ORGANISATIONAL VOLUNTEERING:

MEANINGS OF VOLUNTEERING, PROFESSIONALISM, VOLUNTEER

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AND WELLBEING

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ABSTRACT

Volunteering has become the major means by which individuals and communities connect and engage with significant social issues. While volunteering is typically constructed as an inherently positive activity that improves personal and social wellbeing, this project critically examines the relationship between organisational volunteering and wellbeing. Scholarly literature from multiple disciplines suggests that three key dimensions are particularly salient in understanding connections between volunteering and wellbeing. The first dimension is the significance and meaning that volunteers themselves attach to what they do. The extensive volunteering literature contains multiple theoretical and empirical perspectives on the core features of organisational volunteering, without considering how volunteers themselves might reconcile these tensions.

The second dimension is the role that organisational expectations and messages about professionalism in particular play in shaping volunteer identity and practice and its relationship with wellbeing. Professionalism is usually framed as an attribute of paid work and hence as inconsistent with the volunteer role and the mission of nonprofit organisations more generally. The third dimension involves the connections between organisational volunteering and wellbeing as they are evident in nonprofit communities of practice, where wellbeing emerges from the collaborative relationships that volunteers develop. CoP scholarship tends to position collaboration as a component of "good" CoPs and conflict as negative.

Accordingly, the *objective of the thesis is to understand the meanings of volunteering as they are constructed by volunteers, shaped by understandings of*

professionalism embedded in core organisational codes of conduct, and enacted in communities of practice. Doing so will enable a close and comprehensive assessment of the connections and potential tensions between volunteering and wellbeing. In addition to advancing research on volunteering, the research has implications for three core organisational communication constructs: occupational and organisational identity, coordination and relationality. The study of the meanings, identities and practice of volunteering offers insight into how individuals manage multiple identity positions, especially in non-work settings, and how particular identities cue the ways in which relationality is enacted. The study of communities of practice in nonprofit contexts could also extend studies of coordination that explore how organisations attempt to control their members by focusing on meaningful participation.

The thesis is structured around five research questions. First, I ask: *what meanings do individuals engaged with voluntary organisations give to their volunteering?* Second, in order to assess the impact of professionalism, I ask three questions: *How do organisational codes of conduct construct professionalism for volunteers? How do these codes of conduct position the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing? How do volunteers relate organisational notions of professionalism to their own wellbeing?* Finally, in order to understand the connections between organisational volunteering, relationships and wellbeing in practice, I ask: *How do volunteers enact communities of practice?*

As a broad frame for the entire project, I employ a hybrid phenomenological perspective based around three key postulates: (1) individuals create meaning through intentional interaction with objects of experience; (2) we use both experience and context to understand a phenomenon; and (3) individual

and group differences in how an object is experienced enrich our understanding of a phenomenon. The postulates suggest that, in order to understand the phenomenon of organisational volunteering, both a detailed account of volunteers' experiences and an analysis of the organisational context in which volunteering occurs is required. Specifically, I analysed volunteering in three nonprofit organisations in New Zealand: Refugee Services, the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society, and St John Ambulance. A total of 49 in-depth interviews were conducted with volunteers in all three organisations in order to answer questions about the meanings of volunteering, the impact of professionalism on wellbeing, and communities of practice. Additionally, I collected textual data in the form of reports, brochures, promotional materials and training manuals, as well as observational data to assess how codes of professional conduct were constructed in each organisation. Data were analysed for each of the three key dimensions of the volunteering-wellbeing relationship as follows. I used a phenomenological method of analysis adapted from the Duquesne School to unpack the meanings that volunteers gave to their experiences of volunteering. In order to develop emic understandings of professionalism within the nonprofit organisations in this study, I highlighted statements from organisational representatives and in organisational texts that discussed professionalism and clustered key elements into themes. In contrast, I applied an a priori coding method to address the last research question on communities of practice. Specifically, I adopted Lave and Wenger's (1991) framework to analyse how volunteers used shared repertoire, mutual interaction and joint enterprise to create communities of practice, and I parsed these categories for evidence of both collaboration and conflict.

The findings of this project have significant implications for research on volunteering. First, this study challenges uni-dimensional visions of volunteering found in both academic and popular literature as a free act. Instead, the data highlights the dual nature of volunteering, which is simultaneously agentic and deeply relational. Moreover, two distinct pathways, or ways of negotiating this duality, emerge. Volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway move synchronically between agency and relationality, while those on the giving-obligation pathway shift diachronically from agency to relationality.

Second, the study shows that codes of conduct regarding professionalism and its relationship with wellbeing are constructed differently across organisations. Further, participants in each organisation diverged in their responses to organisational notions of professionalism. One group enjoyed the structure and control afforded by professional standards, while the other group resisted professionalism as impersonal and negative for their wellbeing.

Third, contestation and conflict were as prevalent as collaboration and cooperation in volunteer communities of practice in all three organisations. While it was clear that dissent was an important part of "well" volunteer communities, the expectation that volunteering would lead to wellbeing and collaborative relationships did influence volunteer retention and intentions to exit.

These findings have implications for organisational communication research on identity, coordination and relationality, as well as theorising on nonprofit organising, in the form of three dialectical tensions. First, the study suggests that the process of identification is dynamic and dependent upon how volunteers manage the duality between agency and relationality inherent in

volunteering. Second, the study offers an expansive view of what "collaborative"

behaviour in communities of practice might entail, implicating both consensus

and dissensus. Finally, the study demonstrates the key role that relationality

plays, both in definitions of occupational identity as well as the construction of

collaborative communities of practice.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Scholarship on volunteering is diverse and multi-faceted, and the rich quality and high quantity of research about the topic obscures awareness that the conceptual boundaries of volunteering are vague. As I began this research journey, I found myself in the curious position of the Greek philosopher, Diogenes, who walked the city streets with a lit lantern in broad daylight, in search of a "real" human being. Scholars of volunteering may need to tread similar paths: despite our intellectual debts to countless others, we still do not see clearly any answer to the most obvious question, and sense perhaps that our findings have been based on assumptions that we have not explored, explained or even acknowledged.

Specifically, despite extensive research about volunteering, rarely have researchers across disciplinary perspectives paused to define exactly what is meant by "volunteering," presupposing instead a shared definition (Handy, et al., 2000). Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth's (1996) review of the definitions from articles and reports on volunteering is an important exception. They highlighted four core attributes: 1) volunteering contributes positively to the public good; 2) volunteering is a free act; 3) the personal costs of volunteering exceed the benefits received; and 4) volunteering occurs primarily in structured or organisational settings. Nonetheless, Cnaan et al.'s attributes are problematic for two reasons. First, volunteering embraces a wide range of activities and contexts, including delivery of social services, environmental conservation, political involvement, and sports coaching, which may lead to distinctive volunteer experiences. Second, few studies to date have attempted to clarify what distinguishes volunteering from other forms of helping and social engagement (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Chambré,

1993). Consequently, Musick and Wilson (2008) noted that "although the term "volunteer" is a familiar part of everyday language in Western cultures, we cannot be sure it indicates a distinct sphere of social practice in a way that is useful" (p. 11). This thesis, then, examines the significance and meanings that volunteers who are engaged with social service organisations attach to what they do.

An analysis of how these volunteers understand, define and practise volunteering is indispensable in order to assess the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing, and the impact of organisational discourses on volunteer wellbeing and volunteer relationships. That is, scholars have commented that volunteer endeavours, which have always tended to be bureaucratic in formal organisational settings, have become increasingly professionalised in recent years (Dees & Anderson, 2003; Kreutzer & Jäger, 2010). If social service volunteering in particular is a crucial mechanism by which people create relationships with each other (Dym & Hutson, 2005) and engage with socially significant issues (Zakour & Gillespie, 1998), we need to assess how professionalism affects the experience of volunteering, and the wellbeing that volunteers derive from it.

Wellbeing is an especially important consideration for studies of volunteering because volunteering is ordinarily framed as a positive contributor to both personal and social wellbeing (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001; Wilson, 2000). While it is not the aim of this thesis to redefine wellbeing in volunteer contexts, some sort of definition is needed at this juncture. And so, I propose that a notion of wellbeing as a globally positive assessment about personal happiness (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996) is useful here, rather than a composite measure. Composite measures, which involve the selection of particular types of experiences, events

and life circumstances and the assignment of a relative weighting to each component, do not take into account individual differences and preferences. I further suggest that a *subjective* global assessment is appropriate. That is, in the case of volunteering, autonomy or agency constitutes an important element of wellbeing evaluations (Ganesh & McAllum, 2010). For example, volunteers use agency to shape how they might "participate in interesting tasks," "develop good interpersonal relationships," and "contribute to society." An agentic perspective does not necessarily privilege objective outcome-based measures, as significant intersubjective variation is to be expected (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000, p. 520). Another advantage of adopting an agentic perspective of wellbeing is that it can encompass both altruistic and self-interested motivations for volunteering. Individuals may choose to sacrifice personal time and energy in order to benefit others, or they may engage in projects solely with the aim of gaining a "positive emotional response . . . from attaining what [they] want and value from a job" (Hwang & Kuo, 2006, p. 254).

Finally, this project unpacks the nature of volunteer relationships and the impact of both collaboration and conflict on wellbeing, using Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice framework. A community of practice (CoP) refers to a group of people who share a set of activities or practices, interact together, and negotiate a common goal or purpose (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002). Analysis of how volunteers enact a CoP can show how they manage potential relational and practical tensions. It also enables critique of the assumption embedded in the literature that volunteering contributes to the public good through the development of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Here, I define social capital as the goodwill (Adler & Kwon, 2002) and shared meanings (Nahapiet &

Ghoshal, 1998) created through shared social relationships characterised by reciprocity and trust.

Taken together, a close examination of the meanings of volunteering, the impact of professionalism and how volunteers enact communities of practice can also contribute to our understanding of key organisational communication issues such as identity, coordination and relationality in nonprofit contexts. It is particularly interesting to consider volunteering in terms of occupational identity, as the idea that volunteering is an "occupation" has been historically contested and marginalised by paid work. In contrast to the size of the nonprofit sector and the diverse range of nonprofit organisations, organisational communication scholarship on nonprofit organising is still in the early stages.

In one of only a few studies within organisational communication, Eisenberg and Eschenfelder (2009) provided an overview of the challenges of organising and leading nonprofit organisations. In particular, they focused on how nonprofits can maintain coherent mission and identity in an era of sector-bending (Dees & Anderson, 2003) and subsequent partnering with businesses and government. Eisenberg and Eschenfelder also analysed how professionalisation and short-term contractualism impact employee identification and involvement. While they did not explicitly examine volunteering, they identified the role that communication plays in managing the challenges of identification which is particularly salient for volunteers. That is, they highlighted several strategies such as "member buy-in" to mission and clear stakeholder communication to overcome the possible erosion of nonprofits' mission to serve society's neediest members in a funding environment that encourages nonprofits to invest in easily measurable and achievable outcomes.

Likewise, Lewis (2005) explored the unique features of nonprofit organisations that offer new research possibilities for organisational communication scholarship (p. 241). Lewis noted that, in general, researchers have used nonprofits as an interesting *context* for empirical work, rather than as a site in which to develop theories specific to nonprofit organisations. The four areas she proposed for future research included 1) social capital; 2) mission, effectiveness, and accountability; 3) governance and decision making; and 4) volunteer relationships. An analysis of the meanings of volunteering lays the foundation for the research agenda that Lewis (2005) proposed, because the ways in which individuals understand volunteering have profound implications for their identity as volunteers. At an interpersonal level, identity creates expectations about volunteer relationships. From an organisational perspective, questions of identity underpin both critiques of volunteers' effectiveness and accountability, and analyses of how volunteers make decisions and work with paid staff in governance processes. Lastly, identity creates assumptions about how volunteering contributes to social capital.

As I develop further in the review of the literature in Chapter 2, research on occupational identity, coordination and relationality has tended to occur in paid work or interpersonal contexts. Research carried out in a *nonprofit* setting may signal how these constructs can be adapted for a non-work, non-home "third space." Finally, this project also carries a pragmatic agenda: to demonstrate the relevance and significance of communicative understandings of volunteerism for effective and ethical nonprofit practice and management.

In the remainder of this chapter, I explain the contribution that an organisational communication perspective can make to our understanding of

organisational volunteering. I next present my rationale for using a hybrid phenomenological perspective that situates the experience of organisational volunteering firmly within the context in which it occurs. In the tradition of phenomenological 'bracketing,' I then lay out my own assumptions and presuppositions about volunteering. I have chosen to use a confessional style (van Maanen, 1988) to describe my own experiences of volunteering and the values I bring to it, as my personal biography influences the ways in which I approach this topic. Given the thesis's focus on organisational context, I situate the study within the broader social landscape of volunteering in New Zealand, and consider in particular the impact of professionalisation on the nonprofit sector. Finally, I provide an overview of the structure of the rest of the thesis.

<div align="center">An Organisational Communication Perspective</div>

The phenomenon of volunteering has attracted multi-disciplinary research by scholars from communication, economics, geography, leisure studies, management, political science, psychology, public administration, and sociology (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009, p. 343). These studies are highly diverse both methodologically and theoretically. Given its interdisciplinary and inherently multi-perspectival character (Corman & Poole, 2000), organisational communication offers a good platform on which to make sense of the diversity of studies of volunteering.

In particular, interpretive approaches, with their explicit focus on sense-making, can shed light on how volunteers negotiate two distinct repertoires as they construct their volunteer experience. On one hand, popular conceptualisations of volunteering evince a rich tradition of charitable giving and service (R. F. Taylor, 2005). On the other, more contemporary and increasingly

influential professionalised readings of volunteering transform voluntary activity into a variant of paid work (Tilly & Tilly, 1994). Psychologists and sociologists in particular have provided a rich body of research about what these competing paradigms of volunteering look like. What we need to add to this is how organisational volunteers negotiate each or balance both, perhaps creating new hybrid forms of practice. An organisational communication perspective enables a focus on how this process might occur.

The field of organisational communication is better positioned than sociology, psychology, or even management science to examine how individuals make sense of their volunteering because, regardless of epistemological commitments, communication perspectives do not look *through* communication to things such as social praxis, power relations and social structures that are presumed to be more "real" (W. B. Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 40). Instead, communication-centred analyses look at how the qualities of communication specify how identities, relationships and socio-cultural practices are formulated and enacted. As Pearce and Pearce noted, different forms of communication call "forth different ways of being in the participants and [provide] different affordances and constraints" (p. 43).

This thesis takes a broad perspective of communication as ground (Putnam, 2001): communication constructs and maintains "an ordered, meaningful cultural world" (Carey, 1989, pp. 18-19) within which we are social actors. From this perspective, communication understood in terms of *meaning*, *discourse* and *relationships* structures individuals' experiences of volunteering, organisational messages about professionalism and volunteers' enactment of communities of practice. A phenomenological perspective which investigates

being-*for-us* is well suited for this study of the meanings of volunteering. As I show in the next section, phenomenology fuses ontological and epistemological considerations, as the meaning of a phenomenon does not derive from being in itself but from what being is for us who experience it.

A Hybrid Phenomenological Perspective

Phenomenological perspectives can enhance our understanding of volunteering from the point of view of those who experience it. Moreover, phenomenological perspectives are broad enough to encompass analyses of social expectations about volunteering, and media and organisational messages. I begin this section with a justification for the use of phenomenology in this project. Next I provide a brief historical overview of phenomenology. I then explain how I have developed a "hybrid" phenomenological position which is indebted to Husserl, yet which incorporates fresh insights that both extend and diverge from his thinking. Specifically, I introduce three fundamental postulates that underpin all three areas of the study: the meanings of volunteering, professionalism-wellbeing relationships, and the significance of communities of practice. These phenomenological postulates are: (1) individuals create meaning through intentional interaction with objects of experience; (2) we use both experience and context to understand a phenomenon; and (3) individual and group differences in how an object is experienced enrich our understanding of a phenomenon.

What Advantages do Phenomenological Perspectives Offer?

First, phenomenological perspectives are particularly useful when conceptual clarity is lacking, as in the case of volunteering. Husserlian phenomenology posits that understanding the meaning of an experience is reached through analysis of the experience itself together with the way in which subjects

engage with the phenomenon (Kohak, 1978). Understanding what volunteering means for those individuals who engage in it can contribute insight into the problematic issue of volunteer identity that links the self to others, is free yet somewhat binding, and is neither work nor play. A clearer vision of volunteer identity may suggest better strategies for coordinating volunteers and their activity, and suggests how organisations might structure relationships accordingly.

Second, obtaining a rich description of volunteering enables us to evaluate the interpretive schemas that surround it. A clear conceptualisation of volunteering is an essential prerequisite for evaluating whether or not the professionalisation of the nonprofit sector and, as a consequence, volunteering is appropriate. Public policy makers, volunteer managers and volunteers will then be in a better position to assess how professionalism in volunteer contexts is constructed, and how well it fits with the experience of volunteering.

Third, phenomenological perspectives offer a means to reflect on one's first-hand experience. We often live through experience without paying it much attention. To become consciously self-aware, or to act *con scientia*, with knowledge, each self needs an "other" in order to stand apart from its own experience of the present moment, and to reflect. When experience is questioned or commented on, the subject of the experience is able to bring it to mind in a more explicit, intentional way. This intersubjective questioning and reflection by which we consciously attribute significance to "objects, events, tools, the flow of time, the self, and others, as these things arise . . . in our "life-world"" (D.W. Smith, 2009, para. 4) underpins phenomenological approaches.

A Brief Historical Overview of Phenomenological Theory

Phenomenological approaches are diverse, but scholars agree they all "[involve] the description of things as one experiences them" (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, 1991, p. 1). Thus, we are able to move beyond the realm of mere perception towards description of a whole host of other experiences including desiring, believing, valuing, and remembering. The ability of phenomenological perspectives to examine a range of emotive states as well as conceptual schemas is important for a project that examines not only volunteering but also how individuals structure the relationships between volunteering and wellbeing.

It is vital to acknowledge the scope and diversity of phenomenological perspectives. While significant nuances in phenomenological thought are evident in the work of a range of scholars, including Jaspers (1971), Marcel (1960), Ricoeur (1967), Sartre (1969) and Scheler (1994), it is possible to gain a sense of diversity by comparing three of the most influential phenomenological thinkers: Husserl (1962), Heidegger (1967), and Merleau-Ponty (1962). After discussing and comparing the work of these three key figures, I introduce the so-called "new" hybrid forms of phenomenology, and situate my work accordingly. Particular emphasis will be given to Husserl since his works have been most influential in the development of my hybrid approach.

The impossibility of categorically defining the essence of phenomenology is somewhat ironic, given phenomenology's very *raison d'être*. In his comprehensive work on the history of phenomenology, Speigelberg (1969) acknowledged that there are as many versions of phenomenology as phenomenologists. Further, he stated that phenomenology is a "moving"

philosophy with many "parallel currents" (p. 2) that have "a common point of departure, but need not have a definite and predictable joint destination" (p. 2).

Husserl is often credited as the founder of the phenomenological movement at the turn of the twentieth century. The movement arose as a response to the dominant paradigms of behaviourist "objectivism," that focused on stimuli-response, and purely subjective psychologism. Building on Brentano's work on intentionality that linked subjective consciousness to objects, Husserl claimed that experience is the primary source of knowledge. In order to step away from the body of judgements inherent in our everyday constructs, Husserl urged the practice of phenomenological reduction, whereby we uncover the essential attributes of an object. To do so, a phenomenologist must, by critical reflection, lay aside or bracket what was peculiar to particular encounters with an object of experience but which does not reveal what was at the core of the experience itself (Kohak, 1978, p. 106).

Once such a description of the phenomenon has been obtained, the researcher must then engage in imaginative variation, whereby the researcher "alters, via their imagination, different aspects of the experience, by either taking from or adding to the proposed transformation" (Dowling, 2007, p. 133). The end result is a careful description of the *essence* of a thing, or the structural properties without which a phenomenon could not be that which it is (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 55; Van Manen, 1997). That is, Husserlian phenomenology elaborates a thing's internal logic (Kohak, 1978).

Both Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty shifted the terrain of phenomenology away from Husserlian essence: Heidegger to existence and Merleau-Ponty to

perception. I deal briefly with each school of thought in turn. Heidegger rejected Husserl's emphasis on essences. Instead, he insisted that the foundation stone of phenomenological investigation was being (*dassein*) or existence, since all of our activities occur "in the world," which cannot therefore be bracketed. What this means is that one's situatedness in the world, as expressed through cultural background and historical context, is indissolubly linked to the act of making meaning (Koch, 1995; Munhall, 1989). Heideggerian phenomenology is unmistakably hermeneutic, as "[m]eaning is found as we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own background and experiences" (Laverty, 2003, p. 23). Hence, Heideggerian phenomenology offers researchers a methodology that is highly reflexive as one moves between the experience of "being in the world" and interpretation.

Husserl criticised Heidegger's approach as too naïve, naturalistic and pre-reflective (Speigelberg, 1969, p. 282). Put another way, Husserl focused on "things-in-being" while Heidegger's concern was with "modes of being" or the ontological study of human existence (Speigelberg, 1969, p. 288). Husserl aimed to objectively describe, while Heidegger's version of phenomenology is more interpretive. More recent researchers have also contended that while Heidegger's phenomenological approach provides rich contextual accounts, it does not "provide a basis for the relationship on which . . . [a phenomenon] depends" (Dowling, 2007, p. 134).

Merleau-Ponty's brand of phenomenology drew from Husserl's work, but diverged from Husserl's conclusions in important ways. Merleau-Ponty used Husserlian intentionality to describe how the embodied self connected to things in the world. The subject then, is not simply a receptor of sensations, but their

source. Hence, Merleau-Ponty critiqued Husserl's distinction between *noesis* and *noema*, arguing that acts of thought (noesis) and the objects of that thought (noema) cannot always be conceptually separated. For example, the body can be simultaneously the object and subject of one's thought. The embodied self, then, connects with the lifeworld through four existentials: spatiality, corporeality, temporality, and relationality. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological approach can be particularly helpful for analysing how subjects engage in embodied action (aesthetic appreciation of art, film or literature or how subjects make sense of illness, for instance).

Many phenomenological studies borrow elements from various currents of thought. This is particularly the case with what Crotty (1996) labelled "new" phenomenology which is a North American "hybrid." This new approach is broadly qualitative: it attempts to understand individuals' experiences as they engage with a phenomenon (Caelli, 2000) rather than the essence of the phenomenon itself. Hence, including interpretations and reflection in the analysis is not only unproblematic but important. While the focus seems to be on the noetic experience, it is not possible to ignore the nature of the experience. As one Husserlian scholar insisted, one is looking for "descriptions *of situations in the world as experienced by human subjects*" (Giorgi, 2000, p. 13, emphasis in the original). Other influential contemporary phenomenologists (e.g., Van Manen, 1997) combine description of the experience (Husserlian) with interpretation (Heideggerian). Van Manen further complicates matters by conflating the concept of phenomenon and experience (M. Z. Cohen & Omery, 1994).

When deciding which approach to adopt, to modify or to be "inspired" by (e.g., Porter, 1998), one has to consider one's research goal. If a researcher wants

to examine the object of participants' experiences or the phenomenon in itself, then Husserlian phenomenology is most appropriate. If, on the other hand, participants' subjective experiences are of most interest, then a new hybrid form of phenomenology is more helpful (Giorgi, 2000).

I designate my research approach as a hybrid that builds on Husserl's insights. I have chosen to use a largely Husserlian approach to analyse volunteering, which has fuzzy conceptual boundaries, because it becomes important to evaluate how conscious subjects make the world intelligible through intentional, conscious experience that transforms an entity into "*a synthetic unity constituted by my purposive presence*" (Kohak, 1978, p. 53, Kohak's italics). That is, the researcher, by examining a phenomenon closely, is able to grasp the "organizing principles that give form and meaning to the life world" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27) in this particular instance. Without a fresh look at the phenomenon, perhaps it would be impossible to identify what makes an experience distinctly unique from others.

While I choose to use a more Husserlian approach to analyse the meanings of volunteering, I use Crotty's "new" phenomenology to evaluate the impact of organisationally constructed professional codes of conduct on volunteers' wellbeing. That is, I do not attempt to unpack the essential structures of professionalism per se, but to assess volunteers' reactions to organisational discourses. As Maxwell (2005) noted, such an approach is more interested in "how participants *make sense of what has happened* (itself a real phenomenon) and how this perspective informs their actions" (p. 74, my italics) than the veracity of what participants report they said and did. That is, what is of primary interest is how volunteers (subjectively) create meanings from (objective)

interactions with others in the context of their volunteering. This more interpretive analysis perhaps owes more to Heidegger than to Husserl. I also integrate some of Schutz' insights about inter-subjectivity, to elucidate how objects can manifest the same intentional structures for oneself as well as any number of "others," although different subjects may emphasise different aspects of these structures. Schutz' approach has particular dialogic consequences for how we position the influence of relationships on how volunteers assign meanings to what they do.

I now proceed to elaborate the three phenomenological postulates that inform my hybrid position building on Husserl's foundation. The first tenet, which I develop in the next section, is the noematic-noetic constitution of experience.

First Postulate: Individuals Create Meaning through Intentional Interaction with Objects of Experience

Husserlian phenomenology examines all experience by considering how active subjects interact in a conscious or "intentional" way with objects in the world around them. In this way, phenomenology sidesteps the Cartesian split between what is external and objective and a private, subjective interpretation at a methodological level. Husserl rejected Descartes' dichotomy between the mind, conceived of as a thinking substance (*res cogitans*) and the material substances (*res extensa*) of empirical study. Instead, Husserl's epistemology suggested human consciousness (*cogito*) is always directed to something other than itself – the intentional object (*cogitatum*). Hammond et al (1991) explained the relationship between the subject and object of experience as follows:

Experience, as it were, always refers to something beyond

itself, and therefore cannot be characterised independently

of this. (Conversely, it is claimed, no straightforward

sense can be given to an outer, external world of objects

which are not the objects of such experiences.) One

cannot, for example, characterise perceptual experiences

without describing what is seen, touched, heard . . . . This

feature of conscious experience is called…its

'intentionality.' (pp. 2-3, emphasis in the original)

That is, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology presumes the existence

of objects that are independent of the mind, where perception is the primary

source of knowledge. However, he argued that the meaning of a phenomenon

resides in the *act* of perceiving rather than inhering in the *object* per se, which

implies meanings are derived rather than presupposed (Moustakas, 1994, p. 46).

Husserlian phenomenology allows one to ascertain how "the experience of the

phenomena [came] to be what it is" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 98) by examining the

relationship between "that which is experienced" and the "way in which it is

experienced." In Husserl's terms, this is expressed by the intentional relationship

between the noema (object) and noesis (subjective act), represented in Figure 1.
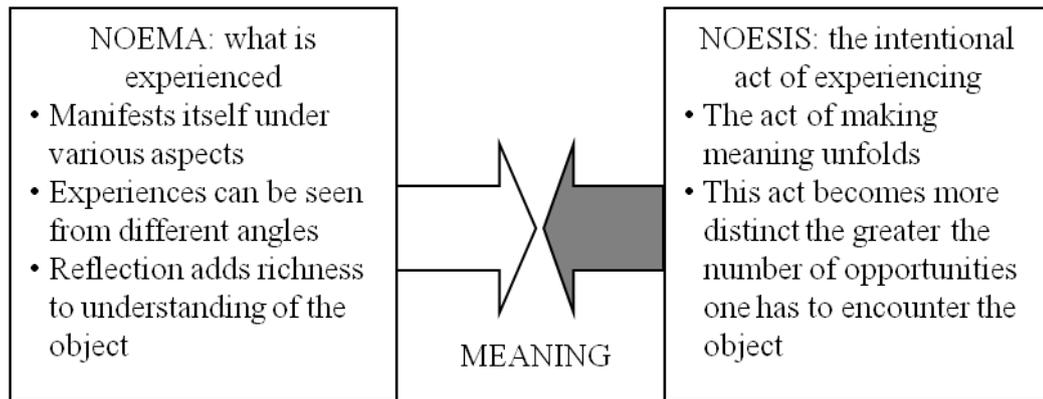
Figure 1: The phenomenological relationship between the noema and the noesis. Adapted from *Phenomenological Research Methods* (p. 31), by C. Moustakas, 1994, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Copyright 1994 by Sage. Adapted with permission.

Phenomenological research, then, requires a close, full description of an experience, encompassing thoughts, feelings and examples. This detailed study of the act of experiencing sheds light on the essential, structural dimensions of the object, much as pulling leaves from an artichoke eventually reveals the heart. Technically, Husserl's "phenomenological reduction" or appeal "To the things themselves!" translates the Latin verb *reducere* as "to lead back" to the "source of the meaning and existence of the experienced world" (Schmitt, 1967, p. 61, cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). In order to have this freshness of vision, Husserl aimed to temporarily "bracket" or suspend pre-existing assumptions about the noema. In this way, the subject is able to reflect on these attitudes, in the search for the essence of an experience (Ray, 1994). Thus, the transcendent ego is attributed a constitutive role in making sense of the world (Hammond et al., 1991, p. 5).

Developing a rich qualitative description of the essential elements of volunteering is helpful insofar as it enables one to traverse uncharted waters, so to speak. Frequently, neither the meaning of the phenomenon nor the inter-

relationships between phenomena are immediately intelligible (Giorgi, 1994, pp. 196-198), although shared meanings are often assumed (C. Wilson, Hendricks, & Smithies, 2001). In fact, Goffman took pains to emphasise "negatively eventful occasions" (cited in Van Manen, 1983, p. 48) precisely because we tend to "overlook the fact that what is manifest is not always thoroughly perceived, assimilated, and understood in its structures and varieties" (Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 410). The analysis of actual experiences – "actualized possibilities" (Giorgi, 1994) – enables scholars to discern what is going on rather than positing a specific position a priori and trying to prove it.

Many phenomenological perspectives use interviews to encapsulate participants' stories and perspectives. Privileging participants' experience avoids the reductionist superimposition of the researcher's own meanings and understandings on the phenomenon under study (Edward, 2006, p. 237). Indeed, Reeder (1989, cited in Ray, 1994) stated that Husserl's ethos of radical autonomy gives rise to recognition that the "self is the . . . bearer of responsibility of experience firsthand" (p. 127).

Second Postulate: We Use both Experience and Context to Understand a

Phenomenon

Phenomenological perspectives may provide rich descriptions of an experience, but as a methodological choice, they can also accommodate the context that forms the interpretive schema in which the experience unfolds. The relationship between experience and context flows both ways. First, we often extrapolate from experience to create more general rules that we then apply in other contexts. Husserl explained that consciousness is not "directed towards objects simply as such but also as instances of general types" (LeVasseur, 2003, p.

412). Husserl also emphasised the importance of studying how we "constitute" objects in the *lebenswelt* (lifeworld), where this constitution refers to the way in which we interconnect the various features of an experience into one united whole via intentionality.

Second, and of more interest for this project, we often engage with a phenomenon based on common shared understandings. Both Husserl and Heidegger acknowledged that we approach objects of experience armed with "common sense constructs and categories that are essentially social in action" (Goulding, 2005, p. 302). Non-intentional experiences, or the stock of knowledge that comes from the context, give rise to certain expectations about a noema (object) that cause us to anticipate certain experiences. For example, if we have only imagined a noema, or only heard about a specific experience, then the horizons of the noema are relatively unbounded. Shifts in the noema are certainly possible, when, for instance, through the perception gained by actual experience, we realise that our unexamined expectations and anticipations proved inadequate. Our previous noema "explodes" (Follesdal, 1998, p. 579) and is readjusted, with a subsequent change in the horizons surrounding the noema. In this case, a new experience requires us to rewrite our current schemas of interpretation.

Preconceptions provide important clues as to how we make these connections because they structure the horizons of meaning (Husserl, 1929/1973, p. 45) potentially obtainable from particular types of lived experiences. Hence, I analysed key organisational texts (websites, brochures, training materials) about volunteering, because these resources influence the way "social objects are made meaningful" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1998, p. 139). I also explored how participants' families and friends responded to their volunteering. Acknowledging

the influence of others on how we perceive our experiences is not a limitation but an advantage. As Schutz (1970) emphasised, a vital part of our experience involves experiencing an *other*. In fact, he insisted that we are enmeshed in the stream of consciousness of thoughts and perceptions involved in living in the present moment. He then suggested that we make sense of our experiences through a reflective analysis of our own past, or by grasping how an "other" lives out their own present moment.

Third Postulate: Individual and Group Differences in How an Object is

Experienced Enrich our Understanding of a Phenomenon

The third postulate emerges as a consequence of the first two. The first postulate suggested that phenomenological analyses enable us to unpack shared meanings by examining both the object itself and individuals' intentional, conscious experiences of it. The second postulate's focus on context offered one reason for the noetic differences that emerge, as diverse individuals draw on different horizons of meaning. The third postulate, then, argues that these individual and group differences enrich our understanding of an object of experience. Indeed, viewing only one perspective of a noema can "blind us to alternatives [and] destroy other possible ways of being ourselves, to be in relationships, and to be in community" (W. B. Pearce & Pearce, 2004, p. 54).

The research process is a progressive layering of new insights and perspectives about the phenomenon through interviews, conversations and reflection. As I further discuss in Chapter 3, while a researcher is certainly dependent upon participants for new insights and perspectives, the researcher's questions also enhance participants' reflexivity. In this way, a dialogic "person-to-

person relationship between discussants . . . acknowledges their collective right and intellectual capacity to make sense of the world" (Dixon, 1996, p. 24).

However, the ability to coordinate or weave together the diverse understandings of a phenomenon through dialogic discussions is highly dependent upon the type of relationships the communicators have constructed, as I describe in detail in Chapter 6. Interpretation of any content whatsoever, then, is embedded in relationships (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). Similarly to the second postulate that argued that sense data underdetermines our understanding of the object of an act, the third postulate proposes that we compare and contrast our descriptions of a particular experience with those of others with whom we engage in relationships. Of particular importance for this thesis is how episodes of volunteering are given meaning by the self and others, drawing upon expectations about appropriate contracts. Navigating binaries such as personal/familiar, professional/distant, reciprocated/one-way casts significant light on what the phenomenon of volunteering means to those who engage in it.

What is of note is that all three postulates – the noematic-noetic constitution of experience; the contribution of both experience and context to meaning; and the role of the self and other in developing rich meanings – have the potential to be interpreted from a dialectical perspective. Perhaps this is not surprising, since as Papa, Papa, Kandath, Worrell and Muthuswamy (2005) noted, "[e]veryday human relationships produce a variety of dialectic tensions" (p. 247) that have been studied by communication researchers (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Conville, 1998). Just as applications of dialectic theory have analysed how individuals communicatively manage contradiction in personal relationships, I suggest that the use of phenomenological perspectives also requires a researcher

to negotiate competing and seemingly contradictory objectives. That is, much importance is attached to the researcher's ability to discriminate the essential structures of a phenomenon, but credibility requires a vivid and faithful description (Laverty, 2003, p. 31) of participants' lived experiences (Beck, 1993). To do so, the phenomenological researcher seeks to establish a close research relationship with the participant who is sharing their lived experiences (Marcel, 1971), yet simultaneously tries to depersonalise the research process somewhat by bracketing one's views and personal perspectives. In order to be transparent about my own assumptions at the outset, the next section sets forth my personal experiences of volunteering and responses to professionalisation in the nonprofit sector.

My Personal Commitments to this Project

I have volunteered for more than two decades, in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and briefly in the Philippines, for a whole raft of organisations with the purpose of bettering the social, political and ecological environment. I started out at 15; my first experience involved visiting the residents of a nursing home close to my home after school once a fortnight, and offering to do the ladies' makeup. Those were odd, lonely afternoons, watching those silent women smiling at themselves in the mirror, without being able to reach them on a personal level, perhaps because of my shyness. Although I got quite skilful at applying mascara to women with few eyelashes left, Red Cross didn't give me much training in how to hold a decent conversation as I did so. After that first year, I began a journey as an episodic volunteer who dipped in and out of volunteer projects on the basis of school and university holidays. The activities were wide-ranging. I have taken adults with cerebral palsy to Melbourne's casino. I have helped elderly patients

with dementia to make photo frames. I have cooked barbecues in retirement villages. I have sold raffle tickets, collected money street to street, chopped carrots at a soup kitchen, weeded gardens for the hospice, run holiday programmes, planted native trees, cleaned beaches, and painted murals in public spaces. I even briefly engaged in political canvassing, which fortunately didn't last.

In my curriculum vitae, I used to list an edited selection of these experiences under the heading "community involvement." I wonder now if the label is a complete misnomer. Sometimes, I never saw the people I helped ever again. Nonetheless, many experiences did seem to create connections within the community. For example, the local coordinator at Riding for the Disabled claimed that the volunteers who had laid tens of thousands of brick paving stones to enable easier wheelchair access for children with physical disabilities had renewed her faith in teenagers. She was astonished that despite a hot Hamilton summer, the volunteers did not abandon the job but completed it in less than a fortnight.

Of course, sometimes volunteering did not seem to build any bridges in the community. An incident from three years ago springs to mind. An elderly woman in a rest-home hospital asked me to help her put on her slippers. Despite my best efforts to oblige, she started to hit me with her shoe: "You're useless! That's not the right way. You just don't know how to do it!" Despite my experience with older persons, I could think of nothing better to do than to move out of arm's reach. The friends I had brought with me were of absolutely no assistance, since they were helpless with laughter. I also recall vividly the week I spent with adults with intellectual disabilities out at Raglan harbour one summer in the early days. I was really enjoying myself until warned by the paid staff

member (supervising both the volunteers and the clients, I believe) about the two adults that tended to bite. One person bit my friend, but I moved faster.

Other experiences are harder to categorise as positive or negative. I think specifically of the impact that the three weeks that I spent in Cebu City in the Philippines in 1994 made on me. I arrived with thirty New Zealand dollars' spending money for the whole trip, although I quickly realised I was comparatively rich in economic terms. On the other hand, I felt culturally and spiritually poor. What had I to give to families from the poorest suburbs? My shock at seeing hunger and a deep economic divide between rich and poor was compounded by semi-despair at the devastation wreaked by a Christmas Eve cyclone. I am not sure I "helped" that community much, apart from my role in renovating a school library and as a "gopher" in free medical clinics. Representatives from the local community thanked us for coming, not because of what we had actually accomplished, but because we were a reminder that it is possible to act. I returned home aware that I hadn't managed to change much by volunteering, although I think our presence did raise awareness of the non-governmental organisation we had worked with, and their ongoing efforts to offer hospitality training for girls from the poorest areas of the city.

The impact on my identity and my thoughts about volunteering, however, was profound. I wasn't sure that my presence there had always been appropriate. I had not known what to say to women in hospital with their sick premature babies. I survived a similar experience because I received first-world treatment. I felt guilty that even as a student with limited cash and resources, I had a social position such that I could take a plane and fly away from poverty when it all got a bit too much. I thought about going back on a longer-term basis, especially

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because my undergraduate degree focused on development economics, but I hadn't finished my studies. I also had a sense that I should be doing more in my own backyard. The suburbs in which I spent my formative years evidenced significant social problems, including gang cultures, alcohol and substance abuse, and domestic violence. I was lucky to have a stable, loving family that protected me from personal experience of these issues, but I didn't grow up with my eyes closed.

As a result, I realised I could make a difference on a small, local scale. I decided to provide opportunities to volunteer to others, who could then eventually reach further themselves. Since completion of my undergraduate degree, I have organised at least two projects annually for high school and university students in towns and cities across the North Island: Hamilton, Auckland, Gisborne, Whakatane, Rotorua, and the Far North. Last year, university students cleared paths through the bush on conservation lands and participated in activities with adults with disabilities at St Chad's Communication Centre in Rotorua, despite the rainy July weather. Those of high school age assisted elderly residents of Sunningdale Rest Home in Hamilton with a sports day and short outings in their wheelchairs the week before Christmas.

As I reflected on these experiences, I needed to acknowledge the importance of other volunteers, paid staff from nonprofit organisations, and the recipients of my efforts in how I made sense of the positive and negative experiences I had gone through. On the whole, volunteering has been and continues to be for me a significant source of personal wellbeing. I have developed some very close, lasting relationships with other volunteers and I

wondered if these positive group dynamics and the importance I give to relationality initially led me to hold professionalism and wellbeing in tension.

Nonetheless, some relationships have been challenging rather than helpful or inspiring. For example, I considered how the experience of dealing with fellow volunteers who slackened off shortly after starting an arduous task challenged my conceptualisation of volunteering as "free." I have received certificates of recognition and commendation from some volunteer endeavours, yet I have also been rapped over the knuckles by other volunteer coordinators who did not appreciate my efforts. How did both outcomes, deserved or not, colour my understanding of volunteering as "positive"? Others who were also involved in the volunteering process seemed to exert a significant influence on how I made sense of my volunteer experiences.

Another significant influence on many of my experiences of volunteering has been frustration with "the establishment." Usually I initiate contact by a phone call to ascertain the possibility of connecting willing students with the organisation, and to set up a face-to-face meeting. With few exceptions, I meet with suspicious questions and frequent requests to email. Many emails are subsequently ignored. Chats over morning tea later assured me that I was not alone in my battle with bureaucracy. Only recently, one colleague rolled her eyes at the prospect of filling out a six page document plus a police clearance check required by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – in order for her son to clean out empty animal cages, as a sort of penance for shoplifting! Such contradictions spurred my interest in this project, as I began to wonder if volunteering as I knew it had altered beyond recognition. No longer did volunteering seem to involve connecting with people outside one's immediate

social circle, applying and developing skills and talents to create better outcomes. Instead, volunteering required extensive form-filling, much as if one were applying for a job.

Consequently, I felt that I needed a clearer perspective of what volunteering is. Libraries and databases are full to bursting with books and articles on who volunteers and why. Yet I found that the literature, on the whole, sidestepped definitional problems. Initially, I could not easily explain why I had joined the disparate range of activities somehow connected with "volunteering" in my curriculum vitae together beneath one heading. The need to clarify why I had categorised my life experience is certain ways formed one of the many personal motivations that spurred me to begin this project. Inspired perhaps by the motto of my alma mater, "*Ko te tangata*" which translates into English as "For the people," I wanted to focus on how volunteers themselves made sense of their volunteering. My interest in examining volunteers' perspectives was that volunteers do not necessarily consider either personal finances or social needs when deciding to get involved. Despite elaborate recruitment drives and volunteer retention schemes, many volunteer-based organisations in New Zealand have been unable to enlist adequate numbers of volunteers to support their work (Maling, 1995).

I wanted to know whether bureaucratisation and the subsequent formalisation of volunteer roles had contributed to this perceived decline in volunteering (R. D. Putnam, 2000; Rathgeb Smith, 1999) or if it was only my impatience that made administrative red-tape so irritating in my attempts to instigate new volunteer projects, especially since my time and energy were already pulled in so many different directions. This motivated me to analyse how rules and regulations impacted other volunteers' experiences and their wellbeing,

and whether this formalisation was the oft-cited "professionalism" that I feared might be eroding the volunteer ethos.

The Context: Professionalism/Professionalisation and Volunteering in New Zealand

Over the past thirty years, New Zealand's "community and voluntary sector" has been pressured to "professionalise," and social services volunteers within the sector have been expected to act in a more "professional" manner. This section first provides an overview of the historical events that have shaped these demands for professionalisation and professionalism. I next define how I will use the terms professionalism and professionalisation, and then show how specific processes of professionalisation have impacted organisations in the nonprofit sector in New Zealand.

A Brief History of the Nonprofit Sector in New Zealand

World events, social attitudes and demographic changes have created peaks and troughs in organisational volunteering in New Zealand as in other industrialised countries. However, its historical and cultural makeup has also led to significant differences. Early Pākehā migrants in the 1840s-60s proved slow to form and join associations (Tennant, Sanders, O'Brien, & Castle, 2006) in comparison with the United States, for instance (de Tocqueville, 1835/1969). These new migrants believed structural explanations for inequalities and human suffering had been left behind in the "Old Country," and subsequently they emphasised individual initiative and responsibility. Volunteering did increase as a more coherent national identity emerged, particularly during the inter-war years, although a lack of consistency in census questions prevents rigorous longitudinal comparisons. As a result, the nonprofit sector has historically relied on anecdotes

and voices from the field rather than statistical data to identify and articulate major trends.

Between 1945 and 1984, successive governments gave the community and voluntary sector considerable latitude and independence to pursue its own goals. Legislation governing the sector was loosely applied and flexible, and the relationships between key persons in both arenas were collaborative (Moore & Tennant, 1997). While government funding mechanisms in the 1960s forced welfare organisations to federate so that national funders could deal with one agency, major changes in relationships between government and the voluntary sector stem from the market reforms of the 1980s (Munford & Sanders, 1999).

The most significant change identified by representatives from nonprofit organisations and commentators on the nonprofit or voluntary sector was the imposition of market ideologies following the enormous structural shakeups that began in the mid 1980s (Brosnan & Rea, 1991). Although other western OECD nations also initiated economic restructuring around the same time (Dalziel & Lattimore, 2001; Massey, 1995), New Zealand pushed forward reforms more rapidly. Hence, it received the dubious honour of being hailed as a living social and economic laboratory (Kelsey, 1995).

One immediate consequence of economic liberalisation was cuts in government jobs, which eliminated experienced civil servants with long histories of connection with the volunteer sector, and fractured the "relationships of trust" (Tennant, O'Brien, & Sanders, 2008, p. 26) between the government and the nonprofit sector. Moreover, the new, formal contract culture that emerged in the mid to late 1990s created a win-lose attitude among nonprofit organisations that

now had to compete for money from a dwindling funding pool. A bleak economic climate led to fewer funds awarded to nonprofits, yet demand for their services by society's neediest members increased steeply. A competitive funding environment pitted organisations against each other as they sought money for programmes.

Organisational representatives directed their anxiety and anger about the enforced competition directly to parliamentary members, and through the public press. Many volunteer coordinators from a variety of social services organisations highlighted their opposition to the pressure from funders to act in a more business-like way (McNeill, 2002; C. Wilson, Hendricks, & Smithies, 2001). Volunteer managers also argued that the contract culture was directly detrimental to volunteers' wellbeing, and negatively impacted on organisations' efforts to recruit and retain adequate numbers of volunteers (Russell & Scott, 1997).

Nonetheless, some nonprofit organisations did opt to work with the new model. As service contracts were generally "renewable, short-term, partial" (Sanders, O'Brien, Tennant, Sokolowski, & Salamon, 2008, p. 27), some organisations sought to stand out by demonstrating efficiency and achievement of outcomes (Gardner, 2007) in order to survive in an environment characterised by increasing fragmentation, role devolution (Edward, 2006, p. 235) and marketisation (M. Simpson & Cheney, 2007).

Professionalisation and Professionalism

Many critiques about the enforced transformation of the nonprofit sector have not adequately distinguished between professionalisation and professionalism. Hence, I briefly introduce and define both concepts at this point. As Ganesh and McAllum (2011) pointed out, these constructs have evident

conceptual overlap, although professionalisation focuses on organisational *process* and *structure* while professionalism examines occupational *identity* and *practice.*

Perhaps due to the ubiquity of the term "professional" (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007), "professionalisation" tends to be used as an all-encompassing term that embraces multiple processes, such as rationalisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation. I distinguish among these processes as follows, drawing on Weber's "multiplex" (Clegg & Lounsbury, 2009, p. 119) view of rationality. I take *rationalisation* to refer to social action that is evaluated in terms of *practical rationality*. That is, "practical ends are attained by careful weighing and increasingly precise calculation of the most adequate means" (Kalberg, 1980, p. 1152). Extraneous processes that do not enable organisational members to efficiently attain desired outcomes become obsolete. *Bureaucratisation* emphasises *formal rationality* or the process of standardising, formalising and institutionalising systems, rules and documentation requirements to ensure due process and fair outcomes. *Marketisation*, in contrast, can be understood as the adoption of a particular type of *substantive rationality* or cluster of values that guide social behaviour (Clegg & Lounsbury, 2009). These values inform and increasingly dominate various life spheres, and become the touchstone against which other events and values are evaluated (Kalberg, 1980). In the case of marketisation, flexibility, ease of exchange and cost-benefit analysis based on monetary values have become normative.

These professionalisation processes then influence how organisational members will enact professionalism. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2, the literature suggests that professionalism has clear-cut attributes. That is,

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professionals (1) possess specialist knowledge and a service ethos; (2) belong to professional groups that develop and share knowledge and monitor its responsible use; and (3) express appropriate emotions. These attributes are presumed to facilitate task performance and structure personal, organisational and social relationships. I propose, however, that one or more attributes may be salient in some organisational settings and not relevant to others. Professionalism, then, is a particular identity position and set of practices that confer "distinctive forms of actorhood" (Hasselbladh & Kallinkos, 2000, p. 701). Furthermore, professionalism is communicatively constructed, depending on how organisational members accept, promote or resist particular professionalisation processes, and is therefore context-specific.

Professionalisation Processes within New Zealand's Nonprofit Sector

The post-1984 economic liberalisation programme left in its wake downsizing, restructuring, increased commercialisation and extensive reliance on market mechanisms across the health, education and welfare sectors. The professionalisation of large parts of the nonprofit sector that resulted from the central government's devolution of many welfare services was accompanied by extensive social as well as economic change. As one local political commentator noted, economic "revolution" has the capacity to generate cultural "evolution" through the gradual change of social norms (Easton, 1999, p. 9). In fact, previous Finance Minister Roger Douglas, acknowledged as the architect of neo-liberal economic change, argued that despite liberalisation's economic face, it was social change that was most urgent in achieving an era of "individual choice . . . and personal responsibility" (Douglas, 1993, p.1).

All three professionalisation processes, rationalisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation, were evident throughout the reform process. First, the government's control of funding led to the *rationalisation* of many nonprofit initiatives. In order to attract and retain government funds, some nonprofit organisations chose to abandon projects that did not fit within the scope of contracts. Government control over what outcomes are important also puts nonprofit organisations' "non-governmental" status at risk (Ganesh, 2005) and threatens their autonomy to meet local needs and to innovate (Sanders, et al., 2008, p. 28).

Contracts also specified what successful outcomes would look like. Nonprofit researchers in the U.S. (Weisbrod, 2004) have noticed that defining success in terms of achieving measurable outcomes can lead nonprofits to target groups whose needs are easily met, and abandon those communities most in need (Ganesh & McAllum, 2011). In addition, narrow success criteria may lead nonprofits to provide tangible assistance that can be documented in order to achieve quantifiable results. Less visible but equally important functions such as lobbying or being present to those who suffer, which are often carried out by volunteers, can be neglected.

Second, the government expected the nonprofit sector to adopt a more *marketised* perspective and focus on projects of "demonstrable" value, at the expense of its historical commitment to non-monetarised, social values such as community-mindedness, justice and care. Indeed, social theorists (Habermas, 1989) have highlighted the self-interested, consumption-driven logic of marketisation by positioning participatory democracy, active citizenship, and concern for the common good as its polar opposite (Anderson, 1990). One critic

suggested that that the introduction of marketisation has extinguished the "passion that existed in the sector; the human element and sense of what organisations 'really stand for' seemed to get lost in the "quest for business perfection"" (Smythe, 1995, pp. 1-2, cited by Tennant, et al., 2008, p. 27).

In addition, marketisation is seen to cut the heart out of community-building and volunteering in particular, as individuals weigh up the costs and benefits of getting involved. In a market, benefits and costs attain equilibrium, whereas volunteers put in personal effort that has "a market value greater than any remuneration received" (D. H. Smith, 1981, p. 23). Therefore, a marketised mentality may lead individuals to eschew involvement in activities that do not lend themselves to obtaining private benefits at an equivalent level to costs, with a corresponding collapse in volunteer numbers.

Third, *bureaucratisation* has led to the development of specific reporting requirements. Critics argue that over-emphasis on accountability and demands for transparency in how organisations used monies has left little room for organisational innovation. More importantly, time previously dedicated to meeting community needs has in some cases been redirected to completing the necessary paperwork. For instance, since the introduction of the 2005 Charities Act, the paperwork demanded by the reporting requirements swallows up 25% of the total amount received from government grants and contracts. Some volunteers reported frustration that they were unable "to do the 'real' work which I love" as a result of the time spent "chasing small bits of funding here, there and everywhere" (Ministry of Social Policy, 2001, p. 165).

To date, research has focused on how professionalisation has shaped the nonprofit sector in New Zealand as a whole, yet the impact of rationalisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation on volunteer identity and practice at an organisational level has received less attention. This project specifically examines how volunteer organisations construct professional conduct for their volunteers, and how these notions are shaped by processes of professionalisation.

My reason for examining how volunteer organisations understand professionalism is to assess how organisational messages about professional conduct have influenced (1) how volunteering is constructed and (2) the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing. In particular, a data-driven perspective of professionalism in volunteer contexts provides a means to evaluate its impact on volunteer-client and volunteer-organisation relationships, and subsequently volunteers' wellbeing.

Conclusion and Overview of the Thesis

Before we can evaluate the impact of growing professionalism on organisational volunteers and their wellbeing, we need a clearer understanding of how volunteers make sense of their volunteer experiences; how professionalism creates horizons of meaning that may not align with preconceptions of volunteering and actual experiences; and how personal experience, context, and interactions with other people impact how volunteers communicatively negotiate these meanings. This chapter has described the contribution of an organisational communication perspective to such research, and in particular, the role of a hybrid phenomenological perspective. I then described how my personal history over the past two decades piqued my interest in this project and offered a brief overview of the impact of professionalisation on volunteering in New Zealand to demonstrate

that concern about professionalism/professionalisation and its impact on volunteers' wellbeing is more than anecdotal, and that the topic is important to volunteers, volunteer coordinators, and nonprofit organisations in general.

In Chapter 2, I review the literature on volunteering using Cnaan et al.'s (1996) attributes as a framework. I indicate how the contributions made from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives have highlighted theoretical and empirical tensions about the meanings of volunteering. Within Chapter 2, I also present work that identifies the key features of professionalism and compare this to research on professionalism in volunteer contexts, before considering the relationships between professionalised volunteering and wellbeing. I next turn attention to the communities of practice literature and the assumption that good CoPs are collaborative. I conclude Chapter 2 by providing an overview of how the findings of this project might contribute to organisational communication research on identity, coordination and relationality.

Chapter 3 elaborates on my justification for using a phenomenological perspective for this project. In the first section, I situate the hybrid phenomenological perspective with respect to other types of interpretive research, and I explain how the three phenomenological postulates that underpin the research questions framed the methods used in the thesis. Specifically, I discuss how I used phenomenological interviews, analysis of organisational texts and participant observation. I then describe the participants and organisations that formed the basis for this study, and detail the challenges of recruiting research participants. Finally, I explain the data analysis methods used for each set of questions. While I used the method of phenomenological analysis developed by phenomenological researchers at Duquesne University (Giorgi, 1985) to describe

the meanings of volunteering, I applied an a priori coding scheme as an analytic frame to analyse professionalism-wellbeing relationships and communities of practice.

I present my findings about the meanings of volunteering, the relationships between professionalism and wellbeing, and finally communities of practice in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, respectively. Chapter 4 shows that volunteers expressed their "agentic self" through freedom or giving. While this expression of agency was certainly an important facet of participants' volunteer experience, the data in this chapter also indicates that volunteering can be understood as a relational process enacted by the "dialogic self" that develops relationships which are reciprocal or obligation-centred. Participants moved between these agentic and dialogic subject positions by distinct volunteer pathways.

Chapter 5 analyses how the organisations in the study constructed professionalism through their codes of conduct, and identifies the processes of professionalisation that underpinned these notions of professionalism in each case. The research then highlights that, from an organisational perspective, the relationship between professionalism and volunteer wellbeing is complex and organisation-specific. In the second half of the chapter, I document how volunteers' responses to organisational messages about professionalism and wellbeing differed within as well as across organisations

Chapter 6 addresses the role of collaboration and contestation as key features of volunteer communities of practice. To do so, I organise the analysis in Chapter 6 around the three elements of a community of practice: shared repertoire,

mutual interaction and joint enterprise. I also analyse when, counter-intuitively, collaboration could be counter-productive for wellbeing and contestation positive.

In Chapter 7, I develop the theoretical and practical implications of this project, and evaluate how the adoption of a phenomenological perspective has contributed to this research. Finally, I identify the limitations of the project, and how these gaps could form useful avenues for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical and theoretical research on nonprofits is an emergent area of theoretical research in organisational communication studies, yet it holds much potential to enrich our understanding of key organisational communication issues. Such research is necessary given the nonprofit sector's economic contribution and social impact. Specifically, the unique characteristics of nonprofit organising form a useful context for developing theoretical perspectives that do not fit the ubiquitous paid, full-time, permanent member-organisation relationship (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002). Volunteers are an important example of these non-standard workers. Given the significant role that volunteers play in the nonprofit sector in New Zealand and other industrialised nations, it becomes important to assess how volunteers understand what they actually do when volunteering and how they make connections between volunteering and wellbeing. Moreover, careful analysis of volunteers' responses to the pressures of professionalism, that have arguably transformed volunteers into workers and volunteering into a type of job, is needed. Despite the agentic bias in many studies of volunteers and volunteering, volunteers' relationships with other volunteers, paid staff and those that receive their services impact how they make sense of the experience of volunteering, respond to organisational messages about professionalism and create links between (professionalised) volunteering and wellbeing. Such questions invite investigation from organisational communication researchers.

In order to lay the foundations for a study that examines the relationships between volunteering and wellbeing and the influences of professionalism and communities of practice in constructing such relationships, this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I assess the contributions that researchers from other disciplines

have made to our understanding of the meanings of volunteering, and how a communication-centred analysis can contest and confirm some of the assumptions that underpin this body of work. The first postulate of my hybrid phenomenological perspective assumes particular importance in this regard; rather than impose a pre-determined definitional framework on volunteers, the postulate focuses on how individuals who intentionally engage with volunteering create meaning through this experience.

Second, the literature review examines research on professionalism and its impact on wellbeing in both for-profit and nonprofit contexts. The second phenomenological postulate specifies that we use both experience and context to understand a phenomenon. As I explained in the Introduction, professionalism has become an important and contested contextual backdrop for organisational volunteering.

In line with the third phenomenological postulate, which explains that individual and group differences in how a phenomenon is experienced enriches our understanding of it, the third section of the literature review discusses how a communities of practice framework could be fruitfully used to investigate how the meanings of volunteering, and appropriate forms of interaction in particular, are co-created by groups of volunteers. One significant trend in the extant communities of practice literature is the link between cohesion and collaboration and wellbeing.

Broadening the scope of organisational studies to include how participants who volunteer for nonprofit organisations make sense of volunteering and negotiate professionalism-wellbeing relationships within communities of practice

may provide new insights on three organisational communication concerns. These key issues are 1) communication and the construction of identities; 2) communication and coordination, and 3) the relational dimensions of communication. I complete the literature review with a brief overview of these three areas.

The Meanings of Volunteering

In this section, I evaluate and critique the attributes of volunteering embedded in influential definitions from the literature. Specifically, this section utilises Cnaan et al.'s (1996) definition as a heuristic to categorise and interrogate the assumptions contained in the wide array of findings about volunteering in academic research and practitioner literature. Cnaan et al. labelled an activity "volunteering" if 1) it is an individual act that contributes to the public good in some way, where the beneficiaries are likely to be outside one's own household or family; 2) voluntary acts are of their nature un-coerced or "free"; 3) although some exchange is involved, the reward obtained from volunteering is less than the service rendered; and 4) voluntary activity is carried out in some sort of structured setting. I interrogate these attributes and suggest how a communication analysis could contribute to what we know about the meanings of volunteering.

Volunteering is a Free, Individual Act

All definitions from the literature describe volunteering as "free," although the notion of freedom has a wide latitude. Most definitions present volunteering as free because the individuals who engage in it are un-coerced and have sufficient time and resources that they do not require financial payment. For instance, Wilson (2000) declared that volunteering "means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization" (p. 215). The

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United Nations definition developed during the International Year of the Volunteer in 2001 included three criteria for an activity to be considered volunteering: "It is not undertaken primarily for financial gain; . . . . It is undertaken of one's own free will; [and] . . . . it brings benefits to a third party as well as to the people who volunteer" (Dingle, Sokolowski, Saxon-Harrold, Davis Smith, & Leigh, 2001, p. 9).

Acknowledging the lack of financial remuneration casts volunteering as an activity limited to those individuals that can afford to do so, thereby exerting subtle pressure on certain groups to engage in volunteering. In the first instance, social class and ethnicity are often related to the ability to afford the donation of time and money (Sundeen, Raskoff, & Garcia, 2007). Sociological profiling has also attempted to identify which individuals are more likely to develop the "natural urge that people have to help their fellow citizens" (Sheard, 1992, p. 122, cited in Taylor, 2005). Thus, certain segments of the population are expected to volunteer more because of their educational level (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996), income (Freeman, 1997), type of job (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1996; Reinerman, 1987), age (Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000; Rotolo, 2000), race (E. Brown & Smart, 2007), or cultural perspective (Bourdieu, 1986; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997b). Sundeen, Garcia and Raskoff's (2009) comparison of organisational volunteering by native-born and immigrant African Americans, Asians, Hispanics and Whites in the United States is typical of this type of research.

However the economic, social and cultural resources conferred by dominant status (D. H. Smith, 1994) seem insufficient to predict volunteering, given such pronounced and widespread decline in civic engagement (R. D.

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Putnam, 2000). The other problematic aspect of demographic profiling is that it creates an impression of homogeneity of both the volunteers themselves, and the experiences that they engage in. In fact, both the explosion in absolute numbers of nonprofit organisations and the changing demographics in most Western economies are likely to result in growing diversity of the volunteer population.

Nonetheless, practitioners continue to hold high hopes for sections of the population who are time-rich, such as older persons (Martinson, 2006/2007; Warburten & Crosier, 2001), unemployed workers (Macintyre, 1999) and younger job-seekers wanting to get a foot in the door (Hall et al., 1998, cited in J. Wilson & Musick, 2003). All of these individuals are expected to be "free" to volunteer since they lack full-time employment.

Other research suggests that volunteering is free because individuals freely choose to engage in volunteer projects when these fit in with their own personal biography and plans for self-development (Hustinx, 2001; Rehberg, 2005). In this sense, volunteering becomes a form of consumer activity, where individuals need to "feel good" about their volunteering (Glasrud, 2007). In a similar vein, volunteering has been conceptualised as free because individuals have made a rational and un-coerced choice about the costs and benefits of doing so. That is, volunteers' initial decisions to "bring themselves into contact with needy others . . . are made in part via a *rational process* during which people estimate the kind of emotional experiences they are likely to have during such encounters and then use these anticipated responses to determine *the degree of satisfaction they expect to experience*" (Davis, Hall, & Meyer, 2003, p. 249, my italics).

From this perspective, volunteers' motivation to persevere is determined by how they rate their volunteering experiences against their initial goals and needs, whether these were altruistic or instrumental (Clary, et al., 1992; Janoski, Musick, & Wilson, 1998; Penner, et al., 1997). For instance, Tschirhart et al.'s (2001) longitudinal study of stipended "volunteers" after one year of voluntary activity found that initial altruistic motivations tended to decrease unless coupled with other outcomes such as social, instrumental, and self-esteem goals. Rational choice theory may thus be viewed as a useful tool for predicting how an organisational setting influences incentive structures for individuals (Boston, Martin, Pallot, & Walsh, 1996), although quantifying value-laden goals such as credibility, integrity and self-fulfilment is difficult, particularly when persons report multiple motivations.

More importantly, the adoption and development of value positions are shaped both by volunteers' experiences as well as the context within which the activity takes place. Context is a multi-faceted conglomeration of societal expectations and images of volunteering, as well as organisational demands, operational forms and diverse missions. The identity assigned to both volunteers and the experiences that they are engaged in are also impacted by discourses at multiple levels and the type of communicative interactions permitted within those discourses. One important discourse that influences the meanings assigned to volunteering is altruism, which I discuss in the next section.

Volunteering is a Form of Unequal Exchange

The social psychology literature contains a rich and on-going debate about whether individuals volunteer due to altruistic tendencies (Batson, 1991) or self-interest (Cialdini, et al., 1987). Nonetheless, most articles, reports and documents

analysed by Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996) in the social policy arena emphasised altruism, or the desire to give to others. Including altruism as an essential component of volunteering assumes that the reward obtained is less than the service rendered (Clary & Snyder, 1991; Piliavin, 2001; Schroeder, Penner, Dovidio, & Piliavin, 1995). As a result, volunteers will need to possess a personality type with a pro-social orientation (Penner & Finkelstein, 1998; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001) if they are to be willing to give more than they get.

