace, Georgia (18) also communicated that her volunteer experience might prove her worthiness as a contributing member of society as a way to address and challenge negatively held perceptions based on her generation:

It did help me when I applied for jobs that I had in my CV that I helped plan the *Rena Kai Run*. I guess it gives them a good judge of character about who I am. Because look at me: I'm young, I have tattoos. I guess

people might not think so highly of someone like that until they find out about what I did. (Georgia, 18)

While Georgia is referring to prospective employers in this excerpt and does not specifically address the age or cohort of these “people”, she also (like Grace) *assumes* that their judgement of her might relate to her prospects of employment. Interpreting these assumptions is useful when understanding the wider social context which brought these two participants to the point of asking *why* they conceptualise volunteering in particular ways. Here, it is important to emphasise that, while the older person or person of authority might not be consciously stereotyping or judging the younger person, the younger person, nevertheless, perceives that they are doing so – that is, a metastereotype – and the actions and reactions of the younger volunteers are formed accordingly. For example, Sophie (29) explained:

...[younger volunteers] just want to feel like they have done something and are contributing...they want to feel like they are helping and worth something. (Sophie, 29)

Here, Sophie uses the term “contributing” in reference to her role in society. In expressing how she feels that her cohort is perceived, she uses the phrase “worth something”, which suggests that “they” [younger people] are acting against negative assumptions. Sophie went on to tell me that she had felt judged because she was younger and, therefore, felt that she “didn’t have as much life experience”.

This perception among the younger volunteers, that highlights an assumed negative perspective that others have towards them, reflects a form of metastereotyping, where they believe older people hold particular negative views about them, and, as a consequence, younger people attempt to modify the metastereotype by confirming positive traits and disconfirming negative ones (Katz & Rosenberg, 2005), as in this context via volunteering. Consider the following excerpt, where Matthew (21) explains why he chose to volunteer during the *Rena* crisis:

Maybe the older generation don't actually think that younger people care about anything else but when there is something like this, people are really keen to help out. (Matthew, 21)

Again, Matthew's comments reflect an assumption that others ("the older generation") have about younger people. The role of these metastereotypes is critically important to the interpretations of these responses, given that research has shown that members of the in-group (in this case younger volunteers) are likely to use strategies to cope with such a threat (e.g., discrimination from older individuals/groups) (Branscombe, Ellemers, Spears, & Doosje, 1999; Klein & Azzi, 2001). These metastereotypes could be further reinforced by younger people's own perceptions of their peer group, as evidenced in research which supports a generalised tendency for adults to mistrust and undervalue younger people (Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008). For example, research conducted by Valaitis (2002) on Canadian youth found that younger people perceived that they had little power in social hierarchies and little credibility or control in decision making: "they don't trust us...we're just kids" (p. 248). They felt that, aside from their closest family and acquaintances, most adults did not trust or respect their ideas.

Within the context of this study, parallels can be drawn between this metastereotyping and the significant number of younger volunteers who initiated their own self-organised responses to the crisis outside the formal volunteer organisation. For example, Georgia (18) told me:

I had a lot of older people who were helping but more talking down to me rather than with me about how we could make something better. Even when I was looking at hiring out a local church to store the overwhelming amount of food, even before I told them what it was for, a lot of people said 'no'. I felt that because of my age it was going to be just too hard, so I ended up keeping it all at my house. I felt there was a bit of distrust because of my age or the fact that I was asking for halls. Maybe they didn't think I wasn't just going to use it to store food? (Georgia, 18)

In this instance, Georgia is illustrating the influential nature of metastereotypes ("I felt that because of my age") on her volunteer behaviour. The influence was such

that she was driven to facilitate her self-organised response to the crisis event from her own home as opposed to a public space (“I felt that because of my age it was going to be just too hard, so I ended keeping it all at my house”). Indeed, research indicates metastereotypes can have significant implications for minority individuals or groups and their interactions with the dominant group (Vorauer, Main, & O’Connell, 1998). Implications for the participants in this study included volunteers’ feeling both stifled and stuck in a power struggle that emanated from these metastereotypes. Accordingly, the new and different opportunities provided by crisis volunteering also acted as a vehicle through which participants could challenge stereotypes:

It’s kind of a red tape generation at the moment. So, it is awesome when you can get involved in stuff that’s a little risky, a little fun, and a little daring. And actually, when you just can help other people. (Matthew, 21)

In referring to his generation as a “red tape generation” Matthew indicates that rules, structures, and barriers prevent younger people from participating in all forms of experiences. The choice of words such as “risky”, “fun”, and “daring” to describe his volunteering experience during the crisis, in the context of a “red tape generation” suggests that he is not easily able to access those sorts of experiences outside of the *Rena* crisis volunteering context. He adds:

I guess that it’s again the red tape environment with us, it doesn’t always go down well. I suppose ultimately where there is a little more risk and bureaucracy is in charge ...you hear so many things nowadays that if a kid hurts his hand on a roundabout suddenly all roundabouts get banned from school. The “no danger is allowed environment” stifles people our age because without danger and risk how are you going to learn and get better? Someone might fall by the wayside and get badly injured but overall it is a learning curve. Ultimately there’s always risk and it’s sad to see adventure and risk taken away sometimes, we get frustrated by the lack of cool things that other generations got to do but are considered too dangerous to do. When you are young you are adventurous and learning about life. It is sad when that gets restrained somewhat (Frank, 19)

To this end, Frank not only indirectly refers to metastereotypes, but also describes how he saw his volunteering experience as one way to experience risk which is otherwise unavailable to his generation beyond the realms of a crisis event. What is particularly revealing in these comments, however, is how Frank's conceptualisations of the volunteering opportunity as something with "a little more risk" and "adventure" was manifested from a position that, he felt, constrained these experiences within everyday life: "it is sad when that gets restrained somewhat".

One way of interpreting how Frank is expressing himself is that he feels restricted in his ability to freely participate in new experiences within a risk society (Beck, 1992, 2006; Giddens, 1991). A risk society is a concept which "designates a developmental phase of modern society in which the social, political, economic and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection in industrial society" (Beck, 1994, p. 5). Related to younger people in today's social world, negative constructions that frame younger people as incompetent and vulnerable consider them to be in particular need of protection from risk (France, 2000). Therefore, any form of unpredictability that threatens younger people in particular is expected to be avoided (Ansell, 2008). In reconciling how the concept of a risk society fits within a crisis event, Ansell (2008) believes that younger people seek activities that provide opportunities for risk-taking in order to construct individual biographies that demonstrate achievement and quality of character.

In the current study, participants communicated their desire to use their volunteering experience as an opportunity to prove their employment worthiness and to challenge assumed negative perceptions of their cohort. What is particularly interesting, given the intersections of metastereotypes, risk-taking, and younger volunteers, is that, in the literature, risk-taking among younger people is understood to arise because of the control yielded by powerful hierarchies within groups which have the ability to influence others (France, 2000). As a result, younger people, in turn, become attracted to places that provide opportunities for risk-taking as a strategy to avoid such powers and control (Ansell, 2008; France, 2000) and as a resource for individualisation, in

order to construct biographies that demonstrate achievement and strength of character (Ansell, 2008).

In summary, participants' conceptualisations of the volunteering experience can be interpreted as an opportunity to attend to forces of power (institutional and organisational) within their everyday lives, whilst at the same time gaining novel experiences and a sense of adventure within a societally acceptable way. This conceptualisation presents a novel approach to understanding the contextualised nature of volunteering among younger people. It indicates that the practical skills and unique experiences they gain through their crisis volunteering not only act to reduce their uncertainty about the future, but also address the metastereotypes emanating from societal assumptions that could potentially further challenge their life trajectory during an important transition. The situatedness of participants' interpretations within a risk society exposes a paradox whereby a continued tendency for risk avoidance within the context of a crisis event confronts a self-reflexive desire among younger people to embrace individuality and biographisation.

Considering Cultural Influences on Volunteer Conceptualisations

The third major theme that emerged from the data was evident in the responses from Māori participants. This theme explores how cultural practices and values informed how Māori participants responded to the crisis event and the critical importance of acknowledging the challenges and limitations in interpreting these experiences.

Numerous interpretive studies have examined cultural influences that shape conceptualisations of volunteers and volunteering (Dekker & Halman, 2003; Dougherty, 2005; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2004). Within an Aotearoa/New Zealand cultural context, different individual and collective orientations significantly influence how Māori and non-Māori cultures experience an interconnectedness of kin and community. In turn, these different cultural orientations form a foundational basis for how each culture makes sense of the term *volunteering*. For example, to Māori, concepts of the self emphasise sociocentricity; that is, a connectedness between family and community is understood as a cultural imperative (Love, Malaulau, Praat, & Love, 2004).

Pākehā [European New Zealanders], by contrast, exhibit a more individualistic orientation where concepts of the self emphasise independence and where personal achievement is equated with an individual sense of self-fulfilment (Sampson, 1988).

Critical to understanding how Māori participants made sense of their volunteering experience is acknowledging that within Māori culture definitive translations of the Western construct of a *volunteer* and *volunteering* do not exist, nor is there conceptually a similar construct. For example, within Māori culture, particular cultural responsibilities such as gathering at the marae (a traditional meeting place) reinforce how Māori function together as a collective (Lo & Houkamau, 2012; Love et al., 2004; Robinson, 2001). These close connections significantly affect how Māori help each other and interact on a basis of cultural obligation, reciprocity, and duty (Robinson, 2001). In other words, caring for others is a fundamental and expected practice among Māori and is considered normal in all aspects of life (Lo & Houkamau, 2012). This construct is different from some Western constructs of volunteering which, by contrast, focus on notions of caring for and helping only vulnerable family members (Miranda, 2011; Stebbins & Graham, 2004).

Despite the lack of conceptual similarity between Western and Māori constructs of what it means to volunteer, there are some generally accepted overlaps in the motivational foundations of volunteering among both Māori and Western cultures (Dulin, Gavala, Stephens, Kostick, & McDonald, 2012). This overlap has led researchers to use the term *mahi aroha* (a sense of sympathy and caring for all others) (Oliver & Love, 2007) when researching volunteering among Māori. Within the literature, *mahi aroha* is typically used to describe unpaid activity among Māori performed out of caring and sympathy for others and in accordance with the Māori principle of *whānaungatanga* (ongoing and reciprocal familial relationships) (Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector, 2007). Further defined, *aroha* is understood as a form of affection and compassion for others and recognises “the centrality of good-will towards others for whānau well-being” (Lo & Houkamau, 2012, p. 111). It should be noted that *mahi aroha* is a recent construct, having been developed with reference to Western understanding of volunteering.

In the current study, nine participants identified themselves as Māori, with five of these fitting the 16-29-year-old defined age bracket of this study. The remaining four were older volunteers (aged over 30 years). As part of iwi liaison efforts, these volunteers had frequent involvement with younger Māori volunteers. Although the intention of this research was not to investigate the varying ways in which cultures view volunteering, it is important to note the antecedents which frame volunteering from a cultural perspective among Māori participants and how these, in turn, affect how participants conceptualised volunteering during the *Rena* crisis event.

A sense of connectedness and community which reflects the Māori value of *whānaungatanga* was clearly evident in the responses from all nine Māori participants. Consider the following excerpts which show the responses from younger Māori volunteers when asked to describe their volunteer experience:

we have a tight knit community, everyone knows everyone and when it came to volunteering all the younger [Māori] generation in Tauranga are all for helping out...I did it for all the people in Tauranga. (Harry, 26);

[we] are there for *kaupapa* [principle], [we] actually care about our environment and actually get it. (Kowhai, 29);

I just think that it [the volunteering] wasn't just Māori, it was for the whole community, non-Māori as well. (Tui, 28);

I've done voluntary stuff before and as a person you go unrecognised but as the group you are recognised, and with this I was part of the *Rena* clean up group, so sweet as. (Moana, 22)

In each of these excerpts, participants use collective terms such as “we”, “everyone”, “group”, “community”, and “all the people”. Having asked participants to describe *their* experiences, these responses were particularly revealing to me as a Pākehā researcher with a Western, individualistic orientation on volunteering, because their answers were grounded in a collective orientation, almost as if they were responding on *behalf* of a group of people. This sense of collectivism was reinforced in my interviews with the four Māori iwi leaders in their descriptions of the younger Māori who volunteered during the crisis. For example, Joanna (30+) explained:

At the marae the *rangatahi* [younger generation] are helping with the food prep, helping the elders, cleaning. They don't know it is volunteer work, it is just something that you do. (Joanna, 30+)

Here, in describing the younger generation of Māori, Joanna reinforces an implicit cultural obligation to help others. Joanna also separates what she is describing as “just something that you do” in comparison to a Western construct of volunteering, further reinforcing the lack of definitive translation across the cultures. The difficulty in answering my question: *What do you consider 'volunteering' to be?* was similarly evident in the nonverbal communication exhibited by Kaia (30+) where, after a long pause, wince, and shrugging of the shoulders, she finally described a *situation*, rather than giving an explanation, to illustrate how she made sense of the term:

If I am up at the marae doing the gardens the rangatahi won't think, they will just come and help and that's volunteering I guess. (Kaia, 30+)

In the above excerpt, Kaia uses an example rather than a definition to demonstrate what she considers volunteering to be. The particular phrase “and that's volunteering I guess” shows that she is attempting to interpret the Western idea of volunteering into something that cannot easily be translated into her culture. Rather, in attempting to explain what she considers volunteering to be, she provides an approximation rather than a definition. Kaia's use of a *value*-based example, rather than an activity, was also revealing, because it highlights the guiding values which Dulin et al. (2012) argue separate Māori and non-Māori communities in their conceptualisation of volunteering. Similarly, Anahera (30+) also offered a value-based description when she told me that the rangatahi have a “responsibility in this area...and whenever we need them for anything it's not an issue”. The potential for Māori conceptualisations of volunteering to be misunderstood within “mainstream perspective[s]” (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009, p. 366) is demonstrated by Moana (22) in her own attempt to *compare* a cultural orientation with a mainstream perspective of volunteering: “the only thing I can think of [volunteering as] is working, but not getting paid”. Her comments “the only thing I can think of...” similarly reflect that, like Kaia, Moana also demonstrates that the Western idea of volunteering is not a direct or easy cultural

fit with her own conceptions. Although Moana directly refers to a nonmonetary form of activity in her description, it can also be interpreted as her trying to convey the normal, everyday situatedness of volunteering in the lives of Māori in a way that non-Māori might resonate with from a paid work or employment perspective. She continues:

Giving up your time to help someone else with something with no expectations, just go in and do it. My views haven't changed at all, I have done volunteering my whole life... You are just doing it for the heart... working around the house for your family, that is love. It is life.
(Moana, 22)

Here, Moana communicates the value of *aroha* in her conceptualisation of volunteering by referencing her motivation as “family”, “love”, and “life”. She further reinforces this motivation by confirming that she is “doing it for the heart” and emphasises the normality of volunteering in her life by comparing it to a typical part of everyday life “I would compare it to working around the house for your family”.

From my position as a Pākehā researcher, I was surprised at the extent to which Moana, and other younger Māori volunteers, were willing to devote their time and energy to the crisis response. To this end, out of the five younger Māori participants, four of these committed full-time to the volunteer effort. In some cases, this commitment involved considerable uprooting from their everyday normal lives in order to take part in the crisis response efforts. Harry (26), for instance, was not from the local area, yet when the crisis occurred, he relocated to Tauranga in order to participate. For two other younger Māori volunteers who had young children, their volunteer commitments meant that their children would often accompany them or that they would rely on *whānau* support to assist with their children so that they could maintain full-time volunteer duties.

When considering my own reflexive position as a Pākehā researcher, it must be acknowledged that my interpretations of these participants were within the constructs of volunteering from a Western lens, as opposed to a culturally-centred understanding. Therefore, through this reflexive process, the limits of interpreting participants’ ‘volunteering’ conceptualisations as a researcher are highlighted. The

following section expands on the limitations that are presented when engaging in volunteer or unpaid research that involves data across cultures and acknowledges other cultural-specific elements within the case study that require careful consideration.

Contextual considerations of the crisis within Māori culture.

There are three other important considerations when interpreting the cultural groundings that influenced younger Māori participants' conceptualisations of volunteering. The first consideration, related to crisis management, is the understanding that Māori communities have culturally determined and localised processes for dealing with the aftermath of a crisis (Paton et al., 2014). To this end, Paton et al. (2014) argue that the organisational structures within Māori culture are naturally embedded in their capability to respond to crisis events. In other words, Māori crisis response practices such as inclusivity and active participation are implicit elements of the Māori culture and, therefore, embedded within their whānau, tribal, and organisational behaviours and actions (Paton et al., 2014). This ability to respond was evident when Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (the local iwi or tribe) operationalised its intertribal networks to access material and social resources in the aftermath of the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes. In addition to organising a response internally, the iwi also mediated communication and decision making alongside external organisations directly involved in the crisis response (such as government ministries and other local authorities) to facilitate a collaborative response to the crisis event (see Kenney, Phibbs, Paton, Reid, & Johnston, 2015; Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; Lambert, 2014; Paton et al., 2014).

In terms of the current study, much of the volunteer response from Māori drew on local cultural knowledge of the environment and ensured that cultural processes were maintained. Harry (26) referred to this knowledge as “Māori ingenuity” and Hana (30+) described how this positioned Māori as the most effective volunteer group for cleaning the shorelines at Mōtītī Island. She explained:

because we were from there, we had access to the people over there, and the knowledge of how to get people there without stepping on anyone's toes. (Hana, 30+)

Related to conceptualisations of volunteering, these culturally framed structures and communication networks were able to facilitate how participants engaged with and responded to the crisis. Consider the following excerpt from Tui (28), which illustrates how these practices operated and interacted alongside culturally embedded values of reciprocity and a sense of connectedness in the volunteer responses among Māori participants:

Rangitahi are taught by their *tuakana* [older sibling/cousin] – the older kids, look after the younger kids...that's just what happens here. (Tui, 28)

In this extract, Tui is describing the community-wide response in her small coastal town, whereby people of all ages were using their time to assist in the informal volunteer response by picking up oil and debris from the shoreline. Her comments support research from Kenney et al. (2015) which shows that an intergenerational transmission of culturally informed practices and information is integral to ensuring that crisis response is done in a culture-centred way. From my own reflexive position, I felt that Tui's comments resonated with the concept of *mahi aroha* in the way she described the relationship between the rangitahi and tuakana which reflected values of *whānaungatanga* and *whanau* ("that's just what happens here"). However, *mahi aroha* in itself is a recent construct that acts as a translation for unpaid work and, therefore, does not necessarily reflect the Māori values that drive cultural practices. As a Pākehā researcher, interpreting the experiences of Māori participants, therefore, poses challenges, because in using a Western or 'mainstream' construct of volunteering it sets up a dichotomy whereby one cultural perspective is normalised and another is presented as exotic (Simpson, Richardson & Zorn, 2009). While it might be that within an Aotearoa/New Zealand context the interaction between Māori and Pākehā worlds may be influenced by the other's worldviews, Simpson et al. (2009) remind us that it is important to avoid relying on mainstream viewpoints that are located in a seemingly value-neutral international domain, but rather to focus on the local level of lived experience in similar, local situations.

The second consideration when interpreting conceptualisations of volunteering among younger Māori participants was the intimate association between Māori values and the natural environment (Lo & Houkamau, 2012). To this end,

participant responses can be interpreted within the cultural value of *kaitiakitanga* [guardianship, protection], which underpins a social obligation among Māori to provide a safe environment. Indeed, the data from both the younger and older Māori participants suggests that the environmental context of the *Rena* crisis had a significant influence on how participants made sense of their role as a volunteer in the crisis. For example, Harry (26) explained how everyone was “all for helping out, especially if it’s got to do with their land, their fridge”. Here, Harry is referencing the ocean as a source of *kaimoana* (seafood) for Māori which was under threat due to contamination from the oil and other substances that escaped when the *Rena* grounded. Further reinforcing the relationship between the environmental nature of the crisis event and her culture, Tui (28) described the crisis as damaging to the “*wairua* [spirit]” of Māori, that is, she is referencing how the physical and environmental effects of the oil spill impacted the spiritual values of Māori, something which she is “still recovering from”. Here, Tui directly references the interconnected nature of Māori values and the environment in her explanation of the impact of the crisis event:

That whakapapa link to the environment, the ship is still there, we can’t heal completely, we probably never will, but we can get further in recovery once that ship is dealt with and our work around here is complete (Tui, 28)

Here, Tui communicates from a cultural perspective, a sense of obligation or responsibility to restore the environment to its prior state. In this sense, Tui goes on to describe how younger Māori used their experience in the crisis response “as a vehicle or a way to still be connected to their beach and their water”. In doing so, her comment can also be interpreted as meaning that by engaging in the crisis response these participants were able to work towards healing some of the cultural damage that had resulted from the crisis.

