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Escape to the Beach:  
Pre-retirement in-migrants' narratives of change, place and  
identity

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## **Abstract**

The pre-retirement cohort (45-65 years) that migrates within Aotearoa New Zealand remains largely ignored in social research. This cohort encompasses people experiencing an emergent mid-life life-stage characterized by increased fluidity between previously distinct phases such as work and retirement. Once relocated, in-migrants seek ways to become endogenous actors in their new locale and construct new identities. A change of habitus is required to successfully navigate the transition from city-dweller to 'local'. One avenue to achieve this is to engage with local volunteer organisations for the development of attachment to place, identity and for the re-narration of life-meaning.

This qualitative research took place in Mercury Bay on the Coromandel Peninsula, Aotearoa New Zealand, with pre-retirees who in-migrated from city locations and who sought volunteer roles in local community organisations. My initial exploration looked to understand how social capital is manifest for these individuals in their volunteer roles in their new location. Findings suggest the existence of a paradox within that development of social capital: participants' narratives indicate that they unconsciously seek to reproduce the very conditions from which they sought to escape, as associated with urban stressors such as workplace stress, urban pressures, financial considerations, social isolation and the demands for 'efficiency' of new-capitalist workplaces. More particularly, the paradox plays out in the development of new forms of habitus by which participants might embed themselves within the community.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

I felt once more how simple and frugal a thing is happiness: a glass of wine, a roast chestnut, a wretched little brazier, the sound of the sea. Nothing else. And all that is required to feel here and now is happiness is a simple, frugal heart (Kazantzakis, 1952, p. 80).

The quote from the classic novel *Zorba the Greek* is emblematic of a commonly held desire for a more utopian sense of life. Some UK sociologists posit that individuals have sought a more utopian lifestyle for centuries as an escape from the pressures of urban living (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). The increase of this phenomenon suggests that multiple social transformations such as globalization, individualization, flexible workplaces and mass mobility allow individuals to reflexively assess their opportunities and options by comparing one place and potential lifestyle against another.

The opening quote echoes the sentiments expressed by the pre-retiree in-migrants interviewed in this research, each of whom also sought a simpler, less complex life in contrast to the complicated web of life in a city environment. The histories and biographies of the individuals in this study provide an insight into the motivations and experiences of this cohort's in-migration from a complex city environment to a simpler pace of life in Mercury Bay on Aotearoa New Zealand's east coast. The participants' narratives provide data with which to explore their engagement with volunteer organizations. A subsequent paradox unexpectedly emerges as a result of the changing conditions that they find themselves experiencing.

This research centres on the experiences of seven pre-retirement age in-migrants aged between 47 and 65 who have moved permanently from a city environment to Mercury Bay within the last 10 years. The in-migrants' cities of origin immediately prior to in-migration are Auckland, Tauranga, Palmerston North and Wellington, although all participants have at some stage of their adult lives resided in Auckland. All seven in-migrants engage with a variety of community organizations in a voluntary capacity. The study explores the motivations for members of this cohort to

leave their city environment and in-migrate to Mercury Bay, and asks how they make sense of such a move. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:

- 1: Provide a wider understanding of the reasons this cohort in-migrates from an urban to a coastal/rural environment.
- 2: Explore the ways this cohort utilizes engagement with volunteer community organizations to become endogenous actors within their new environment.
- 3: Consider the multiple ways in which this cohort constructs new identities as a means to adjust to the change of physical and social environment.

The set of discussions which follows draws on three recurring concepts: pre-retirement life stage, in-migration and Mercury Bay. These discussions provide a background that frames this research.

### **1.1 Pre-retirement life-stage**

In a neo-liberal western context that is strongly influenced by the effects of globalization, life-stage events such as retirement no longer correlate cleanly with a specific age (Philip, Macleod, & Stockdale, 2013; Wulff, Champion, & Lobo, 2010). In view of this, age is not representative of specific chronological life events that follow a predictable linear timeline as may have been considered the social norm of the middle of the 20th century. Instead, age represents a social and cultural phenomenon that is contingent upon multiple influences. These include greater fluidity in work, mobility, economic capital and other dynamic forces (Wulff et al., 2010). Traditionally in Aotearoa New Zealand, retirement age has been considered to be age 65 which is the age individuals are eligible to receive the state funded pension. To encompass the fluidity of life-stages, 'pre-retirement' is a contemporary concept which acknowledges an emergent life-stage that occurs in response to neo-liberal conditions. This thesis deals specifically with urban to coastal/ rural shifts in residence by the 'pre-retirement' cohort; that is, people aged between 45 to 65 years.

Aotearoa New Zealand, like many other developed western nations, is experiencing the effects of an ageing population whose behaviours are markedly different to previous generations. The first of the so-called 'baby boomers' born in the period immediately following World War Two are now entering the traditional age of retirement (65 years). Because of the disruption to traditional life-stages, many younger baby boomers are also considering alternative ways to transition into older adulthood. In view of the changing character of life-stages it is important to understand the ways in which pre-retirees seek to structure their lives under contemporary conditions. One of the ways that this cohort has changed behaviours from that exhibited by previous generations is in the increase of in-migration processes that involve permanent residential relocation from the established family home (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

## **1.2 In-migration**

In-migration specifically refers to the more or less permanent relocation of an individual to a different region within a specific nation-state. Pre-retirement in-migration is becoming a more widespread phenomenon within developed countries, and the nuanced nature of this phenomenon suggests that more research is needed to understand it. More particularly, greater understanding is required of the socio-economic context of pre-retirement in-migration (Philip et al., 2013; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). Because of a lack of a coherent body of theory on this phenomenon, a plethora of terms currently exist, each of which attempt to capture the particular circumstances of migration as undertaken by the baby boomer generation. Such terms include sunshine migration, later-life migration and gerontomigration (Haas, 2012).

Wulff et al. (2010, p. 309) assert that "by identifying the greater frequency, variability and unpredictability of many household transitions, the life-course perspective raises new issues that need to be addressed in research that considers mobility among people in mid-life". Quite apparently the emerging pre-retirement life-stage that enables the possibility of in-migration mobility is not available to all people. This is because in-migration is influenced by a range of variables that may impact the ability

of the individual to access such a course of action (Moen & Flood, 2013). Economic stability, familial ties, ethnic status and social stratification are all factors that may seemingly impact the ability of an individual to re-locate to another geographical area.

One issue that can affect pre-retirement mobility and which is relevant to the current study is the 'empty-nest' effect; baby-boomer householders who are undergoing family transitions (Wulff et al., 2010). Whilst the eventual departure of children from the family home has been a social norm throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond (even though the age that children leave the family home has varied) the locations in which adult children choose to reside in has undergone changes. Whereas mobility patterns of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century suggest that adult children on the whole settled in the same geographical area as their parents, under the logics of new capitalism and the influence of the neo-liberal paradigm of independence and personal responsibility, adult children are now more likely than their 1950's counterparts to move to other geographical locations depending on employment and travel opportunities (Wulff et al., 2010).

With family ties severed by geo-spatial distances and with life-expectancies increasing, 45-65 year olds are increasingly re-thinking their options as their access to adult children and grandchildren along with attendant family responsibilities are lessened, and their expectations of quality of life and longevity are prolonged (Wulff et al., 2010). The reflexivity shown by this cohort is arguably a phenomenon that has arisen in response to contemporary conditions of flexible capitalism, globalization, loosening of familial ties and individualization (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). The pre-retirement phase is thus characterized in this thesis as a mutable and transitional period of the life-course that intersects with migration (Philip et al., 2013). Within the pre-retirement cohort there is a trend toward in-migration to amenity areas, described as areas that feature attractive climate, scenic beauty, recreational opportunities and cultural opportunities (Haas & Serow, 1993).

### 1.3 Mercury Bay

The Mercury Bay area is widely considered to be an area of high amenity value due to its accessible, white sandy beaches, its warm, settled climate and its outdoor recreational opportunities afforded by a large number of islands. It is situated in the Waikato region and is within a two to three hour drive of three large cities; Tauranga to the south, Hamilton to the west and the super city of Auckland to the north-west. The central township of Whitianga acts as a hub that services the wider area and the surrounding towns of Kuaotunu, Cooks Beach, Hahei, Hot Water Beach, Whangapoa and Matarangi. Whitianga harbour provides the base for a number of businesses that cater to the tourist industry, and the town itself has a number of café's, restaurants and bars that provide hospitality services to tourists and locals alike. Whitianga supplies most of the services and amenities that one would expect of an urban area, such as fuel, supermarkets, retail outlets, trades suppliers, restaurants, cafes, in addition to professional services such as lawyers, surveyors, accountants, and medical services. Additionally the area has a few smaller sized retail chains such as *The Warehouse*, *Bedpost* and *Placemakers*. The town also services the farming community and the marine industry which have been traditional mainstays of employment since the 1900's.

The area attracts both domestic and international tourists and is renowned for iconic beaches such as New Chum Beach, rated as one of the World's Top 20 Beaches in 2006 by the British newspaper, *The Observer* (New Zealand Tourism Guide, 2016). It is also renowned for natural phenomena such as Cathedral Cove and the geothermal hot springs at Hot Water Beach. The surrounding Great Mercury chain of islands provides the geography for a thriving tourism industry based around game-fishing, fishing, diving, sailing and sight-seeing.

The usual resident population of the Mercury Bay area stands at 7,173 as at 31 October 2013 (Thames-Coromandel District Council, 2015). Population numbers increase considerably during the summer months. For example, Whitianga township has a usual resident population of 4,368 (Profile.id, 2015). This number swells to a peak population of around 18,000 over the summer holiday period (Thames-Coromandel District Council, 2015). As a consequence, tourism and hospitality

contribute significantly to the local economy. Additionally, because of its focus on tourism, the Mercury Bay area hosts a thriving arts scene that provides cultural events, outdoor music concerts, food festivals, shows and arts entertainment.

#### **1.4 Overview of the study**

A sequence of discussions structured as chapters address the research objectives. Chapter Two reviews literature around pre-retirement in-migration with specific attention to the motivations driving in-migration and explores the state of knowledge around that phenomenon. Included also in this review is a survey of literature that analyses the negative influences of metropolitan living which, when contrasted with the coastal/rural idyll of a less complex life, can act as motivation to undertake a permanent residential change. Richard Sennett's works on late capitalism and its effects on social coherence characterize the best of that literature. The review also considers research on the impacts and benefits of volunteering. In particular I review notions of 'sense of community' and 'embeddedness' as associated with the act of volunteering. The literature pertaining to volunteering provides insight into the conditions and motivations of those who volunteer and also into the intersection of the volunteer sector with the social dynamic of migration. Following on from this, the discussion reviews Bourdieu's taxonomy of capitals with particular focus on social, symbolic and cultural forms of capital and on the interaction of these capitals with Bourdieu's theory of habitus.

Chapter Three discusses the epistemological and ontological underpinnings that frame the research methodology employed in this study. The rationale for using qualitative research is presented, along with an explanation of the constructivist paradigm that guides this research. In this discussion the rationale and methodology that guided the selection of participants is explained. The ethical considerations of the research are discussed and the structure of the interviews and the reasons behind the particular structure that was employed are outlined. Following on from this the specific steps utilized to develop a thematic framework are described.

Chapters Four and Five canvass the themes that emerge from the interview data. The themes are “Change: Push factors” and “Change: Pull factors”. Contained within these chapter titles are a set of sub-themes. Push factors relate to reasons why pre-retirement in-migrants leave their source locations. These factors are workplace stress, urban pressures, financial considerations and isolation. Pull factors provide reasons as to why this cohort chooses to move to Mercury Bay and include the sub-themes of environment, transition retirement, sense of community, perceived opportunity and the chance to ‘make a difference’.

Chapters Six and Seven evaluate the themes and sub-themes emerging in the research findings. Chapter Six concentrates on the development of attachment to place. The findings from the interview data focus on how pre-retirement in-migrants utilize the mechanism of narrative to develop forms of social and cultural capital that help embed them in their new communities. This chapter also considers how pre-retirement in-migrants use narrative of place as a justificatory frame of reference in their relationships with friends, family and colleagues in their source locations. Chapter Seven addresses the notion of identity and discusses the multiple and contingent ways that in-migrants construct identity in their new location. This includes the differences between holiday-makers’ identities and residents’ identities and the importance of external validation in identity-making processes.

The final discussion chapter, Chapter Eight, considers the emergence of an unexpected paradox in the research participants’ attempt to reproduce in their new situations the socio-economic conditions from which they sought escape. The paradox is demonstrated in the development of a new, *adjusted* habitus. This is a habitus through which participants aim to achieve a state of community embeddedness through development of local social capital via engagement with volunteer groups. However, their existing workplace habitus with its impetus towards efficiency, rationality and transparency conflicts with social capital imperatives as volunteer groups strive to cope with changing structural and regulatory demands. This chapter considers these structural changes within community volunteer groups, along with new conditions of compliance and regulatory matters and the availability of volunteers under changing conditions.

Chapter Nine provides the concluding statements that draw together the main themes and outcomes of the research. This chapter contains a theoretical analysis of the paradox using Fredric Jameson's insights into the contemporary forms now taken by dialectical thought (Jameson, 2009). The chapter also suggests additional areas of research to further understand the subject of in-migration from cities to small-town coastal localities.

## **1.5 Chapter One: Conclusion**

This introductory chapter outlined three recurring concepts that provide background information for this thesis. These concepts are pre-retirement life-stage, in-migration and Mercury Bay. Additionally the chapter described the framework of chapters that provide a coherent structure to this research. Chapter Two, the following chapter, contains a review of the relevant literature that informs this research and considers pre-retirement in-migration, volunteering, differences between city and coastal/rural constructions, sense-making and habitus in conjunction with social, cultural and symbolic capital.

## **Chapter Two: Relevant Literature: A critical summary**

The review of literature constructs a referent framework for this research. The range of literature reviewed explains key concepts and outlines the existing body of knowledge in the field. Firstly, the key findings of relevant literature in regard to pre-retirees who are also in-migrants is summarized. Secondly, the review explores the concept of volunteering and examines the literature's contribution to knowledge about contextual influences and motivations for volunteering. Thirdly, the chapter considers issues surrounding in-migration and the contrasts of urban city life to rural town life. Fourthly, the importance of sense-making is explored. Finally, consideration of Bourdieu's work on habitus and the acculturation of in-migrants into their new locations is undertaken. The discussion on habitus links to Bourdieu's taxonomy of capitals with particular reference to social capital and the closely related concepts of cultural and symbolic capital. Social capital has generated a large volume of academic attention and in view of this its various definitions, the problems of measurement to which it gives rise and the applicability to this research is considered.

### **2.1 Pre-retirement In-migration**

The term 'in-migration' describes the permanent relocation of a person from one location to another within the geographical boundaries of a particular country. In-migration can be thought of as *intra*-national migration. In-migration is distinct from 'immigration' which specifically refers to people who resettle in a different country to their birth country and is sometimes also referred to as *trans-* or *inter*-national migration.

The term 'pre-retirement' is a contemporary concept which acknowledges an emergent life-stage that occurs in response to neo-liberal conditions of reflexivity and individualism. This life-stage allows for greater fluidity between behaviours previously observed within distinct life phases (Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). Stockdale and MacLeod (2013) argue that pre-retirement heralds a fluid mid-life life stage that is characterized by changing attitudes to work, residential preferences and lifestyle that

precedes an abrupt shift from employment to retirement. Other researchers describe this fluid life-stage as the encore years or the third age (Moen & Flood, 2013). The encore years refer to a period beyond a career building phase, but before full retirement from the paid workforce. Within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the age of 65 has traditionally been assumed to be the age of retirement from the paid workforce as this is currently the age that citizens are eligible to apply for the state-funded pension. Despite the structural demarcation imposed by the eligibility criteria for state-funded pensions, under contemporary conditions of flexible capitalism, individualism and enhanced opportunities for mobility, many individuals consider retirement options with a less rigidly linear timeline and construct transitional strategies to segue into full retirement (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

This emergent pre-retirement life-stage and the relationship it holds with in-migration remain under-researched in academic literature. Because of a lack of a coherent and targeted body of research, the age boundaries and terms used to describe this phenomenon remain largely undefined (Haas, 2012; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013; Wulff et al., 2010). Given that pre-retirement migration is likely to become more prevalent due to the baby-boomer cohort entering this fluid life-stage, robust attention to empirical and theoretical understandings of this phenomenon is required in order that insight might be gained into the motivations, movements and impacts of pre-retirement in-migration (Haas, 2012; Serow, 2003).

Within the bounds of this research, pre-retirement refers to people aged between 45 and 65. This cohort is frequently referred to as 'baby boomers'; a term which recognises the increase of births in the period immediately following World War Two and up until the early 1970's (Pool, 2012). The baby boomer cohort differs from following generational cohorts because they are entering a life-stage where individuals on the whole have the health and opportunity to explore opportunities for life and leisure within paid work, through volunteering or through other forms of helping (Moen & Flood, 2013; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013).

In times of significant change such as that which arguably the contemporary western world is now experiencing, generational tensions and issues will become more prominent (McCleod & Thomson, 2009). Using the conceptual framework of Pierre

Bourdieu, the current research notes that the habitus exhibited by the baby boomer cohort is generationally specific yet is simultaneously bound to and affected by intergenerational trends (McCleod & Thomson, 2009). Participants in the current research demonstrate inter-generational differences that are experienced as loosened familial ties which allow in-migration in a way that was not as easily accessible for the previous generation. This temporal view of generational tensions may be articulated differently according to the context in which it is played out. It is afforded and enabled by the specific socio-economic, historical and geographical context the participants find themselves in. It is therefore evident that the current in-migration trends experienced by the pre-retirement cohort and their relationship to an emergent life-stage of pre-retirement behaviours as described by Stockdale and MacLeod (2013) are temporally and spatially specific to the milieu in which they occur.

In-migration is a complex phenomenon which is subject to many contextual influences; there is not 'one size that fits all'. This thesis, like other similar studies - most notably Stockdale and MacLeod (2013) - questions the long-held assumption that in-migration predominantly occurs at a retirement (rather than an emergent pre-retirement) stage. Settlement patterns observed in affluent members of the pre-retirement cohort tend to differ from those at earlier life-stages (Casado-Diaz, Casado-Diaz, & Casado-Diaz, 2014; Philip et al., 2013; Serow, 2003). Despite generational differences in migration patterns, it would be fallacious to assume that the pre-retirement cohort act as a unified body with the same influences and drivers that cause in-migration in general. However, notwithstanding diversity amongst this group, a common theme emerges in relation to the motivations for in-migration; that is the pursuit of a perceived better lifestyle (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). Moreover, migrants' narratives are routinely presented as an avenue to a more fulfilled, meaningful life that is compared and contrasted to the migrants' previous lives in their source location (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

Walters (2000) provides a generalized model to capture the specific qualities of in-migration. One aspect of this model that has strong resonance with the current research is termed "amenity migration" which is described as having "a distinct spatial pattern that suggests a search for climate and leisure amenities" (Walters,

2000, p. 129). A similar concept termed “lifestyle migration” is proposed by British authors, Benson and O’Reilly. These authors discuss spatial migration by individuals who migrate to areas that are “meaningful because, for various reasons, they offer the potential of a better quality of life” (Benson & O’Reilly, 2009, p. 2).

Amenity migration tends to attract in-migrants with a relatively comfortable economic status and good health (Walters, 2000). Within a contemporary western context, the in-migration of pre-retirees is frequently driven by a desire to access non-economic benefits that include features such as geographical and environmental resources, climate and leisure activities (Brehm, Eisenhauer, & Krannich, 2004; Haas & Serow, 1993; Walters, 2000). Collectively, these non-economic benefits contribute to a sense of community attachment. Community attachment can be defined as an emotional investment in a specific locality (Hummon, 1992, as cited in Brehm et al., 2004).

Amenity migration of pre-retirees has two sides: the experience of the in-migrants and the impact on the receiving community. From the perspective of the receiving community Stockdale and MacLeod (2013) question whether rural in-migration is a wholly beneficial phenomenon. Rapid influxes of new residents (such as that experienced by Mercury Bay over the last decade) can lead to a sense of social instability. This phenomenon is called “migration turbulence” (Gurran & Blakely, 2007, p. 125). In an Aotearoa New Zealand context, Freeman and Cheyne (2008) note concerns about inequality, displacement and the imposition of ‘city’ values that are at odds with the rural nature of the receiving locale. The transfer of reproduced city values into a new coastal/rural context is an issue that is considered in relation to the participants’ narratives in this thesis and is implicated in the paradox that emerges in participants’ responses to structural and regulatory changes in the field of volunteering.

A concern over value transference and the resulting social friction is echoed by Bosworth and Willett (2011) whose analysis of two different English rural areas found unequal benefits accrued to the recipient communities. They note that embeddedness is not a feature of a rural community *per se*. It is a process that is contingent upon “the significance of the attitudes of the actors, their rationales for

engagement and the spaces in which this can occur” (Bosworth & Willett, 2011, p. 210). This suggests a strong trend towards individualisation within the dynamic of pre-retirement in-migration. Underscoring this finding are structural, historical and societal influences that contribute to shaping this behaviour into discernible patterns of in-migration. Bosworth and Willett (2011) emphasize the contextual influences upon the success or otherwise of in-migration. The individualisation of the pre-retirement life-stage most certainly has influence, but so too does the proliferation of new communication technologies, economic stability and the accessibility of destinations which are all noted as strong reasons for migration decisions (Haas, 2012).

## **2.2 Volunteering**

Contemporary western society is characterized by issues of declining employment and a reducing public sector service (Stebbins, 2004). The rise of the so-called ‘third sector’, or volunteer sector, is one response to the decline of employment. In order to understand this phenomenon the volunteer sector is increasingly subject to further scrutiny (Stebbins, 2004). The expansion of the volunteer sector provides an opportunity to focus a critical lens on the conditions of late capitalism. For example, Stebbins (2004) suggests that past conceptions of volunteering may not be applicable in today's fast-paced world of change where the cultural norm of the work ethic is evolving to include a multi-activity conceptualisation where house, family, club and voluntary work are valued alongside paid work.

Volunteerism has tended to be explained in terms that are abstracted from socio-cultural particularities. Volunteerism has been described as “ongoing, planned, and discretionary prosocial behaviour that benefits non-intimate others and offers little or no tangible reward” (Finkelstein, 2009, p. 653). This definition of volunteering is culturally specific. For example, Māori and Pacific island cultures tend to volunteer in informal ways and form social connections that are not easily captured by Finkelstein's definition. Moreover, Māori volunteering tends to take place in a *whanau* (family) or *iwi* (extended kinship relations) context, and is considered sharing, not volunteering (Robinson & Williams, 2001). Because of the familial

connections and the overall structure of Māori societal norms, Māori volunteering is generally obligation-based and therefore falls outside of Finkelstein's definition. With apparent potential to address this issue, Seaman (2012) provides alternative definitions of volunteering that includes two forms of volunteering termed 'formal' and 'informal'. Formal volunteering relates to services provided to a public organization, whereas informal volunteering refers to volunteer work that is usually spontaneous and generally privately organized such as family care or care of relatives or friends. Whilst Māori forms of volunteering are still on the periphery of Seaman's definition, they are somewhat more akin to informal volunteering in that Seaman (2012) takes account of familial relationships and implicitly the obligations contained therein.

The impact of contextual effects on volunteering are described in terms of the impact of regional and community characteristics on individuals' decisions to volunteer. Stebbins and Graham (2004) consider a number of different perspectives in their international assessment of volunteering. These perspectives include rural and urban differences, pressure on volunteers, professionalism of volunteer organizations and paths to volunteer commitment. Stebbins and Graham's work provides insightful commentary on the motivations for volunteerism from a number of situated contexts across the globe and indicate that the reasons people volunteer are diverse, multiple and contingent.