Two clear challenges confront the altruism thesis. First, it assumes that individuals who already possess personal dispositions such as helpfulness, others-oriented empathy and self-efficacy will volunteer. As Thoits and Hewitt (2001) suggested, "positive, happy people actively seek out volunteer opportunities" (p. 115). There is no evidence, however, to suggest well-adjusted people will not use their free time in other ways. Moreover, it is possible that the cause-effect relationship works the other way and that transformative volunteer experiences create wellbeing (e.g., Zahra & McIntosh, 2007).

The second problem with the altruism hypothesis is that it cannot explain the surprising drop in social capital in the United States over the last four decades (R. D. Putnam, 2000). If the rate of volunteering is determined purely by altruistic individuals who automatically volunteer because it is the "right thing" to do (Wuthnow, 1991), one would not anticipate such a deep decline in social capital. A better explanation of falling rates of volunteering might be that self-reports of altruistic motives are neither credible nor honest, since it is not socially acceptable to claim selfish motivations (J. L. Pearce, 1993).

Alternatively, apparent difficulties in learning the "culture of benevolence" (J. Wilson & Musick, 1997) may reflect the way the volunteer experience is conceptualised at an individual, organisational and broader societal level. Various research studies show either a weak or a positive correlation between religion and volunteering (Berger, 2006; Greely, 1997; Lam, 2002; Lyons & Nivison-Smith, 2006; Uslaner, 1997), but they seldom interrogate how diverse religious affiliations influence the meanings of volunteering. On the other hand, Yeung's (2004) study considered the impact of religiosity on the formation of different types of social capital, and her conclusions about the impact of the size of religious congregations on members' altruistic "beliefs, values . . . and acting them out" (p. 415) could be applied to volunteering.

It is productive at this point to speculate on connections between different aspects of volunteering and the notion of wellbeing spelled out at the outset of this chapter. Of the two aspects of volunteering discussed so far, it appears that when volunteering is positioned as a free, individual act, voluntary engagement contributes to wellbeing in terms of volunteers' ability to choose a project that suits them. Volunteers will then enhance their wellbeing by adopting a "get all you can" attitude. On the other hand, the assumption that volunteering involves unequal exchange frames it as a type of gift to another. Wellbeing is thus a prerequisite for volunteering, rather than an outcome of the volunteer experience itself.

Volunteering Contributes to the Public Good

Another assumption that drives definitions of volunteering is that volunteer activity achieves beneficial outcomes that contribute to the common good (Anheier & Salamon, 1999) through the establishment of positive

relationships. The United Nations definition stated that volunteering develops both parties (Dingle, et al., 2001) or at the very least, a volunteer's self-sacrifice must benefit the recipient (Cnaan, Handy, & Wadsworth, 1996). In this section, I examine the assumption that volunteering contributes to the good of the recipients of volunteers' efforts.

The concept of volunteering as a social contribution is an integral part of the historical development of volunteering. Volunteers for philanthropic causes came from the ranks of the middle-class and urban dwellers during the Industrial Revolution (R. F. Taylor, 2005, p. 123). As Ganesh and McAllum (2009) commented, volunteerism provides "an ordered, structured, and functional solution" (p. 347) to social problems. In this sense, volunteering encompasses tasks and activities that emphasise social cohesion and coordination. It is small wonder, then, that volunteering still resonates with notions of charitable assistance by "Lady Bountiful" volunteers who want to "help" needy others. The "stigma of worthiness" (Hankinson & Rochester, 2005, p. 94) can make other "vulnerable groups" such as persons with disabilities feel their input is second rate compared to more "powerful" volunteers (Balandin, Llewellyn, Dew, Ballin, & Schneider, 2006; Gaskin, 1998; Roker, Player, & Coleman, 1998).

Scholarship with a more critical undertone highlights this potential "dark side" of volunteering. Volunteering can create relationships between giver and receiver that simply reproduce social inequalities and foster dependency. First, volunteers can try to ameliorate immediate social problems without considering their source (Edlefson & Olson, 2002) or long-term solution (Frey, Pearce, Pollack, Artz, & Murphy, 1996). Recipients may find the need to be helped a humiliating experience (Bennett & Barkensjo, 2005) quite at odds with the

"irreplaceable and enlightening personal experiences" (Artz, 2001, p. 240) that

volunteers enjoy.

Social justice scholars argued that the prevalence of a "them" and "us"

position fosters a "doing for" rather than "doing with" attitude (Frey, et al., 1996).

As a result, capable volunteers rather than local residents decide how to best direct

their efforts in needy communities (Lacey & Ilcan, 2006). As Illich (1968)

indicated in his fierce condemnation of international student volunteers, the act of

volunteering may then reinforce institutionally the very inequalities its proponents

are trying to overcome (W. H. Papa, et al., 2005). Wilson (2004), who has written

prolifically on volunteering, noted that "people use the idea [of volunteering] to

excuse themselves from [the] political responsibility" (p. 1541) of finding long-

term solutions. Penner (2004) does not blame Joe Public as much as governments

and politicians who "advocate polices that perpetuate or even exacerbate certain

social inequalities and then almost simultaneously encourage people to volunteer

to help the victims" (p. 664). Hence, the literature shows that the relationships that

volunteering creates are by no means inherently positive, but have the potential to

maintain and replicate structural inequalities (Penner, 2004). Volunteering

possibly creates connection while reinforcing segregation and separation. In the

next section, I consider the extent to which volunteering creates positive,

meaningful relationships.

Volunteering Creates Wellbeing through Positive Relationships

Social capital research usually associates volunteering with trust and

community building (Coleman, 1991; R. D. Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993).

Since civil society is a *relational space* that facilitates the creation of social

capital (Lewis, 2005), volunteering is often used as a proxy measure of relational

development within communities (R. D. Putnam, 2000). The underlying assumption is that social interaction and relationship building are important aspects of volunteering. Studies of volunteer job design and task support in social service settings emphasise the impact on wellbeing of client contact and social interaction. For example, in Barlow, Bancroft and Turner's (2005) study, volunteer tutors assumed roles such as modelling and the provision of mastery experience, with wellbeing qualitatively linked to "observing participants initiate positive life changes " (p. 130). This reflects Nunn's (2002) vision of voluntary activity as a "community commons where people come together to create layers of social connections and relationships" (p. 14).

The assumption that volunteering will build positive relationships then determines which communicative practices are considered most appropriate for volunteering. Values that guide such practices include charity (Cloke, Johnsen, & May, 2007; Lyons & Nivison-Smith, 2006) compassion, connection (Leonard, Onyx, & Hayward-Brown, 2005), care (Andersson & Ohlen, 2005; Rajulton, Ravanera, & Beaujot, 2007), giving (K. S. Jones, 2006) and sacrifice (Mesch, Rooney, & Steinberg, 2006). For example, Ronel (2006) suggested that at-risk Israeli street youth responded to volunteer social workers rather than paid professionals because "[t]hey are amazed that people give them something for nothing, without payment. This sort of giving also frees those who receive the service from the obligation to give something in return . . . and this is what enables a genuine relationship to develop" (p. 1142).

However, a strong link between the development of relationships and volunteers' wellbeing is questionable. A few quantitative studies have not wholeheartedly supported the proposition that opportunities for social interaction

correlate strongly with overall volunteer satisfaction. Wisner, Stringfellow, Youngdahl and Parker (2005) found a positive but not statistically significant relationship between volunteer satisfaction and client contact. Their results may be limited because of the type of volunteer organisations surveyed, which included not only service organisations, but also film and theatre collectives and environmental restoration projects. They also suggest that in service roles, "hard" clients may have a very negative effect on volunteer satisfaction: "volunteers might be overwhelmed by the direct contact experience, feeling that the problems are so big and that they cannot make a difference" (p. 156). Isolation from fellow volunteers and volunteer managers is a particular concern for volunteers in social service agencies with highly emotional labour (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002; Skoglund, 2006).

The inequality inherent in many volunteer relationships (Schervish & Havens, 2002) also does not seem to promote wellbeing or empower those that are "helped." For example, Petronio, Sargent, Andea, Reganis and Cichocki's (2004) analysis of volunteer healthcare advocates, who accompanied patients in physician visits, demonstrated that their presence and interventions reduced the patient's active involvement in the medical interview. Nonetheless, open commitment to dialogue and equality between volunteers and communities does not always promote wellbeing and participation success either. Trainers for a WHO Healthy Communities initiative aimed to encourage participants to express their own opinions and views using a dialogic model, yet without guidance participants milled about in confusion and apparent apathy (Zoller, 2000).

In sum, the literature shows that volunteer-client relationships are complex, and cannot be unequivocally equated with increased wellbeing for

volunteers, reciprocity or dialogism. Further exploration into actual experience and the communicative interaction in relationships could elucidate how the link between client contact, volunteer networks (Schwartz, 1999) and volunteers' wellbeing is mediated.

Volunteering Occurs outside the Family or Intimate Sphere in a Structured

Setting

Building on the dichotomy between needy recipient and capable helper articulated in the previous two sections, volunteering is commonly understood as an activity that takes place outside one's immediate circle of family and friends. Hence, volunteering is conceptually distinguished from informal service activities undertaken within and outside the household. For example, Wilson and Musick (1997) differentiated between volunteering and informal helping. They suggested that informal helping is characterised by its often obligatory nature due to strong relational ties, yet also by its sporadic occurrence, private impact and casual organisation (see Amato, 1990). When understood in this way, volunteering may be free from familial obligation, yet requires some commitment to a coordinating organisation if society is to reap the collective, public benefits of volunteers' efforts. Indeed, as discussed earlier, prominent definitions situate volunteering as an organisational activity (J. Wilson, 2000).

Hence, some sociologists attribute work-like attributes to volunteering in terms of organisational ties, timetabling and the need for skills. For example, Davis et al. (2003) suggested that volunteering is a long term commitment, not a one-off act of helping, as presented by the bystander intervention research (Schroeder, et al., 1995). They proposed that establishing commitment requires careful comparison of costs and expected benefits, similarly to initiating a

workplace contract. Consideration is given to the demands on volunteer time (Farmer & Fedor, 1999, 2001), including juggling paid work and family commitments (J. Fox & Wheeler, 2002).

However, scholars debate what types of formal organisational activity "count" as volunteering. Should we limit volunteering to those voluntary acts that contribute directly to the common good of a community, or does volunteering also encompass those acts that benefit the members of a voluntary association or group (J. L. Pearce, 1993; D. H. Smith, 1991)? Segmenting voluntary activity by associational or organisational structure has been suggested (Arai, 2000; Cnaan & Amrofell, 1994; Paton, 1991). Measurement difficulties arise when an organisation or group can be categorised both as a member-benefit association and as an organisation that benefits other members of the community. Many nonprofit organisations serve this dual purpose; as Alexander, Nank and Stivers (1999) pointed out, volunteering is unique in that it "makes possible individual self-development, as well as collaborative action that has public meaning" (p. 454) and develops others.

Another challenge to a definition of volunteering as public (not private) and organisational (not home) arises from the growth in family volunteering and the consideration of collectivist cultural perspectives. Although volunteering is usually conceptualised, defined and studied as a largely individualised phenomenon, a few researchers have attempted to overcome the over-emphasis on the individual within Western contexts by considering how a volunteering ethos is passed on from generation to generation in communities (Eckstein, 2001) or families (Palmer, Freeman, & Zabriskie, 2007). Second, the conceptualisation of volunteering for an "other" does not fit with the perspectives of many First

Nations peoples (Warburten & McLaughlin, 2007). For example, C. Wilson, Hendricks and Smithies (2001a) contrasted an indigenous Māori perspective on volunteering with mainstream volunteering values in New Zealand as follows:

> When I get up as a Pakeha and mow my lawns, I mow my
> lawns . . . . When I go down the road to the disabled
> children's home and mow their lawns I volunteer to do
> something for the other . . . . When my friend Huhana gets
> up and mows her lawns, she mows her lawns, when she
> goes down to the Kohanga Reo and mows lawns, she
> mows her lawns. When she moves across and mows the
> lawns at the Marae and the Hauora, she mows her lawns –
> because there is no sense of "other." (p. 129)

As Oliver and Love (2007) pointed out, Māori perspectives on volunteering build on the concept of "mahi aroha" or a sense of caring for others based on ties of kinship. Even the notion of "community" is differently understood by communal cultures (Moemeka, 1998). These cultural dynamics are generally ignored by researchers who have defined volunteering as a form of individual engagement with an organisation (Parboteeah, Cullen, & Lim, 2004).

Volunteering is a Form of Under-valued Work

As a natural consequence of defining volunteering as formal organisational involvement, volunteering is sometimes identified as an under-valued variant of paid work (Tilly & Tilly, 1994). Even leisure scholars (see for instance, Stebbins, 2002), who insist volunteering is a form of serious leisure, discuss volunteering in terms of work. I discuss the research that positions

volunteering as a variant of paid work first, then turn to the literature that

questions the extent to which volunteering can be considered a real job.

The literature that aligns volunteering with work tends to consider

volunteering as a stepping stone to full-time paid employment. Volunteering is

seen as a time investment that pays off in skill acquisition (Duncan, 1999). The

promotion of volunteering in communities beset by worklessness (Baines &

Hardill, 2008) and welfare dependency (A. Cohen, 2009; Fuller, Kershaw, &

Pulkingham, 2008) suggests that through volunteering individuals develop skills

(Brooks, 2007) as they reap the rewards of active citizenship.

If volunteering is a preparation for the world of "real jobs" (Clair, 1996),

coordination and control of volunteers should resemble paid work contexts.

Research on organisational socialisation of volunteers has assumed that volunteers

have similar needs to paid workers (McComb, 1995). Practitioner-directed

reports and manuals on volunteer management apply good human resource

management strategies to volunteer contexts to improve recruiting and retaining

volunteers. For instance, Hager and Brudney's (2004) report for the U.S.-based

Urban Institute identified nine "best practices" for organisations that use

volunteers:

> [S]upervision and communication with volunteers,
>
> liability coverage for volunteers, screening and matching
>
> volunteers to jobs, regular collection of information on
>
> volunteer involvement, written policies and job
>
> descriptions for volunteers, recognition activities, annual
>
> measurement of volunteer impact, training and

professional development for volunteers, and training for

paid staff in working with volunteers. (p. 1)

Farmer and Fedor (1999) suggested that volunteers establish psychological

contracts (Liao-Troth, 2005) with organisations with the expectation that

organisations will reciprocate in these ways. Nonetheless, other scholars have

insisted that such comparisons with paid work may only exacerbate the divide

between volunteering and full-time employment. Regardless of their ability to

earn "civic money" (U. Beck, 2000), volunteers are likely to receive "lesser

material and symbolic rewards than paid work" (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009, p.

359).

Even when volunteering is seen as socially important, it tends to be

positioned as an activity that "interrupts" real work. Academics who engage in

"public scholarship," for instance, provide an interesting example of volunteering

that creates community connections and public space for debating issues which

count (Weaver, 2007). Nonetheless, despite its social value, such scholarship that

connects "the stories of our discipline with the stories of people's lives" (Krone &

Harter, 2007, p. 75) takes time and involves considerable effort with no obvious

financial payoffs, since civic scholarship often goes unrewarded by academic

promotion procedures (Greenwood & Levin, 2005).

Perhaps it might be more honest to define volunteering as meaningful

leisure (Buckley, 2005), even if it degrades volunteers' efforts to "non-

professional . . . pseudo-work, occupational therapy" (J. L. Pearce, 1993, p. 31).

Volunteers exhibit fluid organisational membership and stay committed only if

they are able to maintain a friendly "clubby" working environment (J. L. Pearce,

1993). If volunteers are essentially unreliable with little or no accountability (A. Wilson & Pimm, 1996), organisations ought only to assign them tasks that are peripheral to their core mission and not waste time trying to coordinate them. Such was the case in Merrell's (2000) study of volunteers at a "well women clinic," who felt uncertain how their lesser skills should play out through the responsibilities of their role vis-à-vis those of paid workers. This *ambiguous* or *negative* volunteer identity reinforces the gender divide, as women who are not members of the full-time workforce are more likely to volunteer (Daniels, 1988; Messias, DeJong, & McLoughlin, 2005; Themudo, 2009). Nakano's (2000) analysis of the Japanese *borantia* [volunteer] also suggested that volunteering is used to create organisational affiliations for individuals who do not have the benefits of "real" world networks.

Other researchers have considered the possibility of volunteering combining elements of both work and leisure, such as Lie, Baines and Wheelock's (2009) study of volunteering by older persons. Distinct understandings of volunteering emerged in their study: volunteering as leisure that was fun and free; volunteering as a type of work that required commitment; and volunteering as care and civic consciousness. Nonetheless, they did not consider how these notions of volunteering could be reconciled throughout one's "volunteering career" nor that volunteering might be completely "other:" non-work and non-leisure.

The last six sections have shown that the literature on volunteering has complex and often contradictory findings. This review has highlighted several definitional tensions in the literature, such as volunteering as work/non-work; volunteering as work/leisure; or volunteering relationships as contributing or

detracting from wellbeing. In addition, no study has discussed the process whereby persons assign meaning to a particular activity as volunteering, rather than informal helping (Amato, 1990) or activism (Milligan, et al., 2008; Minkler & Holstein, 2008; J. Wilson, 2000), experiential learning (Winter, 1998), or the development of on-line networks (Amichai-Hamburger, 2008). Hence, volunteering can become conceptually blurred with other forms of social engagement (Flanagin, Stohl, & Bimber, 2006; Melucci, 1996). In order to distinguish volunteering, if indeed there is justification to do so, from such activities, this research project investigates:

RQ1: What meanings do individuals actually engaged with voluntary organisations give to their volunteering?

The next section examines another key concern for researchers and practitioners in the nonprofit sector: the impact of professionalism. Specifically, it considers how the literature has positioned professionalism in volunteer contexts, before turning to the possible impacts of professionalism on understandings of volunteering, and subsequently, wellbeing.

Professionalism, Volunteering and Wellbeing

The assertion that volunteering is becoming increasingly professionalised requires careful analysis of how professionalism is constructed in volunteer contexts and how a more professionalised form of volunteering might impact volunteers' wellbeing. As a dominant social and organisational discourse, professionalism has the potential to alter the meanings that volunteers assign to volunteering in several important ways. First, professionalism may influence the type of "structured" setting that volunteering occurs in, and second, the demands of professionalism challenge notions of volunteering as entirely free or unfettered.

In this section, I briefly discuss the attributes of professionalism that emerge from the literature, and suggests how the diverse processes of professionalisation, described in Chapter 1, have constructed identity positions that emphasise particular professional attributes. Next I consider how professionalism has been applied to volunteering. I then provide an overview of the literature on wellbeing, before analysing the research on the relationships between professionalism and wellbeing. Finally, I investigate how the professionalism-wellbeing relationship has been conceptualised in volunteer contexts.

Attributes of Professionalism

As in everyday interaction, researchers presume a shared conceptual understanding of the term "professional" (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007). Even organisational communication research that has unravelled the tensions and ironies within professional groups (e.g., Real & Putnam, 2005) has borrowed definitions of professionalism from sociological studies of fields with long vocational histories such as teaching, law and medicine. What is needed is to unpack the characteristics that researchers in these fields have identified as professional.

Two dominant interpretations of professionalism emerge from the literature. Most commonly, professionalism is understood in functional terms as a set of attributes that taken together constitute a normative value system. Evetts (2003) suggested that proponents of professionalism thus understood are "guardedly optimistic" (p. 399) about the social contribution of a professionalised approach. Alternatively, professionalism can be interpreted more negatively as an ideological discourse at macro, meso and micro levels that controls workers via

the demands of "professional" behaviour. From this latter perspective, Fournier (1999) argued that the encroachment of professionalism acts to "control [individuals] at a distance through the construction of 'appropriate' work identities and conducts" (p. 281). That is, she suggested that professionalism structures the type of person one is. Particular competencies include responsibility for actions, ability to interact with colleagues and customers in an appropriate way, flexibility and openness to change and personal development (pp. 297-299).

These competencies tally up with the attributes of professionalism enumerated in most of the literature on professionalism over the last four decades. Hall (1968), for instance, identified structural and attitudinal attributes of professionalism: stringent entry requirements and training coupled with a view of one's activity as a "calling" and reliance on and regulation by colleagues who constitute a "major work reference" (p. 92) for the application of abstract knowledge. More recent research has only elaborated on these attributes. Three core attributes stand out: the possession and responsible use of a body of specialist knowledge; the ability to decide independently how this knowledge should be applied in diverse contexts; and the expression of appropriate emotions.

First attribute: Professionalism as possession of specialist knowledge

The first key characteristic of professionalism is the construction of the professional as an "expert" who possesses a body of abstract or élite knowledge (Abbott, 1988; Ciulla, 2000; Creuss, Johnston, & Creuss, 2004) and the ability to apply principles appropriately in unique cases (e.g., Schön, 1983). This facet of professionalism has expanded to encompass new occupational groups such as accounting, advertising, architecture, information technology and project managers. With some foresight, Wilensky (1964) predicted that eventually

professionalism would embrace every group with a claim to specialist practice or knowledge. Whether or not promoting professional status is a marketing ploy (Fournier, 1999), occupational groups such as osteopaths (K. Miller, 1998), homeopaths (Cant & Sharma, 1996) and aromatherapists (Fournier, 2002) have claimed professional status.

The claim that knowledge is a key element of professionalism draws on a bureaucratised notion of professionalisation. From this perspective, knowledge is codified, best practices are documented and specific processes are taught to organisational newcomers before they can join the ranks of the relevant "expertocracy" (Van Doorn & Schuyt, 1978, cited in Svensson, 2006). Since professionalism requires the achievement and maintenance of certain standards, Lammers and Garcia (2009) suggested professionalism requires participation in a knowledge community that extends beyond the workplace. That is, professionalism operates in a workplace as an "extraorganizational resource" (Lammers & Garcia, 2009, p. 358) through the application of "established practices guided by formalized, rational beliefs that transcend particular organizations and situations" (Lammers & Barbour, 2006, p. 364).

The identity position that this type of professionalism creates is that of an expert whose status is dependent on the ability to exclude others for two reasons: either they do not possess adequate specialist knowledge (Abbott, 1988) or they do not serve the public through the appropriate and ethical use of this knowledge (Svensson, 2006). That is, professionalism that derives from a bureaucratised notion of professionalisation uses knowledge in such a way as to maintain public trust. Bureaucratised professional practice is characterised by impartiality and fairness (Cheney, Ritz, Lair, & Kendall, 2010).

This second reason for professional status has become increasingly important. As widespread public access to information increases, responsibility and integrity overshadow specialist knowledge as the hallmark of professionalism. Technological tools that democratise knowledge challenge the very notion of the professional as expert. Accountability systems have invaded previously inviolable professional ivory towers (Dent & Whitehead, 2002). In many cases, specialist learning takes a back seat to local, experiential knowledge (Derkzen & Bock, 2007). Professionals' new password is the ethical use of information, as examples of on-line stock market and legal advice fraud demonstrate the need for checks and balances to ensure integrity (Harshman, Gilsinan, Fisher, & Yeager, 2005).

Second attribute: Professionalism as the development and application of tacit knowledge

The second identifier of professionals and professionalism is the existence of professional bodies that foster the development and application of tacit knowledge. This more marketised notion of professionalism emphasises adaptability, flexibility and initiative as essential aspects of professional practice. In an ambiguous, uncertain environment, professionals construct an identity as a "manager," or even better, as an "entrepreneur" (Gill & Ganesh, 2007). This ability to respond as needed resonates with Hotho's (2008) notion of professionalism as agentic, rather than as a construct that individuals simply receive and identify with.

This marketised view of professionalisation differs significantly from bureaucratisation with its insistence on adherence to formal procedures and evidence-based practice operates according to technical rationality. That is, within the bounds of professional practice, entrepreneurial professionals expect to have

latitude to make their own decisions, drawing on the group's combined knowledge, which is "consensual, cumulative and convergent" (Parton, 2003, p. 2). Individuals who identify with this more marketised professional model argue that only other professionals possess sufficient expertise to judge their practice. As a result, both knowledge and its responsible use are generally watched over by a professional monitoring body (Wallace, 1995) which is self-managing.

Third attribute: Professionalism as the management and display of appropriate emotions

The third attribute is an expectation that only appropriate emotions will be displayed (Kramer & Hess, 2002). In some ways, all professionals are expected to live up to the "display rules" that govern the outer expression of emotions (Ashforth & Humphry, 1995). Kramer and Hess (2002) found that excessive *positive* or *negative* emotional expression was categorised as "unprofessional" in their study of professional incidents in the workplace. In a deeper sense, professionals are expected to re-script their inner feelings and responses (Hochschild, 1983) or to enact a professional persona that is distinct from one's personal self.

Particularly in analyses of medically-oriented workers, professionalism at first glance seems singularly non-emotional. Professionalism is described in terms of detachment and objectivity (Lupton, 1994), efficiency rather than caring (Goldstein, 1999), and emotional neutrality (James, 1992). Researchers in the field of medical education have challenged the dominant reading of professionalism as knowledge-based and non-emotional, by including empathy as a key characteristic of professionalism (Hojat, et al., 2002; Marcus, 1999).

Nonetheless, in Morgan and Krone's (2001) study, medics tried but failed to subvert established emotion rules (Fineman, 2000).

This attribute of professionalism draws on a rationalised notion of professionalisation. If professional practice requires getting things done efficiently, the shortest route is to focus on tasks, and to limit emotional display. The professional individual is simply an "agent" who carries out the tasks associated with a particular role, without these tasks influencing her inner self. In fact, many studies of the caring professions have shown that a hardened "professional" skin prevents emotional experiences from creating a "burden, pressure, weight or stress . . . [that weighs] heavily on the individual's sense of self" (Höpfl & Linstead, 1993, p. 76). For instance, Aase, Nordrehaug and Malterud (2008) found that although emergency department physicians had perceived certain incidents "as shocking or horrible earlier in their career, they at present said that they could deal with death and mostly keep it at a distance" (p. 767) by assuming a detached (rationalised) professional identity.

Some research has equated this type of professional identity as fundamentally "raced" (Ashcraft & Allen, 2003, pp. 26-27) and gendered, or aligned with the wholesale adoption of masculine attributes. That is, feminised labour focuses on the emotional, caring behaviours associated with "being present" and masculine, "professional" work emphasises efficient, task-focused behaviours or getting things done. For example, Crawford, Brown, and Majomi (2008) analysed mental health community nurses who used practitioner-talk to contest perceived public perceptions of their job as a "hands-on," watered-down for softies (p. 1056), feminised type of labour. Women in non-traditional or non-conventional settings such as sports journalism (Hardin & Shain, 2006) or civil

engineering (Watts, 2009) affirmed the need to prove their competency, or to conform to "male success criteria" (Watts, 2009, p. 53). In their study of British women who had left law practice, Webley and Duff (2007) implicitly pitted a profit-driven (male) professional culture against (female) values. Although the tensions between "woman" and "professional" are fascinating, these studies do not critique *how* professionalism has been constructed as specifically male.

In sum, professionalism, as represented in the literature, requires (1) specialist knowledge that is used ethically and with a service ethos; (2) the existence of self-managing professional groups that develop and share knowledge and monitor its responsible use; and (3) emotional neutrality that focuses on getting things done. These constructions of professionalism are influenced by different professionalisation processes. In the next section, I assess how and to what extent volunteering has adopted these notions of professionalism.

Volunteering and Professionalism

Although the studies that compare and contrast professionalism and volunteering are limited in number, volunteers are generally represented as under-skilled and people-oriented and therefore fundamentally non-professional (Merrell, 2000). Fears that volunteers may threaten paid jobs in a devolved, money-poor, cost-cutting environment seem unfounded. In fact, data from Canadian non-profits showed that while volunteers had replaced paid staff in some instances, "professional" paid staff had been employed in lieu of volunteers when skill level, legal liability, and reliability were important (Handy, Mook, & Quarter, 2008) within the *same* organisations. Handy et al. noted that data from two national surveys and two case studies showed that task interchangeability was only about 12%, usually in customer service and advocacy roles. This sharp

distinction between highly-trained professionals and low-skilled support workers also emerged in Mackenzie's (2006) analysis of paraprofessionals employed to support child health initiatives in deprived Glasgow communities. While these support workers were paid, Mackenzie noted the possible parallels with volunteer populations. Professionals experienced no insecurity that the support workers would fill their jobs; rather, they were concerned about how to support a potentially vulnerable workforce who tended towards over-identification with families.

To date, scholarship about the intersection between volunteering and professionalism has tended to appropriate models of professionalism from paid work contexts. As a result, most analyses of organisational volunteering have assumed that volunteers are not professional at all, because they receive limited or no training, are not privy to privileged communication networks, have no specific body of knowledge, have low status and are not free from supervision even when their role has considerable consequences (Etzioni, 1966, cited in Knijn & Verhagn, 2003). Others have argued that volunteering may only be "professional" in the sense of *enacting* a "professional spirit" (Hodgson, 2002, p. 805) or "conducting and constituting oneself in an appropriate manner" (Fournier, 1999, p. 287). Particular emphasis has been laid on the service ethos of professionals. Alvesson (1993), for example, argued that volunteers may be considered *para-professionals* since they have an altruistic orientation towards clients and the common good (p. 999).

In this section, I briefly illustrate by several examples that volunteers do not seem to possess the attributes deemed necessary for professionalism, and in particular that they lack specialist knowledge and often develop emotional

closeness with those they serve. I then consider how, if at all, professionalism might be constructed in non-traditional, non-"work" settings (Cheney & Ashcraft, 2007).

Frequently, volunteers do not possess greater knowledge than the recipients of their services (Sharma, 1997). High status volunteer board members do hold specialised knowledge. However, these more "professional" leadership roles tend to be classified as an unpaid but "specialized form of nonprofit management" (Ganesh & McAllum, 2011, p. 3) rather than volunteering (W. Brown & Iverson, 2004). Most organisations that use volunteers as helpers find it impossible to exclude individuals on the basis of insufficient knowledge. Even when volunteers need specific cultural knowledge or "the ability to master a particular symbolic and value environment" (Alvesson, 1993, p. 1001) required by the task, most volunteers still rely on paid staff with more experience as a point of reference. For instance, lack of knowledge emerged as a key finding in Beckenbach, Patrick and Sell's (2009) analysis of novice counsellors. Lack of expertise lowered participants' sense of control over the situation and the outcome. Beckenbach, Patrick and Sells noted that novices tended to "underestimate their effectiveness and maximise any difficulties" (p. 490), and were more vulnerable to feelings of discouragement. Moreover, the volunteer telephone counselors in Viney's (1983) study initiated a "natural process of identification [with the other's worldview] . . . and so become insiders" (p. 260), as opposed to the professionally-trained, who manifested a cool-headed, outsider perspective.

Many volunteers may struggle to maintain emotional distance and obtain adequate knowledge for their role. First, adopting a professional demeanour

(mask?) is difficult when volunteering occurs in "personal" time. Detachment from caring, nurturing behaviours is often positioned as antithetical to much social or human services volunteerism (Harris, 2001). Second, volunteering tends to have a limited life-span, due to time squeeze from other commitments. As a result, volunteers seldom benefit from that "coping ability [that] increases with experience (Barnes, 2001) representing adaptation to job role" (Hulbert & Morrison, 2006, p. 252). Volunteers are an interesting example of peripheral organisational members who may struggle with the "traditional" rhetoric of professionalism because they do not fully invest in a professional role (Kahn, 1992). Instead, they attempt to manage multiple, conflicting role identities (Grube & Piliavin, 2000), moving somewhat uneasily between the spheres of home and family life, paid employment, and temporary organisational affiliation (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002).

Volunteers certainly form an interesting context for understanding how individuals who work in flexible work environments and engage in private or "back-stage" interactions (Van Maanen & Kunda, 1989) that occur out of the public eye (Kramer & Hess, 2002) enact professionalism. The first step involves careful analysis of how professional conduct in volunteer settings is constructed.

Thus far, the adoption of "business-like" perspectives or a marketised version of professionalism by the nonprofit sector has received the most attention in scholarly work (e.g., Bush, 1992; Dees & Anderson, 2003; Frumkin & Andre-Clark, 2000). Milligan and Fyfe's (2005) work also distinguished between hierarchically structured *market*-driven organisations that aim for efficient, "professional" service provision to "clients," and participatory grass-roots organisations that promote solidarity and community development. While such

typologies provide a means to critique government policy, they ignore the need to develop a more inductive approach (Dart, 2004) about how professionalism might be best understood in volunteer contexts.

In particular, scholars need to clarify what notions of professionalism have been adopted by nonprofit organisations, since most studies do not explicitly distinguish among notions of professionalism that draw on processes of bureaucratisation, marketisation and rationalisation. For instance, much attention has been given to the push for volunteer-based organisations to adopt management models, practices and technologies drawn from for-profit contexts. The underlying assumption is that such practices will increase the productivity of nonprofits (Kaboolian, 1998), yet efficacy is often described using a combination of marketised and rationalised terms. For example, in their detailed study of nonprofits in Ohio, Alexander, Nank and Stivers (1999) concluded that "the public-spiritedness of community nonprofits is threatened by increasing pressure to become more businesslike and professional" (p. 462). They identified excessive concern by funders about outcomes, demonstrable efficiency, and the importance attributed to "technical expertise, which regards the lived experience of community residents as unscientific and anecdotal, and the time spent on participatory deliberation as a waste of time because the professional answer to problems is already clear" (p. 462).

Once notions of professionalism are clarified, it will then be possible to evaluate how volunteers accept or challenge these messages, and especially how they situate professionalism in terms of their personal wellbeing. Similarly to volunteering and professionalism, "wellbeing" has a multiplicity of possible

meanings. I briefly describe those notions of wellbeing most relevant to the project.

Measures of Wellbeing

Measuring wellbeing is challenging. First, definitions are all-encompassing; wellbeing is also described as "development and enhancement of the self" (Christopher & Hickinbottom, 2008, p. 565), human thriving, fulfilment (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), or flourishing (Keyes & Haidt, 2003). Second, wellbeing can be considered as a subjective or objective judgement, obtained by a global evaluation of overall satisfaction (Lucas, et al., 1996), by momentary "mood reports" (Deiner, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999, p. 278) or by combining domain-specific, separable "variables" (Deiner, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006). Third, one can consider different levels of wellbeing: individual, social and cultural (Ganesh & McAllum, 2010). I do not intend to contribute to the debate on wellbeing definitions here, but I do want to highlight those aspects that are salient to the volunteering-professionalism debate and to the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing more generally.

One key issue is if volunteers are happy if they say they are (Wright & Cropanzano, 2004), or if measuring their wellbeing requires more objective criteria. Objective criteria include not only externally observable factors such as wealth (Schyns, 2003), good health (Deiner & Seligman, 2004), and positive relationships (Deiner, et al., 1999), but the acquisition of more intangible benefits such as character virtues like courage, humanity and justice (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Other "objective" wellbeing factors of particular relevance to volunteers may include the ability to exercise agency (Benight & Bandura, 2004), control over one's level of involvement (Staudinger, Fleeson, & Baltes, 1999),

autonomy (Sheldon, et al., 2001) and feelings of competence and relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

However, objective measures of wellbeing are problematic for two reasons. First, many so-called objective measures require subjective self-assessments. For example, individuals show considerable variance in their views about what constitutes "interesting work," what "good interpersonal relationships" look like, and what it means to "contribute to society" (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000, p. 520). Second, difficulties arise when deciding which criteria to include and how to assign relative weights to each criterion. This difficulty is particularly pertinent when deciding what sources of wellbeing might be significant for volunteers. Presumably, individuals who freely choose to volunteer expect their involvement to contribute in some way to their personal happiness, yet volunteering can be costly in terms of time, effort and energy. Subjective rather than objective measures would be more useful in assessing the potential benefits and costs of volunteering, given the wide range of income levels, health and employment statuses, time commitment and type of activities undertaken.

This thesis, then, does not position wellbeing as an objective state, measured by a selected set of indicators, but as a subjective evaluation of a specific life domain, volunteering, and how volunteering fits in with other life projects. Organisational discourses of wellbeing also shape volunteers' evaluations of their involvement. That is, even when volunteering is personally costly, it can still be a source of wellbeing if one considers not just the "Pleasant Life," but the "Good Life" and the "Meaningful Life" (Seligman, 2002) as sources of wellbeing. For Seligman, the Good Life involves engagement, and potentially losing the self in activities that matter (Csikszenthmihalyi, 2003). Such personal

life investment of thought and effort in various domains (Emmons, 1996; Omodei & Wearing, 1990) may contribute to achievement wellbeing (Morrison, 2007). The Meaningful Life requires not just hard work, but purposive activity, a sense of "belonging to and serving something larger than the self" (Deiner & Seligman, 2004, p. 4).

Hence, the experience of wellbeing does not necessarily imply unmitigated happiness or pleasure. Many wellbeing theories suggest that individuals engage in an activity as long as they experience more pleasure than pain (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999). According to hedonist wellbeing theories, pain might well impinge on satisfaction levels temporarily (Brickman, Coates, & Janoff-Bulman, 1978), but "a person will judge his or her life as happy if the pleasures outweigh the pains" (Sousa-Poza & Sousa-Poza, 2000, p. 519). Desire attainment theories (Ryan & Deci, 2001) also suggest that individuals will withstand painful experiences if these help them achieve long-term satisfaction of their desires. In this sense, wellbeing is framed as *eudaimonic*: a holistic, deep-seated, global happiness (Lucas, et al., 1996) that temporary mood swings or negative experiences don't fundamentally alter.

Although community organisations that utilise volunteers do not usually provide precise definitions of how they understand wellbeing, claims about volunteer wellbeing appear in promotional and training materials, policies and codes of practice (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001). I suggest that careful analysis of how nonprofit organisations position wellbeing may help us understand how they structure the relationships between volunteering and wellbeing, and how volunteers either resist or enact these implicit and explicit codes.

Professionalised Volunteering and Wellbeing

Theoretical perspectives on the relationship between professionalised volunteering and wellbeing depend to a great extent on how the volunteering-professionalism relationship has been constructed. The volunteering as charity/social capital perspective positions professionalism as negative for wellbeing at the interpersonal, organisational, and societal levels. At an interpersonal level, high quality service requires close relationships with "clients" and not just efficient service provision (Leonard, et al., 2005; Ronel, 2006). From an organisational perspective, volunteers could develop a sense of expendability in a professionalised environment, as in Dein and Abbas' (2005) study of hospice volunteers who feared replacement by more capable, knowledgeable peers. Even at the broader social level, volunteer networks based on personal skill development tend to be communities of circumstance (Arai & Pedlar, 2003) that only benefit those involved (Newton, 1997) rather than a generalised goodwill indiscriminately offered to all, with implications for neighbourhood and community wellbeing (Mellor, Hayashi, Stokes, & Firth, 2009).

Proponents of the volunteering as a variant of paid work perspective, on the other hand, situate professionalism as positive for volunteers' wellbeing. Since social services volunteering can be viewed as a form of emotional labour (Beckenbach, et al., 2009), with subsequent anxiety about performance, professionalism acts as a distancing mechanism (Aase, et al., 2008; Clohessy & Ehlers, 1999; Hagh-Shenas, Goodarzi, Dehbozorgi, & Farashbandi, 2005). Managing compassion-laden experiences well (Shuler & Sypher, 2000) enables the individual to maintain an empathic stance; if not, the "other" threatens to overwhelm the self (Eisenberg, et al., 2005).

Nonprofit organisations' codes of conduct often reveal how organisations position the relationships among volunteering, professionalism and wellbeing. In particular, codes provide a useful insight into whether and how voluntary organisations have adopted or adapted ways of doing things from the corporate sector. Codes of conduct must be understood broadly here as encompassing two key elements. First, codes of conduct are explicitly spelt out in written documents such as training manuals, videos and policy statements that organisations create to regulate and coordinate members' communication and work practices. Second, comments by managers, coordinators and advisors who represent the organisations also indicate the extent to which living practice matches or diverges from the written codes. Without this second source, written documents that supposedly guide responsible practice can become a simple "paper in the drawer" (Nijhof, Cludts, Fisscher, & Laan, 2003, p. 65). To make a difference to the processes and culture of an organisation, codes need to be embedded and implemented. Adam and Rashman-Moore (2004) also indicated that informal means of communicating the norms established by codes of conduct such as organisational socialisation (i.e., staff explanations) were more successful than formal methods (i.e., training documents). Hence, organisational representatives can be considered repositories of codes of conduct as they instruct and monitor how written documents are used and interpreted in practice. Therefore, this project asks the following research questions:

RQ2: How do codes of conduct construct professionalism for organisational volunteers?

RQ3: How do the codes of conduct position the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing?

Literature on *volunteers'* reactions to the need for accountability and other professional demands, if indeed these are present in nonprofit codes of conduct, and the impact on volunteers' wellbeing, is lacking. However, the two distinct perspectives on professionalised volunteering that emerge from the literature suggest markedly different outcomes for volunteers' wellbeing. The first perspective positions professionalism as intrinsically incompatible with volunteering. Research in this line assumes that volunteering involves a caring, personal touch that facilitates social capital building and connectedness in communities (Leonard, et al., 2005). From this viewpoint, professionalism is aligned with controlled or contrived emotional expression; hence demands for professionalism hinder volunteers' wellbeing. The second perspective on the volunteering-professionalism relationship that focuses on the parallels between volunteering and paid work environments positions professionalism positively, as a distancing mechanism. I suggest that champions from both sides of the argument need to assess how volunteers themselves respond to the understandings of professionalism that volunteer organisations have developed. It thus makes sense to ask:

RQ4: How do volunteers relate organisational notions of professionalism to their own wellbeing?

The next section of the literature review examines how volunteers' interactions with clients, other volunteers and paid staff influence their understandings of volunteering, and in particular the notion that volunteering is fundamentally collaborative.

Communities of Practice

One way of looking at group dynamics and mutual learning processes is through analysis of the formation and maintenance of communities of practice (CoPs). Although the communities of practice literature originates in knowledge management and organisational learning, its focus on shared meaning easily lends itself to a communication analysis. In fact, we need to be more cognisant of how other volunteers (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009), recipients (Arnstein, Vidal, Wells-Federman, Morgan, & Caudill, 2002; Hankinson & Rochester, 2005), paid staff (Merrell, 2000; Netting, Borders, Nelson, & Huber, 2004), friends (Janoski, et al., 1998) and family members (Eckstein, 2001; J. Fox & Wheeler, 2002; Littlepage, Obergfell, & Zanin, 2003) influence how volunteers understand and learn what volunteering means, and what constitutes appropriate ways to act in increasingly professionalised environments.

In this section, I first discuss how a CoP-based analysis could contribute to our understanding of how volunteers reconcile traditional notions of volunteering as an essentially individual pursuit with an understanding of volunteering that presumes volunteers will collaborate with organisations, with each other, and with target communities to create beneficial social outcomes. From the vast number of definitions of collaboration on offer, I define collaboration as requiring some level of "cooperation, coordination, and exchange of resources" (Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010, p. 462) and an awareness of and commitment to achieving goals that transcend individual and/or organisational concerns (Keyton, Ford, & Smith, 2008). I then review the elements of a community of practice and how the CoP concept has been applied in volunteering contexts.

Volunteering as Collaboration?

Volunteering is often promoted as a vital means for creating positive connections within communities and addressing varied social problems, in a collaborative way. Indeed, many of the key elements in definitions of collaboration identified in Lewis' (2006) review of the literature on collaboration could arguably be applied to volunteering. Volunteering is fundamentally activity-oriented. It involves communicative interaction over time, through which joint purpose is negotiated and enacted by interdependent parties.

Nonetheless, the emphasis on power-sharing and equal relationships between the self and the other that collaboration requires and fosters cannot be presumed in volunteer contexts. Evident status differences exist between volunteers and paid staff, and potentially between volunteers and those they serve. Moreover, volunteers' initial motivations for engaging in voluntary activity are highly diverse, and may not include a willingness to cede some autonomy in order to collaborate. As a result, the potential for successful collaboration co-exists with features which make collaboration difficult if not impossible. Due to its focus on process, CoP analysis provides a useful framework to study how volunteers contest or attempt to alter organisational understandings of shared repertoire, mutual engagement and joint enterprise.

Elements of CoPs

Academic research and organisational practitioners have renewed their interest in organisational learning (Garud, Dunbar, & Bartel, 2011; Levinthal & Rerup, 2006; Miner & Mezias, 1996) and its implications for identity, social practice and relationships. The situated nature of such learning gained popularity following the publication of Lave and Wenger's (1991) account of the

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socialisation of organisational newcomers including midwives, tailors, meat-cutters, naval quartermasters and non-drinking alcoholics. They analysed the group processes whereby old-timers enabled and controlled "legitimate peripheral participation" by newcomers who learnt as they contributed to the group's practices.

Wenger (2000) later articulated three modes whereby individuals belong to social learning systems: *engagement* with other group members; *imagination* or the development of images and constructs used to orient practice; and *alignment* of perspectives within the group. Wenger argued that every social learning opportunity combines these three modes of belonging but that one mode can dominate in particular instances, affording the social structures such learning creates "different qualities" (p. 228). Amin and Roberts (2008) discussed how different communicative settings "influence situated knowing" (p. 354), with the caveat that their typology was not exclusive. They considered the kinesthetic knowledge of craft or task-based work; the specialist knowledge of professional practice; the innovation characteristic of high creativity jobs (M. Thompson, 2005); and virtual collaboration (C. M. Johnson, 2001). Organisations that use volunteers may combine elements of any of these four CoP "types" or be completely distinct. In any case, studying the communicative setting in which volunteer CoPs operate is a worthwhile endeavour. In terms of this research, professionalism might operate more on *imagination* in terms of organisational insistence that volunteers maintain personal distance in their practice. However, typically volunteer-based organisations have been dominated by models of *engagement* that foster personalised interaction, while activist-oriented organisations have emphasised *alignment* or common goals.

This project uses Wenger's (1998) terminology to analyse how groups of volunteers develop understandings of volunteering. Wenger suggests that what creates a community of practice is shared repertoire, mutual interaction, and joint enterprise. I briefly define these elements, before showing why each element is important for the development of a community of practice. *Shared Repertoire* includes all the activities that members of a CoP do together. Shared Repertoire (Wenger, 1998) or Practice (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002) grounds all learning in organisational context and artifacts (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Shared repertoire assumes that knowledge is distributed among a community's members, and communally shared through "heedful interaction" (K. Weick & Roberts, 1993). *Mutual Interaction* considers how CoP members relate to each other, and the patterns of interaction that develop as a result. Thus, Mutual Interaction (Wenger, 1998) or Community (Wenger et al, 2002) acts as a structurational device since it creates rules associated with recurrent situations, characterised by specific themes and topics, and structural features/symbolism (Yates & Orlikowski, 1992). These rules then prescribe future interaction within CoPs. Through mutual interaction, members of the CoP negotiate *Joint Enterprise*, or the purpose, goal(s) or mission of the group. In terms of Joint Enterprise (Wenger, 1998) or Domain (Wenger et al, 2002), Brown and Duguid (1993, cited by Davenport & Hall, 2002) suggested that a CoP "is by no means necessarily harmonious" (p. 187). Blackler et al. (2000) also found that using activity theory to study CoPs in engineering contexts highlighted "inconsistencies, paradoxes, and tensions" (Davenport & Hall, 2002, p. 184).

Nonetheless, analysis of the "dark side" of CoPs (Gherardi & Nicolini, 2002) or the unequal distribution of power within a community has often been

neglected in analyses of CoPs (Contu & Willmott, 2003; Marshall & Rollinson, 2004), despite Lave and Wenger's (1991) acknowledgement that "unequal relations of power must be included more systematically in our analysis" (p. 42). Perhaps, as Brown and Duguid (2001) suggested, the application of a CoP framework to volunteer contexts mirrors contemporary enthusiasm for community. They point out, however, that

> community . . . can be a deceptive but "warmly persuasive word." (It is worth contemplating how wide the notion would have spread had Lave and Wenger decided to talk about a *cadre* or *commune* of practice.) Communities of practice are, in fact, as likely to be cold as warm, may sometimes be coercive rather than persuasive, and are occasionally explosive. (p. 203)

Gherardi and Nicolini (2002) also rejected connotations of synthesis within CoPs and invited researchers to contemplate "the harmonies *and* dissonance, consonance *and* cacophony, that may coexist within the same performance" (p. 420).

In fact, because learning is situated and contextualised, the possibility of intra-community conflict is augmented. Fox (2000) used Actor Network Theory (ANT) to ascertain the process and conditions under which old-timers control the "points of passage" in CoPs (p. 864). Handley, Sturdy, Fincham and Clark (2006) also documented why powerful practitioners impose constraints on newcomers who threaten to "transform" the community's knowledge and practices (Carlisle, 2004). They concluded that the study of "the dynamics between identity-

development and forms of participation are critical to the ways in which individuals internalize, challenge or reject the existing practices of their community" (Handley, et al., 2006, p. 644).

CoPs and Volunteering

Before discussing how volunteers' understandings of what they do and how they do it are influenced by a community of practice, it seems sensible to assess whether volunteer organisations do in fact constitute a CoP. In terms of Wenger's (1998) three components, volunteer organisations have distinctive *shared repertoires* or specific activities and tasks for which they request volunteer assistance. These activities generate organisation-specific practices.

Volunteers interact with other volunteers, and, in the case of the organisations in this study, paid staff in order to carry out these tasks, creating patterns of *mutual interaction*. Since those who receive services from nonprofits seldom possess enough power to influence activities undertaken, I limit the CoP analysis to organisational members or paid staff and volunteers. Additionally, consistent, ongoing interaction with clients or recipients may be lacking.

Volunteers also have some impact on *joint enterprise*. Although they may lack input into organisational goals due to their marginal status, social service volunteers often work at the coal-face of service delivery in a manner that reflects their understanding of organisational mission. In this sense, volunteer-based CoPs possess what Lave and Wenger (1991) labelled a spontaneous, self-organising, "volunteer" element that eludes managerial control (Roberts, 2006).

Groups of volunteers form a fascinating cameo of how newcomers or marginal organisational members learn and transform practices for two reasons.

First, volunteers often lack clear role definition and therefore are not sure which practices they ought to be learning. To date, most CoP cases have focused on how members of specific organisational groups such as photocopier repair technicians (Orr, 1990), flute-makers (Yanow, 2000), medical claims processors (Wenger, 1998), and technicians (Barley, 1996) moved from novice to expert through the mastery of specific, concrete practices. Volunteers may not exhibit such a predictable novice-expert trajectory. How does the ease with which some volunteers enter and exit their volunteer roles tally with the shift of other volunteers from the periphery to the core of the group's knowledge base? Do volunteer CoPs create different types of volunteers and volunteer experiences?

Second, as Kanter (1989) pointed out, in organisations with less hierarchy, "relationships of influence shift . . . from the vertical (command) to the horizontal (peer networks) . . . with more scope for groups and coalitions to challenge the formal hierarchy and to contest among themselves about the nature of new ground rules and interpretive frameworks" (Easterby-Smith, Snell, & Gherardi, 1998, p. 269). Volunteers belong to multiple communities and will attach varied importance to the identity such membership confers. Conflict about what type of practice/praxis/participation the volunteer role entails is almost inevitable. Some volunteers will be happy to engage in a practice or activity without knowing the meanings that underpin such praxis, while others will strive for and insist upon meaningful participation (Handley, et al., 2006). Research on CoPs in temporary organisations suggests that the trust and familiarity acquired through frequent interaction are missing (Roberts, 2006). As a result, any but the smallest organisation might perhaps be considered as a "community of communities of

practice" (Brown and Duguid 1991, p. 203). Lindkvist (2005) suggested in such cases it may be more accurate to label groups "collectivities of practice."

However, the tensions that any CoP, and a volunteer CoP in particular, needs to manage were not highlighted in Iverson and McPhee's (2008) analysis of CoP processes in two volunteer-driven organisations. Iverson and McPhee's results suggested that the emergency focus of the Disaster Aid teams compared to the knowledge development and sharing that characterised the Sonoran Garden docents led to important differences in how volunteers enacted CoPs. Moreover, while Iverson and McPhee described the frustration that Disaster Aid teams felt at their inability to act outside the rules imposed by their role, they did not discuss how volunteers' local, in situ knowledge was undervalued in contrast with the expert knowledge embedded in organisational policies (Yanow, 2004).

Although Iverson and McPhee's (2008) development of typologies of CoPs could be interesting for practitioners, their adherence to a kind of "ideal type" does not seem to illustrate some of the relational complexities that power brokering and temporary organisational affiliation suggests. For instance, they concluded that some CoPs are stronger than others (p. 196), due to higher levels of mutual engagement and a greater ability to contribute to joint enterprise. I critically examine this claim, and contest the converse assumption: that low levels of joint enterprise lead to a weak community of practice. Perhaps the assumption that more frequent instantiations of CoP processes lead to some groups being "more" of a CoP than others turns a CoP into a product, rather than a process whereby members coordinate their practice (shared repertoire), develop relationships (mutual engagement), and identify with a mission (joint enterprise).

Analysis of these three CoP components can also shed light on the meanings that individuals give to their volunteering and the relationships between professionalism and wellbeing. First, the development of shared repertoire hinges around the question of what kinds of activities constitute volunteering, or if indeed it matters that there is overlap with other related concepts such as activism, helping, or corporate "volunteering." Because of their dynamic, emergent nature, communities of practice have fluid boundaries (Wenger, 2000) and styles and discourses easily travel between communities (Wenger, 1998, p. 129). Boundary objects (Star & Griesemer, 1989) or "shared documents, tools, business processes, objectives, schedules" (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 2001, p. 209) can be used to create common practices across a constellation of communities (Coe & Bunnell, 2003; Roberts, 2006, p. 446). Furthermore, changes in boundary objects (such as professionalised processes) can signal a shift of emphasis within the community of practice itself (J. S. Brown & Duguid, 2001).

Second, analysis of patterns of mutual interaction could enable evaluation of the extent of inter- and intra-group collaboration and/or conflict within the CoPs. Research has typically positioned paid staff-volunteer relationships as antagonistic or negative (C. H. Adams & Shepherd, 1996; Brudney, 1990). Failed attempts to "manage" volunteers have sometimes been attributed to the importance of peer networks in volunteering (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009). The group processes literature (Lois, 1999) also acknowledges the importance of peers in interpreting rules and policies (Kirby & Krone, 2002). There is some intersection with the CoP literature here, as studies of for-profit firms and high technology initiatives in particular have found that relational proximity is more important than geographical proximity (Amin, 2002; Coe & Bunnell, 2003) for

members to participate in the community and develop common meanings. What this research project offers is a perspective on how relationships among volunteers influence their expectations and experience of volunteering as a site of collaboration or contestation.

Relatedly, CoPs may provide a helpful theoretical framework to examine how volunteers jointly determine the purpose of volunteering. We need to consider how the interaction among volunteers' experiences of volunteering, organisational messages and pressure from volunteers' peer networks impacts the understanding of volunteer-recipient relationships. That is, does volunteering serve those whom volunteers help, as the volunteering literature on the public good nature of volunteering suggests, or does volunteering primarily contribute to volunteers' personal wellbeing? More critical literature suggests that most contact reinforces pre-existing stereotypes (Devereux, 2008; Knecht & Martinez, 2009). Wuthnow (1991) also noted that "compassion centers more on the caregiver than on relationships and rarely serves as a basis for establishing lasting ties with the people served" (p. 303). Despite the assumption that relationships in the nonprofit sector are epitomised by collaboration (Snavely & Tracy, 2000), clients or recipients of services usually lack power (see Trethewey, 1997 for an exception). While this project does not explicitly consider power relations, the ways in which volunteers understand volunteering will have a flow-on effect to the recipients of their efforts.

Specifically, this research project investigates:

RQ 5: How do volunteers enact communities of practice?

In sum, the focus on distributed learning that characterises the communities of practice literature could enable analysis of how organisational volunteers develop concepts about volunteering, react to organisational messages about professionalism and wellbeing, and learn to interact with each other, paid staff and beneficiaries. The literature to date on volunteer relationships has focused mainly on how volunteers learn a culture of benevolence (J. Wilson & Musick, 1997) and as a result how volunteers construct the recipients of their efforts. While Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan's (2009) work on group processes in volunteering examined different types of peer networks, work on interactions among volunteers as well as paid staff-volunteer relationships (much referenced in the volunteer professionalisation literature) would benefit from analysis of how volunteers *learn* to interact. A communities of practice perspective, drawn from an organisational learning tradition, is well-suited for this purpose.

The final section of the literature review suggests how these research questions about the meanings of volunteering, professionalism-wellbeing relationships, and volunteer-based CoPs might contribute to communication research, and specifically organisational communication research on issues of identity, coordination and relationality.

The Contribution of this Study to Issues of Identity, Coordination and Relationality

In this section, I review how this study of the meanings of volunteering, professionalism-wellbeing relationships and communities of practice might both inform and be informed by the communication problematics of identity, relationality and coordination. I begin by briefly outlining how the research questions would benefit from consideration of these key communication concerns.

First, the meanings attributed to volunteering are inseparably bound up with issues of identity and relationality. Each aspect that the literature highlights when describing volunteering creates a distinct identity position and understanding of what kind of relationships are appropriate. Conceptualisations of volunteering as free, for instance, link volunteering to a particular personal identity. Positioning volunteering as a form of unequal exchange, on the other hand, creates a volunteer identity that focuses on class and resources vis-à-vis those served. These understandings of identity frame wellbeing in different ways. In the first case, volunteering forms a particular project inserted into one's personal biography, and therefore leads to wellbeing insofar as volunteering provides a source of meaningful leisure. In the second instance, social services volunteering is re-cast as almost vocational: social identity reinforces the need to contribute to less fortunate others. Scholars must consider whose wellbeing volunteering thus understood actually serves.

Second, questions about the impact of professionalism on volunteers' wellbeing would benefit from a close analysis of how professionalism structures the expression of emotions in relationships with clients and among volunteers. Professionalism may reduce volunteers' spontaneity by stipulating what constitutes an appropriate display of emotions; however, professionalism may improve volunteers' ability to manage their relationships with difficult or needy populations. In addition to issues of relationality, professionalism is closely linked to the coordination of organisational members. If volunteers are difficult to coordinate due to their sporadic organisational contact, professionalism may act as a form of discursive control that regulates how volunteers manage ambiguity.

Third, the study of volunteer communities of practice could benefit from considerations of identity, coordination and relationality. From a CoP perspective, volunteer identity is socially constructed through identification with a collective. Nonetheless, the depth of this identification and subsequent volunteer commitment is likely to be impacted by volunteers' membership in multiple other communities and the type of role they play in nonprofit organisations. A focus on how coordination occurs in CoPs may also reveal the importance and quality of relationships among volunteers as well as between volunteers and paid staff.

The remainder of this section considers how the research questions could contribute to communication scholarship on identity, relationality and coordination. I proceed as follows, recognising that questions of relationality and coordination are inseparably bound up with issues of identity and identification, which are fore-grounded in this last section of the literature review. First, I propose that the analysis of the meanings of volunteering in this research project could add to the literature on how individuals manage multiple identity positions, especially in non-work settings. I then argue that analysis of how self-definition and representation construct distinctive volunteer identities is useful. Next, I consider how identities cue the ways in which relationality is enacted and compare such research to perspectives that show how identities develop through relationships. The impact of professionalism on how volunteers enact relationality may suggest which relational patterns are constructed as appropriate or important in nonprofit contexts. Finally, I propose that the study of communities of practice in nonprofit contexts could extend communication-centred studies of coordination that explore the transition from external to internal control through organisational

focus on meaningfulness, especially for marginal or temporary organisational members.

Organisational and Occupational Identity

Academic studies of identity are broad, disparate and diverse. Organisational communication research has examined how role, group (Hogg & Reid, 2006), team (Barker & Tompkins, 1994), occupation (Russo, 1998), and organisation (Alvesson, Ashcraft, & Thomas, 2008) have impacted identity construction. Identity, then, has multiple facets, but here I rely on a broad interpretation of the term as a set of affiliations that manifest who and what an individual is, and the relative worth of these affiliations (Kuhn & Nelson, 2002).

Empirical organisational communication research on *organisational* identity has tended to be carried out in paid work settings (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005). Even research on how individuals manage multiple identities (e.g., work/family) has privileged paid work (Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell, 2003) with the implication that other life domains are less important (R. F. Taylor, 2004). Cruz' (2010) work on volunteer identities is an exception, and shows how individuals juggle work, family and volunteer roles. This study could make an important contribution to identity scholarship in an era where individuals must negotiate the "loss of organizational moorings" (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 2000, p. 14). In particular, as organisational loyalty diminishes (Sennett, 1998), the ways in which individuals manage competing identity options in non-work settings assumes crucial importance.

Recently, organisational communication scholars have renewed their interest in *occupational* identities. According to Ashcraft (2007), occupational

identity transcends particular organisations and actors, and examines how individuals integrate or contest the public image associated with their role through their experience of the specific, material jobs and tasks that they perform as an occupational member. Occupational narratives or the stories "at and about work that are not tied to a particular organization" (Lucas & Putnam, 2004, p. 277) also shed light on the occupational values, beliefs and roles that give rise to organisational hierarchies and social status.

These values, beliefs and roles can create tensions in occupational identities. Meisenbach (2008) investigated how fundraisers for nonprofit organisations managed an occupational identity that was both "revered" and "despised" (p. 260). She noted the discursive pressures to be a "professional" fundraiser that implied "privileging concern for others and the cause over concern for self" (p. 281). Occupational identity usefully shows how a collective identity derived from membership of a particular occupational group influences identity at lower levels (Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011, p. 1145), such as organisational identity and self-identity. These inter-relationships between levels of analysis were clearly articulated in Wieland's (2010) sample of research and development officers who created a self-identity position based around an "ideal self." One participant in Wieland's study explained the congruence between her self-identity and occupational identity as follows: "It's always that you want to feel . . . that you are a valuable person and that you want to do a good job and that you want to show everyone that you are . . . good" (p. 504). Analysing how and whether volunteers are driven by similar normative ideals has significant ramifications for what we might expect volunteers to accomplish through their volunteering.

This study can also offer insight into whether volunteers do in fact have an occupational identity. As the literature review on the meanings of volunteering elaborated, volunteering is understood in agentic, relational and organisational rather than occupational terms. In terms of Kashima's (2002) tripartite model of selfhood which usefully distinguishes among notions of "a self in relation to a goal [an *agentic* self]; a self in relation to another individual [a *relational* self]; and a self in relation to a group [a *collective* self]" (p. 214), we need to consider what forms of collective self volunteers can summon.

From this perspective, an individual's identity, then, is not completely distinct and separable from "social relations and organizations" (Collinson, 2003, p. 527), yet neither is it organisationally determined. If one presumes that identity positions are not stable but fleeting (C. R. Scott & Stephens, 2009), identification is somewhat transient, with the situation conferring a temporary sense of belongingness (C. R. Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998), as opposed to the deep structural identification that links an individual's self-concept firmly to organisational identity. How temporary occupational identities are forged and maintained is of great significance for studies of volunteers who must combine volunteer roles with those of other life domains, and who must negotiate competing identity demands (Rothbard & Dumas, 2006).

I explain this conceptualisation of identity by drawing upon Alvesson's (2010) analysis of identity images found in organisational research. Alvesson provides seven metaphors for how individuals develop identity: *self-doubters* never attain stability due to their insecure and precarious identity positions; *strugglers* actively overcome "a jungle of contradictions and messiness" (p. 200) to accomplish a sense of self; *surfers* exhibit radical openness to multiple

temporal identity positions; *storytellers* construct a self through the creation of identity narratives; *strategists* artfully craft a preferred identity; *stencils* simply reflect dominant discourses; and *soldiers* create an identity through belonging to various groups. In this study, individuals tend to be implicitly positioned as strugglers. I associate identity with a good dose of individual agency, suggesting that in the process of identification, the "individual . . . [is] active and guided by both meaning and goals, over which there is at least an element of control" (Alvesson, 2010, p. 197).

