Volunteering for a Job:

Converting Social Capital into Paid Employment

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Christopher Mark Davidson
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Abstract

The study explores the extent to which the environment of voluntary associations promotes the development of social capital. Moreover, it asks about the extent to which an individual can convert the social capital they have developed in this environment into economic capital, via the labour market. Social capital is primarily concerned with the resources embedded in social relationships, and how individuals can access and use them.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to enquire into the experiences of volunteers affiliated to voluntary associations based in West Auckland. The findings indicate there is no simple causal relationship between an individual's voluntary activities, and the level and value of social capital they can accrue from them. Nevertheless, the findings do suggest that the social capital that is developed through voluntary activity can influence an individual's labour market outcomes.

The research reported here indicates that labour market information is not equitably distributed through society. The study suggests that social policy can help bring this information to excluded groups. Targeted government support of the voluntary sector, aimed at providing opportunities for marginalised or minority groups to develop social capital, is one important option available to government to achieve this goal.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter One: Introduction

'It isn't what you know, but who you know'. This old truism encapsulates much of the meaning of the concept of social capital. Indeed, this thesis inquires into how the labour market outcomes of volunteers might be affected through 'getting to know' others. The truism is a simplification of the concept, of course. Social capital is primarily concerned with the resources embedded in social relationships, and how individuals can access and use them. As noted by Field (2003:44), the greatest value of social capital analysis lies in its 'interest in the pay-offs that arise from our relationships'.

One such 'pay-off' for an individual may occur through an ability to use their social capital to further their prospects in the labour market. A number of studies have shown that friends, acquaintances or relatives can offer important pathways to employment. Arthur, Inkson and Pringle (1999) note that a study in New Zealand found 55 percent of the participants had sourced their most recent job entirely through personal network mechanisms (as cited in Dupuis, Inkson, & McLaren, 2004). A recent study indicated that 40 to 50 percent of jobs are found in this way in the United States (Mouw, 2003).

Social relationships, developed in voluntary associations, may provide an individual with personal networks, and consequently social capital, that can influence their labour market outcomes. That local and/or central government may be able to facilitate this social capital development is of central interest to this thesis.

1.1 Objectives

The study focuses on the experiences of volunteers who are affiliated to voluntary associations based in the region administered by Waitakere City Council (to be referred to as 'West Auckland').

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the extent to which voluntary associations provide an environment conducive to the development of social capital;
2. Explore the extent to which an individual can convert the social capital they have developed in this environment into economic capital, via the labour market;
3. Consider how government can actively facilitate this process through policy mechanisms.

The research is limited to a small sample, and it is restricted to participants who volunteer within one geographical region. The results cannot be considered indicative of the characteristics of the national population of volunteers. Nevertheless, the study offers a modest contribution to knowledge about the relationships between social capital developed in the voluntary sector and the labour market, and the implications for policymakers of them.

1.2 Overview of the Study

To achieve the objectives of the study, Chapter Two identifies key debates within the literature on social capital. The discourse of social capital can be divided into two distinct perspectives, according to whether profit is attributed at the individual or collective level. Social capital is employed at the individual level in this research, with a particular focus on its heuristic utility. Pierre Bourdieu's (1983; 1997) seminal work on the concept is drawn on in support of this position. His notion that social capital can be converted into economic capital is central to the idea that social capital developed through volunteering can lead to paid employment.

The debate then considers the distinction between bridging and bonding social capital. Bridging social capital is socially inclusive and encapsulates relations between groups in the wider society. Bonding social capital is socially exclusive and concerned with social relations within groups. The networks in the community available to an individual through

their bridging social capital make it more likely to benefit their labour market opportunities than bonding social capital.

The same field of debate also addresses connections between the economy and social capital. The premise that social capital can be converted to economic capital links the concept to the political economy.

Finally, the discourse of social capital raises questions about the implications of cultural identity for the attribution of profit, of access to bridging and bonding social capital, and regarding groups' positions within the economy. Broadly, it suggests that these dynamics vary between cultural groups. The implications of cultural differences for policymakers are canvassed in the present research, with a particular focus on the role of the Treaty of Waitangi.

The relationships between social capital, voluntary activity, and the labour market are considered in Chapter Three. Voluntary associations are identified as an important site for the development of social capital. However, social capital development will vary according to the different characteristics of volunteers and the voluntary associations they are involved with, as they are not all alike. Social capital, through personal networks, plays a key role in the dissemination of labour market information. Pathways to employment from the social capital that is developed through volunteering are considered. The chapter then discusses the politics, and policy issues, arising from the social capital discourse.

Chapter Four develops the research methodology. The rationale is outlined for using qualitative and quantitative techniques in the study of social capital, within a broadly constructivist paradigm. In describing the methodology for the qualitative interviews, a set of themes is identified that emerged from both the qualitative fieldwork and the critical review of the literature. These themes informed the development of a set of indicators. The indicators are designed to explore how social capital is developed through volunteering, the relationship between social capital and the labour market, and the relation between social capital and the role of government. The indicators were used to develop a telephone survey

questionnaire. In discussing the construction and implementation of the survey, the choice of participants and the rationale and methodology for their selection are explained.

The findings from the research are canvassed in Chapters Five and Six. Chapter Five concentrates on the development of social capital in the voluntary sector. The findings from the fieldwork focus on how the participants developed their bridging social capital through their voluntary activities, and also on the quality of their social capital. The levels of trust found amongst them are used as a further indicator of social capital. Chapter Six asks about the role of social capital in finding employment. It considers the influence of contacts, networks, and social and cultural skills, developed in a voluntary environment, on labour market outcomes. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the government and voluntary sectors can work together. Possibilities for the development of social policies that draw on social capital are suggested. The views of the participants in the study on government involvement in the voluntary sector are considered alongside these suggestions.

Finally, Chapter Seven draws the conclusions together, merging the conceptual foundations of the thesis with the findings from the fieldwork.

Chapter Two: Social Capital – Conceptual Issues

The aim of this thesis is to explore the relationships between social capital that is developed in voluntary associations and economic forms of capital that are created via the labour market. It asks about the extent to which such relationships may be harnessed to create pathways to paid employment, and the possible roles of central and local government in facilitating this process.

A significant conceptual issue raised in the contemporary literature is that social capital has become all things to all people and, as a result, its usefulness has become diffused (Falk, 2002; Portes, 1998). In this light, social capital's coherence as a theoretical entity does seem questionable. However, dismissal of the concept on these grounds may be premature, and it is possible that it is in this very diversity that the true strength of social capital really lies.

Social capital offers an umbrella under which a variety of social practices can be brought together such as reciprocity, associational life and trust (Das, 2004). Moreover, the strength of social capital may exist within its heuristic rather than theoretical value (Falk, 2002; Portes, 1998; Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000). A surveying of these issues, as they appear within the social capital discourse, will enable the construction of an operational definition of social capital wherein its primary value emerges as a heuristic (rather than explanatory) device.

The following sections will consider the underlying fundamentals of the concept to facilitate an understanding of the approach to be taken. Additionally, there are a number of key issues that must be resolved in operationalising social capital. In this context, issues around the measurement and definition of social capital, political economy and culture will be worked through. This will pave the way for a discussion of the relationship between social capital, the voluntary sector and the labour market in Chapter Three.

2.1 Social Capital Fundamentals

Pierre Bourdieu (1997:51) proposes that social capital is '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 the collectivity-owned capital'. Portes (1998) believes that Bourdieu's notion is arguably the most theoretically refined of all the early contributions to the contemporary discourse. This thesis draws broadly upon Bourdieu's approach to social capital, while using other theoreticians' insights to extend this conception. The concept of social capital has developed along a number of trajectories, variously focussing on the following issues: tension between social capital's individualist and collective dimensions, the convertibility of capitals, the significance of trust, and the distinction between bridging and bonding capital. The rationale for the approach taken in this thesis will be argued for through consideration of these various fields of debate.

Individual and Collective Social Capital

The social capital discourse can be divided into two distinct perspectives according to whether profit is attributed at the individual or collective level (King & Waldegrave, 2003; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998). Social capital at the individual level is concerned with an individual's investment in social relations and how they are able to utilise the resources embedded in those relations to generate a return. At the collective level, social capital focuses on how groups develop and maintain social capital as a collective asset and how that asset can enhance the life chances of the group members (Lin, 2001). Portes and Mooney (2002) note that the transition from the individual to collective level was not anticipated in early conceptualisations of the notion, and that the failure to recognise the key differences between each perspective leads to confusion about what the term means. Given this divergence, it is important to clarify the exact nature of social capital employed in this project.

Bourdieu identifies three 'capitals' - economic, cultural and social. While each of these capitals is considered to be largely monopolised by the dominant class, with obvious references to Marxist thinking, his analysis is at the individual rather than structural level (Lin, 2001). Central to Bourdieu's approach is the notion that individuals are able to actively and consciously draw on the resources collectively held in their networks (Portes, 1998).

James Coleman (1988; 1990), another early thinker in the field, developed the concept of social capital further. His contribution avoided a circularity of thought to which Bourdieu's conception is prone. As noted by Schuller et al (2000:6), Coleman clarified that 'the powerful remained powerful by virtue of their contacts with other powerful people'. Coleman put forward a neo-functionalist theoretical framework where social relations 'constituted useful capital resources for actors through processes such as establishing obligations, expectations and trustworthiness, creating channels for information, and setting norms backed by efficient sanctions' (Schuller et al., 2000:6). This approach allowed a causal link between social capital and resources. It encompassed 'the social relationships of non-elite groups', and as a consequence it broadened the scope of Bourdieu's original contribution (Schuller et al., 2000:8). Portes and Mooney (2002:305) note that literature within this lineage was 'exemplified by the personal connections that facilitate access to jobs, market tips, or loans', thus lending itself to the concerns of this thesis.

Robert Putnam (1995; 2000; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993) led a transition within the debate that came to situate social capital at the collective level (Lin, 2001; Portes & Mooney, 2002). Putnam is largely credited with popularising the concept of social capital and, as a result, much contemporary literature owes a debt (of varying degrees) to his particular strand of theorising. His thesis has attracted the attention of a wide section of the political spectrum ranging through conservatives, liberals and communitarians (McLean, Schultz, & Steger, 2002). Putnam departed from both Bourdieu and Coleman by developing social capital beyond the level of the individual. He equated 'social capital with the level of "civicness" in communities such as towns, cities or even entire countries' (Portes, 1998:18).

This thesis resists this movement to the macro-level on the following grounds. Portes and Mooney (2002:308) state that the application of social capital at a level that produces a metaphor wherein social capital is held as 'stocks' which can be possessed by cities or nations, creates a situation whereby 'the heuristic value of the concept suffers ... as it risks becoming synonymous with all things that are positive or desirable in social life'. Lin (2001:26) also notes that at the collective level, social capital becomes synonymous with other collective goods - citing culture, norms and trust. He concludes that, 'divorced from its roots in individual interactions and networking, social capital becomes merely another trendy term to employ or deploy in the broad context of improving or building social integration and solidarity'.

At the collective level, there is also a lack of distinction between collectively owned resources and the ability of individual actors to obtain them. This can lead to tautological statements where a positive or negative outcome is seen as indicative of the presence or absence of social capital (Portes & Mooney, 2002). Portes (1998) notes that this obscures the fact that not all negative outcomes will necessarily be due to low stocks of social capital. For example, a student may be able to raise funds from their family networks to assist with their studies while another may not. It would be improper to suggest that the student who failed to raise funds in this manner was unable to do so due to having lower stocks of social capital than the other student. It may be that both students have equally strong kin networks. The family network of the student with the negative outcome may have been equally motivated to help, but may simply not have had the resources to do so.

Convertibility of Capitals

Another important element in Bourdieu's analysis relates to his discussion of alternate forms of capital (refer to his (1983) paper 'Economic Capital, Cultural Capital and Social Capital' (Falk, 2001b)). Portes and Mooney (2002) note that a key insight to emerge from his work is that each form of capital is interchangeable. This insight is central to the notion that individuals may be able to access economic resources (such as paid employment) through social relationships developed within the voluntary associations they are involved

with. Dupuis et al (2004) note that should an individual find paid employment through their social relationships, they have effectively converted social capital into economic capital.

However, Bourdieu's concept of the convertibility of capitals is difficult to operationalise. Silva and Edwards (2003) acknowledge Bourdieu's key insight of the convertibility of capitals. That said, his analysis does not lend easily to empirical research. To this end, they note that Bourdieu's 'thinking about capitals is the idea that we live simultaneously in multiple synchronic fields', and that people have packages of capitals where the three forms (economic, cultural and social capital) interact in different ways, being continuously transferred and transformed. As a consequence, 'it is impossible to single out one form of capital and a framework of interrelationship between capitals' (Silva & Edwards, 2003:3). Schuller, Baron and Field (2000) express similar concern in respect of applying Bourdieu's analysis to empirical research.

Silva and Edwards (2003) combat this critique, through regarding Bourdieu's concept of capitals as a set of 'thinking tools'. Bourdieu believes that theoretical concepts are 'polymorphic, supple and adaptive, rather than defined calibrated and used rigidly' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:4). Further, in defining the various capitals as 'objects' of research, Bourdieu (1992) argues that 'researchers must recognise that unless they themselves construct the objects of their research, they are left dealing with objects that have been pre-constructed within narrow approaches' and that 'both theory and method are part of the construction of the object, rather than separate' (Silva & Edwards, 2003:4).

In practice, Silva and Edwards grapple with this notion through using a variety of research methods. They employ both qualitative and quantitative methodologies designed to interrogate the interrelationships between the capitals. The epistemological assumptions implicit in their approach are broadly consistent with the constructivist research paradigm, which is used in the present research. The constructivist approach assumes that reality can be apprehended, but only in the form of 'multiple, intangible mental constructions', that 'are alterable, as are their associated realities' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:110-111). The

specifics of this methodological approach for the present work are canvassed in Chapter Four.

Bridging and Bonding Social Capital

Mark Granovetter's (1973) research indicates that the cohesion of a community is cemented not so much within the 'strong ties' that represent the solid connections held between the members of particular groups, but rather in the 'weak ties' that represent the connections held between individuals from disparate groups in a community. The mix of strong and weak ties is one way that voluntary associations can differ from each other. This may be important, as the type of tie a volunteer holds through their associational membership can be relevant to future employment outcomes. In particular, research indicates that weak ties are more important in producing positive employment outcomes than strong ties (although an exception was found in immigrant communities) (Carson, 1995; Stone, Gray, & Hughes, 2003).