Small town residents value the solidarity and reciprocity that volunteering brings while urban dwellers value self-development opportunities and human capital benefits in the form of new skills and attributes that inhere within the individual who volunteers (Wilson, 2000). Plainly put, small town dwellers seek social capital from volunteering whilst urban dwellers value human capital benefits. This clear difference between small town and large urban contexts has relevance to this research due to the specificity of source location in the participant criteria. Within the context of the current research, participant eligibility stipulates that participants must come from a city environment prior to their move to Mercury Bay.

In terms of context, this specificity allows a comparison between urban and coastal/rural locations. It also allows a dimension of globalization versus localism to be considered. Arguably cities such as Auckland are moving towards a global city

model (J. Lin & Mele, 2013; Sassen, 1991). This stands in contrast to Mercury Bay which, while adapting to significant growth in both spatial and demographic dimensions, is simultaneously an area which has a history of community-based initiatives and is a town that prides itself on community involvement and voluntarism.

Hank and Erlinghagen (2009) suggest that volunteering is a meaningful activity for the pre-retirement cohort. These authors discuss the dual influence of life course and social context as determinants of volunteerism. Furthermore, research by Carpenter and Myers (2010) and Finkelstein (2009) has found that volunteer motivations are positively linked with altruism as well as social status. Stebbins (2004) argues that the twin motivations of altruism and self-interest are evident in all forms of volunteering (serious, casual and project-based) and rather than being separate and distinct motivations, they are intrinsically tied together.

The view that altruism and self-interest are linked is supported by Graham (2004) whose research expands the relationship between altruism and self-interest to suggest that altruism is also connected with value-laden notions of respectability. Altruism acts to improve one's social status which in turn increases one's cultural capital, thus tying self-interest to altruism through the mechanism of social status. This thesis investigates how in-migrants who are attempting to become embedded in their new community consider how the receiving community perceives them. Local perception is an important factor in being accepted into the social groups of the new environment. Thus altruism and social standing are interlinked. The link between altruism and self-interest may be played out according to different contextual effects, such as urban versus coastal or rural environments.

### **2.3 City versus coastal/rural**

According to Sassen (1991) global cities are a distinct feature of a globalized economy that supersedes the structural hegemony of nation states. Whilst Sassen focusses her analyses on the cities of London, New York and Tokyo, the logics of global cities can apply to other sites of globally integrated economic activity (J. Lin & Mele, 2013). Sassen (1991) asserts that global cities, despite their diverse histories

have more in common with each other than with their geographical locations. The commonality between global cities is noted through certain key features; they have distinctly recognisable features. Global cities are sites of international monetary businesses that aid the mobility of capital and allow the growth of specialized international firms that act as production sites and marketplaces. The function of these specialized workplaces is to enhance and service the flow of international finance or other forms of capital (J. Lin & Mele, 2013).

Arguably the city of Auckland, whilst not in itself a 'global city', shares the attributes of Sassen's global city model in that it is dislocated from other cities within the same national borders. The separation of cities such as Auckland from their geographical and historical roots exacerbates the fundamental differences between rural and urban socio-spatial constructions. Sassen (1991) asserts that the spatial expression of global cities results in states of hyper-density and an agglomeration of centralised functions and population. As Sennett (2000) has argued toward this same end, high density environments and the logics of flexible capitalism result in a citizenry that is dissociated and indifferent to others. This thesis explores the extent to which pre-retirement aged people seek to re-establish human connections and sense of community as a consequence of these attributes having been eroded in the urban environments of late capitalism. One way this is achieved is by in-migrating to a rural area where socio-spatial constructions of connection can be realized.

A common theme cited as motivation for in-migration is the desire to mitigate the negative effects associated with the complex interplay of flexible capitalism, urbanization and globalization in the pre-retiree's source location (Bae & Chow, 2014; Gurran & Blakely, 2007; Haas & Serow, 1993; Philip et al., 2013; Sennett, 2000). Sennett (2000) examines the effects of flexible capitalism on urban life and asserts that the contemporary field of work has dissociated people and led to a sense of impermanence and detachment. Sennett describes flexible capitalism as a bureaucratic reformulation of the contemporary workplace that effectively de-layers organizations, substitutes information technologies for bureaucrats, and eliminates fixed function tasks. This contemporary iteration of the workplace stands in contrast with previous forms of capitalism based on 19<sup>th</sup> century Weberian principles of hierarchy that evolved into Fordism. Flexible capitalism replaces fixed function tasks

with short term specific goals. Short term specific goals are considered necessary for a flexible, responsive workplace and such goals have the advantage of being able to be achieved by short term workers, who are then easily shed by management structures and employment laws that cater to the logics of capital accumulation. This feature of flexible capitalism allows businesses to avoid labour costs associated with long term employees. Sennett indicates, in this regard, that “modern management theory argues that the ‘shelf-life’ of a team ought to be a year at most” (Sennett, 2000, p. 26).

Flexible capitalism has resulted in a more complex class structure as inequalities have increased (Standing, 2011). Standing asserts that flexible capitalism has created a new class which he terms ‘the Precariat’, although this group does not conform to historical definitions of class in that the group encompasses a heterogeneous mix of socio-economic status. One of the ways that the Precariat is defined is by their having a precarious income due to employment insecurity (Standing, 2011). Partialization of the job market is a major contributor to employment security, and this takes many forms. For example, independent contractors who are employed for specific task-work easily slip into the category of Precariat. Independent contractors range from tradesmen such as electricians and carpenters, through to lawyers, accountants and other professionals who are contracted for specific, short-term projects.

The social costs of the partialization of the job market have wide-ranging impacts on society. For workers, flexible capitalism erodes a sense of stability or predictability. Consequently moral reciprocity, trust and loyalty are jeopardised (Standing, 2011). Sennett also argues that the social outcome of flexible capitalism breeds a lack of fraternity and loyalty and increases feelings of superficiality and disengaged relations in the geo-social field of the city environment (Sennett, 1998, 2000, 2006). This is exacerbated by three distinct yet related features of the contemporary city. Firstly, social relations are affected by an erosion of attachment to place caused by geographic mobility as workers adapt to partial and impermanent work opportunities. Sennett argues that, prior to the advent of flexible capitalist work place practices, loyalty to the company was rewarded with job stability. Previously, even roles that had high geographical mobility, such as middle and senior executive positions,

retained the security of longevity of employment through the parent company. Under the logics of flexible capitalism these middle and senior executives no longer have the parent corporation to rely on as an anchor. Middle and higher management positions, like lower paid positions, are now also experienced under the task-specific mantra of flexible capitalism that places their positions as a long term prospect in jeopardy. The threat of job loss through corporate takeover, through mergers or restructuring, affects all workers from the factory floor to through to the chief executive officer.

Secondly, Sennett argues that flexible capitalism is reflected in the physical environment. Office architecture is increasingly becoming uniformly bland, standardized and transparent to cater for the increasing mobility of businesses due to restructuring, merger and other processes that impact upon location. This ensures office spaces are capable of instant reconfiguration for changing tenants. Moreover, the standardization that affects the built environment of the workplace is replicated in public consumption trends that are evident in the developed world. Global chains of retail shops selling identical commodities inhabit identical spaces in standardized shopping malls that are replicated and recognizable across the globe. These public spaces dedicated to consumption are divorced from their cultural location. As a result they are more or less indistinguishable from one another regardless of location, be that Auckland, Sydney, Manila, Los Angeles or any number of other cities. Sennett asserts that this trend toward uniformity results in neutral public spaces that blur diversity and dispel attachment, resulting in indifference.

Finally, on the level of an individual's experience, Sennett (2000, p. 27) contends that "highly pressured flexible work profoundly disorients family life" in such a way that the new social rules of the working environment (that nullify commitment, involvement and long-term relationships) are perceived as a very real threat to family solidarity. One way in which this tension is played out is in the withdrawal of adults from civic engagement in order for them to be able to allocate precious resources of time and energy to family life. This withdrawal from civic life produces a disorienting effect on individuals that compounds workplace stress because the resulting discord between workplace and personal values spills over into every aspect of personal, social and civic life (Sennett, 1998, 2000).

Community attachment is heavily reliant on the relationship between the attachment to place and the formation of social connections. Brehm et al. (2004) found that recent in-migrants express a greater attachment to natural environmental features than to the social community life with which they are beginning to integrate. On the other hand longer-term migrants exhibit concurrent attachment to both environmental and social factors. Attachment to place seemingly takes on more significance in the absence of social ties. As individuals develop more enduring social connections, attachment to place remains strong but is balanced by a stronger social dimension.

Negative experiences with urbanization can act as a strong 'push' factor in migration patterns from urban areas to areas of high amenity attraction in the 45-65 year old cohort. In a UK context, research suggests that 'counter-urbanization' becomes a stronger trend in those aged 55-64 than earlier age cohorts (Philip et al., 2013). Bae and Chow (2014) suggest living and housing costs are indicated as motivating factors in amenity migration in retirees across Hong Kong and Southern China. Some New Zealand researchers have provided evidence that much in-migration to coastal amenity areas in Aotearoa New Zealand is driven by price differentials between cities and coastal areas and by neo-liberal processes of consumption and socio-spatial constructions (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008). Socio-spatial construction refers to the commodification of space as a result of gentrification where "positive conceptualizations of lifestyle" amongst in-migrants supplant the culture and tenure of the locally based working class (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008, p. 36). A similar pattern is observed in Australian in-migration from metropolitan areas to coastal areas (Gurran & Blakely, 2007).

Freeman and Cheyne (2008) provide insight into coastal in-migration in a New Zealand context. These authors suggested that narratives of consumption are linked to socio-spatial values. For example the relationship between the cities of Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga and surrounding high-value amenity regions such as Mercury Bay are influenced by housing differentials because the capital gain made on selling property in a high market and purchasing in a less expensive market allows individuals to access a more financially secure older adulthood. As an exemplar, Auckland is the largest city in Aotearoa New Zealand with a usually-

resident population of 1.42 million according to the 2013 Census (Statistics NZ, 2014). This represents an 8% growth or an additional 110,000 people since the 2006 Census (Statistics NZ, 2014). Auckland's growth represents the largest growth in numerical terms in the country. One impact of this reflects in house prices as availability of housing becomes difficult to access. For example Auckland has seen house prices for three bedroom homes increase 78% in the ten year period from 2003 to 2013 (Barfoot & Thompson, 2015). The median house price in Auckland as at June 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 was \$874,851 (Quotable Value Ltd, 2015). Contrasted with the Auckland housing market, housing prices in the Mercury Bay Area have remained relatively static with the median house price as at June 1<sup>st</sup> 2015 being a little under half that of Auckland at \$436,500 (Quotable Value Ltd, 2015).

## **2.4 Sense-making**

This research presupposes that pre-retirement in-migrants are partially motivated by searches for meaning in their lives. This supposition is supported by Benson and O'Reilly who assert that "personal identity is entwined with the process of place-making" (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009, p. 34). This is particularly so in view of the fact that in-migration (as opposed to some other forms of migration such as displacement due to war, hunger or political situations) is a conscious and deliberated choice. In-migration can be considered aspirational because it offers promise of an opportunity to erase past mistakes, institute new practices, modify one's identity and change the trajectory of one's life (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009).

Gomez-Estern and de la Mata Benitez (2013) argue that affiliation to cultural groups is understood in personal ways. These authors investigate sense-making and identity construction through narratives of personal and cultural constructions. They assert that narrative provides a temporal bridge between past and present, functioning as a sense-making tool to navigate a life event; namely that of in-migration (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013). In this way, in-migrants are able to make sense of both their past and their present by adjusting their understanding of past experiences to present conditions. Warriner (2013) also considers temporal dimensions in migratory experience and notes that temporal elasticity is a feature of migratory narratives as individuals blur linear timelines of

events to construct and re-construct events. This enables migrants to make sense of past actions, current actions and future intentions.

Volunteering can also contribute to the process of sense-making. The importance of a meaningful life is central to the relationship between meaning in life and volunteerism in older adults (Sherman, Michel, Rybak, Randall, & Davidson, 2011). Sherman et al. (2011, p. 78) define meaning in life as a state “of relatedness, significance and fulfilment”. These authors suggest that key components in the formulation of meaningful life are the setting of goals and the performing of actions that are congruent with one’s values. Their findings suggest that older adults who volunteer experience higher life satisfaction, well-being, and reduced depressive symptoms. The authors claim that volunteering provides a mechanism to make sense of role loss in later adult life and contributes to a sense of meaning and fulfilment. Volunteering also provides opportunities for individuals to develop stocks of social, cultural and symbolic capital.

## **2.5 Habitus and the Capitals: Social, cultural and symbolic**

*Habitus* is a key concept that is utilized in this thesis to frame understanding of in-migrants’ experiences of change. According to Bourdieu (1997) habitus is a product of history. Moreover, it is the embodied history internalised in the individual so that it becomes like a second nature and seems natural. Habitus is functional not only because it is the embodiment of human conduct shaped by familiarity and history, but it is also cumulative and generative in new contexts (Noble, 2013). The dynamic nature of habitus is implicated in the acquisition of all forms of capital. For example, Prieto, Sagafi-nejad, and Janamanchi (2013) examine acculturation as a consequence of the systemic transformation of habitus and capitals. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and capitals they found that acculturation occurred as a result of “thinking, actions and outcomes taking place in an asymmetrical dialogical space” (Prieto et al., 2013, p. 203). Individuals who were less able to attune their habitus and collate capitals had a more negative experience as they adjusted to their new environment. This work illuminates the complex links

between social practice and acculturation which has relevance to queries around developing an endogenous identity in a new environment.

Bourdieu introduces the forms of capital as “something other than simple games of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 46). He asserts that capital is an integral part of the structure of the social world. This applies to all the forms of capital, not just the easily visible forms of capital such as economic capital. According to Bourdieu (1997) the neo-liberal tenet of reducing everything to mercantile exchange paradoxically implicitly defines other forms of capital. This notion has particular relevance to the current research as pre-retirement in-migrants seek to establish new networks in their new locale and thus must work to establish stocks of some or all of the capitals. Bourdieu is emphatic that “it is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world” without taking account of *all the forms of capital* (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 46). Bourdieu’s interpretation of social capital is particularly relevant to the current study as he asserts that all of the capitals (economic, cultural, symbolic, human and social) are interchangeable. The convertibility of capitals is important for in-migrants in this study as they negotiate the complexities of in-migration and the subsequent embedding in their new community.

The theoretical concept of social capital was largely developed by the eminent French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, and later popularized by American commentator Robert Putnam. Despite bearing the same name, social capital is theorized quite differently by Bourdieu and Putnam; that is, whether the profit or benefit of social capital is assigned at the collective or at the individual level (Davidson, 2005; N. Lin, 2001; Portes, 2000). This thesis follows Bourdieu’s concept of social capital (and other capitals) as inhering within the individual, thus being able to be utilized as a resource for the actor’s own benefit.

Bourdieu’s analysis is specifically targeted at the individual level and suggests that group benefits accrue to individuals who are able to deliberately employ the resources held collectively in their social networks (Portes, 2000). Bourdieu describes social capital as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition - or in other words, to membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 51).

Moreover, the analysis of social capital at the individual level is clearly indicated by Bourdieu when he insists that social capital is a phenomenon on which individual effort needs be expended. He calls this “an endless effort at institutionalism.... an unceasing effort of sociability” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 57).

Falk and Kilpatrick (2000) suggest that social capital is a ‘project’ that requires the investment of time and energy. These authors assert that social capital is a resource built in learning interactions, which can be stored and drawn on. Ergo, it can also be depleted (Coleman, 1990, as cited in Falk & Kilpatrick, 2000). This provides a distinctly individualistic understanding of social capital at the micro-level. More pointedly Falk and Kilpatrick (2000, p. 93) assert that:

Social capital resources may be detected at the micro level only when they are used. The methodological focus therefore must be on the point at which social capital is presumed to be created and displayed, namely in interactions between people.

Portes (2000) notes that attempts to address theoretical inconsistencies results in attempts to empirically measure social capital. As a result, much thinking about social capital has been developed in a broad fashion from large scale surveys that do not necessarily reflect the lived experience of individuals in communities (Campbell & Gillies, 2001; Kirkby-Geddes, King, & Bravington, 2013). Typically research into social capital has taken the form of quantitative research to provide a statistical overview. Issues with measurement, analysis and definition of social capital are widely debated in academic literature (Baum, 1999; Portes, 2000).

A level of consensus exists across all discussions of social capital that the term incorporates dimensions of social and civic trust, the existence of thick and thin connections, or bridging and bonding forms, types of networks, and the mutual benefit associated with these factors (Baum, 1999; Coleman, 1997; Putnam, 2000). Despite these similarities, or possibly *because* of these similarities, the public appeal of such features in the concept leads to the risk that social capital can be used uncritically and all but ignores the elemental ideological and theoretical implications inherent in the concept (Baum, 1999). This implies a theoretical danger in which the relationship between the capitals is overlooked.

The uncritical use and lack of academic rigour surrounding social capital may be related to the subjective dimensions of social capital involving trust and cooperation. These aspects make quantifying social capital a problematic task. Some authors suggest that the utility of social capital lies in its potential as a heuristic tool for thinking with, rather than a measurement device (Davidson, 2005; N. Lin, 2001). Bourdieu himself suggested that theoretical concepts should be “supple and adaptive” rather than “defined, calibrated and used rigidly” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 4). This research therefore will take a heuristic reading of social capital largely drawing from Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of social capital as inhering within an individual and does not attempt to quantify social capital (or any of the capitals) in any way.

Robert Putnam’s famous work on social capital in America is entitled *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2000). This work situates social capital at the level of the collective (Davidson, 2005; N. Lin, 2001; Portes, 2000). Putnam is generally credited with popularising social capital and its uptake as a theoretical underpinning of social policy. The utilization of social capital as a policy tool is made attractive by its appeal as a ‘stock’ that exists in communities, states and nations and has consequent impacts on development (Portes, 2000). Criticism of Putnam’s collectivist notion of social capital is directed at the lack of theoretical robustness. These concerns centre on the tautological reasoning suggested at the collective level whereby the asserted cause and the subsequent effect of social capital lack distinct separation (Davidson, 2005; Portes, 2000). The cause and effect object is theorized as dimensions of trust.

Despite issues with Putnam's theoretical understanding of social capital, his conceptualization of bridging and bonding forms of social capital provide a tool for thinking about the narratives of pre-retirement in-migrants' sense-making in their engagement with volunteer organizations. Cederberg (2012) investigates migrant networks and the notion of social capital from a Bourdieuan perspective but also ties in the concept of bonding social capital. She notes that social capital can be exclusionary in the sense that some individuals have access to a social network and some do not; the availability of which is contingent on a number of related factors such as education, class, cultural capital or symbolic capital in the form of status.

Following Putnam, Granovetter's (1973) seminal work titled *The strength of weak ties* explores the idea that analysis of individual ties (micro-analysis) can provide a bridge into macro phenomena such as social organisation or political networks. This notion is expressed succinctly in his claim that weak ties are "seen as indispensable to individuals' opportunities and to their integration into communities; strong ties, breeding local cohesion, lead to overall fragmentation" (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1378). Weak ties are connected with bridging social capital and strong ties with bonding social capital. This conceptualization of social capital suggests that an individual's chance of accessing group resources is enhanced by that individual exploring contacts through their weak ties rather than strong ones (N. Lin, 2001). Moreover, N. Lin (2001) asserts that utilizing one's weak ties allows an individual access to other social circles that may otherwise be inaccessible. In this way weak ties act as a 'bridge' to wider social interaction. The theoretical concepts of bridging and bonding social capital are utilized in this research as a tool for thinking about the ways that in-migrants access local resources in their new locality.

In a similar vein Casado-Diaz et al. (2014) assert that migrating retirees maintain their existing social capital through friends and relatives from their source location with whom they maintain links, and then create new social capital by establishing new social contacts in their new locale. Although Casado-Diaz et al. (2014) situate their research in a trans-migrational field rather than an in-migrational context, the concepts of retained relationships in the source location and new relationships in the receiving community remain an important consideration for the current research.

On the whole, research into social capital has derived mainly from American, British and European studies (Kirkby-Geddes et al., 2013; Tzanakis, 2013). In a New Zealand context Sengupta, Luyten, Greaves, Osborne, Robertson, Armstrong, and Sibley (2013) investigate social capital as a sense of belongingness. Sengupta et al. (2013) report a number of influences that affect levels of social capital such as affluence, marital status, age and gender. These factors may influence the willingness or availability of people to engage with volunteer organizations. Of particular pertinence to this research is their assertion that variables such as affluence and age do not affect sense of community. However this finding is not universal. For example, McNamara and Gonzales (2011) claim that age, marital status, paid workforce and other caregiving roles have a complex but important influence amongst older adults' volunteering rate.

Cultural capital is acquired over time and can exist in three forms; embodied, objectified and institutionalized (Bourdieu, 1997). Cultural capital in its embodied state is a fundamental concern in this thesis. Cultural capital in its embodied state presupposes that it is acquired through work on oneself, and that this investment in time and labour inheres *within* the individual. Bourdieu terms this work "self-improvement" and asserts that because the acquisition and transmission of cultural capital is somewhat more difficult to observe than that of economic cultural, it can function as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 48). In support of this idea, he states "symbolic capital is nothing other than economic or cultural capital when it is known or recognized" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 21). In other words, cultural capital is the ability to access and utilize the cultural products of society and symbolic capital refers to one's ability to use and impose one's own definitions of a particular phenomenon on other field participants (De Clercq & Voronov, 2009).

Symbolic capital grants the power of recognition. Those who have sufficient recognition have a constitutive power to "make things with words" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Arguably then, cultural and symbolic capital are both explicitly linked to power (De Clercq & Voronov, 2009). This theoretical understanding has deep implications when considering the behaviours of pre-retirement in-migrants who are struggling to adjust their habitus in order to create a new identity in a new location.

## **2.6 Chapter Two: Conclusion**

This chapter explored the relevant literature that informs this research. Firstly consideration of the contemporary life stage of the pre-retirement cohort and the links to in-migration are explored. The influences on in-migration such as life-stage, generational tensions, loosened familial ties, amenity migration and value transference were discussed. Secondly the chapter explored the literature pertaining to volunteering and considered cultural values, contextual influences, and motivations including altruism and self-interest. Thirdly the chapter noted differences in socio-spatial constructions of cities and coastal/rural areas. This section covered the global city model, work pressures associated with the rise of flexible capitalism, attachment to place, negative urban experiences and narratives of consumption that are impacted by disparities in house values between Auckland and Mercury Bay.

Fourthly the literature on sense-making through identity construction that is shaped by personal narratives and cultural or group narratives was canvassed along with the temporal elasticity employed by in-migrants to make sense of their migration as they range between the past and the present. Additionally the literature on sense making through the lens of narratives employed to create a meaningful life was considered. The final section reviewed different forms of capital. This included a review of the academic disjuncture between Putnam and Bourdieu's notion of social capital and problems with measurement of social capital. Bridging capital and bonding capital were considered and the discussion presented Granovetter's theory of weak ties in relation to bridging capital. Finally Bourdieu's theory of capitals was discussed with particular focus on social, cultural, symbolic capital and the relationship of the capitals with habitus. The following chapter addresses the research methodology in detail, including the research question, epistemological framework, research design, sample and data collection methods.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

This chapter provides the rationale that informed the design of this research. It identifies the influence of the research purpose and research questions upon the design. Details of the epistemological assumptions framing the study, the research strategy, the research design, data collection and analytical procedures are canvassed. Additionally, this chapter outlines a set of ethical concerns raised by the design and the discussed ways in which I address them.