Individuals may experience heightened consciousness of identity issues as they deal with "specific events, encounters, transitions, experiences, surprises, as well as more constant strains" (Alvesson & Willmott, 2002, p. 626). Such a perspective presumes that an individual may choose which contextual features in a given social situation have salience (Brickson, 2000; Elsbach, 1999; C. R. Scott, et al., 1998), and that identity therefore evolves as roles change (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001). This type of research on identities and identification assigns communication a fundamental role in managing the divisions between domains of human experience (C. R. Scott, 2007). This may in fact entail constructing a "cooperative response" (Cheney, 2006, p. 258) or managing the tensions that result from conflicting role expectations (Stryker & Burke, 2000). That is, while acknowledging agency, the image of an individual as a *struggler* does not deny the impact of discursive pressures such as professionalism that volunteers, for instance, must contend with as they negotiate their identity.

The identity positions that volunteers adopt have implications for what volunteers actually do. As Alvesson, Ashcraft and Thomas (2008) noted, identity work not only attempts to answer the question "Who am I?" but "How do I act?"

Hence, particular volunteer identities may cue how relationality is enacted in volunteer contexts. The next section considers the issue of relationality.

Relationality

Relationality extends identity work by situating it as a highly reciprocal endeavour. That is, relationality examines "who we are to each other, what we might legitimately expect from each other as human beings" (Humphries & Grant, 2005, p. 44). Burgoon and Hale (1984) similarly stated that relational communication structures "how two or more people regard each other, regard their relationship, or regard themselves in within the context of the relationship" (p. 193). Neither of these broad definitions indicates how we should frame the relationship between identity and relationality. That is, particular understandings of identity may lead to specific types of relationships, yet identity may also develop through relational encounters.

Jung and Hecht's (2004) work on relational identity embraced both of these possibilities. They noted four avenues that might guide research on relational identity: (1) internalisation of others' views in the formation of personal identity; (2) construction of identity acquired through relationships with others; (3) management of various, potentially competing identities in relation to each other; and (4) the possibility that the relationship itself forms a unit of identity (pp. 266-267). These views of avenues for relationality research reflect a variety of self positions. The first dimension enables analysis of how family, friends, other volunteers, organisational representatives and those volunteered for contribute to volunteers' view of their identity. For example, if individuals accept a volunteer identity that constructs them as people who care, then it is no surprise that studies find many volunteers enjoy "forming close attachments with others"

(Elshaug & Metzer, 2001, p. 759) and "display a preference for interaction with, and the company of, other people" (p. 760) more than their paid counterparts who engage in similar occupational tasks. That is, volunteers rely on their relational networks (Tracy, Myers, & Scott, 2006) to construct a particular volunteer identity through comparisons between the in-group (volunteers) and an out-group (non-volunteers) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The fourth dimension may reinforce such an identity position based on organisational affiliation. This form of identity draws on the "impersonal bonds derived from some symbolic group or social category" (Brewer & Gardner, 2004, p. 67).

This study focuses specifically on the second dimension, by examining how the process or experience of volunteering, and the relationships volunteering involves, develop particular self-concepts and how volunteers might move between diverse subject positions. Such a dialectical view of identity (Hermans, 2001) considers how individuals develop unique combinations "of partially conflicting corporate 'we's" (Burke, 1937, p. 264). This perspective views relationships as "enacted and formed through relational members' communication processes" (Rogers, 2008, p. 335). Key to this perspective that situates communication as constitutive of relationships is the role of dialogue in constructing relationships. Dialogue [dia=through; logos = meaning] focuses on the meaning that results from encounters with others (Grudin, 1996), whereby an inter-dependent self and other co-evolve through interaction (Bradbury & Bergmann Lichtenstein, 2000). Evidently, all interaction is embedded within particular group structures and normative environments. As Hogg and Reid (2006) noted, "what people do and say communicates information *about norms*

and is itself configured *by norms* and by normative concerns" (p. 8, italics in the original).

Considerations of individual responsiveness to social cues link issues of volunteering, professionalism and communities of practice tightly together in this study. That is, if the relational self expresses itself through the creation of strong common bonds, and the collective self through commitment to a common identity (Prentice, Miller, & Lightdale, 1994), we need to consider what sorts of environments foster these different types of relationships. Although Humphries and Grant (2005) adopted a view of relationality as intrinsically non-instrumental, dialogic and intersubjectively and communicatively negotiated between relational partners, their broad definition allows us to consider the impact of professionalism on relating. Professionalism, for example, may push volunteers away from the intensely personal relationships more characteristic of the relational self towards a view of the self as a depersonalised, "interchangeable exemplar of some social category" (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987, p. 50).

This project can possibly expand the scope of research on relationality, since in general most previous studies of relationality have focused on family and intimate relationships. Organisational communication scholars have tended to apply models drawn from interpersonal communication to relationships in work contexts. For instance, Zorn (1995) examined workplace friendships, and Kramer (1993) studied changes in relationships during job transfers. Ashcraft and Kedrowicz (2002), on the other hand, examined how volunteers experienced empowerment in a nonprofit organisation and identified the importance that volunteers engaged in highly emotional labour placed on social or relational support rather than independence, self-direction and control. Studying how

volunteers experience relationality in nonprofit organisations that are increasingly prone to adopting tacit employment contracts that resemble paid work contexts could build on these insights by specifically considering their impact on volunteers' wellbeing.

The next section considers how this project's research questions could contribute to our knowledge of coordination.

Coordination

In this section, I refer to coordination as any form of interaction that guides the activity of an organisation's internal subgroups and processes (McPhee & Zaug, 2000). More specifically, coordination can be understood as organisational attempts to constrain or guide the actions of organisational members through "organizational structure . . . policies, regulations, traditions, customs, and cultures" (Lammers & Barbour, 2006, p. 356). Certainly, the shift from coordination via compulsion to participation and workplace democracy has been well documented by communication scholars (e.g., Cheney, 1999; Cheney, Zorn, Planalp, & Lair, 2008). However, the emphasis on meaningfulness may disguise more subtle forms of control under the guise of freedom and self-direction. Perceived responsibility can act as an even more powerful means of coercion, since employees or other organisational participants internalise these discourses (M. J. Papa, Auwal, & Singhal, 1997; Zoller, 2003) or adopt managerial perspectives as their own (Mumby, 2001; Stohl & Cheney, 2001; Tompkins & Cheney, 1983). The result is that growth in apparent freedom leads to tighter control over attitudes and behaviours. Empirical studies of coordination in a variety of organisational structures, contexts and settings, including non-hierarchical groups (Ballard & Seibold, 2004; Barker, 1993), inter-organisational

contexts (Miller, Scott, Stage, & Birkholt, 1995) and technological monitoring of subordinates (Wang-Bae & Eon, 2009) have backed up this tendency.

What is needed is to analyse the applicability of these studies to volunteers in nonprofit settings (e.g, Kramer, 2005). Indeed, given Smircich's (1983) assertion that the "term organization itself is a metaphor referring to the experience of collective coordination and order-liness" (p. 341), volunteer managers' difficulties in making volunteers conform to organisational standards cast doubt on whether volunteers can be coordinated at all. Since volunteers lack financial incentives, perhaps the only resource available to organisations that wish to control the "insides" (Deetz, 1995) of their members is to attempt to control and regulate their identity (Beech, 2008). Popular wisdom may suggest that volunteers are particularly liable to identify themselves with an organisation's mission. However, previous research on *volunteer* commitment tells us little about the process whereby volunteers build organisational commitment, and why certain groups feel more committed than others (Goss, 1999). Counter-intuitively, Wilson and Musick's (1999) study showed that volunteers who were less satisfied with what they had accomplished were most attached: the authors concluded they did not know what volunteers' expectations had been (p. 268). Further complications arise when we take into account fluctuating levels of commitment (Rousseau, 1998) depending not only on activities undertaken (C. R. Scott, et al., 1998), but who communication partners are (C. R. Scott & Stephens, 2009), and how settings cue or activate particular social identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

The analysis of volunteer-based communities of practice may shed light on how organisations might better coordinate volunteers by influencing shared repertoire, mutual interaction and joint enterprise than by overtly attempting to

control them (Kramer, 2005). Strategies may include the careful selection and provision of boundary objects like systems, professional guidelines and social/emotional support for difficult relational encounters. Such an approach recognises that coordinating volunteers' activity (shared repertoire) does not occur in isolation, but is impacted by organisational self-structuring, membership negotiation (joint enterprise), and institutional positioning (joint enterprise) (McPhee & Zaug, 2000; L. L. Putnam & Nicotera, 2009).

Coordination, however, requires organisational members to respond to organisational attempts to shape their practice (DiSanza & Bullis, 1999). The advantage of less coercive forms of power is that they may cause deeper, more internalised changes (Karreman & Alvesson, 2004) but strategies can also backfire because "those subject to normative practices [may] . . . subvert or resist those practices" (Beech, 2008, p. 52). Indeed, compared to overt coercion, unobtrusive control mechanisms are more likely to produce subtle patterns of resistance (Bisel, Ford, & Keyton, 2007; Larson & Tompkins, 2005; Tracy, 2000). Studies of non-traditional workers have shown that precariously situated organisational members may demonstrate a performed compliance (Jordan, 2003) without any real commitment to organisational mission. This is important for volunteer coordinators because dissatisfied volunteers do not always resist by leaving the organisation. We need to analyse how volunteers with diverse responses to discourses of professionalism and understandings of volunteering enact communities of practice. The potential for dissidence may contest popular visions of volunteers as "good" people who want to "help."

This lack of role definition and conflicting expectations may mean that identity is related to behaviours in a fluid rather than linear way (Alvesson, 2000;

Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). This study of the meanings of volunteering may offer a foundation for further research on how volunteer roles act as a resource that provides guidelines for interaction. It may also explain why volunteers may resist certain role demands (B. Simpson & Carroll, 2008) as incongruent with their identity or "self" position. A volunteer with an agentic view of self, for example, may prove difficult to coordinate (A. Wilson & Pimm, 1996) because the agentic self is volitional and goal-oriented, and has a propensity towards purposive activity and self-regulation, in order to develop and refine the self (Little, Snyder, & Wehmeyer, 2006).

Volunteers who adopt relational or collective identity positions may demonstrate a more complex relationship between identity and coordination. First, the more dialogical understandings of identification implicit in these identity positions suggest that the stories that we write about ourselves are fragile and liable to re-scripting by others (Sims, 2003). Second, dialogue does not always lead to convergence but can exhibit centrifugal as well as centripetal tendencies (Gergen, Gergen, & Barrett, 2004), contesting as well as confirming identities. Third, a malleable identity position allows conceptual space to explain why the same volunteer may demonstrate seemingly inconsistent behaviours. For example, Humphreys and Brown (2002) described four types of identification: identification with organisational identity and mission; dis-identification (negative connection between one's self-image and dominant organisational identity); neutral identification or self-perceived impartiality; and schizo-identification (identification and dis-identification with different aspects of the organisation's identity). Silva and Sias' (2010) analysis of the buffering role of groups was a clear example of how individuals could "disidentify with a portion of the

organizational identity and still maintain a sense of organizational identification"
(p. 145).

Given the difficulties that assessing volunteers' responses to organisational
attempts to manage and coordinate them might entail, researchers might perhaps
do better to consider the extent of their engagement with a particular
organisational culture (G. Adams & Markus, 2001). Social psychologists, for
example, use social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) to examine how
individuals use social categorisation to construct distinct groups and how these
groups behave, including "conflict, cooperation, social change, and social stasis"
(Hogg & Reid, 2006, p. 8). Organisational communication scholarship has much
to contribute to the study of the dynamics of identification.

The very issue of identification begs analysis of identification strategies
such as identity narratives or other organisational socialisation techniques that
persuade individuals to adopt particular identities (H. D. C. Thomas & Anderson,
1998). For example, conflictual responses to coordination attempts may lead to
further definition of identity. Those individuals who give more importance to a
collective self may assimilate to organisational expectations and thus reinforce the
alignment of their personal identity with organisational identity. Those who
disagree with organisational mandates may need to reformulate their identity as
part of a dissident out-group (Sims, 2005). Adams and Markus (2001) noted that
those individuals who do not "fit the modal pattern or who would produce
innovation get marginalized, labeled as 'bad' members, and have less influence
over the meaning and direction of . . . categories" (p. 285).

Studies of identity may indicate when and how volunteers are influential within nonprofit settings. Volunteers' ability to shape organisational identity is stronger in organisations that embed volunteers as stakeholders into their organisational community (S. G. Scott & Lane, 2000). However, some organisations may ignore volunteers' views due to their perceived low levels of power (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997) compared to other more vocal stakeholders such as government funders and publics served. The ability for volunteers to "impose their will on the organization" (S. G. Scott & Lane, 2000, p. 54) is especially limited because volunteers themselves do not form a cohesive group, similarly to geographically dispersed teams in for-profit settings (Hinds & Mortensen, 2005).

In sum, despite the importance of the nonprofit sector in western economies and societies, investigation by organisational communication scholars on volunteering and nonprofit organisations is scarce. Such studies have the potential to contribute to theoretical development and empirical work on communication issues such as identity, coordination and relationality. Using volunteering as a platform to examine the construction of identities is particularly interesting because organisational engagement is not only temporary and peripheral to major life projects and to the volunteer organisation's mission itself, but also because volunteer identities rely on quite disparate identity "anchors" (R. Thomas & Linstead, 2002, p. 81), occupying a no-man's land between paid work, leisure, charity and activism. The heterogeneity of volunteers and the volunteer experiences that they engage in provides an interesting context for considering the identification processes of diverse populations. Neither do scholars know how organisations can coordinate and control peripheral organisational members

through the provision of meaningful activity or if organisational structures such as professional demands and rules dis-empower such workers. Nor do we understand how organisational settings and volunteer identities cue how volunteers enact relationality.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on the meanings of volunteering, professionalism and wellbeing, and communities of practice. The review of the extensive literature on volunteering enumerated a number of core features of organisational volunteering that are contested by scholars who conduct volunteering research: its free nature, its personal cost, its public contribution, its ability to develop positive relationships, and its structured organisation. Although scholars' diverse and often opposing perspectives on the applicability of these attributes contribute to a more nuanced understanding of volunteering, we do not know how volunteers themselves reconcile these tensions.

The literature review also identified key attributes of professionalism drawn from paid work contexts and considered how various professionalisation processes cue the development of specific professional identities. The literature on professionalism in volunteer contexts, in contrast, usually situates professionalism as inconsistent with the volunteer role and the mission of nonprofit organisations more generally. However, due to economic recession and government downsizing, professionalisation processes within the nonprofit sector are increasingly prevalent. In light of this trend, it becomes important to assess what professionalism looks like in volunteer settings, and to consider volunteers' responses to the demands of professionalism.

The review then evaluated the usefulness of the communities of practice framework for analysing how volunteers learn, transform and contest volunteer practice. In the majority of cases, CoP scholarship positions collaboration as a component of "good" CoPs and conflict as negative. This gap in the literature begs exploration of how volunteers enact a CoP, and how both conflict and collaboration might be legitimated as appropriate forms of participation.

Taken together, the three phenomenological postulates that I outlined at the outset of this chapter are well-suited for an investigation into the meanings that volunteers give their experiences, the impact of professionalism on volunteers' wellbeing, and the processes whereby individuals learn to volunteer. Specifically, understanding the phenomenon of organisational volunteering necessitates an examination of intentional experiences, context, and consideration of individual and group differences, and justifies the research questions as follows:

RQ1: What meanings do individuals actually engaged with voluntary organisations give to their volunteering?

RQ2: How do codes of conduct construct professionalism for organisational volunteers?

RQ3: How do the codes of conduct position the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing?

RQ4: How do volunteers relate organisational notions of professionalism to their own wellbeing?

RQ 5: How do volunteers enact communities of practice?

Theory building around the meanings of volunteering, the relationships between professionalised volunteering and volunteers' wellbeing, and volunteer

communities of practice will, moreover, provide an empirical contribution to

organisational communication studies of organisational and occupational identity,

coordination, and relationality.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

As mapped out by the review of the literature in the preceding chapter, multiple perspectives have been used to examine issues of volunteering, professionalism, wellbeing and communities of practice. In each case, the methodological lens through which the phenomenon is considered has influenced the choice of terrain. The three phenomenological postulates elaborated in Chapter 1 also frame the research questions that this thesis asks and provide a convincing methodological rationale for studying the experience of volunteering within the context of organisational messages about professionalism and volunteer communities of practice.

This chapter begins by outlining a methodology in consonance with this phenomenological approach, before turning to how this methodology plays out in specific methods or "strategies of inquiry" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 578). Following an overview of some methodological options that focus on the development of meaning, I argue that a phenomenological approach is most appropriate for this project, which considers how volunteers communicatively construct the meaning of their volunteering, drawing on their experiences and interpretive schemas.

In the second portion of the chapter, I link phenomenology as a *methodology* to phenomenologic *method*. I elaborate on the importance of the phenomenological interview as one way of accessing rich descriptions of volunteering and wellbeing, and I evaluate the possibility of "bracketing" and the role of reflexivity. I also explain the importance of participant observation and organisational codes of conduct, in order to evaluate how non-intentional sources of knowledge (preconceptions, organisational messages, and broader social

discourses) structured the horizons of meaning around phenomena. Language

indicates what we value, influencing how volunteers script their activity, construct

a presentation of self, and organise and communicate such a life narrative to

others (Maxwell, 2005, p. 74). Moreover, these cultural categories not only shape

what is "tellable," noteworthy and memorable (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002), but

influence how volunteers develop meanings, negotiate organisational processes

and structure relationships. Finally, I describe the research process, which was

messy, tangled and recursive. Specifically, I explain how I selected the nonprofit

organisations for the study and collected the data. I then describe how I analysed

the data, and dealt with issues of validity.

Research Paradigms

Selecting a perspective from which to tackle any communication issue

requires the articulation of a communication theory, which is underpinned by a

specific paradigmatic position. Paradigms can be considered as "models or

patterns" that we live by; they have a "pervasive, engaged quality" (Lincoln,

1985, p. 29) that resonate with our concerns, and provide a model or way of

approaching an issue that is shared by a community of practitioners (Kuhn, 1970).

More comprehensively, I adopt Patton's definition of paradigms as

> a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking
>
> down the complexity of the real world. As such,
>
> paradigms are deeply embedded in the socialization of
>
> adherents and practitioners telling them what is important,
>
> what is legitimate, what is reasonable. (Patton, 1979, p. 9,
>
> cited by Lincoln, 1985, p. 29)

Paradigms differ greatly with respect to questions of ontology, epistemology and axiology. Ontology refers to assumptions about the nature of reality, whereas epistemology deals with the relationship between the knower and the known as well as how we know what we know. Axiology examines the role of values in the research process, which, as Creswell (2007) noted, determine which stories are told, and how the researcher positions herself in relation to these stories (p. 18). Taken together, these three paradigmatic dimensions influence the research questions that it is valid to ask, and how such research might best be carried out.

In their analysis of social science research, Burrell and Morgan's (1979) work provided a tidy heuristic device to catalogue and categorise fundamentally different approaches to qualitative research, shown in Figure 2.

Radical change

	Subjective		Objective
Subjective	Radical humanist	Radical structuralist	Objective
	Interpretivist	Functionalist	

Regulation

Figure 2: Burrell and Morgan's (1979) paradigm matrix. Reprinted from *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (p. 4) by G. Burrell and G. Morgan, 1979, London: Heinemann. Copyright 1979 by Heinemann.

Burrell and Morgan situated research according to its commitment to maintaining the status quo (regulation) or to transforming the social environment (radical change), and whether research considers the external world "out there" to

be objectively distinct from the knower with observable patterns and regularity or to be constructed by the knower(s) (objective or subjective perspective, respectively).

Deetz (1996) has critiqued Burrell and Morgan's (1979) framework, and its "capacity to enact the lines of distinction" (Deetz, 1996, p.192) among research traditions. His four sector framework, shown in Figure Three, goes further than merely attaching new labels to existing categories. Rather, research styles are arrayed along an open continuum, in order to forestall projects being boxed in by "an overly constrained view of the nature of the theory building process itself" (Gioia & Pitre, 1990, p. 584).

Dissensus

	Dialogic studies Post modern, deconstructionist	Critical studies Late modern, reformist	
Local / Emergent			**Elite / A priori**
	Interpretive studies Premodern, traditional	Normative studies Modern, progressive	

Consensus
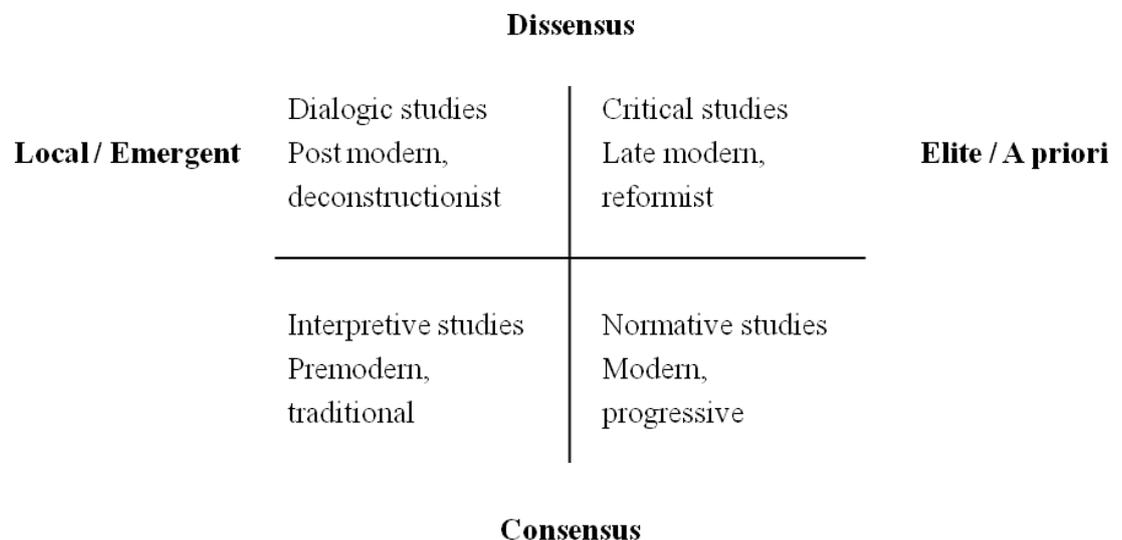
Figure 3: Deetz' (1996) reworking of Burrell and Morgan's paradigm framework. Reprinted with permission from S. Deetz, "Describing Differences in Approaches to Organization Science: Rethinking Burrell and Morgan and their Legacy," *Organization Science*, volume 7, number 2, p. 198. Copyright 1996 by Institute for Operations Research and Management Sciences, 7240 Parkway Drive, Suite 300, Hanover, Maryland 21076, United States of America.

Deetz (1996) asserted that Burrell and Morgan's (1979) divisions simply replicated centuries-old dichotomies that legitimate difference in a world of "separate but equal pluralism" (p. 191). Deetz' critique of the opposition of subjective and objective perspectives is relevant here, as such a split presumes a "psychological distinction between an interior [read, subjective] and exterior [read, objective] world" (p. 193). This dualism ignores the many value judgements made about what constitutes a social fact, and the projection of a priori category decisions onto data, in quantitative, hence "objective," research programmes. To overcome this artificial classification, Deetz proposed more "interesting" criteria for assessing the principles underpinning research: whether pre-given concepts and definitions frame the data, or whether concepts are fluid and processual. The role of the researcher as either expert in concept application, or as co-researcher who assists in concept formation, is complemented by Deetz' other dimension: the relationship of research practice with the wider community. That is, in lieu of a change-regulation split that implies alignment or dissatisfaction with a coherent, dominant group, Deetz suggested research might either normalise a discourse of order (consensus) or sensitise readers to the fragmentation in the entity under study (dissensus).

The boundaries are fluid, and Deetz (1996) encouraged researchers to borrow from the various resources on offer, because "people and events exceed categories and classifications" (p.196), and because poaching from other traditions can create fresh, unique insights. In fact, Deetz argued that consistency is less problematic than how a researcher manages "the tension and whether the two conceptual resources provide an interesting analysis," concluding "I should

not have to . . . perform group membership rituals of purification" (p. 200) based on someone else's categorisation.

This project responds to Deetz' (1996) call to re-engineer traditional research boundaries, since phenomenological perspectives in general challenge Burrell and Morgan's (1979) distinction between subjective and objective dimensions. Specifically, the hybrid phenomenological perspective I have adopted does not fit within either the positivist or the interpretive camp. Husserl was not using Burrell and Morgan's terms when he proclaimed phenomenology to be the true "positivism." Positivistic inquiry as envisaged by Burrell and Morgan led to research programmes that assumed the following principles (Guba, 1985, p. 87):

- Fragmentation of reality into independent "bits" that can be studied intensively in order to arrive at predictions

- Goal of inquiry is the search for context-independent generalisations

- Reliance on causality to explain phenomena

- Presumption of distance between the subject and object of research

- Research programmes expected to provide value-free inquiry.

Husserlian phenomenology, on the other hand, fits none of these descriptors. First, it aims to elaborate an entire experience, and not just part of it. As noted in Chapter 1, context forms an important part of the analysis insofar as context determines the horizons of meaning. In phenomenologically-based research projects, the subject and object of research can be the same person, and when the researcher conducts interviews to ascertain others' first-hand, subjective living through of a particular experience, rapport must be established if the researcher is to vicariously understand the experience in all its richness. Distance would be a

hindrance. Finally, phenomenological approaches often study emotions and values as they are manifest in lived experience.

However, phenomenological approaches do not align entirely with interpretivist perspectives either. As developed in Chapter 1, Heideggerian phenomenologists adopt a more interpretive approach, while Husserlian scholars tend to question what lies at the basis of interpretation. In this next sub-section, I argue that irrespective of the approach chosen, interpretivism is a useful methodology for analysing contextual influences on the development of meaning. I begin by discussing the main features of interpretivism. I then suggest that my hybrid phenomenological approach is a response to scholarship that wants to link the interpreted with the non-interpreted world.

Interpretivism

Paradigm shifts not only indicate what research is valid and valuable, but cause fundamental methodological changes in how one decides what is knowable. The manner in which knowledge is systematised can be distinct from substantive disciplinary shifts. The major paradigmatic avalanche within the social sciences has been the growing intellectual legitimacy (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) of the "interpretive turn" in lieu of over-reliance on positivistic inquiry (Corman & Poole, 2000). Here, I describe the main tenets of interpretivism and the assumptions about communication embedded in this perspective.

An interpretive approach affords two key advantages. First, interpretivism acknowledges that values form an integral part of research (Lincoln & Guba, 1993), as they influence the questions asked, the way the problem is framed, bounded or focused as well as the how the research is actually carried out (Guba,

1985, p. 85). Second, interpretivism emphasises the importance of studying phenomena in a natural setting. Challenges to the dominant functionalist paradigm (L. L. Putnam, 1983) were initiated by researchers who realised that many meanings and interpretations were often developed in-house by researchers co-constructively with participants (Gioia & Pitre, 1990).

Naturalistic settings encourage research that focuses attention on how participants construe the meaning of social actions, as opposed to research that positions social phenomena as external to social actors. That is, rather than reproducing the researcher's worldview, research concepts are *developed with* instead of being *applied to* organisational members (Deetz, 1996, p.195). The result is a research agenda that can accommodate emergent categories, subjective experience, and an emphasis on process (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2000).

Interpretivism has adopted a view of human communication (Fisher, 1978) based on an interpretive-symbolic approach (Krone, Jablin, & Putnam, 1987) that posits that communication is fluid and constructive (Eisenberg & Riley, 1988). That is, it rejects an understanding of communication as a "tangible substance that flows upward, downward, and laterally within [a] container" (L. L. Putnam, 1983, p. 39) with mechanistic characteristics (Axley, 1984). I posit, however, that privileging the creative role of communication does not ipso facto rule out any connection to the "external" world.

In fact, qualitative researchers' ability to unpack key tensions in the processes that they study leads naturally to ontological questions about the non-interpreted world. An ontology that acknowledges the anteriority of being to knowledge assumes that the mind can formally replicate the structural relations

and patterns that it notices in the actual referents surrounding it. Additionally, although mistakes may be made in terms of the subsequent judgements regarding the application of a concept, this does not render the actual event, artefact or practice itself any less real. In fact, ascertaining adequate conceptual breadth may be difficult in the case of complex concepts. The ability to identify *misrepresentation* in terms of errors of division or composition (Llano, 2001) implies that representation is not the only "reality" there is. Moreover, groups and individuals not involved in the "collective imposition of function on entities that cannot perform those functions without that imposition" (Searle, 1996, p. 41) are able to critique any such sense-making activity.

In his analysis of modern epistemology, Greco (1995) outlined three moments of "knowing" that he argued are independent of any particular ontological stance:

1. Un-interpreted *qualia* of experience (sensations characterised as lacking in conceptual content)

2. Interpreted *experience*

3. *Beliefs* about objects in the world

The first stage presupposes the existence of external realities (*qualia* or the objects of knowledge), and mental-psychological reality insofar as the knower can perceive sense data. Interpretivism's emphasis on why certain meanings are attributed to particular experiences at the second level is in no way exclusive. Within the discipline of organisational communication, Cheney (2000) noted that a focus on interpretation does not foreclose the existence of a pre- or non-interpreted world. In fact, he argued that linking the two is one of the key

challenges facing interpretive scholarship, and his tentative call to arms deserves to be quoted in full:

> To what extent, if at all, should research about organizational communication try to "stand outside" the realm of interpretation? Especially, how should we understand the roles of materiality, "constants" and "nonnegotiables" in the world of work, business and organizations? Speaking generally, I would say that interpretive organizational communication scholarship has suffered somewhat from a case of "symbol worship," occasionally to the point of nearly denying "there's anything else out there" (Cheney & Bullis, 1999).
>
> (Cheney, 2000, p.44)

I attempt with my phenomenological approach to describe the elements that form the content of a particular experience (volunteering) as well as the variety of contexts within which inter-dependent agents enact and live out this experience, drawing on diverse resources for meaning-making.

When applied to organisational research, this approach which integrates structure and agency charts a course between the "organisation as becoming" and the "organisation as object" theorists. In the first instance, it contests normalised views of organisations as apparently stable, solid objects. Organisations are not monolithic structures immune to the ill-concerted, overlapping attempts of organisational actors to mould them. Scholars who study group communication and socialisation attest to the power of organisational conclaves to construct social

realities. Weick (1983), for example, suggested that although "there is pre-existing reality at the core of most organisational events," these "small grains of truth . . . are enlarged into constructions by interdependent actions" (p. 18). He gives the example of competitive workers who by their thirst for competition galvanise others, even cooperative people, into adopting a competitive posture. The "organisation" becomes an analytical heuristic for an on-going reconfiguration of "groups loosely or tightly coupled vis-à-vis overlapping tasks, shared or independent goals, frequent interactions and the like" (Seibold, 1998, p. 162).

Analysis of the intersubjective development of meaning is important in this project. An interpretive-symbolic perspective on communication highlights the process of creating shared meanings, through role-taking, identification, and the impact of organisational cultures on interpretation of others' words and actions. In their analysis of the historical development and potential evolution of organisational communication as a discipline in the mid 1980s, Putnam and Cheney (1995) observed the growth of an "organisational culture" perspective, where "culture refers to a social unit's collective sense of . . . what it means to be a member of a group, and how a member ought to act" (p. 20), with a primary role attributed to communication in creating these intersubjective common understandings.

On the other hand, human agency is not totally unconstrained in its creative ability. Without any boundaries for interpreting organisational events, it would be difficult to imagine how micro-level "conversational performances" (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p.13) could constitute a complex, multi-textured but recognisable organisational form. This research project tends towards developing

further Boden's (1994) view of organisations as "grounded in action, anchored in social practices and discursive forms" (Fairhurst & Putnam, 2004, p. 6), where social practices by agents include use of salient experiences and knowledge about existing organisational rationalities and the selection by agents of relevant features to meet given temporal and spatial demands of organising. In sum, interpretivism acknowledges the importance of both structure and agency as an influence on meaning-making.

Phenomenological analysis of intentional experiences links agentic subjects with social realities. At this juncture, it is helpful to briefly situate phenomenology within the gamut of other approaches that rigorously analyse how meanings develop, in order to justify its relevance as a method. In the next section, I sketch out the main features of hermeneutics, heuristics and grounded theory in a comparative way (see Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenology vis-à-vis Other Methodological Approaches Focused on Meaning

As I previewed in the introductory chapter, Husserlian phenomenology aims to elucidate the essence of things, as experienced by subjects who direct or orient themselves to objects *in an intentional way*. Rather than naïve realism, intense self-reflection and intuition enable the researcher to move beyond superficial understandings, in order "to light, to place in brightness, to show itself in itself, the totality of what lies before us in the light of day" (Heidegger, 1977, cited in Moustakas, 1994, p. 26).

Hermeneutics takes conscious experience as a text, and adds an *historical perspective* in order to understand the context. The process of interpretation involves analysis of the parts illuminated by their relationship to the whole. This

has the advantage of enabling the researcher to "[read] a text so that the intention and meaning behind appearances are fully understood" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 9). Reflection and interpretation are brought to the fore so that pre-judgements are transformed and refined as new understanding arises (Gadamer, 1976). However, hermeneutical methodology questions whether it is possible ever to recover the original meaning of a text due to lack of shared understanding of cultural milieux.

This project could certainly have used a hermeneutical methodology to track changes in *historical* understandings of volunteering. However, the attribution of agency, freedom and choice as characteristic features of volunteering rendered the intentionality of phenomenology more appropriate. Additionally, phenomenology aims to peel away the contextual specifics so important to hermeneutics, in order to "characterize the essence of a phenomenon" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 34). Although these essential aspects will be instantiated uniquely for each individual, phenomenology aims to inductively describe "how intentional activity creates meaning" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 34) for multiple social actors.

Heuristics, on the other hand, uses a deeply *biographical* process where the researcher attempts to depict the experiences of participants, using whatever means possible. In addition to participants' stories, one may use diaries, poems, artwork, journals and diaries; the resulting synthesis aims to remain true to the original stories, with no intention of generalising beyond the individual. A hermeneutical approach, on the other hand, considers the cultural, economic, and political context underlying the experiences, and Husserlian phenomenology aims to uncover both the invariant constituents of the phenomenon (the 'what' of the experience) and contexts that account for the 'how' of the experience. Given the

patchwork nature of the nonprofit sector (Van Til, 2000), developing shared characteristics that transcend individual experiences could be helpful for the sector as a whole.

Grounded theory is an interpretive theory that focuses on theory generation, derived from and firmly "grounded" in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Despite its many variants (Charmaz, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1992), its basic premise is that "the first requirement of social science is fidelity to the phenomena under study, not to any set of methodological principles" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1995, cited in Goulding, 2002, p. 16). This avoids the pitfalls of becoming blinded by abstract theories that do not fit the data, or a paucity of theoretical development in empirical quantitative studies that attempt to deductively test and verify hypotheses (Goulding, 2002). Glaser and Strauss eventually diverged in their application of the grounded theory method. Glaser encouraged researchers to continually ask of the data, "What do we have here?" (Stern, 1994), while Strauss and Corbin (1990) used extensive coding to generate generalisations beyond the substantive context of the research. Glaser (1992) condemned Strauss for "forcing" data rather than allowing it to "emerge."

In some respects, some forms of phenomenological inquiry have much in common with grounded theories, yet their aims are distinct. The hybrid phenomenological perspective used in this project aims to generate a rich, detailed *description* of the essence of volunteering (Baker, West, & Stern, 1992) in light of participants' intentional experiences, (Holloway & Todres, 2003) as well as the context within which the experience of volunteering occurs. Grounded theories, in contrast, aim to generate *theory* grounded in the data from the field by developing relationships between categories of data (Creswell et al., 2007; McLeod, 2011).

This section of the chapter has examined the paradigm options available to qualitative researchers. I propose that phenomenological approaches enable a focus on how individuals develop meanings drawing on both experience and context. I explain the hybrid phenomenological method in more detail in the following section.

Phenomenological Method

Caelli (2001) remarked that in the phenomenological literature, no method enjoys preference over another, as phenomenology is a philosophy more than a methodology in the strict sense. Such choice was simultaneously liberating and confusing. In this section, I describe the choices that I made in constructing a hybrid phenomenological method, which included interviews with volunteers and organisational volunteer coordinators, as well as participant observation and collection and analysis of organisational texts.

The Phenomenological Interview

I decided that interviews would facilitate my engagement with others' worldviews or perspectives, in order to attend to feelings, thoughts, intentions, previous experiences, participant interpretations and ways of meaning-making that were simply unobservable by any other means (Patton, 2002). Through the interviews, I aimed to garner rich descriptions of transformative lived experiences (Iaquinta & Larrabee, 2004), as "exemplars" or "paradigm cases" (Benner, 1984). Hence, interview questions probed meaning ("What is the meaning of . . . ?") and analogy ("What is it like to experience . . . ?") (Ray, 1994, p. 128). The complete interview protocol is in Appendix A.

Using interviews to understand the sense-making process can be perilous if one assumes that the interview is mere transmission of information from participant to researcher. Bracketing may seem to resonate with positivist research goals that eschew "contamination" of the data by the researcher-participant relationship, and that strive to ensure that interventions are replicable (LeVasseur, 2003) and that subjects, "like soldiers, are replaceable" (van Manen, 1990, p.7). Phenomenologic method must acknowledge that dialogue with one's participants both reinforces intersubjectively held meanings, and creates new understandings about the experiences being reflected on, in a cycle of endogenous reflexivity (Adkins, 2003). However, recognising the collaborative nature of phenomenological description may add to its theoretical rigour. Conversations may uncover the "dialectic between this momentary new impression and our old understandings" (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 419).

An important component of researcher reflexivity in conversations with participants must be the acknowledgement that we are living in an "interview society" (Atkinson & Silverman, 1997). The interview is an all-pervasive feature of modern life across multiple settings: the chatroom, medical clinic, job interview, restorying through counselling, and business market research (Fontana & Frey, 2005) amongst other manifestations. Within this context, I attempted to move beyond a "stimulus-response" interview model, in which the respondent "[offers] information from his or her personal cache of experiential knowledge" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 3), and whose questions are treated as requests for clarification. The interviewer, on the other hand, "[manages] the encounter" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002, p. 3) and controls the agenda. This perspective transforms the interview into a modern panopticon, an instrument of

governmentality as well as democratisation, since it offers a window onto another's thoughts, feelings, opinions and practices.

Hence, this research project does not represent participants as vessels, repositories, treasure troves of uncontaminated contents, or stores of knowledge that the interviewer can mine to extract rich data for his or her own purposes (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Both the self [the researcher] and the other [the participant] were vital for the act of reflection needed to grasp how meaning is created through the very act of experiencing a particular noema. Schutz (1970), building on Husserl's insights about the noetic-noematic structure of experience, insisted that the meaning of a moment cannot stand out as a "discrete item from the background of one's other experiences" (p. 67). Indeed, he suggested that we can know another in the vivid present, but we know and understand ourselves through a reflective turning to the past.

Hence, each interview was a dialogic, collaborative task. The researcher was not present to unleash or release latent data, but actively contributed to which data emerged. For instance, one participant exclaimed in mock dismay, "Oh, you're going to ask me all sorts of things I've never even thought of, aren't you!" The style of the interview, the questions asked and the degree of relationship established impacted on the sharing of "those moments that leave marks on people's lives [and] have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person" (Denzin, 1989a, p. 15, cited in Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 709). Another participant commented at the end of the interview, "You've asked more than what I *thought* you were going to ask."

This concept of the interview as an interactional project between active subjects fits well with a phenomenological perspective. Applying the idea of conscious intentionality to the actual interview process implies that it was the participant who decided how to establish connectivity with the interviewer in that present moment in a new and fresh way. In this way, one "performs" or "gives form" to the interview. Performance is the result of an actor who reveals him or herself through specific experiences and feelings that others can relate to: the very fact of performing demands an audience. Etymologically, the term audience derives from *audire* (to listen). This act of listening establishes a rapport with the actor that a spectator, who objectifies the actor by adopting a particular perspective, cannot attain (Byrnes, 2007, October).

The resultant collapse of space between the self and the other is best reflected by the title of Barnett's (1996) document on volunteering in New Zealand: *Aroha, Poha, Tikanga*, where *aroha*, often loosely translated as "love" in English, refers to the sharing of breath, and *tikanga* as "treasure" – sharing what is truly of value in order to arrive at a just outcome (*poha*) for both researcher and participant. Listening to the recordings of the first interviews, I was initially embarrassed at how obviously *involved* I was in the conversation, until I realised, as did Oakley (1981), that "there is no intimacy without reciprocity" (p. 49). Kvale's (1996) description of the interchange between researcher and participants as "inter-Views" is pertinent here. This goes beyond Weiss' (1994) insistence on a "working research partnership" (p. 119), in place of a "pseudo-conversation" (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

To facilitate the co-construction of knowledge through interviews, bracketing of preconceptions and assumptions (Gearing, 2004) is needed.

Bracketing aims to suspend the researcher's prior knowledge "so that fresh impressions could be formed without the interference of these interpretive influences" (LeVasseur, 2003, p.409). The next section considers how I attempted this challenging task.

Phenomenological Bracketing by the Researcher

The phenomenological researcher must admit the difficulty of abandoning one's theoretical conceptions (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990), even briefly. One way of overcoming this is to conceptualise theory as part of conscious experience (Ray, 1994, p. 134). Another is the explicit acknowledgement of one's suppositions, since "history, definition and larger environmental factors" (Gearing, 2004, p. 1434) may cloud understanding of the phenomena itself. Eidetic reduction, or the laying aside of preconceptions, is generally achieved by the identification and articulation of assumptions (Cohen & Omery, 1994) prior to data collection and analysis.

Bracketing is therefore very different from grounded theory's blank slate approach, as indicated by Husserl's choice of the Greek term *epoche* for the process of bracketing. *Epoche* literally means "to abstain" or "to stay away from." It may be impossible to abandon one's cultural heritage, upbringing, life experiences and pet theories, but it is certainly possible to openly acknowledge biases and one's subject position. This type of researcher reflexivity facilitates the researcher's becoming transparent to herself and readers, and enables the researcher to "break free from this bondage to people and things" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 87). This form of *epoche* is assisted by extensive researcher memo-ing that tracks the process of reflection and change (Maxwell, 2005).

Hence, in this project *bracketing* involved exploration of my own personal experiences as a volunteer, as these have shaped what volunteering means for me, as developed in the Introduction. Given Kvale's (1996) description of conversation as a "wandering together with" (p. 4), it is even more important to acknowledge with Rubin (1976) that "no matter how far we travel, we can never leave our roots behind" (p. 13). If this undoubtedly occurs during the interview process, where we strain to "[hear] the meaning" (H. J. Rubin & Rubin, 1995) of the data, the manner in which we "discern meaningful patterns within thick description" (Warren, 2002, p. 87) is influenced by our personal biography. The researcher is also an active sense-maker (J. M. Johnson, 2002), and it is hardly a surprise that we tend to hear what we share in terms of lived cultural experiences.

However, returning to the metaphor of interview as performance, at times a performance is so artful that members of an audience forget where they are, and it is only as the curtain falls that they begin to breathe again, and become fully self aware. This possibility is enhanced by the sharing of narratives of experience, since "storytelling promotes empathy across different social locations" (Riessmann, 2002, p. 696). The presence of the researcher in the data will be discussed in the data analysis chapters by distinguishing between "tales of the field" or substantive data, and "tales from the field," where the latter evaluates the process of the interview, with the help of reflexive notes on how narratives were collated and constructed (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). This transparency and revelation of the researcher's values and perspective does clarify "the configuration of the relation between . . . knower and known, which allows certain subjects to speak" (Adkins, 2003, p. 332).

Phenomenological Bracketing by Participants

The second challenge of bracketing is that although the researcher may attempt to avoid theoretical interference by outdated or less useful explanations, it is doubtful that participants do so (Caelli, 2001; Salsberry, 1989) in their "remembered telling" (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 416). Boyd (1989) contested this assertion by stating that one can distinguish between the original perception or essence of an experience, and the subsequent interpretation (Ricoeur, 1981) or frame we allot to it: she asserted that the reflective frame we bring to phenomena is an "interpretive, storied account subject to memory, which can be altered by subsequent events" (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 416). This research project encouraged this form of meta-cognition, by asking participants to discuss the ways in which their reasons for volunteering had changed over time.

Part of the research interview must involve teasing out descriptions of experiences that form the basis of interpretations. The very act of reflection inherent in an interview situation incites interpretation, as Polkinghorne (1989) summed up in his chapter outlining phenomenological research methods:

> The act of reflecting . . . effects a change in awareness.
> The initial nonreflective, direct engagement with the flow
> of experience (the object of study) is replaced by the self's
> relocation to a point of observation that is removed from
> the experience . . . the verbal report is not a duplication [or
> mirror] . . . ; it is a culturally conventional system of signs
> that indicates or points towards the pre-reflective reality.
> (p. 46)

However, if well done, a phenomenological interview may encourage "referential reflexivity" (Adkins, 2003) whereby participant and researcher together examine the point of contact between the reflexivity of the actors in the lifeworld under study, and the reflexivity of the researcher. At the end of the interview, six participants specifically mentioned that their own thinking about and awareness of volunteering had been altered through the interview process.

A Phenomenological Focus on Context

My hybrid phenomenological perspective's focus on context enriches how we might conceptualise the phenomenon of volunteering. In line with the second phenomenological postulate that specified that we use both experience and context to understand a phenomenon, Husserl was adamant that "the object of an act is underdetermined by what reaches our senses" (Follesdal, 1998, p. 579). While the first type of intuition is perception, more importantly follows "essential insight" or *wesensschau* that structures the initial perception of consciousness, depending on "our previous experiences, the whole setting of our present experiences and a number of other factors" (Follesdal, 1998, p. 578). A thorough examination of how the setting is constructed to persuade volunteers and potential volunteers to view volunteering in specific ways is hence an important aspect of this thesis, which acknowledges with Cheney (2000) the "profound awareness of the power of labeling in the creation of our world though not a form of linguistic nominalism that suggests that all or most things do not really exist until they are named" (p. 23).

This linguistic ability to highlight some features while downplaying others is well captured by Deetz' (2003) metaphor of the "I/eye" that determines the type of "relationship between constitutive activities and the 'stuff' being constituted"

(p. 422). While the "I" engages in direct experience, the "eye" intentionally absorbs vicarious experiences about suitable contexts within which experiences usually occur. Taylor, Flanagin, Cheney and Seibold (2001) described the process as follows: organisational members "[emphasise] the phenomena to which they pay attention" (p. 100), which leads to the creation of particular environments. They "then select from among many possible interpretations of the enacted environment . . . attaining a degree of collective sense-making . . . members retain the interpretations that seem to work for them" (p. 100). That is, we shuttle between considering our experiences as both particular and "'in principle,' as the instance of a type" (Kohak, 1978, p. 14).

The consideration of language patterns at the individual, organisational and societal levels may be one way of combining phenomenological analysis with macro-level structural influences (Silverman, 1985). Geertz (1983) affirmed that specific institutional frameworks and cultural assumptions influence the interpretive parameters that give rise to patterns of collective representations. Holstein and Gubrium (1998) also maintained that existing structures and organisational contexts may colour "individual biography . . . interpersonal relations" (p. 148) and interactions. This may be the case for volunteers as they engage with clients, other volunteers or volunteer coordinators, or during the research interview. This thesis explicitly examines the role played by organisational codes of conduct, other volunteers, and the research process itself on how participants reflected on and understood their volunteer experience.

The Research Process

In this section, I detail how I gained access to organisations and participants in the study, and what I actually did once fully immersed in data collection. I conclude with a discussion of data analysis.

Before I began to collect data, I needed to receive approval from the Ethics Committee at the Waikato Management School. In my initial application, I had not anticipated that my interview questions would pose evident risks or harm to the participants. "Volunteering" was not classified as a risky topic or tagged with an ethical red flag. I had also indicated that participants' responses to my questions were more likely to be positive than negative as questions were framed around wellbeing. After consultation with the Ethics Committee representative, I realised that the questions might raise some sensitive issues as they probed how experiences of volunteering contributed to participants' personal identity. My amended Ethics Approval documentation made reference to the confidentiality procedures the research project would use and participants' ability to control what data would be used for this project. In this way, the study was participatory in nature in that participants were able to have an active voice in the study, were able to clarify and amend the data they had contributed, and were aware of the ways in which the research would be used to contribute to knowledge about volunteers in a number of contexts. The full ethics approval is in Appendix C.

Data Sources

I decided to interview participants from three organisations to discover how the organisation that they volunteered for shaped their interpretations. As Weick (1987) pointed out, specific "structures form when communication uncovers . . . shared social characteristics, or shared values that people want to

preserve and expand" (pp. 97-98). The organisational setting allowed the project to probe into the meaning *individuals* attached to the volunteer experience, as well as the influence their membership in particular organisational *groups* had on how they constructed meaning, as meanings are influenced by social and historical nuances (Creswell, 2007). It also permitted research to occur in a naturalistic setting. However, the organisational context did not form a "case" in the strict sense: although the setting represented a bounded system (Stake, 2005) and interviews and document analysis occurred, my observations were not extensive (Yin, 2003).

Initially, I selected three organisations that differed in their geographic reach, size, scope of service and funding source: Refugee Services, the New Zealand Plunket Society and the Waikato Hospital. Refugee Services provides a comprehensive resettlement programme for newly arrived refugees. The Plunket Society is a non-governmental organisation that offers free clinical advice to families and their children aged from birth to five. Volunteers govern the organisation and direct its fundraising efforts. Waikato Hospital is New Zealand's largest hospital. The directing district health board has experienced enormous pressure to meet targeted outcomes within budget constraints.

Volunteer coordinators at each organisation were open to helping me locate willing volunteers. However, access to participants was not as easy as I had first thought. Willingness to allow research did not equate to support to enlist potential participants. Refugee Services has a small base of volunteer teams that were in the midst of a new intake of Colombian refugees at the start of the data collection process. The refugees' imminent arrival required hours of volunteers' time to set up a house and initiate a relationship with a refugee family. Months of

waiting ensued, without a single participant in sight. The two Refugee Services volunteer coordinators suggested I contact the branches in Wellington, in order to find some participants. I interviewed seven volunteers from Wellington, and eight from Hamilton. On reflection, having a second location provided the additional advantage of distinguishing the impact of organisational culture (training, support, and expectations) from the geographical influence of a particular site. The Hamilton Plunket branch also had very limited numbers of volunteers, which is one of the main challenges the local committee faces. The local president suggested incorporating rural volunteers since this would increase the number of participants, and provide a completely different picture from Hamilton's urban perspective.

Finally, despite support from the Waikato Hospital volunteer coordinator, the several hundred volunteers at the hospital were reluctant to participate in a research project. All the volunteers had recently participated in a quantitative study designed to elicit a snapshot of their characteristics. As access was problematic, I sought another organisation from the health sector that combined both paid staff and volunteers. St John Ambulance was selected due to the number of volunteers in the Midland Region of New Zealand's North Island, and the extensive organisational resources volunteers may dip into: a long organisational history and systematic training. What I did not foresee was that even though volunteer numbers look large on paper, St John Ambulance volunteers, like those of the other two organisations, are geographically dispersed into smaller functional units. Appendix D provides brief organisational histories.

The number of volunteers to be interviewed was not pre-determined. Previous phenomenological studies have ranged from three to 25 or 30 in-depth

interviews (Polkinghorne, 1989). Ten volunteers from each organisation were tentatively proposed. Thirty participants is a large number for a phenomenological study. However, observing the phenomenon in multiple instances can clarify meaning, as a form of qualitative triangulation (Flick, 1992; Stake, 1998). I decided to continue interviews until theoretical saturation occurred; that is, at the point where no new data "emerge[s] relevant to particular categories . . . categories have conceptual density and all variations in categories can be explained" (McCann & Clark, 2003, p. 11). Hence, I interviewed fifteen volunteers from each organisation.

Participants were selected because they were engaged in "volunteering," and were thus considered able to "give a full, sensitive description of the phenomena" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 47). Volunteers with varying lengths of engagement with volunteering and both positive and negative perceptions were purposely sought. Diversity was actively aimed for, as the goal of the research is to describe the essential structure of voluntary experience and not to "describe the characteristics of the group who have had the experience" (Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 48).

In view of the organisational sites under study, volunteer "selection" became a misnomer. Total numbers of Refugee Services and Plunket volunteers were so small, that every willing volunteer and whomever they could recommend through snowball sampling became a potential participant. I interviewed rural as well as urban volunteers, those with extensive experience and those who had only recently become involved, across a range of ages and professions. Three advantages of acting this way became apparent. First, this dissertation did not aim to analyse the "type" of person who volunteers per se, a particular organisation, or

even a particular programme, but to examine how volunteers made sense of their volunteering, and hence understood the relationships among volunteering, professionalism and wellbeing in certain ways. Second, in phenomenological research a heterogeneous sample is useful, because the main focus involves describing a "theme song [that emerges] from all the scattered noise" (Patton, 2002, p. 235). Faced with obvious individual differences, commonalities are even more outstanding in analysing "the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon" (p. 235). Third, the geographical spread is typical in New Zealand, since we are a small nation that has to deal with non-standard, dispersed workforces. Studying a broad range of people under one organisational umbrella supports interpretations of the impact of organisational setting, as it is more possible to distinguish between organisational influence and geographical location.

Data Collection

Before entering the "field," I developed an interview protocol to guide the conversation about the meanings participants give to their volunteering. I intended the interview to be semi-structured, including some theme-oriented questions that could elicit descriptions of instances of the phenomenon of volunteering (Kvale, 1996) but with sufficient flexibility to pursue other avenues as needed. The first group of questions aimed at eliciting what the experience of volunteering meant to participants through descriptions of particularly noteworthy moments because they were surprising or outstanding in some way. The vividness of the experience required intense reflection. The questions on wellbeing presumed that particular ways of understanding volunteering would frame the relationship with wellbeing

in some way. Other questions touched on the influences of significant others, the organisation and media in creating understandings of volunteering.

The interviews, which were digitally recorded, usually lasted between one and one and a half hours, although one took nearly three. Forty-three interviews were done in person. I conducted one by telephone due to physical distance. I engaged with the fifteenth participant from Refugee Services via email since she is currently volunteering full-time on a Pacific Island, and does not even have regular telephone access. In general I met participants at home or at work. It was a privilege to be invited into living rooms and office spaces, and to meet family members and colleagues. When I conducted interviews in participants' homes, I was invariably showered by tokens of hospitality: cups of tea, coffee, and even glasses of wine. On two occasions, we ate the chocolates I had brought to thank the participant for sharing her time after work with me, and the interview transcript contained a fair amount of chocolate-induced mumbling. I noticed that participants were less formal when at "home" although some participants expressed concern about their housekeeping. The toddlers and babies of participants who volunteered for Plunket also proved to be a challenge to the research process. One two year old decided the digital recording device looked more interesting than his toys, and had younger, faster reflexes than his mother and I, crushing the sensitive device in his fist before we could lift it out of reach.

Office interviews were perhaps less hazardous, but brought back memories of job interviews. Moreover, colleagues and clients often burst in at most inopportune times, when participants were sharing very personal concerns, or commenting on their place of work, or the volunteer organisation. The other difficulty with workplace interviews was that generally they occurred at lunch

time, and I felt worried that the interview extended far beyond the prescribed one hour break.

Three interviews were conducted on the premises of the volunteer organisation. One Plunket volunteer and I were shunted from room to room by paid staff, who wanted to use private spaces to attend to their clients' needs. I did only one interview at an ambulance station, which lasted seven and a half minutes before the pager sounded and the participant abandoned me to attend a medical emergency. We re-scheduled the rest of the interview – several weeks later.

Some interview settings were less than idyllic. One participant did not want to meet me at home or work, and we almost froze to death sitting on a hill overlooking Hamilton's lake. The interview I did in the café on the mezzanine floor of Wellington's public library is also memorable. After an hour and a half, we realised with a shock that the lights had dimmed considerably and our conversation was interrupted by the security guard, who had unwittingly locked us inside. We completed the interview on the pavement, despite the noisy traffic.

Afterwards, each audio-taped interview was first transcribed verbatim, to ensure accuracy. Three interviews were not taped. I emailed or posted the interview transcript back to each participant to enable them to add, delete, or clarify points we had discussed, since as Alvesson and Deetz (2000) noted, particular words, metaphors and types of questions can trigger specific associations and lines of thought that take each interview in unexpected directions, while other layers of meaning may remain dormant and untapped.

The ability to review what was said may in fact overcome the constrictions placed on the participant who is driven by the demands of the social context of the

interview. Although impression management, language games and social performance certainly can occur (Goffman, 1959), the range of interview data and intensity of the interview itself calls into question the suggestion that interviews are characterised by deterministic, slavish script-following or manipulating behaviours.

In between interviews and transcription, I did some purposive participant observation. This occurred because several opportunities came my way as I negotiated organisational access and access to participants. For instance, I attended two Plunket meetings (one at branch level and one at Area level) to explain my research project and purpose, and to recruit participants. I observed a St John training session one Monday night for the same reason.

These observations were a means to ensure bracketing of my previous knowledge about the organisations in my study. For example, a close family member had worked as a Plunket nurse for over a decade. I had briefly visited many Plunket rooms in the 1980s and at times I had been privy to paid staff venting about volunteers. I worried that my previous knowledge of Plunket would interfere with my ability to listen to what was being said now. On the other hand, my complete lack of knowledge about ambulance work meant that all of my interpretive frameworks had been supplied by the media. I have never been seriously ill, and I am terrified by blood and needles. I decided that spending a dayshift as an observer on a Hamilton ambulance would ensure that I was able to grasp the concepts that ambulance volunteers discussed in interviews, rather than spend emotional energy trying to cover up my reactions to detailed descriptions of medical emergencies.

The other aspect of my data collection involved the collation and analysis of organisational codes of conduct. I began with an analysis of written and visual material such as volunteer recruitment messages, volunteer training materials (manuals, booklets, DVDs, and PowerPoint presentations). I also attended a Plunket volunteer training session and the nation-wide biennial Plunket Conference in Rotorua in 2009. Obtaining an emic perspective on Refugee Services proved more difficult. I could not do the training course without taking on a family, and combining eight hours a week in the early stages of resettlement plus interviewing, writing, and teaching seemed impossible. I complemented the analysis of organisational materials with interviews with the national volunteer coordinators for all three organisations and regional managers from Plunket and St John Ambulance (five interviews in total) to identify issues that were salient to their organisation. These interviews lasted one to one and a half hours.

What I had not anticipated, perhaps naively, was that these organisational representatives expected that I would give informal feedback on volunteers' perspectives. Indeed, I should have realised the important and potentially political role I was playing as an advocate for volunteers. On many occasions, I had been admonished by volunteers to "tell them *that* for me!" That organisations wanted to know all about "that" was unsurprising considering I could not do rigorous research and maintain organisational confidentiality.

I decided to name the organisations for three reasons. First, naming increases the validity of the study, in the sense that it is impossible to judge the results of the research if "no-one knows who participated in a study, and where and when it took place" (Kvale, 1996, p. 115). Additionally, the principle of reciprocity holds here: the interviews provide an opportunity for reflection on the

part of the volunteers, and also act as a springboard for the organisations to examine their practice. Second, it allows the reader to interpret the extent to which findings from these organisations can be applied in other settings.

Third and most pragmatically, disguising organisational identity in what Tolich and Davidson (1999) aptly labelled "small town New Zealand" (p. 61) could only occur if details about each organisation's mission and core activities were omitted from the data. Even if I had *not* named the organisations, yet described the context in the most cursory manner, most readers could have named the organisations in this study. With a population of only four million, New Zealand has small numbers of nonprofit organisations that participate in refugee resettlement, fund as well as deliver parenting and support programmes, and provide ambulance services. For all these reasons, organisational representatives agreed that the organisations could be named.

After a year of data collection, I had approximately 39 hours of audio files and approximately 965 pages of typewritten single-spaced text, in addition to boxes of organisational resources, and several small notebooks containing personal thoughts, questions, and scrawled observations that travelled around in my handbag. The following section describes how I analysed this data.

Data Analysis of the Meanings of Volunteering

Identification, coordination, and relationships all presuppose interaction between and among subjects, where the real meaning of volunteering relies on the "space between" (Buber, 1970). This space is active, as interaction affects both parties (the subject and the object of the interaction). Phenomenological approaches are useful because they specifically examine the point of interaction

between the intentional subject and the phenomena experienced. A close, full

description of an experience leads to identification of the essential structural

elements of an experience. This thick description (Geertz, 1983) is useful when a

concept lacks definition – as in the case of volunteering.

Husserlian research theorists such as those of the Duquesne school based

at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, have developed approaches

for analysis of such rich data (Giorgi, 1985). The first step involves clustering

interview data into themes in order to arrive at rich textual description (Shweder

& Good, 2005). The second stage involves extensive reflection on the underlying

structures that inspire the textural description. Intuition is needed, "varying the

frames of reference . . . and approaching the phenomenon from divergent

perspectives, different positions, roles or functions" (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 97-98)

in order to move from empirical data to the sphere of ideas (Kockelmans, 1967b).

I first describe the method of phenomenological analysis in general, and then

discuss how I applied the procedure in this project.

Giorgi (1985, 2000) elaborated a "scientific" rather than philosophical

phenomenological method useful for the social sciences. He provided a helpful

overview of the steps in this analytical process that occur after bracketing:

1. The researcher reads each interview transcript in its entirety to get a feel
   for the whole.

2. The researcher reads through the data again and identifies "meaning
   units." Meaning units can be distinguished by identifying where a shift or
   transition in meaning occurred. As Groenewald (2004) noted, this step
   involves a "substantial amount of judgement calls" (pp. 18-19) when

deciding which statements relate to the phenomenon under consideration and which are redundant (Moustakas, 1994). Hycner (1999) gives some specific guidelines here: one should consider not only the literal content, but the number of times a meaning was mentioned, and *how* it was mentioned (non-verbal cues).

3. The researcher interrogates what these meaning units reveal about the phenomenon under consideration (Giorgi, 1986, para. 8). Specifically, "the researcher goes through all of the meaning units and expresses the . . . insight contained in them more directly. This is especially true of the 'meaning units' most revelatory of the phenomenon under consideration" (Giorgi, 1985, p. 10).

   Before one can arrive at such insight, it is helpful to build up clusters of meaning units or units of significance (Sadala & Adorno, 2001), returning as often as necessary to the entire interview (Holloway, 1997). The NVivo 8 software was helpful in this regard, as a coded meaning unit, whether it be a sentence or a paragraph, could be instantly situated within the larger transcript. Central themes could then emerge from the various clusters "which [express] the essence of these clusters" (Hycner, 1999, p. 153).

4. These "transformed" meaning units are synthesised into a statement about the participants' experience. Themes that are common to most or all the interviews (Hycner, 1999) can be written up as a statement about the general noematic structure of the experience, although it does not preclude adding situational factors that impact how the experience unfolds noetically and uniquely for each individual.

I used this framework to address my research question on the meanings of volunteering. The first step involved considering which data was in fact relevant. As each interview was transcribed, I read through the entire document several times, adding notes as I did so about the context of the interview, thoughts that the interview had generated and questions that participants' comments had raised.

I began the second stage by loading all the transcribed Word files into NVivo 8 and reading carefully through the interviews to ascertain where participants had described volunteering. As opposed to Yeung (2004) who assigned 767 different two to four word headings to participants' expressions of volunteer motivation in her phenomenological study, I started by looking for explicit descriptions of volunteering, to which I applied an extremely broad initial code (Charmaz, 2006): "Conceptualisations of volunteering." While I explicitly asked each participant, "If you had to define what volunteering is, what would you say?" the interview guide also included probes about friends' and families' reaction to volunteering, media constructions of volunteering, moments of wellbeing, and challenging incidents. I created lists of all statements that explicitly defined volunteering and compared them to statements that had been coded as a description of what volunteering entailed and how volunteering contributed to wellbeing. I included both "volunteering is" and "volunteering is not" statements.

Now I needed to start analysing these meaning units that were collated under the heading, "Conceptualisations of volunteering." Within the descriptions of what volunteering entailed, I established sub-codes for preconceptions about volunteering, the question of payment, the volunteer role, and explicit definitions

("Volunteering is. . . "). Most volunteers distinguished between volunteering and helping, so I created a separate sub-code for *helping*.