As a Pākehā from the local area, while I could resonate with feelings of disappointment, sadness, and frustration about the crisis event, it was clearly evident that my Western constructs of volunteering were markedly different from the culturally centred responses of my Māori peers. To this end, I did not feel the same sense of ownership that I interpreted as emerging from Anahera’s response

when she described how the rangatahi felt almost personally responsible for being there. Tui (28) articulated this sense of deep personal hurt when she said: “when your mauri [life force] of your area is impacted, yours is too”. These excerpts ultimately highlight the different belief systems and aspirations that Pākehā and Māori access in order to interpret, and to make sense of, their participation in the crisis response.

The third important consideration that was evident in interpreting the data was the undercurrent of interorganisational tensions that were linked to cultural practices of Māori and the practices undertaken by the official response. For example:

[there was] no consideration for the cultural values around how the clean-up would go; the central body was telling how it would be done with diggers coming in never mind bodies underneath those areas. What we did here by managing the clean-up here, we managed to mitigate those kinds of impacts happening to our community because we took control of things here, so the impacts in my opinion were on a select few, the ones that were managing that. Even though I don't think the community maybe identified or acknowledges that, that's what we felt. (Tui, 28)

Here, Tui is describing how the official response personnel did not acknowledge or attend to tikanga [cultural procedures] involving Māori spiritual traditions associated with looking after the dead: “no consideration for the cultural values around how the clean-up would go”. As a result, Tui's comments indicate that tensions developed at the interface of the crisis between the official response organisations and Māori, as she described how she “took control of things” in order to “mitigate those kinds of impacts happening to our community”. On the one hand, these tensions can be interpreted as a conflict between Māori and non-Māori regarding the expectations of community and organisation. That is, as both Māori and non-Māori interpret and enact (a Western construct of) volunteering differently, these varying interpretations can give rise to interorganisational conflict. On the other hand, these tensions highlight how interrelated cultural knowledge, values, and practices can act to benefit the wider community and environment in the response efforts. Indeed, prior studies have shown that Māori cultural values and practices facilitated community well-being and resilience

following a disaster (Boulton & Gifford 2011; Hudson & Hughes 2007; Proctor 2010), and yet there are no studies which examine *the relationship* between these cultural values and younger Māori following a crisis event. This lack of cultural focus is surprising, given that research from throughout the Pacific Nations has argued that indigenous knowledge is a valuable and necessary component for effective community response to crisis events (see Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; Phibbs, Kenney, & Solomon, 2015; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Recovery, 2008).

There have been instances of Māori people applying cultural values and practices to address crisis response and recovery within Aotearoa/New Zealand (Hudson & Hughes, 2007; Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; King, Goff, & Skipper, 2007; Phibbs et al., 2015; Proctor, 2010). Research conducted by Smith, Hamerton, Hunt, and Sargisson (2016) which focused on the local response from Maketu community members in the aftermath of the *Rena* oil spill concluded that local and cultural knowledge was immensely valuable in ensuring the success of the local clean-up efforts. Furthermore, these authors claim that the actions of the local Māori communities were underpinned by two cultural values. The first is *manaakitanga*, a term that describes looking after, nurturing, or feeding people and ensuring that they are treated well (Mead, 2003). The second is *kaitiakitanga*, a term that embraces ideas of obligation, hospitality, sustainable development, and care for future generations and relates to both environmental and social dimensions of managing human and natural resources (Kawharu, 2002; Smith et al., 2016). Both *manaakitanga* and *kaitiakitanga* are critical values that distinguish Western constructs of volunteering from the translation construct of *mahi aroha*. For example, a 2007 report on volunteering and cultural obligations from Māori perspectives (Mahi Aroha, 2007) notes that, from a Māori perspective, *mahi aroha* is understood more as a duty or cultural obligation than as something that is considered to be motivated by free will or altruism. In addition, the authors note that *mahi aroha* is also centred on group membership and working within the group for mutual benefit in relation to the past and future (Simpson et al., 2009) rather than being centred on concepts of helping or altruism. In the current study, an analysis of the cultural influences on volunteer conceptualisation among Māori is important, because they demonstrate a need to address how mainstream and other cultures make sense of their place and their role within crisis response.

Despite minimal inclusion of cultural knowledge or practices in formal disaster response planning (Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; Phibbs et al., 2015), there is currently no literature that focuses on the experiences of Māori rangatahi in regard to their crisis response. This omission highlights a significant gap in the research, as the cultural concepts and values that inform Māori responses to crises have the potential to inform Western literature on volunteering. The current study, therefore, is well situated to highlight how Western constructs of volunteering have limited applicability in Māori culture and, furthermore, how the reflexive cultural position of the researcher also presents further limitations to the interpretation of data within this field. Notwithstanding these challenges, the current study does illustrate that culturally embedded practices and values influenced the response among Māori participants, and, in doing so, this research is able to inform literature which examines how cultural values can be addressed in such a way as to aid a more collaborative, culturally sensitive, and capable response to a crisis event.

Conclusions

This chapter has focused on addressing the first research question: How was volunteering conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the *Rena* crisis? The constructions of employment among participants corroborate the generational trend around younger people volunteering in reflective and individualistic ways which are deeply embedded in modernised and individualised social environments (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003). In this view, participants saw the *Rena* crisis as an instrumental opportunity to respond to the competitive pressures of uncertain labour and educational markets (Pantea, 2013) and to enhance their employability. Whilst this finding supports the general consensus that perceptions of volunteerism are continuously shifting (Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008), it also challenges traditional theories of volunteering which fail to consider the perspectives of volunteers from both generational and culture-based perspectives.

This analysis also found that, while many participants demonstrated environmental altruism related to the nature of the *Rena* crisis, individualistic benefits overrode these orientations. On the one hand, this study challenges prior research which cites environmental orientations and social connectedness as the

driving forces for engaging in volunteerism related to the environment (Liarakou et al., 2011; McDougle et al., 2011), while, on the one, its findings here support the instrumental view of volunteering that converges with contemporary debate within Western societies, that is, that the nature of volunteering is experiencing significant changes as a result of broader social and cultural transformations (see Adams et al., 2009; Amin & Mahasan, 2013; Haski-Leventhal et al., 2008; Lorentzen & Hustinx, 2007; Medina, 2011; Pantea, 2013; Woodman & Wyn, 2014). However, these findings offer a new perspective by exploring the relatively uncharted area of the degree to which constructions of employment can override volunteers' environmental altruistic attachments in the context of a crisis event.

This chapter also revealed that the *Rena* crisis presented younger people with a unique opportunity to participate in new experience. This revelation raised two areas of new significance: First, the opportunity gave rise to an undercurrent of metastereotyping, which acted as a catalyst for younger participants to use the volunteer experience as a way to challenge perceived assumptions of their generation. This finding challenges existing literature which typically frames episodic volunteering among younger generations as something which provides them with a temporary and need-based form of volunteering that is not based on commitment (Pantea, 2013). Instead, the analysis suggests that the episodic nature of their volunteering experience responded to participants' desire to address the structural instability and uncertainty characteristic of the modern world by providing an experiential opportunity relative to their reflexive biographies which was otherwise unavailable to them in their everyday, normal lives. Secondly, participants saw their volunteer experience as an opportunity to respond to the organisational and institutional forces reflected in a risk society. To this end, participants were able to experience something adventurous and risky in a socially acceptable environment. Thus, the participants were able to reshape their lives (Jardim & Marques da Silva, 2018) through the provision of a short-term, experiential opportunity.

The study also highlighted the significant cultural influences among Māori participants including the culturally grounded, collectivist orientation that overrode individualised conceptualisations of volunteering that have previously been explored in the literature. Notably, this study also exposes the fact that there

is currently no empirical research that specifically focuses on volunteering from the perspective of the cultural worldview of younger Māori. This is an important issue, as it demonstrates not only that crisis volunteer literature privileges Western constructs, but also that research which explores volunteerism from an age or generational approach needs to carefully consider the cultural perspectives of the research participants.

Tensions evident within this analysis serve to demonstrate the importance of addressing the broader social, historical, and cultural contexts that situate volunteer conceptualisations and, in so doing, reveals the need for researchers and practitioners to place greater focus on how labour and educational market pressures, managing risk, and individual and collectivist orientations of culture can all significantly influence conceptualisations of volunteering among younger people and, in turn, affect the volunteers' participation.

The next chapter considers how cohort dynamics among the younger volunteers affected their various organising and communication responses to the crisis events.

CHAPTER 5

COHORT DYNAMICS AMONG A GENERATION OF YOUNGER VOLUNTEERS DURING A CRISIS EVENT

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the second research question: How did the generational dynamics of younger volunteers affect the various organising responses to the *Rena* event? In the study, the data suggests that generational dynamics played a significant role in the organising responses of younger volunteers and, in particular, their self-organised responses to the crisis. The first theme analyses how participants used technology in their self-organised responses to the crisis and the meanings they attached to it within different contexts. The second theme analyses how younger volunteers approached the crisis event with a fresh lens (Mannheim, 1952). Within this theme, several specific subthemes are examined from a generational perspective. These include: a quest for immediacy and visual gratification; a desire for flexible and creative environments; and, the practical and pragmatic nature of the volunteer response.

The Social Constructedness of Technology in Participants’ Organising Response

The first major theme related to generational dynamics was the significant role of technology in the communication and organising dynamics identified among participants. All 38 of the younger volunteers utilised social media to facilitate and/or engage in the crisis response. In this section, I focus on discussing the social constructedness of this technology, that is, the *meaning* behind the participants’ use of the technology and how they attach meaning to it within different contexts (Orlikowski, 1992) rather than on the technology itself. Within an organisational context, this understanding means that, rather than replacing forms of organising, technology *enables* people to organise (Fuchs, 2005).

The use of technology typically involved participants’ recruiting and/or responding to requests for others to assist in their clean-up efforts via a Facebook group or event. It was not surprising that participants felt that

social media was a necessary tool during the initial phase of recruiting and engaging personnel in response efforts. What was, however, surprising was that these pages were later either disestablished or abandoned as other forms of communication such as text messages and personal contact became favoured. For example, Wayne (22) initiated a self-organised response via Facebook and then changed his main communication channel to text messaging once the core group had been established:

In terms of the 'CLEAN ME' sculpture, I first sent messages over Facebook through an event page that was spread around in groups and shared. From there, people would send me a message and then I started a database myself of people's contact details and gear sizes and what they required so as soon as I needed someone, I could just go through that spreadsheet and use text messaging to contact them. But in terms of sending out a notification all at once to a big audience, Facebook was the best. (Wayne, 22)

Wayne's comments are interesting, because, while there is a myriad of research that examines the use of internet for facilitating social movements (see Castells, 2012; Çoban, 2016; Goldmann, 2013; White et al., 2014), it is rare for online-initiated relationships to move offline and be sustained (Baym, 2015). Drawing on Haythornthwaite's (2002, 2005) concept of media multiplexity can help with interpreting why participants used multiple media to initiate and then to sustain new and existing relationships. The concept of media multiplexity emphasises the link between relationship communication and multiple media (Haythornthwaite, 2005). The central idea is that different communication media (e.g., text messaging, social networking sites, voice call) each play a unique role in relational maintenance (Baym & Ledbetter, 2009). For example, Baron (2008) argues that the intense use of mobile phones establishes strong obligations between people to be responsive. This sense of obligation, Licoppe (2004) argues, can become an institutionalised practice and expectation among individuals who expect that these connections will be sustained. In this study, media multiplexity captures what Wayne is describing above in terms of the level of relationship and associated media use he applied to those individuals or groups in his specific communication and organising strategies. In other words, Wayne used multiple

media to initiate and sustain new and existing relationships in order to coordinate the active response to the crisis.

Participants also found that online engagement through sites such as Facebook was able to facilitate a transition into offline volunteering by providing access to new groups of people, information, and organising tools. For example, Tracey (18) details how she used social media as the initial channel for communication and then subsequently moved to offline channels to sustain the communication with her peers:

I set up a Facebook page to tell people when we were doing the nights, but during volunteering it was face-to-face, texting, and calling to keep in contact with others and to update them. Facebook was really helpful to get more people involved. When I met people, it was really helpful to direct them to the Facebook page so that they could see what was going on, so it was really helpful to get organised...I ended up doing more texting than Facebook in the end, as I could text people who were really interested directly; it just seemed easier than Facebook. Facebook is not the best for me personally...for me it's fidgety. (Tracey, 18)

Like Wayne, Tracey refers to multiple communication methods including Facebook, Facebook Messenger, texting, and face-to-face. In the above excerpt, Tracey also give examples of ways in which volunteers used different methods to meet different needs or take advantage of situations. For example, she used Facebook for recruiting personnel and texting for direct communication with individuals who “were really interested”. This decision suggests that Tracey perceived texting to be more personal and/or more immediate than Facebook or Messenger despite both functions’ ability to communicate with individuals directly. This choice enabled Tracey to engage with others on a more personal and private level and to gain a realistic picture of who was serious about coming along to the event and the resources that would be required.

Other interview excerpts revealed that, whilst Facebook might have been highly practical for engaging others initially, the level of interest that a Facebook event page or post attracted through likes or people clicking to attend the event did not necessarily translate into an offline commitment to participate:

My friend Jodie put something on Facebook checking for people to volunteer and to come down to the Mount SLSC along with her. I was there every single night for 2 weeks...Jodie said I was the only person that came down from her Facebook post, which was quite funny. (Susan, 20)

Here, Susan seems to be hinting at an expectation that attention or interest generated from the initial Facebook post should have resulted in people's engaging in the event offline, yet as illustrated in this case, this expectation was unrealistic. In addition, Susan's account also speaks to the power of other, more direct forms of communication such as face-to-face, phone, and text messaging for engaging with participants who had a real level of commitment. While interaction via social media has become a significant form of experiencing *relationships* among younger generations (Davis, 2012; Subrahmanyam & Smahel, 2010), text messaging is argued to create a more intimate sense of *copresence* between younger people (Davis Smith, 2006; Ito & Okabe, 2005). As evident in the above excerpts, the sense of copresence that was created through text messaging at an individual rather than a group level also served as a more accountable level of commitment and involvement. Indeed, Soriano, Roldan, Cheng, and Oco (2016) argue that signing up to a Facebook group or event page can be considered low-level volunteer engagement, and whilst it may indicate a promising level of involvement and commitment to the volunteer effort, this act has little material impact (Soriano et al., 2016).

While social media platforms were not always sustained as a preferred form of communication following an event taking place, participants did find that online platforms provided a functional environment for brainstorming and updating networks of users with information about the crisis. To this end, participants described how they turned to social media as a convenient and practical assembly area for communicating their feelings and actions about the crisis and to discuss and organise ways to get involved:

Wayne was really good; he set up a Mōtītī Island Facebook page. You could brainstorm with young people and say, "Here is the problem, what's the solution? Any ideas? (Kerryn, 29)

In this instance, Kerryn describes the use of Facebook as a vehicle for organising volunteer efforts; that is, it provided a space for participants to discuss *how* they were going to organise certain initiatives (i.e., “brainstorm[ing]”) and utilised the capability of engaging with multiple users at one time. Given the unpredictable and ever-changing nature of the crisis event, it was important to these users that their plans were based on updated information and that their platform for communicating ensured that all users were receiving the same information at the same time:

We had a Facebook group for the *Rena*...it was the only way everyone knew what was going on at the same time...If we didn't have Facebook, it would have been pretty much impossible just because things were changing all the time. (Matthew, 19)

Here, Matthew reinforces the functional role of Facebook for keeping their plans relative to the unfolding events on the ground: “things were changing all the time”. His comments also hint at a reliance on Facebook as the most practical medium to use when engaging a large number of people.

Social media was also significantly utilised by younger volunteers to maintain volunteer *retention* and harness support throughout their online social networks. Seven of the 38 younger volunteers had recently graduated and 8 were in their final year of study. These participants would often draw upon their recently acquired professional networks to mobilise resources such as food and donations to aid volunteer initiatives. For example, in a response to a throwaway comment from a contract worker cleaning the beach that “he hadn't eaten all day”, Georgia (18) created a *Rena-Kai-Run* page on Facebook to draw attention to this issue. Working at the time as a radio intern, she decided to promote the page on air. Although she admittedly did not expect it to get “really, really big, really, really fast” (Georgia, 18), within 3 days over 435 people had joined the page assisting efforts in collecting donated and purchased food from the community and delivering it to contract and volunteer workers along the coastline:

Within a few days there were 500 people on the page, it was huge...I shared it on *SunLive* and *Bay of Plenty Times* Facebook pages as well,

because the way everything is going is social media. Then I guess people saw it through people 'liking' it. (Georgia, 18)

Georgia's comments are interesting, because they highlight how she specifically found Facebook to be the best way to gain support for her page ("the way everything is going is social media"). While it was the technology behind the social media platform which transmitted the message, importantly, it was the social embeddedness with the user (Georgia) through her strategic knowledge in deciding where to post the message (on the Facebook site of two media outlets and the radio station) that resulted in exposing the communication to such a broad audience.

Relatedly, both older and younger participants felt that the younger volunteers offered a superior ability compared to their older counterparts when it came to social networking. For example, Logan (30+) told me that he was "blown away" after asking a younger volunteer in his self-organised group to "bring along some mates" to assist in the group's cleaning efforts at Matakana Island. The next day so many people turned up that "the line went along Pilot Bay and up around the campsite, right over". Participants also described how they turned to their social networks using Facebook as their main source of information regarding the crisis. They stated that social media provided more up-to-date and a more transparent coverage of what was happening following the crisis event compared to the coverage within the controlled traditional media:

I actually found out most of what was happening through friends on Facebook...I heard about what everyone was doing under the radar, who we knew, through conversations on Facebook. That's how we found out everything...I wanted to know what was going on and whether more oil was coming off. (Katie, 27);

I think young people's engagement came down to social media because at that time it was the 'light' as to what was happening. On that day, people were going down to the beach and posting photos of what they were seeing that morning. They woke up and there was fresh oil on the beach and they were then posting that on Facebook. (Henry, 27)

Discursively, Henry's (27) metaphorical use of the word "light" suggests that without the use of social media to communicate these "younger people" were otherwise left in the dark or excluded somehow from what was happening. Katie's (27) prior reference to finding out what people were doing "under the radar" further reinforces this idea. However, in the absence of analysis of the mainstream media reporting of the crisis, it may have been that Katie and Henry simply *felt* that they had been "left in the dark" either because they lacked knowledge about how to navigate these other communication channels or because they may have been so engrossed in their own online world at the time. In response to further probing, Henry described his frustrations at being unable to engage as a volunteer (the OBC had not yet been established) despite his and his friends' being highly motivated. By engaging in social media, however, both Henry (27) and Katie (27) were able to feel informed about events, and they used this information to determine alternative ways they could engage in the crisis response.