### **3.1. The research question**

This research is driven by three main areas of scholarly interest. Firstly, the multiple and contingent ways in which people construct identity is relevant to this research as the act of in-migration necessitates a re-thinking and a reformulation of personal identity within the context of a new residential environment. Secondly the emblem of 'community' is investigated in this thesis as an increasingly important institution that is valued by some individuals as a counterpoise to the growing reach of globalization, changing workplace environments under a flexible capitalist structure and the neo-liberal condition of individualisation. Thirdly, consideration is given to how the migration of people from urban cityscapes to rural towns affects both the incoming migrants and the receiving community and how the cusp between new forms of connection and continuing forms of disconnection creates a shift in society that impacts the social structure.

Sennett (1997) claims that attachment to place is becoming increasingly important as individuals struggle to make sense of an ever increasingly unstable job market that undermines traditional notions of security, stability and loyalty that were once tenets of job security. In his insightful article *Cities without care or connection* Sennett (2000) expands this notion to suggest that contemporary conditions of new capitalism (characterized as a global workplace characterized by a short-term, task-oriented labour) has resulted in a crisis of social bonds. This kind of flexible capitalism impoverishes the value of work and creates superficial and disengaged relations in the workplace. Moreover it reproduces the same disengaged effect in

citizens (Sennett, 2006). Sennett argues that as work has become an unreliable yardstick for traditional values of worth, life-long narrative and loyalty ties, a shift has occurred whereby individuals now seek attachment to place, rather than to career or company. Furthermore, Sennett (2000) is concerned that the milieu of the modern metropolis is becoming less amenable to place attachment by its inhabitants as a result of the structural influences of flexible capitalism and the subsequent architecture of a cityscape that responds to discontinuity and change by replicating standardization and anonymity in the built environment. With this in mind, there are a number of related areas of inquiry that will inform the research question:

- In what ways do pre-retirement in-migrants make sense of their decisions to leave their urban environments and relocate to a smaller, rural town?
- In what ways does this cohort construct new identities in their new environment?
- What resources do they call on in order to become endogenous actors within their new locale?
- In what ways do pre-retirement in-migrants reproduce the social circumstances of their previous location?

A lever to gaining insight into these areas of interest lies in investigating the narratives of the pre-retirement cohort who in-migrate to the Mercury Bay area and engage in community groups through the mechanism of volunteerism. Specifically, this research asks to what extent do narratives of change influence pre-retirement in-migrants attachment to place and construction of their new identity?

The underpinning research question has an inherent assumption that in-migrants actively seek to position themselves as endogenous actors within their new community, and moreover that one of the avenues they may use to achieve this goal is through group membership. Implicit in this trajectory of questioning is the assumption that pre-retiree in-migrants from densely populated areas need to make more adjustments to acculturate than those who may have moved from a more rural locale. This assumption draws on the work of Prieto et al. (2013) who studied Mexican immigrants that translocated to the United States. These authors utilized

Bourdieuian conceptions of habitus and of field to consider the process of acculturation. They assert that acculturation, plainly stated as the process of becoming, is more problematic for individuals whose habitus are less attuned to new situations.

This research seeks to address the aforementioned questions through interpreting interviews that follow a flexible structure plan in order to enable the interview to be able to shift with the flow of conversation. The format of a flexible plan combined with semi-structured interviewing techniques allows for interesting but unexpected data or themes to become available (O'Leary, 2014).

### **3.2 Epistemological framework**

The language used in a given discourse doesn't just describe or represent meaning: it actively constitutes it by talking it into place or bringing it into being. (Gilbert, 2005, p. 11)

Gilbert's quote succinctly describes the epistemology that underpins this research and ties into Bourdieu's assertion that words make things (Bourdieu, 1989). The epistemology is situated within a largely inductive interpretative framework that emphasizes the importance of individuals' perspectives in the context of their lived experiences. Fay (1996, p. 242) advises researchers to "insist on the agency of those being studied". This advice brings with it recognition of the dynamic interaction between field and habitus. Within this constructivist paradigm is the acknowledgement that the participants in research are the experts in the field being observed.

Concurrently, I am reflexively aware of my own situated viewpoint. Alongside the participants, I am also a pre-retirement in-migrant who has moved to Mercury Bay. O'Leary (2014) cautions that working toward credible research requires acknowledgement and accountability of the researcher's own personal worldviews. Thus, I acknowledge that my worldview is value-bound, and that reflexivity requires me to be aware of other voices whose views may differ from my own. Analysis of the

participants' words must therefore reflect the perspectives and realities of those being researched and awareness that these are not necessarily my own perspectives and realities.

A core function of this research is not to simply capture a 'truth' or even multiple 'truths'. I accept the possibility of multiple realities therefore this research seeks to report authenticity, or in other terms, concern "with truth value while recognising that multiple truths exist... [and] describing the deep structure of experience/phenomena in a manner that is 'true' to the experience" of the interviewees (O'Leary, 2014, p. 62). Doing so indicates that conclusions can be considered credible as they are based on a rigorous and reflexive research practice.

In keeping with this constructivist framework, I take a modified pragmatic view of the interview process as a symbolic interaction between interviewer and interviewee. The interview interaction constructs knowledge in a specific interplay and thus necessarily shapes the data generated. An extreme postmodernist standpoint denies the possibility that knowledge about the social world outside of the interview context can be accessed through the mechanism of the interview process. This is not my view. Instead, I concur with the standpoint asserted by McCleod and Thomson (2009) who contend that narrative is both biographical and social and thus there is an interconnected relationship between the internal dynamics of the interview itself and the socio-cultural setting in which it is socially and historically framed. To put it in other terms, the interview narrative has a wider cultural resonance with the social world from which the interviewee and interviewer encounter their lived experience. Bourdieu (1992) suggests that interviews provide sites to access the range of discursive strategies that people utilize to negotiate the contradictions and dislocations into which the prevailing social circumstances are influencing them. Moreover, interview data can add richness to knowledge of the social by including explicit interpretations of the participants in a way that has meaning and depth to them (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014).

### **3.3 Design – strategy and framework**

It is worth remembering that what we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning. (Heisenberg n.d., as cited in Shulman & Asimov, 1988, p. 293)

Heisenberg's words imply that methods have no intrinsic value in and of themselves; rather the method of research used produces knowledge that is always situated, mediated and rendered political in differing ways. This is not to suggest that the 'real world' is no more than the strategies by which it comes to be understood, but rather that the strategies used produce one specific type of knowledge that does not exclude or preclude other types of knowledge, or, for that matter, other types of research.

Certain methods of seeking knowledge are more suited to some questions than others depending on the type of knowledge that is being created (O'Leary, 2014). Therefore, the method chosen for the research should be directed by the research topic and question. Ritchie et al. (2014) assert that qualitative methods are well-suited to display phenomena in fine-tuned detail and in participants' own terms, which enables analysis of the nature of the phenomenon. This thesis utilizes qualitative methods because it is primarily concerned with the analysis of the interviews in order to produce rich data, which will craft an understanding of the nuanced aspects of the research question.

This research specifically seeks to understand pre-retirement in-migrant's construction of their lived reality through their narrative discourse. In-depth face-to-face interview methods have the capacity to directly address this type of query. Goodson (2001) suggests that face to face interviews can provide a rich and complex source of social information. Interviews are characterized by their flexible and interactive nature and by their ability to produce generative data in the sense that the intensity of focus can produce new spaces for thought and insight (Ritchie et al., 2014). This research employs semi structured face-to-face interviewing as a research strategy that nests comfortably within the qualitative tradition of research as it enables the situated experience of the participants to be voiced. O'Leary (2014)

supports this argument and further states that the qualitative tradition aims to gain a deep understanding of people and their situated milieu through rich engagement with the reality being studied.

### **3.4 Sample**

This research seeks a certain kind of information (how narrative is used to construct meaning around the experience of volunteering) from a certain kind of individual (immigrants from cities who are in the 45-65 year age bracket). Therefore I needed to access interviewees who reflect this specificity. Moreover, in terms of practicality the participants needed to be accessible within the limits of resources and time available to this research project. A purposive snowball sampling method was employed which satisfied both time constraints and accessibility to people who fit the cohort criteria.

Purposive sampling is a strategy whereby the selection of informants is criterion based. The sample units are chosen for specific purposes; in this case age, immigration and volunteering engagement. I identified three initial informants who were uniquely placed within the target community to aid my search for participants. Two of these informants are known to me personally and one is a business owner of a retail shop whose suitability became apparent to me when he discussed the nature of his involvement with a volunteer organisation in casual passing.

Two of the three initial informants were willing to take part in this research in the role of interviewees as they fit the sampling criteria. The third informant, despite meeting the research criteria, considered herself to be too much of an insider because she manages an organization that utilizes volunteers and in which she had been a volunteer herself. As a consequence of her multiple roles she was concerned about issues of conflict of interest and so absented herself from participating in the interview process. However, she remains a key informant for this thesis because of her willingness to provide leads to other informants from within her organization. She was also able to provide me with rich background information as to the structure of the organization that she manages, challenges that the organization faces, an

overview of some reasons why people choose to volunteer and an insight into pre-retirement in-migrants' wishes to become involved with their new community.

All three initial informants have extensive links to the community and have access to other volunteers who fit the research criteria. The first informant is active in the community in a number of different functions. Of particular interest to this research is the position she holds as chair of a local community group that is staffed entirely by volunteers. She also initiated another local community group (also entirely volunteer) and has been involved in the capacity of volunteer in two other organizations.

The second informant became involved in one of the area's service organizations that caters to residents, tourists and business and has links to the recreational amenities the area provides. This informant holds a senior position in the volunteer organization and fulfils a number of functions. The third informant holds a senior position in a community service organisation that draws heavily on volunteer help to deliver its programmes. This organization caters for residents' needs across a broad spectrum of functions from early childhood through to senior citizens.

In order to keep the data set manageable in terms of resources and time needed to competently process it, I planned to interview between five to 10 participants. By the time I had completed seven interviews I considered that I had reached saturation point. Saturation point is reached through an iterative process whereby the data is reviewed until the researcher considers no additional relevant new material is obtained, and there is a diminishing return in comparison to sample size (Ritchie, et al, 2014).

The participants ranged in age from 47 to 63 years old, and included five females and two males. Of the seven interviewees, six have partners, five are in heterosexual relationships, one in a same-sex relationship and one is single. Most interviewees self-identified as pakeha and one identified as part Māori. The interviewees unanimously identify as middle-class. It is unclear why such homogeneity in class occurred in selecting the participants for the research although this may reflect the ethnic and socio-economic make-up of the cohort of 45-65 year olds who migrate to Mercury Bay. The reasons why there is a lack of diversity across ethnic and

economic measures are beyond the scope of this current research. One reason may be that Māori cultural values of whanaungatanga (kinship) shape the specific form of volunteering that takes place and this may preclude or limit engagement with formal volunteering opportunities while maximising informal volunteering. Another possible explanation may be that the relatively homogeneous ethnic makeup of the resident population of Mercury Bay both attracts pakeha in-migrants and acts as a barrier to other ethnic in-migrants. Moreover, the act of in-migrating may be a realistic option only for those who have a certain amount of economic, cultural or human capital with which to re-establish themselves in a new environment.

In four of the six couples, the other partner also volunteered, although not necessarily in the same organization. Of the other two couples, one partner did not volunteer, and the other interviewee did not make mention if his partner volunteered or not. Of the seven interviewees, one was not in regular paid employment, one had intermittent paid work, one held two part-time, permanent positions, two were self-employed, one was employed full time and one was retired. The seven interviewees either currently or had in the past been involved with at least eleven different volunteer organizations since moving to Mercury Bay. There was some overlap; for example three participants had involvement with the same organization, two with another organization and two with yet another, although some of this engagement was not concurrent.

### **3.5 Data collection – instruments and procedures**

I used voice-recorded, face to face, semi-structured interviews for primary data collection with the aim to elicit rich, informative data about beliefs, attitudes and opinions. The interviews took place in March and April 2015. The interviews ranged between 45 minutes and two hours in duration. Each interviewee was initially contacted by telephone, text or email to ascertain their willingness to take part in the research. Once this was established I telephoned each participant or spoke to them face to face to arrange a suitable time and place for us to meet. The time and location were selected by the participants themselves in order for it to be convenient and comfortable. This was to maximise the possibility that the participants would be

relaxed and thus more willing to freely talk about their experiences. Three participants chose to be interviewed in their own homes, two chose to come to my home, one opted to be interviewed in their place of business, and one chose a cafe.

I followed the advice of Ritchie et al. (2014) in their highly informative chapter on interviewing techniques and planned the interview contact, place and content to ensure that I was prepared, reflexive, ethical and professional when conducting this research. To satisfy ethical requirements I completed a Massey University Ethics screening questionnaire as part of the discussion about ethical issues. This determined that the research is deemed 'low-risk' as it poses minimal perceivable risk to the researcher and participants, adequately covers issues of informed and voluntary consent, confidentiality, deception, conflict of interest and compensation to participants. Each participant was given an information sheet which outlined the study's aims, what was required of them, and what their rights were (refer Appendix 1). I provided each participant with a consent form that concisely clarified the agreement between myself as researcher and themselves as participants (refer Appendix 2). The consent form included information about their right to withdraw from the study at any time and the opportunity to review the final document prior to submission. The discussion of the information sheet and the signing of the consent form took place prior to any interviewing.

For reasons of confidentiality and as a measure to protect the identity of participants and the volunteer organizations with which they engage, pseudonyms were used for all participants and where possible details of the organizations the participants engage with have been blurred. Tolich and Davidson (1999, pp. 77-78) advise researchers to "think of New Zealand as though it is a small town", because "New Zealand's smallness makes it relatively easy to identify any institution". It must be noted that this research is situated in a small, relatively sparsely populated district of Aotearoa New Zealand and therefore confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

Part of my preparation included the development of a topic guide to frame the interview (refer Appendix 3). Ritchie et al. (2014) suggest the use of topic guides as an aid to elicit data from the participants. Topic guides frame the subjects to be

included in the data collection and can aid in categorizing subjects in the order they may be approached. Ritchie et al. (2014) note that the order may not reflect the order that unfolds during the actual interview process as unanticipated content may alter this. However the use of a topic guide that follows a logical structure aids fieldwork when it encounters unpredictable complexities. The topic document that I devised for this research took the form of guiding questions that were loosely defined around particular topics to allow a level of consistency in data collection, combined with flexibility so that the participants could talk to issues they felt were salient to their experience. Thus a topic guide acts not as an exact prescriptive document on which questions to ask in what order, but as an interactive and flexible tool that can be adapted and modified according to the flow of each interview. Ritchie et al. (2014) claim that this model allows unanticipated but relevant themes to emerge unimpeded, and contributes to the ability of the participants to frame their own perspectives and interpretations on themes.

I reviewed each interview prior to commencing the next. This method allowed me to “reflexively fine-tune” further interviews to aid data collection (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 140). As a result, I was able to modify the topic document to reflect this. My final question to each participant was to ask if there was anything further the participant would like to talk about, or any aspect that I had not covered which they would like to. Given this opportunity some interviewees spoke at length and some were quite brief. Only one participant had nothing to add.

The interviews took a semi-structured form which allowed the interview to proceed as a “form of conversation” (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 178). This type of interview represents an opportunity for detailed investigation of an individual’s perspective and this is especially relevant when an interviewee’s responses involve personal history (Ritchie et al., 2014). The ebb and flow of narratives are not smooth chronological accounts of a ‘real’ external world but are performative speech acts that invoke justificatory frames of reference. Thus the interview process is an active, co-constructed reproduction of experiences in which typically something is added, omitted or transformed (Atkinson & Delamont, 2007). This interpretative model acknowledges that meaning is co-produced between the narrator and the researcher. It is mediated by the researcher’s prior experiences which are drawn on

to make sense of themes and of the wider cultural script in which they are situated (Marvasti, 2004). Criticism of this interpretation is that the interview can only ever be acknowledged as the reality of the interview itself, and not the social world outside it. Standing against this (and alongside the epistemology that frames this research) is the view that content can only be exposed through how it is made available by the participants in an interview (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Researchers should be reflexive and acknowledge their own situated position in relation to the research (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This reflexive standpoint recognizes that the researcher's prior knowledge and experience influences the research question, methodology, and outcome. No social science can take place without the use of prior conceptual resources (Fay, 1996). Moreover, objectivity occurs not because these resources are precluded, but because they are accountable (Fay, 1996). Thus good research acknowledges the researcher's own intellectual resources as well as the ways in which the researcher changes by interacting with those he or she is researching.

In view of this advice, it is timely to reiterate at this point that I have personal experience of pre-retirement in-migration and subsequent volunteering, having moved from Wellington to Mercury Bay around six years prior to commencing this research. Two of the participants in this research are personal friends, one is an acquaintance, one participant owns a business of which I am a customer, and the remaining three participants were unknown to me prior to commencing this research. The organization that I volunteer with does not overlap with any of the organizations with which the participants are engaged. Despite this, I share experiences of volunteering and engagement that resonates with that of the participants. In this sense, I am an 'insider' with regards to this cohort and have shared understandings and experiences of volunteering. I also have shared understandings of re-location within a country and the adjustment of habitus as a result of adapting to the loss of old friendships and establishing a new life in a different environment.

There are advantages to insider research; *a priori* knowledge privileges the researcher who is familiar with aspects of the field such as idioms, rapport with participants' shared experiences and readily accessible lines of communication.

However, one can never assume a dichotomous rubric of insider/outsider because the researcher's views will always be multiple and contestable (Taylor, 2011). There are negative aspects of insider research that must be overcome as well. For example, the interaction of research and friendships can invoke role-confusion as the boundaries between object-subject can be confused. This can have consequences that extend beyond the temporal boundaries of the research and impact on the nature of the relationships between the individuals concerned. Furthermore, power imbalances and partial representations of the cultural space that is shared can become a process of self-interpretation so that the "narrative of the researched and researcher become entwined" (Taylor, 2011, p. 155).

My epistemological view is consistent with the assertions of Braun and Clarke (2006) that the co-constructed nature of the interview acts as a discursive tool to expose the lived experience of participants. This is more than just 'giving voice' to the experience of participants as the process involves selecting (and de-selecting) pieces of narrative script in which the editing, selecting and deployment of arguments as framed by the researcher is undertaken (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I recognise and acknowledge that narrative generates a retrospective account of events that is framed through a contemporary lens. Despite seeking to recall feelings and circumstances of a time past, participants cannot help but colour their recall by subsequent events and their construction of how life is in the present. This temporal elasticity is discussed in depth by Doris Warriner (2013) who describes this feature of narrative as a sense-making tool for both the narrator and for the listener. Thus, a key epistemological assumption of this research is that meaning and experience is socially reproduced, rather than an inherent characteristic of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

### **3.6 Data analysis**

I transcribed the audio files of each interview in order to become familiar with the data. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the data. This was done manually without the aid of software programmes so that I could fully immerse myself with the content of the data. Thematic analysis involves working systematically through the

data to discover, interpret and report patterns and meanings (Ritchie et al., 2014). Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for those in the early phases of a qualitative research career and can offer an accessible form of investigation that is not bound by specific methodological guidelines (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis can be used within a constructivist framework in which meanings and experiences are viewed as the effects or products of a range of discourses.

I opted to use a latent level of coding. Latent level coding examines “*underlying* ideas, assumptions and conceptualizations - and ideologies” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This method fits with the epistemological underpinnings of the current research. The interaction that occurs between the interviewer and interviewee is not neutral and therefore analysis is necessarily interpretative as it is mediated by the researcher’s personal experiences to make sense of themes (Reissman, 2008). Whilst this means that the process of coding itself involves interpretative work it does not free it of theoretical or epistemological commitment.

The thematic framework and the resulting analysis used in this research have been designed to be transparent to others such as participants, colleagues and supervisors. Ritchie et al. (2014) specifically exhort researchers to ensure that analysis is grounded in the data, whilst simultaneously being aware of the co-constructed and situated nature of the data. Moreover, I ensured that the analysis allowed systematic coverage of the data set. This involved looking for linkages between and within interviews to identify themes.

A theme is a patterned response or meaning across a data set. Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) assert that thematic analysis consists of searching for and identifying common threads or ideas that occur throughout an interview or across a set of interviews. It is important to note that the questions put to participants were not ‘themes’ in themselves but were designed to be necessarily open-ended to allow the participants to talk freely around an idea. Thematic analysis is not a linear process so I elected to use the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) to ensure a systematic process to produce a robust and coherent thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006) outline six steps to which attention need be given in order for the achievement of coherent thematic analysis. Firstly, analysis involves a constant engagement with the interview data which involves reading and rereading in order to familiarize oneself with the content. This has enabled a familiarity to develop with the text and with the recorded interviews so that intonations that interviewees used to enunciate meaning enabled a coding of text data to occur that included, without being reduced to, the form which the conversation took. Transcription deepened this engagement with the text and this in itself involved levels of interpretation as decisions were made as to the level of transcription and the conventions used to make sense of the data. I chose to apply a simple level of transcription and conventions which recorded spoken words, extended pauses and exclamations, and omitted intonations, non-verbal sounds and physical expressions such as shrugs, sighs, or similar (Tuffin, 2005).

Thematic analysis seeks to make sense of underlying themes and ideas of participants rather than a strictly prescribed form of discourse analysis or conversation analysis. Discourse and conversation analysis primarily seek to expose performative aspects of speech, text and data. Whilst there is some analysis of the performative nature of narrative in the current study, the overarching aim of the analysis is to make sense of themes and patterns that emerge across the data set.

The second phase of thematic analysis involved generating initial codes. The notion of 'codes' refers to "the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way" (Boyatzis, 1998, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). In order to facilitate the coding I converted the word document of each interview into an excel file, numbered each line or sentence of the data and applied codes to relevant segments of data. This system enabled quick retrieval of data that was similarly coded. Thirdly, once this was completed I refined this list of codes into relevant themes. This was done through a 'mind-mapping' technique of clustering codes around potential themes, or 'candidate themes' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I then applied these themes to the excel spreadsheets and colour-coded them so that I could easily sort the data into themes for analysis.

Fourthly, the candidate themes were then reviewed and refined. This process involved some themes merging into each other and some being discarded as there was not enough data to support them. I then reviewed these themes in relation to the entire data set. This process enabled me to identify additional data within themes that had been missed earlier and to check that the themes fitted within the overall thematic approach to the data set. As discussed previously, this process was not linear; it required working and re-working of the data-set. Subsequently the process involved much reading and re-reading of the individual interview transcriptions.

At this stage of the process I noted that the data presented an unexpected turn in which I identified a new theme that some of the participants had referred to in detail, but that others made either vague references to or had only mentioned in passing. I was interested in the viewpoints of those who had not expounded on this theme and so I contacted these participants and conducted a brief follow-up interview following the same protocols as for the first interviews. As per the initial interview I prepared a topic guide for the follow-up interviews (refer Appendix 4). The follow-up interviews lasted in duration from 20 minutes to half an hour. One interview took place in the participant's own home, one in my home and the final one in the participant's place of business.

The fifth step in this process was to define and name the themes. This involved a detailed analysis and deep thinking about the 'story' of each theme and how it fits within the overall structure of the data set. In places, data that had been previously identified as stand-alone themes were collapsed into sub-themes of a final theme.

The sixth and final stage of thematic analysis involves writing the report to clearly and coherently provide an account of the data and the analysis. Importantly, this phase aims to "go *beyond* description of the data, and make an *argument* in relation to the research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93).

### **3.6 Chapter Three: Conclusion**

This chapter commenced with a detailed exploration of related questions that were instrumental in defining the research question. It then followed this discussion with an exposition of the epistemological underpinnings that informed the research question and the research design. It continued with an outline of the strategy used and the details of the research design. Following on from this the chapter explained the process used to identify participants and discussed the methods of data collection that were used to collect the data. Finally it provided a framework to explain the processes used in developing thematic analysis of the data set.