Lin (2001:67) argues that an individual's chances of gaining better information are enhanced if they explore, among their ties, the weaker rather than the stronger ones, in order to find likely bridges to other social circles. He notes that Granovetter calls this strategy 'the strength of weak ties'. Lin (2001) extends this idea into the social capital discourse by relating weak ties to the 'bridging' form of social capital and strong ties to the 'bonding' form of social capital. Yeung (2004) also draws explicitly on Granovetter when characterising bridging social capital as 'socially inclusive' and as encapsulating relations between groups in the wider society, and bonding social capital as 'socially exclusive' and as concerned with social relations within groups. Yeung (2004:404) further refines the notion through stating that 'bonding and bridging are not either/or categories but are more/less dimensions; many groups simultaneously bond along some social dimensions and bridge across others'. As a consequence, Lin (2001:68) identifies that individuals with greater bridging social capital are allowed 'access to wider resource heterogeneity'. The implications of this for an individual's labour market outcomes, from the social capital they develop as volunteers, will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter Three.

Social capital may not necessarily be beneficial in all circumstances. Negative consequences have been associated with the exclusive nature of bonding social capital. Woolcock (2001) notes that the strong ties associated with bonding social capital:

> ... can place enormous non-economic claims on members' obligations and commitments, cutting them off from information about employment opportunities ... ridiculing efforts to study and work hard (e.g. claiming that doing well in school amounts to "acting white"), or siphoning off hard-won assets (e.g. supporting subsequent cohorts of co-ethnic immigrants) (Woolcock, 2001:195).

Further, Schuller et al (2000:10) note that while bonding social capital builds strong ties, it can 'also result in higher walls excluding those who do not qualify'. In a similar vein, Healy (2001) notes that group solidarity formed through bonding social capital may lead to co-operation for anti-social purposes. Gang related crime provides one extreme example of this. These concerns are echoed widely in the literature; for example, see Leonard and Onyx (2003), Hooghe and Stolle (2003) and Das (2004). Due to these concerns, Healy (2001:67) states that policies aimed at developing social capital 'need to take account of the diverse forms of social capital and its varying desirability'.

Trust

Two fundamental elements persist within the various definitions of social capital; at a minimum, it consists of social networks and the value of those networks as a resource to its members (Field, 2003; Lin, 2001; Portes, 1998; Schuller et al., 2000). Putnam (2000:19) adds the notion of trust as a further element. He states that 'social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. His emphasis on trust deserves some attention, as indicators and measures of social capital necessarily stem from its definition.

Portes (1998) relates Putnam's use of trust as an element of social capital to the tautological problem already noted with the collective perspective of social capital. That is, for Putnam

trust both produces social capital and develops as a by-product of the mechanisms of social capital (Falk, 2001a:3). For this reason, Schuller et al (2000) are also critical of research that focuses solely on trust as a measure of social capital. They suggest that research requires a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches focusing on the validity of a variety of measures of the concept. Kilpatrick et al (2002:16) concur, stating that 'regardless of whether trust primarily builds or is built by social capital it is generally agreed that trust between differing community members and groups, and trust in community institutions and leadership, are important for building the links, relationships and networks that provide the basis for a collective response to change'. Trust may be an important indicator of social capital, but it should be seen as a consequence and not purely a source of it, and as such, excluded from any definition of the concept (Kilpatrick et al., 2002; Lin, 2001). This approach is taken in this thesis. Stone et al (2003) relate the significance of this debate directly to the labour market. They play down the role of trust, stating that 'whereas trust is often thought to be the aspect of social capital that is critical to achieving a range of outcomes, we find it is the characteristics of networks that are more important in predicting labour force status and job search method' (Stone et al., 2003:23).

Thus, the position taken in this thesis is that social capital will be used at the individual, rather than collective level. Bourdieu's conception of social capital will be broadly drawn on. In particular, his notion that the various capitals are interchangeable is key to the idea that social capital can be converted into economic capital via the labour market. Further, the bridging form of social capital is more likely to assist an individual's labour market outcomes than bonding social capital. Social capital is taken to refer to an individual's social networks, and the value of those networks to them. The next section will develop a definition of social capital, along with issues associated with measuring it.

2.2 Measurement and Definition

This thesis has policy implications, as it asks what constitute appropriate central and local government interventions to facilitate and develop transfers of social capital between the

voluntary and labour market sectors. Policymakers are interested in measuring outcomes of policy initiatives, to assess their progress, and to determine the future of the initiatives. It is useful, then, to consider measures of social capital. Statistics New Zealand's document: 'Framework for the Measurement of Social Capital in New Zealand' notes that social capital has attracted the interest of policymakers in this country (Spellerberg, 2001). Measures of the concept need to be developed to address policy questions. This section outlines the difficulties of quantifying social capital, and suggests strategies for measuring it.

The previous section highlighted the diversity of issues and debates that currently constitute the concept of social capital. The first step in measuring social capital involves the making of decisions about what it is that is to be measured. The variety of approaches to the concept indeed creates difficulties in its operationalisation; each variation of the concept has an associated variation of measure (Lin, 2001; Schuller et al., 2000; Spellerberg, 2001). In treating social capital as a heuristic device within a broadly Bourdieuian approach, this thesis employs an operational definition of social capital as developed by Nan Lin (2001:25) that characterises social capital as:

> 'Resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions.'

Lin (2001:25) notes that this conceptualisation contains two important components: '(1) it represents resources embedded in social relations rather than individuals, and (2) access and use of such resources reside with actors'. The previous section identified that this thesis would use social capital at the individual level, rather than the collective level. It also noted that it would focus on the convertible nature of the various capitals, operationalised in a heuristic manner. This definition is congruent with both those notions.

When considering how to measure social capital, validity is a key issue. Schuller et al (2000:26) ask 'do the variables or factors used measure what they are supposed to measure?'. For instance, the drawback of considering trust as synonymous with social capital, due to tautological concerns associated with its simultaneous constituting and

constitutive natures, was noted in the last section. Thus, the validity of measures that correlate strong quantitative measures of trust in a society with high stocks of social capital are called into question. Exemplifying such attempts to correlate trust with stocks of social capital, Healy (2001) notes that most available measures of social capital use quantitative assessments of trust, along with aspects of civic involvement, including levels of volunteering. Guenther and Falk (2001) add that research which finds significant levels of correlation between social capital and the more traditional quantitative measures of socio-economic well-being - such as unemployment rates, crime rates or newspaper readership – are unhelpfully limited in their scope.

These measures should not be abandoned entirely. However, they need to be mediated by understandings about the contexts in which they are applied (Healy, 2004; Lin, 2001; Schuller et al., 2000). For instance, Healy (2004:17) states that 'local authorities might find local community benchmark surveys, combining a range of methodologies, useful in mapping the extent of social network ties in specific communities'. Further, he points to empirical research carried out in Ireland in 2002 of a sample of the Irish adult population. It indicated that 'informal social support and contact are more significant 'explanatory' variables than indicators of community involvement or volunteering' on the subjective well-being of that population (Healy, 2004:8).

The Statistics New Zealand report (Spellerberg, 2001:10) notes that a statistical framework can 'identify aspects of social life that relate to social capital and which can be measured to some extent' and that can help 'establish benchmarks for estimating the level of the underlying resources that are required in order for social capital rich (or intensive interactions) to take place'. However, the paper recognises the shortcomings of purely statistical approaches and suggests 'measurement would need to focus not only on the existence of relationships but also on the "quality" of those relationships'. Echoing the latter insight, this thesis considers the 'quality' of relationships and networks of the group of volunteers to be studied. The specifics will be covered in Chapter Four, and will heed Coleman's (1990:305-306) caution that social capital's 'current value lies primarily in its

usefulness for qualitative analyses of social systems and for those quantitative analyses that employ qualitative indicators'.

2.3 Political Economy

Jane Friesen (2003:183) states that: 'Social interactions that do not have an explicit economic purpose may affect economic productivity in a variety of ways'. A number of examples can be found in the literature that directly explore the notion that social capital is intimately linked to the political economy, including Francois (2002), Midgeley and Livermore (1998) and Paldam and Svendsen (2004). David Robinson's (1997:4) text 'Social Capital and Policy Development', written in the New Zealand context, notes that 'social capital is not a matter of pitching social against economic interests but of understanding the way in which social networks can impact on both social and economic development'. As already illustrated, Bourdieu's notion of the convertibility of capitals implicitly links social capital with economic capital. The implications of this notion for this research project are considered below.

Relationships to the Market Economy

Ian Falk's (2001a:3) paper 'The Future of "Work" and the Work of the Future' identifies social capital as 'the "missing link" that forges the connections between the economy, the community and the economic markets'. Falk suggests that a strong economy will emerge from government action that strengthens social cohesion through using social capital to inform social policy. One focal point for such policy applications is the relationship between the voluntary sector and the labour market. Healy (2001:12) continues this theme by diagrammatically illustrating the interrelationship of human, social, economic and physical capital to each other, with GDP at the centre. With reference to the work of Coleman (1988), he adds that there is potentially a 'strong complementarity between human capital, social capital and PIL' (political, institutional and legal arrangements) (Healy, 2001:13).

Stone et al (2003:1) explore the relationship between social capital and labour market outcomes, and cite research that indicates social capital can influence economic and political outcomes (see Arrow, 1972; Fukuyama, 1995; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Putnam et al., 1993). They state further that 'in Australia, as in many other nations, there is an emphasis upon paid work as a primary means for achieving economic independence, alleviating poverty and avoiding welfare dependency' (Stone et al., 2003:vii). Thus they suggest that social capital could be used to inform social policy that aims to improve access to the labour market. Writing within a New Zealand context, Cooney (1998, June) notes that government has a role in developing social capital. As an example, he discusses the case of the Waitaki region, where resources were provided to encourage people to contribute to the community (such as through volunteer work). The initiative led to an increased sense of 'community pride' in the region. As a consequence, the area started to build a tourism industry with associated increases in tourism-related employment. He cautions that if government ignores opportunities such as these, 'the deferred maintenance on social capital will become so great that we will be prepared to invest huge sums to recover the lost productivity and stability this capital provides' (Cooney, 1998, June:13).

High levels of social capital have been found to correlate with lowered transaction costs, providing a further relationship between social capital and the economy (Coleman, 1990; Paldam & Svendsen, 2004; Szreter, 2000). Transaction costs are defined as 'the costs other than the money price that are incurred in trading goods or services' (Johnson, 2005). Szreter (2000) draws on the 'new political economy' associated with Ronald Coase's (1937) work that began the field of transaction cost theory in economics. Central to it is the idea that information flows are of critical importance to an economy.

In particular, Szreter (2000:61) notes that 'by enabling us to focus on the crucial issue of how individuals' capacities to process information are distributed across an economy, social capital makes its vital contribution to a new political economy'. He states that 'social capital can be briefly defined as that general set of relationships which minimises the transaction costs of information across the whole economy'. The key point here is that the economy potentially stands to benefit from social capital created within voluntary

associations, assuming that there is a relationship to information and networks within the labour market. Szreter (2000:61) continues that social capital 'can show how the politics of a society and its particular mix of institutions critically influence the distribution of information-processing capacities among its citizens and so, ultimately, affect the efficiency and growth potential of the economy'. Some cautions should be made about policy that aims to use social capital to affect social change however.

In this critical vein, Das (2004:31-32) points to the manner in which 'economic-political conditions enable and, more powerfully, constrain the production of social capital'. Policy aimed at the development of social capital can be subverted if other policies are not in place to address pre-existing economic limitations and inequalities. For instance, if a group of people do not collectively have access to adequate economic resources, the potential for social capital amongst that group to enhance their socio-economic position will be mitigated.

In response to this issue, Walker (2004) asks how government agencies in New Zealand can work more closely together, and alongside third sector organisations. She notes that 'the prevailing view has generally been that interdependent groups of two or more organisations that consciously collaborate and cooperate with one another are more effective than when the same organisations go their own way' but that, in practice, 'local networks can have their own political economy, that is, inequalities and irreconcilable interests within and between networks' that if unrecognised can constrain this view (Walker, 2004:14). Halpern reinforces this concern (2005:323), noting that uncoordinated use of social capital for particular policy ends can lead to a policy response that results in 'many government departments all tinkering with the issue, sometimes with conflicting interests, and sometimes promoting contradictory policies'.

Additionally, Silva and Edwards (2003:11) argue that social capital both 'imposes and hides economic issues', noting further that 'use of the term 'capital' gives primacy to the economic or political effects or outcomes of family and social relationships'. Writers such as Das (2004), Fine (2002) and Navarro (2002) express similar concerns relating to this

'economic imperialism'. Smith and Kulynych (2002) continue in this vein, arguing that the use of the word 'capital' is too economic, restricting discourse to market constraints. Silva and Edwards (2003:11) note that through the use of the word 'capital', Bourdieu himself 'imposes a functionalist economic rationality on social life'. However, they note that Bourdieu's conception of social capital is less subject to this concern than some more recent understandings of it, such as Putnam's collectivist based approach, as his framework is 'explicitly concerned with social justice' with a focus on the individual. Indeed, Bourdieu's project is emancipatory in nature. As noted by Fine (2002:797), his approach is 'irreducibly attached to class stratification and the exercise of economic and other forms of exploitation'.

Navarro (2002:431) also distinguishes Bourdieu's work from these more contemporary understandings of the concept, citing his disclaimer that 'the only things I share with the economic orthodoxy ... are a number of words' (see Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Further, he notes that Bourdieu's conception of social capital roots 'the capabilities and resources of individuals primarily in the social structure in which they are articulated, seeing these resources as pivotal for either reproducing or breaking capitalist relations'. Navarro does caution that Bourdieu's disclaimers may not be enough. The substance of Bourdieu's work may contradict these statements. While not attempting to obscure these concerns, this thesis seeks to mitigate claims of 'economic imperialism' as much as possible through applying a broadly Bourdieuian approach to social capital. As noted by Silva and Edwards (2003:11), although his work 'still retains elements of economic rationality', it is less subject to the charge than Coleman's or Putnam's ideas, primarily due to its focus on the relationship between the individual and social capital.

Power and Control

The ability of social capital to grapple with issues of power and control has also been questioned, in a similar vein to the economistic bent that has recently given to the concept (Fine, 2002; Fisher, 2003; Navarro, 2002). Fine (2002:796) notes that: 'In raising the virtues of civic society to pedestal status, social capital has studiously ignored questions of

power, conflict, the elite and the systemic imperatives of (contemporary) capitalism'. This critique implicitly questions the efficacy of policy instruments that are informed by the notion of social capital.