I then created new sub-codes that expressed the key elements or characteristics contained within participants' descriptions of their preconceptions about volunteering and/or definitions of volunteering. These new codes included *freedom, community, giving,* and *wellbeing.* As I re-read each transcript with these headings in mind, I soon realised that the interview questions about positive and negative incidents that had influenced wellbeing gave rich insight into participants' understandings of volunteering. Moreover, these descriptions of specific experiences were more closely aligned to phenomenological method, as they encompassed a reflective analysis of thoughts, emotions and actions. Hence, I ran NVivo queries to see what meanings of volunteering emerged from codes for both "conceptualisations of volunteering" and "wellbeing." From this broader set of data, I added sub-codes for *guilt*, r*elationships, reciprocity, time, commitment*, *obligation* and *personal development*, accordingly. The meaning units associated with "conceptualisations of volunteering" had now increased fourfold.

Before I could create "meaningful insight" from these meaning units, I tried to cluster the coded meaning units into themes. Five overarching themes emerged from this process: freedom, giving, relationality, reciprocity and obligation. Many meaning units could belong to more than one thematic cluster. For instance, meaning units could draw on notions of both freedom and reciprocity, and others on giving, relationality and obligation, respectively.

I then needed to reflect on "what might constitute the essential features of the meaning units, a process which involved seeking the central issues of the

phenomenon by offering different options through imaginative variation" (Yeung, 2004, p. 31). At this stage, it was vital to cross-check the themes and the relationships among them with the data itself. My first attempt at imaginative variation to explain the process of volunteering reflected myself rather than the data. My description of how and why individuals established and maintained connections between themselves and others in the community privileged my own view of volunteering as highly relational and potentially transformative through a gift of self. This perspective, however, did not match much of my data. Since phenomenological analysis does not start with a pre-given script or standard plot, I had to continue to develop a story that made sense of the data through "disciplined imagination" (Alvesson & Karreman, 2007, p. 1266) or systematic variation of possible meanings that could point towards the essence of volunteering. I tried out several variations of the relationships between freedom/agency and relationality that gave more meaningful insight to what it means to "volunteer." Laverty (2003) noted at this point the researcher is trying to describe "the invariant or essential structures of the phenomena, without which it would not exist" (p. 23).

It is quite probable that another researcher could have categorised the meaning units differently (Yeung, 2004) but I returned to the data to ensure that the way each meaning unit had been assigned to the key feature of volunteering read convincingly. Beck (1993) viewed credibility lay in how vivid and faithful the description was to the experience lived. Beck concluded, "when this occurs, the insight is self-validating and if well done, others will see the text as a statement of the experience itself (Husserl, 1970)" (Laverty, 2003, p. 31).

I also included comments and descriptions from participants that challenged the five key themes. For example, participants held conflicting views about whether volunteering was possible in paid work contexts. Since the data was mixed, I included a heading for *non-volunteering* and compared how freedom and relationality, in particular, differed across volunteering and non-volunteering codes.

The most difficult component of analysis was speculating about what might have been at the core of participants' experiences of volunteering that gave rise to the thoughts and feelings they articulated about the phenomena. Here the inherent flexibility of a hybrid phenomenological approach came to the fore. As I describe in detail in Chapter 4, the structural noematic elements that make volunteering what it is for this group of participants included agency as well as relationality. These are reasonably generic requirements which could arguably apply to others' experiences of volunteering. These elements are then played out in an infinite number of noetic variations, where each participant emphasises a different angle, and combines agency and relationality depending on the contextual cues, social settings, and personal and cultural values.

Questions of how I chose noematic elements and how to represent these noetic variations arise, and I treat them here. First, I was reassured (although surprised) that the aspects of volunteering I had felt were essential were not organisation-specific but spread across organisations. Yet on a practical level, how could I be sure I had grasped anything essential about these participants' experiences? Cohen and Omery (1994) determined that linkages between the particular and the essential could be gained through "logical insight based on careful consideration of representative examples" (p. 138).

Data Analysis of the Professionalism-Wellbeing Relationship

Once a description of volunteering has been developed, it is possible to compare, analyse and critique non-intentional experiences such as reactions to organisational and broader social messages about volunteering, particularly since these non-intentional experiences create expectations. Professionalism is currently a dominant discourse in many volunteer organisations that impacts identification, coordination, and relationality. Close analysis of volunteers' interactions that reproduce or resist messages of professionalism may contribute to other theoretical perspectives, such as structuration theory, where the acting self is constrained by existing structures while simultaneously modifying them (Giddens, 1984).

Consequently, the next step of analysis involved recognising contexts that account for the *way* in which a phenomenon is experienced. I considered the 'context' or the text that accompanies the main text of experiences (Czarniawska, 2002, p. 736) significant for this study which assumes a high level of complexity, interrelatedness and reactivity. I had begun my thesis with the ambitious desire of ascertaining "how the meanings individuals gave to volunteering were influenced by their interactions with others, their organisational milieu and their socio-cultural environment." I had assumed that although experiences are powerful in meaning creation, expectations and prevailing images about volunteering would also impact the way individuals framed these experiences. My "puzzlement" (Lofland & Lofland, 1995, p. 78) about the effect of professionalism on how participants experienced volunteering emerged from the data. It became imperative to understand how organisations constructed professionalism, since

regulations, for example, create a sense of responsibility that affects how volunteers experience and enact agency.

I was not attempting to provide a Husserlian-inspired phenomenological analysis of the *essence* of professionalism in volunteer organisations, but to examine how volunteers responded to organisational messages about professionalism and wellbeing. These messages are the intentional objects of a series of conscious acts on the part of participants, and thus may be treated as an aspect of phenomenological analysis. Specifically, organisational notions of professionalism form the context or horizons of experience within which volunteering unfolds. In our everyday thinking, we use horizons of experience as an intellectual shortcut, without looking at them afresh, or laying aside our presuppositions and judgements to ask what the essential structures of professionalism or wellbeing are. As Moran (2000) noted, these horizons "delimit the nexus of expectations" (p. 162) about an experience, by suggesting which unrealised possibilities are consistent with the noema.

I specified the scope of the context as follows. Much has been made of "upward" accountability or reporting to funders and less on "downward" accountability measures in the nonprofit sector. In his analysis of non-governmental organisations, Ebrahim (2003) argued that while external accountability requires organisations "to meet prescribed standards of behaviour (Chisolm,1995, p. 141)," what is of more interest perhaps is internal self-regulation or ''felt responsibility (Fry,1995)" as expressed through individual action and organisational mission (Ebrahim, 2003, p. 814). Evetts (1999) argued that the adoption of such systems of internal regulatory control through a process of professionalisation will be specific to each occupational group. In order to

unpack such distinct organisational subcultures, Sackmann (1992) advocated the value of "comparing expressed ideas and actual practices as perceived by others [that] can provide valuable information about the world view of organizational members and its degree of overlap with reality as perceived or experienced by others" (p. 140). Hence, both interview data with organisational participants and organisational materials formed the basis for analysis of organisational constructions of professionalism in this study.

One major challenge in this project involved deciding how I would recognise professionalism when I saw it. My initial interview protocol for volunteers had not explicitly dealt with professionalism, which emerged as a significant issue for volunteers' wellbeing over the course of the data collection process. Nonetheless, from the outset, many participants described their volunteering as a type of job. During Interview 3, for instance, the participant referred to her volunteer role as the "RMS [Refugee Migrant Services] job." In addition, as participants discussed specific instances when they had experienced wellbeing and those that they had found challenging and difficult, descriptions about organisational demands for volunteers to act in a business-like manner also emerged.

Notions of professionalism were not always explicitly described as such and needed to be inferred (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The credibility of these notions was enhanced by my engagement with different organisational members over the course of 18 months (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but persistent organisational observation was lacking as my contact was sporadic. Hence, the issues of professionalism that the participants had already identified as a significant impact on their wellbeing acted as a helpful sensitising device. In each

case, professionalism was described as transforming volunteering into a type of job. As in paid work contexts, a "job" meant different things in different organisational contexts.

Participants' comments on professionalism guided the development of interview questions and probes for organisational representatives and subsequent analysis of organisational documents. The interview protocol for organisational representatives is in Appendix B. Their comments also sensitised me to key organisational messages about professionalism, especially given the lack of clarity in the literature about the attributes of professionalism in nonprofit contexts.

I then decided that in order to analyse more precisely how each organisation constructed professionalism, I would also need to consider how the organisation "read" and enacted the processes of professionalisation. That is, professionalisation exerts a significant influence on a) how organisations develop particular understandings of professionalism, and b) how these understandings are expressed in organisational messages and practice. Hence, I created codes for professionalisation understood as rationalisation, marketisation and bureaucratisation, using pre-existing definitions drawn from the literature, as discussed in Chapter 1. I then searched the data (organisational codes of conduct and the interview transcripts of organisational representatives) for examples of these processes (Miles & Huberman, 1993). I also combed the data for organisational interpretations of professionalised volunteer identities or practices that flowed from a particular view of professionalisation.

Early on in the interview with Refugee Services representatives at their national office, both staff described volunteering as a "real job" that entailed

sticking tightly to the "volunteer role." They discussed areas where maintaining this role was essential if volunteers were to be able to carry out their job with Refugee Services: *managing the level of time commitment*; *personal distance and boundaries*; and *respect for diverse cultural expression*. These boundary-supporting behaviours were described as protecting the refugee families and the volunteers. Halfway through the interview, the National Volunteer Programme Coordinator described the structure the volunteer role provides as a key part of "a more professional model of volunteering," as opposed to the "charity model" they had worked with in the 1980s. Subsequently, I examined the written Code of Conduct and found significant overlap with staff comments about the parameters of the volunteer role and how it was to be enacted. The written code does mention the word "professional," but the coordinator noted that she hesitated to give that label to the entire volunteer programme as professionalism "has got a lot of different meanings to different people."

The question of professionalism arose in interviews with local and national Plunket representatives as we discussed volunteers' reactions to the "business plan." *Society Rules*, *policies* and *reporting requirements* were also mentioned as a fundamental aspect of volunteers' role/job. These constructs appeared in organisational documents for office holders.

St John's Midland manager described all ambulance staff (paid and volunteer) as *health professionals* several times. I subsequently asked whether it was possible for volunteers to enact professionalism. In his response, the Midland manager referred to the Core Values programme that forms part of St John's training programme. I later read through the Core Value training kit, which sensitised me to explanations of professional conduct that were described during

the interview. I then coded the interview transcripts for concepts such as *responsibility*, *customer focus*, *clinical excellence* and *training* that were described in the Core Values materials on professionalism.

Once I had coded organisational representatives' transcripts and written documentation for descriptions of what it meant to stick to a volunteer role (Refugee Services), to fulfil the reporting requirements of the business plan and other rules (Plunket), or to act as a health professional (St John), I analysed how professionalism and wellbeing had been linked in organisational codes of conduct. Concepts of wellbeing drawn from the literature directed my coding for wellbeing. I then returned to participants' transcripts to see how they constructed the professionalism-wellbeing relationship.

Data Analysis of Elements of Communities of Practice

The other contextual element that concerned me was volunteers' interactions with clients, other volunteers, volunteer coordinators and even friends, family and colleagues. These interactions form a resource used by volunteers in meaning-making, and they also influence how relationality is understood and structured. Hence, the final research question, as set out in the Literature Review, explicitly considered how different interpretations of volunteering, professionalism and wellbeing impact the enactment of volunteer communities of practice. Similarly to the question about the impact of professionalism on wellbeing, the question about communities of practice does not employ a Husserlian phenomenological method of analysis but uses phenomenologically-derived meanings of volunteering as the basis for evaluating why conflict as well as collaboration may be a key element for volunteer communities of practice.

I took the three aspects that create a community of practice from the CoP literature (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 2000): shared repertoire, mutual engagement and joint enterprise. I coded for these three constructs as follows. To ascertain shared repertoire, I used a broad question from the interview protocol that asked what it is that participants actually *do* while volunteering: "If I followed you through a typical day volunteering, what would I see you doing? What would I hear? What experiences would I observe you having? (Patton, 2002). It's like you're taking a "verbal photo" for me since I can't follow you around." Participants gave rich, detailed descriptions that often drew on all five senses, and the data tended to be vivid. Mutual engagement or the patterns of interaction that characterised relationships was discussed by most participants when describing incidents that had contributed to their wellbeing or moments that they had found particularly challenging or difficult. Joint enterprise encompasses the purpose, goal(s) or mission of the group. Some participants discussed the purpose of volunteering and how their thoughts on volunteering had evolved, through the interview questions, "What did you think volunteering would be like before you started?" and "What are your reasons for volunteering now, and how have they changed over time?" Other participants pinpointed different interpretations of mission or purpose as a key cause of conflict in encounters with paid staff, clients or other volunteers.

Issues of Validity

My concern was that the process of abstraction relies heavily on the researcher's rather than participants' interpretations. While it is true that the researcher is in some way a privileged being who is given time and space to stand apart from the mayhem of everyday living, and look closely at a phenomenon to

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determine how personal and social realities differ from existing conceptualisations

of the phenomena (Lopez & Willis, 2004), Van Maanen's (1983) caution is

important:

> Descriptions are essentially idiographic maps of the
>
> territory which must be read and interpreted by the
>
> investigator . . . . The map cannot be considered the
>
> territory simply because the map is a reflexive product of
>
> the mapmaker's invention. The mapmaker sees himself
>
> quite as much as he sees the territory. (pp. 9-10)

Hence, I do not claim to be able to pronounce the last word on

volunteering, as all interpretation must recognise that "no conceptual formulation

or single statement can possibly capture the full mystery of the experience" (van

Manen, 1990, p. 92). Van Manen's (1997) criterion for validity focused less on

the process of inductive reasoning by the researcher, and more on the end product.

He assured researchers that one has touched the heart of an experience if "the

description reawakens or shows us the lived quality and significance of the

experience in a fuller or deeper manner" (p. 10). I preferred Weick's (1989)

criterion, which suggested that the reader should react "with the feeling, *that's*

interesting" (p. 525).

The second practice of representation that required honesty about whose

voice was speaking through the text (Lincoln & Guba, 2000) was the selection of

particular examples from participants' texts. The interview data was so vivid in

my head, that I could mentally replay sections of it at will. I wanted this sense of

"verisimilitude" (Richardson, 1994, p. 521) for the reader, as if they too had been

present during each of the interviews and had experienced the freshness of participants' perspectives. To this end, I incorporated my fieldnotes into the analysis chapters. I did so to manifest how I interpreted the "natural setting" in which reported experiences occurred, and to show how selective extracts from participants surprised me or confirmed my interpretations (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

Finally, all qualitative researchers must consider why their readers should give credence to their interpretation and the theoretical implications derived from a close analysis of the data. While a healthy scepticism may foster dialogue and new insights, much misunderstanding results from the demand for scientific validity to be applied to qualitative research in the same way as it does to quantitative studies. Hence, this chapter closes with a comment on how I have aimed for validity, understood as "the criteria we use for deciding between alternative interpretations, explanations and theories of the things we study" (Maxwell, 2004, p. 37).

The first manifestation of validity in qualitative research is the documentation of how an account was developed. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) observed, "data in themselves cannot be valid or invalid; what is at issue are the inferences drawn from them" (p. 191). Data often problematises previous frameworks and explanations that need to be laid aside as inadequate. These breakdowns create research space, although Alvesson and Karreman (2007) clarify the boundaries of imaginative variation:

> Although empirical material never exists outside
>
> perspectives and interpretive repertoires, it nevertheless

creates a boundary for imagination. Some constructions

make more sense than others. Empirical material anchors

the process of theorization in specific claims about the

object under study, thus prohibiting arbitrary ideas from

being put into play. (p. 1266)

Absence of interpretive and theoretical sleight of hand is evidenced by inclusion

of data that contradicts the proposed theoretical relationship.

Threats to validity really arise at the stage of developing theory, which

moves beyond concrete events and experiences, to conceptually construct what

the phenomenon means. The judgements needed for inductive theory

development, and the values inherent in evaluation may lead to considerable

debate about the "legitimacy of the application of a given concept or theory to

established facts, or indeed whether any agreement can be reached about what the

facts are" (Maxwell, 1992, p. 292). Reliability is not possible since there is no

standardisation in interview questions, and duplicating interviews would yield

completely different data sets, since qualitative research relies on the researcher as

a tool. Interpretation is credible if one can go back to the data and see that the

proposed theory reads convincingly.

Allowing participants and the invisible college of scholars within and

between disciplines to comment on researcher interpretation is one way of

overcoming the crisis of representation in the creation of social texts (Denzin &

Lincoln, 2000). At the end of each interview, I asked participants if they had other

comments or questions about the research. Most participants were very interested

in what other volunteers had said. In addition to this informal feedback, those

participants who wanted to see the results were sent a thematic summary after data collection.

Conclusion

This chapter has justified the use of a blended paradigmatic approach to unpack the meanings volunteers give to their volunteer experiences. Rather than relying on "inferential empirical methods" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 10) to define volunteering, a hybrid phenomenology allows a researcher to listen closely to actors' perspectives, obtain rich descriptions of the phenomenon, and unravel some of the complexities embedded in particular social worlds. I have also explained why this phenomenological approach has sufficient methodological flexibility that I can compare these meanings with understandings derived from non-intentional knowledge. I also discussed the challenges of the phenomenological interview and the possibility of bracketing.

The last section of the chapter detailed the research process, including selection of the research sites, collection of the data, and the data analysis process. The ability to create a credible account of volunteering is of particular importance since phenomenology moves from the particular instance to the underlying structure.

The next chapter analyses the meanings participants brought to their volunteering, and describes both the essence of the experience (the noema) and the way in which they approached the phenomenon through intentional acts (the noesis). The second analysis chapter evaluates how the context in which "volunteering" occurs combines with experience to create meaning, and how professionalised volunteering contributes to or diminishes volunteers' wellbeing.

The final analysis chapter considers how both the self and the other work together to create and negotiate meaning intersubjectively, as I examine how participants with diverse noetic experiences create communities of practice.

CHAPTER 4: MEANINGS OF VOLUNTEERING

As the literature review suggests, the definitions of volunteering embedded in the sociology, psychology and management literature construct volunteering as an individual act that is free or un-coerced, that is a form of unequal exchange, that contributes to the public good, that creates positive relationships, and that occurs outside the family or intimate sphere in some sort of structured setting. Definitions of volunteering as a type of *activity* are sufficiently broad to incorporate most contributions in the nonprofit sector, but so expansive that conceptual distinction from other forms of social engagement is difficult (Musick & Wilson, 2008). Before we can evaluate the claim that volunteering contributes positively to personal and social wellbeing, we need to clarify the meanings attached to volunteering. To do so, I step back from any preconceived testable matrix, to listen closely to a group of individuals actually engaged with a voluntary organisation. Specifically, this project seeks to elaborate a definition of volunteering that draws on volunteers' perspectives. It makes sense to ask:

RQ1. What meanings do individuals engaged with voluntary organisations give to their volunteering?

The data suggested that volunteering is too diverse to be limited to a particular context or activity and that it is better understood as a *process* that develops oneself and one's relationships with others. However, as I read through the transcripts, two seemingly contradictory views of how that process might be enacted stood out, indicating that volunteering has a dual nature that creates two quite distinct subject positions: agentic and dialogic. The chapter proceeds as follows. The first section details how one understanding of volunteering privileges agency. For participants, volunteering could encompass a myriad of

contexts as long as experiences were tailored to fit individuals' personal biography and interests. More significantly, the term volunteering summoned connotations of freedom and will (*voluntas*), with the volunteer fully in control of what, when, and how to give. Material, cultural and social capital broadened opportunities to contribute. Within the analysis, I track how and when volunteers summoned these notions of an agentic self.

The second section considers the significance of relationality in creating a dialogic self that grows through and with the voluntary experience. Voluntary engagement created relationships with distant others who became part of volunteers' social networks in some way, and often these new relationships led to feelings of guilt at not giving "enough." A sense of obligation and pressure came to the fore when volunteers related specific experiences. Participants then qualified the "voluntary" nature of their involvement, since they felt compelled to give on the organisation's terms to a certain extent, which sometimes compromised personal goals. I examine which contexts fostered volunteers evoking a dialogic, relational self. In the third section of the chapter, I speculate about how volunteers reconcile or resist this duality. Do volunteers shuttle between the two subject positions diachronically? Is it possible for volunteers to summon both subject positions simultaneously? It is important to know how volunteers manage this duality as each understanding of volunteering has quite distinct implications for wellbeing.

Table 1 provides an overview of the key features of each subject position, which I draw out in more detail throughout the chapter:

Table 1

The Agentic and Dialogic Subjects

Agentic Subject	Dialogic Subject
Possesses freedom	Relationships characterised by reciprocity and reiterative nature
Emphasis on will	
Giving results from being a particular type of person	Develops a sense of commitment and obligation
Descriptions of volunteering privilege agency consistently across contexts and organisations	Type and depth of relationship determined by context

For an agentic subject, volunteering could be made meaningful by emphasising one's own role in initiating and maintaining connections with others in a community. That is, participants positioned volunteering as a free decision to "give." This finding was consistent across all three voluntary organisations in the study. As Paolicci (1995) pointed out, this agentic model of meaning-making presumes "the subject . . . stands as unitary and autonomous source of action, a bearer of his/her own life project" (para. 17). Alternatively, volunteers described the process of volunteering in more dialogic terms as mutual development through specific encounters with others. That is, in apparent contradiction to the first theme, participants described volunteering as the development of intense relational bonds that fostered feelings of commitment. Here, individual variation suggests that the type and depth of relationship fostered by particular forms of voluntary involvement is highly context-dependent. I turn now to the agentic self.

Volunteering as a Manifestation of Agency

Understanding volunteering as a manifestation of agency constructs a self that freely channels talents, skills and resources to a volunteer project. Agentic volunteers have a strong sense of who they are and what it is that they can bring to the table, and matches this set of attributes with what is on offer in personal and organisational contexts. It is telling that participants could not categorise volunteering as a particular *type* of activity. Instead, a notion of freedom differentiated volunteering from other forms of organisational or personal engagement. Participants understood freedom as the ability to join, act, and leave any given endeavour at will to suit one's own biographical circumstances. The act of giving time, money and energy to a particular cause made agency clearly discernible, without diminishing volunteers' sense of self. Lack of physical, material or emotional resources, on the other hand, conditioned agency and therefore limited individuals' ability to engage in voluntary activity.

In this section, I show how freedom and giving are linked, and throughout I consider which situations or scenarios generate this identification of the volunteer as an agentic subject.

What Counts as Volunteering?

Volunteers with extensive experience of volunteering in varied contexts initially found it difficult to put their finger on exactly what type of activity constituted volunteering. On reflection, they noted that volunteering cuts across work and home boundaries, and that it was not limited exclusively to organisational settings, although organisations could act as helpful gatekeepers in locating people to "help." Participants also stipulated that volunteering entails a

conscious choice to include more distant others in one's ordinary life, going beyond the call of duty.

Participants struggled at first to encapsulate what volunteering meant to them. After reflecting out loud on how their own experience of volunteering or knowledge of others' experiences cut across multiple structural and sectoral boundaries, most participants concluded that volunteering could be "anything." A Plunket participant found it difficult to put into words all that volunteering evoked for her:

> I mean, goodness, yes it's huge. It could be anything.
> That's the thing about volunteering . . . . It could be
> driving a car, it could be writing financial statements,
> couldn't it? It's whatever you've got to give, I think, that
> helps an organisation achieve what they want to. It's
> definitely –I shouldn't say it's definitely, always, it's
> usually unfunded. Um, what else? I don't know! That is
> really hard! I probably should have got you to interview
> me in the morning when I'm a bit sharper rather than at
> night!

Participants applied the term "volunteering" to a variety of contexts, depending on their previous experiences and knowledge of other voluntary organisations. Only two of those I interviewed were first time volunteers. The other participants catalogued a stream of past voluntary community engagement that ranged from joining kindergarten committees, leading Pippins and Girl Guide groups, supporting school boards of trustees, coaching sports teams, teaching

Sunday school, yearly collecting for health promotion organisations, to emptying

possum traps to protect breeding kiwi within conservation areas. A Refugee

Services' volunteer noted that "Volunteering just ranges. It could be with people,

it could *not* be with people. I mean, it could be photocopying, or it could be with

the police." The diverse nature of voluntary contexts emerged as a positive feature

of the nonprofit sector, as another Refugee Services volunteer noted:

> I would stress the *multiplicity* of it, and that there's
>
> something out there for everyone . . . . I mean everyone
>
> volunteers for different reasons so I mean I've had some
>
> friends talking to me about stuff and I have suggested that
>
> they might like to volunteer with particular organisations
>
> because of what they've been saying but it's hard to make
>
> a blanket statement about what I would say in general
>
> about volunteering. I mean there are so many different
>
> things. It's quite a good way to get work experience in a
>
> field that might be hard to get in to. You can get free
>
> training if you're interested! It depends what you do but it
>
> can be quite good socially. It depends what everyone is
>
> into.

Volunteering also cut across work and home boundaries. Some

participants situated helping behaviours carried out in paid work settings as

volunteering. For instance, work that fell outside the hours specified in their

contract or which was paid below their wage rate was classified as "volunteering."

However, volunteering was not limited to organisational settings, whether in the

paid workplace or not-for-profit setting, but extended to home and community

contexts. A volunteer described volunteering as similar to "going to a big family occasion: a wedding or a funeral, or a party . . . [anywhere where you find] people running around like headless chickens."

Irrespective of the setting, volunteering was a conscious choice to include more distant others in the acts of service that form part and parcel of ordinary life. A Refugee Services volunteer explained that:

> Volunteering is almost like an extension of what you do
>
> every day with your friends and family. You look after
>
> your friends. You look after your family. You do things
>
> for them. Volunteering is making that conscious decision
>
> that you are going to do that for somebody that you don't
>
> know well.

However, potential volunteers could find it difficult to locate those needing help within the community without the mediation of a voluntary organisation. In this sense, organisations are no more than gate-keepers that facilitate agentic individuals' decisions to offer their services, rather than an indispensable element of volunteering:

> If your neighbour put something in your letterbox saying
>
> "Can somebody walk my dog or take me shopping," you
>
> might find somebody would be willing to do that. It is just
>
> that we don't do that because it is asking strangers to help
>
> you. I guess the organisation provides that the link to
>
> make the connections, because I am sure there are people
>
> in my neighbourhood that need some sort of help but until

you make those connections, you can't actually do

anything about it.

This section has shown that participants could not classify volunteering as a specific type of activity nor did they limit voluntary opportunities to a particular context such as non-personal or non-work environments. Volunteering involved going beyond the call of duty at work, in terms of hours, effort and compensation, and it also included acts of citizenship performed for others whom participants stumbled across in the course of their everyday lives. Hence, defining volunteering as an activity typical of the not-for-profit sector as opposed to the for-profit, private sector and the personal domain (Van Til, 1988) did not seem particularly useful when multiple exceptions emerged at every turn. Embedded within this capacity to mould volunteering to fit personal situations is a sense of freedom to act. In the following section, I suggest that participants constructed freedom as an essential feature of the agentic self in organisational volunteering.

Freedom

Participants' concepts of freedom were rich and complex, and appeared as they spoke about volunteering in definitional, generic terms. First, many volunteers referred to the "free" nature of the work itself, since it is unpaid. Two volunteers explicitly defined freedom as lack of external coercion: volunteers do not engage in volunteering to ensure their economic survival. Second, most participants invoked freedom as an aspect of volunteering at each stage of the entry, engagement, and exit process: freedom to join, freedom to act as they chose, and freedom to leave. When deciding to get involved, participants suggested volunteers had the freedom to select projects that met wants rather than needs. Although this freedom to choose "what" to give might disappear once

volunteers had committed to an organisational role, some participants insisted that volunteers remained free to decide how much to give. Finally, most participants invoked freedom to exit if volunteering cramped their ability to fulfil other commitments or to participate in other activities that were more enjoyable or convenient. I will briefly elaborate on each of these aspects in turn.

Many volunteers defined volunteering as "free" because of the lack of monetary payment. The following three quotes from a volunteer from each organisation were typical:

> Ambulance volunteering is full-on work, and you're
> getting paid very little for it [St John Ambulance].
>
> Volunteering is just giving your time for free [Plunket].
>
> I guess the definition of what volunteering is to me would
> be you donate your time and hopefully your skill without
> any expectation of financial reward [Refugee Services].

Implicitly, these definitions contrast volunteering with paid work, because rather than meeting needs, volunteering fulfils wants. Some participants felt that they "had" to work in paid jobs that they did not particularly like, to support themselves and their families. For them, the material necessities of life formed an external pressure that left little room for choice. Volunteering, on the other hand, did not contribute to improving finances. Hence, freedom consisted in gratifying desires at each stage of the volunteering process.

Many participants framed their decision to start volunteering as a free act (cf, Cnaan, et al., 1996). A St John Ambulance participant explained, "I volunteered – I went there willingly without any coercion so I must be a

volunteer!" External pressures such as social status (Carson, 2000) or invitations from family, friends or colleagues (Ben-Porath, 1980) might exert pressure on individuals to contribute in a voluntary capacity, but several participants concluded that non-volunteers had two options. They could freely jump on board and pull their weight, or ignore any suggestions to get involved, as a Plunket volunteer explained:

> A typical volunteer is a person who puts their hand up to
> do anything, really. They're a person who goes and does
> . . . if they say "We need to do something," that person
> will be there. They'll always be there – that person always
> finds a space in their time to do it. Where there's others
> who've got reasons like "I don't *feel* like it" and they only
> do it when it suits them.

Before getting involved, most participants claimed that volunteers select what and how much to give. Another Plunket volunteer noted that "as much or as little as you want to give is what people should know about volunteering. Nothing is too small to give." Few participants explicitly invoked freedom to explain how volunteers made choices once they were officially on the books, although a Plunket volunteer mentioned that the organisation can't "make" you do something you would rather not, nor do they have any claim on your time or resources:

> Well I think in the workplace when you're given a job,
> you're committed to it, you give your all to it because that
> is your job, but when you're volunteering it's a completely
> different mind-set. When you're volunteering you know

you're just giving your time for free and you therefore

have no accountability.

Several participants also suggested the lack of formal ties between the organisation and the volunteer left individuals free to move on to something new if the commitment was too much or the task at hand did not "fit:"

The great thing about volunteering is that you can you can

choose to do whatever you want and you can leave

whenever you want and there's no obligations. Like you

can try out different stuff and then leave when you like

[Refugee Services].

Hence, some volunteers did not bother convincing friends to start volunteering because it would be too tempting for them to leave if they it "just wasn't them:"

They've never done it before. I've tried to bring some

friends into it, but they're just not into it. They just don't

have their heart in it. You've got to work at it,

volunteering. So, if it becomes too difficult, it's easy to

say "I'm not doing it" if you're not enjoying it anymore

[Plunket].

To a certain extent, all three "freedoms" (to join, to act, to leave) referenced doing what you *like*, what appeals to you, what is convenient. The thoughtful title of Hustinx's (2010) article, "I quit therefore I am?" that links the agentic self with the drive to self-actualisation, captures this sense of freedom well. An understanding of volunteering premised on freedom reflects both

subjective and objective dimensions of wellbeing. Fulfilling a personal want increases individuals' sense that they are living the Pleasant Life, without requiring them to consider other needs that may be more pressing but less suited to the volunteer's personal biography and desires. Freedom to choose when to leave when convenient also draws on objective wellbeing measures such as a sense of autonomy and self-control over involvement.

Hence, many participants framed pressure on volunteers to contribute on the organisation's terms as negative for volunteers' wellbeing. For example, participants questioned whether it was reasonable for paid staff to ask/demand for availability at set times and long-term commitment rather than episodic spurts of helping. A St John Ambulance volunteer questioned organisational demands:

> You know, they turn round and say "Hey you should
>
> volunteer, you should give one day up a week or two days
>
> up a weekend," you know every weekend, you should be
>
> able to . . . . "Should!" There's a difference between
>
> *should*, *will* and *am* and *can*!

For this participant, demanding that volunteers give in certain ways and at certain times rather than waiting for volunteers to initiate the giving they are comfortable with erodes the voluntary ethos. Moreover, with the lawns to be mowed and the house to be cleaned, she did not classify her weekends as "free."

Participants viewed freedom as the ability to make decisions unhampered by necessity and obligation. Decisions to get involved depended on the extent to which volunteering could meet "wants" such as personal development and enjoyment. Control over tasks and time commitment was important. Several

participants pitted accountability and responsibility against freedom once volunteers were involved in a voluntary venture. That is, free volunteers give what they *want*, not what the organisation *needs*, and if pushed can and will leave. Participants acknowledged that this freedom can be unattainable if the self is emotionally, physically or financially needy. The next section considers how the ability to give at will presupposes an agentic self.

Giving

Freedom, as defined by participants in the previous section, is not determined by age, gender or personality type. However, adequate access to money, time, community networks, and knowledge conferred by dominant status (D. H. Smith, 1994) allowed participants to express an agentic notion of self that was free to pursue goals beyond fulfilment of basic needs. Participants suggested that the ability to give presumes that an individual has sufficient resources of time, money, and emotional energy to offer to others without compromising or diminishing their own sense of identity. In this section, I first discuss how participants framed giving as "easy" as long as time and money costs remained superfluous to volunteers' needs. Next, I show how some participants positioned individuals whose energy was spent on meeting life's necessities as non-agentic. Finally, on occasion, participants excused themselves from giving, when exhaustion or sickness created limitations that threatened their agentic self. For most participants, individuals who were not limited in their ability to donate some of their available time, money and energy to a voluntary cause but chose not to do so were described as selfish.

The first prerequisite for giving was time availability, although the amount of discretionary time needed in a timetable for an individual to feel *able* to

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volunteer showed significant subjective variation. For example, a participant who combined a demanding full-time job with volunteering stated "I'm one of those people who think that sitting on the couch is a moment lost!" Another noted that time availability per se was not an absolute criterion, but expanded or contracted depending on the individual. To illustrate her point, she cited the aphorism, "If you want a job done, ask a busy person," giving the example of how much a mother of five could jam into her timetable, whereas a woman with two children could claim she was overworked already.

The second resource needed for giving was financial security. Financial security had a more concrete lower limit than time availability. That is, the potential volunteer needed to be financially self-sufficient so as to easily afford expenses associated with volunteering. Otherwise, as a volunteer explained, volunteering "can become a burden on your family. It's not free, monetary wise. It costs to be a volunteer." St John and Plunket did try to break down the monetary barrier, by offering a stipend for out-of-pocket expenses (St John for meals and uniform costs, and Plunket, a token petrol mileage rate). Nonetheless, reactions from participants' social circles painted volunteers as time-rich, middle-class housewives. A Plunket volunteer, who chose to give up her paid work in order to work in the home with her children, resented a friend's stereotype:

> After I was volunteering for about six months, a girlfriend
>
> said to me – and she earns I don't know $120,000 a year
>
> (she's an accountant) – and she said "Oh well if I had
>
> children and if I had a husband that could afford to keep
>
> me, *I* would like to volunteer for things." And it was

again that "Desperate Housewives" and I thought "Oh

that's kind of stink!"

Participants who volunteered for Refugee Services corroborated the connection between giving and financial autonomy. Despite Refugee Services' stipulation that volunteers not contribute personal monies, a volunteer intimated that another member of her team "sourced" a new washing machine from her own pocket for the family they were working with. As long as participants controlled how much and when to give, giving did not alter or diminish their identity, but was expressed as the overflow of their talents and values.

Participants showed considerable understanding for individuals who, in their opinion, could not give through volunteering since they lacked the necessary time and money. Most participants described a range of conditioning factors that inhibit individuals' ability to volunteer. Financial stress, relationship difficulties, job insecurity, unpredictable timetables, and feelings of having nothing worthwhile to give to others could shut down the needed space. "Able" volunteers, on the other hand, are able to transcend these challenges. A Plunket volunteer explicitly invoked Maslow's hierarchy of needs, to explain how individuals who cannot meet their own basic needs are unable to participate in activities further up the hierarchy related to self-actualisation and fulfilment like volunteering. Another Plunket volunteer from a rural town with high unemployment where the branch is struggling to attract volunteers explained that inability to manage one's own affairs is incompatible with the giving to others required of volunteers:

I think [for some people] volunteering their time and their

services is just too much. Trying to get through the day

with four kids under five and struggling to pay the power

bill, I don't have the energy to volunteer or put any more

time into anything else. I definitely think a lot of people

just don't have the time, the desire . . . . Sometimes *I* wake

up and think "How am I going to get through today??!" I

haven't got energy to give to anybody, let alone voluntary,

and that's certainly not the case for all the families, but

there's heaps of families like that, that are overwhelmed

with their lifestyle, have four to five kids of their own,

don't have a car, can't get here, you know just a solo mum

and if there's a meeting it is usually on in the evening,

don't have a babysitter, lots of that sort of thing. It is just

not that cut and dried to volunteer and be there bang, bang,

bang.

Another participant commented that "when they're struggling to make

ends meet . . . they wouldn't think of giving something back to somebody else."

A St John volunteer also explained how the lower socio-economic status of the

neighbouring town meant the ambulance station attracted fewer volunteers:

You've got a more of a – not self-centred . . . that sounds

really nasty, but you know you're concerned with your

own world and want to focus purely on what you've got

rather than looking at the bigger wide world sort of thing.

The third factor that participants identified as fundamental to giving is emotional and physical energy. A Plunket volunteer described her exhaustion after a winter where every family member fell sick on a rotating basis: "You have nothing to give. The emotional cup is empty!!! Those seven weeks yeah my emotional cup was . . . I threw the cup away!" Tiredness and mild illness formed interesting contexts to examine how two Refugee Services participants chose to exercise agency. In the first case, the volunteer rationalised how she could avoid making a visit after returning to New Zealand from a trip overseas:

> At the moment, I feel as though I can't cope with them,
>
> but it could be because I'm not feeling very well, the last
>
> thing I want to do now is . . . . I mean I should be going
>
> round there now, and all cheerful and everything and I'm
>
> just sort of thinking "Do you think that they realise I'm
>
> home yet?" Perhaps I can leave it until I'm feeling better.

The other volunteer made a conscious decision to visit a refugee with mental health issues rather than let tiredness after a full day's work dictate her schedule:

> She can be a bit erratic about what you're going to strike
>
> her like. Whether everything's terrible, or whether we're
>
> going to be vacuuming the house, or whether everything's
>
> totally normal. So you don't really know what you're
>
> about to get yourself into, and that can be off-putting when
>
> you've had a big day. And I just have to say "Okay,
>
> tonight I'm definitely going to go and visit" because it's

> my visit night and I'm going to do it. Otherwise what I do
>
> is I think "Oh, God, I can't cope with this tonight. I'll go
>
> around the next night" and then something happens, and
>
> before you know it the week's gone and you haven't done
>
> a visit, and then you're like, "Oh, God."

In both cases, participants' decisions emphasised willpower rather than external circumstances and conditioning factors – organisational expectations about the number of visits, and feelings of exhaustion, respectively.

Most participants framed volunteering as dependent on willpower for individuals who had the necessary means to give, especially for those volunteer tasks that do not require specialised skills. A Plunket volunteer explained that fundraising is not difficult, but just requires a person to want to do it:

> I mean some people could make a cake, make a phone call
>
> or whatever. Most people *can*. It's just whether they *want*
>
> to. People are perfectly capable. It's just whether they
>
> want to do it or not. Anybody can stand outside
>
> Pak'n'Save supermarket with a bucket, collecting money.
>
> *Anybody* can do that.

For most participants, individuals who were perfectly capable of giving but chose not to donate some of their available time, money and energy to a voluntary cause were described as selfish and lacking in community spirit. Another Plunket volunteer was scathing:

> Society now is very selfish. They look after themselves.
>
> They don't think about other people. I know people don't

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have the time anymore, but I think sometimes that's just

an excuse because people used to be very busy way back

when as well. We've got all these mod cons now to make

our life easier so I don't see how we can't help even in just

a little way. People say they're too busy but I think maybe

they're lazy or don't care. I'm harsh I know but I think

that's what it is. People don't care. They turn a blind eye

and think someone else is going to do it. It's ok – someone

else will do it. I'll use this service but someone else can

sort it out. It was really hard. People don't want to do it!

People are like "I want to come here to be with my child

and enjoy myself. Have a cup of coffee and have a chat,

but I don't really want to do much because I'll have to do

it at home."

From her perspective, other potential volunteers (coffee group mothers) will pay to consume, but are not ready to give without an identifiable benefit resulting from the transaction. This criticism conceptually separates freedom from giving. If giving is *being able* or capable of offering time and services, freedom requires *wanting* to engage.

This section has shown that participants framed volunteering as an expression of freedom. They invoked freedom at all stages of the volunteering process (joining, engagement with an organisation, and organisational exit) to explain how volunteering met higher order needs of fun, enjoyment and personal development. Most participants possessed educational, financial, material and emotional resources that facilitated their giving. For them, giving enabled

freedom. Participants were critical of "selfish" individuals whose personal circumstances permit them to volunteer but who deliberately choose to sidestep social commitments. On the other hand, they were quick to excuse those whose needs prevented them from volunteering. Family demands, work timetables or lack of money were all factors that inhibited expression of agency.

Descriptions of volunteering as agentic were consistent across participants from all three organisations. However, participants also talked about contexts which embedded a dialogic self. When volunteers described relationships with their host organisation, other volunteers, the beneficiaries of volunteering, and the wider community, they highlighted issues of relationality, commitment and obligation. The next section considers how these features create a distinct volunteer subject position: the dialogic self.

Volunteering Creates the Dialogic Self

The messy, unrepeatable nature of personal relationships can develop, extend and challenge volunteers, who find it hard to bracket volunteering from other life projects. Relationality emerged from participants' transcripts as a key concept in social services volunteering. The majority of participants admitted decisions about involvement and commitment were not always completely *free* choices, but intersubjectively negotiated within the context of relationships established through volunteering. Intrapersonal and interpersonal variation in the importance given to social ties was evident, depending on the context and connection between relational partners. In this section, I look at volunteering through the relational lenses of reciprocity and obligation, and suggest which contexts foster volunteers enacting a dialogic rather than agentic self.

Relationality

As participants described specific occasions that they categorised as extremely positive or negative, they reflected that the relationships within which these events were embedded shaped their perceptions of what it meant to be a volunteer. In fact, volunteers acquired their identity in part from and by means of these relationships. In contrast to agentic understandings, the to-and-fro nature of relationality meant that the wellbeing derived from giving was no longer completely under the volunteer's control. When considering volunteering through the lens of relationality, two quite distinct perspectives emerged:

1. The actual experience of volunteering showed some participants that volunteering involves receiving as much as giving. Volunteering was recognised to be highly *reciprocal*.

2. Other volunteers' experiences reinforced their sense that the recipients of their efforts really needed them. Hence, irrespective of whether their encounters were pleasant or challenging, being a "good" volunteer meant continuing to give. These volunteers described a strong sense of *obligation* to those served.

I briefly illustrate examples of these features, before considering how they contribute to commitment to the voluntary role.

Reciprocity

First, volunteering created reciprocal relationships between volunteers and those they served. Theoretical perspectives on norms of reciprocity have documented the tendency for individuals to respond in kind to persons who have helped them in the past in a variety of contexts such as gift-giving (Cialdini,

1988), restaurant tipping (Rind & Strohmetz, 1999) and within close relationships (Surra & Longstreth, 1990), but researchers were doubtful that this would always occur in volunteering because of the high costs associated with giving (Murnighan, Kim, & Metzger, 1993). Wuthnow (1998) suggested that volunteers from small towns would emphasise and appreciate reciprocity, whereas suburbanites would focus on the benefits of self-development. This study showed that repeated interaction led to a sense of reciprocity, irrespective of participants' geographical location. This is an important finding because studies that attempt to define volunteering by measuring its prevalence have assumed that reciprocity is a characteristic of informal networks of "bartered favors and safety nets" rather than "volunteer labor freely given" (E. Brown, 1999, p. 13).

Hence, as they described their motivation for volunteering, and how it had changed over time (as indeed it had for nearly all participants), some participants reflected that an excessive focus on what they themselves brought to the table was unbalanced. A participant explained that ignoring the benefits a relationship brings can lead volunteers to play the role of "the noble martyr and the goody goody-two shoes." Another Refugee Services volunteer who also manages volunteers for another organisation found that her attitude towards her own volunteering changed after conversations with the new volunteers she manages. She noted that the implicit do-gooder attitude of new recruits was reasonably common:

> I asked them "Why do you want to volunteer?" "Because
> I want to help." You know, everyone wanted to "do
> *good*," things like that. "Because I want to give something
> to the community." That's one that comes up quite a lot

and then I ask the question "What do you think you will

get out of it?" and the most common response was "Oh I

don't expect to get anything – I've just come here to

give!" So that's where I say "*Hello!* You never do

anything for nothing" and this comes back to what I was

saying about belonging and giving and receiving which is

part of that . . . . So I get these new recruits to look at what

they might receive in the process of volunteering.

Indeed, pride in the "help" they provide through the volunteer process can structure volunteering as rather one-sided (Devereux, 2008). Another volunteer commented that "there are elements of smugness and selfishness in feeling good, aren't there?" Some volunteers are highly conscious of the danger of only seeing what one is giving: "Helping seems like a loaded word and puts people on unequal footing." The ability to help confirms volunteers' status as members of a capable élite, as opposed to the out-group who require assistance.

Exaggerated stress on the "help" that volunteers offer to various community members/groups/enterprises can obscure the fact that volunteers receive kudos from others, a "warm glow," and personal growth through their volunteering efforts. Identification with the role confers significant amounts of self-esteem (Ashforth & Mael, 1989) about one's own abilities that are recognised by recipients and the broader community. An ambulance volunteer still vividly recalls the obvious appreciation from an elderly ambulance patient after dropping her off at her home:

> I went to grab her hand to say goodbye to her, and she
>
> pulled me down and gave me a big kiss on the cheek and
>
> she said "Thank you dear. That was such a wonderful
>
> drive back. You're just such a lovely lady." It was so nice.
>
> I love doing jobs like that. She was just so full of
>
> appreciation, and so genuine about it. It was absolutely
>
> rewarding. As I walked back to the truck, I knew I had a
>
> smile on my dial. I just remember thinking "I love this
>
> job." Yeah.

Acknowledging reciprocity may highlight volunteers' awareness of the potential power imbalance inherent in the volunteering relationship and enable them to avoid it by allowing the recipient to become the one to help and look after the giver. More importantly, acknowledging the ability of the recipient to give back reduces the risk of reinforcing dependence. Deliberately *not* helping fosters self-sufficiency, as another participant who also volunteers for St John commented:

> It took me a while to learn that but I've learnt it so I tell
>
> people to piss off if I can't do something. It is not that I
>
> can't do a lot of things, it's I don't really *need* to. You're
>
> asking me to do something that you really should be doing
>
> yourself, so and it's not helping that person by me doing
>
> it. It's better to help them to help themselves.

Another Refugee Services volunteer noted that by forcing another person to stand on their own two feet, volunteers situate others within a support network and link them into a broader community:

Because it's the understanding that everybody has a

responsibility to themselves, to help themselves through it

as well, and that you're not alone – there are resources and

there are support services available, and it's about getting

those people to connect.

In fact, participants stated that the thrill involved in moving "beneficiaries" of

volunteering to the stage where they can give back to the volunteer encapsulated

the whole point of volunteering. A Refugee Services volunteer described the

moment when she knew "her" lady had made huge progress towards

independence:

She wanted to do a sort of little dinner for me six or nine

months into the placement. I didn't really want to do it

alone, so I took a friend with me . . . . And she and one of

the other Burmese women were there, and they'd prepared

this meal for us. So we turned up and she had this table

laid out in the middle of the lounge. We sat there and ate

the dinner while they looked on. We said admiring things

about the food . . . . I was quite stunned by the whole

thing, because it's another thing of that relationship.

Suddenly I'm being waited on whereas I've always been

the one helping her. She's giving back to me by putting

me in this position, but you have to sit there and suck it up

. . . . It was kind of nice because it was them showing us

their culture, and a gift in return for the help that I'd given,

and assistance. It's an experience, and you feel good that

you've been able to get this person to a point where they

firstly *want* to do this for you and they also *can* do it for

you.

Reciprocity, then, is a form of mutual influence that enables change rather than

maintenance of the initially unequal relationship between both parties (Burgoon,

Dillman, & Stem, 1993). However, other participants described their experiences

of volunteering in terms that emphasised obligation rather than reciprocity, as I

describe below.

Obligation

As this group forged relationships with families, patients or community

members, these volunteers realised the extent of others' needs with greater clarity.

Many of these participants began volunteering armed with a range of

preconceptions about the positive relationships they would establish through

volunteer engagement and challenging or difficult encounters were a rude shock.

When the quality of interactions did not match their expectations, some volunteers

believed the onus fell on them to make the relationship work: a sense of obligation

followed negative experiences of relationality and cemented rather than

diminished their commitment to their volunteer role.

The development of obligation-based relationality usually played out as

follows. The first phase of volunteering was characterised by excitement and

enthusiasm at giving and getting involved. Negative or challenging incidents

occurred during the second phase, oftentimes to volunteers' surprise. In the third

phase, volunteers decided to continue volunteering anyway, regardless of whether

their attempts at giving were appreciated or not. These participants premised their

volunteer identity on their responsibility to continue to honour their commitments. In some sense, these volunteers were willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing for the wellbeing of those they were serving.

In the first phase, participants felt excited and enthusiastic about giving and getting involved. These participants certainly bought into the ideal that "good" volunteers create positive experiences for others, as a St John volunteer explained:

> I just love being with people. I'm a people person. It's
>
> very rewarding inside, you know inside yourself. You
>
> think, ooh, you know, you've uplifted somebody today.

Another volunteer commented that she had gone in with the expectation that it would be quite "*pleasing* to assist them in a Lady Bountiful kind of way!" These preconceptions of volunteering mirror definitions from the literature that align volunteering with a sense of positivity. Many scholars assume that volunteering builds up community (e.g., R. D. Putnam, 2000), "a "warm" term that conjures images of harmony, sometimes with a dose of nostalgia" (Wenger, et al., 2002, p. 144).

In the second phase, volunteers soon became conscious that connection in and by itself did not instantly generate community, especially when the relationships knit together highly differentiated individuals and groups. A Refugee Services volunteer described the moment he grasped the precarious link with the recipients of his efforts:

> And then it was this – although we'd met them and
>
> although we'd talked to them, turning up there and

realising we're not friends! We don't know each other very well yet feeling *so* connected in some way. Um, and there was that kind of connection and kind of getting excited again. There was also the freak out – I don't even know them! And then being in each other's physical presence, having that connection . . . thinking "What was I worried about? Why was I even *thinking* that?" And at the same time still having fear that you're going to overstep someone's cultural beliefs . . . . There was an air of absolute welcome and at the same time I was slightly frightened.

Despite his desire to develop quality relationships with the refugees, this participant realised the outcome of the encounter was by no means guaranteed. This uncertainty is a source of consternation to many volunteers, according to another participant with a lot of volunteering experience:

I think a common problem with the RMS volunteers is that they think they're going to be the saviour to this person, and that this person's going to be their friend. And that's not necessarily a good expectation to go in with because the people arriving are just like your cross-section of the community. You're going to get on with some of them, and you're not going to get on with some of them. It's a disappointment to people when they don't gel, there's nothing that's going to last.

Participants were even more surprised that voluntary relationships generated emotions such as disappointment, resentment, fear and anger, caused by ingratitude, negative feedback and criticism. The bubble sometimes burst brutally. Ambulance volunteers described their feelings of incredulity when called upon in the wee hours of the morning for broken fingernails, hyperventilating teens whose boyfriends had just dumped them, and alcohol-induced health problems. Plunket volunteers' efforts to submit timely, detailed plans for parent development for the following year were sent back from National Office with corrections rather than positive comments. Refugee Services' volunteers experienced similar awakenings. One refugee family "fired" their volunteer support team, since they did not equip their new home in New Zealand with a play-station. Another participant noted that despite Refugee Services' best efforts to provide a home for a newly-arrived family, the family resented the poor quality housing:

> Quite often you assume when people arrive in that kind of
> situation that they'll be pathetically grateful for everything
> they get . . . but not at all! They were really, really
> unhappy with the housing they were given. This was an
> upper middle class Iraqi family. They were used to mixer
> taps. Why were there no mixer taps in the house? It was
> quite challenging, because you sort of thought "Damn it, I
> don't think you've realised the context of this, that there
> are going to be families that don't get housing because you
> have."

While voluntary interactions included many positive moments, participants reflected that their expectations of volunteering as unmitigated

enjoyment and happiness had been naïve and unrealistic. While a range of

emotional experiences is hardly unexpected given that volunteers are dealing with

other members of the human race, how volunteers make sense of negative

incidents and feelings of over-commitment merits close attention, particularly

since definitions of volunteering drawn from the literature tend to emphasise the

positive outcomes of volunteering for those who engage in it as well as those they

serve.

The third phase is characterised by commitment to volunteering driven by

obligation rather than freedom. Participants' explanations of their decision to stay

on in their volunteer role despite difficult experiences challenge research on

volunteer commitment that focuses on the individual (Larkey & Morrill, 1995),

and the extent to which she identifies with organisational mission. I suggest that

the dialogic self also relies on feedback from an *other* that shapes the extent of

commitment to the volunteer role.

Interestingly, self-induced pressure to repair bad experiences and develop

relationships further intensified rather than reduced some participants' efforts.

Since relationships are never "once and done" but cover the same ground many

times through on-going interaction and negotiation, participants could re-build

their self-image as a volunteer. For instance, an ambulance volunteer detailed her

desire to save face in front of paid staff:

> I felt as if I had one of the worst shifts probably about six
>
> weeks ago, and I don't know if it was tiredness or what,
>
> but it was an officer I hadn't worked with before and I
>
> thought that was an absolute – excuse me, but *crap* shift.

It was a rotten shift. I just felt as if I wasn't switched on, I wasn't focused. He asked me some basic things which I was fumbly about and I came home and I beat myself up about it mentally and then I thought "I will fix you" and I went and put my name down very shortly afterwards with the same officer and I said "I had a rotten shift, I'm going to be better for you tonight" sort of thing, you know, and it was a much better shift.

In this case, a dialogic view of selfhood is evident. The volunteer's belief that her efforts had been interpreted and judged drove her to hone her skills. Her identity as a capable volunteer was dependent upon the opinion of the paid officer that she was working with. Nonetheless, she also refers to her ability to influence how the paid staff member viewed her contribution, by improving her current performance.

The importance attributed to others' perspectives of one's voluntary contribution rests on the strength of relational ties. When volunteering is recast as a process of ever-growing relational bonds, continued interaction results in commitment to a relational other. In the following section, I show how a sense of obligation evolves into commitment, and depending on the intensity of the relationship with the *other*, how volunteers experienced the pull of obligation, duty, and when commitment proved inconsistent, guilt.

Commitment and Guilt

The data showed that the participants in this study initially exhibited quite predictable signs of organisational commitment: buy-in to organisational goals

and engagement in organisational activities. Nearly all participants situated their voluntary role as core rather than peripheral to the organisational mission (cf, J. L. Pearce, 1993). Volunteers who identified most closely with core organisational goals had the highest commitment. This sometimes resulted in participants staying a lot longer than they thought they would. A participant who realised her voluntary role was pivotal to the survival of the organisation's local Plunket branch declared her intention to step back from her voluntary position. However, in an email exchange eight months later, she confessed to "still being here!"

The reason volunteers gave for increasing levels of commitment was closer ties with beneficiaries that created moral bonds and duties. Volunteers used analogies that compared the experience of volunteering to "child-rearing" and "having a family." For instance, a Refugee Services volunteer mentioned:

> Well I mean you just can't sort of put them aside or go home at 5 o'clock! If they need help, you've got to be available. I think the worst thing would be to say that you'll do something and then not follow it through because their lives have been so uncertain . . . . You're a constant for them, so you've got to be reliable, even if you don't do it very often. Even if you said, "I'm only coming once a week," you've got to do that. I think, if you make a commitment, you've got to be committed.

These close bonds meant that the volunteer-recipient relationship extended far beyond the fulfilment of a set of tasks. Another participant concluded, "You end up attached to them, and there is an emotional investment from them, whether

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it's a good experience or a bad experience. They will emotionally touch you in some way." What is of interest is that several participants could not find any strictly rational basis for the gradual build-up of intense feelings of personal obligation. A Refugee Services volunteer described her inability to step back in the following terms:

> It's this unrealistic idea that you'll be *finished*. They do
> talk to you in the training about how you have got to plan
> for your own redundancy. You've got to plan for you not
> to be essential in their lives and I know that I am not
> essential, I know that I could leave and nothing terrible
> would happen but . . . and they're always going to have
> issues and they are always going to have problems and
> stuff coming up but it's something I haven't got my head
> around yet.

Here, participants' comments seem to suggest that volunteering is not in essence a "free act" because relationships compromise unfettered choice of actions. Volunteers' sense of obligation did not stem from social expectations as much from awareness that if they stopped, perhaps no-one else would be available to step forward and take over (cf, Piliavin, 2001). A participant described her inability to leave her voluntary role, even though she was struggling to cope with a new paid work position:

> I also just started my first real job at the same time which
> was also working with new migrants and refugees and was
> really full on and demanded a lot of energy and I worked

quite a lot of over time in the beginning trying to get on

top of it all and I was a real stress basket and my partner

thought I was insane for volunteering. He basically said

"You're not coping. Why are you doing this? I don't

support you doing this." I said to him "I need your

support to be able to do this" and he said "I *don't* support

it, I don't think that you should be doing this right now, I

think you should wait until you have got more space and

time." It was really difficult and I decided that he was

right and I contacted RMS and I said "I don't have the

time or the space to be able to do this to its full capacity. I

think this family deserves someone who has got more time

and stuff" and they said there isn't anyone and just having

you there in a restricted capacity is better than having no

one.

Obligation does not merely dog volunteers' entry into voluntary roles, but increases and broadens with time. While volunteers do claim to put their hand up, foot-in-the-door opportunism on the part of voluntary organisations is rampant (Freedman & Fraser, 1966): volunteers begin by offering an inch and the organisations ask them to contribute a mile. An ambulance volunteer explained how he felt obliged to take on extra shifts to ensure an ambulance had a double crew, for the good of the patient and the paid officer on duty:

I've met with the odd vollie who has started a shift, then

half way through the shift given a huge yawn, and said

"Oh, see ya." I would never do that. I don't think it

happens that often, but I've heard of it happening. When –

my problem about feeling guilty . . . every occasion when

someone has rung me at home, and said "Look, would you

be able to come in because our vollie for the night hasn't

turned up." I've never been able to turn it down because I

don't know what I'd do if I said "No" and that ambulance

was on single crew and something happened. That's my

fear if I was to say no, and then going to bed, knowing that

ambulance officer is on their own, and not to be sexist but

especially if it was a lady officer . . . because you do get

put in some situations.

Several participants identified moments of truth where they realised they needed to put aside personal plans and preferences in order that all could pull together to achieve organisational goals. Another ambulance volunteer described the spill-over of cancelling her regular shift:

It's encroaching on other people, because if you can't do it

then somebody else has to step in. You've committed to

something and I've always been one if you commit to

something then you carry it through. You don't do it half

pie because it's the same with like playing in a team sport.

If one person doesn't turn up then it affects everybody and

there's a lot of mucking around with phoning people.

They might have something planned so then you feel

guilty because you've you know taken them away from

whatever they had planned.

The ripple effect that lack of commitment had on others meant all but two participants detailed feeling "guilty" about the possibility of curtailing their contribution, even when enthusiasm for the organisation's mission wore thin. Volunteers did indeed feel "trapped" (Kulik, 2007) by the thought of letting down others who "have been in it so long as well and maybe they want to get out too, and I've kind of piked out if you like. That's, yeah, the guilt of feeling that I'm piking out."

Consideration of other volunteers tended to take precedence over volunteers' own needs, until the voluntary role threatened to infringe on the legitimate rights of volunteers' families and significant others. A Plunket volunteer who needed extra time to prepare for a new baby felt intensely guilty, even though she realised she could be on the verge of burnout:

> It's the volunteer vortex! So yeah, that's how I sort of got
>
> hooked into that. I felt obliged to keep going and help
>
> because there's only five or six people regularly turning
>
> up and that's the whole city! Being able to say no is hard
>
> and I think a lot of people have problems with that.
>
> Everyone on committees can't say no, I think. *I* felt really
>
> guilty when I said to the girls I was stepping back for a
>
> while. I agonised over it for ages, but I thought "I have to.
>
> I just have to do it." Otherwise I'll just implode.

Volunteers could uphold the priority they afforded their families more easily if they were not constantly reminded of the gap their absence caused for the organisation. A St John volunteer explained:

A few weeks ago, Craig was quite crook and he was up at

the hospital with pneumonia, and I rang the shift

coordinator and I said, "That's it. I'll let you know when I

can come back." I didn't do a shift for three weeks, and he

doesn't mind. He was like "Family comes first." But you

still feel guilty about it, so I told him, "Don't send me

emails asking me to do shifts!"

When family obligations interfered continually with volunteers'

commitment to the organisation, negotiating the tension between the two interests

became impossible. If participants were not able to give the voluntary role their

best shot, most decided it would be best to "resign" so as not to leave others high

and dry at the last minute. Another St John volunteer described the tension

between volunteering and family obligations as follows:

There's absolutely no regrets apart from the time Erin was

very sick when she was only two weeks old. I broke the

rules and answered the phone because I realised something

was up because it was vibrating so much. Our shift was

ending at 6 o'clock at night, this was 10 to 6. Our pager

goes off with another job and I didn't get off the truck

until 10 o'clock that night even though Erin was in

intensive care. I hold quite high moral grounds that if I've

put my name down for that shift I will not pull out of it

without a super-duper reason because I know what it's like

from the other point of view: running an operation and

having people not turning up. So if Erin's sick or Miriam's

had a bad day and needs help I still go and leave them and

that's just absolute torment.

In every case, volunteers chose family. This participant emailed several months after the interview to say he had left his voluntary role, since another baby was on the way, and he could no longer endure his sense of guilt. Adler and Kwon (2002) suggested that this type of guilt could be due to excessive "solidarity with ingroup members [that] may overembed the actor in the relationship" (p. 30).

Summary: The Meanings of Volunteering

The meanings that participants gave to their volunteering did not entirely coincide with definitions of volunteering drawn from the literature. Volunteering was not limited to a specific *type* of activity carried out by pro-social altruists or even to a particular sector (i.e., *not* business, *not* government, *not* home) as some social theorists have suggested (Van Til, 1988). Instead, participants' descriptions of the meanings that volunteering held for them included four key elements: freedom, giving, reciprocity and obligation. Each of these elements creates a distinct interpretation of the meaning of volunteering. Freedom and giving characterise the agentic self, while reciprocity and obligation spring from a dialogic perspective.

From an agentic viewpoint, *freedom* implies that volunteers act without coercion to meet their personal wants at each stage of volunteering. Wants might include enjoyment, personal development, or feelings of contribution. Volunteering then is a *means of self-development and self-expression and a source of personal satisfaction and fun*. *Giving* depends on the possession of

abundant resources that enhance the opportunity to act freely. If an individual had the capacity to give, volunteering demonstrated a non-selfish use of freedom. Through the lens of giving, volunteering is a *personal contribution and sharing of one's resources to meet the needs of less fortunate others*.

From a dialogic perspective, volunteering is not an individual pursuit so much as the development of networks of relationships. Some volunteers expected relationships with those they worked with and for to be reciprocal. Volunteer relationships were meaningful insofar as those who received volunteers' assistance were enabled to give back in turn. *Reciprocity* means volunteers both give and take from the encounter, experience positive as well as negative emotions, and constantly re-negotiate the meaning of the relationship. When reciprocity is emphasised, volunteering is a *form of social engagement that develops others' capabilities and moves individuals towards independence*. Volunteers expect to get a sense of satisfaction out of their involvement, and if they do not, they will move on to other activities that contribute more to their wellbeing. Other volunteers described how they would continue to give regardless of the response of those served. On-going interaction created intense relational bonds, and feelings of *obligation* or responsibility towards clients, other volunteers, and the organisation. From an obligation-centred perspective, volunteering is a *moral commitment to serve needy others with whom volunteers establish relationships*. These volunteers will continue to sacrifice themselves for others' wellbeing even if the giving becomes difficult.