The following chapter commences with a discussion of the first of the themes that were extracted from the data, that of change. This theme is separated into two main parts: push factors and pull factors. Chapter Four considers the 'push' factors that motivate the pre-retiree in-migrants to leave the urban metropolis and Chapter five deals with pull factors. Push factors are considered as narrative resources that the pre-retiree in-migrants utilize to make sense of their decisions to in-migrate.

## **Chapter Four: Change- Push factors**

This chapter opens with a discussion of themes about push factors that act as reasons to leave the city environment and in-migrate to a coastal/rural area. Central to Chapter Four is the idea presented by Richard Sennett that flexible capitalist conditions in contemporary cities affect the lived experience of people both within and external to their working environments (Sennett, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2006). I also draw some parallels with Georg Simmel's essay *The Metropolis and mental life* in which Simmel associates the stressors of living and working in a densely populated urban environment, characterized by complexity and diversity, with the development of impersonal and indifferent social relationships (Simmel, 1903, as cited in Nehring, 2013). The proposition that the participants use negative experiences of work and social stressors in their previous city environments as push factors or reasons to contemplate moving to a smaller rural town draws on this notion. Following on from discussion of this theme, the next chapter discusses the 'pull factors' that act as reasons to attract pre-retirement in-migrants to the Mercury Bay Area. Together, push factors and pull factors are presented as significant fields of content within participants' narratives of change.

### **4.1 Background**

Georg Simmel wrote in his essay *The Metropolis and mental life* that:

The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life. (Simmel, 1903, as cited in Nehring, 2013, p. 150)

The conflict described by Simmel between the internal and external is not new; arguably it is a tension that has been manifest since primitive human existence. Philosophers throughout the ages have noted this duality in one form or another. Nietzsche's relentless struggle of the individual in order to achieve full development,

Socrates' comparison between the soul and the city, and Plato's mature moral theory are examples of similar and recurring themes in the empirical study of the human condition (Nehring, 2013; Parry, 2014).

Georg Simmel applied his notion of the tensions of the internal/external dichotomy to the spatial and social conditions of urban life in contrast to rural life. Simmel wrote *The Metropolis and mental life* in 1903 yet arguably it is equally relevant in contemporary urban society. For example, Simmel (1903, as cited in Nehring, 2013, p. 151) claims that in an urban context the intensification of emotional life is due to the "profound disruption with which the fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu" creates a sense of dislocation. This causes the individual to form a protective shield for the self. As a result the individual develops a rational, disconnected manner which serves to distance events from the depth of emotion and personality, transferring them to the outer sphere of mental activity. The constantly changing external stimuli of the contemporary city environment that is foisted on the individual causes a sensory and emotional overload that typically produces a blasé and disconnected behavioural pattern within the individual as they struggle to cope psychologically. This produces states of indifference, reservation, and heightened levels of rationality in the individual. It also manifests in social relations where distance, aloofness and a predominance of fleeting relationships with little investment of time or emotion are the cultural norm. Simmel's observations on the experience of rationality and its effect on the human condition in urban environments expand on Emile Durkheim's notions of organic solidarity and rationality under the conditions of capitalism, in contrast to the mechanical solidarity that occurs in agrarian societies (Durkheim, [1893] 2014). Whilst Durkheim's conceptualization may not map seamlessly onto contemporary conditions, arguably the basis of the development of rational, as opposed to emotional, solutions in an urban city environment is a valid one under the influence of new forms of capitalism.

The extent of this dichotomy or tension is indicated in the narratives of the participants in this research. The first theme to be drawn out from the data set involves 'push' factors or reasons why the participants chose to move from their source urban location to Mercury Bay. These push factors are further broken down in sub-sets that include work stress, urban pressures, financial considerations and

isolation or alienation. Whilst all participants give multiple reasons for leaving the city, one theme that emerges across all participants' narratives is the experience of highly specific, intense workplace stress.

## **4.2 Workplace stress**

Sennett (2006) identifies the new, flexible shape of capitalism as the cause of deep discontent in the inhabitants who reside within the city social environment. He asserts that anxiety is a pervasive characteristic of the contemporary work environment and it arises because of conditions where outcomes and stability are indeterminate. This same idea is explored by Oswald (2010, p. 651) who argues that as contemporary work pressures increase as a result of modern work-practices, "emotional prosperity" declines. Oswald describes emotional prosperity as a sense of wellness across a range of markers such as happiness, life-satisfaction and mental health.

Sennett (2000) also investigates the increase of work pressure and attributes the cause of such to a change in the fundamental structure of capitalism. He notes a shift in the composition of capitalist organisation from the Weberian notion of a pyramid-shaped hierarchy to a "de-layered" model that has removed layers of bureaucracy (Sennett, 2000, p. 26). Sennett (2000) calls this new form of capitalism 'flexible capitalism'. In this model, bureaucracy has been replaced by new information technologies and workers are now predominantly structured into groups or teams that work on short-term specific tasks designed to achieve maximum efficiency. The recognisable and defining feature of Sennett's flexible capitalism is the concept of groups of workers organised and categorized into separate cells of production; whether the output of that production is material or intellectual is inconsequential.

Sennett (2000) illustrates this new structure by using an allegory of a circle with a dot in the centre in which the dot represents a select group of managers and the circle encapsulates the short term, flexible workforce. In this form, opportunities for information to be filtered down reduce, in contrast to work spaces that are organized

in a typical Weberian pyramid structure. The workers (who are organized along the periphery of Sennett's circle) are most often grouped into teams whose tasks are goal-oriented, measured, and competitive. Because of the managerial structure of flexible capitalism, short-term, contract, or team-organised workers have little say or effect in modulating orders and exercising some control over the tasks. Rather their task's logic becomes one of intense competition so that they might out-perform other teams in a "winner-takes-all" situation (Frank, n.d., as cited in Sennett, 2000, p. 26). Flexible capitalism thus creates a new, intense form of workplace stress. It is this highly specific, intense workplace stress that has proved to be problematic for some participants in this study. For example, one interviewee describes how the intensity of workplace stress acted as a prime motivator in her decision to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. She articulates her emotional response to the experience of working in a highly competitive, corporate environment:

[I was] working at an extremely stressful job in Auckland... quite long hours.... I went through a really busy time at work, didn't feel appreciated, stressed out, bursting into tears 'cause I was stressed, you know, that sort of thing (Lorraine).

Lorraine's narrative of life in the city is dominated by her interpretation of working experiences. The narrative makes frequent reference to working conditions in the corporate sector with descriptive comments concerning "quite long hours" and "frustrations at work". This story reveals an inner conflict between the participant's social and psychological needs and the demands of the job. These comments communicate a deep-seated dissatisfaction with the corporate career path, despite her working life being framed by herself as highly successful and well-remunerated. She indicates that she worked extremely long hours, often into the night, and the intensity of stress within the job brought a level of anxiety that was unable to be compensated by status or remuneration.

A similar notion is expressed by Peter, another interviewee who previously had worked in the finance sector in the city. This narrative characterizes a successful corporate sector career yet one that also experienced the intense pressure of the flexible capitalist work environment. The participant spoke of being "burnt out" a

number of times, which he attributed to a range of vague causes that he found difficult to articulate. The vague unease in this narrative is reminiscent of Sennett's description of anxiety that he claims arises in ill-defined conditions (Sennett, 1998, 2006). Sennett explains that the tendency of contemporary firms and corporations to undergo corporate restructuring in response to share prices, debt restructuring or other external market forces leaves employees in a state of indeterminacy that negatively impacts upon the individual (Sennett, 2006). The participant's description of the uncertain nature of the finance world mirrors Sennett's portrayal of flexible capitalism's logics of restructuring and competition. The inability of Peter to express or pinpoint the cause of his discontent highlights the feelings of indeterminacy to which Sennett refers. This narrative exemplifies an individual's experience of the highly reactive field of finance in which uncertainty is the only certainty: "It's just, oh, you know, it's a range of things; there's no 'one' thing. Ah, the stress, the stress of work, I suppose. I just burnt out" (Peter).

Stockdale (2014) suggests that the decision to in-migrate is rarely based on consideration of one or two factors. Couples in particular will base their in-migration decisions on a process of negotiation and compromise between the two parties. This finding is consistent with the narratives of participants in the current study. For example, Maryanne herself was happy to remain in the city and felt invigorated by the pace and excitement of city life. However her partner's experience of working life was somewhat more problematic and the stress of his working conditions was the prime motivating factor in their decision to move.

In this narrative, motivation to in-migrate is framed as being a necessary course of action for Maryanne's partner and for them as a couple, stating that "[partner's name] needed to leave his work there". Maryanne's emphasis on this was simple and striking; her partner had reached a breaking point in his place of employment that they felt was insurmountable and left them with no option but to move on. The psychological impact of the partner's working environment is evident in Maryanne's narrative and she articulates their move as being a direct response to her partner's workplace stress:

It was time for him to leave [his place of employment], he was getting pretty wound up there, it was quite a hard [place] for him to be a part of in the end, so it was time he left.

The simplicity of this statement belies the poignancy of their decision to move in light of the fact that her life in the city was otherwise satisfactory and fulfilling in many respects.

Dissociation from spatial environments as a result of flexible capitalism is one symptom of the destruction of urban life according to Sennett (2000). The excerpt from the above participant's narrative alludes to the spatial connectivity that had been severed in her partner's place of employment. Her partner's workplace stress resulted in his psychological distance from the physicality of the work environment such that he could "no longer be a part of it".

The effects of workplace stress are not confined to one or two fields of corporate enterprise. The range of city-based careers held by the interviewees in this study included corporate business, finance, import/export, education, science and governmental positions. Some interviewees spoke of experience in multiple fields. For example Louise described her experiences in moving from academia to a corporate environment where she had a successful career in the city. The academic environment is portrayed as "relatively free" (although comparatively lower paid than the private sector) compared to a highly resourced managerial position within a global corporation. Louise described the salary as attractive in this corporate position, and professionally the organization was well-resourced which enabled her professional research projects. This provided satisfaction and pride to the participant, who felt that she could pursue her research work in a way that was not possible within an academic environment due to resourcing restrictions. The professional satisfaction of having access to resources for research contrasts with the personal experience of the corporate working environment at a relationship level. This disjuncture caused Louise considerable distress. Her account of her comparative working experiences suggests a feeling of personal pride and sense of achievement in her work in academia mirrored by an equally evocative account of the constraining nature of the corporate environment where work social relations were strained. To

rephrase this, the highly task-specific work fulfilled her sense of purpose as much as her social relations at work did not. Louise alludes to the underlying tensions that caused her to feel restricted as a result of the framework and expectations of the organization around her research projects:

I guess another way to put it is, the kind of, weariness I felt, not with the [work] I was doing or the collaboration I was doing, but dealing with personalities within an organization which is just – tiring.

The expectations of the global corporation that she worked for conflicted with her desire as a researcher to pursue avenues that the research may have opened up. Instead, the corporate demands of the organization dictated certain avenues of research and corresponding compliance and behaviour from its employees in order to maximise its return on investment: Louise describes this as follows:

I think that it's simply because in that situation, you know, I had been used to degrees of freedom. You were still constrained even within an academic environment but you do have more degrees of freedom... and I think that within that [corporate] environment there's such a prescription... you can work within a wider framework but not everything you can do can be so tightly prescribed.

Additionally this interviewee, like the others, experienced tensions with her social relations in the workplace. She articulated dissatisfaction with the values encountered in the highly competitive corporate workplace environment:

So I guess the long story was although I was sort of at the pinnacle of my career and doing well within my industry, there was still the rough edge there, and so [I was] not particularly happy with the ethos there...and I guess I found that I'm not a highly P.C. person either, so you know, I guess this is where I have to be a bit careful and not mention the industry, but, [it was a] very male-dominated [industry], kind of chauvinistic as well. So yeah, rough edges (Louise).

In his book *The Corrosion of Character* Sennett (1998) contends that the new, flexible capitalism of contemporary times undermines trust and commitment. In an environment that is marked by consumer driven logics of production, corporations typically engender detachment and superficial co-operation rather than institutional loyalty. Thus the qualities of character to which an actor may aspire, such as commitment and loyalty, are in conflict with the competitive nature of the flexible capitalist workspace. The dissonance between personal values and the will to be successful in a highly pressured work environment are common threads of narrative amongst the interviewees. Often this is articulated as a tension between the benefits derived from the position and the tension of social relations in the workplace:

I think that in the prior year [to moving] I had done really well, I had received promotion. I felt it had been a very hard year, coming up against the powers that be (Louise).

In this interviewee's experience, the corporation's structure engendered low levels of informal trust and this conflicted with a personal sense of values as well professional values. The resulting dissonance impacts on personal relations at work. In his essay *Cities without care or connection* Sennett (2000, p. 26) names this as a paradox where:

People work intensely, under great pressure, but their relations to others remain curiously superficial. This is not a world in which getting deeply involved with other people makes much sense in the long run.

### **4.3 Urban pressures**

Georg Simmel refers to urban pressures when he comments that the "fluctuations and discontinuities of the external milieu" threaten the self when the senses are bombarded with tempo of metropolitan life (Simmel, 1903, as cited in Nehring, 2013, p. 151). The pressures of urban living are a clear push factor for the pre-retirees interviewed and represent a common discourse across the interviewees. Frustration with the daily stress of dealing with traffic delays, population pressure and difficulties

in maintaining social contacts due to the spatial and temporal nature of the city environment provides a strong discourse of discontent with city living and offers an insight into motivations for relocation.

Within the sub-theme of urban pressures, the participants utilize the discourse in a comparative manner to juxtapose aspects of urban stress against the romantic ruralized stereotype which encapsulates the idea of a slower, more relaxed pace of life with more engaged social attachments (Witham, 2012). In this thesis I refer to this idea as a coastal/rural idyllic notion which encapsulates ideas of enhanced social cohesion, a slower pace of life, simplicity of structure, attachment to place and enhanced opportunities to pursue leisure activities.

The performativity of narrative can clearly be observed by the use of contrast to justify prior and current actions (Tuffin, 2005; Warriner, 2013). Most interviewees justified their dissatisfaction with the city by casting the city in a negative light and comparing it to the benefits of living in a more rural area with a slower pace of life. The interviewees' narratives of the experience of negative city impacts stand in direct contrast to the ebb and flow of life in a rural community that follows a steadier equilibrium where relationships are typically more personal and involved, in part as a result of years of recognition, personal knowledge and steady or predictable lifestyle.

The contemplation of a potentially less complex environment of Mercury Bay as compared to the prospect of continuing life in an urban city environment offers an attractive and inviting opportunity to reframe one's life trajectory. Bosworth and Willett (2011) suggest that in-migrants who perceive the rurality of their new location as having positive characteristics, such as a simpler pace of life and attractive geographical amenities, contrast this perception with their experience of the city and seek ways to escape the less attractive aspects of metropolitan life. The following interview excerpt articulates this notion clearly, demonstrating a carefully rationalised approach to in-migration that considers both potential losses and gains that such a move might entail:

It was really a combination...We can't underestimate the financial pressures but it was also about, what are we going to do with the rest

of our lives, and where do we want to spend the time we've got left? I know it sounds quite gloomy, it isn't, it's positive. But you reach a point when you want to make a decision. I've got X number of years left, do I really want to spend those years sitting in traffic and stuck at traffic lights or do I want to spend that time near a beach and in a place where we can walk the dog or walk the dogs and perhaps a lifestyle that doesn't offer some of the opportunities that a city would but has lots of benefits on the other side of the coin? (Chris).

This excerpt is emblematic of the frustrations with differing aspects of city life. It is presented in contrast with positive attributes of the new location that serve as a resource for the interviewee's perception of community attachment and justification to in-migrate to Mercury Bay.

Some interviewees employ differing discursive strategies to achieve a similar aim. As demonstrated above, one strategy uses a dichotomous contrast of bad versus good to construct meaning to attach to reasons of in-migration. Another discursive tool is the emphasis of the qualities of one place by unspoken comparison to another. For example, one interviewee articulates his dislike of the Auckland environment and contrasts this by an unspoken comparison with Mercury Bay. The strategy draws attention to the positive aspects that he enjoys in Mercury Bay by highlighting the negative aspects that he has left behind. When discussing negative impacts of city life he asserts "it's a combination of the whole Auckland experience" (Peter). The unspoken implication is that the Mercury Bay experience is on the whole, experienced as a positive influence in his lifestyle. However, arguably this is not a balanced representation of this individual's experience in Mercury Bay as he has had some difficulties with implementing his business plan for a new business venture in Mercury Bay. This discourse reveals a strong negative bias against the city environment:

The good thing about leaving Auckland is, it used to take me about half an hour to get on the motorway and I lived, probably, directly from the motorway, about 400 metres from it (Peter).

This excerpt uses Auckland's traffic congestion as a point of juxtaposition for the uncongested ease of travel that occurs in Mercury Bay due to a significantly smaller population. The argument becomes more emphatic by the silence on the comparative benefits of travel in Mercury Bay when a one-sided argument on the negative aspects of travel in Auckland is presented.

Frustrations with travel (particularly travel in Auckland) are evident in all the narratives of the interviewees. These are framed as problematic for the quality of lifestyle in the city and are offered as reasons that the individual is unable to engage with a volunteer organization in the city environment. Again, the tool of juxtaposition is utilized by another interviewee to highlight this, although in this instance the participant uses positive attributes of Mercury Bay to highlight negative city experiences:

Well I think that the place is so compact that you haven't got to drive, you know forty minutes, to get to your little place of volunteering and forty minutes to drive back again. The furthestest away anybody is, [is] oh probably about 10 minutes, maybe a little further than that if they're out at Coroglen as some people are. I think it's a lot easier just to drive, you know, somewhere around here or, to get a lift somewhere (Paula).

Discontent with socio-spatial conditions in the city that complicate social life provides another push factor for participants. For example one interviewee frames her discontent around the difficulties she encountered in maintaining relationships in the city environment. Lynn asserts that "people won't cross from one side of Auckland to the other to catch up because they're all too busy". The notion of being too busy in the city is a recurrent one. Later in the interview she exclaims that "ohhh people are too busy in the city!" The same idea is discussed at length by other interviewees who also comment on the busy-ness of city life. The lack of available time to pursue other interests outside the work environment transmute being busy into a value-laden attribution: "...but I mean, just too busy! And too greedy!" (Paula).

Paula builds on the narrative of busy-ness in the city to craft a response that includes value judgements and uses the engagement with volunteering in Mercury Bay as an example of how she is able to expand her altruistic behaviour in a way that she felt unable to in the city due to temporal and spatial constraints combined with the complexity of urban life. The frustrations of temporal and socio-spatial stressors are indicative of an awareness of a lack of social cohesion and community engagement in the city environment. Moreover, both time and space are more easily negotiated by the in-migrants in their Mercury Bay setting. A further example of the temporal nature of this discourse is provided by Paula, who, when discussing the field of volunteering, incorporates issues of being time-poor in the city in contrast to having available time in Mercury Bay:

Oh I think it's something that would impact me more in a city because I had a full time job there, and [I was] just too tired, too busy, whereas here I'm part time.

#### **4.4 Financial considerations**

Related to the sub-theme of urban pressures is the consideration of finances. Financial considerations of in-migration are one area where the interviewees had divergent experiences both in their city environments and their subsequent experiences after in-migrating to Mercury Bay. In some cases, financial stress in the city acts as a push factor, and in others, in-migrating to Mercury Bay positioned them in a more precarious financial position. Interestingly, those whose financial position is less secure in Mercury Bay than they had experienced in their source city environment rationalised this as a small price to pay for the positive aspects they experience in living in a smaller, more connected environment. This is an example of the convertibility of capitals as the participants rationalize economic capital and social capital. Bosworth and Willett (2011) observe that the expectations of in-migrants play a role in their subsequent development of becoming endogenous actors within their new location. Similarly, the attitude of participants to financial possibilities and perceived levels of financial security is an important factor in their ability and willingness to embed themselves in Mercury Bay.

Mercury Bay, like many rural areas in Aotearoa/New Zealand, is an area that does not present an abundance of employment or business opportunities. Separate data for the Mercury Bay area is not available, however the entire Thames-Coromandel district of which Mercury Bay is a part has only 11,427 established jobs across the district (Infometrics, 2015). These jobs are shared amongst a resident population of 26,181 (Profile.id, 2015). By and large, people can expect to earn considerably less in Mercury Bay than they would in a city environment. Employment opportunities are somewhat limited, especially in the professional or semi-professional field, and most work offered is in the lower paid retail and hospitality sector or in production jobs such as those offered in the local seafood processing industry or forestry industry (Thames-Coromandel District Council, 2015).

The opportunities for self-employment are similarly constrained by issues of population, remoteness, and seasonality. The location and size of Mercury Bay limits the diversity of business opportunities that one could reasonably expect in a city location. Therefore, any person considering in-migrating to such an area is likely to carefully consider the financial impact on themselves and their families or partners by making such a move. Despite such constraints, the Thames-Coromandel district has experienced greater employment growth over the period from 2001 to 2014 than the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand, showing a 2.0% increase across the region as opposed to national increase of 1.7% (Infometrics, 2015). Tempering this is a lower than national average growth in GDP of 2.3% for the Thames-Coromandel district as opposed to a more robust 2.6% growth nationally (Infometrics, 2015).

The intersection of in-migration and the labour market is influenced by context and regional variations. Gurran and Blakely (2007) assert that traditionally theories of migration suggest the reason for in-migration is a stable or growing labour market however their findings also imply that migration occurs to coastal regions of Australia where employment is limited. They attribute this growth of in-migrant flows to those who are no longer tied to a fixed location such as workers who are able to telecommute, business owners or those seeking to transition into retirement. The interviewees in this study have circumstances that resonate with the findings of

Gurran and Blakely (2007) as they either currently or have been within the categories of tele-commuters, business owners or transitioning into retirement.

Social and economic imperatives are intertwined (Granovetter, 1985). Bosworth and Willett (2011) assert that this is especially true where individuals in-migrate to rural communities. The link between social and economic imperatives is evident in the narrative constructions of the interviewees and reflects a nuanced inter-relationship between the two concepts. Many of the pre-retirement in-migrants interviewed for this research evoke a strong sense of the interlinked relationship of economic and social considerations in their narrative of reasons to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. An interviewee who experienced financial stress in the city as a result of business failure describes his experience:

The global financial crisis impacted us quite severely and resulted in us, basically, losing everything. We had visited Whitianga a few times on holiday and [my partner] got the opportunity, when a position became available at [place of work] to apply for that position so that sort of compliments the timing. We were basically winding up everything we had in Auckland, selling the house, closing down the business, and this job came up at the same time, so we both loved Whitianga, so that was part of it, so we decided okay...(Chris).

The performative nature of this excerpt demonstrates the justificatory achievement in which the move to Whitianga is framed as a positive action that has an equal or greater weighting than the financial difficulties associated with the business failure in the city. The participant goes on to explain his emotional reaction to his financial situation:

... We managed okay, so it was (even though we were broke), it was liberating. You go and walk on the beach with the sun shining and the financial pressures just seemed like a million miles away... So we [have] got no money, so what!...You know, in some way we've created a world for ourselves where a lot of our status and value and self-esteem is based around money and material things. And I know it

sounds like a cliché, but when you have all of that taken away from you, you have this realization that actually, I'm still here and I'm okay. It puts all of that other stuff into perspective. It really does (Chris).

This narrative rationalises the interviewee's financial situation by casting the choice to move to Mercury Bay as one that is beneficial to quality of life in a non-economic sense, and moreover places a higher value on the social capital benefits of life in Mercury Bay than that of economic capital. Moreover, the narrative echoes the assertions of a number of authors that lifestyle reasons are connected to notions of the rural idyll (Bae & Chow, 2014; Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013).