Navarro (2002) suggests that Putnam's conception of social capital is bound up within capitalist ideology. Consequently, it is impervious to an inherent contradiction between the alienating and atomising effects of capitalism and the togetherness sought by a social capital deeply embedded within that same doctrine. Fine (2002) is equally scathing of social capital. However, he largely exonerates Bourdieu from his critique, noting that he 'emphasises the social construction of social capital (what it means and how it relates to practices), and that it is irreducibly attached to class stratification and the exercise of economic and other forms of exploitation' (Fine, 2002:797). Thus, he too generally limits his criticism to the more recent developments within the field; in particular, the work of Putnam and to a lesser extent Coleman. He believes both have excised the more critical components of Bourdieu's analysis. Fine (2001:63) notes further that subsequent to Bourdieu's work 'social capital has become broader in scope but so much shallower in depth to Bourdieu'.

Fine's critique does not necessarily diminish social capital's heuristic value. He states himself that 'social capital as a heuristic instrument undoubtedly allows for investigative research' (2001:108). Further, King and Waldegrave (2003:235) note that by employing Bourdieu's approach in their research, they were provided with a 'vocabulary for discussing the power relationships among fields or networks'. They note that his approach 'equates social capital with the qualifications or credentials of entry and membership of a particular social group'. Thus, the heuristic value of the concept is extended through its ability to locate relations within the field of political economy, providing a means of explaining why some individuals may be excluded from certain groups. To this end, reasons as to why social capital that is developed in the voluntary sector may be constrained from being converted into access to the labour market can thereby be considered. This opens up questions about the political context of social capital.

The Political Context of Social Capital

McLean et al's (2002) book 'Social Capital: Critical Perspectives on Community and "Bowling Alone"' opens with the following quote:

> As soon as public service ceases to be the main concern of the citizens and they come to prefer to serve the state with their purse rather than their person, the state is already close to ruin.
>
> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'The Social Contract' (cited in McLean et al., 2002).

Social capital is concerned with individual action. Yet the quote captures the notion that collectively, those actions, and the social networks they arise from, have wider ramifications for the political economy. However, the role of social capital is subject to debate; it is inescapably bound up in political ideology around the role of citizens in society (Francois, 2002; Hooghe & Stolle, 2003; J.D. Montgomery, 2000). Its utility has been advocated over a wide range of the political spectrum. For example, Brown and Lauder (2000:229) cite British Labour Party Prime Minister Tony Blair: 'We can only realize ourselves as individuals in a thriving civil society, comprising strong families and civic institutions buttressed by intelligent government ... this Third Way ... will build its prosperity on human and social capital'. One aspect of the Third Way is the minimisation of government, through helping people to participate in civil society, through encouraging civic engagement such as membership of non-governmental organisations and voluntary associations. To this end, these strategies draw on social capital ideas for insights into creating the necessary social cohesion required for their success (Muntaner, Lynch, & Smith, 2000; Turner, 2001).

The concept of social capital sits equally within the neo-liberal ethos. The New Zealand National Party, led by Jim Bolger, enthusiastically embraced the notion in the late 1990s (Cooney, 1998, June; Harington, 1998). Additionally, Healy (2001:51) notes that the 'welfare state has been cited as a possible cause of declining social capital' while Putnam (2000:363) suggests that 'surely it is social capital ... that will most improve the quality of

public debate' in respect of issues 'such as deciding what sort of safety net, if any, should replace the welfare system'.

This thesis suggests that the concept does have a role for informing social policy, and indeed a critical one. This section has considered the relationship between social interactions and the political economy. Bourdieu's link between social capital and economic capital is central to the discussion, adding as it does the capacity to consider the issues of class, conflict and power within the construction of social capital. Further, the thesis argues that the heuristic value of social capital lends itself to informing social policy. Thus, an active role for local and central government in developing social capital and facilitating its exchanges is advocated. This notion will be picked up fully in the next chapter. However, there remains one crucial issue to be considered that impacts on the development of social capital: cultural identity.

2.4 Culture

Inkeles (2000:22-23) notes that 'cultural patterns of different communities play a critical role as a form of social capital in affecting the chances for those communities success in economic, political, military and other endeavours'. The Treaty of Waitangi makes New Zealand a primarily bi-cultural society, creating an imperative for social policy to account for the needs of Maori communities. This section first considers the implications of cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha communities for this research project. It then considers the implications for other cultures.

Robinson and Williams (2001) provide a framework for understanding how social capital can differ between Pakeha and Maori communities. They discuss the cultural distinction between 'giving (European concept of volunteering) and sharing (Maori concept of cultural obligation)' (Robinson & Williams, 2001:52). The rules governing 'giving', or volunteering, will differ between cultural groups. This has implications for policymakers. The idea of cultural obligation, for instance, makes a fatuity of the statement 'voluntary

community activity' for Maori, as volunteerism implies an option or choice. The expectations of reciprocal relations, inherent in the notion of cultural obligation in Maori culture, make the idea of 'voluntary community activity' redundant. If voluntary associations are to be viewed as a source of social capital, then 'we need to understand the nature of relationships' within them; a failure to understand the differences between communities 'may suggest why some people are excluded from active participation in society while others dominate' (Robinson & Williams, 2001:53-54).

The Pakeha perspective of social capital encapsulates networks that exist in the wider society, such as those developed through community or voluntary organisations. In contrast, Maori have a greater focus on whanau (Robinson & Williams, 2001; Spellerberg, 2001). Blakeley and Suggate (1997) neatly summarise the relationship between whanau and social capital:

> What distinguishes Maori communities from non-Maori communities is the sense of a shared affinity between members regarding Maori identity, values, culture and history. This is encapsulated in the concept of whanaungatanga, which is an important contributor to social capital in Maori communities. For whakapapa-based communities, whanaungatanga is about supporting, nurturing and sharing resources within iwi, hapu and whanau and hence relates to the concept of participation ... . Another important factor in relation to social capital is tikanga ... for whakapapa-based communities, tikanga ensures that members know and understand the systems and processes of knowledge, accountability and support (Blakeley & Suggate, 1997:88-91).

This thesis is limited to a survey of volunteers selected from groups constructed within a European tradition. This suggests that further work should be done to explore the relationship between social capital developed within a whanau environment, and labour market outcomes. Robinson and Williams (2001:69-70) make some useful comments about the policy implications that stem from these differences. In particular, they urge that guidelines and eligibility criteria for support of community initiatives (such as from trusts,

foundations or the government) take into account, and recognise as equally valid, the different organisational structures, norms, values and aspirations of Maori communities. Further, New Zealand is now home to a wide variety of peoples from the Pacific, Asia and other areas. A similar approach to policy for them may also have the potential to improve employment outcomes within their communities.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has considered the fundamentals of the social capital concept. The thesis argues for a heuristic rather than theoretical reading of social capital. That said, in drawing broadly on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, it brings into that heuristic reading the concerns with power, class and conflict which animated Bourdieu's approach to social capital. More directly, however, Bourdieu's focus on the individual allows volunteers in this study to be considered individual actors who are capable of accessing and using the resources, embedded in their networks, for conversion into other forms of capital. In particular, this study has an interest in the conversion of social capital into economic capital, via the labour market.

Voluntary associations are identified as important generators of social capital in our society. Individuals are situated within normative structures that allow for reciprocal exchanges between members of networks. Not all networks are alike. Falk (2001b:4-5) notes that 'it's not whether some of us belong to more or fewer networks that counts, it's the nature of those networks that seems to be important'. In particular, Granovetter's (1973) thesis on the 'strength of weak ties' is correlated with bridging and bonding social capital. The suggestion is made that bridging social capital is more likely to provide information that will lead to positive labour market outcomes.

Social capital is positioned as a link between the economy, community, and economic markets, thus providing a nexus between the voluntary and labour market sectors. The thesis proposes that local and central government investment in the development of social

capital will lead to economic benefits, including the creation of paid employment. Conversely, if opportunities to invest are discounted, depletion of the resource is conceivable.

Social capital can have different meanings for different cultures. Effective social policy in New Zealand, that aims to promote the development of social capital, should recognise the varying organisational structures, norms, values and aspirations of different cultures as equally valid. Whilst not minimising the needs of other cultures, the Treaty of Waitangi makes this an imperative in respect of Maori interests.

Chapter Three: Voluntarism, the Labour Market and Social Policy

The previous chapter examined the fundamentals of social capital. This chapter widens the debate through exploring the connections between social capital developed in the voluntary sector and the labour market.

The voluntary sector is diverse. The first section considers the varying characteristics of voluntary associations that can either enhance or constrain an individual's ability to develop social capital within them.

The second section enquires into how an individual's social capital can influence their labour market outcomes. It builds on the preceding discussion and suggests that factors such as an individual's present socio-economic status and the quality of their networks can influence their labour market outcomes. The final section enquires into how social capital may influence local and/or central government social policy.

3.1 Voluntary Associations and Social Capital

It has been recognised for some time that voluntary associations can provide benefits to society in ways other than through the primary objectives they set out to achieve. In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville (1969) wrote about how social interactions in voluntary associations acted as a 'social glue' in American society. Similar themes can be found in other early contributions to the discipline of sociology. In addition, a number of academics trace the roots of social capital to De Tocqueville and/or the work of sociology's founding fathers (Field, 2003; Navarro, 2002; Portes, 1998; Woolcock, 1998). The relationship between social capital and the voluntary sector is thus critical to this thesis, and forms the basis of this section.

Associational Membership and Social Capital

Voluntary associations can provide an important site for the development of social capital (Leonard & Onyx, 2003; D. Robinson, 1997; Stolle, 1998; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). Leonard and Onyx (2003:189) state that 'most of the early contributions to social capital theory attributed an important role to voluntary associations in producing social capital'. They cite several pieces of work that identify strong connections between civic involvement and levels of social capital (see Coleman, 1988; Onyx & Bullen, 2000; Putnam et al., 1993). In particular, they refer to Teorell's (2000) longitudinal study of a large sample of the Swedish population. It found that membership in community organisations typically preceded the development of both friendship networks and levels of political engagement. Interest in the concept of social capital in New Zealand largely extends from the 1996 conference 'Social Cohesion, Justice and Citizenship – the Role of the Voluntary Sector' which 'focused on a definition of social capital that refers to the "networks of voluntary association" that help build a civil society' (D. Robinson, 1997:1).

It should not be assumed, however, that a simple causal relationship exists between the levels of volunteering in society and its stocks of social capital. A variety of factors can influence the level and value of social capital that may accrue to a given *individual* actor. For instance, research indicates that the more formal or hierarchical an association is, the lower its capacity becomes for developing social capital (Arai, 2000; Halpern, 2005; Sharpe, 2003). Sharpe (2003:448) states that 'while a move toward formalisation would help such associations thrive within a social environment that favours formalisation, it is precisely the informal, accessible, and leisurely style of grassroots associations that contributes to their most important social benefits'. Further, Halpern (2005:271) discusses a variety of examples to support his conclusion that hierarchical social structures 'actively undermine' most positive forms of bonding and bridging social capital.

Assuming a simple causal relationship between the levels of volunteering in a society, and its stocks of social capital, may also obscure how social capital is distributed throughout it. Wilson (2000) describes a general correlation between higher levels of education in

individuals and a greater number of requests they are likely to receive to volunteer. He indicates that people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to receive opportunities to volunteer. Consequently, this diminishes their opportunities to develop social capital. He also emphasises that not all voluntary efforts will be rewarded in the same way. He notes that positive social ties are more likely to arise out of more 'socially acceptable' endeavours such as Meals on Wheels, than from taking part in protest actions (J. Wilson, 2000:224). Similarly, the social capital developed in different cultural settings may provide outcomes that differ from mainstream environments. The policy implications that stem from cultural differences were discussed in the previous chapter.

Volunteering encompasses a wide range of activities. Social capital's heuristic utility will depend upon how well the environment in which it is employed is understood. It is thus useful to consider definitions and typologies of volunteering. Tilley and Tilley (1994:291) define volunteer work as 'unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial, or friendship obligations'. This definition is an advance on early understandings of volunteering, which differentiated between productive and unproductive activities in society and typically placed voluntary work in the latter category (J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). The definition provides a useful starting point, though it does not fully convey the variety of activity that voluntary work encompasses. The remainder of this sub-section fleshes out a typology of volunteers that was developed by Susan Arai (2000) towards this end.

Arai's typology moves beyond earlier classifications of volunteering that focused on the motivations or benefits to volunteers, through considering the nature of the volunteer's experiences. It accounts for their positive experiences; such as the opportunities volunteers have to make a contribution, to develop their knowledge and skills, and to form new relationships. It also accounts for their negative experiences - such as frustration with organisational processes, a lack of support, and their personal lack of skills, knowledge and influence. The typology identifies three main types of volunteer: citizen volunteers, techno volunteers and labour volunteers (Arai, 2000:340). It is acknowledged that these are ideal

types, and that individuals may move between them over periods of time. They are summarised as follows:

> *Citizen volunteers*: Typified by an emphasis on suprapersonal concerns (e.g. poverty alleviation, equity and access issues). They are generally interested in making a contribution to the community. The main benefit to these volunteers comes from their appreciation of the interpersonal relationships and connections they develop through volunteering.
>
> *Techno volunteers*: They are usually aligned to an association due to specific skills they have to offer. They typically do not have a full understanding of the association's mission and values. A key benefit for them is often the ability to expand their networks and knowledge, often in ways that may benefit their paid employment.
>
> *Labour volunteers*: They are directly involved in implementing the activities and services of the voluntary association. In contrast to citizen volunteers, they are usually less interested in the mission and values of it. The main benefit they see for themselves is the expansion of their personal networks (Arai, 2000:342-345).

This typology, and the points preceding it, has important implications for this thesis. A variety of factors can influence the degree to which an individual's social capital, accrued through their voluntary activities, can affect their labour market outcomes. These can include the level of formality within the association they are involved with and the role that association plays in society, tempered by their own desires and motivations as a volunteer, and their own socio-economic status to begin with. King and Waldegrave (2003:237) note a particular concern in this respect: 'networks of the poorly educated and under-employed will tend not to hold currency in the networks of the well-educated and professionally employed, and vice versa. All things being equal, this would not necessarily be a problem; all things are not equal, however'. This has a clear policy implication. If all voluntary associations are not alike, then enhancing labour market outcomes in a given community, through government support, may require a thorough consideration of an array of quite subjective variables. This can include factors that range from the socio-economic

constitution of an association to the potential of an association to develop bridging social capital across the wider community.