Also of significance was the way that participants consistently described their use of Facebook as a way of either distributing or gaining information about the crisis through photographs:

I put some photos onto Facebook about things I had seen. Everyone was devastated; most were uneducated about what was happening. So I turned into a bit of a liaison for my friends especially from overseas about what was actually happening, how bad it actually was. (Jonty, 22);

Someone posted a photo of all the bags they had collected of oil up in Waihi and that was really interesting to see all the bags of oil up there because you just thought *woah*. (Jason, 22);

I'm from Auckland, so I took lots of photos. I don't know if they saw the whole of what was happening. My friends and family were really shocked when they saw what was going on. (Grace, 22)

These comments illustrate a range of intents and impacts behind participants' acts of posting photos on Facebook. For example, Jonty posted photos as a way of keeping a visual account of the crisis for his social networks that were geographically distanced, which meant that they were able to inform others of

“what was actually happening, how bad it actually was”. For Grace, the impact on her friends and family was significant: “[they] were really shocked when they saw what was going on”. This visual form of storytelling meant that, unlike reading about the crisis, people were able to *see* the unfolding crisis through the online posts and, in the absence of first-hand evidence, the degree of devastation. The impact of having photographs documenting the crisis events via Facebook is highlighted in the comments from Jason in his reflection on seeing the image of oil-filled bags: “you just thought *woah*”. In this way, the photos – in the absence of accompanying words – were able to communicate a story that was open to interpretation by the audience. Thus, as a source of information about the crisis, this photo narrative was very different from the oral and textual news releases provided by the print, radio, and television media.

While a number of studies interrogate the social media posting of photographs by young people (see, for example, Alloway, Runac, Qureshi, & Kemp, 2014; Brunell, Tumblin, & Buelow, 2014; Gil de Zúñiga, Jung, & Valenzuela, 2012), these postings are often linked to egoic motivations related to individual self-promotion and narcissism. Within this study, there was little evidence to suggest that the younger volunteers were posting photographs to promote themselves. Indeed, in the above excerpts, participants described using images of the environment without any reference to themselves being included in the image. A more useful way of interpreting the intent behind the participants’ postings is that they felt that these images were able to maintain a more truthful account of the crisis among their peer networks. Relatedly, a global survey conducted by Deloitte Consulting has shown that feeling connected, updated, and involved through short and frequent communication which is honest and provides clarity through open feedback channels was the highest-ranking imperative among the younger generation (Rai, 2012). In this sense, the photos uploaded to Facebook by the participants provided options to connect with an online audience through comments and reactions to the post. That the posts were from *known* contacts in their social network community may have heightened the degree to which audience members trusted the information that was being shared. Indeed, research from Jansen, Sobel, and Cook (2010) highlights that younger generations are most trusting of the opinions shared amongst their own known networks.

There are many important factors to consider in analysing and interpreting participants' use of technology during the crisis. On the one hand, the utilisation of social media as a main form of communication reflects the perpetual online connectivity of younger generations (Montgomery et al., 2004). This connectivity has been described as a lifeline, a daily necessity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), a digital generation (Baars, Dannefer, Phillipson, & Walker, 2016; Buckingham & Willett, 2006; Jenkins, 2008; Palfrey & Gasser, 2008), and "an extension of their brain" (Black, 2010, p. 95) which shapes the way younger generations process, share, and gather information (Martin, 2005). This notion was articulated by Matthew (19) as follows:

Being online was definitely the way to go. That's where everyone hears about stuff our age and where all the communication happens...it is essential. (Matthew, 19)

For Matthew, using social media as a preferred communication channel did not require a significant change of habit nor a need to step outside his comfort zones to get involved in the crisis response (Raynes-Goldie & Walker, 2008). In other words, he turned to social media as a natural default response for gaining information, communicating with others, and organising himself in the response efforts.

Another way of interpreting the examples in this section is through participants' use of technology as a tool for enhancing and empowering real-world action as opposed to a replacement for traditional forms of interactions (Raynes-Goldie & Walker, 2008; Valaitis, 2005). In terms of the concept of media multiplexity (Haythornthwaite, 2002, 2005), Facebook was one form of communication technology that was employed alongside many others (such as text messaging and phone) for specific functions such as facilitating action (Raynes-Goldie & Walker, 2008) and as an empowering mediating structure for participants who felt displaced and marginalised from participation in the crisis response. Because social media was able to *enhance* self-organised events by publicising the communication to a large, connected audience, its use facilitated an *empowering* way for the social networks to enact their volunteer participation in the crisis. One way social media did so was by removing structural barriers that may have

impeded community engagement (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). Moreover, by attracting a large audience, participants found a functional way to bypass authorities and engage in the crisis response and, thus, to provide them with a way of reconciling their sense of individualisation (Spreitzer & Doneson, 2005). Hardy and Leiba-O'Sullivan (1998) argue that empowerment is characterised by equipping the powerless to acquire, manage, and control resources in order to contribute to effective social action. In this study, the social media-driven, self-organised efforts gave the participants the power to manage and control their own contributions to social action (crisis response).

In summary, participants' use of particular forms of technology provided different functions in their communication and organising strategies in response to the crisis. In this sense, media multiplexity was as fundamental to the relationship between participants involved in the crisis response as it was to the meaning that they attached to the technology itself. The next section builds upon the argument that generational dynamics affected participants' organising responses to the crisis event. Based on the premise that younger generations offer a fresh approach to a crisis event, the section examines the ways that their generational context influenced organising dynamics in responding to the crisis event.

A Fresh Lens Approach to Crisis Response

The second major theme focuses on how participants approached their organising response to the crisis event with a fresh lens (Mannheim, 1952). Because younger generations are lacking in life experience compared to their older counterparts, Mannheim (1952) argues that a fresh lens creates opportunities for younger generations to see problems, issues, and events from a distinctly different perspective from that of older people. To this end, the findings suggest that participants approached the crisis event in a distinctive way (see Lubinski et al., 1996; Mannheim, 1952; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007) which set them apart from other generations and, in turn, influenced their organising response to the crisis. Within this theme, three subthemes are examined. The first subtheme examines the younger volunteers' quest to achieve a sense of immediacy and instant gratification in their response efforts; the second subtheme focuses on their innovative and creative responses to the crisis; and, the

third subtheme analyses their practical and pragmatic approach to the crisis both in terms of how they conceptualised the crisis itself and in their organising response.

A quest for immediacy and gratification.

The first subtheme focused on the how younger volunteers reflected notions of immediacy and urgency in their response to the crisis event. These were communicated in two ways. First, they felt a sense of urgency to respond to the crisis as quickly as possible, despite health and safety warnings that the officials had imposed. Secondly, they placed great significance on their desire to gain an immediate and visual sense of accomplishment as a result of their volunteer efforts.

In total, 20 of the 38 of the younger volunteers described a sense of eagerness and urgency around their desire to participate in the crisis response. For example: “Young people just wanted to go, grab the bucket, get some overalls, and get out there” (Moana, 22). Two participants also specifically used the word “immediacy” (Katie, 27; Susan, 20) when describing their eagerness to participate in the response efforts. It was also apparent throughout the interviews that that younger volunteers prioritised an urgent response over administrative requirements and safety concerns. For example:

everyone wanted to clean up the beach as fast as possible. I mean you don't want to not clean up the beach just because you were waiting for a couple of processes to go through. (Cameron, 29)

This attitude of mind meant that for the many of the younger volunteers health and safety warnings from authorities also slipped down the priority list, as they felt pressured to capitalise on the motivated networks of peers they had organised:

officials were saying we had to keep off the beach. I was like ‘yeah, but we have this massive resource of like 30 people’. (Kerryn, 29)

Here, Kerryn is coupling her sense of urgency with the fact that, because she already had a (self-organised) group of volunteers, she did not want to deter their motivation to help with the response efforts by having to conform to health and

safety procedures or lengthy administrative and registration protocol.

These perspectives were not isolated to the *Rena* crisis. During my interview with Sam Johnson (21), leader the of the SVA, he talked about the innate desire for urgency among his peers in the aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes. In the following excerpt, Sam describes the simple, but effective, adjustments that had to be made in the organisation of volunteers to prevent frustrations arising:

...we learnt pretty early on that you had to send large groups into a house so that they got the job done quickly and so that they were able to see the results early on. They were able to see instant gratification and it was simple, no hard processes...So simple that there were no deterrents from them being involved. (Sam Johnson, SVA Leader, 21)

Identical sentiments were expressed by the young *Rena* volunteers. For example, Cameron (29) expressed his strong desire “to get the beach looking back to normal as fast as possible”. Relatedly, Pim (OBC Manager) said he was surprised how many younger people were eager to be involved in the *Rena* response, given that he had previously struggled to engage young people as volunteers for dune restoration and tree planting efforts. Nigel (30+) who was also involved in the management of OBC told me that, compared to other volunteer opportunities, younger people were particularly drawn to the *Rena* crisis because it “was far more immediate; they could go on and make a difference quite fast” (Nigel, 30+). It also appeared that seeing the devastation of the crisis event had a powerful impact on the younger volunteers:

If you knew there was 400 tonnes of oil in the ocean, but you couldn't see it, you wouldn't probably do anything about it. But if you saw 400 tonnes of oil on the beach, you would want to do something about it. (Henry, 27)

The above comment is revealing, because Henry implies that the visual impact of the crisis was critical to his subsequent engagement as a volunteer, more so even than either the nature of the crisis or the impact of the crisis. This sense of being able to *visually* appreciate the effects of their contributions was further heightened by the degree to which the thick, black, spilled oil had changed the previously

pristine shoreline. This image had a profound effect on the younger volunteers, a response which initiated in many cases an emotional call to action:

I thought it was a lot more exciting because you get to see it happening. Whereas if you volunteer and raise funds for Red Cross or something, you don't actually get to see the difference your contribution is making. (Rowan, 18);

The *Rena* was a very in your face disaster [where] you could see the results of your work quicker. (Aimee, 17)

This sense of material reality described by the participants is revealing, because, even though many nonvolunteers were able to appreciate the visual changes through mediated communication, being *physically* involved in appreciating this difference seemed critical. To this end, participants often spoke about how the condition of the beach changed as a direct result of their volunteer contributions, with one noting that it was “amazing” (Jason, 22) to see the difference they had made at the end of the day. One volunteer leader described this feeling as a “visual sense of achievement” (Wayne, 22) which seemed to keep everyone’s spirits high and motivated:

I like to see the difference being made, I like to see the before and after. I like to see ‘this is how bad it was before, but because I jumped in, this is what it is like now’. You can see the change and how it is better for it. (Wayne, 22)

Here, Wayne specifically demonstrates the importance of a personal contribution to the visual changes (“because *I* jumped in, this is what it is like now”), thereby forming a connection between volunteering and appreciating the immediate and visual sense of gratification from one’s actions. Another example which corroborated this connection came during the interview with Camden (27), one of the Sustainable Coastline (SC) volunteer leaders, who said they often observed the younger volunteers favouring areas of the beach which had large areas of oil globules and significant amounts of ship remnants strewn across, as opposed to the areas which had small details of oil. The latter, Camden (27) told me, made

younger volunteers feel “disheartened” and that a few hours spent cleaning small pieces of oil and debris had a “demoralising” effect on their morale.

Accounts which illustrate how younger volunteers had a strong connection to a sense of immediacy both in their response to the crisis and in relation to the visually gratifying effects of the volunteer contributions can be tied to innate dynamics reminiscent of their age cohort. While Crampton and Hodge (2009) provide a fairly generalised view of the generational cohort by suggesting that they simply lack patience, other scholars provide a more rounded approach by suggesting that being surrounded considerably by computer technology since birth has significantly shaped their expectations. To this end, these scholars (Black, 2010; Martin, 2005) suggest that the fast-paced nature of this type of learning and their experiences with information processing have enhanced their ability to evaluate, solve problems, and make decisions within constraints of time and space. As a result, younger generations expect to feel a sense of accomplishment, obtain immediate feedback, and to know the where, what, how, and why of *today* as opposed to the long term (Black, 2010; Martin, 2005). In this study, achieving an immediate sense of accomplishment was certainly evident in the way that younger volunteers communicated and organised themselves and, in particular, those who were involved in the cleaning response.

While these connections that link the generational dynamics of younger volunteers and the effects these had on their volunteering experience are encouraging, there is currently no literature that explores the intersections that link *either* visual gratification or immediate gratification among younger volunteers during the context of a crisis event, despite a multitude of studies which clearly demonstrate that generational dynamics have a significant effect on how younger people communicate and organise within organisational and workplace settings (see, for example, Gibson et al., 2009; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge et al., 2010). For example, the desire for younger people to be independent and not micromanaged (Bennett, Pitt, & Price, 2012; Black, 2010; Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Gibson et al., 2009; Kowske et al., 2010), with a focus on collaborative teamwork (Fernandez, 2009; Islam, Cheong, Yusuf, & Desa, 2011), and a desire to establish and maintain social connections within workplace and organisational settings (Twenge et al., 2010).

This study, therefore, helps to extend knowledge of how younger people respond to crisis events. It does so by examining how the specific context of a crisis event presents a particular and often dramatic set of (visual) stimuli which are not evident within other volunteer contexts. At times, this factor, in turn, significantly influences how they organised and communicated during the crisis event.

A creative and innovative approach.

The second subtheme focused on the creative and innovative dynamics of younger volunteers in their approach to solving issues presented by the crisis. Importantly, this approach saw them negotiate existing structures and procedures that had been established via the OBC and from their own, individualised, self-organised responses which allowed for a flexible environment that could cater to their creative response dynamics. Analysis of this subtheme details how these dynamics are generationally embedded and outlines how the data was interpreted in consideration of the historical and situational context of their cohort.

Throughout the interviews, there was an overwhelming perspective from both the younger and older participants that younger volunteers presented a different approach to the crisis event compared to the official response. To this end, almost one third (12) of the younger volunteers interviewed used the word “fresh” in describing their approach to the crisis. For example:

Fresh ideas, different ways of doing things, sometimes better. (Tracey, 18);

They [younger people] bring something very fresh, very nice to the team. (Mary, 27);

...a young perspective and fresh ideas that might not have happened before. (Georgia, 18);

Younger people have a fresh perspective. I mean you have a lot of people stuck in their ways and if you have young minds then that's good. (Susan, 20)

In these excerpts, Tracey, Mary, and Georgia are using the word “fresh” in a positive framework, with reference to a new, novel, or untainted approach that

younger people brought to the crisis response. Susan's comment, however, is more revealing, because, although it seems she is also using the term "fresh" in the same context, she also implies an undertone of tension by suggesting that those who did not have "young minds" were not progressive ("stuck in their ways"). In the absence of explanation about whether Susan is referring to crisis officials or older people in general (or both), she is, nevertheless, proposing that the addition of younger people to a crisis response brings something that is "good".

The fresh perspective referred to in the interviews also translated into the creative solutions that were offered by the younger volunteers. Kowhai (29) said that the younger volunteers were "always brimming with ideas" for finding solutions to issues. For example, Harry (26), who was a member of a self-organised group, explained that he arrived at a local beach which had been covered in a thick blanket of oil from high seas the night before. His team arrived on the scene at the same time as a group from the official response organisation. He observed what he described as their "inefficiencies of double-backing on yourself or covering the same ground twice", so together he and his group members (all younger volunteers) scanned the area and discussed everyone's various ideas before finally settling on a split team approach and meeting in the middle. While this example reflects a process of self-organising amongst these volunteers, it also illustrates a collaborative approach to trialling new and innovative solutions.

Other examples of younger volunteers' innovations were more far-reaching, despite being simple in design. One example of innovation was exemplified in a logbook created by a 17-year-old volunteer on one of the neighbouring islands; the logbook recorded "who did what, when, what they recorded, what resources they used" (Hana, iwi leader, 30+). Because the logbook went into plenty of detail, for example, it also noted "what the tide was, what was washing up" (Hana, 30+), it became a valuable resource for crisis response management. In my interviews with Pim (OBC leader) and Nigel who was also involved in the management of the OBC, both individuals noted the significance of this logbook. Here, they explained how it served as a recording system that meant when DOC (Department of Conservation), ICC (Incident Command Centre), Maritime NZ or other contracting parties wanted information about various wildlife, oil locations,

or arising issues, there was a way to locate and describe it. Given the complexities and various personnel involved in the crisis response which often led to miscommunication, duplication, and confusion, the logbook provided a one-stop-shop to be updated on activities when returning from periods of absence: “all I need to do if I needed to find out what had been going on was just to go and sit in the marae and read the logbook, it was all in there” (Hana, 30+). Hana went on to describe the logbook as “incredibly helpful and useful”, “awesome”, and also “quite candid” and explained the dual function it served by way of “backing up young people who were always being blamed when things went wrong”. Therefore, via the logbook, the volunteers could prove, for example, “no, I was here, we were doing this” (Hana, 30+). Hana’s comments are revealing, because whilst she is praising both the younger volunteers and the benefits of the logbook, she also situates these comments within an environment which suggests “young people were always being blamed when things went wrong” (Hana, 30+). Therefore, through her reference to the logbook, Hana is suggesting that it provided a useful tool for defending the participants’ movements in order to maintain or protect her innocence.

Another innovative initiative was developed on the mainland by two younger volunteers who were also university students and were searching for oiled wildlife as part of a group outside of the official volunteer response. To address the “inconsistencies with where people were collecting [oiled wildlife] from” (Susan, 20), the students decided to capture data in a clear and consistent, systematic, quantitative format by way of transferring field notes into an Excel spreadsheet format, drawing on learning from their university studies. This initiative created significant efficiencies for those volunteers tasked to act on the basis of this data. The initiative was so successful that the data was subsequently used in student research projects and in reporting by the official response authorities: “...that they were actually using our ideas was really cool to see...to see that we weren’t just soldiers; we were actually contributing. That was really cool” (Susan, 20). Here, the use of the word “soldiers” is revealing, because it suggests that Susan felt that by volunteering under the official response banner she would need to conform to a regimented, strict set of expectations and rules, much like that of a soldier who must remain in line at all times. She contrasts this metaphor by explaining that in volunteering outside of the official response, she was able to develop and then

utilise her own ideas rather than adopt a preestablished set of procedures and tasks.

Younger volunteers also demonstrated an affinity for thinking outside of the box. An example of this thinking was seen with a group of self-organised younger volunteers who had organised a food delivery service to volunteers and employees who were working at various response locations. This initiative had come about after visiting the wildlife response headquarters when the young volunteers noticed that a lot of people were vegetarian and/or vegan and, therefore, were not eating the limited provisions that had been provided on site for them:

...so we made vegetarian curries and heaps of vegan food because we thought that if they were working with the animals they would probably eat like that. We took it there and they were so grateful because no one else had taken that into consideration. (Georgia, 18)

Other initiatives involved a younger volunteer who trialled homemade sieves made from various types of wire to remove small amounts of oil from the beach. This initiative was later adopted by ICC and resulted in the individual stating that he felt “really validated and recognised” (Jerry, 25). This comment from Jerry suggests that he gained a sense of empowerment as a result of his idea’s being adopted by the official response organisation. This example was particularly interesting, because it seemed as if younger volunteers were involving themselves in self-organising initiatives to maintain a sense of distance from the official response. Furthermore, the undercurrent of tensions that was evident at times indicated that younger volunteers did not feel comfortable being a part of an organisation that they felt stifled their sense of innovation and creativity. Yet in this example, Jerry’s acknowledgement of his initiative’s being adopted by the official crisis response organisation in a positive framework hints that his (and possibly others’) tensions were not necessarily directed at the official response itself, but rather, towards the *environment* which he felt was not conducive to creative thinking.

In order to interpret these findings, it is useful to reflect on what Martin (2005) describes as a typical behaviour for younger people to crave results, but in doing so, to have the “freedom to figure out the process to achieve them” (p. 40).

Indeed, Martin (2005) argues that organisational displays of creativity and innovation among younger generations can be understood as part of their continual quest for independence. Research from other scholars corroborates the argument that younger generational cohorts consistently seek forms of independence in reference to their organising and management styles within the workplace (see, for example, Anantamula & Shrivastav, 2012; Twenge et al., 2010). Interpreting the creativity and innovative dynamics of the younger *Rena* crisis participants as a symptom of their quest for independence is promising, because it suggests that they could be using these alternative ways of thinking as a vehicle for removing themselves from a dependence on an established, systematic response to the crisis.