Migration to a rural locality is often acted upon after exit from the labour market (Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). These authors claim that in-migrants are more likely to have been self-employed prior to their move. Three of the seven participants that took part in this current research were self-employed prior to moving to Mercury Bay. Of these, two participants had businesses that were not specifically tied to location and could thus be relocated. In-migration decisions are rarely made on the basis of a one dimensional defining factor. Rather, decisions are multifaceted, and the loosening of ties to specific locations is likely to be one influential component of a host of motivations implicated in the decision to move (Bae & Chow, 2014; Stockdale, 2014).

Whereas some participants' narratives focus on financial stressors in the city environment, others emphasize potential financial and lifestyle gains that may be able to be accessed in Mercury Bay. Stockdale and MacLeod (2013) suggest that in-migrants often anticipate owning a rural business that enables a holiday-like lifestyle. One interviewee speaks directly to this concept. He and his partner spent some time looking for a business in Mercury Bay that would suit their perceived lifestyle needs prior to in-migrating. This course of action indicates a rational plan to in-migrate in which options are considered and strategies formulated to make the move a viable proposition. After a substantial period of time investigating opportunities they had narrowed down the type of venture they would consider and eventually purchased a

business that retails to both locals and tourists. The business has not realized all of their hopes:

I was thinking the economy would have picked up, by now, closer to where it was back in 2008, 2007. Um, with the idea that I wouldn't have to work so hard, or the company would make more profit, so I could get people to work in there, so we'd sort of work, four days a week (Peter).

Despite the business not fully realising the financial aspirations of the owners, this interviewee remains somewhat satisfied with their joint decision to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. Later in the interview Peter demonstrated a considered rational approach to their in-migration decision and combines lifestyle choices with financial reasons as a motivation for moving: “[Mercury Bay] had everything; we ticked a lot of the boxes we were looking for. Um, [we] liked the place, the intention was to retire here, so, [we] just moved early!”

This comment supports the claims by a number of authors that frequently in-migrants undertake their move as part of a retirement plan, rather than as a strategy to start again (Gurran & Blakely, 2007; Philip et al., 2013; Stockdale, 2014). For example, Stockdale and MacLeod (2013, p. 88) argue that sole-person businesses such as bed and breakfast/ accommodation providers and consultancy-type businesses are on the whole favoured by in-migrants and are “consistent with a personal desire to strike a lifestyle change and a greater work-life balance”.

The notion of changing one's circumstances to alter the working life trajectory clearly articulates the urge to seek a lifestyle change that incorporates work-life balance within the structure of a small business operation. An example is provided by one participant who had purchased a house in Mercury Bay three years prior to moving with the intention of eventually retiring. A personal health crisis occurred not long after the house purchase causing a reconsideration of life-plan trajectory. Prior to in-migrating the participant ran a successful business and her partner had a well-paid senior leadership role in a government organization. The partner relinquished the city-based career for a much lesser paid position that is locally based. The couple

chose to convert their home into a high-end Bed and Breakfast business catering to the luxury market which the interviewee manages while her partner remains in the external/paid workforce. The tourism business is part-time and less stressful. For this participant, in-migration has realized the couple's aim of blending financial and social imperatives: "Here I'm part-time, looking after the [business name], so I do have spare time and it's also nice to get out and relax with people" (Paula).

This couple demonstrate an active decision to manage the tension between financial and social imperatives by de-scaling their professional work commitments in favour of positions that offered a stronger work/life balance. Whilst their initial move to Mercury Bay was based around them both continuing their city-based careers, once established socially in Mercury Bay they felt that to continue to do so was incongruent with their new lifestyle. The decision to relinquish their previous careers resulted in a situation where their income is significantly less than they earned when they resided in the city. Despite this outcome, the participant constructs their story of in-migration as having been beneficial. Clearly this participant places value on non-economic benefits of lifestyle that balance the loss of income.

The motif of relinquishing a robust income for a lesser one that also allows a better quality of lifestyle is repeated throughout the data set. The most dramatic example of this notion is exemplified by one participant who earned a substantial salary in the city that she relinquished for a wage that was less than a third of her city earnings when she moved to Mercury Bay. Furthermore, she traded a successful corporate position that carried with it status and recognition for a part time, casual job in a local bar. This interviewee, like others, made a planned decision to forego higher earnings, and was able to emotionally compensate for this by placing a higher value on lifestyle:

Oh yeah it was a big step backwards financially, but it was *total* lifestyle. I knew financially I wouldn't be getting on the same money in Whitianga at all, and I was totally expecting that, so it was all about the lifestyle (Lorraine).

She emphasized this point a number of times throughout the interview, claiming that:

[I] started working at [the hospitality business] basically for board, and I knew summer was going to be busy and I had some money coming in but [I was] fully anticipating that I would have nothing during the winter months, and then the job at [an office] came up and that was the hardest decision because it was, 'do I want to go back and do 40 hours a week at an office?' But it was full time, permanent and good money especially for Whitianga, yeah, and I get to walk to work past the beach! (Lorraine).

The emphasis on lifestyle contrasts starkly with values that are ascribed to the conditions of her working life in the city. This participant's decision to leave a financially secure career that had status in favour of an uncertain future in a small town attracted deep concern from friends, family and peers. However, for this interviewee, the lure of a more utopian lifestyle compensated for both monetary loss and loss of status. In Mercury Bay she has created a more connected, meaningful lifestyle. She adopts a daily routine of walking to work along the beach and greeting other early morning walkers whom she does not know personally, but with whom she enjoys a micro-relationship that involves mutual recognition and a sense of community. For this participant, opportunities to interact on a personal level with people with whom, in a city environment, she would otherwise have nothing to do, is of greater value than extrinsic and intrinsic rewards offered by a highly paid and respected career in the city. This suggests a complex dynamism between social attachment and natural amenities as a motivator for in-migration. On a broader scale Brehm et al. (2004) argue that the well-being of rural communities is linked to dimensions of social and natural attachment and that these dimensions have a complex relationships with other aspects of embeddedness such as economic and cultural capitals.

## 4.5 Isolation

Simmel asserts that the money economy that operates in a city environment reinforces aloofness and rationality. This milieu, where the producer of goods or services is isolated from the end-user, has “coalesced into a structure of the highest impersonality” as a result of rationalized and calculated transactions that cross over into the psyche of the inhabitant of the metropolis (Simmel, 1903, as cited in Nehring, 2013, p. 153). As a result of the money economy logic that shapes behaviour in the metropolis, quality and individuality are reduced to a quantitative level. This practice results in a type of indifference that is not experienced to the same degree in a rural setting.

Sennett (1998) also explores the notion of disengaged personal relations in a city environment and attributes this to a complex interplay of flexible capitalism, built environment and increased work stress. Sennett asserts that the temporality of flexible capitalism impacts on an individual’s commitment to mutual engagement with other workers as short-term superficial relationships at work become the norm. This is exacerbated by the trend towards standardized neutrality in the built environment of the city that is designed to accommodate the transitory nature of flexible capitalism in which businesses start up, reform or disband according to market forces (Sennett, 2000).

Isolation and alienation within the metropolitan city environment are deeply implicated in the structure of flexible capitalism that is becoming the norm in developed countries. The deficits of the structural change in the workplace as described by Sennett (2006) result in diminished social capital that permeate the work environment and extend into the lives of the employees and thus into the social fabric of life in the city. Internal competition breeds lack of fraternity, puts enormous stress on workers and promotes mistrust and lack of social cohesion as workers refrain from emotionally investing in workplace relations. Long, intense working days exacerbate stress and decrease loyalty. Sennett claims that “pressure becomes a self-contained, deadening experience in firms with low social capital” and that employees suffer social, psychological and intra-personal consequences as a result (Sennett, 2006, p. 66).

The effect of workplace stress, its resulting social isolation and its extension into the private lives of workers, is articulated and reproduced by the interviewees in this research. Emblematic of this is the narrative of a participant who expressed feelings of isolation and distance from work colleagues which spilled over into her personal life. The paucity of people with whom she felt able to form deeper attachments was a source of anxiety to her. She talks of “being paid well, but big rent, big costs, not going anywhere, not being able to meet anyone because you’re busy” (Lorraine).

The impact of the city environment on social relationships is a common theme across the interviewees. Environment and social norms interact in complex ways that affect the frequency and manner of social interaction. The difficulties in maintaining social relationships incorporate elements of time, space, workplace demands, and the acceptable social norms of interaction: One participant discusses the difficulties in maintaining contact with friends and colleagues who move within the bounds of her source city. The difficulties are constructed around issues of traffic and of time needed to travel across suburbs: “Well you only see me twice a year now anyway [laughs] because that’s what it’s like in Auckland” (Lynn).

Geography and alienation are linked in ways that are not immediately apparent. For example, Mercury Bay is geographically isolated yet on the whole, social alienation from others is not pronounced and is the exception rather than the norm. Conversely, Auckland is geographically centrally located yet alienation from others is experienced as a social norm in the milieu of the metropolis, by the participants in this research. Lynn’s statement makes a clear link between alienation and place. “That’s what it’s like in Auckland” situates alienation on a spatial level rather than an individual level. The narrative construction of place provides a tool to explain why she and her partner are able to relocate to another region (Mercury Bay) and avoid replication of issues of alienation that they experienced in the city.

The concept of social isolation being linked to place is demonstrated in all the narratives. An interviewee recounts an incident that illuminates the differences in social interactions according to place. In her volunteer role in Mercury Bay she interacts with essential services such as search and rescue organizations, fire, police and ambulance services. As a result of these interactions, she is in the habit of

greeting people in these organizations if she passes them in her daily business regardless of whether she knows them personally or not. In Mercury Bay the greetings are always acknowledged. Recently when in a city on business she passed a police officer on the street and waved. The participant describes feeling “jolted” at the cold response from the officer and was shocked to realize that her actions were out of place in the city environment yet seemed so natural in her adopted town. This interviewee has clearly acquired the habitus of a Mercury Bay local that is reproduced in her social interactions when passing another person in a street.

Despite differing social and personal backgrounds that include single, heterosexual and homosexual family life, a common theme of social alienation is observed across the dataset, although it is experienced differently according to the particular set of circumstances of each interviewee. A representation of the diversity of experience around the common theme of isolation is provided by one interviewee whose move to Mercury Bay was primarily in response to her partner’s workplace stress. This participant articulated the truncated relationships she experienced in her city life in a more positive light. She discusses this in relation to the reaction of friends to their decision to move to Mercury Bay.

We were relatively mobile at that time, we’d already shifted into Auckland from rural South Auckland and had been there about three years, and so people knew we were flexible and would move about... I think some of my friends in Auckland were disappointed that we’d only sort of just come to know one another (Maryanne).

This excerpt reveals that discontinuous relationships that often occur in a city environment are characterized by flux and change. Similarly, flexible capitalism is characterized by discontinuous jobs (Sennett, 1995, 1998, 2000). Thus a worker can expect to change jobs or move numerous times in their working career, even if that person remains with the same company or in the same field. Moving jobs often entails moving areas to accommodate travel demands. As the above narrative shows, even moving within the boundaries of a city results in the loss of friendships and the forming of new ones. Another interviewee also refers to the discontinuous

nature of relationships in the city and laments the twin causes of spatial difficulties of travelling to different suburbs and lack of available free time as a barrier that results in abridged relationships: “I’d sort of lost contact with a lot of people” (Lynn). The effect of flexible capitalism and the expansion of urban sprawl on social relationships is that fewer of the social relationships one has extend into differing spatial contexts (Sennett, 1998).

#### **4.6 Chapter Four: Conclusion**

This chapter identified that participants construct discourse around negative factors in the city environment that justify their reasons for deciding to in-migrate to a rural/coastal town that is by Aotearoa New Zealand standards, remote. From the main push theme of negativity, four sub-themes were identified from the data to illustrate the motivations for in-migration. The narratives used by the interviewees in this thesis centre around negative effects of the urban cityscape including work stress, urban pressures, financial considerations and isolation or alienation. Discussion within this chapter has demonstrated links between the narrative constructions of the participants and literature on motivations for in-migration, and the social distancing effects of flexible capitalism and urban pressures. These links relate to dissonance and unease experienced by individuals as a result of the logics of the contemporary city environment.

The next chapter, Chapter Five, considers pull factors that in-migrants discuss as motivations to move from their homes based in cities to the coastal/rural environment of Mercury Bay. It considers the effect of the environment, opportunities to transition into retirement and an enhanced sense of community. Additionally the chapter discusses perceived opportunities that provide a lever for in-migrants to contribute to their new community.

## **Chapter Five: Change- Pull factors**

The previous chapter examined push factors that were given as reasons for pre-retirement in-migrants to give up their urban lifestyles and in-migrate to Mercury Bay. The current chapter investigates pull factors that are identified as positive reasons to move to Mercury Bay. The pull factors are multiple and contingent: each participant responds differently to a combination of pull factors that motivated their in-migration. Despite the diversity shown in pull factors, some common themes are evident. These pull factors have been organized into sub-themes. The sub-themes under consideration include the environment, transition retirement, sense of community, perceived opportunity, the ability to make a difference, use of their existing skill-set, and sense of community.

### **5.1 Environment**

Perceptions of a better lifestyle and higher quality of experience have been linked with in-migration to remote rural areas (Bosworth & Willett, 2011). The coastal/rural idyll provides a positive image of an alternative to metropolitan living and draws on images of a romantic past where social relations are involved, connected and harmonious. Additionally this romanticized notion of small coastal town living has elements of attachment to place and expanded leisure opportunities. The tourism website that promotes Whitianga, the largest town in Mercury Bay, is owned by the Mercury Bay Business Association and opens with the following statement:

Welcome to Mercury Bay, the buzz of the Coromandel Peninsula, where you can leave the stresses of city life behind. The place where you can do a little or a lot - the pace of life can be as busy or as calm as you choose, where people smile and say hello when you walk down the street. No traffic lights, no peak hour traffic, no city hustle and bustle – just you and your imaginings (Mercury Bay Business Association, 2015).

The above website's pitch is clearly aimed at urban city-dwellers and appeals to the romanticised idea of the coastal/rural idyll. It connects environment with sociality and evokes a nostalgic era of engaged social relations and slow, uncomplicated pace of life. The allure of the coastal/rural idyll is evident, yet paradoxically the website ties this notion with 'buzz' and busy-ness; perhaps in an appeal to the habitus of city-dwellers teetering between dichotomies of lifestyles. Despite being a tourism website presumably aimed at potential short-term visitors to the region, the second page of the website is evidently focussed on attracting permanent in-migrants with business aspirations. The website makes a pitch for potential in-migrants by asking: "New to business or thinking about setting up? Just moved to town and haven't make contacts yet? (Mercury Bay Business Association, 2015).

Concerns in academic literature divide between in-migrants' perceptions of the rural idyll as a result of regional 'branding' and the lived experience of the existing population (Turnpenny, 2004, as cited in Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Philip et al., 2013; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). Regional branding is apparent in the promotional aspects of this website. The strategic pitch of this website for new business is primarily designed to appeal to the lifestyle desires of potential business owners rather than to economic concerns that such a business owner may have.

The relationship between the receiving community and in-migrants is a complex one, however the ability of in-migrants to develop a new identity as an endogenous actor within their new location is implicated in successful integration and interaction (Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). This is because the influx of in-migrants has implications for the receiving communities in terms of economic development, community cohesion and community engagement.

The notion of migration in search of an enhanced quality of life has attracted scholarly attention as leisure-oriented and lifestyle migration has increased in contemporary western societies (Brehm et al., 2004; Casado-Diaz et al., 2014). All interviewees had holidayed in the wider Mercury Bay area prior to their decision to in-migrate and this highlights a connection between leisure ideals, lifestyle ideals and natural amenities. Louise had first holidayed as a child with her parents who subsequently brought a section and built a beach house. She frequently holidayed in

Mercury Bay as a result, and later brought her own children for holidays. When she established a relationship with a new partner, Louise introduced him to Mercury Bay after looking at a number of locations throughout the upper North Island as potential places to retire. Eventually they settled on Whitianga, in part because of her association with Whitianga, and in part because of her new partner's enthusiasm for the place: "it was a new experience for him, he just came here and he just loved it" (Louise).

Considerations of environment and place hold an important position in the construction of a new identity in a new location. For example, Walters (2000) identifies a spatial pattern of migration amongst pre-retirees that suggest leisure activities and climate are prime motivators for selection of geographical locations in which to settle. This is supported by Brehm et al. (2004) who assert that the non-economic benefits of a place act as strong motivating factors for in-migrants searching for an improved lifestyle. Moreover, these authors claim that such environmental, geographical, leisure and climate attributes help in-migrants to develop an emotional investment in their new location.

All participants in this research spoke of the environment in affective terms. This indicates a reflexive practice of self-affirming their choices (Howland, 2008). Attaching affect to place increases the depth of the connection an individual has to a particular space and repeated iterations of affect increases the strength of this bond. "Narratives are emotionally and socially evaluated" and can be used as tools to provide sense-making (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013, p. 362). By this process, the interviewees in the current study (re)construct their self-identity as embedded, endogenous actors rather than outsiders in their new environment.

All interviewees made specific reference to their attachment to the environmental attributes of Mercury Bay. A prominent narrative of being *lucky* to live in an environment of such natural and pristine value was common across the data set. Environmental attributes are internalised by participants as symbolic capital to articulate a status position of privilege and luck to be able to live in a beautiful, holiday-like environment year-round rather than only have access to such an environment during annual holidays or long weekends. Emblematic of status

positioning is the following excerpt from Lorraine who spoke of how she enjoys the beauty of the natural environment in Mercury Bay. She elevates the environment to a position of desirability: “And the fun thing is that everyone wants to come and visit!” (Lorraine). This discourse was most commonly used to juxtapose participants’ reasons for moving to the circle of friends, family and acquaintances in the city that do not have the same access or availability of natural amenities.

## **5.2 Transitional in-migration and pre-retirement**

The notion of in-migration as a pre-retirement transitioning strategy is discussed by a number of academics (Philip et al., 2013; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013; Wulff et al., 2010). Philip et al. (2013) note that, contrary to popular belief about migratory flows from cities, much in-migration to rural and coastal areas occurs prior to retirement age, rather than after the traditional retirement age of 65. This assertion is supported by other studies that have also noted this trend (Davis, Crothers, Grant, Young, & Smith, 2012; Stockdale & MacLeod, 2013). This phenomenon suggests that pre-retirement in-migrants undertake their move as part of a plan to transition from full-time paid work into a work pattern that allows for greater lifestyle opportunities.

After holidaying in Mercury Bay for a period of time, a number of interviewees purchased a holiday home with the intent to establish a base in Mercury Bay that would eventually become their permanent residence. British authors Benson and O'Reilly (2009) discuss the complexities involved in such decisions and note that a certain amount of reflexivity is involved in managing residential strategies. Decisions need to be made about which place will be the primary residence, how much time and money will be invested in the holiday home and a host of other emotional, practical and social issues that require deliberation. Moreover, the concept of home involves emotional and symbolic attachments that are strongly connected to physical location (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009). Frequently it is this latter aspect in relation to the search for a more utopian sense of living that determines the primary residence.

The process of loosening the locational ties of one locale to enable resettling in another is noted by Stockdale (2014). For a number of the pre-retirement in-migrants

in this research, the intended holiday home quickly became their first residence. One couple purchased a holiday home but within six months had made the decision to move to Mercury Bay permanently, concluding “we would like to do it the other way round and make this our home and go back to Auckland occasionally” (Lynn). This couple had been spending long weekends in Mercury Bay prior to their move. Lynn is a self-employed professional and had planned to gradually increase her customer base in Mercury Bay to a point where she could decrease her workload in Auckland. The planned loosening of ties with her Auckland based clientele and the simultaneous action to increase the Mercury Bay clientele demonstrates that Lynn and her partner actively employed a strategy of transitioning the in-migration process. This is also demonstrated by their cumulative course of action that was structured around increasing time in Mercury Bay and decreasing time in the city incrementally.

The concept of transitioning into permanent residency also features in other interviewee’s narratives. For example, Paula’s partner had a senior position in a governmental department in a major city while Paula herself worked from their home. The combination of flexible workplace conditions allowed this couple to effectively structure their working time in a tractable manner to facilitate a transition:

[my partner] was commuting to [the city], coming back Wednesday night, working from home Thursday... so we really had Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday up here, ...we stayed here one Christmas for six weeks and we just said at the time, gosh, we’d love to live here permanently (Paula).

The in-migrating pre-retirement cohort is seen to take a planned approach to the withdrawal from economic activity which unfolds over time rather than a previously taken-for-granted abrupt change from one’s activities being categorized as ‘work’ to ‘retired’ (Philip et al., 2013). This suggests individuals are responding to contemporary work and employment conditions that are characterized by flux and instability. Pre-retirement in-migrants are sometimes able to leverage the flexible nature of the work environment to suit the partial nature of their working life during

the transition phase, and thus are able to manage their exit from the field of economic activity to account for this.

Some interviewees had not purchased a holiday home prior to in-migrating to Mercury Bay yet these individuals still demonstrate clear transitory migration strategies. For Peter and his partner, their decision to in-migrate was part of a definitive strategy to exit the job market in source location and purchase their own business in the town of Whitianga. They had spent considerable time holidaying in the area so were familiar with the region's towns, services and infrastructure. They spent some time looking for a business that would potentially suit their needs. Peter notes that they "...took the opportunity, basically looking for something to do down here, so we took the view that we'd come here sooner [rather] than later".

Another participant and her partner continued their working careers after they had in-migrated to Mercury Bay but scaled down their work commitments. The participant's partner is an academic and was able to negotiate part-time work. The participant herself continues with some project-based work through a multinational corporation. The flexible nature of their respective workplaces allowed them to arrange their working engagements to their own advantage and enabled them to utilize the opportunity to work remotely, and this facilitated their decision to in-migrate.

Academic literature suggests that in-migration decisions are seldom simplistic and encompass a wide range of factors that are personally relevant to each individual case of in-migration (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Philip et al., 2013; Wulff et al., 2010). Only one couple did not plan their in-migration specifically as a transition into retirement as the partner took on a permanent, fulltime position in Mercury Bay which the participant constructed as a complex mix between a promotional career move, a necessary move for professional job satisfaction, a desire to access a less complex lifestyle, and a personal satisfaction.

In an example provided by Maryanne, lack of suitable employment was a concern as she had previously established a small business enterprise in the city environment. Despite uncertain job prospects for herself personally, the combination of the partner's working position and their previous experience with the area as holiday-

makers encouraged this couple to reach the decision that the Mercury Bay region would provide a fulfilling lifestyle and meet their needs.

Stockdale (2014) describes in-migration motivations as multi-faceted and the above narratives reflect a similar trend of complex inter-related motivations. Despite participants' narratives revealing a wide range of complex motivations for in-migration, the desire to access a stronger sense of community is one motivation that is evident across all the participants in this research.

### **5.3 Sense of community**

'Sense of community' is a concept that incorporates aspects of belonging and acceptance. Sense of community is defined as "the sense that one was part of a readily supportive network of relationships upon which one can depend" (Saranson, 1974, as cited in Sengupta et al., 2013, p. 38). This definition provides a broad overview of a range of emotions and attributes that cover concepts of connectedness, wellness and civic trust. Sense of community has been demonstrated to have a positive relationship with social capital, psychological and physical well-being, trust and reciprocity (Davis et al., 2012; Sengupta et al., 2013; Witham, 2012). Sense of community is related to meaning in life, life satisfaction and wellbeing and is important on at least two levels; that of the individual and that of the community (Davis et al., 2012; Oswald, 2010; Sherman et al., 2011). Individuals who have developed a sense of community may fulfil their need to belong and have increased subjective physical and mental health (Sengupta et al., 2013). On a structural level, communities with high levels of community sensibility also have higher levels of social cohesion, civic and neighbourly trust, informal social participation, and group participation (Davis et al., 2012).