The Developing Nature of Volunteering

The levels and types of participation in volunteering have changed and developed in recent years (Graham, 2004; Nichols, 2004; Price, 2002). In particular, Price (2002:119) notes that 'developments such as forced voluntarism, the growing number of retirees, and corporate sponsored volunteering are changing the nature of civic engagement and some voluntary associations. There is evidence that younger volunteers are increasingly concerned with volunteering opportunities as means to pragmatic ends, such as résumé building'. This subsection considers what may be driving these changes. It asks about their implications, and concludes with illustrative examples of contemporary innovations in the voluntary sector in New Zealand and internationally.

Price (2002) is sceptical about whether collective notions of social capital can satisfactorily explain changes in the voluntary sector. He notes that Putnam, for instance, bases his argument about declining civic involvement upon aggregated responses to surveys, which are used to form generalised statements about the nature of our society (such as excessive individualism). Price contends the reality is far more complex, and he draws on Bourdieu to consider structural factors affecting the sector. He cites the example of a hypothetical group of concerned neighbours organising to oppose a business development in their area. While loose associations like this have strong potential for developing social capital, their political nature and lack of formal institutionalisation do not make them attractive sites for résumé building. Corporations are unlikely to involve their employees in a volunteer capacity with them given their anti-business nature, and people channelled towards volunteer work through schools, the workplace or government agencies are likely to be steered towards less controversial and more formalised associations than this (Price, 2002:126).

This view is supported by Arai (2004:152), who states that 'volunteering is socially constructed and is affected by the changing social and political context', noting further that

Canadian government policy has spurred the 'proliferation of volunteering for its contribution to the market (techno and labour volunteers and skill development for participation in the labour force)'. Thus, this raises the question of the balance policymakers have to make between supporting the voluntary sector to develop social capital, and constraining the growth of social capital through altering the dynamics that build it in the first instance. For example, a particular voluntary association may welcome a government grant. However, if it was conditional upon performance objectives that are counter to the objectives of some of its volunteers, such support may have negative implications for the development of that association in the longer term. Arai (2004:174) notes that voluntary associations are valuable sites for the development of 'virtues such as cooperation, collective identity, altruism and social relationships as ends in themselves', virtues that may be undermined through ill-considered government interventions.

Voluntarism has been subject to other developments, in addition to the exogenous factors just noted (and perhaps due to them). These may affect how social capital is generated. Seyfang (2004) discusses a range of recent UK initiatives that employ voluntary activity as a mechanism for ameliorating social exclusion. The development and encouragement of local currencies is one example of contemporary change in the volunteer sector. Seyfang highlights time banks as a particularly innovative form of local currency. The UK government considers them within the scope of volunteering; thus they are not subject to the tax regime, including income testing. Time banks are described as follows:

> A time broker is employed to manage the scheme, maintain a database of participants, and recruit people and organisations. Participants inform the broker of the kinds of things they require help with, and what they can offer in return, and the broker arranges time exchanges by finding people to meet each other's needs. People earn a time credit for each hour spent helping someone else, and spend a credit when someone helps them in return (Seyfang, 2004:61).

Seyfang (2001:252) cites research indicating the effectiveness of time banks for 'promoting volunteering, building social capital, and tackling social exclusion in deprived

neighbourhoods'. She also notes their potential for building bridging social capital within communities, and developing pathways to paid employment (see also Halpern, 2005).

Time banks have not been piloted in New Zealand, although Williams (1996) does note that 'green dollar exchanges' are another form of local currency that has been developed here. These schemes are not explicitly concerned with promoting voluntary activity, though they do function in a similar manner to the time bank concept and have similar objectives. The objectives of green dollar exchanges are noted as 'community-building, creating more localised economies and helping the unemployed to participate in productive activity' (Williams, 1996:319).

More pertinently, a number of volunteer centres connected with the independent organisation 'Volunteering New Zealand' have been set up around the country to (among other objectives) match voluntary associations with people seeking opportunities to volunteer. McCarthy (2005) notes that one of these centres, Volunteering Auckland, has signed up around 10,000 volunteers since starting twelve years ago, and has 180 community groups on its database seeking volunteers.

The New Zealand volunteer centres are an innovative example of the developing nature of volunteering in this country. However, Cheryll Martin (2004) of Volunteering Auckland does express concern at other, particularly government-driven programmes. She notes that initiatives such as volunteering that is required as part of educational curricula, or as a form of work in the welfare system, or as forms of punishment through the justice system, impinge on the 'true nature' of volunteering.

Voluntary associations are an important site for the development of social capital. However, they are vulnerable to changes in the social and political environment. The implications of the role that local and/or central government may have in facilitating and developing social capital within the voluntary sector for political purposes (such as improving labour market outcomes) will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

3.2 The Labour Market and Social Capital

Hodgkinson and Weitzman (1996:4-112) note that the 1995 'Independent Sector Survey of Giving and Volunteering', conducted in the United States, found nearly a quarter of volunteers surveyed were involved in voluntary activity at least in part to 'make new contacts that might help my business or career' (as cited in J. Wilson, 2000:232). Mouw (2003) cites research that indicates around 40 to 50 percent of jobs in the USA are found through friends or relatives. Perri 6 (1997) notes that 'a number of studies have shown that more people find employment through family, friends and acquaintances than any other single pathway' (as cited in Dickson, 2004:8).

Each of these statements indicates there may be a causal relationship between an individual's social networks and their employment prospects. However, Wilson (2000) argues there is scant evidence to support claims that volunteering can lead to paid employment, or improvements in the quality of an individual's paid employment. Further, Norwood (2001) found the impact of social capital on employment outcomes minimal, compared to human capital/educational achievement factors, cautioning that social policy should continue to prioritise its focus on educational equity. This section examines, in more detail, the notion that social capital, particularly that which is developed through voluntary activities, can lead to improved labour market outcomes.

The Role of Networks in Labour Market Outcomes

One feature suggested by the notion of social capital, as applied in this thesis, is that individual actors can purposively draw on the resources embedded in their social relations to improve their chances of personal profit. Lin (2001:24) observes there is a consensus, on this point, amongst a number of leading academics, including Bourdieu, Coleman, Lin, Flap, Burt, Erickson and Portes. In particular, Ronald Burt (2002) applies this notion to the role networks have in affecting labour market outcomes. He draws explicitly on Bourdieu and Coleman when stating that: 'The social capital metaphor is that the people who do

better are somehow better connected ... certain people or certain groups are connected to certain others ... dependent on exchange with certain others. Holding a certain position in the structure of these exchanges can be an asset in its own right. That asset is social capital' (Burt, 2002:150).

Portes (1998:12) cites the work of both Burt (1992) and Granovetter (1974) when stating that social capital is frequently invoked 'as an explanation of access to employment, mobility through occupational ladders, and entrepreneurial success'. He notes that Burt's use of the concept accords with Bourdieu's instrumental approach, as it focuses on the benefits that can accrue to individuals. Further, it builds on Granovetter's 'strength of weak ties' notion (discussed in Chapter Two) in highlighting the role weak ties have in improving employment outcomes for an individual. Others to employ both Burt and Granovetter in advancing this notion include Lin (2001) and King and Waldegrave (2003).

Lin (2001) has investigated how social capital could improve the chance of 'getting a better job' and found consistent support for the proposition that social capital could contribute to positive labour market outcomes. He did note, however, that the nature, and value, of an individual's networks might differ according to their socio-economic status. Further, this notion has yet to be fully conceptualised and studied. Bourdieu's work acknowledged that the value of networks will vary according to an actor's circumstances: 'the volume of social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected' (Bourdieu, 1997:51).

Aguilera (2002:856) cites a number of studies (see Fernandez-Kelly, 1995; Lin, Edsel, & Vaughn, 1981; W. J. Wilson, 1987) that indicate participation in the labour market (and job quality once in paid employment) can be contingent on the quality of an individual's networks. Further, Dickson (2004:9) refers to Giddens (1998) in stating that 'unequal access to influential networks serves to reinforce existing patterns of social disadvantage'. Healy (2001) notes that it is the range and nature (particularly in respect of bridging rather

than bonding ties) of an individual's connections rather than the number of connections that assist their employment search.

Social networks may also matter from the perspective of an employer's strategies and expectations (Dickson, 2004; Dupuis et al., 2004; Fernandez & Castilla, 2001; Stone et al., 2003). Stone et al (2003) cite the work of Holzer (1988), Rees (1966) and Montgomery (1991) when arguing that social networks play an important role in demand-side decision-making by employers. They note that a central task of the labour market is to facilitate exchanges of information, or signals, between employers and potential employees. In the labour market, information is imperfect about given jobs, or about any individual employee. The process of job-search takes time and can be expensive. For this reason, informal channels or networks can form an important part of the job search process. In particular, employee referrals are an important informal channel. They are generally informative and reliable, because the referring employee is unlikely to put their own reputation at risk through recommending unsuitable applicants. Thus, informal channels can reduce the cost of job search. Arthur, Inkson and Pringle's (1999) study supports this notion:

> In a recent New Zealand study of 121 job-to-job transitions, in 66 instances (or 55 percent of the sample) the new job had been obtained entirely through personal network mechanisms, while in a further 13 cases (or 11 percent of the sample) personal networks had supplemented formal mechanisms such as newspaper advertisements and formal applications (as cited in Dupuis et al., 2004:2-3).

Volunteering as a Pathway to Paid Employment

Dupuis et al (2004:7) argue that 'the importance of social capital is underestimated both in theory and in practice concerning employment finding'. However, they are cautious. For instance, they note that as the labour market becomes more fragmented, and as recruitment systems become more professionalised, the role of social capital in job search may diminish. Further, Rotolo and Wilson (2003) acknowledge that research suggests a positive

correlation between the levels of voluntary activity and an individual's employment status. However, they caution against drawing conclusions that associational membership is a causative factor leading to higher status careers. They note that 'civic skills' taught through high status jobs enable civic participation, and that small businesses often use community organisations to build contacts. Many corporations also encourage managers to become involved in their communities as part of their 'corporate outreach programs'. They conclude that 'it is unlikely that voluntary association memberships cause careers. The evidence suggests, rather, that careers cause membership' (Rotolo & Wilson, 2003:604).

Accounting for these points, it is acknowledged that a simple causal relationship between voluntary activity and labour market outcomes is improbable. However, Rotolo and Wilson's findings focus on higher status careers. Disadvantaged or excluded groups are not explicitly considered in their paper. Networks built through voluntary activity may play a role in providing pathways to paid employment, particularly for these groups (Healy, 2001; Seyfang, 2004). Seyfang (2004) argues that social networks developed through voluntary activity can provide a powerful mechanism for reincorporating excluded individuals back into mainstream employment. A key reason is that the voluntary sector can provide opportunities for the development of bridging social capital between disparate communities. Moreover, she notes that volunteering can provide an environment where individuals can build the self-esteem and confidence required to immerse themselves in social networks.

Witten-Hannah (1999:25-26) builds on this analysis through stating that 'community initiatives act as a catalyst in the formation of social capital ... they create opportunities for the development of social relationships and ... empower individuals and groups, giving them hope and self-confidence'. Dickson (2004:8) notes further that social norms play a role in people's attitudes to work, pointing to research that indicates 'people who are embedded in networks of family, friends, community and institutional ties that support the value of work are more likely to be employed'. Healy (2001) argues that social inclusion policies should recognise that access to social capital can improve an individual's life

chances and that government support of voluntary associations is one mechanism that can be used to this effect.

The preceding discussion indicates that volunteering may lead to paid employment for some people. The efficacy of social networks to enhance an individual's labour market outcomes is likely to be dependent upon a combination of factors, such as their socio-economic status and the 'quality' of their networks. As noted by Seyfang (2004), the heterogeneity of the voluntary sector may provide opportunities for individuals to bridge into networks otherwise outside their immediate sphere.

There is no simple causal relationship between social capital and the labour market. Facilitating the development and transfer of social capital from within the voluntary sector, into economic capital via the labour market, raises complex policy considerations. The final section of this chapter grapples with this complex terrain.

3.3 Policy Implications

The concept of social capital is not new to New Zealand's political landscape. In May 1997, Prime Minister Jim Bolger hailed social capital as the way 'to blaze a new trail in building better communities' (Berry, 1997:C5). Berry (1997) noted the initiative was a response to the negative effects of economic restructuring on community development. Bolger's views were supported through work done by Internal Affairs (Boyd, 1997). Berry (1997) also noted that in the same year, Christchurch City Council voted $3.3 million for a 'social cohesion' package, part of which was designed to develop social capital in the city. More recently, the Ministry of Social Development included a session devoted to social capital in 'The Social Policy, Research and Evaluation Conference' held in November 2004. Further, the concept of social capital has informed a number of recent contributions to this countries social policy discourse, including (and not limited to): Robinson (2002), Healy (2004), Spoonley et al (2004a), Dickson (2004), Walker (2004), Taylor (2004), King and Waldegrave (2003) and Dupuis et al (2004).

Social capital seems capable of finding a place in varied corners of the political spectrum, as noted in the previous chapter. This section begins by exploring how social capital can be positioned within the various political discourses. This is rounded out with a discussion of how policymakers might use social capital, for the purposes of creating pathways to paid employment. A partnership approach is advocated. The approach is founded on Bourdieu's notion of social capital, which relies on investment to build and maintain social capital. It also draws on Jurgen Habermas' notion of 'communicative competences' that suggests government cultivate an environment that promotes fair and equitable communication between stakeholders.

The Politics of Social Capital

A number of authors have critiqued the perceived appropriation of the concept of social capital within neo-liberal politics (see Arai, 2000; Fine & Green, 2000; Healy, 2001; B. Robinson, 1997; Szreter, 2000; Wallis & Dollery, 2002). Neo-liberal advocates argue that the state crowds out voluntary associations, inhibiting the creation of social capital. As Bonnie Robinson (1997:A19) puts it, this gives 'those who want to reduce the size of government a social approach to what is essentially a monetarist agenda'. For instance, central to the Bolger government's agenda in seeking to build up voluntary agencies was a desire to devolve social services from the public sector to the voluntary sector (Boyd, 1997:13).