Evident parallels appear between pairs of definitions. That is, the definitions of volunteering understood as a manifestation of freedom and of reciprocity focus both on personal development, independence and the need to

give as well as receive. Definitions of volunteering that refer to giving and obligation, on the other hand, emphasise a judgement about relative resources and the moral requirement incumbent on fortunate individuals to alleviate others' needs.

Nonetheless, so far these four distinct answers to the research question "What meanings do individuals actually engaged with voluntary organisations give to their volunteering?" seem to contain some puzzling contradictions. While participants referred to agency when they described volunteering as "free" and/or as a manifestation of "giving," they also constructed volunteering as profoundly dialogic.

This apparent tension can be reconciled by framing volunteering as a *process* that develops oneself and one's relationships with others. That is, the meanings that participants gave to their volunteering developed over the course of their voluntary engagement. They often began volunteering armed with a whole host of preconceptions about what volunteering would be like. Social and organisational discourses of professionalism and the expectations and pressures of others created and reinforced these "horizons of experience," as I discuss in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. However, the actual experience of volunteering often re-scripted or transformed how volunteers made sense of their volunteering. In more expansive terms, volunteering is *the process whereby individuals move from privileging agency to including and acknowledging the importance of relationality*. It is a matter of becoming rather than being a volunteer (Ganesh & McAllum, 2009, p. 355). Including both agentic and dialogic dimensions of volunteering that "[pull] people between competing poles of communicative action" (W. H. Papa, et al., 2005, p. 243) provides a dialectical perspective of the

meanings of volunteering that can explain the contradictory tensions in human relationships. A dialectical perspective can also accommodate the non-linear nature of the volunteering process. The next section examines *when* volunteers made sense of their voluntary involvement in terms of an agentic self as distinct from a dialogic self, and the following discusses *how* participants alternated between these two subject positions.

Negotiating Duality

The majority of the participants appealed to agentic notions before they began to volunteer. Relational themes predominated as they switched from generic to specific explanations of what volunteering was for them, personally, and how they engaged with paid staff, other volunteers and the recipients of their efforts. Nonetheless, nearly all participants could shift abruptly between agentic and dialogic explanations of their volunteering, or could justify their obligation-motivated commitment by emphasising the role of agency in their initial decision.

Participants tended to describe volunteering as an expression of their freedom, especially when asked about their initial motivation to volunteer. Once involved, relationships seemed to condition or limit freedom to a certain extent, as demonstrated by a Plunket volunteer who compared her earliest experiences with her later commitment:

> No, [once you're in] it's a chore. For me, it's volunteer
> before you enter it. Then once you enter it, then it's like
> another job for you, ok. [It's] hard work. They didn't tell
> you that. But they didn't want to push you into it. It's like
> "Make yourself comfortable first and see how it goes, and

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then you can be a volunteer if you feel like it." But

because I thought there were not many people. . . . There

were few, so it was like "Maybe next week would you like

to do this?" so slowly they get you into it.

When describing engagement with paid staff within the organisation, other

volunteers, and beneficiaries of their efforts, participants were far more likely to

emphasise obligation and commitment. Several participants described with

annoyance volunteers who dropped out along the wayside, becoming unreliable

and unresponsive to requests, with the result that those volunteers who persevered

carried a higher burden. However, the movement between agency and

relationality did not always appear as a neat linear process as participants'

engagement with voluntary organisations deepened.

What could at first light seem confusing is that all participants seemed

quite capable of swinging from claims of agency to expressions of relational

commitment within the same breath. For example, a participant claimed that in

theory she could leave Plunket at will, but in practice, the organisation's goals

were too close to home:

We're volunteers. We can step away anytime we like. We

could leave Plunket in the lurch basically. If I left now, it

would collapse. It's just the one thing that's keeping me.

This participant spent hours every week filling in forms, sending emails, phoning

potential helpers, and coordinating other committee members' work, all close

friends. She was grateful for the supportive network she found in Plunket after the

birth of her baby. Nonetheless, the time commitment was taking its toll on her

family life and other hobbies. She managed to continue volunteering, by promising herself that very soon she would exit the role.

Volunteers reiterated their sense of agency when volunteering seemed costly, as a way of rationalising and legitimising their ongoing involvement. Another participant from Plunket described her self-talk when she did not *feel like* organising fundraising sausage sizzles on bitterly cold foggy winter mornings:

> Oh there've been times when I've thought "I don't *want* to do this" and I've resented it, but not "*Why* am I doing this?" It's a bit different I think. Because I think it's worthwhile, but I've resented it, nonetheless.

In this case, the participant felt obliged because she didn't want to let the rest of the committee down. She overcame her resistance by reminding herself that her giving was worthwhile. What is of note is that while she referenced elements of both the agentic and dialogic self, she did not mention freedom. I propose that the key to understanding the dual nature of volunteering hinges upon how volunteers construe and enact the relationship between the agentic and dialogic self. The next section suggests that volunteers manage the dual nature of volunteering in two distinct ways.

Diverse Volunteer Pathways

In this section, I employ a pathway metaphor to point out two routes that volunteers can take as they move to and fro between agentic and dialogic subject positions. Like any form of analogy, metaphors do not adequately capture some features of a phenomenon, yet highlight other aspects in a useful way. The pathway metaphor is useful here because it shows the multiple options available

to volunteers. Those on a pathway also choose which maps or features to pay attention to in order to choose their direction: in this case, needs of self, or needs of others. However, the pathway metaphor also has temporal connotations that suggest that volunteering is a journey, which may be more helpful in conceptualising the giving-obligation pathway than the freedom-reciprocity pathway.

Table 2 shows the two ways in which volunteers may shift between agentic and dialogic subject positions: freedom-reciprocity or giving-obligation. Volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway freely choose volunteer "projects" to meet an existing interest of need. Volunteers evaluate how their giving is reciprocated, and if it is not, they invoke the freedom that they enjoy as volunteers and assert their right to move on. Volunteers on the giving-obligation pathway choose to give because they have superabundant resources available to offer to others. The act of giving to needy others develops a strong sense of obligation and commitment that tends to reinforce the initial decision to get involved.

Table 2

Volunteer Pathways between the Agentic and Dialogic Subject Positions

Agentic Self	Freedom	Giving
↕	↕	↕
Dialogic Self	Reciprocity	Obligation

The data suggests that when a volunteer attends to needs of "self" first, they move synchronically between agency and relationality, by invoking freedom

and reciprocity. Alternatively, when volunteers focus on others ahead of themselves, they move *diachronically* from agency to relationality, as giving leads to obligation.

Freedom and Reciprocity

Volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway move *synchronically* between agentic and dialogic subject positions. The section on reciprocity suggested that when volunteers enact relationality in a reciprocal manner, they expect that those who benefit from their efforts will give back in some way. This expectation of some kind of return led one participant to reject the possibility of selfless giving outright:

> Often people think volunteering is something you do for
>
> the good of society, so even if I don't enjoy it I should do
>
> it. *I* just would not. I absolutely would not! It would be a
>
> disaster for the people on the other end. They would see I
>
> was getting irritated. I'm not very good at hiding that. I'm
>
> just not very patient!

The payback from volunteering could take the form of a sense of challenge or personal growth, the development of new skills, and in terms of the dialogic self, enriching relationships.

While volunteers on this pathway appreciated the relationships that volunteering affords, they carefully weighed up the costs and benefits of giving. This view of relationships employs a mechanistic metaphor (Froggatt, 1998) that implies that individuals can smoothly switch on and off different aspects of their lives at will (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). This sense was apparent in a

participant's explanation of how he decided how much energy to expend on volunteering: "I volunteer because my time can be used wisely and it can benefit others. But I'm not doing it to the detriment of my own enjoyment of my life." If after rational consideration, volunteers decided the relationship was not reciprocal but burdensome, they invoked freedom to justify moving on. All participants quoted in this section were in the process of leaving or had already left their voluntary role.

The data suggested that when volunteers perceived the payback to be insufficient or irrelevant to their needs or wants, they immediately invoked freedom to justify a cut-back in their level of involvement or their decision to abandon the volunteer experience completely. Since these volunteers attempted to balance their involvement by sharing at an "appropriate" level (Owen, 1985, p. 5), they were puzzled by other volunteers' sense of guilt. A Refugee Services' volunteer explained:

> I know what I'm willing to do. That's the founding
>
> principle from which I work. I guess that in a situation
>
> where there could be potential compromise, I will choose
>
> and if in that situation I felt that I was only doing
>
> something because I felt obliged, then I would not do it.

The first reason for switching synchronically from reciprocity back to freedom was that volunteering became too personally costly in terms of time or effort. The second, and often related, reason was that other non-work experiences seemed to contribute more to personal wellbeing than volunteering did. One participant who had decided to abandon her volunteer role at Plunket explained

that "There's just too many meetings in the evenings and things and weekends. Time is too valuable. We and our friends also have lots of interests like sports and travel and things." Another participant from Refugee Services broke off her contact with the refugee family following the end of the placement and took up pottery classes instead. These classes enabled her to take some time out from her own family without the difficulties of dealing with continual phone calls demanding for help.

The data has shown that volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway expected their contribution to the relationships formed through the volunteering experience to be reciprocated. When the benefits received were insufficient or unsuitable, or personal costs too high, volunteers shifted synchronically to an agentic subject position, and explained their decision to exit or curtail their involvement by invoking freedom. Volunteers who prefaced their involvement on giving and obligation described volunteering in quite different terms. I compare the main features below.

Giving and Obligation

Volunteers on the giving-obligation pathway move *diachronically* from an agentic to a dialogic subject position. Whereas volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway moved fluidly between agentic and dialogic subject positions, the giving-obligation pathway tended to be uni-directional. Giving created strong relationships that developed a sense of obligation to keep giving. Some volunteers became "super-volunteers" who gave beyond the call of duty. Nevertheless, at times, volunteers' ability to remain focused on others' needs was threatened by personal needs that intruded on volunteer engagement, and volunteers were forced to step off the pathway completely. I describe this pathway below.

This group of volunteers' initial decision to give was strengthened over time by the relationships that they established with recipients. As relationships deepened, recipients became more embedded in volunteers' personal networks. Volunteers then continued to give, even when they didn't *want* to, as a participant explained:

> It's like a combination between going to work and helping your granny! Because it is something that you feel that you ought to do but it is also something that you want to do. Volunteering . . . I suppose a very simplistic view is doing something that you don't have to do for pretty much like the - I don't know - the *love* of it's not the right word but because you want to or I suppose in some cases because you feel obligated to.

Another participant limited agency to the moment she "put her hand up" to do a job. Afterwards, relational ties created a web of commitment that solidified that first choice, rather than fomenting analysis of purpose and worth:

> I got sucked in and then I put my hand up to do something and then that was it. You know I hate being a quitter so I don't want to let them down so four years later. What stops me from quitting? Leaving the others. Leaving it unfinished. Letting people down.

Of note are the references that this participant made to her obligation to "them," "the others" and "people." Another participant also suggested that individuals with a "volunteering mindset" are programmed to say yes without adequately

analysing the personal consequences of doing so, especially in situations with small numbers of volunteers, and, as a consequence, high workload. Several participants later wondered what had possessed them in the heat of the moment to agree to another responsibility:

> You step up on a committee, and say "I'll be a committee member." You don't have a secretary and you can't run without one, so someone who has got that sort of volunteering, guilt-ridden mindset will say "Oh yeah, I'll put my hand up and do it because no one else will . . . . Yip I'll do it."

One possible reason for this focus on others, often to the detriment of the self, was the example of family members and friends that gave unconditionally. Most participants on this pathway described family members or significant figures in their lives who had shared time and skills that had been fundamental for their personal development, and felt inspired to follow this example. Research on how family background and social position promotes a tradition of volunteering (Palmer, et al., 2007; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997b) was reflected in participants' explanation that since they had "received so much," they intended to "pay it forward" in their turn.

As a result, volunteers on this pathway tended to evolve into "super-volunteers" spending nearly every free moment giving to a cause. A participant who volunteers for Plunket spent about five minutes explaining her current workload:

I spend a lot of time on the phone or on the email. Taking

bookings because people hire out the Plunket rooms.

Sorting out keys – making sure people have the key to get

in. A lady just phoned me about Raglan's building. The

council reckon they own it and Plunket reckon they own

it. And because Raglan come in under Hamilton's branch,

I need to be involved. They're looking for all their minutes

at the moment. So I said "Look, we'll have a meeting at

my house with all the minutes here. You all come up, and

we'll sort it out." That was this morning. And I sent off

some emails about grants because all the grants are

coming to an end. So last night we had a meeting . . . .

What we've got, what needs sorting out, what we can

apply for next. Tomorrow I'll be going to the bank. All

sorts of little jobs. I've got minutes to type up at the

moment because the secretary's left. She's having a baby.

That's the problem at Plunket – everybody has babies and

leaves! Oh, and I was on the phone just before you came.

A coffee group friend of mine who I've managed to get to

come on the committee, she's organising our Fish and

Game catering for Saturday.

This participant wanted to scale back her role, in order to take on *another* role as

co-President on a Playcentre committee and as a reading helper at the local

primary school. However, she felt obliged to support the Plunket committee,

which was operating with small numbers and without the assistance of a paid

administrator. She also explained that she continued Plunket volunteering, despite the long hours, because she had time that other working mums lacked and a house that was spacious enough for meetings.

She, along with several other volunteers who deserved the super-volunteer label, did not describe themselves as such, since they defined super-volunteers as those whose commitment extended over decades, usually to multiple causes. Three participants described this type of volunteer by referring to a local television programme, Mucking In that shows "deserving kiwis" who volunteer being rewarded for their efforts with a surprise garden makeover (Mucking In, 2008, para. 1). The show's producers specify nominees as follows:

> The people we are looking for as recipients are those who
> are exceptional within your community - they are standout
> in their generosity toward others whether they know them
> or not. They are the people who go **way beyond** their
> family and friends in their kindness - it may be someone
> who does major voluntary work or someone who tirelessly
> over the years never fails to care for people way beyond
> what everyone else does. More often than not these
> people are motivated by a generous heart and quietly go
> about their business not seeking any form of recognition.
> (How to make nominations, 2008, para. 1)

In sum, volunteering had subsumed other facets of these individuals' identity to such an extent that their whole identity revolved around their volunteer role. This interpretation of volunteering has a long-term impact on super-volunteers' identity

similar to Dempsey and Sanders' (2010) study of social entrepreneurs who draw "upon the notion of a calling" (p. 439) to give to other people. Although social entrepreneurs receive some financial remuneration, they are only able to offer the popular imagination a "compelling vision of meaningful work . . . [by celebrating] a problematic account of work/life balance centered on extreme self-sacrifice and the privileging of organizational commitment at the expense of health, family and other aspects of social reproduction" (Dempsey & Sanders, 2010, p. 439).

Evidently, not all volunteers on the giving-obligation pathway evolve into super-volunteers. This group of volunteers often stop volunteering completely, not because they re-assess the resources they have at their disposal to give, but because the needs of other relational others, especially family, compromise their ability to continue volunteering at their current level. This outcome is not surprising, given that volunteers on the giving-obligation pathway exhibit high levels of commitment and often give more than they expected to when they first began volunteering.

Nonetheless, even after they had left a volunteer role, these volunteers tended to step back onto the volunteering pathway, as in the case of a Refugee Services volunteer who felt guilty that she had not contacted the refugee woman she was working with before she shifted cities at short notice. She reflected that this experience propelled her into her next volunteer endeavour:

> I got a sudden transfer from Auckland to Wellington, and I
> left in the space of a week. I desperately wanted to go to
> Wellington, so I buggered off – and I didn't go and see
> her. And I have always regretted not going to see her that

week because I didn't return to Auckland for quite a

while. I wrote her letters saying "I've gone to Wellington.

I'm sorry I'm not here" but I've never heard back from her

and I've never talked to her again. And I don't know

what's happened. And then I left again to go overseas. I've

been back in New Zealand for a year. But I've no idea.

I've thought about contacting her through RMS but time's

spun so long, and I just feel like she might think I ditched

her. And there's like a kind of unfinished thing sitting

there. And I suspect that's what propelled me into the

second. So in a way my second volunteering effort was

probably penance of a sort!

Relationships established through their volunteering roles continued to play a constitutive part in the formation of these volunteers' identity. First, these relationships indicated which sectors of the community needed support and assistance, and often one volunteering experience led on to other forms of volunteer activity in related areas. Two participants had even taken on paid roles for nonprofit organisations that drew on the knowledge and skills they had gained from volunteering. These "career volunteers" had a distinctive occupational identity linked to the volunteer role. Second, some participants described how organisational volunteering enabled them to create new volunteer relationships where they could put into practice lessons learnt from previous volunteer relationships that had been mismanaged or negative. Only in this way could volunteers attempt to maintain their self identity as the benign, "nice" person they had hoped they were.

Conclusion

Participants gave diverse meanings to their voluntary engagement that are not captured by current definitions in the literature that emphasise free choice and socially beneficial outcomes. The data indicated that volunteering has a dual nature that embraces both personal agency and relationality. The chapter expanded on the features of each dimension, before showing that the relationship between the two halves is equally complex. I review each aspect in turn.

Personal agency is implied in the very term "volunteering" (*voluntas* = will). Participants framed volunteering as a free, un-coerced act that was not motivated by physical need. Definitions of freedom also included the ability to leave when volunteering no longer offered individuals the opportunity to increase life enjoyment, develop skills, and broaden networks. Additionally, certain characteristics seemed to foster a superabundance of agency. Specifically, individuals who had more resources, skills, and space were expected to be more capable. One natural outlet for their super-agency could be volunteering, and talented individuals who did not engage tended to be labelled as selfish.

The other dimension of volunteering emphasises the strong relational bonds that the actual experience of volunteering engenders. In one sense, relationality overturns the "nice" image that participants noticed tends to swamp media reports. Relationships are built through give and take, can generate negative as well as positive emotions, and are constantly re-negotiated through interaction. On the other hand, these relational bonds can create feelings of commitment, obligation, and even guilt for some volunteers.

I suggest that the dual nature of volunteering is evident both when volunteers distinguish between different stages of the volunteering process (decisions to enter and exit) and when they move from defining volunteering in generic terms to specific, personal examples. However, the duality also appears when volunteers attempt to re-script or justify why they are or are not doing what is expected in the voluntary relationship. The ways in which individuals can make the agency-relationality transition construct different understandings of volunteering. From a freedom/reciprocity perspective, volunteers weigh up the demands of relationality in terms of the cost to personal freedom, and feel comfortable to move on to another alternative that fits their life projects better. Individuals on the giving/obligation pathway, on the other hand, tend to jump in boots and all after their initial decision to give. The experience of volunteering confirms rather than challenges this first choice. This more dialectical perspective of volunteering allows a more nuanced understanding of the relationships between volunteering and identity, coordination issues, and relationality than do current definitions available in the literature, that emphasise either freedom or relational connection.

One significant influence on both volunteers' preconceptions of volunteering and on how volunteers might interpret appropriate forms of relational expression is organisational discourses of professionalism. As discussed in the literature review, media, academics and practitioners have debated the possibility and ethics of insisting upon professionalism in volunteer contexts and the impact on volunteers' wellbeing. As professionalism can structure the horizons of meaning without necessarily being aligned with the essential structures of volunteering itself, I have chosen to treat the meanings of

volunteering and the professionalism-wellbeing relationship separately. The

relationships between professionalised volunteering and wellbeing are discussed

in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: PROFESSIONALISED VOLUNTEERING AND WELLBEING

Volunteers and those who study them cannot ignore professionalism, as the major trend since the 1984 market reforms has been the New Zealand social services sector's abandonment of a charity model of volunteering. In fact, many practices in the nonprofit sector increasingly resemble those of the corporate world (Tennant, et al., 2008). Scholarly investigation has suggested that the adoption of professionalised practices is diametrically opposed to the creative, ill-defined, community-oriented character of volunteering (Knight, 1993; Milligan, 1998; Milligan & Fyfe, 2005). Local commentators from the popular press have also proposed a causal link between nonprofits' adoption of businesslike behaviour and disillusionment with volunteering (e.g., McNeill, 2002). This bifurcated professionalism-volunteering model assumes that the imposition of standards and knowledge requirements might well threaten volunteers' freedom. Second, the model presumes that limiting emotional display might undermine rich volunteer relationships and, consequently, reduce volunteers' wellbeing.

However, the problem with the professionalism-volunteering debate as it stands is that the term "professionalism" is used too loosely. As described in Chapter 1, professionalism refers to the *identity positions* and *practices* that develop within and alongside the *structures* and *processes* of professionalisation. This project argues that bureaucratisation, marketisation and rationalisation, as distinctive processes of professionalisation, lead to different types of professional practices and identities, and create diverse subject positions.

The review of the literature on professionalism suggested that each variant of professionalisation highlights a different attribute of professionalism. That is, bureaucratisation focuses on the possession and ethical use of specialist

knowledge, creating a professional identity as an "expert." Marketisation emphasises flexibility and initiative that is monitored by knowledgeable peers, leading to a professional identity as a self-propelled "manager." Rationalisation stresses efficiency in task performance and restricted emotional display. In order to reach identified goals, the individual adopts the identity of an "agent."

Given these diverse understandings of professionalism, it becomes imperative to consider how the organisations in this study construct professionalism through their codes of conduct. In addition, I consider how these codes of conduct construct wellbeing, and what concepts of wellbeing underpin these constructs. Finally, organisational messages about the professionalism-wellbeing relationship are compared with volunteers' views. Specifically, this chapter addresses three research questions:

RQ2: How do codes of conduct construct professionalism for organisational volunteers?

RQ3: How do the codes of conduct position the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing?

RQ4: How do volunteers relate organisational notions of professionalism to their own wellbeing?

To answer the second and third research questions, I first analyse how organisational codes of conduct construct professionalism, and how these notions of professionalism feed into organisationally-defined views of wellbeing. I begin by presenting the sources and specificity of and mode of communicating each organisation's codes of conduct. The section on *sources* specifies whether the codes of conduct appear in written and audiovisual documentation and/or as directives and feedback from coordinators and advisors about how policies and

regulations ought to be implemented. *Specificity* examines how explicit organisational messages about professionalism were, and the section on *communication* describes how formal and informal codes of conduct were communicated to volunteers. I then look at the key messages about professionalism and its relationship with wellbeing embedded in organisational codes of conduct. I address the fourth research question by evaluating how volunteers responded to organisational messages about professionalism in terms of their wellbeing, since the ways in which participants enact precepts determine how policies become practice (Kirby & Krone, 2002).

Within the first half of this chapter, I comment on how organisational codes of conduct construct professionalism, and how these notions of professionalism draw upon and simultaneously cast light upon particular understandings of professionalisation.

Codes of Conduct, Professionalism and Wellbeing at Refugee Services

This section begins with an analysis of Refugee Services' codes of conduct, before suggesting what notions of professionalism and wellbeing are embedded in the codes. The overarching message in Refugee Services' codes of conduct is that volunteers must erect boundaries around the role, in order to protect their personal (non-volunteering) life.

Refugee Services' Codes of Conduct

Refugee Services' codes of conduct, which are contained in the training manual and policy documents and supplemented by staff explanations, are primarily communicated during the six week training period preceding

volunteers' placement with a refugee family. The written documents explicitly label the volunteer role as "professional."

Sources

The source document is the 200-page training manual that includes course material on issues related to effective refugee resettlement, and the policies and procedures that manifest the "attitudes and behaviours that people should have when doing this type of work" (National Office staff member). Volunteers agree to comply with policies and procedures by signing a code of conduct that establishes the parameters of the volunteer-refugee and volunteer-organisation relationships, and fulfils the organisation's health and safety obligations.

Specificity

Refugee Services presents volunteering as a job rather than a hobby or amateur interest. Although National Office staff hesitated to label the volunteer experience as "professional," the training document does insist that "professional behaviours must be maintained at all times as a representative of the Refugee & Migrant Service" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 8). The label of "volunteer support *worker*" also indicates the link to paid work. Hence, the training manual includes copies of the "Volunteer Support *Worker Job* Description" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 46) and the "Volunteer Support *Worker* Agreement" (p. 48). One local coordinator attributed the name change to the perceived need by Refugee Services for individuals to realise the role was a real job, rather than a bit of sporadic volunteering on the side.

From the organisation's perspective, the codes of conduct clearly spell out the objectives of the volunteer "role," which include 1) assisting with the material

demands of resettlement, 2) introducing refugees into broader social networks, and 3) promoting cultural tolerance.

The manual lists specific expectations around the first two objectives in the job description and volunteer support worker agreement. To meet the third objective, each individual agrees to "respect any family cultural and religious heritage and customs, to learn about these with sensitivity, and refrain from any imposition of one's own beliefs or cultural customs" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 48). In addition, breaching any item on the official list of 'don'ts' – engaging in illegal/criminal activity, proselytising to different faiths, or breaching confidentiality of the family – would result in termination of the organisation-volunteer relationship. In general though, little written material treats specifically how volunteers are to achieve the third objective in line with Refugee Services' vision of New Zealand as "a vibrant and diverse society that welcomes and values refugees and fosters social and economic participation" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 46). The training manual gives three pages of pointers about what the organisation's values of "respect, integrity, empowerment, partnership, community/family, and innovation" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, pp. 41-43) might look like, but these are general recommendations such as offering "appropriate assistance" and "providing emotional support" (p. 41).

Communication

The experiential training sessions aim to increase volunteers' cross-cultural awareness over the course of the compulsory six week programme that volunteers complete before their assignment to a refugee family. The training encourages deep learning by asking volunteers to keep a Course Journal that is a reflective evaluation of each session. During the six month placement, volunteers

also select ten "interventions" with their refugee family for a Fieldwork Journal, to identify self-learning and volunteer-facilitated learning by the refugee family. Additionally, volunteer support workers attend two volunteer support meetings with the Team Supervisor, to monitor the needs of the volunteers in the team, as well as those of the refugee family during the placement.

Through gradual organisational socialisation, Refugee Services uses the written documentation and staff input at each stage of training to foster a particular view of professionalism which I unpack in the following section.

What Notions of Professionalism are Embedded in Refugee Services' Codes of Conduct?

The key theme running through the codes of conduct is that an individual must make distinctions between what she does under the auspices of the volunteer role and what she does in a personal capacity. The codes of conduct specify two reasons for this compartmentalisation of life domains. First, erecting boundaries between life domains protects volunteers' personal space. Second, and more importantly, volunteers' adherence to a strictly bounded role enhances achievement of the organisational goal of refugee independence. That is, by operating within the parameters of the volunteer role, volunteers contribute to realising Refugee Services' vision of best practice refugee resettlement. On the flip side, operating within the boundaries also acts as a control mechanism of sorts that prevents volunteers from pushing their own version of resettlement on refugees, such as forcing them to adopt a "Kiwi" lifestyle.

This specification of the means best suited to achieve a particular end draws on a rationalised view of professionalism. Refugee Services' *end* or goals

are refugee empowerment and the development of a tolerant, open society. The means that Refugee Services expects volunteers to use in order to achieve these goals include limiting task involvement, avoiding intimacy in personal relationships and accepting diverse forms of cultural expression. These three areas all revolve around effective boundary management. By following training guidelines faithfully, volunteers become "agents" who carry out Refugee Services mission efficiently and effectively wherever they are.

Task Involvement

The codes of conduct describe boundaries around task involvement in terms of time availability, money management and the need for volunteers to refer serious issues to professionals. These boundaries act as a means to protect volunteers' time, resources and emotional space, respectively. This *end*, protecting volunteers, may seem at first glance to be distinct from the overarching organisational goal of refugee independence. However, since volunteers are an essential component of Refugee Services' resettlement process, the organisation needs to enhance volunteers' ability to combine their volunteer role with their paid work, family responsibilities and other life interests as a matter of pragmatic self-interest. Volunteers who are able to manage multiple roles tend to commit to the organisation over a longer time period.

The first strategy to enhance volunteers' commitment involves restricting the extent to which the demands of the volunteer role cut into other life domains. The importance that the organisation puts on safeguarding volunteers' time is indicated by the placement of the "Guidelines for Boundary Setting" directly after the Volunteer Support Worker Agreement in the training manual. The manual suggests communicating clearly to refugee families the times that one will be

available to visit. The first reason is to enable volunteers to "maintain healthy boundaries" and "avoid burnout" (p. 49). The Guidelines for Boundary Setting stipulate that "you cannot be everything to everyone" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 49).

The second explanation reminds volunteers not to step in and do everything for a family; instead, they must focus on the "end goal . . . [of] independence for the client" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 49). Key indicators of appropriate support include "doing things with them rather than for them; not taking the easy way of doing things yourself; respecting their ability to make decisions for themselves; giving them the information they need to make decisions; encouraging them to access services themselves as soon as they feel confident enough" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 42).

The second type of boundary that protects volunteers and fosters refugees' independence is Refugee Services' stipulation that "It is not Refugee Services' policy for volunteers to lend money to refugees. Should volunteers choose to do so, they must take full liability" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 8). The second sentence applies the criterion of independence and personal responsibility to volunteers in the same way as the organisation does to refugees. Hence, one National Office staff member framed volunteers' decisions to act beyond the bounds of the role as a personal choice, and therefore outside the ambit of Refugee Services' responsibility:

> If they have made that decision, then they're saying "I'm
>
> not doing this as part of my volunteer role. I am doing this
>
> because of my relationship with this person." That is

different. There will always be instances where people

will cross that line, whether it's for guilt or for any other

reason. Those are *individual, private choices* that people

make. We're not going to legislate what those choices

will be, but we give guidelines.

The third area where Refugee Services tries to reduce the ever-expanding

demands of the volunteer role is by requiring that volunteers recognise the

"indicators for referral to professionals" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 5).

Volunteers are encouraged to refer serious issues to professional counsellors,

social workers and cross cultural workers, since "if you try to do a much bigger

role, you can actually find yourself very much out of your depth and that is not a

safe situation for people to be in." One National Office staff member commented

on the organisation's legal responsibilities to ensure volunteers' health and safety,

noting that

Under the law . . . occupational health and safety

[legislation] requires organisations to treat volunteers as

they would employees . . . . So, we have proper policies

and procedures, clear guidelines of what the job

descriptions and roles are.

These procedures that delineate the limits of the volunteer role also protect

refugees since volunteers' interventions could potentially backfire due to their

lack of experience or expertise.

Nonetheless, if volunteers did choose to "operate outside the policies and

procedures," she argued that "they take that on themselves. They have made a

choice, and that can have consequences." Since almost anything could happen if volunteers ignore policies and procedures designed to protect health and safety, Refugee Services insists that volunteers must take responsibility for those actions that fall outside the scope of the codes of conduct.

Acceptable Personal Relationships

The second element where boundaries are invoked refers to the maintenance of a certain personal distance between volunteers and refugees. The codes of practice clause reads: "The special nature of the relationship between the volunteer and refugee requires clear boundaries" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 8). In fact, if relationships with refugees become "intimate," the policy stipulates that the "volunteer must resign from this role" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 8). The codes of practice imply that intimacy collapses boundaries that are integral to the role.

Nonetheless, in practice, members of staff at the National Office did acknowledge that many volunteers do develop close personal relationships, and will therefore be unable to take on a new family. They specifically noted that "the intensity of the ongoing relationship with the bulk of our families . . . [means] that many volunteers may not be in a situation that they can continue to give another big dose of that to another family."

Appropriate Cultural Attitudes

The codes of conduct also require volunteers to demonstrate a tolerant approach to the wide range of value systems that they will encounter as they deal with refugees from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. The training manual insists volunteers abandon any "patronising attitude to other cultures,"

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with a "romantic notion of the 'poor refugees'" and instead "respect refugees and treat them as equals" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 43). The document further urges volunteers to exhibit attitudes of tolerance and compassion, recognising that what volunteers perceive to be the "New Zealand way" (p. 43) may appear odd to refugees. Such detachment from cultural norms, the organisational codes of conduct claim, will allow volunteers to maintain their boundaries and will mitigate concern about cultural choices.

Two assumptions underpin this organisational mandate. First, from Refugee Services' perspective, volunteers themselves vary in their values and social practices, and therefore identifying a shared national heritage and traditions that transcend individual differences could be problematic. One National Office staff member pointed out that "even individual families in the same culture have different cultural norms, different things that are expected. So you learn to be flexible about those and that's the same situation here." Second, willingness to engage with others' cultural norms needs to be the dominant note in creating an open, welcoming society built on *respect*, a key organisational value. Respect means that volunteers allow refugees to decide how to integrate their own cultural perspective with the information and experiences that they have provided for them. National Office staff gave an example of a possible refugee perspective:

> You might hear that women are equal [to men] in New
> Zealand culture. From your own cultural perspective, you
> would look at how that fits and what parts of that do you
> accept and what parts do you find beyond your culture?
> The refugee might decide that some of those things are
> behind their cultural boundaries.

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She noted that in the desire to show respect and acceptance of otherness, volunteers can over-accommodate, "almost subjugating your culture because you're so busy trying to respect and deal with their culture."

To protect volunteers' own values and beliefs, Refugee Services highlights another key value in the training document: *integrity*. Integrity requires volunteers to live out their own values with coherence when others' cultural practices challenge what is dear to them. Integrity means that volunteers are aware that "there are certain things that are sacrosanct in *your* culture . . . so you realise 'I'm very happy to make allowances in these areas but actually with this, this is where my boundary stops'" (National Office staff). In sum, effective refugee resettlement within an open tolerant society requires volunteers to continually find a balance between respecting views that may conflict with their own, and standing firm about their own "cultural boundaries."

This section has shown that the codes of conduct promote a form of volunteering that draws on a rationalised view of professionalism. To realise Refugee Services' aim of refugee independence, volunteers must use the appropriate means. If volunteers adhere to the volunteer role and establish clear boundaries in terms of task involvement, emotional intimacy and cultural tolerance, they will contribute to achieving Refugee Services' goal more efficiently.

A rationalised view of professionalism emphasises efficiency rather than relationships. If the volunteer *role* rather than refugee-volunteer *relationships* drives interactions and involvement, volunteers will be protected from having refugee resettlement take over their life. That is, the role limits tasks, while

relationships can increase task expectations. The role rejects intimacy, while relationships can build it. The role demands cultural tolerance and value neutrality, while relationships foster mutual sharing of values. In the following section, I discuss how Refugee Services professionalism vis-à-vis wellbeing.

How does Refugee Services Position the Relationship between Wellbeing and Professionalism?

Refugee Services constructs the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing as mutually reinforcing. First, organisational representatives explicitly mentioned that only "well" individuals are able to be professional, since they do not use the role to meet personal needs. Second, staff situated wellbeing as the natural outcome of professional conduct. In this section, I discuss how Refugee Services staff and the codes of conduct frame wellbeing as a prerequisite for enacting professionalism and construct professionalism as fundamental for maintaining wellbeing.

To Enact Professionalism, Potential Volunteers Need to be "Well"

Refugee Services' codes of conduct and staff comments positioned wellbeing as an essential prerequisite for taking on the role. The training manual has an entire section entitled "The Role of the Volunteer Support Worker." The first page contains a diagram that indicates various personal motivations for taking on the volunteer role. Examples include "desire to make friends," "desire to feel needed/valued," "personal growth & challenge," and "giving back to others in reciprocation for personal support" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 38). The manual then states:

> When you understand your motivations, it is easier to
> ensure that your needs are met. It is important to keep your
> motivation in balance with the required task. You need to
> be aware that a strong motivation in one area does not
> interfere with the role of the VSW . . . . The VSW role
> might meet some of your needs. Others might be better
> met by the team or RMS staff or outside the VSW role (p.
> 38).

The course guidelines document stated that volunteers' primary motivation must be to meet the needs of the refugees and not their own needs. One National Office staff member confirmed this point, explaining that "If volunteers are to help people settle in New Zealand, they must themselves be well settled." This prior level of wellbeing is essential if volunteers are to be able to live out aspects of the role in a professional manner. That is, if potential volunteers are using the role to meet friendship or other social needs, they will be vulnerable to burnout due to lack of clear boundaries, since close relationships increase the level of expectation that volunteers will give continually.

Refugee Services hopes hearing worst-case scenarios will put off overly needy individuals at the outset, and prepare those who stay for eventualities outside their previous experience. The deliberate presentation of scenarios such as drug dealing, arrests, and domestic violence also encourages volunteers to ask for help when traumatic incidents occur. Usually capable individuals can struggle to manage their own emotional responses and manifest agency when they encounter situations that require specialist assistance or new skill sets that their own professional training has not equipped them for.

Well-Lived Professionalism is Necessary to Maintain Wellbeing

According to Refugee Services' codes of conduct documents and staff explanations, professionalism enables volunteers to maintain wellbeing. First, professionalism means maintaining the volunteer role through the erection of clear boundaries that protect personal and work time from time spent volunteering. This prevents overload and enables volunteers to take care of their own needs (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 49). Second, professionalism requires buy-in to the organisation's aim of encouraging the independence of refugees and supporting them to reach *their* goals (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 46).

In terms of time commitment, Refugee Services claimed that volunteers choose where their boundaries are. Hence, variation in what constitutes a busy or full timetable for each volunteer is not especially problematic, and challenges objective notions of wellbeing that cite the absence of stressors, such as role ambiguity, role conflict, work overload, and work-family conflict (Firth, Mellor, Moore, & Loquet, 2004). The training document does remind volunteers that when they do not know how to prioritise goals and boundaries threaten to collapse, "you are not on your own – talk with your team" (RMS Refugee Resettlement, 2006, p. 49). Refugee Services staff reiterated the importance of the team approach for volunteers to maintain clear volunteering-work-life boundaries, particularly in the early stages when volunteers have to furnish the house for refugees.

The second component of professionalism indispensable for volunteers' wellbeing is a focus on refugees' independence and responsibility for their own behaviour and values. National Office staff insisted that volunteers have to

relinquish control over how they think the family should act, and give them space
to make mistakes if need be:

> Volunteers may well work very hard with a family and not
>
> receive a lot of thanks. In our training, we put up the
>
> lifesavers scenario where the person goes out and rescues
>
> someone and they swear at them, throw up and go back
>
> out to swim again. It's the same sort of situation here.
>
> You can do your best. You can give them information,
>
> and they may choose to take a completely different path,
>
> to disregard that information, to do things that you think
>
> are perhaps unwise and they have the right to do that.
>
> They are individuals. One of the things we are trying to
>
> do with refugee resettlement is to give people back their
>
> decision-making ability so that they are able to control
>
> their own lives within society, within our rules and you
>
> have to allow people to do that.

Refugee Services privileges refugee families' choices over volunteers'
expectations and judgements. That is, the role encourages refugee families to
grow towards independence building on their own cultural values and religious
practices rather than measuring the success of resettlement according to the extent
to which refugees adopt "New Zealand habits" (RMS Refugee Resettlement,
2006, p. 43). Volunteers, then, should not have to be concerned if refugees act in a
manner that does not seem consistent with the "New Zealand way." Their
wellbeing depends on their ability to be detached from refugees' cultural choices.

Codes of Conduct, Professionalism and Wellbeing at Plunket

Plunket volunteering involves planning parenting education and

development, and funding these programmes and the clinics from which they

operate. Due to the amount of money involved, the committees of local women

who raise and manage these funds are subject to a whole ream of reporting

requirements that document how funds used to further community development

are spent. I begin the section with a brief analysis of the codes of conduct, before

suggesting that the notions of professionalism and wellbeing that the codes invoke

draw on different sources. Hence, organisational messages about wellbeing do not

always coincide with a professionalised volunteer role.

Plunket's Code of Conduct

Volunteers can access Plunket's codes of conduct through the Plunket

intranet, training booklets, training workshops and informal knowledge-sharing.

The codes of conduct do not clearly specify what the volunteer role entails.

Instead, they focus on how volunteers are to fulfil the reporting requirements, in

ways which are similar to business practice.

Sources

Volunteers can locate Plunket's codes of conduct in the Society Rules,

which can be found on Plunket's intranet, *The Cradle*. *The Cradle* also contains

templates for volunteers to use to fulfil reporting requirements. Training materials

can be split into three groups. First, the *Welcome to Plunket* (2009) booklet issued

at the introductory workshop sets out guidelines for conduct that apply to all

organisational members, whether volunteers or paid staff. Second, volunteer

office-holder manuals spell out the functions and reporting responsibilities of

presidents, vice-presidents and treasurers in detail. Third, volunteer-specific

workshop booklets directed to all committee members focus on time management and the development of positive relationships.

Specificity

Volunteers receive surprisingly little mention in the Society Rules, given their important role in governing the organisation. The Society Rules vaguely define a volunteer as "an individual who chooses to do unpaid work to assist the Society to achieve its objectives" (Te Wana Quality Programme, 2008, p. 7). The lack of specificity about what volunteers actually *do* to achieve Plunket's mission of "caring for young families" is indicative of the broad scope of initiatives that volunteers can implement in their local communities. Volunteers can also influence national level objectives through their participation in the biennial Plunket conference, where branches put forward "remits" that propose policy directions for the organisation as a whole. The only limits are set out in Plunket's policies surrounding breastfeeding promotion, infection control, privacy and research, and commitment to cultural inclusiveness.

In contrast to Refugee Services, the term "professionalism" is not as visibly embedded in Plunket's organisational discourse. Nonetheless, according to the National Volunteer Education Advisor, Plunket's current organisational structure operates along the lines of a "business model." For instance, Plunket's insistence that committees submit their objectives in a business plan format treats volunteering as a form of business practice.

Communication

Plunket relies heavily, although not exclusively, on volunteers at Area Society level to deliver training. For instance, until recently the local New

Zealand Councillor (the volunteer in charge of governance issues for the region) ran the two hour "Welcome to Plunket" workshop that covers organisational structure and history. Despite its introductory nature, I struggled as a workshop participant to comprehend the simplified organisational chart showing how the volunteer and (paid) operations arms connect. Around me, volunteers scribbled arrows over the diagram of who reports to whom, and who to call for what all over their copies. The Area Manager suggested that volunteers do not receive enough structured follow-up after this initial orientation.

Knowledge of rules about money, meetings and minutes is vital for officeholders (presidents, vice-presidents and treasurers). Plunket provides three avenues for disseminating these rules. First, volunteers can access written material such as booklets in training workshops and templates from *The Cradle*. Second, officeholders at Area Society level periodically fly to Wellington for training by National Office staff. Third, Area level officeholders are then expected to pass on knowledge to other volunteers at branch and sub-branch level. This training often fails to filter down, since branch volunteers cannot attend workshops run by Area level officeholders if the timing is not convenient. In these cases, more experienced volunteers train incoming volunteers using the system that worked for them. As a result, new organisational members inherit knowledge and application of the Society Rules from the incumbent officeholder, with all the gaps and quirks of individual interpretation that this implies.

Nonetheless, the business plan and other reporting templates maintain some semblance of consistency across committees. The next section examines the main elements of Plunket's approach to professionalism.

What Notions of Professionalism are Embedded in Plunket's Codes of Conduct?

The codes of conduct do not specify what Plunket volunteers should be doing for families with young children in their own communities or what policies they should push for at national level. What the codes do highlight, however, is the need for committees' planning to be responsive to community needs. To enable responsiveness, the codes of conduct articulate a set of tools such as the business plan that structure how committees analyse community needs. Moreover, these tools, drawn from for-profit contexts, not only facilitate forward planning but simultaneously require committees to evaluate which outcomes have been achieved to date. Volunteers are constructed as "managers."

These core organisational messages reflect a marketised view of professionalism. This section shows how organisational messages about (1) committee flexibility combined with responsiveness to community needs, and (2) the usefulness of business tools apply the logic of market forces to a particular type of social practice (Lair, Sullivan, & Cheney, 2005), namely Plunket volunteering.

Committee Flexibility and Responsiveness to Community Needs

In the case of Plunket, the activities that local committees should undertake to meet the organisational aims are not pre-given, as they were in the case of Refugee Services. Instead, the organisational codes of conduct suggest two strategies to guide committees' decision-making about what projects to take on. First, if individual volunteers notice that current community norms are not optimal for the wellbeing of children, they may decide to advocate for change by influencing organisational policy at a national level, as in the following example from the National Volunteer Education Advisor:

> A person in a local branch can really feel a *passion* about
>
> something, like "I believe that Plunket as an organisation
>
> needs to advocate for kids to be safely restrained in the
>
> cars." That's how it happened, and we changed the course
>
> of our society and we saved lives. Who did that? Well
>
> that was Georgina down in the local sub branch that did
>
> that. She started the ball rolling.

As "owners" of the organisation, volunteers at branch level make these suggestions at the national conference.

Second, the organisation wants committees to implement and market programmes that boost Plunket's profile as an organisation that works with local communities to provide "Together the best start for every child" (the organisational vision statement). The training documents describe how Plunket is divided into 18 local areas, so that committees can "raise money locally to do what it is that *our community wants*" (National Volunteer Education Advisor) rather than implementing health and child development strategies from the top down. At a strategic national level, Plunket can then leverage local volunteer committees' ability to respond quickly to community needs as a competitive edge in securing government funds which could otherwise be directed to other health organisations that are also "Well Child Providers."

This aspect of the codes of conduct reflects market principles that suggest that supply of services must be fluid and flexible to meet community demand. Families are transformed into consumers who choose among the Well Child providers available in local communities. The codes of conduct frame committees

as responsible for responding to community signals about wants, marketing programmes and services to their target market, and providing those services that are demanded.

The Usefulness of Business Tools for Planning and Evaluation of Outcomes

The second key theme embedded in Plunket's codes of conduct is the need to utilise good planning and evaluation tools. This section provides a brief overview of Plunket's previous reporting requirements, and how new business tools brought in the early 1990s have changed the nature of reporting.

As one of New Zealand's oldest charities, Plunket has always had rules around how meetings ought to be run and how financial transactions ought to be monitored. Most systems to protect public monies derive from the legislative requirements of Plunket's status as an incorporated society. The *President and Vice President Resource Booklet* (2007) reminds those in charge that the committee's role is to act as the "guardians/stewards of the community resource in their location" (p. 1). Requirements include circulating meeting agendas, taking accurate minutes, validly electing office-holders, holding annual general meetings, and regularly reporting on finances. Plunket's National Office exerts considerable pressure on sub-branches and branches to fax through timely financial accounts so that Plunket does not lose its charity status.

Following the adoption of a commercially-oriented management team at national level in the early 1990s (Bryder, 2003), however, the reporting systems became much more businesslike (see Appendix D for a brief organisational history). While the types of interventions and initiatives are still left to the discretion of volunteers who are on the ground in each location, the new systems

dictate how volunteers are to report on achievement of outcomes. The more recent system innovation is the "business plan." The business plan sets out each committee's goals and objectives for the coming financial year, and specifies how they will achieve it, complete with SWOT analysis and a budget.

The national staff member who manages volunteers framed this new tool as enhancing volunteers' ability to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of their community projects. Specifically, the National Volunteer Education Advisor described how the business plan gave volunteers the power to set their own objectives within the parameters of Plunket's mission:

> The business plan sets out what you want to achieve. If we came up on high and said "Alright, we want a 10% increase in support groups." Really!?! Fine, now what does that mean for me? If we've got ten at the moment, that means we want eleven so where are we going to have a new support group? "Well you didn't ask us if we wanted one did you?" Whereas if you say one of our desires is to increase the number of people that we are meeting, we're going to have more parenting education in our area. That seems pretty plausible, so how we going to do that? That then becomes what your business is about, your action plan. So if you want to have more support groups, how are we going to do that, how much money are we going to need to do that, therefore how much money do we have to raise?

That is, using this more business-like model, volunteers can more easily assess what local communities need and plan what they want to do to meet these needs. After identifying what will be done, volunteers must then decide what measures they will use to assess how effective their plans have been. Community development is reduced to what can be seen, measured and documented (in the example above, for instance, the number of support groups) rather than the intangible outcomes such as parents' sense of being supported.

A detailed plan also means that volunteers' efforts can be evaluated by others at Area Society level and at national level. Plunket expects "good" volunteers to attend Area Society meetings and report on how the smaller entities such as sub-branches and branches are progressing. In a certain sense, committees that measure and achieve the objectives set out in their planning documents offer evidence that they are "professional."

How does Plunket Position the Relationship between Wellbeing and Professionalism?

Plunket's organisational resources show evidence of both connections and tensions between professionalism and wellbeing. The sources of wellbeing that are documented in Plunket's codes of conduct include self-management of time committed to Plunket, satisfaction at contributing to community development, and the development of positive relationships. In this section, I describe specific Plunket resources position wellbeing and their relationship to organisational messages about professionalism.

The first key component of wellbeing according to Plunket's organisational resources is volunteers' ability to decide how much time they

commit to Plunket. That is, in order to ensure their own wellbeing, volunteers are expected to be self-managing and responsible for setting limits around their time and availability. For instance, the generic *Welcome to Plunket* (2009) booklet issued to all new staff and volunteers highlights Plunket's self-proclaimed commitment to the creation of a "family friendly, people and family orientated workplace" (p. 5) where "employee wellbeing and development is a high priority" (p. 5). The document suggests that family friendliness is possible because "roles are self-managed," and "flexible working conditions are an integral part of the way we work" (p. 5). Members who can proactively plan their time and manage their various life roles are able to achieve wellbeing through work-life balance.

The first volunteer skills workshop listed in the national Volunteer Education Programme brochure, *Stressed out – not me!*, also refers to the need to responsibly manage various life roles. The Waikato area has not run any of these workshops since early 2007, and booklets were unavailable following the resignation of the National Volunteer Education Advisor, who has not yet been replaced. However, the advertising brief for the workshop suggests that "volunteering is fun, but when it's not in balance with the rest of your world, stress and burn out can result. This workshop looks at practical ways to maintain a balance that works for you." The workshop title intimates that wellbeing is made up of domain-specific, separable components that must be juggled. Control over involvement becomes key (Ryan & Deci, 2000) if other areas such as paid work, family, and personal hobbies, are not to be jeopardised. Both the *Welcome to Plunket* text and the volunteer skills workshop on managing stress link wellbeing to volunteers' ability to evaluate the time that they have available. The link between proactive planning and wellbeing draws on objective notions of

wellbeing. In order to experience wellbeing, individuals must have a sense of control.

However, the expectation that volunteers will be responsive to community needs that is embedded in organisational messages about professionalism may challenge volunteers' sense that they determine their own time commitment. Nonetheless, this tension does not seem to be openly acknowledged. Another volunteer workshop on "being a magnet that attracts volunteers" idealises volunteers who successfully combine multiple commitments yet continue to contribute. The difficulties in balancing one's own personal time demands and continuing to meet community needs was also downplayed by one Area Manager who commented that volunteers who do not recognise their own power to set limits create their own burden. She explained that:

> Some of the things that are stopping the new ones coming
> on is – dare I say it? It is almost like that martyr attitude:
> "I've got to do it because nobody else will. Can't you get
> somebody to come and help me?"

Nonetheless, busy volunteers who feel over-stretched may still experience wellbeing as they consider how their contribution enables their committee to meet community needs.

The second source of wellbeing contained in organisational codes of conduct derives from volunteers' contribution to Plunket history through the difference that they make to communities. The opening comment by the Chief Executive Officer and the Board President in the *Welcome to Plunket* booklet reminds new members that "you have joined an organisation that is *proud of its*

rich history and is focused on making a difference to young children and families/whānau every day" (p. 4). The text continues, "by becoming part of Plunket you have been given the *unique opportunity* to do *rewarding and interesting work* which will *positively impact* on the health and well being of New Zealand children and families/whānau" (p. 4, my italics). Moreover, if committees use business tools to plan initiatives and evaluate their interventions, volunteers will increase their wellbeing, particularly if they are "task oriented people . . . [who] want to achieve outcomes, tick things off" (Royal New Zealand Plunket Society, 2007, p. 6).

Significantly though, the third and most common organisational message about wellbeing addressed to volunteers emphasised the development of strong interpersonal relationships. The President and Vice President Resource Booklet that provides training for office-holders stated that "committee members . . . often develop long-term friendships from their involvement in Plunket" (Royal New Zealand Plunket Society, 2007, p. 1). Organisational texts also suggested that these relationships contribute to wellbeing when they are free from conflict, particularly for "process-oriented people [who] want to meet social needs and create harmony" (p. 6). This emphasis on resolving conflict was also apparent in the title of another volunteer skills workshop, *Let's find a solution*, that advertised itself as "a practical workshop to find solutions for conflict."

However, excessive stress on maintaining relationships can decrease committee members' ability to suggest initiatives that they believe best meet community needs. For example, when I observed the "remit" voting session at the 2009 national conference in Rotorua, I noticed the pressure exerted on volunteers to conform to majority opinion. The chair of the session asked committee

representatives from around the nation to offer their views on the number of visits that paid Plunket nurses make to mothers with new babies. The lights flooded on, and the MC announced, "Ladies, it's *bus*iness time!" Volunteers gripped their yellow voting cards, as they listened to each committee's proposal. The sacrificial lamb who spoke on behalf of a branch faced a crowd of several thousand women, any of whom could offer comments or questions. One dissenting branch that did not support the proposal under consideration received no applause. Instead, the next spokesperson began, "Well, *obviously* I support the proposal," before explaining her committee's points in support of the recommended change. Wellbeing seemed predicated on fitting in and forming part of a cohesive team, rather than refining a plan that actually worked to benefit families and the community.

Organisational resources did recognise the possible tension between increasing wellbeing through the development of positive relationships and a focus on community development, at least at committee level. Booklets for office holders pointed out that the president of each committee has the arduous job of reconciling the needs of task-oriented and people-oriented volunteers though the creation of "a friendly and supportive atmosphere" (President and Vice-president Resource Booklet, 2007, p. 6). One possible situation where task- and people-oriented volunteers may enter into conflict may involve diverse responses to the use of business planning tools, although organisational codes did not mention this specifically.

Moreover, office holder booklets did not offer any suggestions about how possible tensions might be managed. For example, the 20-page *President and Vice-president Resource Booklet* bursts at the seams with the presidents'

responsibilities for chairing meetings, "preventing discussions being hijacked" (p. 5), and generally ensuring action occurs. Despite the over-riding task focus, the first and last point of the "Helpful Suggestions" section reads "HAVE FUN!!!" (pp. 6-7).

Overall, organisational messages about wellbeing show some connections with expectations about professionalism. First, the emphasis on planning and evaluation developed by volunteers' use of business tools may help them to assess their own time availability for Plunket tasks and maintain a sense of work-life balance. Another possibility, however, is that Plunket's insistence that "professional" volunteers respond to what communities need may pressure volunteers into giving more time to the Plunket cause than they wanted to, consequently lowering wellbeing. Second, business planning contributed positively to volunteers' wellbeing by enabling them to achieve community goals more effectively.

On the other hand, organisational messages about the importance of personal relationships created some tension between professionalism and wellbeing. Emphasis on positive relationships as a source of wellbeing could challenge volunteers' ability to offer suggestions for community projects or solutions that diverged from the majority view. Plunket's codes of conduct also acknowledged that committees may experience conflict depending on how much importance was attached to getting things done in a professional manner and how much emphasis was placed on creating positive relationships.

Codes of Conduct, Professionalism and Wellbeing at St John

St John's codes of conduct apply to all members since both paid staff and volunteers contribute to the organisational mission, to "prevent and relieve sickness and injury and enhance the health and well-being of people of all races and creeds anywhere in New Zealand." I begin with an analysis of the codes of conduct, before examining how the codes position professionalism and wellbeing. I propose that, from the organisation's perspective, wellbeing is linked to relational teamwork and self-sacrifice, rather than clinical excellence.

St John's Code of Conduct

St John's codes of conduct contain information about best medical practice and the attitudes and values that St John wants to drive clinical practice. The material on values specifically defines professionalism and describes how a professional attitude also underpins all the other values. Codes of conduct are communicated during initial training and at weekly training meetings.

Sources

The clinically-based protocol books and the Core Values programme contain the codes of conduct. The resource materials available to management to foster commitment to the Core Values include an explanatory PowerPoint presentation with presenter's guide, and motivational DVD.

Specificity

Two resources specify how professionalism ought to be enacted. The practice-based protocol books indicate precisely what each organisational member can do in a given medical scenario according to their qualifications. The other source is the Core Values training programme that describes the values and

attitudes that underpin these actions. The four Core Values of integrity, empathy, teamwork and professionalism underpin how the organisation preserves its reputation (integrity); treats patients (empathy) and other team members (teamwork); and provides clinical service (professionalism), respectively. Although the value of professionalism as such refers to excellent clinical practice, a "professional" St John member needs to enact all four Core Values. For instance, the Core Value of integrity makes reference to professionalism as a key component. That is, demonstrating integrity or upholding organisational reputation through reliable behaviour is described in the Core Values DVD as acting with a "sense of professionalism." However, despite the clear references in the codes of conduct to professionalism as a Core Value, the resource pack is intended to be a "conversation starter" rather than a detailed guide for action.

The Core Values implementation pack includes (1) a DVD to show to St John members entitled *Our Core Values*; (2) a PowerPoint that introduces the values to organisational members, with definitions and brief case studies as examples; (3) a presenter's guide for whoever is facilitating the Core Values session at various organisational levels; and (4) a Core Values Commitment Letter that each member signs to acknowledge their personal support for the Core Values. The pack also contains other promotional materials to remind organisational members about the Core Values including A3 and A4 posters, desk displays and wallet cards.

Communication

Protocol books form part of on-going organisational socialisation at St John. Members can refer to the protocol books en route to an emergency and during down-time at the station. The weekly training sessions draw from medical

scenarios found in the protocol books, and staff can nominate volunteers who have exhibited best practice for "Case of the Week" at training sessions. St John recognises members who enact the codes of conduct with excellence in three ways. First, management recognises any compliment given by a member by the public. Second, length of service is recognised at key stages (3, 6, and 9 years for volunteers), and third, long-serving members may be invested in the Priory of St John.

In contrast, Core Values training occurs as a one-off event during organisational induction, alongside other topics such as death and grieving, and cultural sensitivity in a diverse environment, St John's history, and legal issues surrounding privacy and liability. St John members subsequently receive a wallet-sized core values card, as a reminder of the importance of the Core Values. That is, although the medical protocol books inform *what* excellent clinical practice looks like, the Core Values specify *how* jobs are done. The next section unpacks the Core Values resource in more detail.

What Notions of Professionalism are Embedded in St John's Codes of Conduct?

In this section, I describe the core values of integrity, empathy, teamwork and professionalism, and show how descriptions of all four Core Values allude to professionalism as a defining attribute of practice at St John. Finally, I unpack the essential characteristics of professionalism as expressed in the Core Values resources in more detail: (1) meeting excellent clinical standards; (2) behaving in a calm yet urgent manner; and (3) taking personal responsibility for one's actions which means being reliable and committed.

These organisational messages about professionalism reflect processes of rationalisation and bureaucratisation. Rationalisation means that ambulance crew streamline processes in order to provide the most efficient emergency care possible. Bureaucratisation is also evident in terms of strict adherence to codified medical practices, explicit articulation of expectations about professionalism, the requirement for detailed documentation of callouts and treatment, and insistence on impartial treatment for all members of the community. These trends, which emerge in the Core Values, construct volunteers as agents of St John, who must aspire to expert status through continuous learning and feedback.

The first Core Value is integrity. *Integrity* directs members to act in such a way as to protect the reputation of St John in the community. The voice-over in the Core Values DVD presented integrity as an organisational resource that could be lost through individual acts of carelessness. Interestingly, the value of professionalism defined how St John expects members to demonstrate integrity:

> Being the first to care . . . carries with it a great
>
> responsibility. The positive perception the community has
>
> developed over many years can easily slip because of one
>
> simple lapse. This means our guard cannot be relaxed. A
>
> reliable and consistent behaviour must always be
>
> displayed. This sense of professionalism is precisely the
>
> reason St John are relied upon.

Other attributes of integrity presented in the training material included "communicating in an open, supportive and honest manner, maintaining confidentiality, behaving responsibly with St John equipment and resources,

taking responsibility for our actions, and respecting the Christian heritage, ethical standards and traditions of St John."

Empathy focuses on attitudes and behaviours directed towards patients, as well as other St John members. The training materials defined empathy as "acting in a way that is sensitive to the needs of others, and is compassionate and kind." Key indicators included "treating patients, stakeholders, clients and all St John members with dignity and care, focusing on the needs of others, and respecting and supporting all people, organisations and cultures without prejudice." Both integrity and empathy draw on bureaucratised notions of fair, impartial treatment.

Teamwork directs members' actions towards co-workers, both volunteers and paid staff. The Core Values PowerPoint defined teamwork as "working together as one unified organisation to help each other and the community," which is demonstrated by members "respecting different roles, backgrounds and ethnicities within St John," and "actively encouraging and supporting others" by "sharing resources and knowledge." In the Core Values DVD, the Chancellor of St John, Neville Darrow, described this new "cultural change" programme as an effort to develop an organisational culture "characterised by relationships based on mutual respect."

Professionalism directs members' own conduct and attitude towards the task at hand. The voiceover in the training DVD compared St John members to superheroes:

> Ever noticed how a superhero changes when the suit goes
> on? Whether wearing a uniform or not, a similar thing
> happens with our people. There's something different

about their stance and demeanour, as if a confidence and

composure is being worn like an invisible cloak.

More prosaically, the PowerPoint presentation defined professionalism as

"achieving outcomes and standards, and continuously developing."

To enable the best customer service possible to be provided to all patients,

the PowerPoint in the Core Value training pack lists the attributes that

demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for professionalism:

1. Customer focus (internal and external customers)

2. Striving for excellence, achieving outcomes and meeting standards

3. A willingness to accept feedback, develop and learn

4. Accepting and supporting innovation

5. Demonstrating skillful, calm and authoritative behaviour

6. Demonstrating energy and urgency

7. Being reliable and committed

Rather than deal with each attribute point by point, three sub-groups of attributes

can be identified. Points 2-4 form the first group that specifies the outcomes St

John hopes to achieve, and can be summed up under the heading *Meeting*

excellent clinical standards. That is, to actually help patients, members must meet

clinical standards. Volunteers may feel they are at a distinct disadvantage

compared to paid staff in terms of knowledge and skills, but the Core Values

resource indicates that they can still aspire to professionalism if they exhibit

openness to continuous learning.

The second group, points 5-6, refers to how these outcomes are to be

carried out by *Behaving in a calm yet urgent manner*. Clinical standards will be

best met by an ambulance crew that is able to rationalise their activity, or set aside
nonproductive emotions and non-essential tasks. That is, calmness, authority, and
the demonstration of "energy and urgency" enable the crew to transcend the pain
and suffering of the patient and determine which medical interventions are of
actual benefit.

Last on the list is the need for members to be "reliable and committed,"
which falls within the ambit of *Taking personal responsibility for one's actions*.
Presumably, professionalism requires turning up to do a shift. The Midland
Regional Manager described professionalism as taking personal responsibility:

> Professionalism is how you act and it is acting with
> responsibility. *All* of our people act as health
> professionals, and the difference is that some get a pay slip
> and some don't. I don't know how many times we've used
> that line, but that's the difference.

To sum up, professionalism refers both to the outcomes St John members
achieve, and to the manner in which actions are carried out. Outcomes-based
criteria for professionalism such as high standards and knowledge give rise to
responsible service. A calm and urgent manner enables members to manifest
professionalism consistently and reliably.

The resource pack makes no mention about how the other core values
might inform or influence members' enactment of professionalism. In fact, the
training materials insist that "all [values] are equally important – there is no
priority order." This confluence occurs because the Core Values programme itself
is built around their integration, so that in the words of the organisation's

Chancellor, St John can position itself as a "positive, proactive, and a disciplined body which is humanely driven yet business-like in the way that it operates." Nonetheless, the focus on integration offers no acknowledgement that individual members may have difficulty in reconciling the demands of each value in practice.

How does St John Position the Relationship between Wellbeing and Professionalism?

Organisational messages about wellbeing are found in a variety of sources: advertising campaigns directed to potential volunteers, the Core Values training DVD aimed at existing volunteers, and the Regional Manager's explanation of how St John attracts and retains new volunteers. A clear link between professionalism, understood primarily in terms of clinical excellence, and enhanced wellbeing is conspicuously absent from organisational messages about wellbeing. Instead, these messages relate wellbeing to (1) teamwork (another core value), (2) excitement, and (3) self-sacrifice. In this section, I detail how supportive, interesting relationships are positioned as essential contributors to positive experiences of wellbeing. What also merits attention is that the importance attributed to these relationships recedes in emergency situations where members must direct all their energies to task-focused clinical excellence. In these instances, organisational resources suggest that personal wellbeing must give way to the obligations of professionalism.