Whilst an analysis on predictors of sense of community are outside the scope of this research, the importance of this concept remains integral to the identity making resources used by the participants. The desire to experience sense of community has two dimensions. One dimension is embodied; that is, the individual accrues benefits from having a sense of community that contributes to the individuals'

construction of identity. The second dimension embraces a feeling of interconnectedness with a perceived community or group of people. This enables identities to form that define themselves in terms of a greater whole. To this end, engagement with volunteer organizations provides an avenue for in-migrants to develop a sense of community that helps connect them as individuals to the wider social fabric of their new society.

The narratives of the pre-retirement in-migrant cohort reflect a desire for sense of community as illustrated by one interviewee who expressed a desire to contribute to her new community. Lorraine values the opportunity to “give back”. One of her volunteer positions is with a community group that works in conjunction with the Police and Fire service. This is a community initiative that acts as the ‘eyes and ears’ of the afore-mentioned services and their main role is to alert the police or fire brigade if anything needs attending to. This interviewee enjoys “keeping people safe” and thinks it is “quite nice” to be involved in this aspect of the community. Lorraine’s story, about involvement with a community group whose task it is to watch over the area while it collectively slumbers, appeals to her altruistic sensibilities. She considers that she is directly and materially contributing to the wider social trust that is experienced within the community, and moreover that this mutual trust is reflected back to her personally.

A common theme across the interviews is the desire to develop a social network. In line with in-migrants’ desires to experience greater social cohesion, the networks sought are not necessarily of close social connections, but ones in which faces and names of people are familiar. A participant provides a good example of this notion where he contrasts city and small town social relationships:

You go to the supermarket and you’ll always meet five or six people that you know, and you’ll stop and have a chat. That doesn’t happen in the city. You can go to a mall and do your entire shopping for the week and never meet a single person that you know (Chris).

Interviewees feel recognised and valued in a smaller town where social relationships extend past close friends and kin into the wider community so as to include people

one can recognise by sight and come into contact on a frequent basis. These 'micro'-relationships contribute to an overall sense of well-being and connectedness that the in-migrants lacked in the city environment. Another participant talks affectionately about the crossover of people that she meets through her volunteering experiences in Mercury Bay that she also meets in other situations. These situations are ordinary, everyday occurrences such as at the supermarket, as Chris describes above, or walking to work.

Yeah definitely you recognise them and say hi to them, and that's what I love about small towns, I mean I walk to work every morning and I pass three or four people and I've got no idea of their names, their backgrounds or anything, but every morning it's 'good morning, how's it going, have a great day'. You'd never get that in a city and if you did people would look at you like you're crazy! (Lorraine).

Upon moving to Mercury Bay all interviewees realized that they would have to branch out and meet people. All interviewees sought out such opportunities and the common choice was to become involved with volunteering in a community group. This course of action helped to achieve the twin aims of increasing social capital and developing a sense of community to become more deeply embedded in their new community. Some interviewees chose a number of organisations that allowed them to develop a wide network of people; others selected just one organization but became very involved with the chosen group.

The heterogeneous nature of community organizations provides an ideal opportunity for new in-migrants to create a network of people and develop their social capital. Maryanne speaks eloquently of this aspect of her life in Mercury Bay as she describes her experiences with volunteering:

[They were] not necessarily people that I would choose to strike friendships with. But certainly it put me into a position where I could start to really tap into that rich, quite deep, everyday community life that is present here. What I felt, right from the word go, was that I was able to feed from that rich soil of everyday community life.

The sense of inter-connectedness of social life in a small community experienced by this participant reveals a deeply seated appreciation of the strengths that a rich community life contributes to daily life. The availability of networks to which this particular interviewee was able to connect, and by which to build the everyday fabric of her life, has enabled her to explore her own talents and abilities and provided her with the opportunity to share her skills with the wider community. All this occurred through her engagement with volunteer community groups.

#### **5.4 Perceived opportunity**

Within the theme of pull factors a further sub-theme of perceived opportunity is present in the narratives of the interviewees. The concept of 'opportunity' provides interviewees with a discursive tool to imagine a future of possibilities that may not be available to them in the city environment, or at least may have been more difficult to access. Moreover, the concept of opportunity also incorporates within it the promise of change.

For some interviewees, opportunities presented by volunteering allow for development of the individual themselves. Bourdieu calls this 'human capital' (Bourdieu, 1997). The opportunity to expand one's knowledge through volunteering is palpable for some interviewees and provides a lever to help the participants embed themselves in the local community. Personal development and growth are attractive motivators for individuals to connect with volunteer groups (Sherman et al., 2011). For example, Maryanne appreciates the "opportunity to learn about arts, to learn about local government, to learn about funding. You know, I've learnt so much!"

The clarity with which individuals see these opportunities is directly related to the level of population within the Mercury Bay area. It is much easier to gain recognition in a small town as opposed to a big city simply because it is much easier to be visible when individuals' paths cross in a variety of different contexts. Additionally it is relatively easy to gain access to exposure through the local media, as some of the

participants have done in the course of their work with volunteer organizations. In the Mercury Bay area there is a free local weekly newspaper that is widely read, as well as a local radio station that broadcasts to the immediate area. These two forms of media focus more or less exclusively on local content. Any new business, initiative or community action within the Mercury Bay area is likely to attract some level of exposure through these mediums.

Maryanne is one of three interviewees whose work with volunteering has attracted local media attention. Consequently Maryanne has become a relatively well-known figure in Mercury Bay and this has contributed to the growth of the organization with which she volunteers. She acknowledges that this achievement would be difficult in a larger urban area where there are many groups competing for space and attention.

There's a certain privilege in that. In coming into a community which is almost like a blank canvas. So that privilege, for me, is that this community has allowed me to explore this whole facilitation of [volunteering field]. In a city, probably 300 other groups and individuals associated with those groups are doing what I'm doing here, but because it's a blank canvas, I've had this colossal opportunity. (Maryanne)

Aside from exposure through the local media, individuals see opportunity to make sense of their lives and to satisfy their altruistic intentions through local volunteer groups. The availability of volunteering opportunities combined with a perceived sense of being valued for one's work or skill can interact to build a new identity.

[There is] much more scope in small towns, many more organizations that need you. Well, yeah those are my two main reasons. Because there's a need, and because you're more comfortable when you go and do it and it's a bit more casual and it's less competitive. I mean in some cases in Auckland it's a case of "Oh well, who needs me? Well it doesn't really look like anyone needs me- well let's not try" (Lynn).

The visibility and accessibility of opportunities in Mercury Bay make it easier for people to connect with volunteer organisations. Because of the cross-over that occurs in a smaller population, where people have greater recognition of others through acquaintances and interactions in their daily lives, individuals feel more able to approach others to become volunteers; or in the case of in-migrants, approach people they know, or know of, to join a local community organisation. Granovetter (1973) calls this accessibility to wider social circles “the strength of weak ties”. He asserts that it is easier for individuals to access social capital and other resources through acquaintances and friends of friends, rather than through strong ties or closed groups. This is because the networks which overlap each other are much wider amongst weak ties, and cover more social groups because of their heterogeneous nature. To restate this, those with whom we have weak ties also move in circles other than our own usual circles, and thus have the ability to put us into contact with a wider and more diverse range of people.

In a small population, weak ties extend and are reinforced more readily than in a larger population simply because due to economies of scale, an individual is more likely to come across a person they have had contact with through a weak tie connection. For example, there are only two relatively small supermarkets in the entire Mercury Bay area and consequently meeting a person who has been introduced through a weak tie in the supermarket aisles is relatively common. Coupled with the in-migrant’s wish to become embedded as locals and their initially conscious effort to attune their habitus to the local social norms, in-migrants will often engage in conversation with people with whom they have weak ties; thus supermarket conversations are surprisingly commonplace occurrences in Mercury Bay.

In-migrants are able to acquire the habitus of an endogenous actor over a period of time. This is achieved through the sequential transformation of their dispositions and expectations as they act, react and interact in the fields of their daily encounters (Prieto et al., 2013). Bourdieu (1997, p. 52) states that “the existence of a network of connections is not a natural given”. Therefore an individual (and more pointedly, a new in-migrant) must actively work to establish a network of people with which to form functional and mutually beneficial relationships. Furthermore, Bourdieu (1997)

asserts that the investment of time and energy into establishing networks only makes sense if those networks aim to produce and reproduce durable relationships that are directly usable.

## **5.5 Making a difference**

The ability to 'make a difference' or to donate one's skills or labour is much more palpable in a small community than in a large urban environment. Partly this is to do with economies of scale; because a city has the potential to provide a much wider range of resources, people and skills to any given project than is available in a smaller setting the visibility and effectiveness of one's individual contribution can be perceived as having less impact. Conversely, in a small town, the smaller pool of potential contributors to any given project ensures a greater visibility and impact. Participants in this study demonstrate an awareness of the differences in availability of volunteering opportunities between the city environment and that of small towns, and construct the perceived need for their skills as a motivating factor to become involved in the community.

As an example of making a difference, one interviewee volunteers in a variety of different organizations. She works with local school children as a 'reader' to help young children develop their reading skills, volunteers her accountancy skills to a new branch of a seniors' advocacy group, has recently taken on a commitment to manage the accounts for a community performing arts project and hosts international students from one of the local language schools. All of these opportunities became possible through the social capital obtained through people with whom she and her partner have become acquainted. Because of the accessibility of opportunities that she has been able to access through weak ties, she is able to offer a range of her skills across a range of organizations. The use of skills for communal good helps develop feelings of connectedness and embeddedness within her new environment and satisfies an altruistic imperative that is tied up with notions of attachment to place and a desire to 'give back' to the new community which has welcomed her.

Narratives of meaning-making through volunteering resonate with the findings of Sherman et al. (2011) which found that volunteerism predicts higher life regard amongst older women volunteers than older women who did not volunteer. Paula demonstrates how volunteering has provided a depth of significance, relatedness and meaning to her life. Paula's experience has put her into contact with people with whom she otherwise would not have any connection. She states:

I'm not so cynical any longer and I've seen a different side of life. I'd say I grew up relatively comfortably, never had to worry about food or anything like that. Some of these people [that her volunteer group provides services for], you see them looking at things, and they can't even afford to buy a three dollar pair of shoes, so you know; it certainly changes your outlook on life.

## **5.6 Chapter Five: Conclusion**

Like chapter Four, Chapter Five considered themes that are evident in the pre-retirement in-migrants' narratives of change, with a focus on the positive or 'pull' factors that are constructed by interviewees to legitimize their decisions to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. Positive environmental factors, transitions retirement strategies, a stronger sense of community, the availability of perceived opportunities and the ability to utilize existing skill-sets demonstrate evidence of the narrative constructions used by the pre-retirement in-migrants to contribute to sense-making of their decisions to in-migrate.

The following chapter, Chapter Six, investigates the pull factor of "Place" in more detail. Attachment to place is an important resource for in-migrants to help them adjust and assimilate to their new environment. This chapter considers the geographic and spatial effects of attachment to place, alongside the social features of attachment to place.

## Chapter Six: Place

The process of identifying with place involves a complex interplay of factors. These factors include personal interpretations of the geo-physical environment, the social features of place attachment, and the adaptability of the habitus the pre-retirement in-migrant carries with them. Social, cultural and symbolic capitals are important elements that are obtained by actors in their process of identifying with place. Inherent in this process is the assumption that identifying with place contributes to one's personal identity.

Contemporary flexible capitalism impoverishes the value of work which concurrently impoverishes the value of place (Sennett, 1998, 2000). The contemporary job market characterized by economically flexible and highly mobile corporate entities has reduced attachment to the traditional conception of 'work' and career' and has diminished attachment to place. This has become an area of increasing concern because individuals have a need to 'belong' somewhere in particular (Sennett, 1997). One effect of flexible capitalism is that the desire for attachment to place is romanticized to some degree and I suggest that this increases the appeal of notions of the coastal/rural idyll.

I propose that the 'place' of Mercury Bay represents an opportunity for the embodiment of a coastal/rural idyll, which is a reconceptualization of notions of rural idyll conditions. The rural idyll projects a range of "contradictory ideological and symbolic loads" that are able to be appropriated to reflect contemporary aspirations (Howland, 2008, p. 80). For the interviewees in this research, the coastal rurality aspirations include a desire to embed themselves in their new community where opportunities for enhanced social cohesion are thought to exist and to engage with their new community in a way that allows them to become endogenous actors in a meaningful way. Notions of a slower pace of life, greater use of geographical and leisure amenities (also called consumption of place), enhanced social cohesion and lack of urban stressors in their new location are employed by interviewees as a resource to make sense of their in-migration. Ironically, in-migrants also sense an opportunity to impose their urban-acquired skills, culture and experience on what they perceive as a less sophisticated, less worldly community.

The discourse of attachment to place may be particularly important for in-migrants to the Mercury Bay region for the following reasons. According to the 2013 census statistics, 4368 people live permanently in Whitianga town compared with 3081 people in the 2001 census (Profile.id, 2015). The difference of 1,287 people represents a population increase of 41.77%. With approximately one in three people being in-migrants in the last 12 years, it is not unusual that upon meeting new people, the conversation turns to place of origin and reasons for in-migrating. It is a common and expected conversational occurrence that is utilized to establish the length of time an individual has been a permanent resident of Mercury Bay. Kudos is given to those who have longer time spans of permanent residency rather than time as a holidaymaker. The purpose of such a conversation is not necessarily to establish the region that people have actually come from or to seek commonality with other in-migrants. The original place of residence is inconsequential; it is of passing interest compared to the actual time of local residence in Mercury Bay and the reasons given for choosing Mercury Bay as a residential location over and above the previous location. Given the lack of social connectedness between holiday-makers and residents, discussion of place of origin and time of residency becomes an important discursive tool for new residents to publicly demonstrate their attachment to place by establishing emotive links and investments.

## **6.1 Geographic and spatial features of attachment to place**

Analysis of the data supports the assertion that pre-retirement in-migrants utilize narrative to establish a connection between identity and place. This pairing is used as a tool for establishing a 'local' identity within their new community. Brehm et al. (2004) suggest that attachment to the physical aspects of place is stronger in recent in-migrants than in those whose residency in-situ covers a longer time span. They theorize that this phenomenon occurs because recent in-migrants have not yet had the benefit of longer-term embedded social relationships as they begin to integrate into their new communities and must therefore draw on geophysical attributes to construct an enduring basis for connection. The attachment to geophysical attributes is constructed as a kind of symbolic capital by the participants who draw links

between geophysical features and their good fortune in being able to reside in Mercury Bay.

All interviewees express a desire for “consumption of place” (Bosworth & Willett, 2011, p. 210). Consumption of place refers to the use of geographic and spatial features of a specific area by an individual. For example, fishing and boating are popular past-times that use the geographical features of the Mercury Bay area. Use of the coastal environment is an integral part of the community in Mercury Bay and this is reflected in the number of leisure-based organizations that are available. These include the popular game fishing club, locally referred to as “the Shark Club”, the coastguard, at least three scuba diving organizations, a spearfishing club, Waka ama (traditional Māori outrigger canoe) club and a yachting/sailing club. All interviewees claim to utilize the beaches, ocean and offshore islands for leisure activities in some capacity. A representative comment is made by one participant who asserts: “It’s just such a lovely place to be. [It’s a] very safe, very easy environment. [There are] just so many different beaches and different walks to go on around here” (Louise).

All participants considered the availability of services and utilities in the Mercury Bay area before committing to in-migration. This includes consideration of the standard and availability of opportunities for leisure consumption such as restaurants and cafes, as well as cultural activities such as theatre, shows, markets and concerts. Consideration of such features suggests that the pre-retirement in-migrants place value on lifestyle opportunities that extend beyond a simple coastal rurality. Uncluttered public spaces and pretty white beaches in themselves do not fulfil the criteria. The sociality afforded by a thriving café and cultural scene couples with reflexive individuality to create an attractive proposition for the interviewees. Reflexive individualism refers to the individual’s compulsion to self-affirm their choices (Howland, 2008; Lewis, 2006). Working off a framework of theories developed by Ulrich Beck, Lewis (2006, p. 262) asserts that:

People's personal biographies are becoming freed from their attachment to the fixed categories of social identity such as social class, family, gender or occupation that once marked modernity. This

shift towards reflexive individualization means that choice becomes central to people's existence as their identities are formed increasingly through lifestyle-oriented decision-making.

The pre-retirement in-migrants interviewed for this study demonstrate the interaction of reflexive individualization with identity formation through lifestyle choices. Because of this, the consumption of place discourse is an important one for pre-retirement in-migrants because it is used for both establishing cultural capital in Mercury Bay among their new social circles and also for affirming their choices to work colleagues, friends and family in their source locations.

The discourse used for the first audience (new social networks in Mercury Bay) demonstrates a commitment and attachment to place that legitimizes an individual's attempt to embed in their new location and construct a new subjectivity as a local resident. The value of symbolic capital can be observed in this discourse. Symbolic capital is important because it "grants the power of recognition" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). In-migrants actively work to develop symbolic capital for two reasons. Firstly, to establish legitimacy as embedded residents with the locals, and secondly as a justificatory frame of reference for moving from friends, family and colleagues in the urban cityscape they have chosen to leave. Chris exemplifies the first iteration of the utility of symbolic capital when explaining his attachment to his new location. He discusses the benefits of Mercury Bay as a juxtaposition to the rest of the world:

I'm kiwi but I've travelled a lot, and when you look around at what there is in the rest of the world, and then you come and drive down Albert Street and come out the end of Buffalo Beach Road, and you look around here, you have to appreciate, we're very, very fortunate.

The discourse presented for the latter audience (friends and family in the source location) demonstrates an individual's reflexive individuality by calling attention to their self-affirming values in selecting a high amenity-value location that is not only geographically desirable but also has a desirable built environment providing a selection of quality cafés, restaurants and bars that act as sites of leisure consumption. For the interviewees in this study, reflexive individualism is a

fundamental tool in establishing connection to place and is used as a justificatory frame with which to explain their in-migration to friends, family and work colleagues in their source city location. The interviewees relate interactions between themselves and their city workmates to demonstrate this. For example one interviewee imagines that her colleagues “were quite jealous” (Louise), another describes her in-migration to Mercury Bay as “going to paradise... [I’m] not just going to imagine it, [I’m] actually going to live the dream” (Lynn).

Self-affirming discourses of consumption can be conceptualized as a display of social distinction and identification (Howland, 2008). The dualism of the self-affirming discourse used by the participants intertwines history, biography and future possibilities by constructing symbolic capital back amongst relationships left behind in the city, and forward by establishing cultural capital amongst new circles of friends and acquaintances in Mercury Bay. The attractive features of the built environment in Mercury Bay serve as a discursive tool to self-affirm in-migration: “It ticked all the boxes” (Chris) and “it’s got everything you want” (Peter) are examples of the discourse used to achieve this. Another participant demonstrates the performativity of a self-affirming discourse when discussing the benefits of living in Mercury Bay:

This was the definite pull. We’re fairly discerning about where we would go. We didn’t want to just pick up and go to any old place by the sea, but it definitely had to be by the sea! (Lynn).

Places as spatial fields are interpreted from social positions and draw on social reasons (Rose, 1995, as cited in Sheather & McIntyre, 2013). Conceptually, the idea of ‘place’ is multi-dimensional. Place takes account of distinct physical, geographic and social features of a particular geographical area (Sheather & McIntyre, 2013). These features have a complex inter-relationship with each other. For example, Brehm et al. (2004) explain that community attachment is more than just a consideration of social attachment because it includes dimensions of the natural environment and amenity availability. Additionally, the idea of place draws on notions of “place myth” which Coyle and Fairweather (2005, p. 149) describe as a conglomeration of positive images that accumulate over time to become “picture-postcard” representations of an area.

The multi-dimensional nature of place is discussed by a number of participants and presented as reasons for in-migration. The excerpt below is emblematic of this. In this excerpt Lynn discusses the reasons that she and her partner chose to in-migrate to Mercury Bay despite having no social connections in the area. This excerpt is interesting on a number of levels. Firstly, the narrative loosens ties with the urban environment (“There’s nothing compelling”). Next, the narrative demonstrates individual reflexivity by indicating a considered choice of attractive features, and thirdly the participant attributes social cohesiveness to place (“it’s got a real heart”) despite having no prior personal experience of social cohesiveness in Whitianga:

There’s nothing compelling about the Auckland lifestyle... we checked off what it’s got as far as features that we like, and one of the main characteristics of Whitianga is that it’s got a real heart, a community (Lynn).

Bourdieu’s idea of place connects to different forms of capital that are acquired over time; in particular, cultural capital. Bourdieu (1997) suggests that cultural capital exists in three states; the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutional state. The embodied state occurs in the form of enduring dispositions in the bodily state, the objectified state refers to tangible cultural goods and the institutionalized state refers to institutional conferring of cultural capital through a collective recognition such as through educational achievements and other types of instituted rewards. Of particular relevance in this thesis is the notion of cultural capital in the embodied state. Bourdieu claims the embodied state exists “in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body” (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 47).

The pre-retiree in-migrants interviewed for this thesis actively work to construct cultural capital through the use of discourse and modes of behaviour that connects the self to place. Moreover they use the tools of discourse and embodiment to embed a particular disposition of mind and body into themselves and into their interactions with others. Symbolic elements that may reflect cultural capital include tastes, behaviours and posture. The embodiment of taste and posture, along with

other ways of being, signal a state of belonging. Possessing similar forms of cultural capital with local residents creates a sense of belonging to the group.

Embodied cultural capital is evident in some of the longer term in-migrants who have adopted ways of being that are attuned to that of the locals. This includes modes of behaviour such as relaxed attitudes to rigid time-keeping that is the norm in city workplaces, adoption of outdoor pursuits that were previously not pursued but are part of the local culture (such as sailing and fishing) and a casual approach to workplace dress standards. For example, very few men (and neither of the two men interviewed for this research) wear business suits in Mercury Bay. Bourdieu suggests that habitus is the accumulation of currencies of capital over a period time (Sheather & McIntyre, 2013). The adaptation of cultural capital presupposes an active investment of time and energy to acquire certain dispositions which are reflected as an adapted habitus. In other words, individuals as agents assiduously work to acquire these traits.

## **6.2 Social features of attachment to place**

The emblem of 'social connection' is a potent one for reimagining a new life defined by a more utopian view of daily life than that which is available under the logics of flexible capitalism and high-density urban lifestyles. This discourse acts as a frame to assign emotional connection to place. It is also utilized as a way of asserting embeddedness. The interviewees placed careful emphasis on the desirability and availability of social connections that exist in a smaller place. For example, one interviewee and her partner brought a holiday home and "quickly found out that our neighbours were very friendly and looked forward to us coming here every weekend" (Paula). The sense of being welcomed and having one's presence 'looked forward to' suggests a value placed on social cohesion and neighbourliness that is perceived as lacking in the metropolis.

Benson and O'Reilly (2009) draw a link between leisure activities and the development of social capital in a new environment as actors find themselves interacting with others who have similar leisure interests. Most interviewees noted

that they had met a range of people through leisure activities or membership of clubs and organizations such as the game fishing club, sailing club, bridge club or arts community. On the whole, these organizations provide opportunities for bridging social capital as described by Putnam (2000). Forms of bridging social capital allow actors to “generate broader identities” and are useful for individuals who are seeking to extend their reach into society (Putnam, 2000, p. 23). An example of how the weak ties in bridging capital can be utilized is provided by a participant who became involved in a variety of groups:

[it] just ramifies and people who you’ve met in [one community group] who also are involved in [another community group], you become more firmly established for them as friendships. I mean acquaintances and friendships as well. And then through [the first community group], getting to know people that led me to doing some volunteer work for [a third organization], just once a month doing a Thursday, just being out etcetera etcetera.. Meeting more people again! (Louise).