Healy (2001) refutes the neo-liberal claim that the welfare state will necessarily diminish social capital creation. He notes that the Netherlands and Sweden are countries that have the most extensive welfare states in the world and that they also score amongst the highest in indicators of social capital, such as levels of voluntary involvement amongst its citizens. Further, Arai (2000) notes that in Canada, neo-conservative influences have pressured some organisations to shift their goals from their original missions to direct service delivery. One consequence has been that some volunteers have found themselves having to engage in aspects of volunteering outside their type (refer to Arai's typology in section 3.1 of this

chapter). They have become despondent with their involvement, thus countering the development of social capital.

Both Arai (2000) and Falk (2001b) caution that government must not withdraw its responsibilities to the voluntary sector through the promotion of active citizenship. To this end, Arai (2000:347) notes that 'while the foundation for citizenship lies in the voluntary exercise of civil and political rights, the rights of citizenship also invoke duties in others, including government'. Bonnie Robinson (1997:A19) also questions whether simply devolving responsibility from the government sector to the voluntary and community sectors will build social capital, noting that evidence suggests the contrary, and that 'voluntary activity ... can be stimulated or supported by carefully designed increased government activity'. In this same way, this thesis will be moving toward the suggestion that the government and voluntary sectors work in partnership.

An active role for government is implicit in Bourdieu's conception of social capital. Bourdieu (1997) stresses that investment is required to build and maintain social capital. Further, Warner (2001:188) builds on the idea that each form of capital is interconnected, and states that for Bourdieu: 'if the object of network building was not endowed with social, economic or cultural capital then the effort will not be considered worthwhile'. He emphasises that in geographical areas with weak social capital, it is most desirable that investment in each form of capital comes from both local government and local residents.

Szreter (2000) and Falk (2002) consider the role of Habermasian political theory in this respect. Taking a heuristic reading of social capital, they draw on Habermas to emphasise the importance of a policy environment that promotes fair and equitable communication between stakeholders, encompassing parties within both the government and voluntary sectors. Brand (1990) notes that Jurgen Habermas refers to such an environment as having shared 'communicative competences'.

New Zealand's contemporary political environment, with its focus on competitiveness and economic growth, could be considered in conflict with the social objectives of the approach

suggested here. David Robinson (1997) argues that competitiveness and individuality, when taken to its extremes, can inhibit social capital and social cohesiveness. He does point out, however, that the two goals are not mutually exclusive. Economic growth can provide the economic foundation upon which a fair welfare system can be built, while social capital can contribute to greater community participation in democratic processes, thus providing the bedrock for a well functioning community and economy. Amongst the benefits of a carefully managed symbiotic relationship, he notes the potential for less violence (and its economic costs) through strengthened communities, improved links between government, business and voluntary sectors and lowered transaction costs (see also Das, 2004; Gittell & Thompson, 2001; Healy, 2001; Rotolo & Wilson, 2003). Robinson succinctly appraises the challenges of partnership between government and the community sectors:

> There is an argument that overly large government can crowd out community activity which produces social capital ... at the other extreme a minimal state can result in less fortunate families and communities being left to flounder through lack of skills and resources. Somewhere in between exists a healthy balance of government intervention whereby civil society, and the voluntary organisations within it, are able to flourish (D. Robinson, 1997:85-86).

Towards Social Capital Policies

The development of policies directed at encouraging social capital development must be premised on an assumption that they can actually effect change in practice. Two key authors in the collective tradition of social capital, Putnam (1993) and Fukuyama (1995), take a laissez-faire approach in their interpretation of the concept. That is, they both argue against active government intervention to stimulate the development of social capital. Putnam believes that government policy can have very little effect on the creation of social capital (Alex-Assensoh, 2002; Maloney, Smith, & Stoker, 2000; Wallis & Dollery, 2002), while Tarrow (1996) notes that he perceives 'the character of the state as external to the model, suffering the results of the region's associational incapacity, but with no responsibility for producing it' (as cited in Maloney et al., 2000:216).

Warner (2001:189) cites several authors who oppose this view (see Crocker, Potapchuck, & Schechter, 1998; Evans, 1996; Potapchuck, Crocker, Schechter, & Boogaard, 1997; Skocpol, 1996), and argues that (local) government can effectively build social capital through sharing 'autonomy with citizens, shifting its emphasis from controller, regulator and provider to new roles as catalyst, convenor and facilitator'. Further, Judge (2004:24) notes, in response to the question of whether or not government has 'any business influencing peoples choices about investing in their social capital', that inescapably, governments already do so. He continues that 'decisions about public transport and housing, parental leave and education, day care and elder care, to name but a few, significantly shape the social connections people make'.

The remainder of this subsection will explore, conceptually, considerations for local and central government in developing effective policy. It returns to the dichotomy of bridging and bonding social capital that was introduced in Chapter Two, along with the notion that bridging social capital may be more likely to open up pathways to employment for an individual. The previous section noted possibilities for its development through volunteering due to the heterogeneity of that sector. Narayan (1999) continues in this vein, noting that all societies have divisions along lines such as gender, class and ethnicity, and that access to resources can be determined through these groupings. While bonding social capital may help members within a group, it is bridging social capital that can open up economic opportunities outside of groups. For this reason, Narayan argues that policy guided by the social capital discourse needs to focus on developing bridging social capital.

The potential benefits of increasing the social capital available to marginalised or minority groups has been discussed (refer to Seyfang, 2004). Further, Aguilera (2002) believes policymakers should recognise that labour market information is a valuable commodity not available equally to all, and should aim to foster ways of bringing this information to groups with less access to it (see also Wallis & Dollery, 2002). He adds that social capital can act as a 'powerful tool in explaining how labour markets operate' and that it can be useful in understanding how programmes can assist the unemployed or underemployed (Aguilera, 2002:871). Judge (2004:25-26) notes that social capital may be 'particularly

pertinent for policies seeking to better integrate groups at risk of social exclusion (e.g. new immigrants, the long-term unemployed, youth at risk, certain Aboriginal communities, the frail elderly)' and that for those with 'virtually no social capital, then even a modest increase may make a large difference in outcomes'. Moreover, Robinson and Williams (2001:55) suggest that 'restrictions on the freedom of operation of voluntary associations ... non-reciprocal relationships ... and not recognising the status of marginalised groups' can contribute to social capital decline.

Wilson (2000) notes that volunteering is less prevalent amongst lower socio-economic groups and the unemployed. Additionally, he states that 'the generic term "volunteering" embraces a vast array of quite disparate activities. It is probably not fruitful to try to explain all activities with the same theory nor to treat all activities as if they were the same with respect to consequences' (J. Wilson, 2000:233). Policy that seeks to build pathways to employment through supporting voluntary groups should remain cognisant of these disparities, however understood, and should therefore be carefully targeted. Dupuis et al (2004) also highlight the need to account for lifecycles when targeting policy, as they found that as people become older (and presumably more experienced), they rely less on social capital and more on formal job search processes when seeking paid employment.

This field of literature also suggests there are further nuances that policy should be sensitive to in the voluntary sector. The dangers of steering volunteers outside of their 'type', whether purposively or as an unintended consequence of social policy, was noted earlier (refer to Arai, 2000). Additionally, Huntoon (2001:157) notes that voluntary associations can provide a channel for government to foster social capital, stating that 'policy objectives not obtainable as a result of direct action by government may be reached by the creation of social capital by associations', however, 'this places government officials in the delicate position of nurturing a public good which government does not provide directly'. Sharpe's (2003) aptly named paper '"It's not fun any more": A case study of organizing a contemporary grassroots recreation association' further emphasises the balance policy must achieve. He notes that bureaucratic 'red-tape' derived from continuing government encroachment in the voluntary sector can inhibit social capital development.

Policies will be shaped by current political discourses. Spoonley et al (2004b), writing about New Zealand, consider social capital within the social cohesion discourse and note in particular the importance of labour markets in engaging people in economic participation. Although stated within the context of outcomes for immigrants, they do comment that 'one important reason for incorporating social capital into social cohesion policy frameworks is to acknowledge the network and relational issues' (Spoonley et al., 2004b:14). In the UK, Seyfang (2004:57) traverses similar territory. She notes that at the level of social policy the social inclusion discourse acknowledges the benefits to society of volunteering for its role in 'social building' and in creating 'social networks' that develop social capital which can be 'drawn upon in order to re-insert oneself into society', particularly through access to employment from these networks.

Szreter (2000) illustrates the relevance of Jurgen Habermas' notion of communicative competence to the social policy arena at this point, stating that:

> To maximise the terrain over which extensive social capital can flourish, the political and cultural conditions must obtain in a society or economy which promote to the maximum a widely diffused communicative competence among the greatest diversity of individuals or citizens (Szreter, 2000:66).

A partnership between the government and voluntary sectors is central to the concept of communicative competences. However, there are some cautions to be noted. Leonard (2003) asks whether it is beneficial to build bridging social capital to enhance economic objectives within a community that is 'just getting by' where it may be to the detriment of the bonding social capital that is holding it together. Similarly, Judge (2004) cautions that 'promoting one type of social capital, such as bridging ties between disparate communities, to achieve one set of policy objectives may have the unintended consequence of undermining other patterns of social capital'.

Falk (2001b) highlights the need to identify whether it will be mostly bridging or bonding social capital that will be developed through a given policy initiative, through scrutinising

the qualities of the organisations involved. To work in partnership would entail understanding the needs of each specific community. As noted by King and Waldegrave (2003:241) 'in the area of policy development, implementation, and delivery, one size does not fit all'.

3.4 Summary

The heterogeneity of the voluntary sector may provide individuals with opportunities to develop social capital that may in turn provide them with pathways to employment. However, this notion is contingent upon a number of variables. Negative correlations have been shown to exist between the likelihood of an individual's involvement in voluntary activity and their socio-economic status. The efficacy of a voluntary association to develop social capital can be determined by qualities such as the levels of formality within it and the diversity of people involved with and attracted to it. The utility of social capital in providing pathways to employment may be dependent upon the environment in which it is obtained. In particular, involvement with less 'socially acceptable' groups or culturally marginalised groups is less likely to enhance an individual's mainstream labour market opportunities.

Bourdieu's notion of social capital highlights the interconnectedness of social and economic capitals. Thus, social capital accrued within a voluntary setting may be converted into economic capital via the labour market. The capacity of individuals to convert social capital into economic capital may be further increased if the voluntary and government sectors work in partnership. This notion is highlighted through Habermas' idea of 'communicative competences', which suggests an important role for government in cultivating an environment that promotes fair and equitable communication between stakeholders.

Chapter Four: Methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods have been used in the fieldwork, within a broadly constructivist paradigm. The first section of this chapter discusses each of the methods, and explores the rationale for the approach taken. The second section of the chapter details the processes employed in identifying and selecting voluntary associations to take part in the research, and discusses the issues involved in selecting participants within them to take part in interviews.

4.1 Methods

Following the development of a theoretical framework – which has been elaborated in the previous two chapters - a qualitative study involving face-to-face unstructured interviews, with six participants, was carried out during April and May 2005. Its primary purpose was to explore how the participants' experiences as volunteers had influenced their labour market outcomes, and to identify the key themes arising from their experiences. These themes, together with those developed through the critical review of the literature, informed a questionnaire that was used in a telephone survey. That survey was carried out during July and August 2005. Given the research's interest in the role of government, volunteers were selected from within the boundaries of one local authority, to ensure that all participants referred to the same body when asked about 'local government' issues. Volunteers were selected from associations that were based within the geographical area administered by the Waitakere City Council. This area is referred to as 'West Auckland' in this thesis.

The uses of both qualitative and quantitative methods triangulate the empirical research. Triangulation 'strengthens a study by combining methods' given that 'every method has its limitations, and multiple methods are usually needed' (Patton, 2002:247).

A constructivist approach was taken to develop the research themes. Constructivism aims to link the researcher with the participants. The findings of the research are constructed by the researcher, based on the contributions of the participants, as the research is conducted, and as the research progresses. In doing so, the approach acknowledges that the participants are experts in the field being studied (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Opie (1992) states that the approach means that the 'validity of data ... is closely linked with its quality and therefore to the manner of its collection', and that it is 'less preoccupied with the notion of replicability and ... the notion of absolute truth'. This approach is consistent with Bourdieu's notion of 'the construction of the object', noted in Chapter Two (refer to Silva & Edwards, 2003). In particular, the guides for each of the qualitative interviews were informed by the findings of the previous interview and were rewritten following each interview accordingly.

The telephone survey deviates from the purely constructivist paradigm. It primarily employed questions that were quantitative in nature. They remained unchanged following the pilot study, and were statistically analysed on completion of the survey. Generally, quantitative research of this type is associated with a traditional positivist or postpositivist research paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, the questionnaire was based on the results that emerged from the constructivist research that had been applied in the first stage of the fieldwork. The primary purpose of the quantitative questions in the telephone survey was to test the findings from this first stage, and to more fully explore the themes that had arisen amongst a larger group of people. In addition, the survey contained a number of open qualitative questions that were coded, appropriate to the themes that emerged from them, subsequent to completion of the survey. Thus, the fieldwork can be considered broadly constructivist in approach, while employing multiple research methods.

Qualitative Study

The qualitative methodology used in the first phase of the fieldwork lends itself especially well to the constructivist approach. In particular, Sarantakos (1998:47) notes that qualitative methods offer 'personal contact and insight, with the researcher getting close to

the people, situation and phenomenon under study'. A cyclic technique was employed, which incorporates four stages: data collection, data reduction, data organisation and data interpretation. Tolich and Davidson (1999:8) state that 'the notion of a cycle is important because it reminds us that the interpretation drives the collection, and that the collection-reduction-organisation drives the interpretation'.

Six participants were selected to take part in the unstructured interviews, which formed the data collection stage of the cycle. Section 4.2 outlines how the participant's were identified. Three participants were volunteers from the Ranui Action Project and two were volunteers from the McLaren Park Community Project. One participant was from the Waitakere City Council. While this last person was not interviewed as a volunteer, she worked in areas of policy relevant to voluntary activity within West Auckland. Thus she was in a position to provide valuable insights to the study. Participants were provided with an information sheet that outlined what the study was about, what they would be asked to do, and what their rights were. They were also provided with a consent form that clarified the agreement between researcher and participant, noting in particular that they may ask for further information at any time, that they may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of this project, that their name would not be used without their permission, and that information from the interview would only be used for this thesis or any publications arising from it. The interviews did not begin until the information sheet had been reviewed and the consent form had been signed.