The organisation's recruitment advertisements focus primarily on teamwork and relationships as sources of wellbeing. They read "Being a St John volunteer is really rewarding in lots of ways. Working with a great team of people, learning lots of new skills and helping so many people in our community. We need people like you, it'd be great to have you with us." While skill

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development is certainly an aspect of professionalism, the advertising brief accompanying the posters highlights "It would be great to have you with us" as the take-home message or "central thought." The Volunteer Recruitment Advertising Tool Kit also lists the connotations the advertising seeks to promote:

- A sense of belonging

- A sense of really being needed (urgency)

- A sense of being an important part of your local community

- A good feeling about St John, our people and our work

- A sense of being supported by colleagues and the organisation through training and camaraderie. (p. 4)

Interestingly, any mention of clinical excellence, calm yet urgent patient treatment and reliable, responsible behaviour is absent from the list.

Second, St John lays out up-front the excitement of ambulance volunteering. The organisation selects and enthuses potential volunteers by requiring observation shifts on an ambulance, rather than providing an in-depth information session about commitment and responsibility. The Midland Regional Manager acknowledged:

> We are not good at explaining what your commitments as
> a volunteer are likely to be, because we're concerned that
> we're going to scare people off. We'd like to get people in
> the door and we'd like to get them hooked and we hope
> that they will stay. They talk about being hooked, it's a
> volunteer word: "I had a bit of an interest and I've been

> hooked. I just keep coming back, that's satisfying." All of
>
> us enjoy dealing with patients. It's a rewarding experience,
>
> that's the hook. But if on day one we give them a bit of
>
> paper, and we explain to them, 'Look, we want you to act
>
> as an health professional and it's going to mean a week
>
> away and five weekends and internet access and seven
>
> assignments and a shift a week,' they're not going to come
>
> back the second time, so we haven't got our balance right
>
> on that. It's a topic that St John has avoided.

To some extent, the first two sources of wellbeing – "rewarding relationships" and "excitement" – both draw on hedonist notions of wellbeing that suggest that individuals will engage in an activity as long as personal satisfaction or pleasure outweighs the pain or effort involved (Kahneman, et al., 1999).

When an emergency occurs, however, the Core Value training materials suggest that this type of hedonist personal wellbeing must be sacrificed. In fact, self-sacrifice is not just encouraged but demanded: the voiceover reminded members that "being available and providing care for others can be a selfless task. It requires you to place the needs of others ahead of yourself." The Core Values voice-over informed the viewer that:

> These people have instilled in them a sense of duty, and an
>
> ethos of compassion so ingrained that *they consistently*
>
> *place the safety and wellbeing of others well before*
>
> themselves . . . . The compassion displayed by members of

St John to those in need and the wider community means

that the general public has a high regard for our care.

From an organisational perspective, the duty to provide excellent clinical service

can and may override considerations of personal wellbeing.

This section has shown that organisational codes of conduct do not create

obvious connections between professionalism and wellbeing. Messages about

teamwork and excitement that derive from hedonist notions of wellbeing do not

draw on professionalism as it is constructed by the organisation. In fact, from a

hedonist wellbeing perspective, professionalism (which demands that volunteers

sacrifice their personal wellbeing in order to provide excellent care) and wellbeing

are diametrically opposed. Nonetheless, organisational messages targeted at

volunteers do articulate that individuals may still obtain wellbeing by serving St

John and the community, contributing to a cause that transcends the self (Deiner,

et al., 2006).

The chapter so far has outlined each organisation's codes of conduct, and

suggested how codes construct professionalism and volunteer wellbeing. Table 3

that follows shows significant organisational differences in constructions of

professionalism and wellbeing and the relationship between them:

Table 3

Organisational Constructions of Volunteer Professionalism and Wellbeing

	Refugee Services	Plunket	St John
Professionalism	**Rationalised form of professionalism** requires clear boundaries between the volunteer role and other life concerns. **Professionalism** erects clear task boundaries through task guidelines, rules about lending money, and policies for referral. **Professionalism** requires personal distance between volunteers and refugees; the role requires personal connection, but not intimacy. **Professionalism** demands buy-in to organisational goals of refugee empowerment, independence and responsibility.	**Marketised form of professionalism** requires committees to be responsive to community needs. **Professionalism** requires the use of business tools that facilitate planning and evaluation.	**Bureaucratised and rationalised form of professionalism** is excellent clinical service. **Professionalism** requires a calm, urgent task focus. **Professionalism** requires personal responsibility.

	Refugee Services	Plunket	St John
Wellbeing	***Wellbeing*** is enhanced when volunteers to use the role to meet refugees' needs and not their own personal needs. ***Wellbeing*** constructed as the referral of cases beyond the scope of the VSWs' role. ***Wellbeing*** is enhanced by a team approach to resettlement. ***Wellbeing*** is enhanced by a focus on refugees' independence and responsibility for their own behavior and values.	***Wellbeing*** means that volunteers manage their own time and commitment levels. ***Wellbeing*** derives from satisfaction at realising community development. ***Wellbeing*** is linked to life-long friendships. ***Wellbeing*** is enhanced when relationships are free of conflict.	***Wellbeing*** is augmented when volunteers have a great team of people to work alongside. ***Wellbeing*** is enjoyment that derives from helping people in the community. ***Wellbeing*** is also constructed as excitement. ***Wellbeing*** is sacrificed for others.
Professionalism -Wellbeing Relationship	***Clear relationship*** between professionalism-wellbeing and wellbeing-professionalism. ***Wellbeing*** is an essential prerequisite for taking on the "professional" role. ***Professionalism*** maintains wellbeing.	***Complex relationship*** between professionalism and wellbeing. ***Professionalism*** in the form of planning and evaluation skills increases wellbeing by helping volunteers to assess and manage time commitment. ***Professionalism*** in the form of planning and	***Ambiguous relationship*** between professionalism and wellbeing. ***Wellbeing*** derived from personal relationships is secondary to professionalism in emergency situations.

Refugee Services	Plunket	St John
	evaluation skills increases wellbeing by enabling committees to effectively achieve community goals.	
	Professionalism understood as community responsiveness decreases volunteers' ability to protect their own time, reducing wellbeing.	
	Wellbeing derived from cohesive personal relationships can reduce committees' ability to respond in the most appropriate way to community needs.	
	Professionalism-wellbeing relationship is ambiguous in committees which need to balance the use of business tools and the development of positive personal relationships.	

Participants' Responses to Organisational Messages about Professionalism and Wellbeing

Participants within and across organisations had diverse responses to organisational notions of the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing. In this half of the chapter, I assess how and to what extent participants' understandings of the professionalism-wellbeing relationship differed from organisational understandings, in order to address the fourth research question, "How do volunteers relate organisational notions of professionalism to their own wellbeing?" As demonstrated in the previous chapter, participants' understandings of volunteering were complex. Hence, their discussions of professionalism and wellbeing did not always mirror organisational messages.

How did Refugee Services' Volunteers Relate Organisational Views of

Professionalism to their Own Wellbeing?

Refugee Services' training programme clearly communicates organisational expectations about professionalism to volunteers. All participants discussed boundaries, for example, as a key feature of volunteering for Refugee Services. In this section, I present participants' views on the relationships between Refugee Services' notion of professionalism and their own wellbeing. The first key finding indicates that most participants could describe challenging incidents when enacting professional codes would have protected their sense of wellbeing. Nonetheless, participants varied in both their ability and desire to (a) enforce strict boundaries between the role and their personal life; (b) maintain personal distance from the refugees; and (c) focus on refugees' responsibility for their own behaviour and cultural choices. The second finding suggests that the tight link between well lived professionalism and wellbeing was conspicuously absent from participants' descriptions of how their voluntary role with Refugee Services

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contributed positively to their wellbeing. In this case, participants tended to focus more on relationality than professionalism. This ambiguous relationship between professionalism and wellbeing suggests that volunteers might be selective in their decisions to enact professional codes of conduct.

Professionalism Can Protect Volunteers' Wellbeing

Participants drew on the notion of boundaries as a salient aspect of professionalism when participants found their wellbeing threatened by over-commitment of time, excessive demands by refugee families, cultural dissonance or concern about refugees' behaviour. However, participants differed in their ability to create boundaries to protect their "personal" time. Several volunteers found it impossible to use professional distance to buffer themselves from families' requests that fell outside the scope of the role. A participant commented that "You either had to go the whole hog or nothing at all." She continued:

> The mother would phone up and want you to write
> references for her, and find out things like how could she
> get the husband's teeth fixed without paying . . . and oh,
> sometimes you'd think "I just don't want to get into this, I
> really don't want to deal with it." It wasn't very
> comfortable, but sometimes you just had to say "No, I
> can't help you with this." Ultimately I completely
> disentangled myself from them. They were very full on
> and, you know, they wanted *all of you*.

Interestingly, she did not position her voluntary experience as a professional role that she could assume and shake off at ease, concluding:

> In a volunteer situation, the sky's the limit. You can give
>
> as much as you want or can, or more than you want . . . .
>
> Need is always so much greater than resource. I think
>
> that's often what puts people off getting too engaged in a
>
> volunteer organisation because it just *eats you up*.

At the other extreme, three participants protected their personal wellbeing by reiterating their sense of agency and placed clear limits to their involvement. As one of the three stated:

> I'm fairly good at placing boundaries around what I can
>
> reasonably expect of myself, and what I felt the family
>
> could expect of me – I didn't feel that I was compromising
>
> my own time, because of the time being "free" and the
>
> time being "yours."

Another experienced volunteer maintained boundaries by emphasising her own needs. She noted, "When the husband wanted me to do something, I'd have to say, 'Actually no we *won't*, because I need to go home and cook dinner.'" Since these volunteers pre-determined how much they could give to the relationship, they maintained wellbeing by refusing to undertake tasks that compromised their other commitments outside the role. The majority of the participants, however, tried to negotiate a middle line.

The other component of professionalism that Refugee Services perceived as indispensable for volunteers' wellbeing was a focus on refugees' independence and responsibility for their own behavior and values. That is, volunteers should let refugees find their own cultural niche in New Zealand society, by combining

elements of New Zealand culture with their own as refugees see fit. Most volunteers did leave refugees free to act out their own cultural values, but internally struggled to personally distance themselves from the outcome of those choices. The inner distance characteristic of professionalism protects the volunteer from anxiety and enables them to focus on the role. Nonetheless, some participants found maintaining this kind of detached attitude to refugees' choices problematic. A volunteer recalled her concern about how two teenage refugees would fit in to the culture of the local high school; after dropping them off, she imagined multiple negative consequences:

> It was quite worrying. We drove off in the car, and like people were out in lunchtime. And [one of the boys] was going "Hello, new friends! Hello, new friends!" and all the boys were looking at them going "What are those freaks?" because they've got Elvis-style, quite old-fashioned haircuts, and they love their leather jackets, and their jeans with white sneakers. Like T Birds or something. So the first day when I dropped them off . . . . I had to cry all the way back to work just because I was so worried, because they were so happy and so innocent – and you know what kids are like.

Although, like most participants, she chose not to comment or intervene even though she feared others would view the refugees' behaviour as inappropriate, she experienced intense anxiety because of the close relationships she had formed.

On the other hand, participants' reports of positive experiences with refugee families showed that relationality, rather than professionalism, led to a heightened sense of wellbeing.

Relationality Enhances Volunteers' Wellbeing

In contrast to challenging incidents, the recurring theme in volunteers' descriptions of positive encounters with refugee families was the importance of the relationships that they had formed. Similarly to participants' varied ability and desire to enact organisational norms about boundaries, participants differed in the importance that they gave to relationality, and the level of intimacy that they expected within relationships with refugees. Some volunteers described refugees as an extension of their family circle, while others positioned them as part of their broader social network.

Relationality was a significant contributor to wellbeing for participants who included refugees as part of their family circle. Two participants explicitly compared volunteering with forming part of a family. In these cases, volunteers invited refugees to family functions, and one volunteer taught three of the children to drive. The family metaphor denotes common purpose, an obligation to help (J. Wilson & Musick, 1997b) and close-knit relationships that are more characteristic of "informal helping" (Amato, 1990) than a professionalised understanding of voluntary "work." This notion of strong ties is evident in a volunteer's explanation of how the relationship with her "lady" and her son had changed over time:

> I feel a real connection with her. I feel some capacity of –
> I don't know if *love* is the right word, but I want her to be

part of my life at some point. I'd like to be the surrogate

grandmother to this child.

Such highly relational accounts ignore organisational messages of professionalism that foster personal distance.

Such close relationships may well increase volunteers' concern about refugees' behaviour, and challenge wellbeing. Volunteers who choose to become emotionally involved are not naively unaware of this risk. Instead, as a participant pointed out, the depth of the relationship also contributes to the rewards of volunteering:

If I had better personal boundaries I wouldn't be giving as

much but then I probably wouldn't be getting to know my

family as well and maybe I wouldn't be getting as much

from it either.

Managing the volunteer role effectively means balancing relationality with professional norms that prohibit intimacy.

The other group of participants envisaged refugee families as part of an extended social network. Another participant described the relationship in the following terms:

There comes a moment where they are not just people that

you are helping at a distance, but where they kind of

become a part of your social network in a way. Maybe not

like friends or things but they become people that you

have some sort of connection with and that kind of crosses

from being something over there in the distance that you

are helping to actually being somebody you are kind of

interacting with as opposed to interacting *to*.

In this case, participants described their wellbeing as an overall sense of satisfaction that their input had facilitated refugees' steps towards independence. A participant explained that her wellbeing derived from "that sense of 'Hey look at this person doing *x*.' Anything that I do is facilitating and the real buzz is seeing somebody blossom and grow." Other participants gave examples of highlights that included watching a teenager playing cricket in his whites after a paper run and celebrating a refugee's new full-time job. Although personal connection existed, relationships involved more distance than those of the first group.

In sum, the distinction between challenging moments that necessitate good boundary management and experiences of relationships that build up positive wellbeing indicates that most participants do not always enact the close professionalism-wellbeing link that organisational messages promote. Moreover, participants negotiated the professionalism-wellbeing relationship differently depending on the ease with which they slipped into a professional attitude, and the type of relationship they had established with the family. Taken together, these two findings suggest that Refugee Services' insistence on detached professionalism could have either a negative or positive impact on volunteers' wellbeing.

How did Plunket Volunteers Negotiate the Relationships between Professionalism and Wellbeing?

Plunket's view of professionalism as community responsiveness constructs community members as consumers of parenting goods and services. Although volunteers were committed to meeting community needs, and derived considerable wellbeing from doing so, small committees and limited time meant that large-scale projects proved challenging. Volunteers tried several strategies to deal with this problem with varied impacts on wellbeing: increasing their own time commitment, trying to recruit new volunteers, or focusing attention on smaller, more tangible activities.

What was more contentious was Plunket's vision of professionalism as requiring business tools to plan and evaluate community initiatives. Volunteers had varied reactions depending on their personal and professional background, and commitment to the organisation. Data from transcripts suggests that participants who were office holders or whose professional background included business experience enjoyed the challenges of planning and reporting back. For other participants, planning and evaluation tools formed an obstacle to getting anything done. When they felt frustrated by systems of accountability, they focused on wellbeing derived from friendships within the committee.

Community Responsiveness and Wellbeing

Participants were committed to making a difference for families and their children through community projects. Some committees had undertaken large-scale projects such as securing funds to build a new Plunket clinic where nurses could see babies, parenting courses could be run, and coffee and play groups meet. Small numbers on committees limited volunteers' ability to carry out these

activities. A volunteer commented that, "strength is in numbers. There is stress without the numbers. Two people can't do it all. Four people can't even do it all. That's pretty much what we've been trying to do it on." Seeing the needs yet lacking the personnel to meet them frustrated volunteers and decreased their wellbeing.

Three options were possible for volunteers given the small number of committee members available to tackle large projects. First, current committee members could increase the time that they put into Plunket. Second, committee members could try and recruit new volunteers. Third, volunteers could reduce the scale of potential projects. As might be expected, the first and second option negatively impacted volunteers' wellbeing. In terms of time, most Plunket volunteers already juggle family, volunteering and sometimes part-time work. Shifting more time into volunteering cuts into time allocated to other activities. A volunteer explained the impact of extra workload as follows:

> It's my choice that I'm volunteering and I know that's
> what's making me stressed. . . . If I want to have my
> stress-free life back again, I need to stop, because it's
> ultimately my family's wellbeing and my wellbeing. If I
> had a huge big committee – but that's not going to happen.
> If we had more help, it wouldn't be so bad.

Participants also found the second option, recruiting new volunteers, somewhat difficult. Even if friends and acquaintances were interested in volunteering, often they weren't willing to give enough time to enable committees

to take on big projects. Another volunteer labelled this unwillingness to commit large chunks of time the "Tupperware theory:"

> You know your friends rings you up and says, "I'm having
>
> a Tupperware party," and you immediately think, "Oh no,
>
> I love Tupperware but it's so expensive!" I can't possibly
>
> afford or don't want to have to fork out $80 for a cake tin,
>
> for example. Volunteering is like that. Someone says,
>
> "Would you mind helping?" but I think I'm going to have
>
> to commit $80 and $80 is too much. I'm going to have to
>
> commit too much of my time.

Most volunteers tried the third option in conjunction with the first and second. The third option was to focus on how volunteers could make a difference in individual cases. Half of the participants' descriptions of wellbeing documented situations where they had able to meet the immediate physical needs of babies or families with fewer means. For instance, two volunteers described how their committees had provided a high chair and other equipment for a new set of triplets from a family who was struggling financially. Five volunteers described a project where committees had decided to knit warm clothes for needy babies. One participant explained that this type of activity felt like what volunteers *should* be doing:

> A couple of winters ago, we got a whole lot of grannies to
>
> knit for us and we also were able to purchase a whole lot
>
> of woollen vests for babies, for the nurses to give out to
>
> those in need and that really felt like that's what we're

supposed to be doing. I mean, we do all the activities for

the mums and all the educational courses as well but this

felt like something we were doing for the babies. You

know, helping out and keeping them warm and toasty.

Yeah, that was a big warm fuzzy that we had.

The advantage of this third approach is immediate feedback and obvious

appreciation from those that receive help, which contributes positively to

wellbeing. The use of business tools also had a varied approach on volunteers'

wellbeing, as I discuss below.

The Impact of Business Tools on Volunteer Wellbeing

Most discussion about Plunket's planning, management and evaluation

requirements centred on the various systems in place to ensure accurate reporting:

meetings, marketing guidelines and business plans. Different reactions to these

systems matched the New Zealand Councillor's (the volunteer in charge of

governance for the Waikato region) predictions about the post-business plan

Plunket world: less commitment, less communication, and less flow-on up the

hierarchy:

You're going to get the branches that won't do it full stop

because it's all too scary and then you'll get the other

branches – that perhaps they have someone there is more

business oriented – because there're business people out

there, and they'll do this fantastic one! But that doesn't

actually benefit most branches because they're still scared

off. "Shit, we don't have the right person in ours!" "We

don't know what to do so we just won't do it. We'll push

it under the table, but then we won't be involved in

anything." What then happens is that everybody just goes

off and works in their own little silos everywhere and

doesn't get involved.

In this section, I discuss how each "silo" responded to Plunket's insistence on business tools in terms of their wellbeing. Volunteers with business experience or more training because of their Plunket position applied their skills to the systems Plunket set up to facilitate community development. For this group, business-like expectations contributed to wellbeing. Committee members without such experience or training and older volunteers, on the other hand, felt overwhelmed by the responsibilities that the new systems placed on their shoulders. To maintain their sense of wellbeing, this second group focused on relationships within their committee rather than on business tools. I conclude by suggesting that the converse may also hold: lack of wellbeing from good relationships may lead volunteers to emphasise achievement of community development goals.

First, committee volunteers with an accounting or business background understood the purpose and format of the business plan, and appreciated its ability to help committees plan proactively. A participant with management experience explicitly linked the business plan to getting things done more easily:

If we have a business plan it is easier for us, we can see

what needs doing, we can prioritise and it can actually get

done. Rather than us going "Oh we need a wall heater . . .

we will discuss it next meeting," and then in the winter

with the first cold snap it is like "Oh we really need a wall

heater!" . . . . Our business plan is hopefully going to be

more preventative. That's organisational skills: forward

thinking, looking to the future, and looking at the bigger

picture. That is what we are trying to work towards: being

more professional because when we explain that we are

Plunket volunteers, people tend to think we bake cakes or

we knit woolly vests for newborn babies. They don't see

us as a professional entity, and that is what we are striving

to become.

These participants enjoyed the intellectual challenge of creating good business

plans. Planning and accountability, the hallmarks of Plunket's professionalism,

contributed to their wellbeing in terms of their perceived control (Baumeister &

Leary, 1995) over what was happening in their local area.

On the other hand, the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing

was negative for older volunteers and participants without business experience.

This group of participants was committed to community development, but

positioned most of the systems required by professionalism as a hindrance rather

than a help to delivering outcomes. Most participants managed resentment about

pointless professional demands by focusing on how relationships within the

committee and the community contributed to their wellbeing. Even when poor

relationships occasioned a focus on how their contribution made a difference in

the community, participants did not link development to professionalised systems.

Most systems associated with careful planning and evaluation received criticism by these participants. Meetings were an exception. Well-run meetings facilitated effective fundraising and planning for parent education. Several participants mentioned enjoying learning how to run a "proper" meeting:

> It was actually quite good last night. We got her to run
>
> through an actual proper meeting with us as we did it and
>
> you know I learnt heaps. I've never been on a committee
>
> before. The meetings are so different to any other type of
>
> meeting.

Having a clear structure keeps volunteers on track so things get done, and creates a sense of accomplishment or achievement that contributes to wellbeing (Seligman, 2011).

Participants categorised other systems as red tape that was entirely negative for wellbeing in terms of enjoying pleasant experiences (Seligman, 2002), engaging in meaningful activities (Csikszenthmihalyi, 2003) and possessing a sense of agency (Bandura, 1997; Sheldon, Elliot, Kim, & Kasser, 2001). For instance, one volunteer was livid about the hoops her committee had to jump through merely to replace the sign that had fallen down outside their Plunket rooms. The committee checked the sign had the appropriate colours and fonts according to the style guide before sending it to the sign-writer, only to find out that the style guide had changed without notice. She concluded, "To us that's a barrier . . . . Why the hell do we bother?" These participants felt that their efforts and time were reduced to nought by ill-communicated regulations from the

Communication and Marketing Department about what could and couldn't be done.

The business plan epitomised pointless professionalism. Three volunteers with 40 to 50 years involvement questioned the need for a business plan when volunteer committees have been running education courses and supporting the work of Plunket nurses for almost a hundred years without one. One of them explained:

> If [the accountant] is not around I doubt that we'll do it! I wouldn't do it again. We felt we had to do it because of the new Plunket rooms coming up. They kept saying if you don't have these things in your business plan you can't do it sort of thing. But we *know* we are trying to attract more volunteers, why do we have to put it on a piece of paper that we want to get more? Why do we have to put it on paper that we are going to be running Pepe courses? We *know* we're going to be running education courses. If it's not in your business plan you can't do it. I guess it's to keep committees on track. That must be what it's for. I don't know.

More recent recruits to Plunket volunteering also positioned the business plan as irrelevant form-filling. A new volunteer commented that she "didn't want to have to run a mini-business. It's taken the joy out of it for me." Another participant explained that the reporting requirements can actually hinder volunteers from achieving community goals:

> We can spend so much time crossing the *t*'s and dotting
>
> the *i*'s that you haven't actually got time to go out there
>
> and promote an organisation and actually do what you
>
> want to do, which is a shame. Volunteers aren't trained to
>
> do stuff like that. We're from all walks of life. More often
>
> than not we're still mums and you kind of think wow
>
> we've got to do this business plan with a mission
>
> statement and it's just crazy.

Another participant wanted a document that "is user-friendly and which has words that people actually understand and recognise." A third found the technical language terrifying:

> My husband is a businessman and he has been saying "It's
>
> time you got out." He couldn't understand half of what is
>
> in that thing. I don't even know what half the words are
>
> and he couldn't believe it.

Despite subtle acts of resistance on the part of many volunteers (handing it in late or insisting others with relevant experience do it for them), most business plans eventually reach completion, since without one, committees cannot undertake community projects.

Most commonly, participants coped with fulfilling professional demands that they did not enjoy by focusing on relationships and friendships that contributed to wellbeing. Systems for accountability and planning and reporting requirements became tolerable because of the good times spent with others on the committee and members of the community. An experienced volunteer who hated

the business plan channelled her emotional energy into the positive memories associated with fundraising events:

> The business plan would be the worst thing. Doing that, to me, would be the fastest, the main reason for me to get out. Because I *enjoy* everything else about it. I enjoy the catering. We have a lot of fun doing it. Two of us did the dishes for us at the wild food feast . . . and they had a big screen [for the rugby] and the Bledisloe Cup game was on and we were watching that. We had an absolute *ball*. I love doing that sort of thing. You get to meet all the people. We do the fireworks fiesta every year and we are only serving cups of tea and cakes and that sort of thing. It's a lot of fun. I get to see people that I haven't seen for ages. All these jobs get me out but there's nothing else about it that I don't like except that business plan. I will do anything else.

Since the business plan has a deadline, participants who did not like business planning had the rest of the year to cultivate enjoyable relationships. The converse hardly holds true: poor relationships impact every interaction. Nonetheless, volunteers can try to look beyond the individuals to the organisational cause. One participant who is the lone volunteer on a struggling committee felt unsupported by paid staff in her attempts to reinvigorate her branch:

> There is very little enthusiasm and very little commitment
>
> to volunteers and recruiting volunteers and fundraising
>
> and promotion but we're asking community members to
>
> come on board and do that with us . . . . It's frustrating
>
> and I have got caught up in "Oh well if you guys don't
>
> care, I don't care." I'm being honest! But I have moments
>
> where I've thought "No, I *do* care" and people have
>
> approached me and said "Let's do an initiative together,
>
> let's get out in the community."

I suggest that this second shift in attribution rests on shaky foundations, since volunteers with poor relationships are vulnerable to discouragement and disillusionment if initiatives for community development do not succeed as planned.

This section has shown that Plunket volunteers are committed to responding to community needs but that lack of resources hampers their efforts. Wellbeing is best maintained by focusing on the help that committees offer to individual families and children. Plunket volunteers can be split into two groups depending on whether they position the use of business tools as (a) helpful for achieving community development, and (b) contributing to wellbeing. The first group has business experience or Plunket training. Planning and systems increase their sense of wellbeing through personal development, challenge and a sense of control over what is happening at a local level. For the second group, reporting and planning requirements were completely alien and therefore unpleasant and meaningless. In addition, business tools wasted valuable time that could have spent on engaging with the community. To maintain some sense of wellbeing, the

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second group focused on the friendships that committee work fosters and the enjoyable experiences of fundraising together. If relationships falter, the second group have little incentive to continue volunteering for Plunket. The first group may switch their focus to how professional systems increase the efficacy of community development.

How did St John Ambulance Volunteers Negotiate the Relationships between Professionalism and Wellbeing?

Participants articulated a remarkably coherent view of professionalism as excellent clinical service, calm task focus and sense of personal responsibility for one's actions. On the other hand, participants articulated a professionalism-wellbeing relationship completely distinct from St John's understanding. In contrast to organisational messages that suggested members sacrifice wellbeing to enact professionalism, the data shows that participants viewed professionalism as an essential prerequisite for wellbeing. I propose that St John's emphasis on teamwork as a source of wellbeing needs to be re-interpreted: teamwork has an impact on wellbeing through teams' ability to determine what constitutes professional behaviour. First, given that professionalism at St John demands clinical excellence that is obtained through practice of skills and acquisition of tacit knowledge on the road, team members could either facilitate or hinder acquisition of knowledge. Second, team members could mediate volunteers' self-assessment about whether they could have done more for a patient or not.

In this section, I propose that professionalism as clinical excellence contributes to a positive professionalism-wellbeing relationship, regardless of patient outcome. I then show that professionalism as personal responsibility is far more likely to challenge volunteers' wellbeing. In both cases, team members

provide guidance about how to navigate the professionalism-wellbeing relationship.

Professionalism as Excellent Clinical Knowledge Fosters Positive Wellbeing

Participants did not prioritise positive experiences of relationality through teamwork and community contribution as a major contributor to wellbeing. In fact, several participants felt their role as volunteers was under-valued by media messages that emphasised caring and ignored clinical skills, such as the St John Ambulance-initiated advertising campaign that featured an officer tucking an older lady into bed with a hot cup of tea:

The public think we pick up a nice little old lady that's had a little fall and bundle her up in a blanket and take her to hospital, and tuck her into bed, because the TV *says* we tuck them into bed! In the TV ad, there's a lady, she gets her pills out and you see her with the kettle and she makes a cup of tea and then she trips on something, and she goes "Ooh" and presses her button around her neck and then suddenly you see this ambulance racing round the street to get to her house and suddenly the next thing you see is they are tucking her in the hospital bed. It is like that does *not* happen!

While over half of the participants described the importance of a warm, personal approach for patients, wellbeing for volunteers depended more on their sense of actually being able to offer help in a particular situation, as a participant detailed:

> After we had all cleared the scene I sort of went back in
> and just made sure all of our equipment was gathered up,
> we hadn't left anything there and I went to the wife and I
> says, "He is seriously ill but we have given him the best
> chance we can" and she just held me and she said, "You
> worked so hard" and that made it worthwhile.

In this case, the family's appreciation of the volunteer's professional skills and effort afforded her immense satisfaction, even though the man later died.

Rather than relationality, a sense of clinical competence was the key to wellbeing. A professional approach requires careful attention to patients' physical condition and vital signs, since lives are at stake. Most volunteers aspired to clinical excellence because of the nature of this voluntary role (care equates to saving patients). Feeling skilled and capable was strongly linked to wellbeing. As I had expected, many participants selected incidents where they had been able to use professional knowledge to "save" patients as examples of positive wellbeing.

What I had not anticipated, however, was that even when expertise was insufficient to save a patient, participants' wellbeing remained high if they had exerted all their skill and effort. One participant chose a failed attempt to resuscitate a man who had had a cardiac arrest as a moment when he really experienced wellbeing. He described the scene:

> We tried for a long, long time to get him going but
> couldn't. We decided we weren't going to give up, so we
> transported him doing cardiac in the bus. Carried on for
> about 40 minutes and I felt good about it. When his wife

came into the resus room, I decided I didn't need to see

that, and I'd finished my turn doing the compressions so I

packed up and went and saw the paramedic. "I'm going to

leave now." "Yup." I just left the family to it, but I felt

good about it because we gave it everything we'd got. If

this guy was going to come around, he would have come

around. We found out he had a pre-existing heart

condition, and there was probably nothing much more we

could do. I worked to the absolute limit of my skill level.

Another participant explained that "It was important to me to know that there was

nothing else we could have done. I walked in and I knew that that lady possibly

wouldn't make it and she didn't, but it didn't worry me." In both cases,

knowledge enabled a sense of detachment from the outcome.

Teamwork, identified by St John as an important aspect of wellbeing,

impacted on volunteers' sense of professionalism. Participants often relied on paid

staff to give feedback on the effectiveness of clinical interventions due to their

greater knowledge. A participant described how others' input about her practice

contributed to her wellbeing:

A couple of the officers will really stretch me and that's

been really good, I've enjoyed that. You get to know the

officers very well and often afterwards the officer would

say "I couldn't do any more for that patient than what you

could do."

Unsupportive staff, on the other hand, could intensify volunteers' self-doubt about whether they could have done more to save a patient. Lack of knowledge meant closure on an incident became more difficult, as another participant explained: "That's when to me it is really bad, because then it gets you thinking did I do the right thing, did I not? Yes I did, no I didn't…"

Professionalism Understood as Personal Responsibility Can Damage Volunteers'
Wellbeing

Just as the possession and use of clinical knowledge contributed positively to wellbeing, perceived lack of training and skills were extremely negative for wellbeing. The sensation of holding someone else's life in the balance without the requisite skills meant a negative patient outcome could lead to intense feelings of guilt that were made worse by participants' perceptions of responsibility. Participants showed considerable confusion about who takes responsibility for volunteers' decisions. Some volunteers thought that the paid or senior officer on the ambulance was responsible for volunteers' errors. Others believed they were personally responsible for all their actions, and hence lack of knowledge and skills was especially problematic, as a participant explained:

> It's also the type of work where you're aware that you're
> dealing with people's lives and that's a reality check that
> comes in every so often. Occasionally, just sometimes,
> I've gone through self-doubt and I've thought "I don't
> know if I can do this." I don't think I can handle the
> responsibility of having someone's life in my hands.

Half of the participants gave vivid examples where lack of knowledge impacted wellbeing because they took negative patient outcomes to heart. One participant experienced emotional trauma when she arrived at the scene of a fatal car crash less than a minute after it happened. She explained:

> I felt this lady's last heartbeat and there was nothing I could do and that to me was absolutely awful. I got stood down after that job for the night. I just couldn't sleep properly, I couldn't eat properly. It was *horrible*. I had like a permanent headache.

Her experience of teamwork from the paramedic at the scene, and other team members available through St John's peer support network changed how she retrospectively made sense of this accident.

> [At the time] I didn't have the knowledge to quickly work out who had what injuries, and that is where my senior came in because he said to the fire service guy, "This car's our priority. We'll deal with the other one next." My concern was that we had played God on that job: we'd decided who lived and who died. To me I would have rather helped the woman whose car was on the correct side of the road – bugger the other guy that had crashed into her.

Following referral to a psychologist, she re-scripted the entire event: "They change the way your brain thinks about certain things. He just convinced me that no, it's just how things were." In this case, the participant relied on how paid staff

applied their professional judgement to this scene in order to maintain a sense of wellbeing after this event.

This section has shown that participants did not emphasise community service as a major contribution to their personal wellbeing. Instead, they framed their contribution in terms of clinical excellence. As long as participants had used all their skill and effort at an emergency scene, they were able to maintain a sense of wellbeing, even if the patient died. Professionalism meant volunteers controlled the situation and could ensure closure, which was essential for wellbeing. Teamwork had an impact on whether participants felt professional or not. Supportive staff could build up volunteers' actual knowledge and skills as well as their self-confidence. On the other hand, unsupportive reactions by paid staff about how participants had applied knowledge and skills led to feelings of insecurity about their professional status, and therefore less wellbeing. This insecurity was made far worse by participants' perceived responsibility for their actions. In this sense, professionalism can have an ambiguous impact on wellbeing. Increased clinical knowledge and skills contributes to wellbeing, but increased responsibility can decrease it.

Conclusion

While all volunteers in this project experienced some pressure to conform to "professionalised" codes of conduct, professionalism did not emerge as a monolithic construct. Professionalism at Refugee Services required the enactment of a tightly-bounded role with clear task requirements, non-intimate personal relationships, and bracketing of personal values and cultural norms when interacting with refugee families. Plunket constructed professionalism as responsiveness to community needs and the use of business tools drove

professionalism. At St John Ambulance, professionalism meant excellent clinical service, a calm but urgent attitude, and a sense of personal responsibility.

These understandings of professionalism draw on different processes and structures of professionalisation. Refugee Services' view of professionalism stems from a rationalised perspective. Organisational codes of conduct construct volunteers as "agents" who attain a specified end by operating within the parameters of the volunteer role. Plunket's version of professionalism was far more marketised. Marketisation suggests that committee members are "managers," who ought to evaluate their plans and outcomes in terms of business-inspired values, and that projects that committees undertake ought to be flexible and responsive to community needs. St John Ambulance's notion of professionalism incorporates aspects of both rationalisation and bureaucratisation. Volunteers must streamline processes in order to attain optimal outcomes, and engage in continuous learning to achieve expert status.

Organisational messages about wellbeing also differed. For Refugee Services, wellbeing derived from the ability to create personal distance between the volunteer role and one's personal life. The selection of "well" volunteers who were not seeking to fulfil their own needs facilitated placing clear boundaries. At Plunket, professionalism contributed to wellbeing in terms of time management and achievement of community outcomes, but wellbeing also derived from the establishment of close friendships within the committee, particularly if these were free from conflict. St John Ambulance focused wellbeing messages on the benefits of great teamwork, and satisfaction at helping members of the public through skill development. St John's Core Values materials also suggested that

volunteers should be willing to sacrifice their personal wellbeing for others as a matter of course.

Given such dissimilar understandings, the connection that organisations constructed between professionalism and wellbeing was also diverse. Plunket and St John Ambulance emphasised relational sources of wellbeing, such as friendships within the committee (Plunket), and teamwork and interaction with patients (St John), without excluding the contribution that professional conduct could make. Community development through family education (Plunket) and confidence in clinical skills (St John) both received a mention. At Refugee Services, on the other hand, wellbeing was the direct result of well-maintained boundaries.

The comparison of volunteers' responses to these organisational codes of conduct is important not only because of the inherent interest of the data, but because the relationships between professionalism and wellbeing reflect important organisational differences. Although each interview contained unique, individual nuances, I provide a summary of major trends here.

Refugee Services' organisational codes of conduct suggest that wellbeing hinges on professional behaviour. Volunteers only mentioned the importance of boundaries when discussing negative or challenging experiences. Most could specify moments when maintaining clearer boundaries would have enhanced their personal wellbeing. However, when participants described moments of positive wellbeing, they dwelt on the rewarding relationships they had established with refugee families, which would not have been so rich, deep or strong if they had treated the voluntary role as a type of job. In short, the relationship between

professionalism as organisationally understood and wellbeing was ambiguous for Refugee Services' volunteers.

For Plunket, organisational codes of conduct constructed complex relationships between professionalism and wellbeing. Professionalism understood as meeting community needs generally challenged volunteers' ability to manage their time. Volunteers struggling with small committees maintained wellbeing by focusing on more manageable initiatives. From Plunket's perspective, the use of business tools to enhance planning and evaluation would enable volunteers to get things done "professionally" in their communities, whereas relationships would contribute to the well functioning of committees and personal wellbeing. The group of participants with business experience enjoyed the forward planning and evaluation tools: professionalism and wellbeing worked together. For participants without business knowledge, buy-in to a highly commercialised notion of professionalism seemed to compromise wellbeing. The data showed that participants could compensate for lack of wellbeing in one area by emphasising the other. That is, when the demands of professionalism were costly, participants emphasised relational wellbeing. When relationships were tense, participants turned to how their contribution was helping the community.

Finally, St John Ambulance volunteers linked professionalism, understood as clinical excellence, with wellbeing, while the organisational codes of conduct linked wellbeing with teamwork. From participants' perspective, professionalism acted as a resource that protected them from getting too emotionally involved with patients. Participants "felt good" about the jobs they went to if they had used all the skills and expertise they possessed, even if the patient died. Insecurity about their knowledge and skills to save lives, on the other hand, caused anxiety and

self-doubt. Participants resented emphasis on caring, nurturing behaviour that ignored professional skills. Although teamwork shaped participants' views of their own professionalism, from participants' perspectives, it only indirectly impacted wellbeing. In sum, professionalism as clinical excellence was a positive contributor to wellbeing, but professionalism as personal responsibility could decrease it.

These multi-faceted relationships between professionalism and wellbeing also complexify the role that experience and context play in creating understandings of phenomena. When expectations about the context matched volunteer experiences, participants were far more likely to report wellbeing. Conversely, participants discussed how dissonance between context and experience led to challenging or difficult moments. Some volunteers who had anticipated positive relationally-oriented interactions were upset by their experiences of professionalised volunteering. Other volunteers who had accepted a context of professionalised distance were disturbed by experiences of highly relational volunteering, which impeded them from limiting their emotional involvement. The previous chapter, which analysed the meanings that volunteering held for participants, may indicate reasons why volunteers' understandings of the professionalism-wellbeing relationship diverges from or converges with organisational notions. In fact, given the two distinct volunteer pathways, it is unlikely that all participants would respond to organisational messages about professionalism in the same way. The next chapter considers how volunteers with such different reactions to organisational context are able to jointly construct a community of practice.

CHAPTER 6: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AS LOCI OF CONTESTATION AND COLLABORATION

The chapter on the meanings of volunteering emphasised the importance of relationality and challenged assumptions in the literature that volunteering is a free, individual act. This chapter questions another core assumption about volunteering: that volunteering fosters the development of positive, *collaborative* relationships that augment volunteers' wellbeing. Nonprofit scholarship has implied that collaboration maintains and strengthens nonprofit organisations, while on-going tension and dissensus destroys a community. Indeed, the very term "community" evokes nostalgic connotations of harmony (Wenger, et al., 2002). The nonprofit leadership literature has also linked collaboration with "good" leadership and conflict and division with "bad" management. Sources of conflict vary: volunteers may engage in extra-role behaviours that challenge organisational mission or, at the other extreme, they may not contribute at all. As a result, nonprofit work proposes and evaluates strategies for managing volunteers whose interpretations of what they ought to do clash with expectations of paid staff (Brudney, 2004; Dover, 2010). Volunteer coordinators may also need to manage tensions among volunteers with diverse understandings of what constitutes an appropriate commitment level.

Despite the importance of the nonprofit sector for social capital formation, however, I argue that it is not necessarily desirable that volunteer organisations be havens of peace, goodwill and consensus, or that groups of volunteers within these organisations collaborate. Further, I contend that some instances of contestation actually contribute to cohesion, while others are destructive. The data in this chapter shows that some cases of collaboration can be fruitful, while others

are unproductive or dangerous. Volunteering scholarship must embrace both contestation and collaboration as key relational dimensions of volunteering experience.

A CoP perspective enhances analysis of collaboration and contestation for several reasons. First, the three dimensions of social practice that structure CoPs align closely with some of the key elements of collaboration, which include the sharing of resources, cooperative behaviours and coordinated responses (Lewis, 2006). Second, the CoP literature does not assume that volunteers will carry out tasks, relate to others or establish a shared mission in a collaborative manner. For instance, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder's (2002) definition of CoPs as "groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an on-going basis" (p. 4) does not rule out the existence of disagreement among members.

Hence, in order to remain alert to the possibility of concord and consensus as well as conflict and contestation, this chapter considers:

RQ 5: How do volunteers enact a community of practice?

To address this question, I first define the three dimensions of a CoP, and explain how volunteers from each organisation enact these dimensions, according to the amount and type of collaboration. I also assess the impact of collaboration and contestation on volunteers' wellbeing. Analysis of these components has the potential to cast light on the key communication questions of identity, coordination and relationality. I discuss these implications throughout the chapter.

Key Elements of CoPs

CoP analysis evaluates three key dimensions of social practice: shared repertoire, mutual engagement and joint enterprise. *Shared repertoire* includes everything members of a CoP do together. This activity-oriented component describes the scope and type of role members assume. *Mutual engagement* refers to how CoP members relate to each other, and the patterns of interaction that develop. Finally, *joint enterprise* specifies what CoP members see as their overall goals or mission, and how these play out in shared values.

Groups of volunteers do in fact constitute a CoP (cf, Iverson & McPhee, 2008). The volunteers in this study all received formal or informal training and instruction about what tasks were expected, and hence possessed an understanding of shared repertoire. The volunteers also interacted with other volunteers and paid staff on a regular basis. As peripheral organisational members, volunteers did not always have a clear vision of the organisation's values and how the volunteer role contributed to organisational mission. Nonetheless, joint enterprise refers to members' *perceptions* of mission, whether or not this aligns at all with an organisation's perspective.

CoPs at Refugee Services

Analysis of shared repertoire, mutual engagement and joint enterprise at Refugee Services showed that this CoP was predominantly collaborative. *Shared repertoire* at Refugee Services tended to be collaborative because volunteers had to parcel out and coordinate tasks within the team; *joint enterprise*, in contrast, was fragmented, since volunteers held divergent views on what forms of cultural empowerment were appropriate. For some groups of volunteers, *mutual engagement* was collaborative. In some cases, team members and paid staff

formed an important resource for cultural knowledge and emotional support, and social interaction among these volunteers contributed highly to wellbeing. However, even when mutual engagement was not particularly collaborative, interaction was not a source of major conflict.

Shared Repertoire at Refugee Services

There are three major aspects of shared repertoire at Refugee Services: material resettlement tasks, coordination with other team members, and sharing cultural practices. Participants' descriptions of material tasks showed marked convergence across interviews, although effective teams distributed jobs to ensure an effective resettlement experience. The type of cultural experiences that participants shared with refugee families was the least collaborative aspect of shared repertoire.

Material tasks, already detailed in the chapter on professionalism, were similar for all families. The first major project involved setting up a house before the family arrived. Most volunteers recalled the "hard slog" to obtain household goods or to source a "fridge on a shoestring," and the pressure to find furniture because "we knew if we didn't find them something they wouldn't have it." Having a team to collaborate with reduced the stress and the workload, especially when team members had good networks: "the woman I worked with was much better at it. She had more contacts, and she was quite creative at thinking of ways to get stuff, whereas I felt completely daunted."

After the family's arrival, teams split on-going material tasks because of diverse skills and time availability. Students often excelled in helping refugees deal with government departments, while teams assigned outside jobs to men.

Retired persons assisted families with day-time chores, while full-time employees visited in the evenings or on weekends. Coordination between day and evening visits was required in order to effectively support a family. Teams that slackened in their efforts to keep up the contact often fell over.

Hence, shared repertoire also included phone and email contact among team members. One participant estimated that she spent only a quarter of her time with the refugee family. Administrative tasks took up the rest of her time: obtaining data about the family's entitlements; contacting paid staff at Refugee Services for mental health referrals; coordinating social work visits; and communicating with the rest of the team. Without collaboration, volunteers were wont to become frustrated. As another participant explained:

> Sometimes you go over and you don't know if the
> family's already told the volunteers something and then
> *everybody* goes and rings Housing New Zealand to report
> the same thing, because the family sees one volunteer.
> They tell them and nothing happens. It might be because
> the volunteer hasn't done anything and it might be because
> Housing New Zealand hasn't done anything. So they tell
> the next one and the next one until the problem's fixed,
> and they don't say "I've already told Karen this." It's
> more like "Problem: broken" . . . . It's much simpler
> communication like that.

To avoid this type of double-up, this participant concluded, "You have to keep the level of communication up."

The last element of shared repertoire involved familiarising refugees with cultural practices in New Zealand. Some teams worked together to organise dinners or outings, although most participants decided individually how best to introduce refugee families to life in New Zealand. For example, two participants played soccer regularly with the children of "their" family; another taught the teenage girls how to cook "Kiwi" meals. What unified the diverse initiatives of individual volunteers was a shared desire to create connections between the refugee families and their local communities.

When community members became part of refugees' networks, volunteers reported a considerable sense of wellbeing. For example, a participant described how a trip to the fruit and vegetable shop became an opportunity to meet someone new:

> We had a lovely experience because the lady behind the
> shop counter said "Where are you from?" My lady was
> able to have a conversation with her, like "I'm from
> Colombia" and asked her what her name was, and she
> shook her hand and introduced herself too. It was really,
> really nice.

Volunteers also acted as a buffer for refugee families when public reactions were not so edifying. When one family went to the supermarket with a food voucher for the first shop, the checkout operator was vocal about government handouts:

> The woman kept muttering about these people get things
> for nothing. Of course they didn't know what she was

saying, so I just tried to keep my voice level and say "Yes,

well, they left everything. They've got *nothing*." They

resent anyone who gets "something for nothing" so she

said. You feel like shaking them - "you ignorant ***!"

Another participant's connection with a family from Afghanistan led his father to

jump to a rather extreme conclusion: "He asked me, 'You're not working for the

Taliban are you?' I was mortified." Lack of acceptance of refugees as a normal

part of the local community reduced volunteers' wellbeing.

In sum, shared repertoire was a fairly collaborative component of the CoP

at Refugee Services. Participants worked together with other volunteers on their

team and with paid staff to meet Refugee Services' goals of establishing a

pleasant material environment and situating refugees in a network of positive

relationships.

Mutual Engagement at Refugee Services

Mutual engagement at Refugee Services was neither highly collaborative

nor especially confrontational, perhaps because opportunities to engage with other

volunteers and staff were limited, and because teams, and individual team

members, differed in the amount of help they felt they needed to work with a

refugee family. Participants' timetables meant they seldom coincided with other

volunteers. Participants often failed to get through to paid staff, although

volunteers' reactions to this sporadic contact depended on the amount of support

that a group felt they needed. Even when paid staff did not respond immediately

in moments of crisis, volunteers blamed the lack of government funding rather

than paid staff themselves.

Volunteers' Engagement with their Team

Some participants described how other team members' levels of engagement dropped off when work and personal pressures became too intense. In these cases, pressure to create a positive welcoming environment for families left little time for interaction amongst volunteers. Since tasks could be delegated through email, volunteers did not see each other unless they scheduled times to catch up.

For some participants, this lack of contact was positive rather than problematic. A participant described her team as including a "weird dude who I don't particularly like a whole lot" and other members who were "pretty good, pretty easy-going." She concluded "I don't have a whole lot to do with them because I visit the family and they visit the family but we don't really all do it together." Being in the same team did not automatically create a relational bond. However, relational apathy did not translate into criticism of how other team members performed the volunteer role.

On the other hand, four participants from the same group described themselves as "the poster representation of how RMS should work." This team met for drinks at the pub and had dinner parties. One participant from the group commented that although the desire to meet new people [the refugees] had motivated her initially, "probably one of the greatest parts of it has been getting to know the volunteers and know about *their* experiences." For this group, collaborative mutual engagement also contributed to their ability to support the family, especially when they were unsure how to manage refugees' cultural choices.

Volunteers' Engagement with Paid Staff

If the team does not cohere, volunteers may be left with few resources other than Refugee Services staff for support. The majority of participants praised the mammoth efforts paid staff made to support volunteers, despite their high workload. Nonetheless, most participants also observed that volunteer coordinators did not respond to emails and telephone messages immediately, especially when emergencies occurred out of office hours.

Consequently, some participants felt abandoned by Refugee Services. For example, a volunteer described the arrest of one member of the family during her visit as "too big for me to handle." She detailed the incident:

> The police turned up one night to arrest one of my family
> and he wasn't home. I managed to negotiate with police
> that he could go in to the station in the morning . . . . The
> next morning I had to work and he had no-one to go with
> him. His father was working as well. I called many, many
> times to my local co-ordinator and the social worker. The
> social workers are also over-worked and under-funded,
> another brilliant resource that most families don't have the
> full benefit of. There was no one that I could contact after
> hours and I know that's not a service they provide for
> volunteers but . . . they just need more paid staff to support
> the volunteers.

The potential for isolation runs counter to the support structure Refugee Services aims for, which National Office staff described as follows:

An analogy again might be on the aeroplane, where the air

things come down and the mother is supposed to put on

her own oxygen mask before she looks after the children.

If the volunteers are there to do a role and assist the

clients, they can't do it unless they are well looked after . .

. . We give them as much support as we can, to help them

to do that work so that it's very clearly focused on their

wellbeing.

In sum, some participants needed a web of relationships that would help

make sense of unexpected situations, while others happily operated independently

from other team members and staff. Contact tended to enhance wellbeing when

volunteers were faced with challenging situations. The rest of the team could offer

suggestions about how to best respond to cultural differences, and Refugee

Services staff could offer assistance in dealing with problems that fell outside the

scope of the volunteer role. However, when participants did not encounter

difficulties, lack of connection or coordination with other team members and staff

did not lead to conflict or confrontation.

Joint Enterprise at Refugee Services

In contrast with the cohesive shared repertoire that volunteers established

through the intensive training sessions, joint enterprise was highly fragmented.

Participants had three quite distinct views on what the purpose of their role as

Refugee Services volunteer support workers ought to be, perhaps depending on

whether they identified with a view of volunteering as supportive of

organisational mission, or a perspective of volunteering as a means of self-

expression and freedom. One large group supported the organisational mission of

creating a society that embraced, respected and promoted diverse cultural and religious expression. The second group expected refugees to conform to "New Zealand" values, and therefore believed that their role involved encouraging refugees to adapt in order to fit in. The third group tried to empower refugees and help them understand mainstream cultural norms. I discuss possible reasons for divergent understandings of organisational mission and volunteers' role in accomplishing it, before exploring the three perspectives of joint enterprise in more detail.

Three reasons for diverse interpretations of joint enterprise stand out from the data. The most obvious is volunteers' irregular and punctuated interactions with paid staff after the initially intensive training period. After the six month placement had finished, most participants had little guidance on how they should manage conflicts over cultural values with refugee families. The second is that volunteers entered the training programme with very different motivations that were not always honestly shared with Refugee Services' staff. Several participants mentioned cases of volunteers who "subverted" the role to meet their own needs. The third reason is that participants' ideas on what Refugee Services' ideal of cultural tolerance and empowerment looked like *in situ* varied considerably.

Joint Enterprise as Cultural Tolerance

The first interpretation of joint enterprise was closely aligned with the organisational values of respect for diverse cultural practice and cultural empowerment, even when refugees' values and behaviours seemed to clash with what might be "expected." Hence, when values conflicted, participants privileged refugees' independence by accepting their choices, rather than asserting their own cultural values. Several participants emphasised the importance of reserving

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judgement: "Going in as a volunteer like that you have to very careful. You can't put your values onto somebody else. It's hard, but you just can't be judgemental." Another described how his everyday thinking about punctuality and courtesy changed:

> I realised that if we said we were coming to dinner and we just called up and said that we couldn't make it, even if they'd gone to the effort of making extra food, it wouldn't have been a problem for them. So, the courtesy we felt forced to extend to them had only been on the assumption that they work exactly the same as we do.

Several participants applied this principle of cultural tolerance even when refugees' choices seriously impinged upon their personal value systems. For instance, one participant provided transport to the liquor store to purchase alcohol for a party she considered could be dangerous for the child in the family, despite her personal concerns. Although she tried to justify the "help" through self-talk such as "Oh, okay, I'll do that because it's New Year, and it'll be hot and hard to carry," on her return home she feared for the safety of "the little fella." After several hours of oscillating between imagining the worst, and distancing herself from the problem, putting her own plans for the New Year on hold, she articulated the heart of her dilemma:

> There was a point when I really struggled. Should I go back there and see if they're alright? But if I do that, they'll be trying to shove drinks down my throat, because they're just so persuasive and don't take no for an answer.

So I just decided, "Oh stuff it. Whatever will be will be."

As it turned out, she [the mother in the refugee family]

ended up with a broken window. She said she doesn't

know how it happened. I thought, "I'm really glad I

wasn't there." Yeah, it was not nice. There were a lot of

uncomfortable things: them demanding you take them to

go and buy the booze, me having to make a conscious

decision, okay, I will do it, but only this once, because it

was kind of like not far from home.

Her unease and anxiety persisted despite her attempts to enact Refugee Services'

attitude of cultural independence. Despite this internal tension caused by

dissonance with personal values, these participants were critical of volunteers who

refused to lay aside their own values when in the volunteer role.

Joint Enterprise as Cultural Assimilation

The second interpretation of joint enterprise was that volunteers' role

involved preparing refugees to live and work the New Zealand way. Some

participants described volunteers who expected refugees to "adapt." For example,

a participant disparaged volunteers who "were trying to actually convert from

[refugees'] religion of origin to the religion of the volunteers." More mundane

examples included attempts to get Colombian refugees with their "little tops and

little skirts" who "look like they're going clubbing all the time" to tone down their

style when attending functions with volunteers.

Efforts to pass on instil dominant cultural norms meant that volunteers felt

unable to maintain an identity as a benign, accommodating helper. For example, a

Refugee Services volunteer appealed to "cultural differences" to explain why she lost her temper when her family ignored "Kiwi" standards:

> As we were driving off, the windows were all down and out goes an empty beer bottle. I stopped the car in the middle of the road and I said, "That is *not* happening here. I will not have something thrown out of my car!" And I got out of the car, went and got the beer bottle and put it back in the car. "Sorry, Keri, sorry!" Well, she certainly learnt that you don't throw rubbish out the window when you're in my car. I might be a real bitch about it, but I have to be firm about some things.

Obvious disapproval ("being a bitch") did not fit into this participant's view of an appropriate volunteer identity yet she sacrificed her image as a "nice" person in order to keep New Zealand roads clean, green and safe.

Joint Enterprise as Cultural Integration

The third perspective of joint enterprise combined elements of both the first and second groups' interpretation. These participants felt that a blanket application of Refugee Services' criteria of empowerment and "independence" was unhelpful for refugees. This group did not believe that showing respect for refugees' cultural values necessarily diminished their ability to express their own values. Instead, cultural misunderstandings or clashes provided an opportunity to discuss how refugees' values and New Zealand cultural norms could work together.

One participant explained that you have to "help people, to give them the choices so that they can make their own decisions . . . . You don't take over, you give them the options." Advising families about options could mean pointing out how other members of the community viewed their behaviour. For instance, one team decided to investigate cultural norms before discussing with one girl how she was "draping [herself] all over [her] brother." Further research revealed hand-holding was normal cultural behaviour between siblings. However, when the brother mentioned marrying his sister, the husband of one of the volunteers shut him down: "Oh, you can't do that in New Zealand, mate!" Another participant encouraged the family to tidy up the outside of their property to avert neighbours' complaints:

> I told them "You have to start doing it, because you know
> Housing New Zealand wouldn't be happy if you don't do
> this and the neighbours won't be happy." It took a while to
> clean up the whole place so I said "Well, what do you do
> each day?" and they said "We sleep." "Why do you
> sleep?" They stayed up at nights, just chatting, but they'd
> sleep from midnight until 12 o'clock daytime and you
> wouldn't get them at that time. You can't force them: you
> just have to work around what's good for them.

This participant did not show disrespect for cultural practices (e.g., sleeping patterns) by helping the family fit into a house-proud neighbourhood.

In short, the dispersal of volunteers after completion of the six month placement and lack of ongoing organisational contact meant that volunteers had

fragmented views of joint enterprise, despite the fact that all volunteers had been through a programme of cultural sensitisation with a focus on refugee empowerment, and had all actively engaged in the resettlement of a refugee family for at least six months. All participants concurred that New Zealand should be a welcoming place for refugees, but differed on how this should happen. One set of participants believed that New Zealand society should be tolerant enough to accept refugees' cultural choices. Therefore, they as volunteers ought to enable refugees to live out their own values irrespective of how those values challenged their personal views. A second variant of joint enterprise placed the onus on refugees to adapt to mainstream cultural values. These volunteers tried to transform refugees' behaviour to conform to their own values. The third option involved the volunteers discussing options about values and behaviour with refugees without denying their personal stance.

These diverse approaches to refugee resettlement are in many ways productive for Refugee Services as a CoP since they reflect broader societal discussions about migration and cultural identity. From the 1980s on, the impact of migration and refugee resettlement on national identity was widely debated in the media and in the political arena, as growth in the refugee population and the number of migrants from the Pacific, Asia and Europe increased ethnic diversity (Bedford, Ho, & Lidgard, 2001). From Refugee Services' perspective, New Zealand ought to acknowledge and foster the "wonderful contribution [of diverse populations] to the social, cultural and economic fabric" (Refugee Services, 2009, para. 10). This integrative approach to diversity maintains the cultural identity of individual refugees and refugee communities while fostering engagement with the resettlement society (Valtonen, 1994). As in other OECD nations, members of

political parties from the far right, however, argued that restrictions on immigration were needed, and that assimilation was the key to maintaining a coherent cultural identity (Jupp, 2003). So far, public debate has tended to polarise perspectives on integration and assimilation. Dialogue within volunteer teams that regularly engage with refugee families may open up conversations that build bridges between perspectives.

How do Volunteers at Refugee Services Enact a CoP?

Volunteers "worked together" to achieve shared repertoire at Refugee Services. Participants' understanding of shared repertoire was fairly consistent, perhaps because Refugee Services' training programme clearly articulated expectations about tasks. However, most participants worked independently from other team members to achieve a good resettlement experience for a family. That is, Refugee Services volunteers demonstrate "pooled interdependence" (J. D. Thompson, 1967), where "individuals do not truly depend on one another" (Lewis, 2006, p. 202). Volunteers share information in order to ensure tasks are completed for a family, but they do not coordinate their behaviour in the sense that parties alter their activity to accommodate the other(s).

On the whole, mutual engagement was not contentious. Participants were cognisant that timetables of other volunteers and workload of paid staff meant that contact could be intermittent. Some expressed hope that more secure government funding could increase staff support for volunteers. Many participants found other team members helpful sources of information and guidance about how to manage cultural difference. Nonetheless, *lack* of close relationships in a team did not lead to conflict and reduce volunteers' wellbeing, although it could contribute to confusion about distribution of material tasks, due to inadequate coordination.

The facet of CoP that showed most divergence at Refugee Services was joint enterprise, or how volunteers ought to contribute to the creation of a multi-ethnic, tolerant society. These fracture lines within volunteer groups were not particularly evident at the level of mutual engagement or shared repertoire, since volunteers did not interact with other teams after the initial training period and contact within teams focused on coordinating material tasks. That is, divergent interpretations did not lead to tension. However, these disparate understandings of the volunteer role suggest that volunteering will not automatically contribute to the public good in the way that Refugee Services anticipated.

CoPs at Plunket

All three elements of Plunket volunteers' community of practice showed evidence of some discord. In terms of shared repertoire, participants' views of which tasks were appropriate for volunteers diverged at times from organisational demands. Most volunteers preferred those activities where they were able to work with other volunteers to raise funds or to connect families with relevant community services. The enjoyment that volunteers reported from working together seemed to indicate that local committees were sites of collaboration and support. Nonetheless, volunteers had to continually manage other committee members' perception of their contribution, and give neither too little nor too much. On the surface, mutual engagement was collaborative, but could hide deeper conflicts. Finally, when volunteers perceived that national policies reduced their wellbeing, they selectively implemented directives, creating their own version of joint enterprise.

Shared Repertoire at Plunket

Plunket's shared repertoire revolves around locally-focused committee meetings, since these meetings structure follow-up activities carried out at home and in the community. Post-meeting work includes tasks such as asking for money, doing financial accounts, organising support initiatives such as play groups or coffee groups, running fundraising events, and maintaining Plunket rooms. Some aspects of this shared repertoire showed high levels of collaboration: establishing a productive yet pleasant environment at meetings, and organising fundraisers. Nonetheless, some volunteers disagreed with organisational expectations that they would become involved in advocacy work at Area level and take responsibility for financial accounts.

Meetings

Meetings combine intensive decision-making and extensive socialising with other women before and after. For meetings to coax volunteers out of their homes in the evenings, the space needs to be eminently social. All of the participants I interviewed with one exception (who is no longer volunteering) noted that some of their best friends were also on the Plunket committee, and therefore meetings constituted "another night to catch up with them." Most volunteers blamed themselves for the length of most meetings: "It takes so long to get started. I mean it's a bunch of women and we're just chatting away, catching up! That's what keeps you going really – being able to catch up with everyone." Once volunteers had reconnected with old friends, the meeting proper began.

In smaller areas, volunteers meet in each other's homes. City branches and Area Society tend to hold meetings in the Plunket rooms because they are more

central, as was the case of the first Plunket meeting I attended. My fieldnotes read as follows:

> *The meeting started at 7.30, about 20 minutes away from my home. These Plunket rooms are situated at the side of a mall! The furniture is new, the paint is fresh, and the facilities well-appointed. There is even a small patio which afforded ample opportunity for the summer mosquitoes to join us as the sun went down. The meeting took ages to start, as women dribbled in. Since it was an Area meeting, small groups of two or three from each committee sat down together. I wasn't sure who to talk to, since there were no familiar faces. I smiled at the women as they came through the door and waited for the meeting to start. It did – about 15 minutes later. The chitchat died down and a full-on business meeting ensued, with minutes distributed, proposals outlined, motions forwarded and seconded. I wondered when the business at hand would ever reach my need for research participants. We finally did – at 9.45, the last item on the agenda, then the meeting finished. A few volunteers left at this point but the majority congregated in the kitchenette. The jug was soon on the boil, and cups of tea and packets of supermarket-bought chocolate biscuits started to circulate along with the home baking. I excused myself at 10.10 as I had said that I should be home around 8.30 and I wondered if my household was worried! It was such*

a still night that the sound of women laughing together

followed me to the car.