### **6.3 Chapter Six: Conclusion**

This chapter addressed the influence that attachment to place has on in-migrants. Attachment to place is multidimensional and includes physical, emotional and social elements. The physical dimension is demonstrated by narratives that attach importance to the geophysical attributes of Mercury Bay that afford lifestyle activities to the pre-retirement in-migrants. In some cases this relates to the accessibility and availability of leisure based activities, but in other cases it relates to the beauty of the natural environment. The emotional link to place is demonstrated by the affect that interviewees attach to place. This includes the natural environment but extends out to include the built environment and availability of amenities and services that are accessible in Mercury Bay. The discourse of social connection to place situates social cohesiveness as being associated with the geophysical location of Mercury Bay.

Social connection to place is implicated in identity construction, and this link is discussed in the following chapter, Chapter Seven. Social relationships as holiday-makers are noted as substantially different to those experienced as residents. Along with negotiating changed residential status, in-migrants must also manage both new and existing relationships. The nuanced nature of these relationships is discussed as participants' discourses of external validation for their new identities are explored.

## **Chapter Seven: Identity**

Identity has been defined as “an action that aims to define or characterise oneself, sometimes in relation to belonging to different groups” (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013, p. 350). Identity is formed through mediated actions which are used in socio-cultural settings with the specific intent to impose understanding on others and oneself about one’s own characteristics or right of belonging to a group. This notion can be explained as the interaction and negotiation of field, habitus and capitals. Identity-making is an integral part of an individuals’ subjectivity and this can be problematic for in-migrants whose lives span two worlds because the negotiations occur over two different fields; that of their previous location in the city and their new environment in Mercury Bay.

Individuals’ narratives can be considered as “self-making devices” (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013, p. 349). Narratives provide a tool that allows investigation into the construction of identities in participants’ discourse because the elaboration of affect implies a personal synthesis of self-making construction and allows connections between personal, social, contextual and cultural dimensions of identity (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013). Therefore it can be surmised that identity construction has at least two major dimensions that are implicated in migration processes; the personal dimension and the group or cultural dimension. Narratives of change necessarily invoke transformations of individuals’ identity as they seek to construct meaning and ways of being that are appropriate and effective in new environments (habitus), because existing ways of being may not be appropriate, applicable or effective in their new locale. In this way, narratives have a temporal dimension because they span a bridge between the past and the present (Gomez-Estern & de la Mata Benitez, 2013; Warriner, 2013).

### **7.1 Social relationships as holiday-makers compared to as residents**

Interestingly, none of the interviewees had developed any stable social relationships in Mercury Bay prior to their moving, despite many having spent a significant amount of time in the area as holiday-makers. For example, Louise had regularly holidayed

in the area since she was a child and has had an ongoing relationship with the area for a period of over 60 years. Louise's response typified the responses of the interviewees when I asked if they had any social networks in Mercury Bay prior to their permanent move. She responded "None. Zero. Zilch, Nada". The emphatic nature of this response corresponds with similar responses from other participants. This suggests that the nature and quality of social interaction occurs in a very different field dependant on whether one is a holiday-maker or a permanent resident.

The disjuncture between the subjectivity of holiday-maker and resident indicates that there is a social and philosophical divide between these two groups of people. I surmise that holiday makers are perceived by the resident population as disconnected consumers of the resources and amenities of the area; they have no stake invested in the Mercury Bay area. This notion is discussed by Freeman and Cheyne (2008) in their evaluation of gentrification processes in a coastal Aotearoa New Zealand context. There is a noticeable disconnection between residents' and new-comers' attitudes about values, lifestyles and appropriate behaviours. Therefore newcomers must adapt and adjust their behaviours in order to be perceived and accepted as 'locals'. This process develops over time and with experience; moreover, it requires an active attention to recognise and learn behaviours and ways of being. The process of becoming a local involves an alignment of behaviours and values with the existing resident population in order to be accepted into the group and to be able to be a legitimate actor as a resident.

Even regular holiday-makers to Mercury Bay who may have had family holiday homes in the area for generations are not viewed as locals despite the longevity of their association with the area. The fact of their dual residency between their holiday home and their city residence marks them as different in the perception of full time residents. Holiday-makers' intent to engage remains suspect in resident's eyes as holiday-makers are perceived as having loyalties outside of the area that take precedence over concerns for the environment and community life in Mercury Bay. This aspect is also noted by other Aotearoa New Zealand researchers who assert that:

Conflict stems from the fact that many properties are bought up by incomers whose affiliations can remain focused outside the settlements. This may be because the amount of time they spend in the settlement is limited due to work and other commitments, or because the property has been purchased as a holiday home or investment. (Freeman & Cheyne, 2008, p. 50)

Local residents tend to have an uneasy relationship with tourists who flock to the area during the summer months. Mercury Bay is a popular summer tourist destination that attracts international and domestic tourists alike. Tourists are viewed as 'others'; outsiders whose presence in Mercury Bay is generally benignly tolerated as a necessary economic boost to the area that enables many businesses to survive during the economically lean winter period. This creates a dilemma for locals. On the one hand they must be welcoming and appear friendly to tourists and regular holiday-makers, but on the other hand locals are wary of establishing friendships with out-of-towners. Investment in a relationship that may or may not continue the following summer is possibly wasted expenditure. Additionally, as much as locals realize that tourism is a huge contributor to the local economy, they also bemoan the intrusion on their otherwise quiet town as parking issues, late night parties, rubbish disposal, cues at the supermarkets and congestion at boat ramps around the region become the norm for the summer season. The transition from outsider to insider (local) varied for all the participants in terms of time to achieve this status; however the commitment to achieving local status and habitus was uniformly demonstrated.

For the people interviewed for this research, the lack of meaningful social relationships they formed as holidaymakers provides a motivation for them as in-migrants to display a commitment and connection to Mercury Bay that demonstrates their new subjectivity as a 'local'. One participant's narrative demonstrates the implicit understanding of the different subjectivities required between being a holidaymaker and being a resident. Maryanne and her family had holidayed in one of the northern holiday spots of Mercury Bay for about 10 years prior to in-migrating. Despite their annual ventures to the area this participant was acutely aware of their lack of social connections. She discusses her understanding that upon moving

permanently to Mercury Bay they would have to invest time and energy into developing connections. She states:

We both know how to *be* in small communities, to live in small communities. We were both born in small communities and we lived in [name of small town] for about 15 years which is a reasonably small community so we knew how to *be* in a small community (Maryanne).

The emphasis on 'being' indicates that community living in a smaller community is substantively different to 'being' in a city, and further, that modes of behaviour as a holiday maker and as a resident are marked by divergent habitus. All participants indicated that they were on some level aware that 'ways of being' (habitus) were differently applied in the two different contexts of city and Mercury Bay. This knowledge spurred all participants to seek social interactions that provided opportunities to engage with locals in a way that would allow them to adjust their habitus to 'be' a local. Volunteering in community organizations provided a suitable vehicle for all participants.

Haas (2012) in his study of amenity migrants in Spain notes that volunteering may be used as a tool to create an identity as a local that is distinct from that of an episodic holidaymaker. This idea is replicated in the current study. Peter notes that "it was one of the reasons I joined [volunteer organization]" and Chris claims that volunteering in a smaller town makes it: "...easier to feel a part of the community, and in some ways that's kind of reassuring. There's a degree of anonymity in a city that never goes. That anonymity in a small town goes away pretty quickly"

## **7.2 External validation**

Bourdieu (1989, p. 21) asserts that:

legitimation of the social world is not, as some believe, the product of a deliberate and purposive action of propaganda or symbolic imposition; it results, rather, from the fact that agents apply to the

objective structures of the social world structures of perception and appreciation which are issued out of these very structures and which tend to picture the world as evident.

The bi-directional nature of structures of perception and appreciation in the field of volunteering legitimize identity through the vehicle of community group membership. This benefits the volunteer group by establishing loyalty and commitment to the group. It also benefits the volunteer – particularly the in-migrant volunteer – by creating an identity that provides meaning to one's life.

External validation through perception and appreciation is an important resource for pre-retirement in-migrants in the struggle for legitimation. It creates both symbolic capital and cultural capital. Symbolic capital is apparent in discourse with family and friends who remain in the source location. The validation is sought for making a wise decision to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. Cultural capital is accrued locally, in Mercury Bay. It is constructed around status as a legitimate and endogenous actor in the participants' new location.

As noted previously, symbolic capital grants the power of recognition and this results in a constitutive power to "make things with words" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). Because of the uncertainty that accompanies a significant life event such as in-migration, the importance of being able to make things with words helps participants make sense of their move to both friends and family left behind in their source locations, and to new friends and acquaintances in their adopted location. In this way, the acquisition of cultural and symbolic capital is actively worked upon and the successful acquisition of these capitals is thus linked to power (De Clercq & Voronov, 2009).

In-migrants' dialogues with locals may create new cultural spaces that are necessarily hybridized as a result of interactions (Prieto et al., 2013). One way that pre-retiree in-migrants use narrative to create identity is to construct meaning around perceived opportunities to engage with community organizations. This narrative is used to establish and validate new identities that require reforming as a result of the act of in-migrating. These meanings have a relationship with the establishment of a new and enhanced identity in their new location. One participant directly addresses

the relationship between volunteering and identity construction. She notes that “[it took] time: time for me to develop an identity. I certainly have a completely separate identity now” (Maryanne).

One study of baby-boomer women who volunteered in Canada found that the participants expressed a vigorous ambition to take control of their lives (Seaman, 2012). The strategy of volunteering makes sense for pre-retiree in-migrants who seek to enhance their cultural capital through shared values and behaviours that are routinely practiced in a group (McNamara & Gonzales, 2011). The construction of a new identity that draws from previous experience and the perception of new, previously un-accessed opportunities are tied up with notions of creating a more utopian subjectivity. An example of this is provided by Maryanne whose discourse reveals a strong need for shared behaviours to establish a sense of identity and grounding:

It was specifically so that I could [participate in a group activity], and [participate] with other people, because I need that in my life, so first of all it was for me.... I very quickly found out that there were other people around who wanted to [participate] also... you know, looking for connections.

The relationship that occurs between field and habitus is dynamic. Habitus is both the functional embodiment of human conduct according to familiarity and history as well as being cumulative and generative in new contexts (Noble, 2013). This particular feature of habitus makes it simultaneously a stable and dynamic entity (Noble, 2013). The particular habitus and accompanying cultural capital that Maryanne possesses allows her to interpret structural openings in the field that occur because of changes in wider, external societal processes (Husu, 2013); in this case, demographic changes that result in in-migration. In-migrants as social agents engage in a symbolic struggle to establish and legitimate their constructions of reality through new classifications and definitions that “construct social reality as much as they express it” (Bourdieu, 1989, pp. 21-22). In this way, habitus and field are dynamic because fields provide opportunities of access and possibilities which are

perceived and appropriated by the dispositions of agents according to their *a priori* socialization and history.

Whilst connections in the new locale are an important element of identity construction, old connections are also important as people need to justify in-migration to people with whom they maintain relationships with in their previous environment. The performative aspect of narrative is exemplified in the recounted stories of the in-migrating cohort when describing interactions with people in their previous locale. At stake is the reputation and status of the in-migrant. It makes sense to position oneself as lucky or wise to have chosen to live in a desirable area. For example Lynn discusses convincing some friends to buy a holiday home in Whitianga:

One of our friends, who was a neighbour, they stayed in contact and they come down and stay two or three times a year. They've just bought a holiday home in Whitianga!

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, one could justifiably posit that this participant has achieved legitimation of her decision to in-migrate to Mercury Bay. In a similar way Louise demonstrates how she achieves legitimation through the approbation of colleagues which reinforces her decision to in-migrate. She relates that comments from colleagues suggest envy, and by way of comparison this discourse reinforces her actions. Louise claims her colleagues' reaction was enthusiastic: "Oh great! ...and there was a little bit of Wow! Location-wise".

Another participant articulates a different perspective as she encountered difficulties in establishing symbolic capital when attempting to convince friends and family of the wisdom of her decision to move. Lorraine recounts that:

A few friends were yeah, very, very excited [for me], a few were quite jealous and other people just didn't get it at all. Some people were like, "Why would you"? [laughs]. Why *wouldn't* you? I mean, at the *beach!*

Clearly Lorraine has her reputation at stake in this excerpt, and she attempts to frame her in-migration as a positive move to her friends. Opinions of friends who expressed disbelief at her decision to leave her highly remunerated job for less money and a simpler lifestyle are qualified by Lorraine who discounts their position with a rhetorical question: “Why wouldn’t you”?

The interactive nature of the embodied subjectivities of in-migrants is evident as they traverse the temporalities of the past and the present. Narratives that range between past and present draw on contrast (between the urban and the coastal/rural subjectivities) and this opens up new possibilities for the future (Noble, 2013). According to Bourdieu (1997) habitus is a product of history. Moreover, it is the embodied history internalised in the individual so that it becomes like a second nature and seems natural. Whilst this may seem to indicate that habitus is inert and unchanging, Bourdieu (1997) claims that habitus is the *active* presence of the past. This interpretation suggests that habitus is not static and therefore habitus can change over time and according to exposure to varying fields.

The participants in this study demonstrate an active engagement in constructing their personal histories and biographies to enhance their sense of belonging in their new community. Gomez-Estern and de la Mata Benitez (2013) suggest that migrants employ acculturation strategies and adopt practices to adapt to their new communities. This brings about a change in identity and a change in everyday practice that is acculturated to their new locale. To rephrase this, the participants set about creating their own ‘local’ identity, an ideal that is strongly tied up with an embodied sense of symbolic capital because to become an endogenous actor in their new community, the participants must not only ‘feel’ like they are locals, they must also be seen as locals. This achievement is embodied in the individual through the ways of talking and thinking about their environment and space that they inhabit.

### **7.3 Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

Chapter Seven assessed the concept of identity and examined the ways that in-migrants construct identities that bridge geographical and social spaces. The

construction of identity as a local compared to a holiday maker or bach owner is integral to sense-making for in-migrants as they utilize narrative to demonstrate their investment in place. Differences in social capital between holiday makers, bach owners and residents are noted and efforts to adjust one's subjectivity to reflect that of 'a local' are surveyed. External validation is an important tool in identity construction and in-migrants face a double-edged sword as they attempt to seek validation from friends and family left behind in their source location whilst they simultaneously seek to develop validation of their identity as a resident. In-migrants must adapt their habitus in order to successfully integrate these two external sources of validation of their developing identities.

The following chapter takes an overview of the previous chapters and identifies the existence of an apparent paradox within the narratives of the participants. The background to this paradox is outlined as well as the conditions within the participants' volunteer organizations that give rise to this apparent paradox. These tensions occur as a result of structural change in the volunteer sector combined with increased compliance and regulations of the field of volunteering and pressures on the availability of volunteers.

## **Chapter Eight: The paradox**

The indisputable fact that we do not, and perhaps cannot, recognize our own voice indicates how incurably strange we are to ourselves (Hoffer, 2006, p. 83)

Hoffer's quote sheds light on a seemingly strange paradox embedded within the narrative constructions of the pre-retirement in-migrants. On the one hand there is a unanimous theme of motivation to leave the urban city environment and its opportunities for wealth creation because of unresolvable conflict with the social effects that a city engenders. These effects are dissociated social relations (caused by an increasingly uncertain flexible capitalist logic that permeates the social fabric of the metropolis), coupled with issues of temporality and spatial dissonance. On the other hand, all interviewees express a desire to direct the community organizations with which they respectively volunteer towards more robust and compartmentalized structures, paradoxically reproducing many negative aspects of the environments from which they have sought to escape.

### **8.1 Background**

Towards the end of each interview I asked the participants how they envisioned the future of volunteering in Mercury Bay unfolding. I prompted them by asking about the nature of changes they foresaw. During the data analysis stage of research I identified the existence of the paradox in the narratives. In three instances I conducted a short follow-up interview to clarify some points that the interviewees raised when asked about the future of the field of volunteering.

The narratives of the participants suggest that a complex interplay of city and workplace stressors creates an urge towards a more utopian lifestyle that is afforded and enabled by notions of a coastal/rural idyll. The coastal/rural idyll is constructed around ideals of a more relaxed, unhurried pace of life, stronger, more engaged social relations, and the opportunity to engage with and consume the geo-physical attributes of Mercury Bay and the surrounding area. All participants specifically

identified social cohesion and simplicity of structure as strong pull factors. Moreover, the participants view active community engagement through altruistic actions of volunteering as an important factor to help realize these lifestyle goals.

The interviewees had clearly considered the future of their respective organizations and held emphatic views on this. All participants acknowledge that the field of volunteering is changing rapidly as a result of either growth of the organization, central government legislation, population growth, economic sustainability, or a combination of these factors. Firstly, all interviewees spoke of the need for structural change within their organization if the organization was to thrive or even survive in the imagined future. Secondly, a theme of concern about compliance and accountability is evident. Thirdly, as a result of the uncertainty surrounding change, there is a strong concern that the availability of volunteers will diminish.

Despite a unanimous acknowledgment of impending change, the participants' reaction to this change is varied. Some interviewees spoke with an air of nostalgia that the conditions under which an individual is able to engage with a community organization are becoming increasingly restricted and regulated. Other interviewees approach impending change with a somewhat resigned attitude because they feel unable to alter the anticipated course of change due to structural shifts in the field of volunteering. These structural shifts are articulated as the legislative need for stronger checks and balances in accounting procedures, and potential obstacles to engagement of volunteers through mechanisms such as police and identity checks and other bureaucratic interventions. Other interviewees welcome change as an opportunity for growth and expansion yet were equally aware that change needed to be managed carefully to account for the contextual factors that distinguished their volunteer organization from others.

## **8.2 Structural change within community organizations**

The ease of membership in a community group coupled with the simple structure of volunteer organizations is attractive to those seeking escape from the pressures of flexible capitalism and inner-city stressors. The relaxed, informal structure of many of

the Mercury Bay community groups is seen as a welcome and refreshing change to their highly structured city experiences. The participants note that the ease of engagement with volunteer groups in the Mercury Bay area evokes feelings of connectedness and social cohesion. This aspect of community engagement appeals to participants' need to develop social capital in their new locale. The experience of a relaxed and unstructured environment that provides social opportunities contrasts with the participant's working experiences of flexible capitalism in the cities. This aspect of volunteering is clearly valued. Paula describes her experience:

I have a lot of fun with the ladies down there, we play up, and a lot of regulars come in. It's really cool, it's fun! I actually quite enjoy it. It's a good social break for me.

This participant evidently values her volunteer work for the social capital she has been able to develop amongst a group of people with whom she otherwise would not have come into contact. She states "I wouldn't have met any of them actually!" Paula describes a relatively loosely based structure that allows the volunteers to make minor decisions independently:

Don't tell [volunteer manager's name] but occasionally, if [op-shop customers] say "I've only got \$20.00 and it's \$22 or \$24 dollars..., yeah you know it's two way - it's to raise money for [volunteer group] but it's a social service, so yeah.

Despite the motivational drivers of altruistic intentions, social capital development and opportunities to embed in their new community, the interviewees unconsciously seek to replicate corporate-like structures within their community groups when faced with change. The nature of the envisioned change is varied; some interviewees speak with regret about the inevitability of such structural changes, such as Lynn who laments that "It's just the way the world is going. Obviously the organizations need to move with it". Only one of the interviewees expressed an openly enthusiastic response to the anticipated structural changes within their organization. This participant anticipates the professional image that such changes bring. He states that "it's a positive. It reinforces lot of things; it's making us a more professional unit"

(Peter). Other interviewees foresaw that the only way that their organization could survive was to embrace such changes.

Impending changes within volunteer organizations are enunciated as being problematic in many respects. One interviewee discussed the difficulty of the situation:

It means a whole lot more structure, and that's good in some ways and it's very prescriptive and confining in other ways, but it probably is the way that it has to be done (Chris).

Similar concerns are spoken of by other interviewees. For example, when discussing the growth of the volunteer organization, Lynn describes how:

it's gone from being a little organisation [that they] can set up and can make it up as they go along, now volunteer people need to fit it into their busy lives because not all volunteering is done by retired people with nothing to do [laughs]. So people need to be able to know what's expected of them, what they are letting themselves in for, what they're going to be responsible for what liabilities are involved. They need to know who else is doing what, and if they put their name to an application for funding they need to be happy with what's going to be sent on, and how that's going to affect them.

When asked about the nature of the structural changes within the organizations, the most common response was that the organizations would require more specificity as to what each volunteer role within the organization was expected to do. As exemplified in the above excerpt, the interviewees anticipate that volunteer roles will be required to have more tightly prescribed job descriptions. The benefits of having job descriptions are seen as ensuring that volunteers are allocated relatively equal amounts of tasks in terms of time commitment and goals to be achieved, thus eliminating or minimising the disparity between workload that most groups laboured under.

Some interviewees wonder whether small teams of volunteers will be formed to achieve specific task related work goals. This structure bears striking similarity to Sennett's description of flexible capitalist workplace structures, with emphasis on short-term task specific roles that are clustered into teams (Sennett, 2000, 2006). The interviewees who envisaged change as a result of the growth of the community group they volunteered with are looking for solutions to a precarious situation. Chris describes coping with growth of his volunteer organization as "a really delicate balance of being or not being, surviving or not surviving".

There are negative aspects to this structural change. Louise explains that:

There does need to be a bit more firm structure about roles, so the head of the structure knows who is taking on what, but the problem with that is that when you are dealing with a small organisation, and people have other things in their life, people do resent being called to account when they are giving their time voluntarily and willingly and doing their best. Yet they are being called to account for what they are doing or not doing. That's the problem, there is a critical point. A lot of people who are volunteers are very happy to learn and have systems set up as they go, they are not too happy to be dictated to [by role descriptions]....And this group is at that juncture.

The division of labour is implicated in a second structural change that the interviewees envision. A number of interviewees foresee that the community organization with which they engage cannot continue under its current workload without burning out their existing pool of volunteers. As a consequence, a paid structure for certain key positions is seen as necessary, or at least is an option that is currently under consideration as a solution to some of the dilemmas that are encountered within the volunteer structure. The prospect of having a paid position amongst a cohort of unpaid volunteers is clearly problematic. This is articulated by a number of participants. One participant is firmly convinced of the need for the organization with which she engages to have at least one paid position due to the amount of work required of a particular role within the organization. However, she asserts that:

There is an age old conflict between being paid for your work and not being paid for your work. More and more people know that they need to be paid for some of their time and if they see someone else in the organisation being paid for what could be seen as volunteer work, that's where it's going to get tricky (Lynn).

On the other hand, some participants do not envisage problems with a partially paid volunteer workforce within their community group. Peter cites an English organization that employs such a model. This interviewee feels that having paid positions is a positive move as he considers it will bring a more professional edge to the organization with which he volunteers. Peter sees the progression into a partially paid/ partially unpaid volunteer model as inevitable and attributes this development to the increasing pressure on the organization to provide a professional and accountable service to the public.

Despite seeing the inevitability of such a progression, Peter also envisages a philosophical divide between those paid and those unpaid. This is becoming more apparent to him as his organization moves into a more professional phase of operation. Volunteers are treated more like workers and are required to pass various modules before they are permitted to undertake certain roles within the organization. This requirement creates some point of resentment and certain stratification of volunteers according to the levels of training that they have undertaken:

Some of the older guys, they've been around ten years or so, and they don't like having to re-do theory, [and keep up to date] with that refresher course. Some of them find it daunting (Peter).