The interviews were unstructured. They were based around an interview guide that was designed to explore the role of any networks the participants may have developed through their voluntary activities. In addition, it enquired into the effects on the participants' employment outcomes of the knowledge and skills developed through social interactions in a voluntary setting. The interviews concluded with an enquiry into the participants' views on the role of local and central government in the voluntary sector. Each interview was audio-taped, and ranged in duration from twenty to forty minutes.

The interviews were transcribed, coded, and analysed as soon as possible after their completion. Tolich and Davidson (1999:140) note that this method 'means that the process can reflexively fine-tune further data collection'. Indeed, each interview did bring new data to the research and following each interview the guides were modified accordingly. The coding and analysis was conducted according to the method described by Tolich and Davidson (1999:141), which involves 'reading through the expanded fieldnotes and transcripts as soon as they have been written, marking up, as you go, the positive and negative aspects of the information collected ... positive coding identifies and aggregates areas of theoretical and empirical interest in the fieldnotes or transcripts'.

In practice, each interview was transcribed soon after it took place into the right-hand column of a two-column table, in individual MS Word documents. Notes were made in the left-hand column identifying any themes that had emerged, and the quote next to that theme was highlighted in red. As the research progressed, individual MS Word documents were set up for each theme that arose, and the highlighted quotes were copied and pasted from the transcripts into these thematic files. The first initial of the participant's name, and a sequential number that allowed cross-referencing between the thematic files and the individual transcripts, prefaced each quote. While the interviews were unstructured, guides were prepared prior to each interview that identified the points that should be discussed. Following the coding process, a new guide was redrafted for the next interview that took into account any new themes or relevant information that arose from the previous interview.

Patton (2002:433) notes that with qualitative research, 'no straightforward tests can be applied for reliability and validity', and that it depends 'at every stage, on the skills, training, insights, and capabilities of the inquirer, qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst'. Further, Silva and Edwards (2003:13) apply a Bourdieuian approach centred on the 'construction of the object' of research in their work, noting that 'it is well acknowledged that the ability to perceive and apprehend something by means of intuition, perception and sensitivity is properly scientific'. It is reasonable to draw on this approach given this thesis uses Bourdieu's notion of social

capital, and that the research is not seeking to establish statistically reliable results that can be generalised to a larger population. The primary goal of the empirical research is to explore the connections between voluntary activity and labour market outcomes for a group of West Auckland volunteers, and to identify common themes from their experiences. It has also enquired into their views on the role of government in the voluntary sector. The qualitative interviews carried out as the first phase of the empirical research has sought to 'construct' knowledge of these themes.

Telephone Survey

The second phase of the empirical research employed a telephone survey. The aim was to interview at least fifty West Auckland volunteers. The survey was eventually administered to a total of fifty-two participants. Section 4.2 outlines how the participants were identified. The survey contained predominantly closed quantitative questions built around the themes developed through the qualitative research. It also drew on theoretical issues arising from the critical review - that forms the basis of Chapters Two and Three. The primary purpose of the survey was to explore the extent to which these themes applied over a larger group of people. Additionally, it included a set of qualitative open-ended questions designed to collect further data on key issues. As the survey progressed, the results were entered into a SPSS file. Use of this statistical software package allowed the researcher to monitor the progress and effectiveness of the survey during its administration, and to conduct the data analysis presented in the findings section. A copy of the questionnaire is included as Appendix A.

The questionnaire was kept as succinct as possible, to ensure the minimum possible inconvenience to participants. It enquired into the participants' current experiences as volunteers with the organisations from which they were referred, and also asked about their historical experiences. The design of the questionnaire followed a number of stages. De Vaus (2002:47-48) notes that 'the process of moving from abstract concepts to the point where we can develop questionnaire items to tap the concept is called descending the ladder of abstraction'. A 'ladder' was developed using a flow diagram that drew on the themes

that had emerged from the qualitative research and the critical review. The first level of the diagram identifies 'social capital' as the primary concept driving the research. The second level identifies the dimensions of the concept of social capital related to voluntary activity, the labour market, and the role of government. The third level identifies points within each of these dimensions that the study has aimed to address; it was from this level that indicators were developed. Further, these indicators provide the basis for the themes discussed in the findings chapters. They are as follows:

Indicators for social capital developed through volunteering

- Heterogeneity and breadth of relationships developed through volunteering.
- Qualities indicative of the depths of connection between volunteers.
- Levels of trust between volunteers.

Indicators of social capital in relationship to the labour market

- The role of contacts and networks in finding employment.
- The role of social and cultural skills developed through social interaction in the finding of employment.

Social capital and the role of government

- Views of volunteers on appropriate and inappropriate government interventions to support and develop the voluntary sector.

A set of questions was devised to explore each indicator. Where possible, questions were constructed to compliment each other to allow a single unit of measure to be built for the indicator they related to. As an example, four questions specifically address the heterogeneity and breadth of relationships developed through volunteering. Questions thirteen and fourteen in the questionnaire consider the degree of variation in education and income levels between participants and their fellow volunteers. Both questions employ a Likert scale that allows the responses from each question to be combined into a single unit of measure. The indicator is further explored through questions ten and eleven, which both support and enlarge upon this measure. Question ten enquires into whether the participant has widened their social connections beyond the association they volunteer with, through

the contacts they have made while volunteering there. If an affirmative response is elicited, then a qualitative question is asked to establish the nature of the relationships or connections that they have referred to.

The questionnaire was designed with extensive reference to De Vaus' (2002) 'Surveys in Social Research'. The questions were reviewed by academics specialising in both statistics and survey research at Massey University, and revised as appropriate following each review. A 'trial run' of the survey was administered to three fellow students and their feedback was sought as a final stage in the questionnaire design.

The questionnaire was pilot tested on the 7th and 8th of July 2005. This involved administering the questionnaire to five participants. During the pilot, the length of each interview was monitored to ensure that its duration fitted within the ten to fifteen minutes that was anticipated during design stage. Notes were made against any questions that may have required adjustment. A number of minor alterations were made on completion of the pilot, such as changing the word 'employment' to 'job' in one question, and consolidating two of the qualitative questions that inquired into government involvement in the voluntary sector, as similar responses were elicited from each question. The number and extent of alterations was minor and should not have materially changed the nature of the few questions that were modified. As a result, the pilot questionnaires have been included amongst the responses analysed in later chapters.

Two questions asked the participants to compare their education levels and earning capacity with other people they volunteered with. Part way through the telephone survey it became apparent that, compared to other volunteers, most respondents had indicated they were in the middle range. The primary purpose of these questions was to ascertain the degree of heterogeneity within each participant's voluntary association. It was unclear why the respondents were indicating they were in the middle range. It may have been because they were in largely homogenous associations, or perhaps they were uncertain about the backgrounds of their fellow volunteers. It could also have been because they were uncomfortable judging themselves in comparison to their fellow volunteers. In response,

after the twelfth interview was completed an additional question was inserted into the survey. It inquired into the respondents perceived view of the diversity within the association they volunteered with. That the first twelve participants (23 percent of the sample) were not asked this question is clearly stated in the findings section.

4.2 The Participants

Preparations for the fieldwork began in February 2005. The first stage of the research involved designing a plan for identifying volunteers who might take part in the study. The definition of volunteer work discussed in Chapter Two is very broad: 'unpaid work provided to parties to whom the worker owes no contractual, familial, or friendship obligations' (Tilley & Tilley, 1994:291). This could encompass a wide range of activity, such as a person picking up rubbish in their street from time to time, through to providing large amounts of voluntary time as a board member of a large social service provider. This raised a number of problems that needed to be dealt with systematically.

The resources required to identify every 'volunteer' in West Auckland were not available for this study. However, as noted by Tolich and Davidson (1999), this type of research is not primarily concerned with *reliability* and *generalisability*. Its primary goal is the collection of *quality* data that can provide a valid account of the experiences of the participants that take part in it. Thus, random sampling of all volunteers within West Auckland was not considered necessary for the purposes of this thesis. The volunteers were sourced through approaching voluntary associations based in the region. Thus, the participants are restricted to those volunteers who are affiliated to a voluntary association, that agreed to take part in the research, and that was based in West Auckland.

The first task in finding participants was to construct a database of as many voluntary associations in the region as possible. Henderson Citizens Advice Bureau was the first point of contact. From information gathered there, both the West Auckland District Council of Social Services and Volunteer Auckland were contacted. In addition, the Waitakere City

Council and the Auckland Regional Council were contacted. Each of these organisations provided (publicly available) details of the voluntary associations registered with them. This information was then consolidated into a single database. The associations were categorised, by purpose, into the following broad groups: environmental, community, special interest and recreational. A decision was made to contact just environmental and community groups. The main reason for this approach was that associations within these categories are primarily established for the purposes of carrying out voluntary activities.

Recreational and special interest groups were excluded. While many hours of volunteer work are carried out within them, the boundaries between voluntary activities and personal interests can be less defined. For example, a soccer player might have been interviewed about the social capital that she derived from volunteering at working bees at her club, or from working in the kitchen on a volunteer basis. In this case it may have been difficult within the interview to distinguish this from the social capital derived through her personal recreational pursuits as a playing member of the soccer team.

However, it is acknowledged that distinguishing between 'voluntary activities' in their most altruistic sense, and 'personal interests', is problematic. After all, it would be difficult to argue that even the most diehard conservationist did not get some personal pleasure from their 'voluntary' contributions! Further, Stolle (1998) proposes a micro-theory of social capital that accounts for variations between voluntary associations. It points to different characteristics in the various 'types' of associational membership as conducive to quite different social capital outcomes. Stolle's work is more expansive than the terrain considered in this thesis. However, the idea that not all voluntary associations are alike informed the decision to only include environmental and community groups in the study.

In total, twenty-five associations were contacted. Nine agreed to take part in the research. A brief description of the activities of each of the associations that took part follows:

Ranui Action Project

The Ranui Action Project (RAP) is a community development initiative whose purpose is 'to bring the Ranui community, government agencies, health providers, volunteer groups and the council together to improve health and well-being outcomes in Ranui' (www.ranui.org.nz). Child Youth and Family Services and the Ministry of Health fund RAP through the Stronger Communities Action Fund, with assistance from the Waitakere City Council. Projects undertaken by RAP include the development of a community garden, and providing access to information and communication technologies for the community.

McLaren Park Community Project

The McLaren Park Community Project has partnerships with Waitakere City Council, Bruce McLaren Intermediate School and Henderson South School. It aims to strengthen the community within the McLaren Park/Henderson South area through a range of initiatives. These include developing a local youth group, building relationships with local businesses/developing employment opportunities, environmental action in the area (e.g. tree planting, stream maintenance), and increasing educational opportunities for all age groups in the area (McCurdie, 2005).

Friends of Whatipu

Friends of Whatipu aims to preserve the character of the Whatipu area. Its members work alongside the Auckland Regional Council where appropriate. They are involved in activities such as tree planting, beach maintenance (e.g. clearing rubbish from the beach), and predator control. They also arrange picnics and social events at Whatipu, while endeavouring to 'engender a spirit of guardianship for the Whatipu area' (www.waitakere.govt.nz/AbtCit/ne/pdf/ranges-bkgrdrpt-ref_app.pdf).

Ark in the Park

Ark in the Park is a restoration project that aims to reduce animal and plant pests, and to reintroduce native animals and plants, to the Cascades Kauri Park in the Waitakere Ranges. It is built upon a partnership between the Waitakere Branch of the Royal Forest and Bird

Protection Society and the Auckland Regional Council (www.forestandbird.org.nz/arkinthepark/index.asp).

Titirangi Fire Service

The Titirangi Fire Service is a part of the New Zealand Fire Service. Its key aims are 'fire safety and fire prevention' whilst 'working to improve the outcomes from traditional emergency response activities' (www.fire.org.nz). The Titirangi Fire Service is staffed by a combination of local volunteers and professional fireman. Only volunteers took part in the research for this thesis.

Ecomatters Environmental Trust

The vision of Ecomatters Environmental Trust is 'beautiful, sustainable environments, cared for by our communities' (www.ecomatters.org.nz). Ecomatters is an umbrella organisation that seeks to consolidate the expertise and experience of three community trusts: Keep Waitakere Beautiful Trust, the Tag Out Trust and the Weedfree Waitakere Trust. Amongst its objectives, it seeks to foster co-operation between environmental and community groups, enhance the local environment through promotion of community funding and volunteerism, and develop qualitative and quantitative monitoring systems.

Friends of Arataki

Friends of Arataki was originally formed to support the establishment of the Arataki Information Centre. It is presently involved in fundraising, promotion and voluntary projects in the Waitakere Ranges. Members help run the Information Centre and its associated projects, including a 'kids day' and bush camp education project (www.waitakere.govt.nz/AbtCit/ne/pdf/ranges-bkgrdrpt-ref_app.pdf).

Karekare Landcare

Karekare is a west coast beach settlement in West Auckland. Karekare Landcare is an environmental group that aims to minimise the impact of introduced weed and animal pests in the area. They have an annual beach clean up, a waterfall restoration project, and regular

community weeding and planting days (www.arc.govt.nz/arc/volunteer-groups/landcare/landcare-group-profiles.cfm).

Massey Amateur Swimming Club

An apparent exception to the inclusion of only environmental and community groups is the Massey Amateur Swimming Club. However, they are a not-for-profit association that teaches water survival skills to lower socio-economic groups. They are not involved with competition swimming. As such, the association is considered to fit the profile of a 'community' group.

Two voluntary associations had expressed a willingness to be involved in the qualitative research. The Ranui Action Project and McLaren Park Community Project took part in this stage of the study. The project managers for each organisation identified people willing to be involved in the face-to-face interviews. The participant from the Waitakere City Council was selected through correspondence with Ann Magee, Director: Strategy and Development at the Council.

The method of recruiting participants varied for the quantitative research. Initially, a letter was to be prepared, on association letterhead, and signed by an appropriate official. This would be sent to members introducing the researcher, the aims of the study, and inviting them to take part in the research. A formal information sheet, a consent form, and a reply paid envelope would also be included. This method was used for three of the groups surveyed. In all other cases, the associations that were contacted insisted on less formal procedures; although at all times the Privacy Act was adhered to. For instance, the Titirangi Fire Service asked the researcher to present the study to the firemen at practice night, and to ask them if they would take part. An information sheet and consent form was handed out to those who expressed interest. Other organisations took it upon themselves to ask members if they would take part, and then provided the details to the researcher of the members willing to be interviewed for the study. Information sheets and consent forms were then provided to these people.