Another way of interpreting participants' creative and innovative crisis response is within the realms of *socially entrepreneurial*-orientated volunteering (see De Hart & Dekker, 1999; Isham, Kimberly, & Kolodinsky, 2006; Robinson, 2001; Weller, 2008). While this is still an emerging research area, the role of social entrepreneurship in addressing urgent, yet marginalised or unpopular social problems is well documented (Bornstein, 2007; De Clerq & Honig, 2011; Praszkie, Nowak, & Coleman, 2010). Defined by Tapsell and Woods (2010) as "the construction and pursuit of opportunities for transformative social change through innovative activities occurring within social communities in a historical and cultural context" (p. 550), social entrepreneurial acts are focused on opportunity and innovation. Within this study, participants' experiences resonate with forms of *socially entrepreneurial* acts, first, in their various displays of creativity and innovation in overcoming barriers and finding solutions and, secondly, through the focus on interrelationships as a key function of their networked response.

According to Martin (2005), socially entrepreneurial acts are achieved via exposure to a myriad of belief systems, cultures, and advanced uses of technology, creating a generation unwilling to accept one solution or process until others are explored and considered. Previous studies have illustrated the socially entrepreneurial orientation of younger volunteers who respond to crisis events. For example, in the 2011 Tōhoku earthquake in Japan, younger volunteers challenged existing structures and procedures to identify new solutions to the

urgent social needs that were presented by the event. These volunteers were labelled “quiet mavericks” (Toivonen, 2011, p. 55), forcing officials to reconsider the institutional mechanisms often employed during a response which can block these crucial volunteer contributions. Other studies of socially entrepreneurial responses to crisis events include examples following Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding of New Orleans in 2005 (Chamlee-Wright & Storr, 2010; Kroll-Smith, Jenkins, & Baxter, 2007) and after 9/11 (Lowe & Fothergill, 2003). Lewis (2013) also conceptualises the formation of the SVA following the 2010 and 2011 Christchurch earthquakes as a socially entrepreneurial act that resulted in multiple forms of creativity and innovation. The opportunity for the current study to contribute to this area of the literature is encouraging. Indeed, Lewis (2013) argues that if better insight of the enactment of social entrepreneurial acts among volunteers during times of crisis can be achieved, then there is the potential to harness the meaning behind these acts during times of normalcy.

A simpler outlook: Unclouded or inexperienced?

The third subtheme focused on participants’ pragmatic approach to their conceptualisation of, and response to, the crisis. To this end, participants conveyed a practical, simple, and straightforward approach, which provided a strong contrast to the strict regulations and procedures that had been established by the authorities. This analysis also considers that cohort dynamics influenced the rise of intergenerational tensions during the response efforts.

Throughout the interviews, many of the younger participants felt that the official response efforts were unnecessarily complex and on 10 occasions used the word “complicated” when describing the approach taken by authorities. For example, Henry (27) felt that authorities often made “simple” things such as explaining how to remove oil from the sand and into bags overly complicated: “It doesn’t need to be rocket science”. Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that younger volunteers’ frustration towards what they felt were overly cautious procedures imposed by authorities seemed to have a patronising effect on them:

we are not stupid, we know we have to wear the clothes, we know we cannot eat the oil, we know we have to put it in bags. (Mary, 27)

While Mary's comments convey that she felt patronised in the way she was being communicated with, the objectivity of her words reveals a very simple approach to an issue that involved elements of risks to health and safety. This approach was similarly reflected in many of the other interviews with younger volunteers, particularly in relation to self-organised responses, where there were no established procedures to follow, nor preexisting information to turn to for advice. However, rather than view the unpredictable nature of their self-organising as chaotic, the participants appeared to maintain a straightforward approach which, in turn, worked to their advantage in finding effective solutions to the ever-changing environment. For example, Kowhai (29) described how her "mahi" [work] was self-directed whereby "common sense" was sought in order to undertake tasks at hand. Here, Kowhai uses the term "common sense" to describe what she considered a logical way of reaching a solution. In a similar vein, Jonty (22) told me that he and his peers would often just find their own "more logical way to do it", when describing their self-organised responses. Approaching tasks logically was also reflected in an interview with Moana (22) where she explained that because the shorelines were experiencing particularly high tides, it was important that the oil-filled bags were placed further up the beach to prevent their washing back into the ocean overnight: "In the first few days the official response didn't even think of that". Seeming the obvious thing to do, according to Moana and her friends, they spent the day moving the bags that had been filled by OBC volunteers further up the sand dunes and closer to the access points in anticipation of the bags' being collected by the trucks.

Another example highlighting the less complicated style of response among younger participants was when Sustainable Coastlines (SC), a volunteer based, charitable organisation took over the role of managing the volunteer response (previously managed by OBC). The two staff members who spearheaded the project were 27 and 25 years old and so fell within the same cohort as the younger volunteers within the current study. Both individuals commented on being particularly conscious of applying a "simpler" approach to the response procedures, which they described as having been "over-complicated" due to significant administrative and systematic demands. According to their website, Sustainable Coastlines prides itself on being a young company, driven by a small team of hardworking staff and a large network of volunteers. Focused on

educating the public through clean-up events, awareness campaigns, and planting projects, the efforts of its members have resulted in numerous awards for the organisation. The appointment of SC to the frontline of OBC appeared to shift the opinions of many younger people of the OBC programme significantly. This shift was directly reflected in the following excerpt from Cameron (29), who described how the appointment of a younger person to lead the volunteer response made a difference:

...there's something different about a really young guy rocking up who was there for one purpose and one purpose only which was to sort this out, as opposed to some old guy standing there in a high vis vest saying, 'don't go on the beach, we need to sort out this, that and the other thing'.

(Cameron, 29)

Here, Cameron compares how he felt that younger and older people differed in their approach to the crisis. What is particularly interesting here is that both of the people he refers to had the same authoritative role in the crisis response, thus, making the focus of his comment rest more the age of the person delivering the message and their associated approach than on the seniority or hierarchy of that person. The potential influence of this peer call-to-action was reinforced in the spontaneous recruitment of volunteers after an unexpected dump of oil following a particularly large set of waves. Nigel (30+) told me that because the incident occurred outside of the scheduled OBC volunteer shifts the organisation was unsure what to do. Rather spontaneously, Nigel recalls a "young guy grabbing a megaphone" which within half an hour, resulted in his recruiting 40 fellow younger people, with their gumboots and rakes ready to assist. Nigel questioned the likelihood of this response's happening had the recruiter been older:

...it's an interesting point isn't it, that the person sending the message, and whether the [perceived] age of that person is a factor in who turns up. Is a young person more likely to affect young people turning up? (Nigel, 30+)

From an organisational standpoint Nigel asks whether the age of the leader has an effect on the success of the message. In a study conducted by Chi, Maier, and Gursoy (2013) which examined employees' perceptions of younger and older managers based on generational cohorts, the authors found that the workplace

perceptions among younger generational cohorts were at odds with those of older generational cohorts. A critical implication of this difference, their findings revealed, was that that younger cohorts of employees perceived that younger managers had a higher level of competency compared to that of older managers. These findings support research from Furunes and Mykletun (2005) which also evidenced within-generational-group favourability. Within my study, it appeared that both Cameron and Nigel's accounts reveal a degree of within-generational-group favourability, considering that, in both instances, participants were forming judgements and assumptions based on hypothetical people based solely on their cohort.

Alongside younger participants' simpler approach to the response efforts was an apparent looseness in their consideration for protocol and regulations imposed by the authorities. While their casual approach to protocol was noticed by the official personnel I interviewed, what was revealing was that both younger and older participants interviewed shared the same perspective as to why younger people might have presented this dynamic. For example, Harry (25) told me that, compared to their older counterparts, younger generations are:

...not cluttered with the bullshit. It could just be [our] inexperience. We haven't had those situations occur in their past... We see the issue as cleaning the oil, wash down birds. We don't see in the past this was the land of whoever, and they have these rights, they don't care about that. We just know a job needs to be done and we will volunteer to do it. So, in some cases, our inexperience is an advantage. (Harry, 25)

While Harry is not specific about what he meant exactly by the term "bullshit", he situates his comments historically, in his example of describing issues that older generations might have experienced during their life that are not necessarily relevant within the lives of his peer cohort. Using this contextual framework, it can be surmised that Harry is using the term "inexperience" quite literally, to imply that his cohort simply has not lived as long and, therefore, experienced as much as older cohorts and, as a result, younger people have fewer preconceived judgements, assumptions, and prejudices that might impact how they make sense of their volunteering experience.

Interestingly, the same term, “bullshit”, was used by another younger volunteer who was advised against engaging in clean-up efforts outside of the OBC. When I asked her why, despite the warnings, she decided to withdraw her interest from the OBC and participate in a self-organised response, she told me: “[we] don’t care about the bullshit, [we] just want to get the job done” (Jamee, 25). Like Harry above, Jamee also spoke with a sense of defiance in relation to rules and regulation and a sense of urgency in her response that was not possible through the OBC. In doing so, she is also exhibiting a loose sense of loyalty or commitment to the OBC, a volunteer organisation that she had registered with, and then withdrew from. While her actions and associated comments resonate with research that argues younger people are less likely to be embedded in notions of loyalty than their older counterparts, her comments (like Harry’s), also reflect the sociocultural positioning of today’s younger generations in the context of reflexive modernity. In this context, younger people are likely to take advantage of new social conditions (Cole, 2004), challenge the social conditions and dominant structures of society (Jeffrey, 2013), and subvert institutionalised currents (Bauman, 2001; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002; Wood, 2010). In other words, participants constructed their lack of life experience as of value, because doing so allowed them to challenge the established crisis response procedures imposed by the OBC and engage in their own reflexive and purposeful response. This reflexive approach was explained by Jerry (25):

We [younger people] are fresh; we haven’t been crushed by the world yet. Older people have so many problems ... younger people are not as tangled up in complications. (Jerry, 25)

In his description, Jerry positions himself and his peers in a privileged insider role, where they were able to critique the direction of the society before them and, from this position, forge their own direction. Furthermore, Jerry’s comments draw parallels to what Mannheim (1952) and others (see Lubinski et al., 1996; Mannheim, 1952; Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Silbereisen & Lerner, 2007) describe as younger generations’ responding to social issues. In this sense, Jerry is suggesting that a fresh lens has provided a more objective view of both the crisis event – and the wider social environment in which it takes place – which has

enabled the approach of himself and his peers to be less complicated than the one which is taken by older cohorts.

I found it very surprising that an older participant (Anahera, 30+), who was representing the local iwi as a volunteer leader, told me that she also felt her (older) cohorts were significantly influenced by their historical situatedness: “Older people are more clouded because of all the politics and rubbish going on”. Here, Anahera is also suggesting – as the younger volunteers were – that individuals from older cohorts were disadvantaged by their inability to view the crisis event objectively. Anahera reflected on an instance where she withdrew her self-organised team of volunteers from cleaning in a particular area because of fears that a group of nearby official responders may “dob us in for not being part of the official programme”. A younger volunteer then proceeded to head straight out onto the site, noting “this needs to be cleaned, we are cleaning it” (Harry, 26), in disregard of any dangers. Surprisingly, the group was approached by the official contract cleaning crew, who wanted to know what method they had used to clean such a large stretch of beach so efficiently. The younger volunteers demonstrated their sweeping technique in which they would all hold hands and walk forward together in a line, an idea the contract team subsequently adopted. Anahera explained that:

had it not been for their youthful innocence I would have led the group off the site, and the clean-up would not have been done. (Anahera, 30+)

In this example, Anahera is directly comparing the effects of being part of an older cohort which meant that, for her, she would have let her previous experiences, concern for consequence, and consideration of hierarchy, influence her decision to withdraw from the situation. She is suggesting that the *lack* of these factors in the mind-set of the younger volunteer *enabled* a non “clouded” decision-making process to occur – despite the imposed rules and regulations – and, thus, result in a successful outcome.

Other instances stood out which further demonstrate the subversion of rules and regulations required in order for younger volunteers to fulfil their individualised forms of volunteer response. For example, one participant lied to officials about his age (15) so that he could meet the strict age criteria for participation; another

described his indignation after being told by officials that unless he were army personnel, he must stay off the beach:

At one stage, only the army were allowed on the beach. I didn't want to wait ...so I put on an old dress-up army uniform I had at home and went straight down onto the beach and started putting oil in sacks and getting my hands dirty. (Jerry, 25)

While wearing this uniform to gain access to the beach clean-up may not have been strictly lawful, on the one hand, such actions demonstrate the practical nature of Jerry's thinking by way of providing a tangible solution to the problem. On the other hand, it also demonstrates how Jerry appeared to lack any fear of consequence in his conscious subversion of the rules. Interestingly, this fearlessness seemed to align with how three participants referenced their underdeveloped or immature "neuro pathways" (Jerry, 25), "frontal lobes and cognitive reasoning" (Sophie, 29) to broadly describe themselves as being less concerned about consequences than older cohorts were. These comments can be interpreted in terms of how younger people were aligning their experiences with behaving *young*. This Bayat (2017) suggests "represents a sort of Bourdieuan habitus – a series of mental and cognitive dispositions, ways of being, feeling, and carrying oneself that are associated with the sociological position of structural irresponsibility" (p. 20). Indeed, it appeared that the younger volunteers were never going to be deterred by the warnings imposed by the authorities, and because they were not enrolled in the official response efforts, they did not seem to feel accountable to anyone in their actions:

people came down and told us we had to get off the beach, and we were like 'Um, no, we're not going to'. (Grace, 22);

The idea of someone saying 'no you can't clean up oil on your beach' was never going to stop young people from going down there. (Jerry, 25)

While these comments might be considered arrogant, they also reflect a practical example of how being "not crushed by the world" (Jerry, 25) or "tangled up in complications" (Jerry, 25) meant that they became confident about their decision making during their self-organised responses and paid little attention to the

possible consequences. Although this markedly different approach reaffirms generational aspects of their identities, it also served to highlight dominant power relations (Cohen & Musson, 2000) which often divided these generational identities (Parker, 1997):

I think that to be fair, young people made the *Rena* happen. The younger generation really got into it. There were lots of other people of different ages as well, but the exciting stuff that I did and the most fulfilling and the stuff that was really cool was with other young people... the bits that weren't so good were the really structured bits where older people were in control. (Kerryn, 29)

In this excerpt, Kerryn is referring to the self-organised efforts that she participated in outside of the official response. Her comments aptly demonstrate how the younger generation made sense of these response efforts as a more “exciting”, “cool” and, therefore, a more “fulfilling” alternative to the OBC, which, by contrast, she considered as being more “structured”. The comments are also revealing in Kerryn’s identification of the official response as being that which “older people were in control” of. This comment suggests that Kerryn had a preexisting association that attached older people to a role of assumed power.

On the one hand, the alternative forms of organising exhibited by younger volunteers in their response to the crisis are somewhat expected. Indeed, it is an expectation that each new generation challenges existing systems and seeks to develop its own processes and ideals positioned within its own, sociocultural context (Helve & Wallace, 2018). Related to the notion of fresh lens, Mannheim (1952) reminds us that the social world depends on the emergence of innovative solutions and ideas from one generation to the next in order for social change to occur. On the other hand, the pragmatic approach to the crisis event among the younger volunteers meant that they were less burdened with considerations about hierarchies and administrative obligations. While this approach poses significant challenges related to health and safety for officials, participants’ lack of accountability through self-organising enabled an efficient emergence of motivated and capable individuals who were often focused on vulnerable areas not addressed by the official response.

Conclusions

In examining the second research question: *How did the generational dynamics of younger volunteers affect the various organising responses to the Rena event?* this chapter highlights two key issues. First, it argues that the organising dynamics of younger volunteers cannot conceivably be interpreted without consideration of the interplay between the social constructedness of technology, the generational dynamics that influence their organising responses, and broader power structures that exist within the volunteer environment. This view is critically important because it supports a view that social media technology *empowers* users in times of crises (Leong, Pan, Ractham, & Kaewkitipong, 2015) and focuses attention on the active role of the technology *users*, as opposed to addressing the role of technology from a crisis response perspective (see Leidner, Pan, & Pan, 2009; Pan, Pan, & Leidner, 2012; Yang & Hsieh, 2013). The latter perspective, these researchers argue, inadvertently undermines the role of users by positioning them as “victims” (Leong et al., 2015, p. 175) or as reactive constituents in the traditional command and control structure (see Gao et al., 2011; Grabowski & Roberts, 2011). Given that an emphasis on the technological tools of crisis response have dominated the literature on crisis response over the past decade (see Hughes et al., 2008; Palen, et al., 2010; Palen et al., 2009; Starbird & Palen, 2011), this study offers a new area of insight for future research. Specifically, it contributes to understanding from generational perspective, the social constructedness of the technology, that is, how younger volunteers attach meaning to the technology in their organising and communicative functions during a crisis event.

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Secondly, the chapter highlights the criticality of the period experienced by the younger generation in their transition to adulthood. First, it considers the individual balancing of volunteers’ subjective aspirations within significant structural changes, for example, their transition into professional careers,

independence from family, and the transition towards individual lifestyles (Miles et al., 2018). Secondly, it considers the “structural irresponsibility” (Bayat, 2017, p. 20) of this period in time whereby individuals no longer substantially depend on others, nor are they typically responsible for others. At a practical level, the influence of this transition among the younger cohort was significant. This significance included how a quest for immediacy and gratification saw a focus on efficient, visual improvements to the areas affected by the crisis event; how the creative and innovative approach of the participants engendered initiatives that often responded to marginalised areas affected by the crisis, many of which could be linked to socially entrepreneurial acts (see De Hart & Dekker, 1999; Isham et al., 2006; Robinson, 2001; Weller, 2008; Martin, 2005); and, how a lesser degree of life experience translated into a simpler and more practical outlook in the younger volunteers’ response to the crisis. Through these subthemes, this study highlights the importance of unpacking the experiences of younger volunteers during crisis events from a generational approach whilst interrogating some of the organisational assumptions related to younger cohorts of volunteers. Furthermore, these findings respond to a call by France and Roberts (2015) to demonstrate how generational theory can bring new insights to studies of younger people.

The next chapter considers both the cohort dynamics of the younger generation and the power-based tensions between the younger volunteers and authorities. In so doing, it helps to inform how participants conceptualised self-organising during the crisis event.

CHAPTER 6

CONCEPTUALISING SELF-ORGANISING DURING THE *RENA* CRISIS

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the third research question: How was ‘self-organising’ conceptualised by younger volunteers involved in the *Rena* crisis? Here, I explore the ways in which self-organising informs the volunteer experience for participants, and how they negotiated the idea of volunteer participation through their own constructions of self-organising. In exploring the various ways that participants negotiate and construct volunteering, the chapter is organised in line with the themes that emerged from the data.

The first theme explored in this chapter focuses on the structural frustrations experienced by younger participants that catalysed their withdrawal from the OBC and laid the foundations for them to construct a more empowering response to the crisis through self-organising. The second theme focuses on how participants constructed self-organising as a quest for agency which enacted forms of emergent activism and a sense of leaderlessness. Both themes and their associated subthemes consider how younger volunteers’ constructions are framed by their historical, cultural, and social environment.

Navigating Structural Frustrations

Of the 38 younger volunteers interviewed, as many as 22 described, either directly or indirectly, their anger, annoyance or dissatisfaction towards the hierarchical and bureaucratic structure of the official crisis response to the *Rena* disaster. For example, Henry (27) recounted his frustrations with the “suffocating” administrative procedures of the OBC before he decided to initiate his own self-organised response. The structural features of the OBC were also criticised by several other participants. Susan (20) described the OBC as “a bureaucratic nightmare”, and Wayne (22) identified the process of registering for the OBC as “quite the rigmarole...it was hard to get registered and to find the information as to where to go”. An excerpt from my interview with Cameron (29) shows how the

slow-moving, administrative processes within the official response translated into feelings of resentment towards authority:

It was a huge chain of command...that took forever for anything to actually get done...everything became really stifled. And then because it is all stifled you start to become resentful at the powers that be because you are sticking to a policy. Cameron (29)

All these participants construct themselves as marginalised in the eyes of the official managers of the crisis response. This construction is evident in their frustrations at not having the power to participate, access information, or make progress in the response efforts.