Participants had diverse views on whether contributing to wider Area meetings rather than just sub-branch and branch meetings came with the territory. Area meetings are essential for advocacy-related work, but disagreement is more likely, and much more time is needed to negotiate differences in opinion. Some participants felt that volunteers should contribute to the wider picture particularly as the Area Society subsidised some branch costs, but most participants avoid Area meetings. One participant explained why:

> One of the girls put it quite nicely one day. She said it's
>
> [the local sub-branch] more like friends catching up. We
>
> *like* having meetings to catch up with each other, rather
>
> than feeling like "Oh God not another meeting." It's a
>
> really cohesive committee. We're all at a similar place in
>
> our lives. We are all mums with young children. It's
>
> small: there's only seven of us, and there's no politics
>
> involved. Our girls don't like going to Area meetings,
>
> because it's really *them* and *us*. You know Area Society is
>
> very different and I think probably because the politics
>
> gets a lot heavier as well.

From her committee's perspective, the Area meetings' format, purpose and size are less likely to foster the personal friendships that contribute to wellbeing. The New Zealand Councillor is discouraged at poor attendance at Area meetings, and has tried unsuccessfully to introduce a number of strategies to

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increase participation, by making these meetings "fun" with guest speakers and motivational talks. On the whole, over-emphasis on the professional dimension of shared repertoire at the expense of personal friendships diminishes volunteers' involvement. A similar pattern emerges from post-meeting work.

Post-meeting tasks

Participants used meetings as a springboard to focus their efforts until the next meeting. Some tasks were done individually, but participants reported more enjoyment of those tasks they shared together.

Preparing for fundraising events or completing branch accounts requires time and space at home, alone. For instance, cutting and pasting baby photos for a fundraiser turned one volunteer's sitting room into a whirlwind of paper. Another participant found that finishing accounts was a matter of "just sitting at the kitchen table at night . . . . It was a solid two or three hour block. You know, once you started, you had to keep going." The reporting requirements are substantial:

> You get a bank statement and you get a form and you send
> it through. You do copies and then it's through to
> centralised accounts. That's a monthly thing. And every
> half a year, you've got the grants to do, which is for the
> Ministry of Education. Then you do the Year-end thing.
> So you've got two grants plus Year-end, plus the monthly
> reports every month. [Seeing my expression of horror, this
> participant consoled me] . . . . I mean *you* could do the
> monthly reports, they're easy.

This participant, however, concluded that Plunket is "a bit cheeky" to ask volunteers to do accounts. She added that the organisation should cover the paperwork and finances, and leave the volunteers "to help them out."

Another participant made phone calls to "drum up other volunteers" for upcoming events, or targeted companies for financial support. Very little fundraising was done alone, except for street collecting for Plunket's annual Appeal week, when volunteers lobby the public nationwide for financial support. The majority of participants found this experience disheartening as not only were individuals short on cash, but unless they had small children themselves, they were quite likely to say, "Oh! *Plunket!!?* Is it still around?"

Most participants found organising play groups for children or coffee groups for mothers more meaningful and enjoyable than the work they did alone. Most participants who ran coffee groups noted that mothers did not realise that coffee groups offered a forum for mutual support, where they could receive advice about sleeping patterns, childhood illnesses and toddler tantrums, without an expert condescendingly preaching at them. This support meant that mothers went home "feeling better" about themselves and the care they were giving their children. Sometimes the support was extremely tangible:

> This lady turned up from Poland, with a Kiwi husband and
> they had this little baby. And she turned up at the coffee
> group, and I said, "How's it going?" And they're living in
> a motel. They've actually only been here for two weeks.
> Her husband's just started work. She didn't know anybody
> obviously and she was just looking at renting a house. I

asked her, "Did you bring anything with you?" "No, we
just brought our backpacks." So I said, "Do you have
furniture coming over?" No, that was it. They had nothing,
they had *nothing*. They didn't even own a teacup! So I
said, "Oh my God, what are you going to sleep on?" They
didn't even have a mattress. I have a spare airbed, I can
give you a tablecloth and towels and I can give you some
cups and saucers. So I got all these to her because the
husband was working and she didn't have a car. So that
made me feel really good, because I could help her and
they had nobody.

Volunteers often experience intense gratitude from women who have benefited
from coffee groups and playgroups, and these women sometimes become
volunteers themselves.

Another aspect of shared repertoire that contributed significantly to most
volunteers' wellbeing involved events such as baby gear sales, catering functions,
or working bees at local Plunket rooms. Events where volunteers enjoy working
together are useful not only for fundraising purposes, but also serve to unite the
committee. This element of shared repertoire has historically formed the backbone
of Plunket volunteering. Interviews with two volunteers, each with over fifty
years' experience in Plunket, suggested that forty to fifty years ago, women
aspired to join a committee. Data from my fieldnotes revealed that the external
image of glamour and creativity was built on a committee who had fun working
together:

The rain was sleeting down despite the warmth of the afternoon, and I almost missed the turn-off to the Plunket rooms. It was obvious they have been there a long time: two volunteers showed me furniture and alterations their husbands have made over the last four decades! Before we started talking, they showed me newspaper clippings of former Plunket fundraisers. I was simply dazzled by their originality: an elephant race across farm paddocks, progressive dinners, balls and shows. One remembered the Plunket ball with nostalgia: "A Plunket ball was always the thing in the district. You'd have the turkey suppers, and we'd take the big containers of fruit salad, and there'd be savoury eggs. And we had to go downstairs in our hall, to supper, and they called it the supper room. In later years, people no way would they go down – "You can't go down there!" People forgot how to climb up and down stairs, I'm sure! Then of course, we had our Plunket mothers, and we were still youngish, and we put on a show once a year, at Christmas time. Eighty cups and eighty chairs to sit on and everyone when they knew about it would be wanting to come, but the number was limited because we only had that many seats in the hall!" Their faces lit up as they reminisced, and they showed some sadness that today's mothers hardly give Plunket a second glance. I drove home wondering how business plans compared to the type of

social gatherings that these two women had stacked away in

their memories.

Four months later, I drove the opposite direction to another

small rural town that is struggling to get any volunteers at all.

No longer do Plunket volunteers seem to be identified as an

élite cream of the crop, but rather as an essential element in

solving significant social problems as they impact families.

These Plunket rooms have also been here a while and they

need a fresh coat of paint. The Plunket sign is new but that's

probably because the logo recently changed. Paid staff moved

in and out of the offices as mothers brought their babies in for

appointments. My interview was interrupted twice then shifted

completely to the open plan area next to the reception desk – I

asked about support from paid staff rather surreptitiously! The

one remaining member of the "committee" showed me a flyer

for a coffee and cake morning tea scheduled for a week after

our interview to meet women interested in finding out more. I

was delighted to hear six weeks later from the operations

manager that a sizable number from the town would

participate in the Round the Lake cycle challenge in Taupo,

with sponsorship.

The link between internal communication and external communication (Cheney & Christensen, 2001) to possible committee members still rests on participants having fun together. Hence, excessive focus on making systems work was insufficient to retain volunteers, since participants only attended meetings and

carried out post-meeting work when personal relationships were also satisfying. Seeing that meetings retain an element of fun and that socialising is also purposive ensures a smooth transition between the two distinct aspects of shared repertoire: strengthening friendships and providing for parenting education for local families.

Mutual Engagement at Plunket

Plunket's reliance on volunteers to drive community initiatives puts pressure on committees to get things done. Plunket volunteers interact with other volunteers on their committee, volunteers from other branches, as well as paid staff from the operations side in order to carry out this role. Three aspects of mutual engagement at Plunket were salient. First, volunteers experienced pressure to conform to their committee's expectations because of the importance of the relationships they formed with other committee members. Second, new volunteers were invited to events where they could develop positive relationships before they were introduced to the demands of meetings. Third, participants positioned paid staff, whether supportive or not, as "them" versus "us," the committee.

Interaction amongst Volunteers

Plunket committees tend to be cohesive because of the importance of friendship ties. Many participants joined a committee through invitation from a friend in a Plunket-organised coffee group, and friendship maintained their involvement: "I have never left since, because my friends – they are basically the committee. So it's well they're doing it, so I will join in because I don't want to miss out on what they're doing." However, friendship could be a double edged sword: participants worked more than they "wanted to" because they did not want to let friends down.

In negotiating workload, volunteers had to carefully navigate between under- and over-performance. Do too little and other volunteers will criticise the recalcitrant committee member for lack of effort. Committee members then try to "jolly them [under-performing members] along and try to get them to see that things actually need doing" but in the end, if a volunteer doesn't "understand that by volunteering for us they have to work within these guidelines . . . then – I know it sounds awful – but there is no point in them being there." At first blush, then, it seems the more work a volunteer does for the committee, the better. However, the interview data shows that the trick to being an ideal committee member means finding the right equilibrium between giving too little and too much. Do too much, and others may accuse a volunteer of bossiness and running the show. Volunteers have to "manage" their committee involvement.

Given the importance of reading the subtle signs surrounding acceptable commitment levels, many participants discussed the need to give new volunteers time to develop positive relationships before immersing them in the politics of committee work. Participants also suggested new volunteers need to experience fun and friendship before they were ready for meetings. One participant mentioned they stopped inviting new volunteers to meetings straight away, since from their perspective, meetings only involved "sitting at a desk talking about finances." She elaborated that meetings seemed "so business-orientated. We just talked about all the work that we had to do."

Volunteer-Paid Staff Interactions

Volunteers regularly engage paid staff such as the Plunket nurse, the Regional Area Manager, administrative staff, and paid staff who ensure continuity in volunteer-funded services. The majority of the participants reported good

relationships with their local Plunket nurse, who is a source of potential

volunteers beyond volunteers' own friendship circle, as nurses see mothers eight

times after the birth of a new baby.

Relationships with administrative staff, in contrast, can be tense, partly

because the inter-relationships between the volunteer governance side and the

government-funded, operations side are misunderstood by both paid staff and

volunteers. The Area Manager for the Midland Region described a recent instance

where volunteers overstepped their responsibilities, by instigating disciplinary

proceedings with a paid staff member who supports the car seat rental scheme

overseen by Plunket volunteers:

> One example that caused quite a bit of fuss was a Car Seat
>
> Coordinator had the committee president and secretary
>
> come back after a planning meeting at Area Society saying
>
> "This is our car seat scheme still" – which it is – "and
>
> you're not performing, you're not selling enough seats and
>
> if you don't pick up your game, you won't have a job, and
>
> we're going to get somebody else trained up to come and
>
> help you and make sure the job's done properly."

The lack of appreciation for work done by the "other side" cuts both ways. The

National Volunteer Education Advisor mentioned that:

> I've even recently heard from a volunteer that their Area
>
> Manager would basically like to get rid of all volunteers:
>
> they're just a waste of time and energy. And so you think,

well hang on a minute! They're the *owners* of this

organisation.

Volunteers can be Plunket stalwarts yet unfamiliar faces for day-time staff since volunteers enter the premises at night. Administrative staff often under-estimate volunteers' knowledge about the organisation, which marginalises their contribution. A participant concluded, "When I walk in to do something, I'm like 'Hello! Volunteer!!! I do know my way around!' I feel like I need a big badge: 'I am actually here too, but just after hours.'"

Another source of irritation for volunteers is that paid staff sometimes frame volunteers as irresponsible and incapable because they cannot literally drop the baby and come to meetings. Another participant was critical of the lack of appreciation of the multiple roles that volunteers juggle:

> Plunket is terrible [at giving notice] but they don't seem to
>
> get where we're coming from. Like I've been called up,
>
> "Can you come and sit in on an interview on Thursday?"
>
> "Can I bring my children?" "No." Well, what am I going
>
> to do with them then? I'm not going to stick them in day
>
> care so I can come and sit in on interviews for Plunket. I
>
> won't do that to my children.

This attitude of "them" and "us" emerges even when volunteers are impressed with the sacrifices that paid staff make to support volunteer-driven fundraising events:

> I mean Saturday at the Craft Fair one of the nurses was
>
> there selling bacon rolls with us. *They* will support our
>
> fundraising events. *They* are fabulous.

When paid staff don't contribute to volunteer causes, volunteers tend to interpret detachment by paid staff as a callous lack of support and care, despite the clear split in responsibilities between the clinical arm of Plunket and the work of the volunteers. The Area Manager positioned the role of paid staff and volunteers as completely distinct:

> It's like if you took ten people off the street, who would be
>
> a volunteer out of those ten? Not every staff member is
>
> going to be happy to give up an evening or a weekend.
>
> They're paid to do their 7.6 hours and that's it. Some will,
>
> oh they're happy as, and at the Bake-Off they jumped in
>
> boots and all and wouldn't have thought anything else and
>
> that was with no directive from us. But there is an
>
> expectation with a number of volunteers that the staff will
>
> do a whole lot of different things that tie into that
>
> volunteer side. So that can make it difficult when you get
>
> a staff member who isn't that way inclined. We've got
>
> staff members that have not only their own family, but
>
> take children from Child Youth and Family . . . . They do
>
> all sorts of other things outside their job that actually
>
> might not include running a cake stall for Plunket.

Moreover, the clinical staff already carry a considerable workload to ensure the development of the "well child" programme. Possibly the catch-cry "Better

Together" applies to volunteer committees, and not paid staff-volunteer relationships.

This section has shown that mutual engagement among volunteers is driven by friendships that create tight-knit committees that, at first glance, appear cohesive. Friends often bring friends which can grow committee numbers quickly. The socialisation of would-be volunteers also focuses on the development of positive relationships and friendship, before volunteers are expected to engage in post-meeting tasks that do not involve working together. Once involved, friendships lead volunteers to put their hand up for new jobs, in order to stay in the loop, but the obligation not to let friends down can also pressure volunteers to give more than they want to.

"Them" and "us" interactions with paid staff only reinforce the importance of strong committees. That is, when volunteers are under-valued by administrative staff or under-supported by clinical staff in fundraising efforts, committees must pull together to achieve the goals they set.

Nonetheless, despite the surface cohesion, I argue that committees may not be entirely collaborative. That is, committees are only collaborative in the sense that committee members coordinate their responses, constantly checking what and how friends are contributing in order to contribute appropriately in turn. Interview data showed that committee members make judgements about under-performance by other volunteers and paid staff members, and put pressure on them to contribute at an acceptable level. However, volunteers also needed to ensure they could not be accused of dominating the committee by doing too much.

Participants negotiated a fine line between under- and over-performing, as their contribution was constantly evaluated by other committee members.

This form of collaboration may not be productive for the CoP, as coordinated responses may hinder the expression of other collaborative elements such as the sharing of resources and cooperative behaviours. As noted in the section on the relationships between wellbeing and professionalism in Plunket's codes of conduct (see pp. 229-230), the emphasis on consensus may inhibit volunteers' willingness to share ideas that diverge significantly from those held by the rest of the group. Moreover, the data also suggests that some volunteers choose *not* to cooperate with committee members who do not pull their weight and contribute at an appropriate level. One possible outcome is that committees are smaller, with room only for the "super-volunteers."

Joint Enterprise at Plunket

Plunket's mission is to deliver high quality services to children under five and their families (the role of the operations side), and to support and connect families to relevant community services (the role of the volunteer side). To achieve this goal on the volunteer side, joint enterprise at Plunket revolves around three key elements: targeting families that need assistance; allowing volunteers to respond to needs in their own local area; and facilitating volunteering by implementing family friendly policies. This section examines how volunteers contested these organisational understandings of joint enterprise. In each case, a clear divide exists between the "policy" at national level and how volunteers enacted it locally. First, despite participants' enthusiasm for Plunket programmes, volunteers believed Plunket's lack of public profile meant that they were ineffective in connecting families to Plunket's services. Second, participants were

cynical about the rhetoric of volunteer empowerment and critical of directives coming down from on high from National Office. Third, the majority of participants felt that Plunket's family friendly policies were difficult to implement in practice. Plunket volunteering certainly contributed to their personal and professional development, rather than their family's development. I discuss each aspect of joint enterprise in more detail below.

Many participants believed that Plunket was not reaching families who most need support and education, due to lack of awareness that Plunket still exists. Volunteers reacted to the (impossible) organisational mission to meet family needs with no clear community presence in two ways. First, some volunteers became extremely zealous in their promotion of Plunket. I overheard one volunteer apologising that parenting courses had not been available in the last two years due to a tiny, over-stretched committee – even though she herself had only recently joined. The second, more common response involved scaling down interventions due to insufficient volunteer numbers and poor organisational visibility. These participants expressed a sense that outside of the committee, many people did not seem interested in supporting Plunket or volunteering. For example, Hamilton is a city of 131,000 but as one participant noted, "there's only five or six people regularly turning up [to meetings] and that's all of Hamilton!" The result was an air of futility about Plunket's possible growth.

With respect to the goal of local empowerment, most volunteers felt pressure to be the official "face of Plunket" by supporting nationally-determined policies and goals not of their choosing. While local committees are supposed to be able to respond to what their communities need, policies are implemented from the top as a key part of Plunket's "image." This puts pressure on volunteers to buy

in to Plunket's policies. Breastfeeding, in particular, was a bugbear. One participant framed "picture perfect" Plunket volunteers as "earth mothers who just push babies out and breastfeed them till they're two or whatever!" The fear of openly bottle-feeding at the Plunket rooms was a "pet hate" of another participant, even though half of her committee couldn't breastfeed their babies.

Moreover, volunteers sometimes bear the brunt of unpopular national policies. For instance, Plunket works with the police and the Accident Compensation Corporation to enforce the use of children's carseats. One participant found that her involvement in the safety checks on the main highway into town meant members of the public construed Plunket as part of the problem rather than the solution:

> We'd pulled over a mum who had four unrestrained children, and the police had asked me to come and have a chat to her. She was angry at the police for pulling her over, and in her mind "How the **** do you expect me to restrain all the kids in this car?" with no money. She was really angry and I felt like it was my fault, I upset her because I didn't care about cost or money and that I was implying that she didn't care about her kids' safety. I said, "Hey look I'm sorry you feel that way, I'm not here to judge you and I'm not here to point out anything you are doing. I'm here to help you, and I can help you if you come back to Plunket. We can get some quotes through WINZ [the government social security agency] and get

some finances to help you have seats" and she was waving

her arm at me like this. "Oh, eff off the lot of you."

After this negative experience, she refused to get involved in any further carseat

checks. Implementing national policies at local level did not enhance

empowerment, but damaged Plunket's image within the committee and the

community. Hence, most participants focused on running their local branch really

well, but were reluctant to contribute to policies at higher levels.

Last, participants dismissed the organisational value of family friendliness

since volunteering for Plunket made attaining the goal of work-life balance and

family friendliness almost impossible. Participants enjoyed the opportunity to

reconnect with adult concerns – half the participants commented on the need to

avoid "mummy brain" and to develop personal and professional skills, but this

came at a cost. All Plunket volunteers mentioned that leaving the house and

children "ready" was no last minute task. One volunteer's pre-Plunket To Do list

was a classic example of the double shift:

> If I've got a Plunket meeting on a Tuesday night, I need to
>
> make sure that the children are sorted, done and dusted,
>
> bathed, in bed. I always make sure that his tea is ready and
>
> I make more of an effort if I am going out to make sure
>
> that everything at home is in order.

Several participants mentioned their husbands or partners resented nights

and weekends out. One participant explained that her husband "doesn't like me

going out so much as he would rather I was home with him, so whenever I have a

meeting, he's like "When are you going to be home?"" Another participant's

husband "doesn't call it Plunket; he calls it *bloody* Plunket, or Plunket *again* because it takes me away from my family." Justifying time and effort spent on paperwork done at home was even more challenging.

Although most participants would like Plunket to officially recognise men's role in facilitating their ability to volunteer, many participants framed men as simply in the way when they were dragged along to help with the work itself. Plunket is still an organisation *for* women, run *by* women. This participant's description of how the committee managed the men during their clean-up of the playground next to the Plunket rooms was typical:

> We had decided which girls were going to clear out the shed, which girls were going to organise the men [we both laughed], and which girls were going to look after the children. I was making tea at that point, because I needed a cup of tea and so did everybody else, because they were all in the same boat having brought the husbands with them. Then it was like [to the men] "Well okay, that fence is coming down. Will you please rip it out? That playhouse needs picking up and lifting but we can't, so we'll attach the chains and pull it, and that tree needs chopping down, so can you do that but only after you have done A, B, and C." And then you have to keep an eye on them that they are not wandering off doing things that they shouldn't be doing!

From this analysis, it is evident that joint enterprise at Plunket shows significant divergence between the organisation's stated goals and their interpretation and implementation by volunteers. First, many committees believed their efforts to reach families who needed assistance was undermined by lack of knowledge about Plunket, and subsequently, little appreciation or support from the public and sometimes administrative staff. Some participants responded by taking on full responsibility to promote Plunket. Others manifested an air of futility about what a small committee could possibly achieve in terms of reaching families needing support. I suggest this second group were buoyed up by receiving thanks from individuals who were intensely grateful for help received, as in the case of the Polish migrant. The second feature of joint enterprise is a sense of powerlessness in the face of national directives, especially when these policies run counter to volunteers' personal practices and community needs. To preserve some modicum of local independence, participants avoided getting too involved at higher levels. Lastly, volunteers constructed committee involvement as family unfriendly, since it interfered with their role in the home. In their view, volunteering for Plunket did not build up their family but rather contributed to their personal and professional development.

How do Volunteers at Plunket Enact a CoP?

The data showed that volunteers' ideas about what their role entailed diverged significantly at times from organisational expectations. Shared repertoire involved some disagreement about what was appropriate work for volunteers on two levels. First, branch and sub-branch volunteers did not feel obliged to attend Area Society meetings, despite the efforts of Area Society members to make these meetings interesting and relevant. Second, some participants questioned the

amount of paperwork that volunteers needed to do for Plunket. Within branches, however, volunteers worked together to balance business and fun. Committees' understanding of joint enterprise also differed significantly from National Office's view on the volunteer role. Participants responded to unrealistic expectations from National Office, Area Society and administrative staff, lack of support from family members, and lack of recognition of their work by the community by building strong local committees.

As a consequence, mutual engagement within committees seemed highly collaborative. However, the importance attached to consensus and agreement perhaps hides the covert power struggles within committees. Friendships might well introduce an element of fun, but when it came down to business, participants had to ensure they didn't overdo commitment or undermine others' efforts by not fulfilling tasks.

These findings contradict assumptions that volunteering is free and that it contributes to the public good. First, volunteering was not "free" in the sense that activities were freely chosen and/or could be abandoned at will. Volunteers framed some elements of shared repertoire as inappropriate for volunteers, yet carried them out so as to contribute to the committee. Second, the contribution of volunteering to the public good was sometimes hindered by small volunteer numbers and counterproductive national policies. While volunteers' wellbeing was enhanced by involvement and interaction with the committee, some participants expressed concern about committees' ability to initiate new connections and make a difference in local communities.

CoPs at St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance volunteers commit to at least one twelve hour shift on an ambulance each fortnight, usually at night. A volunteer at a small station can potentially spend whole nights sleeping on the job, until the pager rouses the sleepy volunteer, who is transformed into part of a well-drilled emergency response team. A community of practice has to reconcile the different characteristics of on-again, off-again work patterns, differences in knowledge and skill levels, and the need to be efficient yet caring in local communities. Shared repertoire tended to be collaborative, as all St John members needed to work together to provide efficient, expert, emergency medical service. Mutual engagement and joint enterprise, in contrast, were characterised by some degree of conflict and dissent. Once out of the public eye where a show of unity is important, some volunteers were critical of poor treatment by paid staff, while others excused them. Mutual engagement among volunteers as well as volunteer-paid staff interactions contested organisational views of St John as a "family." In terms of joint enterprise, the majority of volunteers were committed to ambulance volunteering rather than volunteering for St John.

Shared Repertoire at St John Ambulance

Shared repertoire at St John includes off-road downtime and on-road emergency response. Downtime is simply preparation for on-road activity. Volunteers spend the most time interacting with paid staff during call-outs. Although on-road dialogue is task-focused, volunteers and paid staff do collaborate to find and treat patients. They exhibit reciprocal independence where "the outputs of *each* participant become the inputs for other participants" (L. K.

Lewis, 2006, p. 202). Ambulance crew presume that other team members understand their assigned role, and will perform their job efficiently.

Downtime is predominantly non-social, although not necessarily non-collaborative. The majority of volunteers arrive at the station after a day's work, trying to mentally disconnect from two weeks of professional problems, home life, or exhaustion from paid work. Crew begin each shift by cleaning the ambulance and checking supplies. Crew may then watch TV, sleep, read, or study the protocol books. Several volunteers appreciated paid staff who helped them work through "curly" scenarios from the protocol books during downtime, in order to develop their clinical knowledge.

The tenor of a station changes when the siren goes off, as within minutes the crew must press the "responding" button in the ambulance. Within the first minute, volunteers and paid staff have negotiated the pecking order, by deciding who is sitting in the driver's seat. Permission to drive is perceived by most volunteers as a symbol of their status vis-à-vis paid staff. Some staff refuse to let volunteers take the wheel. During my observation, one officer labelled volunteers who were addicted to speed and power to control the traffic as suffering from "red light syndrome." In fact, permitting volunteers to drive can release more highly qualified paid staff to work with patients, and even intrepid drivers might prefer to avoid navigating unfamiliar territory or dealing with motorists' road rage (one unfortunate volunteer stalled the ambulance at the traffic lights a block from the hospital, and had to deal with angry motorists honking impatiently behind him). Recent government legislation may actually reduce volunteers' ability to drive if they are on the road in their day job. After the 14 hour cut-off, a driver may only attend two priority medical emergencies.

On-road time can be split into three distinct segments: 1) finding the location; 2) dealing with the patient at the emergency scene and during the transport; and 3) discussion of the incident on the way back to the station or to a less urgent call. The first stage, driving to the emergency scene, can be fairly routine unless the location is obscure. Street directions and shortcuts dominate the conversation, rather than discussion of the patient's problem. Most volunteers indicated that the codes radioed to the ambulance crew by the multi-million dollar centralised communication centre were often wrong. One participant was called out to treat a bee sting, but ended up picking up a young woman going into labour: "rather extensive swelling," as the ambulance officer noted ironically. Since most the information could be misleading, one participant ignored any indications, and instead enjoyed "ambulance sing-along."

When the ambulance arrives at the scene (private home, roadside, public premise), the vehicle is parked so that crew can depart quickly if the situation threatens their safety. Crew can ask for back-up using the *SHIT* code (*S*end *H*elp, *I*t's *T*errible). The focus then shifts entirely to the patient. I noticed that one of the crew carries out a primary and secondary assessment of the patient, before beginning appropriate treatment. Interactions are limited to asking the other crew member to assist with the procedure. When volunteers can't find supplies, some paid staff can be curt, yet as a reasonably new volunteer explained:

> Some of them *are* quite short with you in a stressful
>
> situation, but every one of them that has yelled at me has
>
> come up to me and apologised. "I'm sorry I yelled at you
>
> but you knew what was going on and I didn't think you'd
>
> heard what I said."

If needed, the ambulance transports the patient to hospital. Once the patient has stabilised, crew fill out paperwork, detailing the clinical treatment as well as constructing a story about what has happened, in order to obtain funding from the District Health Boards for medical emergencies or the Accident Compensation Corporation for accident claims.

Most potential for social interaction occurs on the return trip to the station after leaving patients at the hospital. If the working relationships are positive, return journeys can be enjoyable communal downtime:

> *We were back at the station for the briefest time. This call was*
>
> *to pick up a patient reporting heart pains from Fairfield*
>
> *Medical Clinic. Penelope parked the ambulance around the*
>
> *back by the mobility ramp. When she got out, she wrenched*
>
> *open the doors, and almost curtly invited the man to step up.*
>
> *He looked okay. Penelope sat on the right hand bed and took*
>
> *notes about the heart pain he was experiencing when he went*
>
> *up the steps of his flat. She suggested to the man that he get an*
>
> *apartment with no steps, to prevent future heart strain. She*
>
> *dropped him off at the hospital ambulance bay. After taking*
>
> *his blood pressure in the triage area, she left him there,*
>
> *slamming the doors of the ambulance with evident relish.*
>
> *Simon asked her as she pulled out if she was having a good*
>
> *day! Her brow unwrinkled and she burst out laughing, saying*
>
> *she had tried to be polite – "no, not polite . . . civil!"*
>
> *Apparently, this man goes to hospital every week, a so-called*
>
> *frequent flyer. She informed Simon that when he sees a female*

paramedic on duty, he immediately pretends he can't walk,

makes them carry him to the ambulance and tries to stare

down the front of their shirts. When asked what he is allergic

to, he leers and says "Women."

The extract from my fieldnotes demonstrated that this time is important for debriefing about distressing incidents or annoying patients. It forms a social type of post-emergency downtime distinct from the task-oriented preparation of the ambulance at the station. Other downtime activities tend to revolve around individual preparation for emergencies (study and sleep) or personal ways of distancing oneself from emergency work (reading or television-watching). The rest of the time spent on the road focuses on finding and treating patients, rather than looking after the needs of other crew members. To get the job done, collaboration is assumed.

Mutual Engagement at St John Ambulance

Volunteers treat many members of the public during a shift. Unless patients probe, they are usually unaware whether they have received treatment from a paid officer or a volunteer. Interactions between paid staff and volunteers, on the other hand, can make volunteers acutely aware of their status on the ambulance. Paid staff tend to take control of the situation because they don't know the capabilities of the volunteers they are working with. I argue that despite organisational insistence on unity, the watch system and the differential knowledge and experience that paid staff and volunteers bring to the job often led to patterns of mutual engagement that belittled volunteers' contribution. Reactions to staff who asserted their superiority caused division amongst participants about whether as "vollies" they formed a separate class to paid staff or not.

As an organisation, St John tries to create unity between paid and volunteer crew, by giving volunteers the same training as paid staff, and by giving them the same uniform, since they too are members of the St John "family." A long-term volunteer was horrified when I asked him if volunteers had a separate identity to paid staff:

> I think it would be a sad day if you were to be identified as a volunteer as per a paid person. Like if two ambulance officers turned up at a scene, and one had a red stripe on and the other had a black stripe, and the one with a red stripe was a vollie.

St John ambulance volunteers are constantly reminded by organisational messages that they have the same status as paid staff. The Midland Regional Manager proudly informed me that "the only difference is the payslip."

Nonetheless, many volunteers felt ignored and unwelcome at the station. For paid staff, a volunteer can be yet another unfamiliar face amongst the crowd of unknowns milling around the station. In fact, during the observation shift I did, nobody except the two in charge questioned who I was or what I was doing there:

> *After getting lost in the St John complex last time, I was determined to be early but I still ended up wandering around a deserted car park in the dark. I simply couldn't find the house where ambulance crew hang out between calls, until I investigated the alleyway behind the building where the ambulances park. A big padlocked iron gate looked like a formidable obstacle, until an energetic-looking uniformed*

woman walking briskly down the driveway let me through, and I cautiously walked into the brick house – very 1970s style. I felt both sleepy and nervous, despite having slugged down a coffee before I left home. Another hot steaming mug helped, and I was plonked down on a cushy leather couch watching the 7:00 news. I was introduced to Penelope, the paramedic I will be shadowing for the morning. She's not smiling, but maybe that's because it's early. I felt like an idiot sitting on the couch, smiling at different officers as they went past. I was so obviously an outsider in my civvies. They all pretty much ignored me. I am afraid that I am being a bother in a busy ambulance station.

After sitting on the couch for a while, I feel sick of looking like a piece of the furniture. No-one is watching me, so I investigate the layout of the house. There are bedrooms for those on night shift, as well as the lounge, the kitchen, and an office with files. I only found one toilet (this is NOT designed for women, is it?) but that will do! I managed to recruit a volunteer who is working towards her Ambulance Officer qualification, which doesn't depend on the number of hours one does, but the type of medical incidents. She needs a certain number of cardiac arrests, respiratory problems, attacks and allergies. "It's sad for them, but good for me," she informed me with a smile. Isn't it interesting how easy it was to strike up a conversation with a volunteer?

At 8:00, I am still sitting on the same couch! The News is still

the same, a repeat of last hour's, and nobody else is in the

lounge at all.

The sensation of being in the outer circle that emerges in my narrative was also manifest in the interview data: "The first time I worked at the city station, nobody showed me where the loos were, nobody showed me where the rooms were. They just sort of left you to flounder, as if 'Oh well you're a volunteer you can find your own way.'" All participants except one noticed that the attitudes of some paid staff were fairly dismissive. Volunteers commented on omissions of simple greetings and thanks more than openly aggressive behaviour. One participant's first shift in the city coincided with a farewell dinner for a paid officer, and she felt like a complete outsider:

I felt completely unwelcome because they didn't realise

there was a volunteer on that night and you feel as if you

are the real gooseberry at the party. But in the end they

sort of accepted the fact that I was there and I participated

in the dinner and I just made sure that whenever a call

came in I just went with them, so I just sort of kept myself

out of the festivities. In the end they weren't too bad. I

actually find that the staff are sometimes harder to deal

with than the patients!

In part, inconsistent contact between paid staff and volunteers due to the watch system leads to superficial relationships. The watch system refers to the rolling roster that governs paid staff's timetable. Volunteers take on shifts when

and as they are available, cutting across watches. One participant explained: "Paid staff work in shifts so they're always working with the same people so they've got good relationships with them, whereas here it's all higgledy-piggledy."

As a result, paid staff need to "start a conversation with a different person" each time they come to work. The Regional Manager concluded that "this is taxing" since paid staff do not know volunteers' experience level, as the patch only shows the training attained, and not the tacit knowledge acquired through on-road experience. The lack of clarity associated with volunteers' identity position means that coordinating action becomes more difficult. The Regional Manager commented:

> When you work with the same people, you know their capabilities, you trust them implicitly. When you're working with a different person each day, well have they unloaded the stretcher before, are they a nurse, can they put IVs in, have they been taught to check drugs yet? Now the other side of the coin is that it's tough on the volunteers, because they work with person A who hops into the passenger seat, "It's your job now, show us how it's done!" versus the next person that they're working with who allows them to be the stretcher-bearer sort of thing.

In fact, the interview data corroborated the difficulty of constantly working with new people: those volunteers who consistently worked with the same paid staff reported high levels of satisfaction at working like "a well-oiled

machine." Volunteers at the smaller suburban and rural stations also enjoyed the camaraderie more than at the larger city station which was described as more impersonal. Familiarity improved relationships with paid staff.

Another factor that influenced mutual engagement between paid staff and volunteers was volunteers' perception of their lesser knowledge and experience. All of the volunteers interviewed described incidents where they lacked knowledge to appropriately assess the medical needs of a patient. For instance, paid staff knew when a patient was faking symptoms, or when symptoms indicated something more serious. For this reason, the majority of participants were hesitant to complete the paperwork required without the paid officer checking afterwards, as the documents constitute the official record. Most volunteers would prefer paid staff to check documentation and to closely supervise them when they do anything beyond what their protocol level permits.

However, allowing paid staff to have the final say in specialised clinical settings seemed to transfer to mundane tasks at the ambulance station. Participants reported that some paid staff expected them to check the truck at the beginning of the shift, while other paid crew take this job on themselves. The two volunteers who mentioned the initial check in detail had diametrically opposed responses to paid staff off-loading this job to volunteers. One participant complained:

> It takes an hour to check the truck, make sure everything's
> on. But this is the sort of bullshit that goes on . . . I've
> seen him sitting in the lounge watching TV while the
> volunteer he is on with is doing the shift check. Whereas
> on the city station, on the *good shifts* [my italics], they'll

> tell the volunteer, no you go watch TV or go do something
>
> else, I'll do this . . . because they're getting paid to do it!

The other volunteer felt that despite the large paycheques some paid staff receive ($30 per hour plus overtime), he did not mind doing the vehicle check while the paid officer read the newspaper because he reasoned "I'm an *ambulance officer*." He rejected the mentality that "I am *only* a volunteer. I don't have to do that, I only do the things that I really want to do, because I am only here to help you."

Participants' views about appropriate responsibilities for volunteers differed widely. Two distinct groups emerged: those who want to push the frontiers of what they are "allowed" to do constantly, and those who toe the party line and acquiesce to paid staff. The first group established a volunteer identity distinct from that of paid staff, by situating themselves as marginalised. One participant believed that paid staff who had been volunteers discriminated most against current volunteers:

> There is a lot of crap going on, considering that a few
>
> years ago, those two who are now paid officers were
>
> volunteers with us, and now basically we're getting quite
>
> badly treated by them, the sort of things that *they* would
>
> have complained about.

Their joint identity is premised on resentment and frustration at the behaviour of some paid staff. They do not channel anger publicly, because they still want to uphold St John's organisational image. Since volunteers' uniform makes them indistinguishable from paid staff, volunteers will swallow poor

treatment within the close confines of the ambulance, or in homes, workplaces or sports grounds where the volunteer feels under the watchful eye of the patient:

> Worst experience – I was a very new volunteer, we're
>
> driving a patient to hospital and this grumpy [paid] person
>
> asked me "Can you just take a blood pressure please." I
>
> am like "Yeah sure," so I get all the bits out and start
>
> doing it, and he said "I *told* you to sit in the corner and
>
> shut up." And I wasn't going to argue because it is
>
> unprofessional in front of the patient, I wasn't going to say
>
> "No you didn't, you stupid dick!" I wanted to, and that to
>
> me really, really sucked.

Anger towards "power-hungry" paid staff was re-hashed and vented later, with volunteers discussing paid staff behaviour. One volunteer described how "other people have talked like, 'What do you think of so-and-so?' 'They treat me like shit' kind of thing." These volunteers criticised other volunteers who did not complain as eager beavers or boot-lickers.

The second group of volunteers didn't mind "passing the plasters" or doing house-keeping around the station, because they rationalised that all tasks contribute to the success of a team. Hence, they focused on adapting their behaviour to different personalities and needs. A volunteer at first aid level quickly adjusted they way that he was holding a patient after a rap over the knuckles by a paramedic:

> The way I was doing it was fine because it was the way
>
> the [paid] guy next to me was doing it. It was just not the

> way *she* wanted me to do it. You have to work with
>
> people, so I changed the hold position to the way she
>
> wanted me to do it, and so did the guy next to me! And I
>
> kind of grinned to myself at how he quickly changed his
>
> position after I got my head ripped off.

This more malleable group were more likely to laugh at paid staff's excessive demands than respond with outrage. Moreover, these volunteers re-framed incidents that could be seen as hurtful as reminders that they do not know everything:

> We had one observer last week who thought he knew
>
> everything already, but when you're coming into
>
> something like this, you can't be offended by anything. I
>
> was going to say that when she [the paramedic] tells me to
>
> do something, I'll go and do it straight away. Later on, she
>
> said "Sorry for ordering you around." And I was "It's not
>
> about me. It's about the patient." I don't think people who
>
> take being ordered round personally should do it, because
>
> while they're busy thinking about "Oh, you hurt my
>
> feelings" the poor guy's there . . .

These volunteers who position themselves as growing towards ambulance officer status manage difficult paid staff members by ignoring put-downs. Through an on-road trial by fire, this group tends to up-skill faster and subsequently they often join the paid workforce. These recruits may increase the prevalence of the dissident volunteers, because they perceive stubbornness and assertion of personal rights as being stuck-in-the-mud, "volunteers [who] think they are paid staff,

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they've been here so long that they won't change with the times." Volunteers who

isolate themselves from prickly staff usually leave, as their "negotiated response

to the situation" (Wenger, 1998, p. 77) no longer fits the apprenticeship model of

learning that seems to be necessary for providing excellent patient care.

This analysis has shown that despite St John's insistence that paid staff

and volunteers are equal members of the organisation, paid staff usually dictate

how things are done on the ambulance and at the station. Volunteers do not

present a united front to this power imbalance. Partly, diverse responses emerge

because volunteers' sporadic organisational engagement leads to tenuous

relationships among themselves: some stations only have one volunteer on at

night. Most volunteers leave Monday night training meetings after a quick chat,

although a few go out for Friday night drinks together.

Two reactions to paid staff's superior attitudes stand out in the data. The

first response creates a sense of joint volunteer dissent. Disgruntled volunteers

compare notes about dominating paid staff and try to avoid them. The second

response is to ignore poor treatment by focusing on learning skills that improve

patient care. Unsurprisingly, this second group is attractive as a recruitment

possibility for ambulance management. Mutual engagement at St John Ambulance

is a site for contestation, about what it means to be a volunteer, and a member of

St John.

Despite the assumption that "good" CoPs are generally collaborative,

contestation about mutual engagement has some productive elements.

Specifically, contestation enables volunteers to identify whether or not they can

achieve "fit" with an organisational culture that privileges expertise rather than

participation, as volunteers, or as potential paid staff. Resistant volunteers can be vocal about the hierarchical nature of interpersonal relationships within the organisation, and their criticisms may perhaps discourage some potential volunteers. Nonetheless, arguably these volunteers' involvement with St John might have been limited if they were not able to cope with paid staff feedback.

Joint Enterprise at St John Ambulance

Division amongst volunteers about appropriate forms of mutual engagement at an interpersonal level was mirrored at an organisational level by divided views on joint enterprise. Most participants identified themselves as "*ambulance* volunteers at St John" rather than "*St John* volunteers." St John's organisational motto "First to care" reflected most participants' reasons for volunteering. Most signed up for "ambulance volunteering" because having a double crew makes saving patients' lives easier, with few participants committed to St John as an organisation. Those participants who enacted intense organisational commitment to St John per se supported St John's policies. The second, larger group felt powerless to change policies they believed undermined volunteerism and St John's contribution to the community. I present participants' responses to some organisational decisions below.

Two participants were committed to "volunteering for St John." One participant had been involved in St John since childhood. She was grateful for her St John work, which helped her survive her marriage break-up:

> It kept me sane, because I had a support system behind
>
> me. It gave me focus . . . so it was wellbeing for me in the
>
> fact for me hey it kept me alive, got me out the depression

because you look out: you don't look in. You think of

others.

Another committed St John member conceded that conflict exists between paid staff and volunteers but suggested "a lot of the issues are very trivial." He believed resolving differences necessitated finding what would benefit St John as an organisation:

> When you take a stand, you have to go with at the end of
>
> the day what's going to be the best thing to promote St
>
> John's in the eyes of the public. Sorry, you are going to
>
> have to modify the way you think, because we are heading
>
> in this direction. What you are trying to do is, well you
>
> are going in a different direction, and St John is always
>
> going to move ahead. It is always riding along; it is such a
>
> huge machine, huge.

The majority of participants, however, were committed to "ambulance volunteering," irrespective of which ambulance provider was running the service. Their first criticism was that St John does not value its volunteers or recognise their limited time availability. A participant described his annoyance when the paid officer assessing his suitability to be a volunteer was called away several times for emergencies: "I thought, 'Wait a minute. If you place some emphasis on volunteers to get them on board, then you should make the commitment to stick to your appointment!'"

Nonetheless, even serious dissatisfaction was not usually high enough to mitigate volunteers' commitment to saving lives. One participant featured on

national television when he and fellow volunteers from an isolated town exited the organisation in protest over St John's refusal to reimburse volunteers' on-road time. However, when emergencies occurred, community needs still exercised a serious pull:

> It all came to a head when they [the helicopter operators] called Pete and me directly because two kayakers had canned out on the lake. We just ran to get our equipment: it's stuff that him and I raised funds for, so we didn't have to strip ambulances out when we were search and rescue jobs. But anyway, when we went to this meeting with St John about getting our Authority to Practice back, we were told we were technically "stealing" the equipment since it belonged to St John. I mean, the community paid for the stuff. We helped raise the funds to buy it. Actually, some of the equipment, I made it myself. And when we were told that because we didn't have Authority to Practice, and that since we weren't part of St John, we were technically "stealing" Pete walked out of the meeting. He couldn't stand the bullshit. He still doesn't have his Authority to Practice. I stayed mainly because of what I feel I owe to the operators. That's the thing. The majority of volunteers do it for the community. They don't do it for St John at all. In a rural area like this, you volunteer as a service for your family and friends. You do it for somebody else – not for St John.

This participant constructed an occupational volunteer identity that was community-focused rather than organisationally bound. The value this participant put on saving lives in his community over-rode the value he put on perceived organisational unfairness.

The second clash between organisational values and participants' value positions stemmed from St John's adoption of a more business-like approach. The decision to bulk-buy ambulances and parts at a national level might make sense from an accounting perspective, but the connection with local communities has disappeared with it. One participant who has volunteered for St John for 41 years explained:

> There are country towns in which the third generation of
> the people that owned the garage are still serving St John
> members. But to a large degree they're pretty negative
> about St John as an organisation because for years they
> supplied the petrol at the cheapest possible rate, they
> provided the tyres and the batteries. Very often if there
> were mechanical repairs and warrant of fitness, they used
> to do those. Now they've got to come to town to get those
> things done.

From his perspective, St John no longer supports the local community that funds the ambulance service.

Joint enterprise then has two variations. Few participants supported St John as an organisation. Most participants were more interested in being the "first to care" for patients' lives. I suggest that joint dissatisfaction by this second group

of participants to some organisational decisions served to reinforce volunteers' position as peripheral organisational members, who lacked power to alter management policies and mandates that they did not like. Nonetheless, the wellbeing that ambulance volunteering conferred tended to be stronger than volunteers' dissatisfaction with organisational policies and corporate direction.

How do St John Ambulance Volunteers Enact a CoP?

Because St John ambulance volunteers are highly committed to ambulance volunteering, each team member collaborates to carry out their part of the job, despite the task-focused nature of on-road work and the lack of social contact during downtime. Nonetheless, although St John Ambulance promotes an ethos of unity and collaboration, forms of mutual engagement were highly contested. Participants fell into two broad groups in terms of their responses to paid staff who highlighted the skill differential and who insisted that volunteers do mundane jobs. One group looked for respect from paid staff towards volunteers. Since volunteers were not remunerated, paid staff should do the dirty jobs, and extend volunteers to the limits of their skill level so as to maximise their enjoyment. The second group did not expect gratitude, but were appreciative of opportunities to learn. Personal reactions to poor treatment were secondary to self-development of skills and knowledge.

Mutual engagement varied across the two groups because each held quite different views on what professionalism should look like in the context of St John Ambulance. The group that treated interactions with paid staff as opportunities to learn bought into St John's notion of professionalism as continuous up-skilling and development. This rationalised perspective of professionalism connects improved clinical skills with better patient treatment. The group that expected

better treatment from paid staff had a more relational understanding of volunteering and their wellbeing suffered as a consequence of poor treatment by some paid staff. Their experiences of mutual engagement fed into joint enterprise. Combined with irritation about poor treatment, many participants were critical of management-level decisions, although joint enterprise did not seem to contribute as much to volunteers' intention to leave the organisation as dissatisfaction with mutual engagement.

St John forms an interesting context to evaluate the impact of contestation on a CoP. First, although patterns of mutual engagement were contested by one group of volunteers, volunteers' responses to treatment by some paid staff indicated their suitability as an organisational member long-term. Second, and perhaps surprisingly, while most volunteers constructed a volunteer identity predicated on organisational dissidence and dissatisfaction with organisational policies, most participants continued to volunteer. Despite contestation of mutual engagement and joint enterprise, shared repertoire forms a "hook" for volunteers that sustains their commitment and contribution to the CoP.

Conclusion

Participants from each organisation demonstrated diverse forms of both collaboration and contestation as they created shared repertoires of action, interacted together, and negotiated joint enterprise. I summarise the chapter findings in Table 4.

Table 4

CoP Characteristics of St John Ambulance, Plunket, and Refugee Services

Elements of a CoP	Refugee Services	Plunket	St John Ambulance
Shared repertoire	**Coordination:**	**Disagreement about tasks:**	**Collaboration:**
	Material tasks	*Meetings*	*Unsocial downtime* at the station
	Coordination of interventions with team	• Branch level	*On-road emergency response*
	Sharing cultural practices	• Area Society?	• Finding location (task-oriented)
		Post-meeting work	• Treating and transporting patient (task-oriented)
		• Tasks done alone	
		• Support initiatives undertaken with others	• Returning to station (potentially social)
Mutual engagement	**Lack of confrontation or contention:**	**Superficial collaboration:**	**Division and dissent:**
	Limited engagement with paid staff	*Committees built on friendship ties*	*Organisational messages* suggest unity and equality
	Interaction with other volunteers	• Pressure to contribute	
	• Sometimes helped participants to respond to refugees' cultural choices	• Balance commitment levels according to others' expectations	*Watch system* leads to lack of consistent interaction between paid staff & volunteers
	• Limited interaction beneficial when team	*Them & us attitude* towards paid staff	*Paid staff's superior knowledge* & skills mean

Elements of a CoP	Refugee Services	Plunket	St John Ambulance
	members did not cohere	reinforces importance of tight-knit committee	they take control • Medical interventions • Mundane tasks at the station *Diverse volunteer responses* • Equality with paid staff (resistance) • Subservience to paid staff (acceptance)
Joint enterprise	**Fragmentation**: *Absolute cultural tolerance* of refugees' choices irrespective of personal values *Imposition* of volunteers' own values on refugees *Discussion* of cultural values and finding balance between refugees' and volunteers' value positions	**Contestation**: *Responsibility for promotion* and delivery of services engendered two responses • Zeal • Sense of futility *Powerlessnes*s to respond to local needs because of need to conform to national directives Family friendliness not actualised • Involvement inimical to work in the	**Dissatisfaction:** Few are *volunteering for St John* because of high commitment to this particular organisation Majority engage in *ambulance volunteering* to save lives

Elements of a CoP	Refugee Services	Plunket	St John Ambulance
		home	
		• Opportunity to develop outside the home	

The meanings attached to volunteering contain embedded assumptions about how volunteers ought to approach tasks, relate to other volunteers, paid staff and the coordinating organisation. One dominant view in the nonprofit management literature is that volunteers will collaborate with each other and paid staff within organisations, and that collaboration improves wellbeing.

Nonetheless, developing meanings of volunteering is not a monological endeavour, but is worked out through ongoing interaction between the self and multiple others. Individuals may hold different profiles or views of a phenomenon because their length of experience or engagement varies, and their personal background and expectations impact the horizons of meanings that they attribute to that object. These diverse views often caused tension and conflict, and indeed volunteers contested as well as confirmed organisational expectations and the views of other volunteers about what volunteering entailed. A communities of practice framework offered a useful tool to analyse the extent of collaboration and its impact on wellbeing.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

I began my project with the aim of finding out how volunteers themselves made sense of the experience of volunteering. I also wanted to assess the impact of organisational discourses of professionalism on volunteers' wellbeing. Finally, I intended to evaluate the assumption that collaboration rather than conflict characterised volunteer relationships, and also the impact of both collaboration and contestation on volunteering. This chapter proceeds as follows. First, I briefly summarise the contributions of this research project to our understanding of volunteering, professionalism-wellbeing relationships and communities of practice. I then draw out the practical implications for organisational communication studies of occupational and organisational identity, coordination and relationality, and evaluate the contribution of this project to phenomenologically-oriented research. Finally, I offer suggestions as to how future work could build on this research.

Implications of this Project for Research on Volunteering and Wellbeing

Drawing on the data from the chapter on the meanings that volunteers gave to their volunteer experiences, I offer a definition of organisational volunteering. The two elements that differentiate this definition from those existing definitions in the literature are the emphasis on relationality, and the assumption that volunteering is a dynamic rather than static process. I suggest that this view of volunteering has implications for our understandings of volunteers' wellbeing. I then propose that discourses of professionalism structure how relationality ought to be enacted, which further differentiates volunteering from other forms of social engagement such as activism. Lastly, I recommend that we expand our notion of positive relationships in volunteer contexts to incorporate

both contestation and collaboration. I summarise the answers to each research question, before unpacking their significance.

The Meanings of Volunteering: A summary

My first research question considered the meanings that individuals engaged with voluntary organisations gave to their volunteering. The meanings that participants assigned to these experiences did not cohere with the emphasis on free choice that emerged from many definitions in the literature. J. Wilson (2000), for example, specified that "any activity in which time is *given freely* to benefit another person, group, or organization" (p. 215, my italics) is volunteering. Nor did participants' descriptions of volunteering resonate with definitions of volunteering from the social capital literature. Research on social capital development has tended to document the growth of networks at a macro societal level, with the assumption that volunteer-driven relationships create positive community connections and build trust (Nunn, 2002; Putnam, 2000).

In fact, while participants did mention personal freedom and enriching, positive relationships as aspects of the volunteer experience, they also described situations where their agency was compromised and relationships were challenging and difficult. I suggest that volunteering is better described as the *relational process* whereby individuals use their agency to establish connections with others in a community, often through an organisational gatekeeper. Such a relational perspective does not overly determine the outcomes of community connection, as volunteers and the recipients of their efforts must re-negotiate relationships constantly through interaction.

Analysis of the data suggested that volunteers can undertake this relational process in two ways. One set of narratives positioned volunteering as a free choice insofar as it corresponded to wants rather than economic needs and fulfilled individual interests. In this case, when volunteering stopped being a source of enjoyment, freedom was best served by moving on to greener pastures. Those participants who emphasised personal freedom also expected volunteer relationships to increase beneficiaries' agency, independence and ability to give back. Indeed, relationships needed to be reciprocal if individuals were to continue volunteering.

Other narratives emphasised how volunteers' abundant resources, skills, time and space allowed them to transcend immediate needs, and exercise agency. Not channelling their agency towards others in volunteer endeavours was viewed as selfish. Volunteers tended to develop strong, binding ties with those they worked with, yet relationality could become oppressive, as volunteers interpreted recipients' need for their assistance as requiring a committed response. Hence, relational bonds could lead to a sense of obligation and guilt at not contributing "enough."

Both notions of volunteering demonstrated a shift from agency towards relationality. Participants tended to talk about their preconceptions of volunteering or volunteering by a generic "other" in agentic terms whereas volunteering by "me" was more relationally-oriented. Most participants also described how the importance they attributed to relationality deepened as they engaged with recipients on an ongoing basis. Nonetheless, the emphasis on agency was not a distinct volunteer "stage" that participants passed through and abandoned en route to more relational understandings, as developmental models of volunteering might

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suggest (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008) for either the freedom-reciprocity or giving-obligation pathway.

Volunteers on the freedom-reciprocity pathway moved synchronically between agentic and dialogic subject positions. When relationships were not reciprocal, these volunteers made reference to their freedom as volunteers to justify why they were not performing the role as others expected or why they had decided to leave the volunteer organisation. Volunteers on the giving-obligation pathway negotiated the agency-relationality duality diachronically. Volunteers' giving developed relationships characterised by a sense of obligation. Some volunteers were not able to sustain their level of commitment, and abandoned volunteer endeavours. These volunteers often initiated new volunteering experiences once circumstances permitted.

This duality inherent in the volunteer experience requires a more expansive notion of volunteering in social services contexts. Definitions are problematic to write and to apply, since the conceptual boundaries they create can be too broad or too narrow to be useful. If the boundaries are too broad, the definition can become a meaningless theory of everything. Given the diversity of volunteering experiences and nonprofit organising in New Zealand and globally, it seems difficult to identify attributes that would cohesively link this vast number of disparate activities.

If the definition is too detailed and specific, important examples of the phenomenon fall outside the scope of the definition. Nevertheless, I chose to run this risk, since the lack of precision in the literature about what volunteering actually *is* was one of the reasons that I began this project. The definition I offer is

far from definitive, but forms a starting point for future discussion about the characteristics of long-term social service volunteering in nonprofit contexts. The definition follows:

> Ongoing organisational volunteering is the experience whereby we move from an awareness of others' needs and/or opportunities for personal development, to an organised, relational engagement with another/others in the community to address those needs, on an unpaid basis.

Several elements of the definition require some commentary. First, I argue that incorporating notions of relationality, as well as agency, into a definition of social services volunteering is vital if we are to situate it as an interactional project between the volunteer and the recipients of their efforts. This component of the definition may seem to suggest that volunteers who stuff envelopes or file forms aren't actually volunteering at all. I deal with this objection as follows. As an individual becomes embedded in the social networks of a small or large office, or an informal network of any type, she starts to volunteer. If paperwork is done alone, the individual concerned may have decided to give her time or skill to help a cause. I argue that without social interaction, however, giving cannot develop into obligation, nor freedom into reciprocity and the individual will merely be *helping* rather than volunteering.

Second, the definition also frames volunteering as unpaid labour. In most social services settings, volunteers are not compensated for what they do. I argue that even in workplace contexts, volunteering goes beyond role demands, as the literature on organisational citizenship behaviour suggests.

Meanings of volunteering: Implications for Research on Volunteering and

Wellbeing

The literature on the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing has tended to draw on notions of volunteering as an expression of either freedom or giving. Positioning volunteering as a manifestation of freedom situates volunteering as a set of experiences that individuals match with their personal biographies and wants. In this case, wellbeing simply requires the volunteer to seek out a best "fit" between organisational mandate and one's personal profile (Farmer & Fedor, 2001; Grube & Piliavin, 2000; Sergent & Sedlacek, 1990).

Alternatively, when volunteering is framed in terms of giving, it is used as evidence of individuals' abundant agency. Giving expressed through volunteering leads volunteers to identify themselves as a good person or as a citizen who uses their agency to contribute (Stout, 2003). Allahyari (2000) went even further, suggesting volunteering is a form of "moral selving," or "the work of creating oneself as a more virtuous, and often more spiritual, person" (p. 4), although Frumkin (2002) argued that Allahyari's ethnography did not allow volunteers to voice how they enacted this process. Wellbeing links to this expanded personal profile.

When relationality is added into the mix, volunteering-wellbeing relationships become far more unpredictable. Previous research has suggested that positive relationships contribute positively to volunteers' wellbeing, while negative outcomes, such as recipients who do not respond to volunteers' efforts (Arnstein, et al., 2002) or who reject them outright (Chan & Donnita, 2006), are detrimental for volunteers' wellbeing. That is, wellbeing is impacted by the type of relational ties and the quality of the relationships (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal,

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2008). This is a useful insight, as volunteers' wellbeing does not depend solely on agentic, volunteer-driven decisions.

However, this project suggests that the impact of relationality on wellbeing is more complex. Chapter 4 showed that relationality can be either reciprocal or obligation-centred, depending on the volunteer pathway chosen. When relationality is enacted in a reciprocal way, negative experiences may still be viewed as a learning experience and part of personal development (see pp. 282-283 for an example). When relationality is obligation-laden, both negative and positive relationships may reduce volunteers' sense of wellbeing. Negative relational experiences may lead volunteers to interpret their efforts as pointless. Strong, positive relationships may reinforce volunteers' perception that they need to keep giving, even when they don't want to or volunteering encroaches on their own space or time.

Professionalised Volunteering and Wellbeing: A summary

The second set of research questions examined the impact of professionalism on volunteers' experiences of wellbeing, in an attempt to explore the assertion that professionalism reduces volunteers' ability to exercise agency by imposing constrictive standards. I first evaluated the extent to which professionalism emerged in organisational codes of conduct, and how organisations constructed the professionalism-wellbeing relationship. All organisations expected a type of professionalism from their volunteers, but what that professionalism should look like varied widely.

Organisational Perspectives on Professionalised Volunteering

At Refugee Services, a rationalised perspective of professionalism created a clear link between the *means* (living the role well) and the *end* or organisational mission (achieving refugees' independence). Specifically, volunteers were expected to enact a tightly-bound role with clearly articulated tasks, personal relationships that were non-intimate, and buy in to a model of cultural tolerance. Professionalism linked to wellbeing in two ways. First, from Refugee Services' perspective, only "well" individuals were capable of taking on the role. Second, enacting professionalism contributed to wellbeing by creating distance between the responsibilities of the role and one's personal life.

Plunket's view of professionalism drew on a more marketised perspective. Professionalism required committees to be flexible and responsive to needs within their own communities when planning and implementing new initiatives. Additionally, Plunket expected that professional committees would use business tools to better manage community initiatives. Organisational messages constructed a complex relationship between professionalism and wellbeing. Professional tools and systems correlated positively with wellbeing in terms of community development and time management. Conversely, the expectation that committees would respond to community needs negatively impacted volunteers' ability to protect their own time. According to Plunket's organisational literature, friendships within committees was another, non-professional contributor to wellbeing. Given the importance of relationships in sustaining wellbeing, conflict was played down or avoided, similarly to findings from previous studies of nonprofit "collaboration" (Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010), potentially hindering committees' ability to think outside the square.

St John Ambulance's view of professionalism reflected processes of rationalisation and bureaucratisation. Unsurprisingly, organisational messages highlighted excellent clinical service, a calm, urgent task focus and personal responsibility as the hallmarks of professionalism. Organisational messages about wellbeing suggested that satisfaction derived from teamwork, community involvement and excitement contributed positively to wellbeing. The codes of conduct also stated that volunteers' personal wellbeing must be sacrificed as and when needed, in order to deliver excellent clinical service.

Volunteers' Responses to Professionalised Volunteering

Volunteers' attitudes towards organisational codes of conduct about professionalism and wellbeing varied within organisations, although some important differences emerged across organisations. Refugee Services' volunteers framed professionalism as a protective resource for maintaining boundaries in the face of difficult, negative experiences that could threaten personal wellbeing. However, volunteers described rewarding moments in terms of the close relationships they developed. These relationships would not have been so satisfying if participants had enacted the professional distance insisted on in the codes of conduct. A rationalised take on professionalism is a double-edged sword: while it protects volunteers from draining emotional experiences, rationalisation risks creating a controlled environment that prevents genuine interpersonal engagement. As I concluded in the analysis chapter on professionalism and wellbeing, the relationship between professionalism and wellbeing was ambiguous for this group of volunteers.

The professionalism-wellbeing relationship was not as organisationally determined for Plunket volunteers. Instead, participants' responses to marketised

codes of conduct depended on personal background, and specifically, business

experience. Volunteers who had worked in the commercial sector appreciated the

tools for measuring success and forward planning. Those without this type of

experience ignored the demands of professionalism by focusing on the positive

relationships they developed through committee work. When relationships soured

because of conflict, volunteers switched the emphasis to outcomes like

community growth and development. An organisational understanding of

professionalism that draws on marketised principles holds the most potential to

bifurcate volunteer practice, creating a divide between those who buy in to a

marketised substantive rationality and those who do not.

St John Ambulance volunteers did not separate professionalism and

wellbeing in the way that organisational messages suggested. Similarly to

Refugee Services' volunteers, ambulance volunteers used professionalism as a

barrier or protective mechanism in the face of highly emotionally charged

incidents, such as patient death. A perceived lack of clinical expertise led to

feelings of inadequacy, and subsequently, lack of wellbeing, as did a sense of

personal responsibility for a negative patient outcome. In this sense, rationalised

medical practice, or the application of the most efficient procedure, combined

with a clear understanding of hierarchy and responsibility structures contributed to

volunteers' wellbeing. Teamwork was only important for wellbeing in terms of

how paid staff and other volunteers built up or denigrated volunteers' assessments

of their own levels of professionalism.

Professionalised Volunteering: Implications for Research on Volunteering and

Wellbeing

The significance of these findings is twofold. First, the prevalence and importance of professionalism in volunteer contexts conceptually divide volunteering from activism. Traditionally, some sociological perspectives have distinguished the two by situating "activists [as] . . . oriented to social change while volunteers focus more on the amelioration of individual problems (Markham & Bonjean 1995:1556)" (J. Wilson, 2000, p. 216). In his significant work on what we know about volunteering so far, Wilson sought to collapse this distinction between people and politics by citing examples where volunteers moved from caring behaviour to demanding resources for social change (Chambré, 1991). I agree that the caricatures of volunteers who patch up problems and activists who seek solutions reinforce a false dichotomy. Indeed, a definition of volunteering as simultaneously relational and agentic is sufficiently broad so as to encompass relationships that nurture as well as relationships that challenge the status quo. The key difference between activism and volunteering is that activists refuse the imposition of any limits or boundaries on their expression or action. Despite definition differences across disciplines and theoretical perspectives, activism emphasises advocacy, conflict and transgression (Ganesh & Zoller, forthcoming). Volunteering, on the other hand, is moulded by and arguably, constricted by organisational and societal demands for professionalism.

The second implication of these findings on professionalism-wellbeing relationships is that context is an essential element in how professionalism develops and is manifest within each nonprofit organisation. Given the organisation-specific understandings of professionalism, I suggest that we cannot

posit any deterministic causal relationship between professionalism and volunteers' wellbeing. That is, professionalism does not necessarily imply lesser wellbeing for volunteers.