Tolich and Davidson (1999) refer to the process where the themes from the research are analysed and brought into the text as bridging analysis. This process begins with the thematic coding protocols discussed earlier in this chapter, and ultimately leads to discussion of those themes in the thesis. Quotes are used to support and illuminate the findings. They note that it is useful to refer to people by name when including quotes in the text to improve readability, rather than referring to participants as, for example, person x, y or z. They also note that it is important to protect the identities of the participants. Consequently, in all cases a pseudonym has been used in place of the participant's actual name where quotes have been used.

4.3 Summary

Two distinct research methods were used in the fieldwork for this thesis. This chapter described how each was employed, along with a discussion of the rationale for choosing the method. It also discussed how the participants in the research were identified and selected.

The research was constructed within a broadly constructivist paradigm. To this end, the participants were considered experts in the field being studied. Thus, qualitative interviews were used in the first stage of the fieldwork, and themes were constructed from the experiences that the participants shared with the researcher. Each interview informed the data collection process in subsequent meetings. This allowed the interview guides to 'morph' from one interview to the next, as an understanding of the experiences of West Auckland volunteers developed. This approach is consistent with the research methodology proposed by Bourdieu, and discussed in this chapter. This point is not insignificant given that theoretically the thesis draws heavily on his notion of social capital.

Quantitative research is generally associated with a positivist approach. The quantitative phase of fieldwork employed in this thesis did draw somewhat on this tradition, as the questions remained unchanged throughout the study, and the results were statistically analysed. This phase of the research was nevertheless guided by the constructivist

approach; the questionnaire was designed with reference to the critical review in Chapters Two and Three, alongside the outcomes of the qualitative fieldwork. Further, its primary purpose was to test the findings from this earlier work and to more fully explore the themes amongst a larger group of people. The questionnaire also contained a number of qualitative questions that both drew on the initial qualitative research, and built on the themes that had emerged from it. The results from these questions were thematically coded following completion of the survey.

The participants involved in this study were drawn from a range of West Auckland voluntary associations. Volunteer work encompasses a wide range of activities. The study was limited to volunteers involved in 'environmental' and 'community' groups. The reason for this is that these types of associations are generally established specifically for the purposes of carrying out voluntary activities. In contrast, associations that mix voluntary activities with personal pursuits, such as sports clubs, were excluded. However, differentiating between 'voluntary activities' and 'personal pursuits' is problematic, as there is always likely to be an element of both, irrespective of an individual's primary motivation for volunteering. Through interviewing participants from 'similar' associations, this was partially controlled for. In total, nine voluntary associations took part in the research. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of the participants.

Chapter Five: Volunteering and Social Capital in West Auckland

This is the first of two chapters that consider the findings from the fieldwork undertaken for this thesis. The methodology chapter noted that the indicators used in the telephone survey provided the basis for the themes discussed in the findings. These indicators were classified into three categories: indicators of social capital developed through volunteering; indicators of social capital in relationship to the labour market; and those relating to social capital and the role of government. This chapter is concerned with the themes classed within the first category, Chapter Six discusses the latter two categories.

Three key themes were developed within the first category of indicator. The 'heterogeneity and breadth of relationships' that participants develop through their voluntary activities is discussed in the first section. The following section explores how the 'quality of the relationships between volunteers', within a given association, can affect the value of an individual's social capital. The final section explores the 'role of trust' within the associations surveyed.

5.1 Heterogeneity Within Voluntary Associations

An individual's social capital may be a valuable asset in assisting them to find paid employment. Further, the voluntary sector may be a fertile environment for an individual to develop social capital, due to its heterogeneous nature and the possibilities it offers for social interaction with a wide range of people. It is proposed that social capital can be heuristically useful for understanding the value of resources embedded in these social networks.

Central to the proposition that the social capital developed through voluntary activity may lead to paid employment is the notion of bridging social capital. A volunteer's employment outcomes are more likely to be positively affected through the connections they have with individuals from disparate groups in the community ('weak ties'), rather than through the solid connections they have with individuals within groups they are associated with ('strong ties') (refer Granovetter, 1973). Further, Nan Lin (2001:68) draws a parallel between Granovetter's 'strength of weak ties' notion and the concept of bridging social capital. He notes especially that bridging social capital provides an individual with access to a wider variety of resources, as it relates to relations between groups in the wider society (exogenous relationships). The heterogeneous nature of these ties is more likely to provide labour market information. He notes that bonding social capital is less likely to provide such information, as it relates to socially exclusive ties within groups, which are likely to be more homogenous.

To this end, the research has enquired into the nature of the networks that participants might have developed through their voluntary activities. In particular, it has been concerned with establishing the extent to which the participants' networks enhanced either their bridging or bonding social capital.

Exogenous Relationships

Several examples emerged from the qualitative research that illustrated volunteers were able to expand their social networks through their voluntary activities. For example, Beth, a Maori woman in her fifties who is actively involved with youth in her local community, indicated that her voluntary activities enabled her to develop social ties that now extend beyond the boundaries of the organisation she volunteers for:

> *I've met the mayor and talked with him quite happily, and the deputy mayor; I've met some Maori leaders that I've never met before ... lots of people.*

Beth stated, further, that her voluntary work allowed her to do *'a lot of things that a lot of people don't get to do'*. She also noted that her voluntary work had opened up *'new horizons'* for her. Through her voluntary work, Beth has demonstrated that she has generated social ties exogenous to her normal social sphere. These may be considered weak ties that have the potential to benefit Beth at some time in the future; effectively, she has increased her bridging social capital through volunteering.

Dianne, who is training to be a social worker, expressed similar sentiments. Dianne is involved with a West Auckland community-building project as a volunteer. She noted the following in respect of her activities:

> *Because working with, with so many different groups in the community, I think you're more aware of different perspectives, and other peoples' understandings of their part in the community ... so it's bridging more, I suppose the word is networking.*

Dianne plans to embark upon a new career as a social worker. She is aware that developing networks within the community can be of value to her future career. She has chosen to volunteer for an organisation that can provide her with new social ties within the community. These ties have potential value to her new career direction. While she may not consider it in these terms, Dianne has developed her bridging social capital through working as a volunteer.

A number of questions in the telephone survey further explored this theme. The survey enquired into two different aspects of heterogeneity and the breadth of relationships that the participants may have developed within the voluntary sector. It first asked about the relationships participants might have developed outside of the organisation they volunteered with, as a direct result of their voluntary activities. It then enquired into the heterogeneity found within the organisations in which the participants volunteered.

It was suggested to the participants that, through volunteering, sometimes people widen their social connections beyond the organisation they are volunteering with. It asked whether they had developed any friendships, contacts or networks outside of the association they volunteered for, through their voluntary activities with that association. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) indicated they had extended their social networks in this way. Participants who answered this question affirmatively were then asked how they would describe the nature of those contacts or networks. The following table presents a summary of their responses. The 'Percentage: Affirmative' column is concerned only with those respondents who indicated they had developed some form of social contact outside of the association they volunteered for. The 'Percentage: Total' column presents the results for all participants.

Table 5.1: Nature of Contacts or Networks

	Respondents	Percentage: Affirmative	Percentage: Total
People with similar interests	8	27.6%	15.4%
Local body officials	5	17.2%	9.6%
Business / professional	3	10.3%	5.8%
Social / friendship	13	44.8%	25.0%
No external relationships	23		44.2%
Total	52	100.0%	100.0%

These results support the notion that voluntary associations may be an important site for an individual to develop weak ties, and thus bridging social capital. Each of the external relationships represent potential assets to the respondent, that they may not have had were they not involved in voluntary activity. The categories listed in the table were developed from qualitative responses in the telephone survey. The following is a 'snapshot' of comments from some of the responses:

- Met other groups in the social services.
- Met volunteers in other similar voluntary groups.
- Friendships and sharing of information.
- Widened business networks through voluntary contacts.

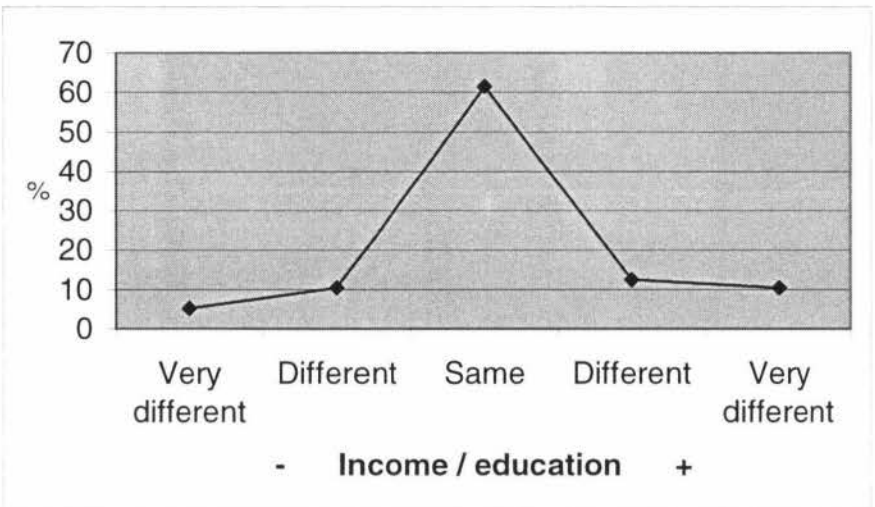
- Networking in the community, emails with other similar organisations.
- Professional relationships at a local body level.

In particular, the table shows that 15.4 percent of the total participants had indicated they developed new business or professional relationships, or new contacts with local body officials, as a direct result of their voluntary activities. While not negating the potential value of the other external relationships developed by volunteers, it could be argued that 'professional' ties would be particularly important in enhancing an individual's employment prospects. However, it is acknowledged that further research is required to substantiate this view.

Endogenous Relationships

The previous sub-section considers the networks an individual may develop outside of the association they volunteer with. However, the telephone survey was also concerned with the heterogeneity within any given voluntary association. The variety of socio-economic factors found amongst volunteers in an association is a further indication of the variety of social networks (and consequently bridging social capital) potentially available to its members. Two further questions asked respondents to contrast, against themselves, the education and income levels of the people they volunteer with. Responses to both questions were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. The results from both questions were combined into a single unit of measurement. For instance, the total score for those who answered that they were 'significantly less educated' than other volunteers, was combined with the total score for those who answered that they 'earn significantly less' than other volunteers. Collectively, they were classified as 'very different'. The results are presented in Figure 5.1.

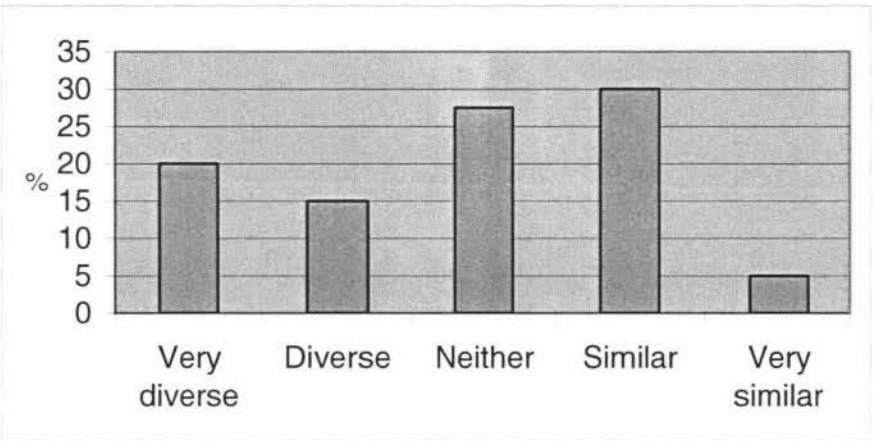
Figure 5.1: Heterogeneity within Voluntary Associations



The left-hand side of the graph represents responses that indicate a participant believed they were less educated or earned less than other volunteers, to some degree. The right-hand side of the graph represents those responses that indicate a participant believed they were more educated or earned more than other volunteers, to some degree. When accounting for the combined results of differences in both the levels of education and income, 15.6 percent of respondents believed that their fellow volunteers were 'very different' from themselves. A further 22.9 percent believed that their fellow volunteers were 'different'.

As noted in the methodology chapter, these questions raised some concerns early in the survey. It was felt that participants seemed reluctant to rank themselves as more or less educated, or to earn more or less than the people they volunteered with. Nevertheless, by completion of the survey it transpired that 38.5 percent believed they were either 'different' or 'very different' in this respect. Due to this concern, however, an additional question was added to the survey after twelve interviews had been completed. The additional question asked participants to consider how diverse they felt the association they volunteered for was. They were asked to use criteria such as age, occupation, ethnicity and education. Figure 5.2 presents the results from this question. The figure accounts for the results from the forty participants who responded to the question.

Figure 5.2: Diversity within Voluntary Associations



An interesting result from the figures presented in this graph is that 35 percent of respondents answered that they believed the organisation they volunteered for was either 'very diverse' or 'diverse'. This result is similar to the findings from the initial two questions that enquired into heterogeneity within voluntary associations. These questions found that 38.5 percent of respondents believed they were either 'very different' or 'different' to the other people they volunteer with. This does seem to suggest that roughly just over a third of all participants surveyed felt that they were interacting with people they viewed as different from themselves, to some degree, through their voluntary activities.

The findings presented thus far do seem to indicate that voluntary associations can provide an environment that provides individuals with the opportunity to develop bridging social capital. This is due to the heterogeneous nature of the sector, and the possibilities volunteers are presented with to meet a range of other people through their voluntary activities. However, a concern that arose from the research relates to the demographic data of the participants surveyed. The majority of participants were over the age of fifty (57.7 percent), and identified themselves as New Zealand Europeans (88.5 percent). In this respect at least, these statistics infer that a relatively homogenous group of people was surveyed. The following two figures illustrate this demographic data.