According to Ersing (2003) and Wearing (2011), marginalised populations are those who are prevented from accessing opportunities and resources that are critical to enabling them to contribute actively to society and to reach their full potential. The younger volunteers felt particularly marginalised, because their desire to see their volunteering experience as an employment-related opportunity and as a way of gaining new experiences within the context of a risk society was not compatible with the OBC's rigid ideas of volunteering. A participant highlights such an incompatibility when she says:

I didn't register to help with the beach clean-up...I wasn't always available because I had school so because I found myself unable to help in those areas, I looked for other ways that I could help. (Kirsty, 17)

This particular participant did not register with the OBC at all, because it did not fit in with her availability and commitments. Similarly, another participant chose to engage in self-organised efforts, saying:

We did a couple of beach cleans here and there [with OBC] but I didn't end up doing too many because of the hours. They had two options: one or the other. You couldn't just turn up and get involved if you had a spare hour so they made it harder. By having the contacts through people I had the ability to clean up when I could like getting down the beach and doing some surveying so I had some more flexibility by doing my own thing, which was good for me...the response from us was faster, and we could

organise it more flexibly to go at certain times whereas the official stuff had to be there at certain times and that was a hassle...[we] are still getting involved but working in more of a tight-knit group and being able to work when suits. (Dave, 22)

In the first part of this excerpt, Dave refers to his sense of marginalisation in the way the officials “made it harder” for him to volunteer through their inflexible time schedules. In the second part of the excerpt, Dave contrasts the rigidity of the OBC with the “flexibility” available to him by “doing my own thing” “when it suits” through self-organising. On the one hand, Dave’s construction of self-organising as a mode of participation that fits into his particular biography supports research documenting the relationship between younger, self-reflexive volunteers and the increase in younger people’s participating in episodic volunteering (see Hustinx, 2010a, , 2010b; Pantea, 2013; Weller, 2008). On the other hand, these constructions can be interpreted as a pragmatic way for younger volunteers to navigate their own predilections for reflexive forms of volunteering alongside the structured organisational forces that constrain their potential. This approach was aptly illustrated by Tracey (18), a high school student at the time of the crisis, who found that volunteering through the OBC clashed with her school commitments. Rather than accept this clash as a barrier to volunteering, Tracey advertised a meeting in the school newsletter for people who might be interested in “coming out at night time to help with penguin work or anything else that was practical like petrels or sand dune planting”. This call proved attractive to her fellow students and over 50 people turned up to the meeting. Seven of these students ended up volunteering regularly and four of those went on to become long-term wildlife volunteers. By creating an alternative option that worked around the existing commitments and timeframes of herself and her peers, Tracey’s self-organising meant that more people could engage as volunteers.

There are a small number of recent studies addressing the attractiveness of emergent and self-organised efforts among younger people outside of official response efforts following crisis events (see, for example, Lewis, 2013; Plummer et al., 2008; Shirky, 2009; Whittaker et al., 2015). Despite the evidence on how the adaptability, direction, leadership, and communication features of self-organising systems encourage simple and flexible ongoing levels of commitment

from participants, there is little research which addresses how individuals' experiences result in ongoing volunteering. One exception is a study from Carlton and Mills (2017), who claim that the unique self-organising features of the SVA allowed for reformulated situational responses, relationships, and systems which made it easy for the SVA and its volunteer membership to engage in future events.

Frustrations with (in)efficiencies.

A part of the younger volunteers' attempts to navigate structural frustrations was their struggle with what they perceived to be inefficiencies in the way the OBC functioned. They were critical of the slow-paced nature of the OBC response, which did not meet their expectations of urgent action. Here are two specific examples:

We didn't just want to sit around and wait for a call. It was frustrating for us having to sit around and wait to do something that we knew we could easily do...we kept ringing up and they wouldn't answer our calls or get back to us, so we decided that we would just start cleaning up ourselves.
(Grace, 22)

In this first example, Grace's impatience with the idea of simply waiting around for calls to help is a manifestation of the way she constructs herself as being undervalued by the authorities. She read the lack of communication from the organisation as not giving any cognisance to her skills and abilities as well as those of her peers. Her sense of urgency about the crisis situation was also ignored by the organisation.

The second example of the volunteers' frustration with perceived inefficiencies of the OBC is illustrated in the following excerpt from an interview with Jason (22):

What I was hearing was that you weren't supposed to be cleaning up all that stuff, but you just wanted to. It was horrible to see all that stuff on the beach and it was all taking too long. Jason (22)

Jason conveys a sense of being trapped in the context of authority and permission. Given that he lived in a house that was only metres from the beach and could see

the oil and debris on the beach, Jason was clearly frustrated by what he saw as a lack of urgency in taking action.

As many as 13 of the 22 younger volunteers withdrew their registration with the OBC, choosing instead to participate in self-organised responses. One participant explains how the notion of self-organising crystallised:

We had lots of young people join our group...when they came to us, we were just much more flexible, and they were able to work in what they could manage...I remember one young fellow coming to us and saying 'I cannot wait to get out there and they will not let me go out until I am signed up and I cannot wait for that', so they came to us, and they came in their droves. (Anahera, 30+)

Here, Anahera reinforces the younger volunteers' innate desire for immediacy. One person was not even prepared to register with the OBC for fear of the delay this registration process would cost him in terms of urgency. A sense of urgency and immediacy is linked to the organising practices of younger generational cohorts (see Barkhuizen, 2014; Holt, Marques, & Way, 2012; Martin, 2005). However, the data suggests that younger volunteers constructed self-organising as an alternative form of participation not only to respond quickly, but also to exercise their right to make an immediate difference in what they considered to be 'home'. This personal connection appeared to heighten the emotional connection to the crisis among the volunteers, an emotional connection which further reinforced their desire for an efficient response.

Organising without formal structure.

A second subtheme of the broad navigation of the younger volunteers' frustrations with structural barriers centred on their constructions of self-organising as a vehicle for flexible commitments to crisis response. This conceptualisation was in stark contrast to the hierarchies and administrative procedures set in place by the OBC. As evident in the interviews, self-organised initiatives were highly appealing to the younger volunteers:

It came across as an easier option for what was involved and also easier to contribute to because it was less structured, you didn't have

to sign up and ring a number and register. It was just doing what you can do, and you can do it as you want to do it. Like I wanted to do a day and if I signed up on the beach I might have been called back the next day. (Frank, 19);

It was far less controlling...more opinions and ideas could be explored. (Susan, 20);

Anyone could turn up wearing whatever and they could just get out there on the beach and get it done. (Cameron, 29)

The phrases “just doing what you can do”, “just doing what you like”, and “they could just get out there...and get it done” illustrate the flexible and loose forms of commitment within self-organised efforts. In this construction, the participants did not feel a sense of obligation or ongoing accountability in the volunteering efforts. The lack of rules and regulations within these self-organised efforts made it an “easier” option for the participants to structure their contributions around their own lifestyles. One participant – Cameron (29) – suggests that, unlike the vetted application process of the OBC, self-organised efforts encouraged “anyone (to) turn up wearing whatever” with whatever contributions, skills, and capabilities they could offer. The sense of feeling valued within self-organised efforts was reinforced in Susan’s description of the lack of rules and regulations which meant that the opinions and ideas of younger volunteers “could be explored”.

On the one hand, these comments support research which argues that today’s volunteers are demanding easier entry and exit options (Hustinx, 2010b), have weak organisational ties, and place greater importance on issues that are immediately visible to them where they can offer action-based contributions (Fernandez, Barbera, & van Dorp, 2006; Hustinx et al., 2010; Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Putnam, 2000). Here, participants looked to self-organising as a way of engaging in “individuated form[s] of commitment” (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 172), that is, they were able to be more sporadic, temporary, and noncommittal in their volunteer roles.

On the other hand, these comments suggest that younger volunteers constructed self-organising as a creative and adaptive form of crisis response which not only

attended to their own sense of self-awareness, but also attended to the ongoing, changing needs of the crisis event. For example, Wayne (22) described how self-organising offered “more freedom...to do it by yourself...with less regulation and order” (Wayne, 22). Endorsing Comfort and Okada’s (2013) argument that self-organising is positioned on the “edge of chaos” (p. 22) for a functional, yet creative and adaptive, crisis response, participants took advantage of their marginalised position to revision their ideal response and move toward that form through self-organised efforts. This approach often meant that self-organising emerged in a casual manner which required minimal effort and ongoing commitment from participants:

Someone would just say ‘should we go pick up some oil’? So, we said ‘yeah, let’s go pick up some oil’. Go home, have a feed after doing our duties. It was really casual, we were all just hanging out at the time. A few of the bros had already done a few days previous and then someone mentioned it so we all went and did it. (Moana, 22);

I think more laterally about how we should go about getting something done and if you have to follow bureaucracy for too long I get really frustrated and can’t be bothered so with all the young people that we got around, we just came up with something to get done. It doesn’t matter if it is a bit rough around the edges, as long as no one gets hurt and the thing gets done. (Kerryn, 29)

Both accounts illustrate the informal and casual organising approach preferred by the younger volunteers. Significantly, participants did not see their casual approach as necessarily impacting the desired outcome of the crisis response. Indeed, Kerryn describes this approach as a more lateral way of thinking, which is revealing because it positions the approach taken by younger volunteers in relative dichotomy to the formal, and highly structured, control and command response typically adopted by authorities in a crisis (Neal & Phillips, 1995; Quarantelli, 1987).

An opportunity to contribute skills and expertise.

The third subtheme of the younger volunteers' sense of frustration with formal structures was their desire to see volunteering as a more fluid opportunity to test their skills and gain experience to prepare for a career in the workforce. The opportunities for participants to gain practical work experience were limited in the structured official crisis response. To this end, nine younger volunteers recalled how the OBC denied them any opportunity to offer solutions and ideas. For example, Wayne (22) described his excitement at discovering an effective product for removing heavy oil from rocks. Prior to presenting this product to the ICC managers, he gathered relevant literature, provided evidence of its effectiveness, and located a supplier who could offer the product at no cost. However, the ICC declined to consider the product, a response which caused a deep sense of frustration for Wayne and his peers:

they told me that it couldn't then go any further because they were using their own methods...which was very frustrating. (Wayne, 22)

Susan (20) shared a similar story where after trial and error she discovered two alternative solutions for cleaning oil off rocks. First, she considered bashing the limestone against rocks "but we were told we couldn't do that. I have no idea why, we were just told that". Secondly, she found that applying peat moss to the oil was very effective, yet the officials did not seem interested:

they wouldn't let us use it...I don't know why...I'm not sure where the resistance or tensions came from. Probably from one of the departments...there were so many departments. (Susan, 20)

Here, both Wayne and Susan pointed to entrenched organisational hierarchy and authority in the context of what they felt was an undermining of their attempts to come up with effective solutions to the crisis. Susan's repeated use of the word "departments" reinforces the prevalence of the bureaucratic forces that inhibited the volunteers' creativity and initiative. Both Susan and Wayne, for example, felt marginalised by the structural constraints on them.

Frustrations were also evident in cases where participants felt that officials did not take advantage of their specific skill sets and expertise. For example, Willa (29), who volunteered at the Penguin Monitoring Station, which was managed as part

of the Maritime New Zealand response, was visibly angry when she described how those “higher up the chain” refused to utilise her skills. “They didn’t listen...they didn’t care”, she said. With a bachelor’s degree in environment-related studies and volunteer experience rehabilitating rare bird species, she was confident that her skills would be sought after, yet she had been allocated the job of cleaning tanks and nothing more. A few weeks later, she left the official penguin monitoring group and joined a self-organised group of people focused on rehabilitating vulnerable wildlife around the base of Mauao. She noted:

There I felt more as one, and not so much of a hierarchy. There was less hierarchy...My skills and experiences were better utilised at penguin monitoring. I haven’t got anything bad to say about them. (Willa, 29)

Willa blames the highly structured organisational environment for the treatment she suffered and suggested that in a more informal organisational setting, she did not feel redundant. Significantly, her comments suggest that within a more informal setting, her previous sense of marginalisation was replaced with a sense of feeling highly valued: “I felt more as one”. Here, the use of the word “one” reaffirms her feelings of being valued as an individual, as opposed to feeling lost among many in a highly bureaucratic system.

Similarly, Kerryn (29), who had a master’s degree in biology and practical voluntary experience rehabilitating birds with the Department of Conservation, felt defeated while volunteering at the official wildlife centre, because her skills and knowledge were not put to good use:

I would have thought that they would have been really stoked having someone who had a master’s in biology they would have wanted working there, but they just wanted the dumbest people who didn’t have any experience working with animals who wouldn’t question anything and would listen to everything they were told and that would just do exactly what you told them...but I never got to clean a bird. I kept asking and I told everyone I worked for that I had a master’s in biology and would really like to participate in as wide a variety of things as possible...they just wanted people to follow exactly what they would say. (Kerryn, 29)

Evidently, Kerryn felt that participants lost their sense of identity and became one of many within the official response. Her frustrations were echoed by another participant who stated that he was “pretty pissed off” (Wayne, 22) that his technical skills were not taken advantage of by the OBC.

In all these examples, the participants conceptualised self-organising as the opposite of structured official organisations. For them, self-organising represented an expression of individuality and creativity, values that were systematically trampled upon by the emphasis on established procedures by official organisations. The rigidity and lack of flexibility of the official response meant that there was no room to capitalise on the relevant background experience, skills, and capabilities of the younger volunteers.

In a comprehensive review of the disaster response literature, Fernandez et al. (2006) found that whilst many volunteers had skills which matched the needs of the crisis response, integrating these volunteers required significant effort by officials. Utilising volunteers’ abilities was considered far more manageable when the crisis response required low-skilled tasks. This preference for low-skilled volunteers was recognised by Kerryn (29) who claimed: “they [the authorities] would have been so stressed out that it would have been easier for them to have people that were easier – and not that I was difficult. – [but] rather than having people ask if they can do this or do”.

Multiple participant accounts such as these reveal that younger volunteers were both conscious and reflective of how their skills and capabilities aligned with the volunteering context in both the highly structured official response and in the more flexible environments available through the informal volunteer efforts. Indeed, the literature reminds us that reflexive volunteers are motivated by the acquisition of skills for the labour market (Pantea, 2013) and volunteer as a tool for coping with biographical uncertainty (Read, 2010). From this perspective, “clever volunteers” (Giddens, 1994, p. 94) are often looking for either a “highly specialised and self-organised volunteer activities” (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003, p. 183) or for an informal strategy which reflects their self-organised individuality (Harris et al., 2010).

The following section builds upon the ability for self-organised efforts to cater to the younger volunteers' reflexivity by providing an organisational environment that enabled their skills and capabilities to be utilised and in doing so to pull them out from a position of marginalisation to one of being highly valued.

A Quest for Agency

The second theme that emerged from the data focused on how younger volunteers' constructions of self-organising were intrinsically concerned with shaping their participatory experience within the crisis in a self-reflexive way. According to Lister (1997), when forms of civic engagement are construed with participation, this construal "represents an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents" (p. 35). Defined by Ahearn (2001) as "the socioculturally mediated capacity to act" (p. 112), agency confronts individuals with a challenging duality: "Do we make our own future or are we pawns set in motion by forces we cannot control?" (Brummans, 2017, back cover). An excerpt from Cameron's interview reflects this duality where, in describing why he and his peers chose to self-organise rather than volunteer for the OBC, he said:

There are always going to be conformists and there are always going to be people that make changes. (Cameron, 29)

Within a volunteering context, Cameron's comment highlights the idea that the recognition of participants' individual agency is integral in recognising their rights to self-organise as a participatory experience during the crisis event.

Two key issues stood out in the data and these issues are presented as subthemes of the broader theme of agency. First, it emerged that there were multiple links between the younger volunteers' mode of participation and forms of activism, and, secondly it became apparent that participants were hesitant to engage in traditional forms of organisational leadership. This section begins by providing some context to the alternative modes of participation that the younger volunteers engaged in by illustrating the role of structure and agency experienced by the younger volunteers.

A significant feature of participants' accounts is the persistent interplay between the organisational structures of both the formal and informal response efforts and how this interplay impacts their sense of agency. In order to gain deeper insight into how younger volunteers conceived self-organising during the crisis, it is useful to consider how the volunteers' agency is influenced by – and influences – the different organisational structures. As the well-known sociologist, William Sewell (1992) argues:

Structures...are constituted by mutually sustaining cultural schemas and sets of resources that empower and constrain social action and tend to be reproduced by that action...But the same resourceful agency that sustains the reproduction of structures also makes possible their transformation. (p. 27)

As this research shows, younger volunteers are agents who are expected to enact positive contributions to the crisis response efforts, but instead, are too often constrained in their ability to do so because of highly structured organisational barriers. These barriers include, for example, administrative processes that delay the immediate response and the dominance of hierarchies, both of which stifle volunteers' capacity to use their individual abilities and skills. In contrast to these highly structured contexts, the loose and flexible nature of self-organised efforts appeared to enhance the dynamic interaction between the volunteer experience and the participants' individual self-worth (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Kühnlein & Mutz, 1999). This interaction can be understood as strengthening the younger volunteers' sense of agency, because, in the absence of structure and control, as reflexive volunteers they were better positioned to engage with their individuality (see Dekker & Hooghe, 2003; Hacket & Mutz, 2002).

Furthermore, by positioning themselves within more flexible structures which allowed for their skills and expertise to be utilised, the younger volunteers were better able to construct positive representations of their generational cohort. This finding aligns with Vromen's (2003) research on civic engagement among Australians aged between 18 and 34, which challenged the level to which traditional institutions catered to a broad range of individual and organisational experiences. The researcher found that it was critical to recognise the agency of the younger Australians in terms of shaping their own lives and with their

interactions with institutions, in order to understand why these individuals sought different forms of participatory experiences.

From a structural perspective, the data suggests that, by engaging in self-organising, participants were able to move beyond their perceived sense of marginalisation and gain a sense of freedom that was otherwise unavailable to them within a formal context:

Being able to think and have the freedom to test new ideas and have them heard is something that can come from an informal scenario where people are open to new ideas coming in and aren't going to get shut down based on the assumption that they know what is right. (Kevin, 20)

Here, Kevin's words draw parallels with research conducted by Harris et al. (2010) who examined the marginalisation of younger volunteers in their struggle to participate in conventional forms of civic engagement. In their study, the authors found that younger volunteers struggled to be heard and to make changes within formal organised forums and, consequently, opted for more informal and localised activities that reflected their preference for action and socially oriented organisation and communication styles. Furthermore, Kevin's attribution of freedom to an "informal scenario" reflects an assumption that formal organisations are by contrast not open. The literature on equifinality within organisations argues that there are many ways of organising to achieve desired outcomes (Fiss, 2011; von Elverfeldt, Embleton-Hamann, & Slaymaker, 2016). However, there are parallels to be drawn between the sense of agency participants felt within informal organising as something that did not exist within the structured environment of formal organising.

Secondly, from an agentic perspective, the data suggests that through self-organising participants were able to gain a sense of empowerment via a form of participation which attended to their own sense of reflexivity. While empowerment can mean different things to individuals and disciplines, within contemporary volunteer scholarship empowerment is defined as the social value shifts which consider individualisation and reflexivity in the context of modern societies (Helve & Wallace, 2018). From an agentic perspective, this notion meant

that self-organising represented a resource for empowering the reproduction and transformation of social action.

Further supporting this line of thinking, Fuchs (2006) argues that individuals who participate within self-organising structures gain a sense of empowerment by escaping the commitments, responsibilities, and accountability within formal response efforts and a sense of liberation via flexible levels of commitments. According to Mumby and Stohl (1991), dominant social groups exercise power by creating “an ideological meaning system which serves its own interests” (p. 318). Within the current study, it can be interpreted that self-organising reflected a potent power struggle between the younger volunteers and officials. Consider the following excerpt from an older, self-organised volunteer in his description of why he felt younger people were drawn to participate outside of the OBC:

They were just looking for a way that they could help without getting told that they can't do it. (Logan, 30+)

Here, Logan highlights an essential aspect of self-organising that appealed to the younger volunteers – one that reflects the challenging duality of agency whereby they must decide if they are to make their own future or be part of a system that they do not have the ability to control (Brummans, 2018). Via the perceived sense of liberation within self-organised efforts, younger volunteers were able not only to create a meaning system which served their own contextualised, self-reflexive needs, but also to engage a fighting spirit among the participants against the institutions which they perceived to be the source of their marginalisation.