Situating professionalism and wellbeing as inimical is the result of definitions of volunteering that privilege agency. If agency were the essence of volunteering, then demands for professionalism that forestalled the untrammelled expression of agency would be inherently negative. Once volunteering is conceptualised more broadly as relational as well as agentic, the professionalism-wellbeing relationship becomes more complex. If relationships can cause emotional distress, professionalism protects wellbeing through the provision of guidelines that channel volunteers' agentic decisions. If on the other hand, relationality is reasonably unproblematic, agency can be stymied by professionalism. I discuss how professionalism can liberate volunteers from a sense of guilt and worry, and then consider how professionalism can constrict their scope of action.

Professionalism can act as a protective resource for volunteers by specifying how interventions should be carried out, particularly in "high reliability" organisations (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001) where optimal performance is imperative because of the nature of the job. Explicit directives limit volunteers' personal responsibility for whatever falls outside the parameters of their role. A focus on efficient performance also enables some emotional detachment from the outcome of an intervention. For instance, Tracy, Myers and Scott's (2006) work showed that correctional officers, 911 call-takers and fire-fighters used humour as a way of protecting their "self." Specifically, humour created role distance and a sense of superiority to those being "served," as well as providing light relief for

extremely tense moments. The need for these types of interactional practices that create emotional distance and role differentiation (between one's real life and one's specific task/role on the job) is highly applicable to volunteer contexts that can also be categorised as "unpredictable, identity-threatening, tragic, incongruous, and stigmatized" (Tracy, Myers, & Scott, 2006, p. 284).

Alternatively, professionalism can act as a means of control over volunteers, requiring them to adhere to systems. In this case, volunteers have to enact relationality according to a pre-specified model that spells out which types of emotions it is appropriate for volunteers to manifest. Kreutzer and Jäger (2010) noted this can lead to organisational conflict, because volunteering is not so much a choice of how to spend free time as a way of structuring "the way we do things around here" (p. 5). Organisations with a mission of fostering collaboration, participation and dialogue may find that some volunteers react poorly to professionalism understood as standardised routines and efficiency. In fact, some volunteers did resist tools, techniques and practices that were transferred from the business sector without adequate thought to how they might be implemented in nonprofit contexts (T. E. Beck, Lengnick-Hall, & Lengnick-Hall, 2008). Most resentment, however, derived from the perceived de-personalisation wrought by professionalism. Some volunteers felt that the emphasis on systems obscured their ability to relate with empathy to those who needed their assistance.

In sum, the problem was that volunteers expected to encounter "emotional work" or authentic emotional expression when interacting with others (Miller, Considine, & Garner, 2007) in volunteer contexts. They did not anticipate performing "emotional labour" or inauthentic emotional expression (Hochschild,

1983) due to an understanding of professionalism that required them to engender limited emotional display and focus on task performance.

In some ways, this differentiated, twofold impact of professionalism reflects Habermas' (1984) distinction between communicative and strategic action. I suggest, however, that maintaining a conceptual split between organisations with grassroots, dialogic, communicative action, and others with "professional," efficient, strategic action (cf., Eliasoph, 2009; Milligan & Fyfe, 2005) is not always productive. That is, we also need to consider how hybrid state-nonprofit partnerships (Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, 2009) attempt to combine both communicative and strategic action. Eliasoph (2009) also argued that the growth in these new organisational forms makes it increasingly important to evaluate how participants in top-down, funded organisations "do" civicness in them differently to informal, unfunded organisations (p. 292). "New" volunteer organisations face different challenges to "classic" volunteer associations. Funded organisations must demonstrate transparency and accountability to multiple stakeholders that may include central, regional or local governments and private donors, as well as potential volunteers. Eliasoph (2009) noted that demonstrating inclusion and empowerment (dialogic collaboration) to these groups requires extensive and constant measurement and documentation (rational, strategic action).

Irrespective of the structural genesis of these new organisational forms, I argue that communication by and among volunteers is central to organising. Volunteers' reproduction of or resistance to new organisational types is driven in part by their reactions to professionalism. Since positive and negative responses to organisational mandates to "be professional" occurred within the same

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organisation, I suggest that the relationship between professionalised volunteering and wellbeing is influenced by volunteers' views of relationality as well as organisational type and volunteer activity. In contrast to Kreutzer and Jäger's (2010) study where volunteers' perceptions about their identity did not demonstrate significant inter-organisational differences across six volunteer associations, I found distinct responses to organisational demands for professionalism across as well as within organisations.

In conclusion, the finding about the impact of professionalism on volunteers' wellbeing adds to the literature in two ways. First, this study provides case study comparisons of what professionalism looks like in three distinct volunteer organisations. Second, it shows that volunteers' responses to these professionalised discourses are influenced by volunteer coordinators' expectations and management strategies, organisational forms and structures, volunteers' personal histories and the communicative interaction among volunteers.

Volunteers' Communities of Practice: A Summary

The last research question used CoP analysis to analyse the extent of collaboration in volunteer relationships in organisational settings, and examined the link between collaboration and volunteers' wellbeing. The literature on CoPs has presumed that "good" CoPs are collaborative on the whole. CoP research certainly acknowledges that too much consensus can stultify innovation and best practice and create rigid, reified structures; however, research also assumes that a CoP that is continually buffeted by dissensus and tension is not sustainable. The data from this project, however, suggested that collaboration and contestation were bedfellows in all CoPs, despite their nonprofit status and apparent commitment to collaborative outcomes. Perhaps counter-intuitively, some

instances of contestation were productive (L. L. Putnam, 1993), and some cases of collaboration destructive.

Refugee Services' CoP

Refugee Services' volunteers collaborated closely to set up a home for an incoming refugee family, and to assist them with the material aspects of the resettlement process. A collaborative approach to shared repertoire was important for wellbeing, since having a team alleviated the stress at having to furnish a house with few resources, and team members' varied time availability for visiting families reduced demands on volunteers' personal time. In terms of mutual engagement, the extent to which volunteers coordinated visits and cooperated with staff to support refugee families' wellbeing showed considerable variation. Nonetheless, patchy coordination and cooperation was not necessarily a source of dissatisfaction with the volunteer experience. That is, while some volunteer teams found that relationships with other volunteers were the highlight of their volunteer experience, and provided needed informational and emotional support, other participants had little need to engage with either volunteers or paid staff.

Joint enterprise proved the most contentious element of the CoP, and included diverse interpretations of Refugee Services' vision of cultural tolerance and respect for diverse cultural values. Some participants did not wish to intervene or influence refugees' cultural values and behaviours. Nonetheless, some of these participants felt anxious and worried about refugees' decisions. Others hoped that families would conform to the "New Zealand way" of doing things, while a third group explained local expectations yet respected refugee choices.

Although these fragmented interpretations of the volunteer role do not always align with Refugee Services' organisational mission, I argue that diverse perspectives create space for civic dialogue. That is, the contestation of joint enterprise among volunteers is a microcosm of policy debate about refugee resettlement in New Zealand society. I propose that this type of contestation is productive for understanding diverse viewpoints, because despite Refugee Services' aim to implement "best practice" methods of resettlement, the model must have the support of the wider community.

Plunket's CoP

Plunket volunteers contested aspects of shared repertoire such as "excessive" paperwork and representation on higher Area-level bodies. This disagreement with organisational demands manifested itself in avoidance tactics when faced with unwanted tasks and responsibilities. Nonetheless, volunteers would tolerate difficult or boring tasks so long as committee work was enjoyable.

On the other hand, national directives, policies and messages that did not match the volunteer experience, and that were therefore contested by volunteers, were a destructive element of Plunket's community of practice. That is, regardless of how volunteers responded to the mammoth task of promoting Plunket, or whether they avoided or ignored national policies, their wellbeing suffered. I suggest that volunteers who are struggling to maintain their own wellbeing may find it hard to recruit new committee members, and the sense of being overwhelmed becomes cyclical.

To maintain a sense of wellbeing when faced with struggles over workload management, policy implementation, and ability of local entities to act on the

ground, relationships at local committee level assume major importance. The data showed that collaboration was an important aspect of mutual engagement. Cohesion could be counter-productive, however, as the need to present a united front of "us" against "them" meant that disagreement within committees was discouraged. However, conflict within committees can be a sign of healthy functioning, and a means of generating better ideas about how to meet community needs. In the CoP as it is currently structured, fostering a united front to protect personal wellbeing could lead to less innovative community outcomes and lower social wellbeing.

St John Ambulance's CoP

St John Ambulance volunteers appreciated that their role enabled the smooth functioning of ambulance operations on shifts where paid staff numbers were insufficient. Participants' primary motivation for volunteering was to save lives, which is facilitated by having a driver and an ambulance officer who is able to attend the patient. This motivation meant that the task-focused collaboration evident during on-road call-outs was positive for volunteers' wellbeing, since collaborating at medical emergencies enabled volunteers to gain knowledge and skills. As discussed in the previous chapter, a sense of self-efficacy due to adequate skills was highly linked to volunteers' reports of wellbeing.

While volunteers collaborated with paid staff to provide emergency services to *patients*, some participants contested the roles assigned to volunteers by some paid staff. The relational clashes that characterised mutual engagement were generally negative for volunteers' wellbeing and could be unproductive for St John in terms of volunteer recruitment. Participants described how some paid staff members' comments denigrated their role as volunteers, their contribution to

the emergency effort and their knowledge and skills. One group of volunteers was able to maintain wellbeing by de-personalising these behaviours, by focusing on patients' needs, and by considering how to use feedback to up-skill. These volunteers perceived themselves more as officers-in-training rather than volunteers, and were more likely to move into St John's paid work force.

The other group dealt with criticism by deflecting it and blaming paid staff. These volunteers expected paid staff to demonstrate gratitude and respect for volunteers who give up their free time. Manifestations of respect included paid staff doing the housekeeping and allowing volunteers to develop skills and on-road experience. Relegating volunteers to mundane roles on and off road was therefore resented, and discussed among volunteers. This group was also far more likely to be critical of management level decisions, adopting a volunteer identity predicated on covert organisational dissidence (Kassing, 2001). The potential damage to the organisation's public image and ability to recruit volunteers could be significant.

In contrast with Refugee Services and Plunket volunteers, conflict over joint enterprise at St John Ambulance did not have a significant impact on volunteer engagement or wellbeing. Volunteers' engagement with shared repertoire, or enjoyment of ambulance work itself, compensated for dissatisfaction with joint enterprise in this CoP.

Communities of Practice: Implications for Research on Volunteering and

Wellbeing

I consider the significance of these findings to our understandings of communities of practice. Most importantly, each CoP contained instances of and

established patterns of collaboration *and* contestation. Not only may one component be fairly collaborative and another contested, but some components of a CoP may simultaneously exhibit both, as in the case of diverse responses to mutual engagement at St John Ambulance. Situating CoPs as sites of both contestation and collaboration makes it doubtful that one can in fact find a CoP that is entirely collaborative. As Koschmann and Laster (2011) pointed out, "tensions . . . are inherent to human organizing" (p. 29).

Although some work claims to examine tensions or conflict (Tsasis, 2009), most emphasis is given to the characteristics needed for organisational collaboration: complementary goals, and positive social interactions characterised by trust. Only in Tsasis' closing paragraph did he allude to the need for NGO partnerships to find the "balance of dependence and autonomy . . . needed for building interorganizational relationships" (p. 18). In this regard, Lewis, Isbell and Koschmann's (2010) study filled an important gap in the literature, by documenting how nonprofit partners communicatively managed the relationship and structural tensions they encountered in inter-organisational relationships.

Nonetheless, Lewis, Isbell and Koschmann (2010) labelled the means whereby participants responded to tensions as "coping strategies" (p. 475). I argue that tensions or contestation within CoPs is not inherently "bad," but can form part of "well functioning" CoPs. As Tracy (2004) noted, "contradictions are inescapable, normal, and, in some cases, to be embraced" (p. 121). For instance, St John Ambulance can assess the suitability of volunteers for paid staff positions by analysing how they respond to St John's hierarchical structure (see Appendix D for a history of St John, which is highly military). In the business of emergency response, paid staff with higher skills exercise significant control over what tasks

are deemed appropriate for amateur helpers. Only those volunteers who can focus on patient needs and skill development rather than interpersonal niceties will fit the organisational culture.

Hence, I also challenge the assumption made in the literature that collaborative CoPs are "good" because they build capacity through knowledge sharing, resource pooling (Gulati, Nohria, & Zaheer, 2000), and harnessing "synergy" (E. S. Weiss, Anderson, & Lasker, 2002). I suggest that collaboration is not always productive, and neither does a "collaborative process that is more inclusive [create] better decisions" (Keyton, Ford, & Smith, 2008, p. 379). For instance, the potential exists for peer networks of capable, dominant social groups to inhibit the development of conditions for dialogic encounters, reinforcing pre-existing strong ties rather than creating new weak ties (Granovetter, 1973) which actually hinders rather than helps the growth of social capital.

Plunket is a particularly clear example of the problems associated with tightly-knit groups. In this case, the relational bonds within groups tended to increase the likelihood of a coordinated response. For instance, many women joined committees because their friends had. Nonetheless, as a corollary, when one volunteer decides to leave, a committee can collapse as her friends also step down. Thus, high levels of coordination, which seem positive when volunteers are engaged with the organisation, threaten both a committee's longevity, and Plunket's traditional learning model. Once the women who have been volunteering for 20, 30, or 50 years are no longer involved, it is not likely that the two to three years that most contemporary Plunket volunteers stay with the organisation will be enough for them to build the sophisticated skill set and the "big knowledge" needed to move the Plunket machine forward. Plunket as an

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organisation has not faced the transition yet, although the new educational training programme will formally teach what used to be passed on in person.

Recruitment also becomes more difficult when committees are overly collaborative. The strong cohesion of tight friendship groups precluded the easy assimilation of non-dominant cultural groups that are often the beneficiaries of Plunket's programmes. In 2011, being a Plunket committee member is not the status symbol it was in 1951 or 1961, but, as paid staff pointed out to me, Asian, Pasifika and Māori women are still under-represented.

Before I proceed with the practical implications of the project's findings for studies of identity, coordination and relationality in the next section, I briefly suggest how the three strands of the thesis may inform each other. First, the ways in which each organisation's codes of conduct articulate expectations about how volunteers ought to enact relationality may push volunteers towards a particular volunteer pathway. For example, Refugee Service's insistence on boundaries as an essential component of professionalism accentuated the desirability of freedom and reciprocal relationships and downplayed the possibility of obligation and guilt.

Second, while organisational discourses may well encourage volunteers to take one volunteer pathway rather than the other, participants' personal background, memberships in multiple other communities of practice and the meanings they give to volunteering also shape their responses to processes of professionalisation and messages about wellbeing. The CoP model provides a helpful framework to analyse how diverse volunteers collectively negotiate the

purpose and scope of their organisational role and appropriate forms of interaction.

Implications of this Project for Organisational Communication Research

This project contributes to our topical knowledge of nonprofit organising, and also patterns of communication that are enacted differently in nonprofit settings to full-time paid work contexts (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002). Here I discuss the practical implications of the findings for studies of organisational and occupational identity, coordination and relationality.

Occupational and Organisational Identity

Roles can crystallise into institutionalised, taken-for-granted patterns that may not allow enough flexibility to embrace the emergent nuances of a phenomenon. In terms of organisational identity, this project has shown that volunteers do not always assume a collaborative, helping role within organisations. In fact, dissonance with organisational norms and mission forms part and parcel of much of the volunteers' occupational identity. Volunteers from all organisations in this study have resisted various aspects of organisational culture. Refugee Services' volunteers had divergent views of joint enterprise or what appropriate goals for refugee integration should be and what diverse communities ought to look like. This tension between organisational identity and volunteer identification/dis-identification with it results from their varied value positions. As Jehn, Northcraft and Neale (1999) asserted, "it is the diversity associated with values . . . that causes the biggest problems . . . in work group performance and morale" (p. 758).

Insistence on doing things the "volunteer" way (A. Wilson & Pimm, 1996) rather than the "organisational" way is not limited to joint enterprise. Some Plunket volunteers disagreed with some of the tasks that the organisation had designated as shared repertoire for volunteers. Specifically, tasks with a clear business orientation such as doing accounts and filling in reporting forms were a point of contention. At St John Ambulance, some volunteers contested patterns of mutual engagement where paid staff did not seem to appreciate volunteers' efforts, epitomising a perceived lack of organisational loyalty and care (C. R. Scott, 2001) of volunteer workforces. While other studies have shown that conflict between volunteers and paid staff is a key concern for volunteer management (Brudney & Gazely, 2002; Handy, et al., 2008), I suggest that the heart of the problem lies with discrepancies in how the interested parties construe identity. That is, paid staff and volunteer managers assume that volunteers will engage in deep, structural identification with organisational identity. Perhaps the most significant source of conflict in joint enterprise, mutual engagement and shared repertoire is the expectation that when individuals take on a volunteer role, they agree "to enact the behaviors and accomplish the tasks that are required to successfully perform the role (Kirby et al., 2003)" (Cruz, 2010, p. 39).

As Simpson and Carroll (2008) pointed out, ready-made roles act as a boundary object and function as an intermediary between persons by communicating how individuals in a given situation should "think, feel and act" (p. 32) . In this way, they provide structured guidelines for relational actions that may be accepted, modified or outright rejected by individuals. In this study, while volunteers certainly appreciated the importance of relationality, we cannot neglect agency as an essential aspect of volunteering. Not every volunteer is ready to cede

decision-making power over what they freely choose to do and how they do it to organisational control. Volunteers who assume an occupational identity marked by creativity and freedom are inevitably at odds with an organisational identity that emphasises conformity with preset standards.

The potential for conflict between organisational and occupational identity is perhaps exacerbated by the myriad of other roles volunteers manage, apart from the role which ties them (briefly) to the volunteer organisation. As a result, identification with the volunteer role can be transient, changeable and liable to be moulded by other life demands. Individuals who are successful and capable in work and other contexts may resist being talked down to by paid staff in volunteer settings. They may well choose to manifest stronger identification when in public view (Goffman, 1959), yet possess quite weak identification to the organisation (C. R. Scott, et al., 1998). While in both cases, the individual is still nominally "volunteering," the experiential difference is evident.

Volunteer recruiters and managers have a vested interest in understanding the process whereby volunteers develop and understand their organisational identity, since there is a strong relationship between identification and commitment (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). The dialectical flip-flop between strong and weak identification casts doubt on the possibility of constructing a singular volunteer "identity." First, I propose that constructing a coherent organisational identity is nigh impossible, given volunteers' temporary organisational engagement, lack of ongoing feedback, the amount of work that tends to be done on one's own, and limited access to under-funded, overworked staff. Second, variety is unavoidable since volunteers develop and refine their occupational identity as volunteers through interaction contextually with

communication partners (A. Smith & Gossett, 2007) in combination with their understandings of volunteering.

Nonetheless, knowledge of how participants made sense of their volunteer experiences sensitises us to elements of commitment that may be pertinent for volunteer managers. Meyer and Allen (1997) suggested the following types of commitment: 1) *affective* commitment characterised by emotional attachment to organisations and subsequent internalisation of values; 2) *continuance* commitment based on evaluation of the costs of leaving and benefits of staying; and 3) *normative* commitment driven by perceived obligation. I propose that volunteer coordinators be alert to how the meanings of volunteering shape volunteer commitment. Individuals who understand volunteering as freedom/reciprocity may well continue to volunteer (continuance commitment) without any normative or affective commitment to the organisation's values. They may derive instrumental satisfaction from their role, which they use to freelance.

If volunteering is framed as giving/obligation, on the other hand, individuals may initially strive to maintain normative commitment even when emotional attachment wanes or wellbeing decreases. Dutta-Bergman (2004), for example, argued that individuals who practise "activities that demonstrate responsible choices" (p. 357) in their personal lives are driven by a sense of "unified responsibility" in social contexts (Weisenfeld, 1996). Nonetheless, even apparently motivated and committed volunteers do abandon their volunteer role. Yanay and Yanay's (2008) study of volunteers at a Center for Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence provided a thought-provoking insight into the "phenomenon of dropout" (p. 68). Specifically, they compared volunteers' expectations that they would feel good about their volunteering, and

their actual inability to regulate negative emotions, such as pain and self-doubt. Instigating appropriate social support (Duck & Silver, 1990; Goldsmith & Fitch, 1997) for often emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983) may either encourage volunteer longevity or ameliorate volunteer exit processes. Volunteer-dependent organisations can be so hard-pressed to maintain volunteer numbers that they are unwilling to face volunteer termination, and are distressed by lack of volunteer "loyalty."

More complex understandings between organisational/occupational identity and commitment show that those who understand volunteering in terms of giving/obligation are not necessarily completely altruistic nor are those on the freedom/reciprocity pathway completely self-serving. In fact, the need to balance empowerment and support fits well with an understanding of volunteering as both agentic and dialogic. As Story (1992) noted, volunteering is both "self-" and "other-regarding."

Coordination and Relationality

Studies that examine issues of coordination and relationality build on particular models of identity. In this section, I briefly describe how the findings from this project might contribute to organisational communication research on coordination and relationality. The literature has tended to assume that volunteers are best coordinated by emphasising the meaningful contribution that they make to building up a community's stock of social capital. Additionally, studies have suggested that the encroachment of discourses of professionalism have made it difficult to construct volunteer models of leadership and power that foster a genuinely collaborative community (Githens, 2009), since professionalism threatens the development of dialogic relationships. I argue, however, that despite

tensions between discourses of professionalism and collaboration, both promote *civility* as the key to coordinating volunteer practice and structuring volunteer relationships.

First, I propose that professionalism restricts volunteers' expression of their interests and voice through the expectation that volunteers and volunteer organisations will deal with diversity by constructing respectful relationships and fostering courtesy. Dekker (2009), for instance, distinguished between volunteering and activist-oriented citizenship models that connect groups to broader networks, hold governments accountable, and influence the political environment (p. 228). He contended that volunteering is much more concerned with "civility," which contributes to civicness in a distinct manner to citizenship. Specifically, civility focuses on promoting the public interest through self-control, social conformity, use of manners, and fulfilment of duties.

This split between vocal activism and innocuous volunteering is reinforced by public expectations that nonprofit organisations will deliver professional services. The tight linkage (Cheney & Christensen, 2001) between external communication with funders and publics and internal communication somehow challenges the notion of an "independent" nonprofit sector. If professionalised volunteering homogenises volunteers, it becomes difficult for volunteering to simultaneously "serve society and create change in it" (Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, 2009, p. 35).

Second, the literature on collaboration and "good" CoPs tends to frame coordination as the achievement of consensus and the construction of a common, united front. I suggest that in volunteer contexts, the interactions that guide an

organisation's processes (McPhee & Zaug, 2000) are driven by a desire for civility and convergence. In this study, volunteers' relationships with other volunteers acted as a structurational device for volunteer practice. Volunteers who did not fit the norm could be subtly pressured to conform to expected standards or excluded because they were too needy. Previous studies have focused on how volunteering acts as an exclusionary device that separates capable volunteers from "the poor dears" (Eliasoph, 2009) being served. I suggest that volunteers are categorised as "needy" if they evince divergent value positions (e.g., at Refugee Services) or introduce discord into volunteer relationships (e.g., at Plunket or St John Ambulance). Despite the importance of debate for a vibrant, participatory nonprofit sector, volunteering tends to favour polite tolerance and apparent cohesion.

To this end, this project perhaps offers a more expansive view of what "collaborative" behaviour might entail. That is, this thesis defined collaboration as a combination of (1) cooperation, (2) coordination or alignment of responses, and (3) sharing of resources (Lewis, Isbell, & Koschmann, 2010). Currently, patterns of coordination seem to preclude the sharing of resources such as ideas or practices that diverge from organisational expectations or challenge majority perspectives. However, institutional theorists have suggested that practices and rules that are only "weakly entrenched" (Lawrence, Hardy, & Phillips, 2002, p. 283) can more easily be transformed through and by social interaction. Hence, collaboration can become a force for change and innovation, which is ostensibly one of the many competing goals of the nonprofit sector.

In the final section, I suggest that acknowledgement of the dialectical nature of phenomena could facilitate a view of volunteering that encompasses

agency and dialogism, and collaboration as well as contestation. I argue that a phenomenological perspective is well suited for this task.

Implications of this Project for Hybrid Phenomenological Research

It is unusual to adopt a phenomenological perspective of communication problematics. Hence, this final section of the chapter evaluates the contribution such a perspective has made to this project. I do so by drawing out the implications of three key phenomenological postulates that undergird the analysis, which were introduced at the beginning of this project. First, I analyse the noematic-noetic constitution of experience. Second, I argue that experience and context work together to create understanding. Last, I suggest that both the self and the other are important in deriving the essence of a phenomenon.

First Postulate: The Noematic-Noetic Constitution of Experience

The introduction to this project described how both "that which is experienced" (the noema) and the "way in which it is experienced" (the noesis) together determine how a phenomenon is "given to us in experience" (E. Thompson & Zahavi, 2007, p. 69). The first analysis chapter provided a more expansive description of the noema of volunteering which encompassed the agency-relationality dialectic. At this juncture, it is essential to insist that the fact that we can identify a noema through intense reflection and intersubjective dialogue does not imply lack of richness or a flat, uni-dimensional view of the phenomenon under consideration. In fact, every noema has an element of indeterminacy. In his in-depth discussion of phenomenology, Kockelmans (1967a) reasoned that "each phenomenon has its own intentional structure, which analysis shows to be an ever-widening system of intentionally-related, individual

components" (p. 438), depending on what has been seen and what has not yet been perceived through intentional acts.

Understanding of the phenomenon then depends on subjects' noetic grasp of the noema. The participants in this project approached the noema in two distinct ways via intentionality. Those on the giving/obligation pathway emphasised what recipients still had to achieve, or the gaps which volunteering needed to fill. Remen (1996, Spring) proposed that when we "help," we use our strength to help a weaker other, thereby establishing an unequal relationship (p. 24). Those on the freedom/reciprocity pathway, on the other hand, focused on what the recipients of their efforts could already do and had achieved. This expectation of wholeness on the part of the other person(s) required their collaborative response. If there was no reciprocity, the volunteer moved on. This noematic-noetic constitution of volunteering has profound implications for what we might expect volunteering to achieve at a societal level.

An in-depth study of the noematic-noetic constitution of experience is not atheoretical but forms an important basis for further research from many other perspectives. Phenomenology as a philosophical tradition, inaugurated by Husserl (1859-1938), "is both a decisive precondition and a constant interlocutor for a whole range of subsequent theories and approaches" (E. Thompson & Zahavi, 2007, p. 68). For instance, critical perspectives could further analyse how noetic perspectives from each point of view encourage or hinder dialogue between volunteers and recipients. Organisational studies that examine the role of emotion at work could also fruitfully consider how a freedom/reciprocity and giving/obligation perspective situate empathy.

Moreover, phenomenological analysis allows for many different positions in how it treats consciousness. What joins this diverse bundle of perspectives together is the acknowledgement that we can "adopt . . . different mental attitudes toward the world, life, and experience" (E. Thompson & Zahavi, 2007, p. 68). Phenomenological perspectives, then, are well positioned to examine the "ways in which human social order is premised on tensions and contradictions that underlie apparent cohesion and that point to potential social change and transformation" (Mumby, 2005, p. 22). The integration of experience and the horizons of meaning constitutes another possible tension, which I consider in the following section.

Second Postulate: Experience and Context Work Together to Create

Understanding

Husserlian phenomenology prioritises intentional experience in coming to understand a phenomenon, because perception gives us the object directly, whereas representation and linguistic signification give us only indirect knowledge. Phenomenological experiential openness to alterity (E. Thompson & Zahavi, 2007) differs from Kantian idealism, since consciousness is not shut in on itself but has a noematic object. Nonetheless, phenomenological analysis is not a positivist evaluation of the non-psychic world, but has as its object of study our *consciousness* of something (Kockelmans, 1967a, p. 436, my italics). Evidently, our intentional perception of any noema is impacted by the interpretive schemas we already have.

The discipline of organisational communication is well positioned to evaluate how individuals and groups create the social worlds that situate experience in particular contexts. However, the fact that communication research has the tools with which to examine the horizons of meaning and how these are

constituted does not thereby imply that it is incapable of analysing how we integrate experience into the framework of expectations we have already created. One way is through retrospective sense-making. When experiences match expectations, we fit these experiences into tried and tested interpretive schemas. Alternatively, when experiences jar our neatly established patterns of thinking, we are forced to re-write our interpretive frameworks. As Cheney (2000) noted, "reality sometimes crashes our symbolic celebrations" (p. 45). In the case of volunteering, existing contextual schemas of volunteering focus on agency, yet experiences of relationality frequently challenge volunteers' ability to be detached. For example, a volunteer may believe that he/she has sufficient skills and self-possession to be unaffected by the demands imposed by experience of volunteering, yet burnout is a frequent occurrence (Eisenberg & Eschenfelder, 2009, p. 369; Miller, Stiff, & Ellis, 1988).

Third Postulate: Both the Self and the Other are Important in Deriving the Essence of a Phenomenon

The third phenomenological postulate helpful for communication research is the role of both self and other in coming to a richer understanding of the essence of a phenomenon. Together with Pacanowsky (1989), I argue that in this project, "I make sense of the world primarily by means of engaging others in dialogue" (p. 250). As a result, I am able to build up a better picture of the "processes and practices by which organizational members make sense of their experiences as well as the sense that is made (Pacanowsky and O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982, 1983)" (p. 250).

The terminology may differ but the intent of phenomenological analysis is (1) to describe the ways in which objects are experienced, and (2) to ask what

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meanings these objects have, and (3) how these meanings are constituted in the structure of our consciousness. We begin with a description of how subjects perceive, judge and evaluate the object as presented. This perception is itself inter-subjective. Thompson and Zahavi (2007) noted that the richness of noema means that others' perspectives increase my own understanding as I look again. They elaborated as follows:

> Perceptual objects are not exhausted in their appearance
> for me; each object always possesses a horizon of
> coexisting profiles, which although momentarily
> inaccessible to me, could be perceived by other subjects.
> The perceptual object, as such, through its givenness,
> refers . . . to other possible subjects, and is for that very
> reason already intersubjective. (p. 83)

Participants recognised that their views on volunteering, as a noema or perceptual object, shifted over time and with greater numbers of opportunities to connect with the recipients of their services.

In particular, several volunteers explicitly mentioned how the same episode could be re-scripted in multiple ways, by changing the expectations of *contracts* or relationship parameters (W.B. Pearce, 1976), and *cultural patterns*, through dialogue. For example, ensuring ambulance volunteers did not interpret their role as one of saviour enabled them to have some distance from the outcome of their efforts. The ambulance officer-patient relationship was re-cast as one of facilitation, which removed unlimited agency and therefore responsibility from the ambulance crew. In some instances, volunteers working with refugee families

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recognised that *life scripts* had programmed them to react to cross-cultural misunderstanding and conflict in pre-determined ways. Episodes that challenged volunteers' standards of politeness were initially interpreted as rude or thoughtless. Discussion with other volunteers and paid staff sometimes led volunteers to re-interpret refugees' intentions as manifest in *speech acts*, and hence the actual episode itself. Without multiple others who may either confirm or contest meanings the self ascribes to a phenomenon, the self would have limited access to the rich meanings each situation holds.

In sum, what is of note is that each of these postulates has an inherent dialectical dimension which this project has developed further: noema-noesis; experience-context; and self-other. These dimensions can be complementary or in tension, which gives our understanding of social phenomena and the inter-relationships between them depth and complexity.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study has contributed to the organisational communication literature on nonprofit organising, through an analysis of how volunteers made sense of the experience of volunteering in organisational contexts. First, assumptions about volunteering gleaned from the literature were bracketed or problematised, so as to allow new conceptual dimensions to emerge. Second, a description of organisational volunteering that allowed for both manifestation of agency and relationality allowed clearer focus on the impact of professionalism on volunteers' wellbeing. The study showed that academic and practitioner discourses that demonise the professionalisation of volunteering are perhaps misguided, as professionalism can contribute to wellbeing for some groups of volunteers. Third, this project provided insights into why conflict and collaboration are evident and

to be expected in volunteers' communities of practice. In particular, vague volunteer identities, weak organisational identification, lack of consistent coordination, and volunteers' differing views about appropriate relationships with paid staff and clients contributed to lack of cohesion in volunteer organisations. The study suggested that the tensions such lack of common purpose can introduce may be a strength rather than a limitation of third space environments, as it allows for dialogue and flexibility.

This study also combined an analysis of key organisational communication concerns with a hybrid Husserlian phenomenological perspective. The uniqueness of this approach was that it highlighted the dialectical nature of social phenomena. First of all, the emphasis on the noematic-noetic constitution of experience explained why multiple individuals who approached and understood volunteering from different angles could enrich understanding of a phenomenon. Participants varied in their length of experience of volunteering: some participants had volunteered for more than fifty years, while others were relatively new to volunteering. Those with years of experience had benefited from multiple opportunities to engage with the phenomenon and reflect on its meaning, while the newcomers offered new perspectives. Second, the study examined the inter-relationships between interpretive schemas that provide the context of experiences, and the actuality of conscious experience itself. Finally, both self and others were important for participants in understanding the essence of volunteering, but others (participants) were also important for me as a researcher. Each interview was a fresh opportunity to look, and look again, at the phenomenon of organisational volunteering, and engage with it jointly at a deeper level.

Nevertheless, the project also has some practical and theoretical limitations. First, the data, although rich and extensive, is drawn from volunteers who regularly engage with one of the three organisations in the study. We do not know if episodic volunteers would enact the agency-relationality dialectic in the same way. Research that describes how episodic volunteers understand what they do and compares it with the meanings that organisational volunteers give to their involvement would be a productive avenue for future research.

Moreover, the description of organisational volunteering developed in this project may simply be a communicative construction of a particular demographic group. Organisation-based volunteering is a fundamentally Pākehā phenomenon in New Zealand (Oliver & Love, 2007). Indigenous, Māori perspectives of relationality and agency may engender quite distinct patterns, practices and understandings of volunteering. More research is required on what both episodic and organisational volunteering in *Aotearoa New Zealand* might look like.

Second, the description of volunteering that I developed in this study did not specifically examine how volunteers might move *between* volunteer pathways as they enact agency and relationality. One way forward perhaps is to compare everyday, mundane volunteer experiences with so-called transformational volunteering experiences (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) that cause a profound disjuncture in volunteer pathways, and that perhaps require a reformatting of the landscape. One possibility would be to compare organisational volunteering to episodic volunteering in emergency contexts or volunteer tourism experiences. Other areas of research could involve longitudinal tracking of the changes in volunteer pathways along individuals' volunteering "career" and investigating individuals who volunteer for multiple organisations simultaneously.

Third, while the analysis suggested that the professionalism-wellbeing relationship was ambiguous for volunteers, it did not explicitly consider that participants' varied responses to organisational messages about professionalism might be influenced by their current volunteer pathway. For instance, I speculate that volunteers on the freedom/reciprocity volunteer pathway are far more likely to treat professionalism as a resource. This group appreciates organisational planning and procedures since this facilitates evaluation and selection of a volunteer role that fits their individual needs. Emotional distance or polite interactions that do not touch the core of the volunteer enable the volunteer to move on with ease: what Dekker (2009) and Eliasoph (2009) termed the "plug-in USB key" volunteer.

On the other hand, professionalism may be negative for wellbeing for volunteers on the giving/obligation pathway, since this view of volunteering leads individuals to adapt their skills and talents to meet others' needs, rather than give according to a pre-specified pattern. The development of close relationships tends to impel volunteers to do whatever it takes to help others, yet this willingness to give as others needed is inimical to professional approaches that require clear boundaries between the volunteer role and one's private life. Future research could further interrogate the relationship between these understandings of volunteering and volunteers' reactions to professionalism.

Fourth, I assessed the link between professionalised volunteering and wellbeing, using descriptions of definitions that emerged from the volunteer organisations in the study. Other "versions" of professionalism are possible, and perhaps create more interesting research agendas. For example, I did not explicitly consider the impact of professional orientation on participants' response to the

professionalisation of volunteering, although some work suggests that occupation impacts how volunteers talk about their activity (Granfield, 2007; Reinerman, 1987). Rather than a new form of sociological profiling, organisational communication scholarship has the tools to assess how volunteers create their own view of what professionalism is. These gaps offer fruitful opportunities for future research.

Despite these limitations, this study has the potential to be "useful" (Lewis, 2010) to the volunteer organisations that enabled me to carry out this research project. During the informal conversations that I had before and after interviews with organisational representatives at the time of data collection, I offered to collaborate with each organisation to identify challenges that volunteers face within their organisation, particularly around demands for professionalism and relationships with other organisational actors, and to develop strategies to improve volunteers' wellbeing. The findings of this project on the meanings of volunteering could also be disseminated more widely through the production of a brochure for potential volunteers that discusses the rewards and risks of volunteering. This post-PhD agenda is important, both professionally and personally, since if research is truly to be "*ko te tangata*" (for the people), it must benefit both the volunteers and the organisations that they engage with.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PARTICIPANTS

An interview guide was used to provide a framework of questions relating to the meanings participants give to their volunteering. The questions were theme-oriented in order to elicit descriptions of instances of the phenomena of volunteering (Kvale, 1996). Additional questions and probes were used as needed. Specific questions included:

1. What did you think volunteering would be like before you started?

2. Why did you first become a volunteer?

3. Tell me about your background and your life experiences which you think contributed to your becoming a volunteer.

4. What are your reasons for volunteering now, and how have they changed over time?

5. 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?

6. If I followed you through a typical 'day' volunteering, what would I see you doing? What would I hear? What experiences would I observe you having? (Patton, 2002). It's like you're taking a "verbal photo" for me since I can't follow you around.

7. How do your family, friends or colleagues react to your volunteering?

8. How important is volunteering to you?

9. What is wellbeing to you?

10. How does volunteering contribute to your wellbeing?

11. How has the experience of volunteering affected you?

12. Can you describe a specific incident, experience or moment of your voluntary activity when you really experienced that wellbeing?

13. What feelings do you associate with the experience? What thoughts stand out for you?

14. Can you describe a specific moment which was challenging or difficult? How did you handle this?

15. How does your paid work (current or past) contribute to your wellbeing?

16. How is your workplace (current or past) different or similar to the voluntary organisation you are involved with?

17. What other aspects of your life do you consider to be important to your wellbeing?

18. What are your thoughts on how the media presents volunteering?

The majority of the questions ($1 - 6$ and $11 - 14$) aimed to elicit what the experience of volunteering means to participants through descriptions of moments of particular note to volunteers because they were surprising or outstanding in some way. The vividness of the experience was often accompanied by intense reflection. The questions on wellbeing (9, 10, 12, $14 - 15$, and 17) were not of secondary importance, but presumed that particular ways of understanding volunteering would frame the relationship with wellbeing in some way. Questions 1, 3, 4, 7 and 18 touched on the influences of significant others, the voluntary organisation and media in creating understandings of volunteering.

Appendix B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ORGANISATIONS

Questions for organisational representatives were guided by issues that the volunteers had identified as significant and contradictory. In order to gain multiple perspectives, the local and national volunteer advisor/manager/coordinator was interviewed. The interview protocols were organisation-specific, as indicated below:

Questions for St John:

1. What do ambulance volunteers bring to the table?

2. Tell me about the relationships between the paid staff and volunteers. Please give specific examples.

3. What kind of training do the paid staff get about the role and management of volunteers?

4. What happens to paid staff when volunteers don't turn up to a shift?

5. What do you do with paid staff who don't relate well to the volunteers?

6. Tell me about the legal responsibilities of ambulance volunteers.

7. Do you have shifts where the volunteers are on single or double-crewed?

8. How do responsibilities change when volunteers are on shifts with paid staff?

9. What is the long-term strategy with volunteers? Tell me about the new strategy with National Certificate. Who funds the training?

10. What's your view on offering remuneration to the volunteers eventually? (as in the Te Anau case)

11. What is the impact of the Land Transport Safety Authority's new rules on the volunteers' ability to drive and attend callouts?

12. What are your strategies for attracting volunteers?

13. How do you explain to someone just what volunteering is? If you were talking to someone who had never done it before, what would you compare it to?

14. How do you present volunteering as contributing to wellbeing?

15. What are your strategies for retaining volunteers?

16. How do volunteers leave your organisation? What is the exit process?

Questions for Refugee Services

1. What is the rationale for the training you give your volunteers?

2. Why do you think your volunteers don't always believe the scenarios of challenging situations that they hear in training?

3. What kind of attitudes do your volunteers tend to arrive with?

4. How do you help volunteers enact boundaries between their role and other areas of their lives?

5. How do you assess volunteers' suitability for this volunteer role, and how do you attract the kind of volunteers you want?

6. How do you define volunteering?

7. In what ways are the volunteers accountable?

8. If you wanted to get rid of a volunteer, how would you do that?

9. What is the purpose of having volunteers rather than paid staff carrying out the resettlement role?

10. What is your ratio of returning volunteers, given the intensity of the experience?

11. What you think about how the media presents volunteering for Refugees Services and in general?

12. How do you present the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing?

13. How are you funded, and what do you think is the impact of this on volunteers?

Questions for Plunket

1. Why do you think many Plunket volunteers resist going to Area meetings?

2. How do you deal with the fact that basically people are seemed to be staying three to four years and then moving on?

3. How do you train new volunteers?

4. How do volunteers respond to the business plan?

5. How do you pass on the rationale behind the business plan to volunteers?

6. What do you think about the relationships between the paid staff and the volunteers?

7. How clear is the volunteer role, and how do volunteers know where the boundaries are?

8. What do you think volunteers bring to the organisation?

9. Can you tell me about the training that staff get about the role of volunteers?

10. What do you think Plunket's going to look like in 10-20 years?

11. Why do you think many members of the general public are not aware that Plunket has volunteers?

12. In what ways does Plunket try to acknowledge and support the whole family who supports the volunteer's work?

13. What changes would you initiate to build stronger committees?

Appendix C

ETHICS APPROVAL FORMS

Application for Ethical Approval

Outline of Research Project

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

1. Identify the project.

Title of Project

The Meanings of Voluntary Activity: Understanding the Relationships among
Volunteering, Wellbeing and Work

Researcher(s) name and contact information

Kirstie McAllum (Student ID 9320623)
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Prof. Ted Zorn
Management Communication
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Anticipated date to begin data collection

Data collection will begin in October 2007, or as soon thereafter as ethical approval is
granted.

2. 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.**

Voluntary activity is often touted as a cure-all for social ills as it steps into the breach left
by government deregulation of social services and economic rationalization. The extent to
which socio-economic changes such as the growth of non-standard work and a more

fragmented, unstable work environment have been translated into cultural shifts in the meaning of work and diverse forms of social engagement may be manifested in the voluntary sector which forms a 'third sphere of work' (Ashcraft & Kedrowicz, 2002), falling as it does between the paid, public workplace and the personal, private sphere of home life. Hence, evaluating the meanings attributed to voluntary activity may shed light on broader social changes and the impact these changes have had on wellbeing. Additionally, voluntarism is often designated as the flagship for the healthy development of communities and as an indicator of the extent of social capital building. For these reasons, understanding how the nature of voluntary activity is constructed and communicated within the social services sector becomes important in achieving a productive match between available and potential volunteers and voluntary organizations.

Accordingly, this research proposes to study the meanings individuals give to their volunteering in the context of their overall wellbeing, and how these meanings are created through their interactions with others, their organizational milieu and the broader socio-cultural environment. From a theoretical perspective, the research aims to examine the relationship between communication and wellbeing in both voluntary and work contexts. The research project will adopt a phenomenological methodology combined with rhetorical analysis within an interpretive approach to organizational communication.

Briefly outline your method.

Data collection will proceed in two phases, and ethics approval is being sought for both phases. In Phase One, the research project will examine how volunteers across three voluntary organizations ascribe meaning to what they do, and the perceived impact on their wellbeing. A follow-up interview with most respondents is planned to verify the researcher's interpretations of the findings. This will involve identifying three Waikato-based voluntary agencies: RMS, the Plunket Society and Waikato Hospital are being approached as potential participating organizations. Individual volunteers will be identified with the help of each organization's volunteer coordinator. The volunteer coordinator at the Hospital and at RMS will make my details available to potential participants who will then contact me by phone or email. The Waikato area coordinator for Plunket has forwarded me the email details of the chairperson of the region (a voluntary role) who will help me to pass on information to potential participants. Before the interview proper begins, participants will be informed about the purpose of the research study, and standard procedures for obtaining consent will be followed. The interview will be a one-on-one interview. Interview questions are attached at the end of the document. In Phase Two, more volunteers will be interviewed until theoretical saturation occurs and no new themes emerge from the data. In order to explore how voluntary agencies and society in general (media; family; friends) frame voluntary activity, and how this aligns with volunteers' own experiences, volunteer coordinators may also be interviewed during this phase. Additional data will also be collated from the popular press (television, newspapers) and agency-supplied promotional and other communication materials (websites, brochures, training materials) to identify the range of discourses which influence meaning-making.

Describe plans to give participants information about the research goals.

All participants will be provided with an information sheet to read prior to their interview, and permission to approach volunteers will be sought from participating voluntary organizations.

Identify the expected outputs of this research (e.g., reports, publications, presentations).

The expected output of this research will be reported in the form of a PhD thesis, journal articles and conference papers.

Identify who is likely to see or hear reports or presentations on this research.

The audience of this research is primarily academic, although voluntary organizations and policy makers who deal with the third sector may also be interested in the output of this research. All participants will be invited to read and verify their interview transcripts, and copies of research findings will also be made available to participants that wish to read them.

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.

Data collection will be carried out within the Waikato region. Participants will be selected from three voluntary organizations in the social services sector. The proposed organizations selected are the Refugee Migrant Service (RMS), the New Zealand Plunket Society and the Waikato Hospital. Waikato Hospital is New Zealand's largest hospital. Like most government owned social service institutions, the directing health board has experienced enormous pressure to meet targeted outcomes within budget constraints. The Plunket Society is a non-governmental organization, funded by central government, offering nationwide clinical advice to families and their children aged from birth to five, assisted by a wide range of volunteers. The final organization, RMS, caters for refugees arriving in the Waikato region. After permission is obtained from the organization, I intend to make contact with volunteer coordinators in order to identify and contact potential participants.

3. Obtain participants' informed consent, without coercion.

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

Approximately thirty participants will be selected for one-on-one interviewing (ten from each voluntary organization). Among these volunteers, a subset who engage both in voluntary activity and the paid work force currently or in the past will be identified and selected for more in-depth study. As the focus of the study is how individuals' interactions, organizational environments and socio-cultural influences affect the ways in which they understand the nature of the voluntary experience rather than the a priori consideration of volunteers' socio-demographic characteristics, gender and age will not be either a deterrent or an incentive to select particular volunteers. On the other hand, interviewing volunteers who have had differing levels of association with voluntary organizations would be a preferred outcome.

Volunteer coordinators will be interviewed in Phase Two. Other volunteers will be interviewed as needed in order to obtain in-depth data.

3.2 Describe how you will invite them to participate.

I will contact the manager of each of the voluntary organizations I would like to participate in this research project. At this point, I will explain the overall objectives of the study, and ask the assistance of their volunteer coordinator in identifying potential volunteers that I could contact for interviews. After gaining approval to invite volunteers to participate, Initial contact with these volunteers will be made by phone or email in the case of Plunket. Volunteers from the other two organizations will contact me via phone or email. My details will be displayed on posters around the respective organizations. I will provide each participant with a detailed information sheet and consent form before the interview.

3.3 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.**

Please refer to the attached information sheet.

I will inform participants that they have the right to decline to participate and withdraw any information they have provided at any time before the completion of the interview; that they may refuse to answer any particular question during the interview; and that they can request that particular information from an interview *not* be incorporated in the final findings.

Participants will be able to ask more questions about the research project at any time. I will also provide my supervisors' details so that participants may contact them about the research or the manner in which it is carried out if they wish to do so.

Participants will be provided with transcripts of the interview, reordered into a chronological or logical order to facilitate any clarifications they may wish to make and in order to validate interview data.

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

Please refer to the attached consent form. The signing of the consent form will indicate that participants have agreed to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

3.5 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.

No monetary incentives will be made available to participants. Participants will be involved in the research project on an entirely voluntary basis. However, a summary of the findings will be made available to participants.

4. 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.

This study involves no deception.

5. Respect privacy and confidentiality

Explain how any publications and/or reports will have the participants' consent.

Participants will be informed about the overall objectives of the study, and that the data they provide will be used in the write-up of my PhD thesis and academic journal articles. Their consent for this data to be used in this way will be obtained at the time of data collection.

Explain how you will protect participants' identities (or why you will not).

Participants will be able to request confidentiality regarding their personal identity at the time of the interview, as the interview will require large amounts of personal information about their experiences and motivation as a volunteer. The attached consent form explains how participants may do this. However, the potential case study nature of the results of the interviews requires identification of the voluntary organizations under consideration, including a detailed background description. Protecting the identity of individual volunteers is attainable for Waikato Hospital, which has over 150 volunteers, and Plunket, which also has a wide volunteer base in Hamilton and the wider Waikato. RMS has a small base of ten volunteers this year. In order to keep individual participants' identities confidential, I intend to also interview past RMS volunteers to broaden the base of potential participants. Transcripts will be numbered in order to identity participants, rather than using participants' names.

Describe who will have access to the information/data collected from participants. Explain how you will protect or secure confidential information.

No-one except the researcher and PhD supervisors will have access to the data collected from participants. The tapes will be erased after they have been transcribed. The transcriptions will be retained indefinitely in case of challenge to or extension of the research, until the study ceases to be active.

6. 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.

The interview questions do not pose evident risks or harm to the participants. If participants divulge sensitive information about organizations or experiences, recourse will be made to the confidentiality procedures set out in Section 5.2.

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.

The researcher has had extensive experience of both engaging in voluntary activity as well as organizing voluntary project work, so is well placed to empathize with participants' experiences.

Describe any possible conflicts of interest and explain how you will protect participants' interests and maintain your objectivity.

There are no conflicts of interest between the researcher and the participants.

7. 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.

As stated in 6.1, there are no evident risks or harms associated with this project. The area of research is less likely to be sensitive because it is not classified as a risky topic (ref. Ethical – Red Flags).

Volunteers may disclose how voluntary engagement contributes to their personal identity, which may raise some sensitive issues. However, responses are more likely to be positive than negative as questions are framed around wellbeing. Personal and sensitive information will be acknowledged with respect during the interview. Additionally, participants will be given a copy of the transcript in order to identify any particular information that they do not wish to be incorporated into the final report. In this way, the study is participatory in nature in that participants are able to have an active voice in the study, are able to clarify and amend the data they have contributed, and are aware of the ways in which the research will be used to contribute to knowledge about volunteers in a number of contexts.

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.

In accordance with previously established protocols within the Waikato Management School and the University's Human Research Ethics Regulations (S13.2), I will consult relevant volunteer coordinators about interview questions to ensure they are culturally appropriate for volunteer participants.

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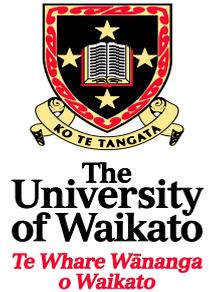
The Meanings of Voluntary Activity: Understanding the Relationships among Volunteering, Wellbeing and Work

Information Sheet for Participants

Researcher

This study is being carried out by Kirstie McAllum at the University of Waikato for a PhD thesis in the Department of Management Communication. If you have further questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me personally or my PhD supervisors (contact details appear at the end of the document).

What is the purpose of the research?

This research project will examine the meaning your voluntary activity has for you, and how it contributes to your overall wellbeing. It also seeks to understand in what ways your experiences as a volunteer are similar or different to those of your current or past workplace. The project will also look at how volunteering is viewed by others who do not volunteer and by society in general, as well as how it is presented to volunteers by different voluntary organizations.

How do I participate?

Your participation is very important to this study in order to understand the relationship between volunteering and wellbeing, but it is completely voluntary. You will be asked a series of questions during the interview, which will take approximately an hour. The interview will be audio-taped. If you are unclear about a question that is asked, you have the right to ask for clarification.

What will happen to the information collected?

Your responses will be kept confidential if you choose this option on the consent form. This means that the records obtained from the interview will be kept private and access will only be granted to myself and my PhD supervisors, Dr. Shiv Ganesh and Professor Ted Zorn. In this case, information that may identify you will be changed by using pseudonyms or omitted entirely in the final PhD thesis or any other published reports or research papers. Tape recordings will be destroyed two years after the research is completed, and transcripts will not contain identifying information.

The name of your organization will appear in the published and distributed research output, in order for other volunteers and voluntary organizations to learn more about the issues facing volunteers. You will be able to reconsider whether you wish your name to appear in the final research study or whether you prefer your responses to remain confidential at the end of the interview.

Declaration to participants

If you take part in the study, you have the following rights:

- You may refuse to answer any particular question and you may stop the interview at any point.
- This research project's procedures and questions are not intended to cause any risk. However, you may choose to withdraw from the study at any time before the completion of the interview.
- You may ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during the course of the study.
- You may ask for a transcript of the interview reordered into logical order, so that you can make any changes or clarifications you think are necessary.
- You may ask that particular information revealed in the interview not be incorporated into the findings of the study.
- You will be given access to a summary of the findings from the study when it is concluded by contacting me directly. I anticipate that the PhD thesis will be completed by the end of 2009.

For further information please contact:

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Consent Form for Participants

Waikato Management School
Te Raupapa

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

The Meanings of Voluntary Activity: Understanding the Relationships among Volunteering, Wellbeing and Work

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 before the end of the interview, or to decline to answer any particular questions during the interview. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Information Sheet.

I would like my personal identity to remain confidential: Yes ☐   No ☐

I would like to receive a summary of the results of the study: Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please provide your email address: _____

I give permission for the interview to be recorded: Yes ☐   No ☐

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet form

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix D

ORGANISATIONAL BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

I compared three organisations to discover if volunteers' interpretations differed depending on the type of organisation they engaged with. As Weick (1987) pointed out, specific "structures form when communication uncovers . . . shared social characteristics, or shared values that people want to preserve and expand" (pp. 97-98). I selected the three organisations as they not only differ in their geographic reach, size, scope of service and funding source, but also because of varied pressures they have experienced to professionalise. The three organisations chosen for analysis were Refugee Services, the New Zealand Plunket Society and St John Ambulance. All three fall broadly within the social services sector, but they differ significantly in how they aim to impact the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

Refugee Services

Annually New Zealand takes on the full quota of 750 refugees recommended by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees. Together with relevant government agencies, Refugee Services is the primary organisation that provides "practical support" to refugees arriving into New Zealand, through the services provided by social workers, cross-cultural workers, and of interest to this thesis, community volunteers (Refugee Services, 2009).

Refugee Services as an organisation has undergone significant changes since its inception. It began in 1976 as the Inter-church Commission on Immigration and Refugee Resettlement (ICCI), with representatives from the National Council of Churches, the Catholic Bishops Conference, HIAS (Hebrew Immigration Aid

Society) and the United Synagogues of New Zealand. The Commission focused primarily on refugees, but also included people applying for political asylum and other new migrants. The Christian Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand (CCANZ) took over the governance role in 1986, before the organisation adopted incorporated society status in 1990. A name change in 1990 to the Refugee and Migrant Commission – Aotearoa-New Zealand Inc. reflects the growing interest in refugees and less emphasis on the organisation's Christian roots. The operational arm developed into the Refugee Migrant Service. With fifty paid staff in nine offices nation-wide (Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington City, Hutt Valley, Porirua, Nelson, and Christchurch) and approximately 500 new volunteers trained each year, the final rebranding as Refugee Services in 2008 shifted the organisational focus solely to refugees, as other organisations have been set up to support new migrants from non-refugee backgrounds.

Researchers and practitioners have investigated and compiled reports respectively on refugees' experiences of resettlement in comparative studies (Parsons, 2005), in terms of access to government services (Grogan, 2008), educational opportunity (Kindon & Broome, 2009; Ward, 2006), health and wellbeing (Nam & Ward, 2006), community support and integration (Strategic Social Policy Group, 2008), and needs-based assessment for specific ages groups (Campbell, 2003; Wong, 2003). While this research is important, it omits what Refugee Services labels the key to resettlement success: the role of community members in welcoming new refugees. Refugee Services undertook a survey of its volunteer support workers in 2007, but only 138 out of 460 surveys were returned, which could bias the results towards volunteers happy with their placement.

Refugee Services' brochures present a smiling volunteer supporting refugees' transition to life in New Zealand, with the slogan, "It's your chance to make a difference." Volunteers are essential not only because they extend the government funding dollar, but also because they bring a personal rather than institutional touch to the resettlement process. Refugee Services' "volunteer support workers" form a team to help refugee families to adapt to life in New Zealand's larger cities. Officially, their role includes kitting out a new "home" ready for the refugees' arrival, and assisting with interactions with schools, doctors, English language teachers, and government departments. The relationship often extends much further as the volunteers are among the first contacts refugee families make on arrival to New Zealand. The need for on-going volunteer support is evident, yet current volunteers are often hesitant to take on new families.

St John Ambulance

St John Ambulance is one division of the Order of St John, which has evolved out of the religious Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem. From the eleventh century, Benedictine monks provided accommodation and hospital care for pilgrims to Jerusalem and later to Crusaders. Hospital services sprung up all over Europe dependent upon the hospital in Jerusalem: these provincial outposts received the name "priories." With wars and re-conquests over the next eight hundred years, the headquarters of the order moved from Jerusalem to Rhodes, Malta, St Petersburg, and then to Rome. The English priory established in 1185 also had a chequered history with its suppression by Henry VIII in 1540, and restoration by Mary Queen of Scots a few years later. Elizabeth I confiscated the priory's property in 1559. Queen Victoria incorporated the Grand Priory of the

Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in England in 1888, which was distinct from the vestiges of the original organisation, then known as the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, of Malta (commonly known as the Order of Malta). The varied offshoots of the medieval order signed a joint declaration of respect and esteem in 1963 with the Order of Malta.

The English version of the Order founded the St John Ambulance Association and the St John Ambulance Brigade. The Association dispensed first aid training, and the Brigade recruited trained ambulance (men) and nursing (women) corps. The Brigades constituted "voluntary civilian organization[s] for rendering assistance to cases of accident and sudden illness in civilian emergencies" (Hunt, 2009 p. 41). The Brigade soon adopted uniforms for easy identification in large crowds. Both foundations were a successful imperial export to New Zealand in 1885, and the New Zealand association was made a Priory Chapter in 1946. The official name of the organisation remains "The Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem," or "The Order of St John" for short, and its double mottos *pro fide* (for the faith) and *pro utilitate hominum* (for the service of humanity). The organisation's logo also manifests religious symbolism, an eight-pointed white cross against a black background, that derives from the merchants of the Italian republic of Amalfi (C. F. Jones, 1993, p. 3) who built an abbey for Latin pilgrims (Hunt, 2009).

St John Ambulance remains New Zealand's largest not-for-profit organisation (Hunt, 2009). It provides a wide range of community health services including first aid training, events coverage, youth leadership programmes, and in school safety training. St John aims to strengthen its community presence through

the Friends of the Emergency Department (FEDS) programme, where volunteers

support patients and families in hospitals, and the Caring Caller programme,

whereby isolated elderly persons receive a daily phone call. St John Health

shuttles assist less mobile patients to make their medical appointments.

Nonetheless, for many New Zealanders, St John is synonymous with emergency

ambulance services, as St John's most visible community presence.

Although New Zealand has no national ambulance service, St John

dominates the provision of emergency services, along with some other private

ambulance operators. The two largest non-St John providers are located in the

Wellington (Wellington Free Ambulance) and Taranaki regions (Taranaki District

Health Board Ambulance Service). Compared with ambulance services in

Australia, New Zealand's nearest neighbour, St John Ambulance is underfunded

by public monies - $24 per capita compared with $55 in New South Wales and

$75 in Queensland, Australia (Hunt, 2009). While money from the government's

Health Funding Authority provides for the paid staff, New Zealand's geographical

structure (size and rural/urban mix) and dispersed population requires that

volunteers work with paid staff in smaller towns and during night shifts, to ensure

double crewing of ambulances. In 2008, 82% of ambulance responses were

double crewed (St John, 2008, p. 9). One large challenge according to CEO

Jaimes Wood is how to integrate the "unique mix of paid and volunteer people"

(Hunt, 2009, p. 216) in an organisation that is by tradition hierarchical and has by

history developed a clear class system. For instance, the original brigades drew

members from the working classes particularly at railways, while the associations

attracted middle-class "do-gooders" to its first aid courses (Hunt, 2009, p. 91). St

John needs to capture how new "them and us" categories might be better

managed, particularly as volunteers remain essential for service provision in many instances.

Although the Ministry of Health and the Accident Compensation Corporation have allocated more funds for paid staff, the time it takes to train new ambulance officers and the growth in demand for ambulance services continue to make volunteers an integral part of the ambulance service. New Zealand's ageing population may have contributed to the 7% rise in ambulance patient numbers (a total of 343,000 patients in 2008). Moreover, compliance with occupational health and safety legislation requires trained staff at all public events. St John noted with confidence that it was "very happy to report that we have achieved a modest increase in operational volunteers in both our Ambulance and Events services" (St John, 2008, p. 9). The biggest challenge to the volunteer ethos, as the new Chancellor of St John from 2009, Garry Wilson stated, is that reliance on state funding could signal that St John was no more than an arm of the welfare state, and "by implication, offering entitlements, not service" (Hunt, 2009, p. 232). Hence, qualitative research into the impact of both the government and public demand for efficiency and value for money in the health and emergency sector is needed.

Royal New Zealand Plunket Society

The final organisation is the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society (Plunket), amongst the oldest non-governmental organisations in New Zealand. Truby King, a medical doctor, established the Plunket Society in 1907 during an era of high infant mortality rates, with the aim to "help the mothers and save the babies." Although methods of child-rearing have changed, Plunket's clinical arm

still offers advice to families and their children aged from birth to five nationwide. Ninety-one percent of children born in New Zealand are "Plunket babies" (Sullivan, 2007). Volunteers across 660 communities (Sullivan, 2007) fund parenting education courses, pay for the building and running of clinics, and facilitate coffee groups for other mothers and play groups for children.

Plunket forms an interesting case, not only because like many social services organisations, women predominate, but because early members deliberately cast it as "a women's society appealing to women." In fact, in 1916, the honorary secretary of Plunket wrote that women's instincts as to what was best for women and children must in principle over-ride technical medical knowledge, and that "bureaucratic formalism would be fatal to the success and progress of the cause we have at heart" (Bryder, 2003, p. 31).

Plunket's Chief Executive Officer, Paul Baigent, claimed in Plunket's centenary year (2007) that the organisation owed its success to its "community-owned and community-driven service" (Sullivan, 2007, p. 14). Whence, therefore, dwindling volunteer numbers? Evidently, part of the reason lies in the rise of women's participation rates in the labour force, and perceptions that volunteers are less "necessary" now than they once were due to higher levels of government funding for clinical staff - from one third in 1914 to 78% in 2001 (Bryder, 2003). Second, younger women have replaced the older society matrons as volunteers, and their involvement is short-lived. For these volunteers, Plunket acts as a mutual support group to help them in their particular life stage: at home with the kids before returning to the workforce or moving on to support other voluntary causes (Playcentre or Parent Teacher Associations) as their children get older. Moreover, they lack time to dedicate to advocacy issues.

Earlier generations of volunteers viewed Plunket as a platform from which women could contribute to and comment on public issues, and Plunket committees formed an important means to extend social networks. Women of the new millennium no longer need any organisational foothold to be able to wield influence in the public sphere. The second, and perhaps more important, reason for the apparent lack of interest in advocacy is the growth of managerial attitudes that control what volunteers can do. New Zealand's first "Children's Commissioner" (1989-1994) and researcher in family-related public policy, Ian Hassall argued in 1993 that without the means of influencing what services they will receive, members become disillusioned and the membership falls away" (Bryder, 2003, p. 275). Certainly, government requirements for accountability have dogged Plunket, as regional health authorities want assurance that they have purchased a "quality health product" from Plunket, as from other health providers. To this end, in the early 1990s, Plunket appointed a commercially-oriented management team. The CEO was male, as were two of the four new regional managers (Bryder, 2003). A public issues magazine, aimed at "thinking New Zealand" commented on the edging out of the "wholesome world of volunteers, woollen pilchers and car rental schemes" and their replacement by "a layer of grey-suited managers" (Chamberlain, 1992, p. 105). The impact on volunteers who joined to extend Plunket's support network to parents in each local community is important to ascertain.