Another interviewee passionately believes that the establishment of a paid role within the organization that she engages with is critical to the organizations very existence. She claims that: "For the sake of [the organization] and sustainability into the future we need to really actively seek payment for a coordinator - and decent money too" (Maryanne).

The organization that Maryanne refers to has grown dramatically since its inception in 2012. The demands of the volunteer roles within the group vary enormously with some pivotal roles requiring particular specialized skills and other roles being very generic in their requirements and intermittent in terms of time commitment. The participants note that the act of employing a person in an organization that is primarily staffed by volunteer labour essentially and fundamentally changes the way the organization is structured. This is an area of deep concern for all interviewees.

Louise however articulates her concern about the future of her volunteer organization because of financial pressures. She sees the need for a paid position within the organization with which she volunteers because the workload has grown so big: “We have one person at the helm who has this massive workload, and is facing burnout”. She wants to see this position being paid but is fretful about it:

I feel that [volunteer organization’s name] is operating close to the red zone financially. It’s still wholly reliant on funding from funding bodies to run its programmes. There is not enough financial safety there, and it’s a dangerous time, so I think that what has to happen, the programme has to be more thinking about cost structures. I think that yeah, it’s time for change (Louise).

Another participant is also concerned about the impact such action may have on a community group. She discusses one organization she volunteers with which started off as a relatively small group relying on volunteers. As the organization grew, some volunteers burnt out because the demands on them increased. Lynn explains:

If one person gives up, another volunteer has to take on two people’s roles, and it comes to a crisis point, and they think, ‘we need to pay someone and what have we got to pay them with?’ And then you say, ‘well they’re getting paid why shouldn’t I get paid?’ That’s the biggest problem I can see with the future.

Lynn notes that gaining funding for wages or salaries is problematic as most funding agencies specifically exclude claims for these activities, preferring instead to fund tangible projects such as the purchase of vehicles, supplies or equipment. She envisages that problems with sourcing wages or salaries from grants or funding agencies will mean that money will need to be diverted from other forms of fundraising. The allocation of funding to wages or salaries will create a philosophical divide between the functional need of the organization to establish a paid position and the concepts of volunteering that implicitly signifies the donation of goods, services, products or funds without expecting economic return to a community group.

The underpinning philosophy of volunteer community groups is based around the notion of donating goods, services, products or labour for charitable or philanthropic purposes. This is diametric to the logics of capitalist corporations whose primary goal is the generation of profit, although on the face of it flexible capitalist organizations might seem to have common ground with volunteer groups. Flexible capitalism's emphasis on teams and teamwork might appeal to the ethos of volunteer groups whose ideology is based on an altruistic understanding of collaborative work towards a shared goal. Words like 'collaborate', 'team' and 'shared goals' appeal to the utopian view of community, yet despite the popular use of these words in the contemporary business world, the flexible corporate model creates disengaged social relations amongst its workers and results in a disconnected group of people whose unity is superficially imposed and ring-fenced by task achievement (Sennett, 1995).

Sennett (1998) explains that flexible capitalism creates an absence of trust. Teams may work together to achieve a common goal but precisely because of that commonality, no bonds are tested, no differences worked through. Moreover, strong bonds develop over time, and this is antithetical to the structure of new capitalism which embraces short-term, task-based engagement. Instead, Sennett (1998) asserts that the notion of 'community' is the result of a process that evolves around conflict. Conflict arises in groups when people care deeply about a shared ideal. This is because people are more willing to invest time and emotion into projects that matter to them on a personal or intrinsic level. Groups of people who are bound by conflict have to work harder to communicate and to create, and thus forge stronger

connections that link people across unequal power and differing opinions. Community volunteer groups are by nature diverse in character and membership. The points that bind individuals in a community group are specific aims or philosophies. The homogeneity of shared ideals masks the heterogeneity of individuals who come together to achieve such goals. By and large, community groups attract people across ethnic, socio-economic and gender categories and thus are more closely described by Sennett's description of a group bound by conflict.

### **8.3 Compliance and regulations**

The regulation of the volunteering field is an issue of concern for the interviewees. The pressure from governmental and funding agencies for accountability has resulted in community groups responding by applying stricter processes in terms of their reporting ability to these agencies, as well as implementing more robust procedures for recruiting and training volunteers. Changes to the Charities Commission regulations as a result of government action over the preceding few years have put the onus of reporting onto Board members. This move has seen the need for board members of community volunteer groups to have a level of understanding of accounting practices. Participants, including Lynn, express their concerns of the impact of such policies and suggest that the level of expertise required is beyond the reach of many people who do not have a business or accounting background: "There's a lot of paperwork and minute reporting detail required for accountability". (Lynn). She goes on to explain how she:

... was initially pretty shocked by how much pre-planning and approval of procedures and policies was involved. Now I see the value in that to the other extreme where I see the few procedures aren't being followed.

This interviewee has in-depth knowledge of the structural aspects of community groups as a result of her professional background. She expresses a deep concern about the ability of community groups to recruit and retain volunteers as people

come to realize that the level of accountability and personal liability has increased as a result of Charities Commission regulations. Lynn explains the level of reporting required by volunteer groups:

The new reporting framework for annual accounts to be uploaded to the Charities Commission website on an annual basis with the annual return - it's another reporting framework around what is normal business reporting standards. So charities fall into one of four tiers, the lowest form being tier form which is cash accounting, cash in/cash out structured for organisations which have non accounting costings. The problem is when you bring in the reality of such things. They might be GST registered, they might have assets, as soon as they get a little bit bigger they move into where you do accrual accounting and that's where the board members now need to understand accounting practices.

The regulation of certain activities and greater emphasis on the liability of individuals who work within organizations represents another structural change within the volunteering field. Under neo-liberal influences of contemporary western society, the emphasis on personal agency has resulted in the risk of personal liability for actions performed within the ambit of a volunteer organization so that the onus now rests with the individual. Subsequently volunteer groups must have procedures in place to ensure that their workers are trained and have clearly expressed boundaries within which to operate. Lynn envisages issues will arise as a result of the disjuncture between the accountability requirements of volunteers and the temporary nature of volunteering: "Volunteers, by their very nature can be here today and gone tomorrow, that the scariest thing" (Lynn). Again, this structure resonates with the tenets of flexible capitalism that are built around an expendable work force (Standing, 2011). As a response to this changing environment Lynn suggests that community organizations will need to develop more robust planning to create appropriate structures that will survive changing personnel within roles in volunteer organizations.

The motif of robust, forward planning is a common idea across the participants. The interviewees are unanimous in the need for health and safety issues to be addressed yet are wary of the trend toward personal liability. This creates difficulties for some community organizations because the level of training and time required to achieve certain standards or qualifications is perceived as a disincentive for volunteers who want to donate their time and labour but have other time commitments that preclude them from being able to fulfil the stringent requirements needed to satisfy regulatory bodies.

Lorraine provides an example of this tension. She related the story of a close friend who was a first aid responder and had recently moved to Mercury Bay. She joined the same volunteer organization but was required to re-sit two years of training and examinations because the qualifications that she already had, although obtained under the same umbrella organization, were not recognised in different regions. The interviewee, in assessing this situation, claims “it’s crazy; it’s got so P.C. [politically correct]. And they’re singing out for volunteers” (Lorraine). The volunteer that Lorraine referred to had expected to be able to transfer human capital into a new context but was unable to do so due to organizational policies designed to deflect liability. The volunteer chose to forgo an active position in the community organization because the cost and time investment seemed too much, considering that she had already invested both in the previous region.

Specialized training for volunteers generally incurs costs for the volunteer rather than being borne by the volunteer organization. This situation usually applies to both training and examinations. Because such training in a neo-liberal milieu is considered human capital and therefore inheres in the individual, the cost is usually expected to be borne by the volunteer. However, as indicated by Lorraine’s example above, sometimes human capital is context-specific and therefore is not able to be transferred to a differing location.

As indicated, the use of training, examinations and certificates implies human capital that is seen to benefit the individual, despite often being a requirement to volunteer within certain roles of the organization. However, under neo-liberal conditions where the individual assumes responsibility for him or herself, the risk associated with any

labour undertaken as a volunteer remains with the individual, not the organization. Should something averse happen during volunteer work hours the potential for litigation or legal proceedings to be taken out against the individual is a real concern for volunteers. Lynn demonstrates a deep concern with this aspect of volunteering:

People need to be able to know what's expected of them, what they are letting themselves in for, what they're going to be responsible for, what liabilities are involved they need to know who else is doing what. And if they put their name to an application for funding they need to be happy that is what's going to be spent on, and how that's going to affect them.

Coupled with personal costs in economic and temporal terms, the added risk of personal liability can be interpreted by volunteers as too much of a burden and this can impact their willingness to put themselves in a position of potential risk.

#### **8.4 Availability of volunteers**

The changing field of volunteering is having an impact on the ability of community volunteer groups to recruit and retain volunteers. The effect of having a smaller pool of volunteers on which to call is that organizations must respond in one of two main ways. Firstly they must either cut back the services and functions to the community that they provide, or secondly they must require more output from their volunteers. Most volunteer organizations are loathe to cut back their services; this is after all, their *raison d'être*. Therefore the most common response is to increase the workload of their existing volunteers.

The increasing workload impacts on the ability of community volunteer organizations to deliver their services. Peter relates a situation where a member of the public berated him about retrenchment of services provided by the volunteer organization that he works with:

[Name] starts giving me shit [about the retrenchment of a particular service], [I said] 'hang on a minute! You know why? You're retired; you don't do anything, how about you volunteering?' Well someone has to.

This participant attributes the difficulty in attracting volunteers to a neo-liberal influence of individualism that focuses on the rights and benefits that accrue to the individual rather than to the community. He, like other interviewees, is concerned that the trend toward individualism is more pronounced in younger people, whom he constructs as being less willing to donate their time for no economic reward. Peter asserts that "older people have more of that 'giving back scenario' than younger people". Paula echoes this concern and worries about the values of the younger generations. She considers that the following generations are "a very 'me' generation". On reflection she qualifies this statement: "but maybe our parents thought that about us!" Paula acknowledges that "yeah, we need younger ones to come in" but seems at a loss as to how to effectively achieve the inclusion of the younger generation.

Not all interviewees hold the same view of intergenerational tensions. Chris has clearly considered a number of possible options and sees a solution to dwindling volunteer numbers in being able to draw in younger people through intergenerational connections. The volunteer organization with which he engages is trying to embrace new technologies to assist them in their work. Chris describes this:

No volunteer organization these days can get by without technical expertise and typically the people who are 50 plus don't have that technical expertise. They don't do social media, they're not good with email and so, you have young people out there who are not only good with that stuff, they're also looking for an opportunity to make use of those skills, so if they're approached in the right way...

Chris envisages making connections through the family networks of pre-retirees. He cites the example of Mercury Bay Area School (year one through to year 13) as a model to follow:

There is that spread between school beginners and school leavers... and it's rare! You don't see that outside an Area school and I think it can be extended outside into the wider community.

An issue that was noticeably absent in the narratives of the interviewees is the subject of cultural considerations in volunteering. Different cultural worldviews impact on value judgements about individuals, social structures and the social world at large. For example, in Māori culture whānau (family) and whakapapa (genealogy) are the base of identity and membership for both the individual and the society (Robinson & Williams, 2001). The concept of whānau reaches out from the immediate family to the extended family network (hapū) and then to the tribe (iwi).

Māori participation in groups is contingent on an understanding of obligations and acceptance that are verbal and implicit rather than rule-driven and explicit, as is the norm for European styled organizations (Robinson & Williams, 2001). "The concept of obligation-driven membership includes obligations based on a common ancestry and the cultural dimension that obliges one to act in certain ways" and this frames Māori volunteerism (Robinson & Williams, 2001, p. 55). Thus, volunteerism by Māori is more likely to be through informal associations rather than through formally structured volunteer organizations.

## **8.5 Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

A common sense understanding of change is that it is evolutionary, and that the process of change necessarily brings about better conditions. However change in and of itself does not necessarily mean that conditions will improve despite the utopian desire for a better existence. Moreover, the assessment of change is a value judgement and therefore is culturally bound - what is assessed as 'good' in one culture may not be so in another.

This chapter demonstrated the existence of an unforeseen paradox that inheres in the participants' narratives of volunteering in their consideration of change when

considered alongside narratives of social cohesion and social capital. The values and aspirations that the participants ascribe to the Mercury Bay area of social cohesion and a relaxed and unhurried pace of life that reflects the coastal/rural idyll stand in contrast to participants' proposed solutions to anticipated directions of change within the structure of their community volunteer groups. The proposed solutions include more tightly prescribed job descriptions for volunteers, the possibility of some paid positions being instituted and the possible creation of teams of workers with specified tasks. These solutions all mirror conditions of flexible capitalism as described by Sennett (1995). Participants are aware that some forms of structural change will create dissonance within their voluntary community group and are also mindful that such modifications may impact on the availability of volunteers, as these groups negotiate changes to reporting compliance and regulatory impositions from national bodies.

Interestingly, when discussing the nature of impending structural changes to their volunteer organizations none of the interviewees drew on the discourses that they employ to describe the simplicity of structure and strength of social connectedness that they experience in Mercury Bay as in-migrants. Clearly the interviewees consider the field of embeddedness in the community and the field of volunteering to operate under different logics. The field of community embeddedness in the community is constructed around notions of coastal/rural idyll with components of social connectedness and simplicity of lifestyle, whilst the field of volunteering is constructed around complexities, structure and rigidly defined job descriptions.

## Chapter Nine: Concluding statements

It is to propose a startling new perspective from which to rethink the novelty in question, to defamiliarize our ordinary habits of mind and to make us suddenly conscious not only of our own non-dialectical obtuseness but also of the strangeness of reality (Jameson, 2009, p. 50)

In order to make sense of the apparent paradox in the participants' narratives I utilized the work of American sociologist Frederic Jameson. This thesis has investigated the intersection of the field of volunteering with pre-retirement cohort in-migration as a way to understand this phenomenon. The dual motivations of push and pull factors that contribute to the process of in-migration are analysed. Additionally the importance of the construction of place and identity formation in negotiating a successful migration process from an urban environment to a small coastal/rural location is considered. In considering the construction of place and identity as processes of in-migration an apparent paradox emerged. This is evident because the motivations for in-migration of enhanced social cohesiveness and simplified lifestyle stand in contrast to a desire to reproduce workplace efficiency through new capitalist workplace practices that counteract the former motives.

The purpose of this research is more than to simply describe the conditions the participants experienced in their in-migration transitions; it is to critically analyse these conditions in order to add to the body of knowledge of pre-retirement in-migration processes under contemporary conditions. Jameson (2009) proposes a heuristic tool for thinking through problems using a dialectical model of reasoning. Rather than adopting a pseudo Hegelian approach to a dialectic problem that invokes the philosophical triad of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, and thus seeks the evolution of an idea through conflict that arises through a linear state of internal contradiction, Jameson theorizes beyond a simple state of binary opposition.

Rejecting the concept of antinomy, Jameson proposes the concept of *the dialectical*; the notion that the contradiction is not simply the negative or the opposite of the starting point. Rather, the state of conflict is in reality not a conflict at all but merely a

reflection back on itself. Jameson (2009, p. 50) calls this “The law of non-contradiction”. Thus, the concept of *the dialectical* transforms the notion of the dialectic from a banal concept to a negation of the initial negation.

Applying this expanded sense of dialectical movement to the field of pre-retirement in-migrants’ engagement with volunteer organizations involves an approach to the dialectical model based on three distinct moments. The first moment can be apprehended as the desire for social cohesiveness and a simpler, more relaxed lifestyle informed by notions of the coastal/rural idyll. This is followed by a second moment characterized by the implementation of rationality and workplace efficiency on volunteer organizations that replicates conditions of flexible capitalism. This is then followed by a third moment of paradox – the sudden realization that the first two iterations appear to stand in conflict with each other, only to subsequently realize that the second moment is an interpretation of the first. This is the point of paradox; that which looks like a paradox is actually a return to the first impression itself, which now appears in an altered form as a consequence of its passage through the second moment.

This research reflects the precarious experience of the participants, of working under contemporary neo-liberal conditions of flexible capitalism in their previous city environments. The participants’ capitalist-urban experiences ultimately cumulate in a desire to retreat to coastal/rural idyllic notions of enhanced social cohesion and a more relaxed pace of life. Yet the workplace practices from which the interviewees sought to escape are simultaneously reproduced in their engagement with volunteer organizations. Viewed through a dialectical lens, the reproduction of flexible capitalist workplace norms and the desire for social cohesiveness are reflections of the same condition, or rather, reactions to the same set of conditions.

The situation in which the pre-retirement in-migrants now find themselves may not result in the exact same conditions from which they sought to free themselves. As a number of authors have noted, context matters; that which occurs in one setting may not have the same effect in another (Bosworth & Willett, 2011; Wilson, 2000). The same tenet applies in this instance. The awakening realization of the integral importance of social cohesion in community relationships that all the participants

value as desirable may influence the adaptation of workplace practices that are envisioned as 'fixes' to adapt to the changing field of volunteering. Additionally, the sheer weight of population in a city environment contributes to the paradoxical anonymity that many city dwellers experience. The lack of population and the geographical isolation of Mercury Bay may mitigate the paucity of social cohesiveness experienced in the metropolitan environment. Demographic factors alone substantively change the balance of work/personal interaction that is experienced in Mercury Bay, as compared to other densely urban locations. Moreover, the contextual influences of such variables may hybridize the in-migrants' habitus to achieve different outcomes. Consequently, the outcome(s) that emerge as a result of the observed paradox are currently unknown.

In view of the instability of this situation, further research to assess the outcomes of the interactions of in-migrants, long-term residents, history and uncertain futures is needed to expand the body of knowledge that currently exists about pre-retirement in-migration. The hybridization that occurs with the confluence of these factors warrants further investigation and offers a distinct opportunity for positive change within smaller communities. Longitudinal research has the potential to provide one tool to assess the outcomes of adaptations to workplace practices that are instituted in voluntary organizations in light of the changing habitus of in-migrants (Benson & O'Reilly, 2009; Stockdale, 2014). Case studies and other forms of in-depth qualitative research could also provide knowledge of how participants navigate these issues. Moreover, because this thesis represents research that is bounded in terms of participants and geography, it should not be automatically assumed to be generalizable to wider populations.

Under contemporary conditions of demographic change the importance of further research into the migration patterns and lifestyle choices of an aging populace is critical. This is because the contextual nature of in-migration suggests that the pre-retirement cohort does not act as a unified body and therefore the impact of an aging in-migrant cohort will be experienced differently according to different contexts and localities. The implications of this phenomenon for communities – particularly smaller communities – are wide ranging and encompass both economic and social

dimensions. The ability to successfully negotiate in-migration for both in-migrants and receiving communities turns on understanding the nuanced nature of this phenomenon.

Thus appropriate strategies based on sound research must be considered by communities, volunteer organizations and local authorities to understand and plan for the impact of pre-retirement in-migration as New Zealand copes with an increasingly ageing yet mobile population.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Information sheet



#### **Researcher Introduction**

My name is Stella Maria Pennell and I am researching how pre-retirement in-migrants to Mercury Bay talk about their involvement with volunteer organizations. This research is towards fulfilment of the degree requirements of Master of Arts (Sociology).

#### **Project Description and Invitation**

This research will enable greater understanding of the reasons why people engage with volunteer organizations when moving to a new locality. I anticipate that the conclusions of this research will: a) assist community organizations in their recruitment of volunteers; b) enable better planning for local body councils and community boards to assess the needs and wants of incoming residents; and c) provide understanding of in-migrants' motivations to volunteer. I would like to invite you to participate in this research to provide some detailed information about your experiences of volunteering.

#### **Participant Identification and Recruitment**

Research participants will be initially identified by me, and I will then ask participants to recommend others in the volunteering field. Participants must be aged between 45 and 65 years of age, be involved in a local volunteer organization, and have moved from a city to live in the Mercury Bay area as a permanent resident. There will be five to 10 participants. Participation in this research is voluntary and no compensation or reimbursement is offered or implied. No discomfort or risk is anticipated for any participant in this research.

## **Project Procedures**

Your participation in this research will involve an interview with myself, which will last approximately one hour. The interview will involve discussing your experiences of immigration to Mercury Bay and your decisions and experiences around volunteering. Depending on what emerges during this conversation, a follow-up interview may be asked for to clarify or expand upon some aspects that may arise.

## **Data Management**

The information and data collected for this research will be stored on my personal computer during the research phase and will be shared with my supervisors Dr. Corrina Tucker and Dr. Warwick Tie. Mercury Bay has a small population and confidentiality may be problematic due to this; however, as far as possible, information that may identify participants including their names, will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used. The only exception to this is where ALL participants are happy to be identified. This will be discussed with participants both during the interview phase and again at the conclusion of the research. At the conclusion of the research the data will be stored with my primary supervisor for a period of five years. After this time the data will be destroyed.

## **Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher; and
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

## **Project Contacts**

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Please contact myself (Stella Pennell) or one of my supervisors if you have any questions or concerns about this project.

### **Low Risk notification:**

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)

**Appendix 2: Participant consent form**



I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded (delete as appropriate).

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	
Address:	
Address:	
Ph:	
Email:	

### Appendix 3: Topic guide

Hi (name).

As explained in my information sheet I'm researching the narratives of people aged 45 to 65 who move to Mercury Bay from a city environment and join a volunteer group.. Personal narratives often hinge on the experience of change - and moving from a city to an environment like Mercury Bay definitely fits that profile. The focus of this interview is to explore the context of that change. Most people who move to a new locality seek ways in which they can become 'local' and become involved in their new community- one of the ways in which people do this, is to join a group.

- 1: So, firstly, thinking about your decision to move to Mercury Bay, can you tell me how that move came about?
- 2: Thinking about your decision to move; do you think this was motivated more by 'push' or 'pull' factors, or a combination of both? 'Push' being reasons to leave where you came from and 'pull' being reasons or attractions that motivated you to move to Mercury Bay.
- 3: Did you holiday here for a period of time before making your decision?
- 4: What was the reaction from your friends and / or family about your decision to move to Mercury Bay?
- 5: Once you'd arrived here full time, how did you go about meeting people?
- 6: How did you end up joining (Volunteer group name), how did you find out about this group/ did you know someone already involved/ did they advertise etc?
- 7: Thinking about your experience of volunteering when you first arrived, can you tell me about that?
- 8: What were you hoping to gain out of volunteering, for yourself personally?
- 9: How has volunteering helped you become established in the community? And can you tell me about this?
- 10: How available do you think the volunteer opportunities are in Mercury Bay as opposed to in the city? Why do you think this is so?
- 11: Where do you think it is easier to volunteer- in a city or in a small community?
- 12: Thinking about where you are at this point in your life, can you tell me about the skills and attributes that you have to offer a volunteer organisation? .

- 13: Thinking about your experiences with volunteering in Mercury Bay, can you tell me your impressions and experiences of how the organisation approaches its engagement with volunteers?
- 14: How do you see the future of volunteering in Mercury Bay unfolding? What are the nature of changes and so you see changes affecting the community organisations you volunteer with? I
- 15: Is there anything else about your experiences that you would like to add, perhaps something that we haven't covered yet?

#### **Appendix 4:           Topic guide for second interview**

Hi (name),

Thanks for agreeing to meet me again today. As a result of your first interview I would like to clarify a couple of points that we didn't adequately cover. Are you fine with that?

- 1:     Thinking about the volunteer organization that you engage with, what problems or challenges or areas of growth can you imagine will affect the organization in the near future?
- 2:     How do you envisage the organization will respond to these issues?
- 3:     Is there anything else you would like to discuss?