Alternative modes of participation: Activism.

The larger theme of agency and power has at least two subthemes. The first relates to how constructions of self-organising can be linked to forms of activism and why this alternate mode of organising resists traditional forms of leadership.

According to Vromen (2003), [social] participation is defined as acts that are “intrinsically concerned with shaping the society that we want to live in” (pp. 81-82). In terms of the current study, younger volunteers' desire for change was manifested in the various self-organised initiatives they undertook which offered action-based solutions to problems they felt were not being addressed by the

authorities. For example, the creation of the *Rena-Kai-Run* and the deployment of food to Mōtītī Islanders both highlighted younger volunteers' will for change in terms of awareness-raising about vulnerable areas of the community affected by the crisis.

According to Fuchs (2006), these action-based forms of participation are often used when describing how self-organising systems can be interpreted as a dynamic concept of protest. There is an important aspect to interpreting self-organising as a form of protest that hinges on its communicative function in society. For example, the act of withdrawing from the OBC and engaging in self-organised responses illustrates that younger volunteers “produce public attention for topics and problems that are ignored and not communicated by dominant actors and institutions” (Fuchs, 2006, p. 117) by offering their own alternative commentary “as a non-institutionalised mechanism of self-criticism of society” (Fuchs, 2016, p. 117). In this context, consider the following excerpt, which refers to the CLEAN ME sculpture created by a group of younger volunteers:

We did it because no one had stepped in and started cleaning. We were advised not to, and we felt hopeless, so we thought we would put a message out there that would stir emotions and get people thinking about getting stuff done. (Wayne, 22)

Here, Wayne (22) describes how he purposely sought to gain public attention for what he perceived to be a lack of urgency on the part of officials to clean the beach. He implies that “stirring emotions” would assist in gaining a heightened level of attention to the cause.

Similarly, notions of protest were evident when Kevin described donning an army uniform in order to participate in the clean-up efforts:

I went straight down to the beach in an army uniform because I didn't want to wait around, I took it down because I knew I wasn't allowed to be on the beach, but I also knew that there was oil on the beach and I just wanted to get stuck in and get into it. (Kevin, 20)

While the intent behind Kevin's actions was not necessarily to gain public attention, his words did criticise the power of the authorities. This criticism, born

out of frustration towards authority and structure, positions individuals such as Wayne and Kevin as *activators* of self-organising. In the literature on social movement activism, self-organising is argued to arise, or evolve, primarily as a result of the growth of people involved in the activity or the initiative of the activators (Fattori, Pozzi, Marzana, & Mannarini, 2015; Pervova & Kelasev, 2019).

Another way to interpret the nature of these acts is by considering how activist forms of protest have revived carnivalesque traditions. That is, they are acts that embody the representation of transgressing social taboos through often emotional and/or physical displays by way of offering “new genres of carnivalesque-citizen participation” (Boje, 2001, p. 433). In this sense, younger volunteers were resisting authority. Often undertaken by groups that lack political and economic power, carnivalesque protest aims to “create conflict with, and encourage resistance to, dominant social discourses and institutions” and functions to build community through dialogue and media interest “by confronting and communicating issues in newly imaginative ways” (Weaver, 2010, p. 40). Indeed, this analysis would, therefore, support the argument that younger volunteers were responding from a position of perceived marginalisation. Through self-organising the participants were able to subvert the “bureaucratic, alienating, pyramidal, over-structured and opaque” (Gerbaudo, 2012, p. 162) aspects of traditional organisations. In doing so, this subversion supports contemporary organising strategies of younger people that reflect a distrust towards the traditional organisations (Gerbaudo, 2012).

Another example of how younger volunteers exhibited forms of activism in their constructions of self-organising relates to their frustrations with the age restriction imposed by the OBC. During the interviews, the 16-years age restriction was raised by 13 of the younger volunteers. At no time during the interviews were any participants prompted to talk about the age restrictions imposed on volunteering; nevertheless, all 13 of these participants raised the issue of their own accord and argued that the somewhat arbitrary age limit discriminated against individuals who were more than capable of responding to the crisis. In the following excerpts, participants reflect on what they considered to be an unjustified decision to restrict

younger volunteers from the OBC and compared this ruling with their own experiences at that age:

at 16 I was a Brownie leader already...which is usually a role that mums do. (Aimee, 27)

at 16 I had left home already to study animal management and went on to be a zookeeper with the primates. (Willa, 29)

To prevent himself being restricted from the OBC, Barry (16), who was only 15 at the time of the crisis, lied about his age throughout the registration process. He said, "I looked about 16 anyway" and felt that "they were stupid age limits".

These accounts illustrate how participants compared and contrasted the disparity between the level of responsibility within the crisis response to levels of responsibility experienced elsewhere. Other comments such as "stupid age limits" suggest that the participants felt they were being unfairly treated as marginalised individuals who had little to offer by way of experience and skill. Cumulatively, these comments contributed to how the participants constructed the notion of self-organising in opposition to structured and formal organisations involved in the crisis response.

Throughout my reflective journal, I noted that a persistent critique among participants relating to the age restriction challenged the notion of free will as defined by traditional notions of volunteerism (see Cnaan & Amroffell, 1994; Cnaan et al., 1996; Handy et al., 2000). In this sense, it appeared that participants felt entitled to exercise a right to free will and to exercise this sense of entitlement by challenging the institutional practices set out by the OBC. According to Teruelle (2012), actions that often go unnoticed in terms of traditional notions of activism are often theorised as a form of alter-activism. Alter-activism is defined by Juris and Pleyers (2009) as:

an emerging form of citizenship among young people that prefigures wider social changes related to political commitment, cultural expression, and collaborative practice...a commitment to horizontal, networked organisation; creative direct action; the use of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the organisation of physical spaces...for developing alternative values and practices. (p. 57)

Relatedly, the forms of alter-activism enacted by younger volunteers in the current study align with the argument that the world is being transformed by younger generations, “but crucially through means and methods that are unfamiliar to adults” (Banet-Weiser, 2004, p. 282). In order to help understand this transformation, Dahlgren (2010) suggests that it might be useful to locate purposeful activism in wilful disengagement. He argues that “we must build into the notion of engagement not just a bias toward democracy but some irreducible element of free will” (p. 9) whereby the act of *not doing* is also seen as engagement when the element of free will is introduced.

Therefore, by wilfully choosing *not* to engage in formal organised responses nor to adhere to the age restrictions, the younger volunteers constructed themselves as alter-activists and in doing so became active producers of society itself (Juris & Pleyers, 2009).

A resistance to traditional forms of leadership.

The second subtheme of the larger (second) theme of agency that emerged from the data is how participants were hesitant about and wary of drawing on traditional notions of organisational leadership in their self-organising.

Within traditional organisations, leadership is constructed as a process where individuals “claim and grant leader and follower identities in their social interactions...and those identities become relationally recognized through reciprocal role adoption and collectively endorsed within the organizational context” (DeRue & Ashford, 2010, p. 627). Within volunteer studies, leadership does not necessarily follow this same process. For example, Hustinx and Lammertyn (2000) believe that reflexive volunteers prefer democratic environments over traditional forms of leadership and delegation to avoid being restricted by bureaucratic structures. In this research, participants constructed a sense of *leaderlessness* within their self-organised efforts whereby individuals who initiated action appeared to shun collective endorsement within the organisational context. In this sense, participants saw self-organising as an open and collaborative endeavour rather than a hierarchy-based structural process in many cases. For example:

there was no strong leadership. It was more of a group arrangement. There were texts being fired around: who has wheelbarrows? Who can bring spades? Who can do what? And it was kind of being fired between whoever was keen to jump in and help. It was all agreed upon a time to meet and I guess on the beach itself there were young guys that were the leaders I guess, saying 'let's hit this patch of oil'. There was definitely organisation on the beach with people with stronger willpower that took action. But in terms of overall organisation, everyone just kind of came together and fired ideas at each other. (Fraser, 22);

Someone would just say 'should we go pick up some oil'? So, we said 'yeah, let's go pick up some oil'. Go home, have a feed after doing our duties. It was really casual. (Moana, 22)

These accounts reflect an absence of anyone's taking the lead in decision-making processes and that organising was understood as a collective effort among the group. In the absence of defined leadership, this meant that there was often not a figurehead or spokesperson to take on the responsibility or accountability of the groups' actions:

There's a lot of accountability that people wanted to be taken away from. I didn't want to say go for it and then it blows up in my face and then I'm accountable. (Cameron, 29)

This excerpt from Cameron's interview is particularly insightful, because it suggests that the younger volunteers did not want to take on a position of leadership within their self-organising efforts in a conscious effort not to be held accountable for the actions of others nor to be associated with any negative consequences of the group's actions. While Cameron does not explain who he is suggesting they are accountable *to*, what he is suggesting is that he perceives there is some risk involved in their actions and, as such, presents an interesting duality to the self-organising among participants. On the one hand, the absence of formal organising and bureaucracy meant that participants were able to reflexively construct their own response to the crisis without constraints from authorities. However, on the other hand, this position also acknowledges the inherent risks associated with a constantly changing crisis. In this sense, Cameron's comments

hint that, by not wanting to be accountable, there was still a perception among the participants that, despite their apparent independence from institutional structures, they were still part of a collaborative organisational response to the crisis, which meant that, ultimately, a certain degree of responsibility was unavoidable.

From a generational perspective, a sense of leaderlessness within the self-organised efforts of younger volunteers is supported by research which argues that younger generations “see the world as flat from a collaborative perspective – as opposed to the traditional world which is often hierarchical and has well defined...boundaries” (Curtis, 2010, p. 3). Accordingly, the organisational structure, and the flow of communication favoured by younger cohorts, has a significant influence in the way they conceptualise organisational leadership (Balda & Mora, 2011). There are several documented advantages that result from a lack of clear leadership within self-organised responses to crisis events. These include an increased likelihood of novel interactions (Gardner, 2013), increased individual freedom to manage, recognise, and anticipate constant changes which is not limited by directives (Wheatley, 2007), and greater flexibility to adjust and satisfy the situational demands (Majchrzak et al., 2007).

Despite these benefits, an absence of leadership among self-organised groups poses a fundamental challenge to traditional crisis research, which argues that leadership is a fundamental driver of effective emergency response (see Bhakta Bhandari, Owen, & Brooks, 2014; Majchrzak et al., 2007). Relatedly, there is little evidence to suggest that official response organisations are prepared to formally acknowledge self-organised volunteers in their response plans (Drabek & McEntire, 2002; Fernandez et al., 2006).

Conclusion

This chapter explored the various ways that younger volunteers conceptualised self-organising during the *Rena* crisis. First, the analysis showed how younger volunteers constructed self-organising as an alternative mode of participation that navigated the structural and bureaucratic frustrations experienced within the official response. Such navigation involved demonstrating how the rigid bureaucracy of the official crisis response organisation was inefficient and unproductive. The younger volunteers also conceptualised self-organising as a

vehicle for creative, practical, and empowering action geared to individual capabilities, interests, and personal and career needs of each volunteer. Secondly, the analysis shows how conceptualisations of self-organising revolved around notions of agency and resistance to power. These conceptualisations linked self-organising to forms of activism and revealed how participants shunned traditional notions of organisational leadership in their self-organising efforts.

Furthermore, participants were able to engage in the crisis response at their own discretion and within timeframes which suited them without having to negotiate organisational structures that prevented or limited their capabilities and skill sets. By avoiding structured organisational forces (Wheatley, 2007) participants were able to move beyond their perceived sense of societal marginalisation and project themselves as active agents.

The data suggests that moving toward a practical understanding between the agency of volunteers and organisational structures may be a starting place for gaining deeper insight into why younger volunteers gravitate towards self-organised responses. Through their conceptualisations of self-organising, younger volunteers are agents of change, who, from a structural perspective, are able to manifest this change through their activist style of participation in the crisis and in their active avoidance of traditional forms of leadership.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to gain deeper insight into how younger volunteers made sense of their volunteering experiences, to assess the impact of generational dynamics on their organising responses, and to understand how they conceptualised self-organising within the context of their volunteer experience. By focusing the study on the intersections of crisis volunteering, self-organising, and generational theories, this thesis makes several contributions to both theory and practice.

Figure 3 pictorially represents the key contributions of the study, which are explained in more detail throughout the chapter.

Presents a challenge to traditional ‘top down’ crisis response practices

Self-organising reconciles structural grievances among younger volunteers, enabling them to more in control of their life

‘Volunteer’ conceptualisations among younger generations are culturally embedded and specific

Indicates a shift from literature/studies focusing on ICT *tools* to the *meaning* and *relationships* behind them

Self-organising positions activist volunteers on the edge of chaos

Activism - Volunteering –Empowerment are all linked among younger generations within the context of crisis response

Figure 3 Key contributions of the study

In outlining the key contributions of this study, this concluding chapter is presented in three sections: the *first* section reflects on the major findings of the

research and outlines its theoretical contribution to the literature that intersects younger volunteers, self-organising, and crisis events. The *second* section considers the benefits of my methodological framework and how this has contributed to new ways of understanding the phenomena under investigation. In the *third* section, I identify the practical implications of this study, address its limitations, and make suggestions for future studies to build on this research.

Theoretical Contributions

The findings of this research are significant in terms of both theoretical and practical implications, as they contribute to and enhance the existing literature on younger volunteers, crisis response, and self-organising. This thesis took a social constructionist approach using an interpretive lens to examine the self-organising of younger volunteers during the *Rena* oil spill crisis. This approach provided a useful perspective for interrogating individuals' volunteer and self-organising conceptualisations in a particular social, political, cultural, historical, and economic context. The study uncovered how participants' conceptualisations of volunteering and self-organising are both dynamically and situationally constructed within complex social relations and contexts. While it may be seen as a challenge to reconceptualise volunteering without undermining its intrinsic value (Davis Smith, 2006), this research has shown that there are opportunities for thinking about volunteering as a different form of practice within different contexts. It is also important to consider how meanings of volunteering differ dependent on the ways in which volunteers bring cultural-bound collectivist or individualistic values to its enactment. This research has demonstrated that culturally embedded Māori principles of *whānaungatanga* [ongoing and reciprocal familial relationships and a sense of connectedness within the community] were influential in how younger Māori volunteers made sense of, and enacted, their volunteer experience. Ultimately, these findings highlight how Western constructs of volunteering have limited applicability in Māori culture.

By challenging traditional assumptions of the crisis management literature that argue responses depend solely on formal top-down organisational structures and arrangements (Nan & Lu, 2014; Whittaker et al., 2015), this study also presents a new way of thinking about crisis management research. The findings demonstrate

that self-organising can provide a viable form of response, one where organisational order can result from a “loosening rather than tightening up the command structure” (Quarantelli, 1988, p. 381). The ability of younger participants to create an alternative, viable response via self-organising, therefore, challenges research which argues that complex social contexts rely on planning and control (Heylighen, 2001).

One of the most striking findings of this study is that the younger volunteers gained a sense of empowerment through their self-organised responses to the *Rena* crisis. This sense of empowerment helped them navigate the structural uncertainties they faced as they transitioned towards a competitive labour market. Throughout this process, power tensions between the younger volunteers and crisis response officials were evident. These tensions were grounded in a deep sense of frustration resulting not only from negative societal views of their generational cohort which gave rise to further metastereotyping among participants, but also from the structural workings of a risk society (Beck, 1992, 2006; Giddens, 1991; Ansell, 2008) which the participants felt limited their experiences, free will, and utilisation of their skills. By forming their own, self-organised responses to the crisis, participants were able to reconcile these grievances and take advantage of their marginalised position to enact their own version of an effective response. In doing so, their self-organising dynamics can be understood as being situated at the edge of chaos within the crisis event (Comfort & Okada, 2013). This was a critical finding, because it revealed the meaning behind participants’ self-organising as being one that presented them with an opportunity to address their own self-reflexivity in a way that was not readily available to them in their everyday life nor in other volunteering contexts. In this sense, a consistent interplay between the structural flexibility offered via self-organising and the participants’ own agency meant that they were able to be more in control of their life. These findings add depth to literature addressing reflexive volunteering among younger people (see Grönlund, 2011; Read, 2010; Rehberg, 2005; Weller, 2008) by suggesting that, within the context of a crisis event, more attention needs to be given to the particular organising structures, in order to engage younger people in volunteering.

This study also adds to volunteer scholarship by using a generational lens to gain insights into how intergenerational perceptions might intersect with conceptualisations of volunteering and self-organising. A generational approach focuses on a cohort of individuals as they move through life together within a particular social, political, cultural, and economic context. By intersecting generational theory with the literature on crisis volunteering and self-organising, the social constructedness of the technologies used by participants drew on the concept of media multiplexity (Haythornthwaite, 2005) to demonstrate how the maintenance of relationships between participants was fundamental to the meaning they attached to the different forms of technologies they utilised (Baym & Ledbetter, 2009; Baron, 2008). This intersection of theory also exposed the broader power structures existing within the participants' generation-specific social worlds as being critical factors in interpreting their conceptualisations. One example of this exposition was highlighted by the way in which participants would utilise Facebook for posting images that captured the impact of the crisis on the shoreline. Here, participants felt that these postings reflected a more truthful and transparent account of the crisis event than that which was being communicated through the media by the authorities. Indeed, trust is closely intertwined with the sharing of power (Castleden & Garvin, 2008). This finding presents a novel perspective. As such, it highlights the fact that the existing literature focuses specifically on the *tools* of communication technology employed by younger volunteers during crisis events (see Çoban, 2016; Dabner, 2012; Delli Carpini, 2000; Fuchs, 2014; Howell & Taylor, 2011; Johnson, 2011; Plummer et al., 2008) rather than on both the *meaning* behind the technologies and the associated meanings that younger volunteers give to digital *relationships* among volunteers. These findings remind us not only that “it is critical to view [not only] the current role of volunteering in the context of social change” (Stebbins & Graham, 2004, p. 16), but also to contribute to literature which examines complex challenges facing organisations as a result of generational phenomena (Joshi et al., 2011; Joshi et al., 2010) by focusing on the effects of generation on the volunteer outcome itself.

What was particularly interesting in the findings was the emergence of self-organising as an alternative form of activist-style participation in the crisis response, whereby participants (*activators*) became motivated to act as a result of

their frustrations with formal organisational structures. By engaging in self-organising, participants were able to move beyond their perceived sense of marginalisation and avoid the organisational forces (Wheatley, 2007) that limited their sense of freedom and personal development. Interpreting self-organised, younger volunteers as activators offers new opportunities for conflating activist participation and volunteering among younger people. This finding is significant, because within volunteer scholarship neither the demarcation nor the relationship between volunteering and activism is straightforward primarily because scholars tend to separate activities that do not emphasise the compassionate and virtuous nature typically associated with traditional constructs of volunteering and to de-politicise volunteer work. To this end, Musick and Wilson (2008) argue that “volunteerism targets people; activism targets structures...the activist changes while the volunteer maintains” (p. 18). In terms of this study, the findings suggest that volunteerism and activism are not causal variables, but rather that their conflation hinges on deep-rooted, fluid, and dynamic socially constructed interactions. These findings also provide empirical evidence to support the argument that younger people should be viewed as *active producers*, in order to gain a better understanding of how they might use their novel vantage point of a fresh lens to provide alternate forms of participation and organising which, Juris and Pleyers (2009) argue, can strengthen organisations. By challenging traditional conceptualisations of volunteering and crisis events among younger generations, this view presents a novel development for crisis volunteer research. Moreover, this view contrasts with literature that views younger volunteers who engage in alternative forms of participation and organising as social problems (see Fernandez et al., 2006; Medina, 2011; Orloff, 2011) and literature which focuses on integrating these volunteers into existing crisis response strategies despite stark differences in their organising dynamics (see Brudney & Gazley, 2009; Sauer, Catlett, Tosatto, & Kirsch, 2014; Starbird & Palen, 2013; Whittaker et al., 2015). In terms of this study, it can, therefore, be argued that the innovative and collaborative practices, individualised commitments, and leaderlessness exhibited by the younger volunteers prefigure an important role as social values, technologies, and practices become increasingly diffused within (sub)cultures of modernity. In terms of contributions at an individual level, their self-organised responses demonstrate the potential for instilling lifelong change at a time of acute

generational development (Flanagan & Sherrod, 1998). In doing so, these findings force academics and practitioners to question the importance of gaining a deeper understanding of the positive coexistence of younger volunteers, self-organising, and crisis events instead of understanding them as working in tension with each other.

Methodological Contributions

The findings of this study work to reframe how researchers and practitioners investigate and theorise crisis volunteering. Challenging dominant frameworks which present volunteering as an altruistic endeavour (see Burns et al., 2006; Carpenter & Myers, 2010; Haski-Leventhal, 2009; Rehberg, 2005), this thesis demonstrates how a social constructionist methodology and interpretative lens can produce a deeper understanding of crisis volunteering both from a contextual basis and with relevance to the generational cohort of individuals undertaking the volunteering activity.

As with all interpretive studies, there are many different ways of interpreting the phenomena under scrutiny (Denzin, 2008, 2011). This thesis offers one way of interpreting the accounts of younger volunteers during the *Rena* oil spill event. The study has been informed by a particular set of philosophical and theoretical assumptions, methodological approach, and layered by my own reflexive researcher positioning. A social constructionist perspective underpinned a methodological framework that supported the subjective relationship between myself and the study participants in our coconstructions of meaning (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hayes & Oppenheim, 1997). Because I set out to *improve* rather than *prove* knowledge related to the phenomena (Stufflebeam et al, 2000), the concentrated focus of a single case study offered a degree of richness and complexity in understanding the world of lived experiences from the perspectives of those who live them (Andrews, 2012).

By embracing my own reflexive position throughout the research process, I was better able to interpret the meaning making that was coconstructed between myself and the interviewees. Specifically, through the use of semistructured interviews I was able to deviate from the original questions to explore areas that I felt, from an insider perspective, required further clarification. I felt that being of

similar age to some of the participants at the time of the interviews helped put participants at their ease and helped them to provide honest accounts of some of the frustrations, insecurities, and tensions they had experienced. Because I was also an insider *Rena* volunteer, reflexivity helped in my interpretations of these conceptualisations. This background was particularly useful when participants appeared to be guarded, tense, or insecure when critiquing authorities. Because I had been aware at first hand that there were tensions related to power between volunteers and authorities during the *Rena* crisis response, I was able to recognise that participants might have been feeling cautious about disclosing their opinions on these freely. This understanding enabled me to become more attuned in interpreting their insights and heightened my “iterative spiral of understanding” (Prasad, 2005, p. 34), because I was able to appreciate some of the wider organisational contexts surrounding their responses (Prasad, 2005).

By maintaining a reflective journal, I was able to add further depth to this interactive process of meaning making. Specifically, my reflexivity meant that I was able to consider how my own assumptions, values, and the power-knowledge relationship between myself and the participants may have impacted the interview process. Although the excerpts from the journal were not significant in terms of the analysis of data, they were particularly useful when respondents communicated nonverbal feedback that was unable to be captured via audio recording. In these instances, I was able to go back through the journal to address any thoughts and observations that I might have noted during the interview that could assist in interpreting their verbal communication.

The methodological framework of the study represents a novel approach to existing research, because, as the researcher, I belonged to the same generational cohort under scrutiny. This belonging enabled me to embrace and appreciate my own subjective realities and internal logic and to use these to assist with interpreting the meaning *behind* participants’ responses (Cunliffe, 2003). This unique position presented a resourceful way to respond to the call from Hilfinger Messias et al. (2008) that, in order to gain deeper insight into how younger people construct and organise their volunteer experiences, it is critical to research their *own* perceptions. These perceptions, the authors argue, are critical if organisations are to move from conceptual frameworks for managing younger volunteers

towards more useful practices of actively engaging youth (Hilfinger Messias et al., 2008).

Implications for Practice

In order for crisis response practitioners to address the organising dynamics of younger generations during crisis events, they need a deep understanding of how younger people conceptualise volunteering and self-organising within crisis events and how self-reflexive tendencies and structural uncertainties underpin this behaviour. By bringing together theoretical and practical knowledge about the behaviours of younger volunteers during times of crisis, both private and public sectors could improve the ability of a community to prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises and disasters (National Research Council, & Geographical Sciences Committee, 2011). From a policy standpoint, this means that practitioners would be better equipped to predict the response behaviour of younger volunteers and, ultimately, how their unique social and (sub)cultural position can benefit crisis response efforts. While these conceptualisations may change over time and between generations, the need for crisis response practitioners to understand how younger cohorts perceive their *own* position within their community (Valaitis, 2002) is important, because much of the research on postdisaster response exposes the multiple shortcomings of official crisis response organisations in areas such as unrealistic planning and problematic communication (Aldrich, 2012). By contrast, the findings of the current study show that younger volunteers' self-organising responses were learnt through doing, were action-oriented, and were able to remain flexible and adapt to the situation as it unfolded (Majchrzak et al., 2007). Thus, these findings support research which identifies small, emergent groups as useful for meeting the changing demands of crisis events (see Gardner, 2013; Majchrzak et al., 2007).

The findings which examined younger Māori participants' conceptualisations of volunteering provide insight into an area that has not been researched before. These findings highlight the need for further research that addresses how cultural values and practices affect how Māori make sense of and enact their volunteer experiences. Furthermore, the findings emphasise the need for crisis response practitioners to acknowledge how cultural values and practices can be addressed,

in order to aid in achieving a more collaborative, culturally sensitive, and capable response to a crisis event. To this end, the study supports a call from Phibbs et al. (2015) who argue that Aotearoa/New Zealand crisis response organisations should adopt a values-based approach by attending to Māori knowledge and practices, in order to have broader relevance for Māori whānau (families), hapu (kinship groups) and iwi (tribes) and, in turn, use this cultural knowledge to innovate crisis response capabilities (Paton & Jang, 2011).

By demonstrating that organisational order *can* arise from spontaneous and emergent self-organised volunteers, this study supports the bold claim from Wheatley (2007) that “self-organisation is the ultimate level of successful response to crisis” (p. 193). While the presence of these self-organised volunteers brought positive contributions to the overall response effort, their presence also presented multiple challenges to crisis response practitioners. Such challenges were evident in the OBC organisational imperatives of policy, structure, and health and safety processes.

The relationship between a potential for ongoing volunteer participation of younger people following a crisis event and the nature of self-organising also requires further examination. Unlike traditional organisations, self-organising systems do not necessarily have any ongoing purpose or intention (Chertow & Ehrenfeld, 2012). For this reason, official response organisations can neither predict nor expect that younger volunteers engaged in self-organised efforts will similarly engage in future, ongoing, or subsequent crises. The potential for tension to emerge between younger volunteers who engage in alternative forms of participation outside of an official crisis response initiative, as illustrated in this study, may also contribute to whether younger volunteers continue to engage in ongoing forms of self-organising within future crisis events. Despite these difficulties, crisis response practitioners should be motivated to better understand, and prepare for, both the challenges *and* opportunities that these younger volunteers present. Indeed, there is significant documentation on the benefits that volunteers bring to crisis response from a community perspective (Whittaker et al., 2015). Furthermore, as former National Incident Commander of the United States, Thad Allen states, “there will never be a major disaster that won’t involve public participation” (Berinato, 2010, p. 78).

From a structural perspective, self-organising is understood as a spontaneous creation that arises out of the “local interactions between initially independent components” (Heylighen, 2001, p. 1). Order arises out of self-organisation as a function of its own maintenance, which means that, intrinsically, self-organising systems will resist external changes (Heylighen, 2001). From a crisis management perspective, while practitioners might be tempted to exert some form of pressure or control in order to steer a self-organised group, this attempt might not always lead to a change towards the desired direction. The looseness offered by self-organising groups is one of their strengths in advancing innovation and problem-solving initiatives and so, despite the challenges this looseness might present to formally organised crisis response management, it should be acknowledged.

Acknowledging the looseness of such groups might mean that specific tasks with a problem-solving focus are allocated to self-organised groups. For example, the Amstelland Safety Region in the Netherlands offers criteria for the integration of emergent volunteers into their crisis response procedures. That organisation’s criteria enable volunteers to be involved in tasks which have minimal safety risks and those that add value to the overall crisis response; in addition, it invites individuals within the volunteer groups to work alongside the official personnel in meetings (Scanlon et al., 2014). Whilst it is vital that crisis response managers are attuned to what is happening on the ground (Whittaker et al., 2015), integrating informal volunteers into formal response efforts runs the risk of engendering counterproductivity, if the very features that make self-organised groups so effective in crisis response (i.e., adaptability, innovation, and creativity) are quashed.

Within the current study, however, some findings suggest that there is potential for integration of self-organised volunteers. First, identifying and working alongside the activators of the self-organised groups could give crisis response practitioners a conduit through which to harness the innovation of the group via motivated and connected individuals. Because the activators were typically seen by participants as being trustworthy and transparent, this approach would also work in favour of crisis response practitioners who were relying on the activator to facilitate the tasks and distribute the information provided through their established networks of peers. Parallels can be drawn between these networks and the notion of structural inertia, which suggests that, in times of crisis,

organisations will benefit more from the design and capability of preestablished networks than from forging new networks (Doerfel, Chewning, & Lai, 2013).

The findings also suggest that younger volunteers were highly attracted to issues that appealed to their reflexive desires for employment-related opportunities. To this end, crisis response practitioners may consider how particular tasks could translate into the younger generation's utilisation of skills or experiential opportunities that would be valuable to their future employment prospects. Here, it might also be pertinent to explore opportunities for linking their volunteering experience to volunteer-integrated learning within their educational institutions.

Overall, this research supports an international call for a more focused approach to examining how organisational cultures and structures of formal crisis response agencies can better account for self-organised volunteering, in order to provide a more adaptive, integrated, and overall effective crisis response effort that harnesses all the skilled resources available (Whittaker et al., 2015).

Limitations and Future Research

While this study has provided valuable insights into the intersections of younger generations, crisis volunteering, and self-organising, it has some limitations. First, this study was based on the response to one event in one society and was based primarily on Western constructs of volunteering; therefore, the research's recommendations and its implications for the crisis response literature need to be approached with this context in mind.

The snowball sampling method reached saturation when names offered by participants were being repeated. Achieving saturation through this particular method does not necessarily, however, suggest that *all* younger volunteers who engaged in self-organising during the *Rena* event were interviewed. As a qualitative case study, the relatively small sample size of younger volunteers means that it is difficult to generalise the findings to other contexts. The findings, therefore, represent a snapshot in time related to a very specific event. That said, it is notable how similar the perceptions of the younger volunteers were to those found in other studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand and overseas (see, for example,

Goodman et al., 2012; Hayward, 2013; Lewis, 2013; McManus, 2011; O'Steen & Perry, 2012; Toivonen, 2011).

While acknowledging these limitations, this thesis addresses a gap within volunteer scholarship where little consideration has been given to generational perspectives in crisis volunteering and how these interact with the organisational and communication dynamics of volunteers. As such, the study highlights several areas that would benefit from further exploration.

First, the investigation of younger volunteers from different cultures within an Aotearoa/ New Zealand context, and particularly Māori and Pasifika volunteers, is needed. The findings have not only highlighted that Western constructs of volunteering have limited applicability in Māori culture, but also revealed how the reflexive cultural position of the researcher can further limit these interpretations. As such, future research could explore how the effects of a neoliberal economy within Aotearoa/New Zealand – considered a hegemonic Western paradigm (Davies, 2014; Hall & Wilson, 2011) might influence -or not- younger Māori.

Second, an intersectional approach to theories of volunteering, generation, and self-organising could be applied to research that focuses on different *types* of crisis events that are becoming increasingly topical in the current social, political, and environmental climate. While the *Rena* case study was an environmental crisis, it would be interesting to assess differences and similarities between the behaviours of younger volunteers who respond to other types of crisis events. For example, in the final week of writing this thesis, Aotearoa/New Zealand was subject to an unprecedented terrorist attack which claimed the lives of 50 Muslim people as they prayed inside their mosques. Within the crisis event literature, a terrorist attack is classified as a *human-caused event* typified by mass violence and malevolence (McFarlane & Norris, 2006). Despite the vast differences between terrorist events and other types of crisis events, Perry and Lindell (2003) have suggested that reasonable expectations can be extrapolated from existing literatures on technological and natural crisis events that allow us to gain insight into the general context of understanding human behaviour under stress following a terrorist event. While researchers have examined the volunteer behaviour of individuals and groups who responded to prior terrorist events such as September

11 (see Lowe & Fothergill, 2003; Steffen & Fothergill, 2009) and the 1995 Oklahoma bombing (see Sitterle & Gurwitch, 1999; Waugh & Streib, 2006), there remains little understanding of or focus on younger volunteers who respond to terror events. The fortuitous nature of the SVA's being located in Christchurch, where the terrorist attack took place last week, resulted in a quick call to action within the organisation. At the time of writing, members of the SVA were focusing their attention on providing free transportation not only for female Muslims who no longer felt safe driving themselves, but also for anyone from the Muslim community attending the funeral services of the victims. Both of these offers provided by the SVA draw parallels with the current study, which saw younger volunteers self-organise to cater for vulnerable or marginalised sectors of the community whom they felt were not having their needs met by the authorities. Whilst the response to this particular crisis event is still in its infancy, the actions taken by the SVA support the call for future research that intersects younger volunteers, self-organising, and *different types* of crisis events by building on some of the findings from the current study.

Third, given the intersectionality of findings that link empowerment, reflexivity, and structural forces that constrain the participation of younger volunteers, it would be valuable for further research to examine the complex interplay between how younger people construct structure and agency during crisis events. Within this sphere, a more focused investigation into the relationship between activism and crisis – specifically volunteering – would be particularly valuable as a way to further examine links between self-organising and alternative forms of activist participants.

Fourth, because this study found that empowerment and activism were closely entwined in the conceptualisations among younger volunteers, there is a need for further explorations into how individuals might view future crisis events: through a lens of empowerment as a volunteer, or empowerment as an activist? Given the abundance of recent research focused on the action and participation of today's younger generation on social issues such as climate change for example (Corner, Roberts, Chiari, Völler, Mayrhuber, Mandl, & Monson, 2015; Hayward, 2012; Buttigieg & Pace 2013; Arnold, Cohen, & Warner, 2009) this is an area ripe for inquiry.

Fifth, from a methodological perspective, future research or publications that emerge from this study that involves Māori participants also require reconsideration. The significant differences between Western and Māori research epistemologies have been widely discussed (Hudson & Russell, 2009; Smith, 2005, 2012; Tolich, 2002; Hart 2010; Moewaka Barnes, McCreanor, Edwards & Borell, 2013; Henry & Pene, 2001). For example, Smith (2012) argues that Western culture has frequently identified itself as the ethnocentric centre of legitimate knowledge that is encoded in colonial discourses which, in turn, influence the researcher. According to Hart (2010) this domination of Western thought has often led to indigenous worldviews being analysed through a Western point of view, which, according to Walker (2004), “has been and continues to be one of the major tools of colonization” (p. 531). Described by Hart (2010) as internalized oppression, this cultural form of epistemological domination (Moewaka Barnes, 2008) can have a significant impact on how a researcher approaches their data collection, interpretation and analysis. In Aotearoa/New Zealand, for example, different cultures approach the construction of knowledge differently: While Māori acquire knowledge to uphold the mana of their community, Pākehā acquire knowledge as a cumulative process which is drawn together to expose universal laws (Cram, 1993). A 2008 study by Moewaka Barnes et al examined how Māori ways of “finding out about and knowing the world have been subordinated to Western/settler epistemological traditions” through researcher domination, creation, and reproduction (p. 443). In order to resist this domination, researchers must either embrace the cultural realities and orientations of those being researched (Wilson & Neville, 2009) or risk having their research processes conflicting with others’ worldviews (Little Bear, 2000). Engaging cultural supervision and continuing to apply the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi into further publications that emerge from this research is therefore critical in order to acknowledge these cultural and epistemological differences in an attempt to move beyond the colonial process of marginalization (Hart, 2010).

Finally, it is important to note that as a consequence of the *Rena* crisis Maritime New Zealand is currently developing national guidelines for its engagement with volunteers and local communities. This move reflects a worldwide trend in policy development on the use of volunteers when responding to oil spills (see National Response Team, 2012; Walker, Pavia, Bostrom, Leschine, & Starbird, 2015;

Walker, Scholz, & Ott, 2014; Picou, Formichella, Marshall, & Arata, 2009). Recommendations based on the *Rena* crisis include the need to engage with the local community early in response efforts (Fraser, May, 2012; Ombler, October, 2014). Despite both these reports outlining the critical role that volunteers play, neither mentions younger volunteers or volunteers who operate outside of the official response. It is, therefore, vital that crisis response officials, governments, and volunteer organisations understand, acknowledge, and support younger volunteers, in order to maximise an effective community response.

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICS APPROVAL

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23rd October 2012

Sarah Lockwood
916B Papamoa Beach Road
Papamoa

Dear Sarah

*Ethical Application WMS 12/162
The self-organising of youth volunteers during crisis events*

As per my earlier email the above research project, as outlined in your application, has been granted Ethical Approval for Research by the Waikato Management School Ethics Committee.

Please note: should you make changes to the project outlined in the approved ethics application, you may need to reapply for ethics approval.

Best wishes for your research

Regards,



Amanda Sirocombe
Research Manager

APPENDIX 2: APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

WAIKATO MANAGEMENT SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

IDENTIFY THE PROJECT

Title of Project *The self-organising of youth volunteer during crisis events*

Researcher(s) name and contact information *Sarah Lockwood/918b Papamoa Beach Road/Papamoa 3118/ 027 5516919*

Supervisor's name and contact information (if relevant) *Shiv Ganesh (Chief)/ Mary Simpson (Deputy)*

Anticipated date to begin data collection *December 2012*

DESCRIBE THE RESEARCH

Briefly outline what the project is about including your research goals and anticipated benefits. Include links with a research programme, if relevant.

The aim of this research is to expand and deepen understanding of the dynamics of youth volunteering during crisis events. The research will specifically explore the roles of social capital, technology and collective action in youths volunteering during crisis events. In doing so, I aim to provide an original contribution to the phenomena through situational insight via a case study approach, focusing on the communication and organising experiences of youth volunteers involved in the Rena crisis event.

The research will compliment current research being undertaken within the University of Waikato related to outcomes from the Rena crisis, as well as international research on volunteer response to crisis events.

Alongside the above anticipated benefits to be gained from the study, I hope to provide answers to the following questions:

- 1. How is 'volunteering' understood within the context of organising with young people?*
- 2. What is the role of collective action in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?*
- 3. What is the role of information communication technology (ICT) in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?*
- 4. What is the role of social capital in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?*

Briefly outline your method.

A single case study research method focusing on the Rena oil spill will be combined with semistructured and analysis of online discourse (i.e., blogs, websites, social media).

The estimated number of interviews will be 60-90 although this will be dependent on the availability of individuals to some extent.

The method of snowball sampling will be used for the interviews as it provides an effective way to capture the social structure in the population by enabling sampled units to provide information not only about themselves, but also about the nominees mentioned by them. This means that key personnel to be investigated will be recommended by those who similarly have relevance within the case study rather than having their relevance determined by the researcher. In this snowball sample method, a suitable start point may be Pim de Monchy, the Rena Operation Volunteer Manager. From here, further respondents will be selected and interviewed based on recommendations from their predecessor, thus providing a certain linkage or 'bond' within the sample population. This is an effective method because it is particularly effective in locating members of special populations and given the time lapse since this particular crisis, other mass sampling techniques may prove difficult.

Describe plans to give participants information about the research goals.

Participants will be informed of their right of access to any data that has been collected from/about them. In all cases, individuals involved in the data collection will be provided a summary of the research goals and methods, steps taken to ensure their confidentiality and consideration of sensitive information, and access to full research report (see attached information sheet).

Identify the expected outputs of this research (e.g., reports, publications, presentations), including who is likely to see or hear the reports or presentations on this research

It is hoped that the findings will augment research and theory in the field of crisis informatics, and provide practical, usable knowledge to both public and private sectors linked and affected by crisis events. Such sectors include local and central government and councils, as well as industry and research in the field of communications, nongovernment organisations, risk management, and knowledge management.

It is also my aim to expand on individual sections of the research into journal articles. As the research progress I also aim to take up opportunities to present at conferences and forums, both academic and industry (i.e., Emergency Management Sector; Volunteer conferences).

Specifically regarding the Rena oil spill response, there are ongoing conferences, hui and meetings, which provide further opportunity to present research findings and outline progress related to impacts and ongoing research as a result of the event. It is hoped that progress and findings of this study will be of benefit not only within Aotearoa/New Zealand, but also to other crisis events involving volunteers internationally.

Identify the physical location(s) for the research, the group or community to which your potential participants belong, and any private data or documents you will seek

to access. Describe how you have access to the site, participants and data/documents. Identify how you obtain(ed) permission from relevant authorities/gatekeepers if appropriate and any conditions associated with access.

The majority of research participants will be likely based in the Tauranga/Bay of Plenty area as the majority of those engaged with the Rena response were local. However a number of people throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand and internationally were also involved and therefore will be included as participants in research process.

It may be difficult to establish the location of some data and participants involved in the gathering of data from online sources however necessary steps will be taken to obtain this information where possible.

If I seek further information from Maritime New Zealand databases or other existing sources, I will be required to meet their eligibility criteria and will be required to sign waivers ensuring privacy and confidentiality.

OBTAIN PARTICIPANTS' INFORMED CONSENT, WITHOUT COERCION.

Describe how you will select participants (e.g., special criteria or characteristics) and how many will be involved.

The method of snowball sampling will be used for the interviews as it provides an effective way to capture the social structure in the population by enabling sampled units to provide information not only about themselves, but also about the nominees mentioned by them. This means that key personnel to be investigated will be recommended by those who similarly have relevance within the case study rather than having their relevance determined by the researcher. In this snowball sample method, a suitable start point may be Pim de Monchy, the Rena Operation Volunteer Manager. From here, further respondents will be selected and interviewed based on recommendations from their predecessor, thus providing a certain linkage or 'bond' within the sample population. This is an effective method because it is particularly effective in locating members of special populations and given the time lapse since this particular crisis, other mass sampling techniques may prove difficult.

Because it may not be possible in some instances to interview participants face to face because of location, phone and/or online methods may be employed i.e., Skype. In these instances, ethical consideration will be consistent with interviews conducted face to face.

Describe how you will invite them to participate.

Participants will be invited to join the research project as soon as ethics approval has been granted. Participants of the research will include:

- *Volunteers involved in the Operation Beach Clean Rena Response team*
- *Staff and contractors employed by Maritime New Zealand, Tauranga City Council, Bay of Plenty Regional Council including iwi representatives*
- *Informal volunteers or those who were voluntarily involved in the Rena response, that were not part of the Operation beach Clean Rena Response team*

Because of the snowball sampling method, access to database of those involved in the Rena response will not be required.

Show how you provide prospective participants with all information relevant to their decision to participate. Attach your information sheet, cover letter, or introduction script. See document on informed consent for recommended content. Information should include, but is not limited to:

- **what you will ask them to do;**
- **how to refuse to answer any particular question, or withdraw any information they have provided at any time before completion of data collection;**
- **how and when to ask any further questions about the study or get more information.**
- **the form in which the findings will be disseminated and how participants can access a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded.**

Approval from the Rena Volunteer Operation management should not be too difficult to obtain given their motivation to understand more about the use of volunteers within future crisis events, and the lack of research in this area. Access to individuals may prove the more challenging part of the research, with some wanting to remain private about their personal involvement as volunteers. To mitigate the apparent lack of privacy from the perspective of participant, ethical considerations will be acknowledged by informing participants of name confidentiality and privacy to reduce the potential for participation due to a fear of identification.

Specific considerations concerning access and implications for access of activity and communication from an online medium will require distinctive processes to ensure ethical concerns are mitigated. Such efforts may include masking participant identities and cultivating trusting relationships. Due to the developing nature of technology, these ethical considerations may require ongoing revision.

Individuals will be informed that participation is only voluntary and therefore they are not obliged to cooperate. Before interviews are undertaken, participants will be briefed on the background of the research and what their rights are as participants. This includes name suppression and confidentiality, the ability to withdraw from the study at any time, the right to ask any questions about the study during the participation, and access to a summary of findings once research is concluded. Participants must be satisfied that they understand these rights before taking part in the research. They will also be informed that their communication will be recorded by manual transcription and verbally via dictaphone. Interviews will require a written consent form to be filled out by those willing to participate in the research.

(Also see attached information sheet).

Describe how you get their consent. (Attach a consent form if you use one.)

(See attached information sheet).

Explain incentives and/or compulsion for participants to be involved in this study, including monetary payment, prizes, goods, services, or favours, either directly or indirectly.

N/a (Research is not ethical if coercion of any sort, or inducement beyond reasonable compensation for participating, is used to gain participation).

MINIMISE DECEPTION

If your research involves deception – this includes incomplete information to participants -- explain the rationale. Describe how and when you will provide full information or reveal the complete truth about the research including reasons for the deception.

n/a

RESPECT PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Explain how any publications and/or reports will have the participants' consent.

Every effort will be taken to ensure that the use of information does not exploit the people whom it concerns, and that participants experience a degree of reciprocity both during and after the research.

In cases where analyses and interpretations are emergent and individuals more easily identified, it may be necessary to show drafts of manuscripts to the participants involved in order to gain their further permission and to sort out any difficulties in acknowledging ownership of knowledge.

Explain how you will protect participants' identities (or why you will not).

Rights to privacy and confidentiality must be respected to ensure that information provided by all participants is kept confidential, and that all participants are invited to exercise this right. Identification of participants or informants will not occur without their informed consent.

The information sheet provided to participants will also state that individuals will not be identified in any publication/dissemination of the research findings without their explicit consent.

Describe who will have access to the information/data collected from participants. Explain how you will protect or secure confidential information.

As the researcher, I will be responsible also for the safekeeping and confidentiality of consent forms and access to the information/data collected from participants will be anonymous when forwarded from my possession.

Steps will be taken in order to keep identities or information acquired in the process of research secure from interception or appropriation by unauthorised persons, or use for

nonresearch purposes. This will involve coding of data and removal of names from interviews and other documents.

Minimise risk to participants

'Risk' includes physical injury, economic injury (i.e., insurability, credibility), social risk (i.e., working relationships), psychological risk, pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, and cultural dissonance and exploitation.

Where participants risk change from participating in this research compared to their daily lives, identify that risk and explain how your procedures minimize the consequences.

Although no potential risks are apparent at this point, if at any point risks arise I will make every attempt to identify and inform participants of potential risk prior to obtaining informed consent. Risks may include pain, stress, emotional distress, fatigue, embarrassment, exploitation and cultural dissonance. In any cases such as these, participants will be consulted to ascertain any risks that they may identify, or concerns that they may have.

Ways of dealing with risks that may occur could include providing participants with names of people that they can talk to if they were to become upset (in the case that they did not want to speak directly with me about the issue).

Where during the course of the research it becomes apparent that the risk of harm is greater than had originally been envisaged, participants will be informed, and the research will be re-evaluated in terms of the first of these principles.

Participants will be informed of their rights to complain if they feel that their trust has been abused. Participants will also be informed of their right of access to any data that has been collected from/about them and the ability to withdraw at any time.

In the case of participants who have other limitations in their ability to provide their own consent (e.g., by virtue of intellectual disability, mental health disability etc.), efforts to obtain informed consent will be made as far as possible prior to and in addition of any consent obtained from a legal guardian.

Describe any way you are associated with participants that might influence the ethical appropriateness of you conducting this research – either favourably (e.g., same language or culture) or unfavourably (e.g., dependent relationships such as employer/employee, supervisor/worker, lecturer/student). As appropriate, describe the steps you will take to protect the participants.

There are no known dependent relationships that may affect this research.

Academic and technical jargon will be omitted from information sheets and questioning in order to reduce any confusion from the interview process. In place of this, clear and simple language will be used.

Being a non-Māori, respect and consideration must be given to the Treaty of Waitangi (see 7).

Describe any possible conflicts of interest and explain how you will protect participants' interests and maintain your objectivity.

As I also volunteered myself at Mōtītī Island and throughout the Rena Operation Beach Clean I am already known to some of the likely participants. At all times, participants will be provided the information sheet and consent form as to have consistent preinformation and knowledge about the research and thus share similar perspectives of myself, as a researcher. Following a semistructured interview process, this will maintain a similar vein to questioning regardless if individual participants are known to me or not.

Exercise social and cultural sensitivity

Identify any areas in your research that are potentially sensitive, especially from participants' perspectives. Explain what you do to ensure your research procedures are sensitive (unlikely to be insensitive). Demonstrate familiarity with the culture as appropriate.

Although this research is not culturally focused, it will likely include Māori participants.

Potential ownership issues, and sensitivity regarding access to individuals from particular areas (i.e., Mōtītī Island) may draw sensitivity when collecting information from research participants.

Having volunteered with many of the cultural participants likely to be involved in the research, my familiarity with their culture and norms is heightened. My own, personal experiences, prior research experiences (specifically in a cultural field) and knowledge also provide a good basis for cultural sensitivity and familiarity.

If the participants as a group differ from the researcher in ways relevant to the research, describe your procedures to ensure the research is culturally safe and non-offensive for the participants.

The Treaty of Waitangi has implications for this research for example careful consultation and obtaining informed consent from Māori stakeholders and collectivities, as well as from individuals may be required.

In some cases it may be appropriate for leaders of a collectivity to agree to participation on behalf of others. If any individuals wish to decline to participate in the research (in spite of consent given on behalf of the collectivity), their wishes must be respected, and the greatest care must be taken to prevent consequent retribution by the collectivity or others. On the other hand, in some situations the rights of the individual to participate may outweigh a collectivity's decision not to do so.

Some research may well require ongoing involvement, advice and guidance from Māori. In cases such as this, steps will be taken to establish ongoing research relationships with Māori stakeholders, advisers or experienced researchers. Care will be taken to avoid

placing unreasonable demands on their time. Principles of respect, reciprocity and mutual benefit should guide these relationships.

Because many Māori individuals and communities have felt that their cultural, intellectual, physical and community knowledge and property have been exploited by researchers who have operated according to value positions different to those of Māori, it is important to recognise that Māori are the guardians of their customary knowledge and cultural property. They have the right to protect and control dissemination of that knowledge or access to such cultural property.

The research endeavour is not an individual pursuit rather it is a negotiated collaborative process that is reliant upon the goodwill and cooperation of participants and collectivities. Ownership and authorship of research product will therefore be carefully negotiated in an informed manner ensuring that the research participants and collectivities are the first beneficiaries of the research.

APPENDIX 3: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Sarah Lockwood and I am conducting this research as part of my PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) studies at The University of Waikato. At any time during this process I can be contacted at the below details:

Sarah Lockwood

sandslockwood@gmail.com

027 5516919

My supervisors can also be contacted should you have any questions about this research:

Prof. Kay Weaver ckweaver@waikato.ac.nz

Prof. Debashish Munshi munshi@waikato.ac.nz

Dr. Mary Simpson mary@waikato.ac.nz

The aim of this research is to better understand the dynamics of youth volunteering during crisis events. I will be specifically looking at the Rena oil spill crisis, and those involved in this response effort. It is hoped that this research will compliment current research being undertaken within the University of Waikato related to outcomes from the Rena crisis, as well as international research on volunteer response to crisis events.

Your participation in this research is highly valued and will assist in achieving the above outcomes. In order to obtain information from those involved, I will be conducting interviews taking between 35 and 75 minutes. Information collected from these interviews will be collated alongside information from online sources such a social networking sites, forums and blogs that relate to the volunteer efforts involved in this crisis event.

As the researcher, I will be responsible for the safekeeping and confidentiality of consent forms and access to the information/data collected from participants. All information collected that includes the names of participants will only be seen by myself and my supervisor/s, and will remain strictly confidential.

Necessary steps will be taken in order to keep identities or information acquired in the process of research secure from interception or appropriation by unauthorised persons, or use for nonresearch purposes. This will involve coding of data and removal of names from interviews and other documents. In cases where analyses and interpretations may identify the identity of individuals, drafts of manuscripts to

the participants involved will be provided in order to gain their further permission and to sort out any difficulties in acknowledging ownership of knowledge.

You will not be identified in any publication/dissemination of the research findings without your explicit consent.

If you take part in the study you have the right to among other things to:

- Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study up to the time of submission.
- Ask any further questions about the study that occurs to you during your participation.
- Be given access to a summary of the findings from the study, when it is concluded.
- Right to access any data that has been collected from/about them, when the study is concluded.

APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Consent Form



Consent Form for Participants

I have read the **Information Sheet for Participants** for this study and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the **Information Sheet**.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the **Information Sheet** form.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name and contact information:

Sarah Lockwood
sandslockwood@gmail.com
027 56516919

Supervisor's Name and contact information:

Prof. Kay Weaver
Ckweaver@waikato.ac.nz

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following lists include probes for interview participants including Section A) generic questions to ask all interviewees; Section B) questions specifically for volunteers ages 18-30ys; Section C) additional questions for these volunteers who were involved in efforts outside of the formal volunteering opportunities; and Section D) questions specifically for interviewees from formal organisations involved in the crisis response. Additional questions and probes will be used as needed. Following these sections, reflections towards areas of inquiry related to the research questions are discussed.

Section A

1. How were you involved in the Rena event? What was your role and interaction regarding volunteers/volunteering?
2. What did you consider 'volunteering' to be before you were involved in the Rena crisis? Have these views changed over time?
3. Suppose I had never volunteered before. How would you describe who a volunteer is and what a volunteer is and what they do? What would you compare it to?
4. Did you have any involvement/interactions/were involved yourself/ with young people that volunteered outside of the official volunteer programme? If so, to what extent? What was your overall opinion of these efforts in comparison to the efforts undertaken by the official volunteer response? Provide examples.
5. Compared to other volunteering opportunities, do you think there was anything significant about volunteering for this particular event which engaged young people? What factors were you/do you think they, were drawn to?
6. In your opinion, what did young volunteers (18-30yrs) bring to the table during the Rena crisis? Why do you think this is? Why do you think young people decided to volunteer for this event?

7. How do you think people perceive the volunteer efforts of young people? Why do you think this is? Do you think these perceptions have changed throughout/as a result of recent crisis events?

8. If you had to explain to people involved in future crisis events how they should go about involving young people, what advice would you give them?

9. How would you describe the organisational skills of young volunteers?

Section B

10. Have you been involved as a volunteer in any other occasions? If so, how does this event compare? What was it about this event that got you involved?

11. Thinking back to why you decided to volunteer-did you experience anything different other to what you expected? Have your reasons for volunteering changed over time? If so, how?

12. If I followed you through a typical day 'volunteering' what would I see you doing and who would I see you interacting with? How would you be interacting with them (i.e., verbally, through ICT)...?

13. Describe how you would go about contacting and communicating with people. What were the most common forms of communication that you utilised throughout your experience (including software, networking sites)? What did you find most/least useful? Can you share any positive/negative experiences?

14. How important do you feel was the role of technology in the volunteering efforts you were involved in? Describe different ways you used technology to assist in your volunteering efforts.

15. Do you think you have any particular skills, abilities or talents which placed you well as a volunteer during this event?

16. Was there anything you wanted to do which you were unable to do? Describe. What were the conditions that led to this? Were there any situations where you faced resistance with something you wanted to do? Can you describe a specific

moment during your volunteering which was challenging or difficult? How did you handle this?

17. Describe the relationship you shared or witnessed between young volunteers and 'others' involved in the volunteer response (both in official and unofficial capacities).

18. Are you able to provide an example of any important decisions you were required to make/made during your volunteering?

20. Has the experience of volunteering for this event affected you? If so, how? Provide examples.

21. Do you feel that your efforts were fairly recognised? How important is it to you that these efforts are recognised? Provide examples.

Section C

22. Were there any specific reasons why you decided to organise your 'own thing' rather than be involved with the formal volunteering efforts?

23. Did you engage others into these efforts? Describe how you involved others in these efforts. How many were involved and in what capacity?

24. How do you think these efforts compared to that of the formal volunteer response? What do you think the reasons are for this?

Section D

25. What were your general experiences like with your encounters with young volunteers this event?

26. Tell me about the relationship between yourself and the young volunteers involved in this event. Provide examples.

27. In your view, what were the key differences you experienced between young (18-30yrs) and older volunteers?

28. Did you have any preconceived notions about young volunteers before your interactions with them? Were these expectations met or did they change? If so, how?

29. Did you experience or witness any particularly memorable positive or negative experiences that involved young people? Did you have any tense or unfavourable exchanges with young volunteers? Provide examples.

30. Are you able to provide any examples of decision making that was done by young volunteers? What was the process and outcome?

31. Many young people decided to volunteer outside of the volunteering efforts organised by the formal response. Did you have any interactions with these groups? Explain. What was your opinion of these individuals and groups?

Research questions

RQ1. How is 'volunteering' understood within the context of organising with young people?

RQ2. What is the role of collective action in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?

RQ3. What is the role of information communication technology (ICT) in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?

RQ4. What is the role of social capital in the dynamics of volunteering youth during crisis events?

The first section of questions (1-9) seeks to ask all respondents their overall opinions of both the formal and informal volunteering efforts of young people in order to compare and contrast responses through consistent questioning. In addition, these questions seek to address specific areas related to the relationships between youth volunteers and others, their perceptions before and reflections after the event, addressing the notion of episodic volunteering, and overall opinion relating the general organisational skills of these young volunteers. These questions aim to elicit initial opinions on *RQ1* from the perspective of both youth

volunteers and organisations. The subsequent sections' questions probe deeper into these areas.

Also addressing *RQ1*, the questions 10-12, 22-24, and 31 aimed to extract deeper understanding as to conditions and/or factors which enable 'volunteering' to occur within their understanding, and whether respondents make reference to organising text within this questioning to better contextualise this within their understanding of 'volunteering'. Also intended in these specific questions were ways to gain reflection of the communication and organising processes of these volunteer efforts relating to the theory of self-organising and CCO theorists (i.e., 22-24, and 31).

To gain better insight as to the values that underpins youth's involvement in volunteering address *RQ4* relating to social capital (12-14, 17, 21-23, and 26), addressing specifically areas of recognition (21), effects of globalisation and its exposure effects toward potential sensitivity towards volunteering and crisis (10), the role of technology in addressing issues enhancing youths social capital (13-15), and understanding towards the concepts of convergent behaviour and social connectedness (22, 23, 31).

It was assumed that the role of ICT (*RQ3*) throughout both formal and informal voluntary efforts would be inevitably discussed, nevertheless specific questions (10, 11, 18, 19, 22, and 24) ensured that key factors relating to its particular influence on the organising and communication practices during crisis events, and general applicability to such events involving youth volunteers (13-15) its facilitation in networking, and to provide insight into the relative positive and negative experiences and functions of particular software and networking sites (13).

The probes relating to ICT through social networking sites also touch on how collective action is facilitated (*RQ2*) with focus on the social networks youths are exposed to via the specific communication and organising practices during their volunteering (12-14, 22, 23, and 26).

The questions which relate to perception (9, 10, 12, 14 – 15, and 17) were not of secondary importance, but were aimed to address much of the literature and media

reference relating to false perceptions and/or conflict between youth and others, here relating these references specifically to volunteering youth.

As with the literature review conducted prior to the interviews, the perceptions of youth volunteers among youth themselves, and from the perspective of others, their unique approach to volunteering and suitability and adaptability during times of crisis may provide useful underlying insight as to gain better understand towards respondent opinions and hence were addressed in 6-9, 15- 17, and 25-29.