Figure 5.3: Age of Participants

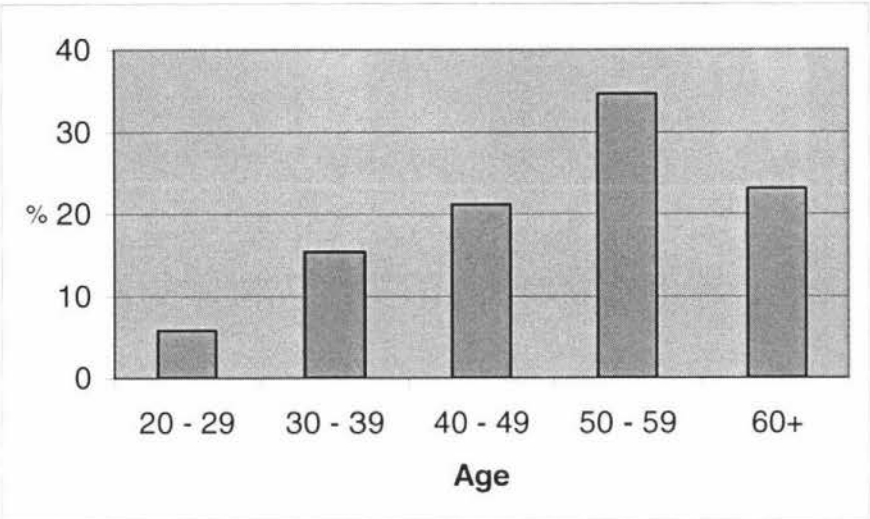
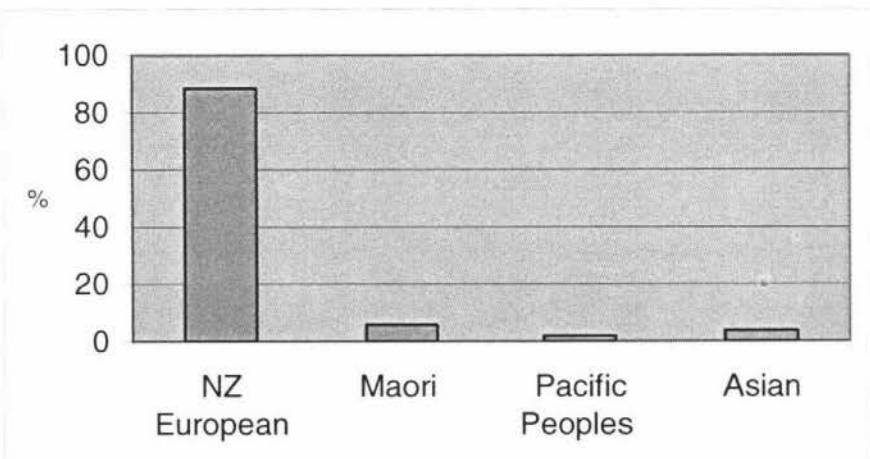


Figure 5.4: Ethnicity of Participants



Note: The survey collected data for the categories of Maori and Maori/ Pakeha, and East Asian and South Asian. These categories have been combined respectively into Maori and Asian for ease of presentation.

These statistics indicate the heterogeneity of the associations surveyed may be limited, as there is not an equal spread in the participants' ages, and there is not a wide range of ethnicities. However, age and ethnicity are just two factors that can be used to define heterogeneity. Further, the survey does not enquire into the demographics of the people that the participants developed relationships with outside of their voluntary associations. In

addition, the participants in the survey were self-selecting from the voluntary associations that took part in it. The demographics of the entire membership of each of the associations that took part are unknown. It is possible that younger people, or people of different ethnicities, did not respond proportionately.

The response rate from the Ranui Action Project (RAP) demonstrates this point. The rate was much lower than for Friends of Whatipu (FOW), 19.4 percent versus 40.5 percent respectively. Further, of the respondents, 50 percent from RAP were Pakeha/New Zealand European. At FOW, 93.3 percent were Pakeha/New Zealand European (the proportion of respondents over the age of fifty was similar). The Ranui Action Project is a community initiative designed to support a low socio-economic and multi-cultural community, so it would appear that self-selection could be a problem.

The types of relationships that have emerged from this research may still provide each of the individuals with valuable bridging social capital, irrespective of the age and ethnicity of those they have developed the relationships with. Nevertheless, the findings indicate there may be a degree of incongruity between the participants' perceptions of diversity, and that indicated by the age and ethnicity statistics. It is recommended that future research address this. For example, 'diversity' could be more clearly defined and methods could be considered to resolve problems with self-selection.

5.2 Quality of Social Capital

The 'quality' of the relationships a volunteer may develop through their activities is of further interest to the research. The thesis has noted that Lin (2001) believes further work is required to understand how the quality of an individual's networks can affect the value of their social capital. Nevertheless, a number of factors that may influence the quality and, consequently, the potential value of an individual's relationships have been identified.

For instance, Aguilera (2002:856) notes that 'networks can provide only the resources they possess'. It follows that access to a greater variety of networks widens the resources potentially available to an individual. Aguilera goes on to argue that an individual's ability to connect with a number of different networks will enhance their chances of finding paid employment. The previous section indicates that voluntary associations provide an environment for people of varying socio-economic status to interact. Thus, the heterogeneity of relationships available within a voluntary environment could positively affect the value and quality of the social capital available to volunteers, through introducing them to networks they may otherwise not have access to. In addition to heterogeneity, this section presents the results from the fieldwork that explored other aspects of the quality of relationships developed by the participants.

Sharpe (2003) notes that as an association becomes more formalised, the development of social capital may be inhibited. Thus the structure of an association can influence the quality of the social capital an individual may develop within it. Dianne's experiences echo Sharpe's view. In her case, the informal nature of the association she is involved with provides her with possibilities to develop social capital. Dianne volunteers for a grassroots community initiative where she has been provided with a range of leadership and personal development opportunities. She notes:

> *I think you learn to, you've got to learn to communicate better. I think not to be judgemental of people, everybody brings something with them, no matter how big or how little it is.*

This comment indicates that through volunteering, Dianne was able to develop her social and communication skills. This has allowed her to form closer relationships with a variety of other people. She expressed that she had met *'a whole new group of people'* some of whom she felt she could *'take it on to a personal level'*.

Dianne was asked how the environment within the voluntary association that she worked for contributed to her developing substantive relationships with other volunteers. She

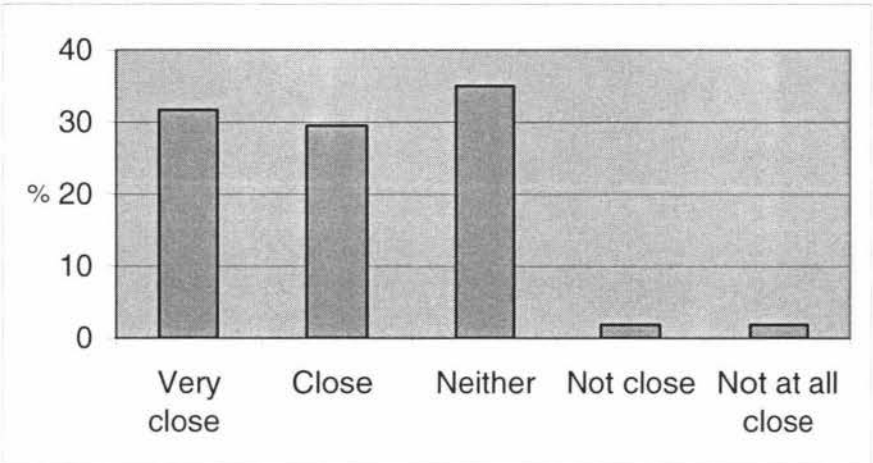
referred to the *'openness'* and *'willingness'* of the volunteers *'who are all working for the same purpose'*, and *'that makes you appreciate people no matter what they put in'*. Further, she stated that voluntary work: *'helps you to grow, and you get those networks as well'*. Dianne's experience is an example of the type of relationship building that Sharpe (2003:448) believes is encouraged in an 'informal, accessible, and leisurely style of grassroots association', of the type that Dianne is involved in. He believes it is these types of association that have the greatest potential for generating both bridging and bonding social capital.

Other participants interviewed in the qualitative phase of the research also indicated that their experiences as volunteers had led to close and varied relationships. Jane has volunteered for a number of community projects in the past, such as Meals on Wheels and Age Concern, in addition to her current community work. She was asked about her reasons for volunteering. Jane noted that developing close personal relationships was a key motivation for her, she states: *'I enjoy the companionship that comes with it'*. In addition, Beth indicated that she had strengthened the skills required to connect with others through her voluntary work:

> *I wasn't able to always speak as fluently or as clearly, or as knowledgeably as I do now, and that has really been through my involvement as a volunteer. And it is (through) having such a varied contact with varied people.*

The quality of relationships volunteers developed with others was further investigated in the telephone survey. It began by enquiring into how the participants rated the quality of the relationships they had developed with the people they volunteer with. They were asked to respond on a scale of one to five, where one meant they have developed some 'very close friendships', and five meant they were 'not at all close' to the people they volunteered with. The results from this question are presented in Figure 5.5:

Figure 5.5: Quality of Relationships with Other Volunteers



Almost two-thirds (61.2 percent) of the respondents indicated they had developed either 'very close' or 'close' friendships. These results seem to offer further evidence to support the notion that voluntary associations provide an environment conducive to the development of social ties.

One further question was asked that explored the quality of the relationships developed by the participants in their voluntary work. They were asked what words they might use to describe the nature of the relationships they had developed with the people they work with in a voluntary capacity. The responses to this question were classified into nine categories, following the completion of the telephone survey. The results are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Nature of Relationships with Other Volunteers

	Respondents:		
	1st response	2nd response	3rd response
Friendly	15	4	
Shared knowledge & interests	7	5	3
Respectful & supportive	11	11	
Honest & trusting	2	3	1
Fun	3	1	
Casual	4		
Close	4		
Challenging or difficult	1	1	1
Professional	1		
No comments	4		
Total	52	25	5

The vast majority of participants indicated, as a first response, that to some degree they had favourable relationships with their fellow volunteers. Just five respondents made no comment, or indicated that their relationships were either challenging or difficult.

The findings from the telephone survey indicate that the associations this group of West Auckland volunteers belong to provide an environment where the volunteers have the opportunity to increase their social capital. Bonding social capital could be increased through the relationships developed within the voluntary association each individual is connected to. Bridging social capital could be increased from the networks accessible to them through these relationships.

However, this thesis cautions against drawing simple causal relationships between membership of voluntary associations and levels of social capital. For instance, as noted earlier in the thesis, Rotolo and Wilson (2003:604) consider that 'careers cause membership' (of voluntary associations) rather than the membership of voluntary associations leading to careers. They suggest that membership of voluntary associations will not significantly affect an individual's stocks of social capital.

The degree to which an individual's voluntary activity influences their stocks of social capital was explored in the telephone survey. The participants were asked how often during a typical week they talked on the telephone with friends, neighbours or relatives. The question was modified from research carried out by Wilson and Musick (1997); its purpose was to provide an elementary indication of the level of social capital that each participant had in their daily lives, outside of their voluntary work. A bivariate analysis was run between this question and the question (which was presented earlier in this section) that asked about the quality of relationships the participants had developed as volunteers. Both questions were constructed using a five point Likert scale.

An assumption was made that a score of one for each question indicated a relatively high degree of either bridging or bonding social capital. A score of five indicated a relatively low degree of either bridging or bonding social capital. It follows from this assumption that if an individual achieved the same score for both questions, then volunteering did not necessarily improve their potential to further develop their social capital. For instance, if a participant scored five for the first question ('not at all close' to other volunteers), and five for the second question (phoned other people 'rarely or never'), it was assumed that it would be unlikely volunteering was proving a useful strategy for that individual to generate further social capital. That is, they indicated they had low stocks of social capital in their 'everyday' lives, and joining a voluntary association did not seem to have improved their ability to generate social capital.

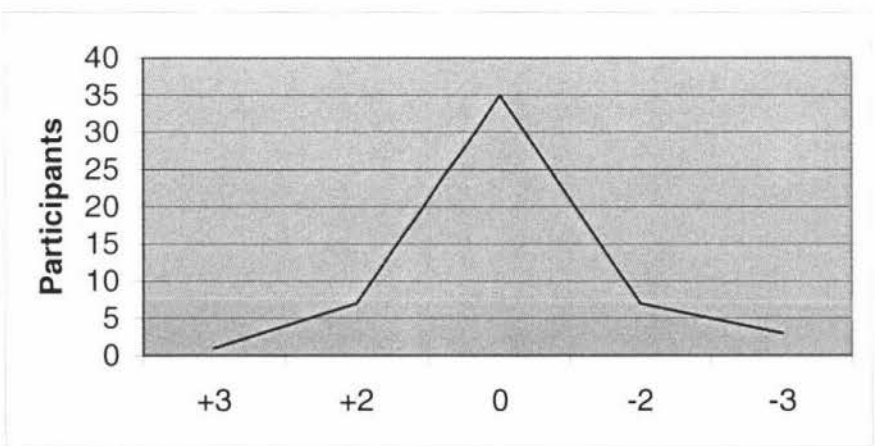
Alternatively, if a volunteer scored two for the first question (developed 'close friendships' as a volunteer), and scored four for the second question (phoned other people 'once or twice a month'), this would be taken to indicate they were able to generate more social capital through volunteering than they were able to generate in their everyday lives.

The participants were allocated a number derived from the variation between their score for each question. For instance, if a participant answered three for both questions they were allocated a score of zero. A score of zero indicates little difference in an individual's abilities to generate social capital in their voluntary lives, as compared to their everyday

lives. If the variation between each question was two or more, this indicated there was a notable difference in an individual's abilities to generate social capital in their voluntary lives, as compared to their everyday lives.

The analysis found that most of the participants gave a similar response to both of these questions. If they scored two for the first question, they were likely to score two for the second question, and so on. This indicates that for most of the participants, their abilities to generate social capital were independent of their voluntary activities. The results from this analysis fitted a normal distribution. The standard deviation equalled 1.045. Of the participants, 69.2 percent fell within plus or minus one of zero, and 92.3 percent fell within plus or minus two of zero. That said, it must be remembered that the sample size for this analysis was relatively small and the indicators are only derived from two questions. The results should thus be considered as indicative only, and further research is recommended. Figure 5.6 graphically represents the results of the analysis.

Figure 5.6: Variances in Social Capital Generation



The results indicate that if an individual is generating sufficient social capital in their daily lives, then joining a voluntary association is unlikely to improve their abilities to generate further social capital, and vice versa. Nevertheless, 15.4 percent of participants rated the quality of their relationships with other volunteers two or more points higher than the rating they gave for the general social capital indicator question.

This finding supports the notion that for some people, voluntary activity can materially improve their stocks of social capital. The result is consistent with the position noted in Chapter Three (refer Aguilera, 2002; Judge, 2004; Seyfang, 2004) that volunteer work can provide some people, particularly those from marginalised groups and minorities, with social capital otherwise inaccessible to them. This social capital can make a large difference in outcomes for them. For instance, access to social networks through which they can gain information about the labour market. That said, the research for this study does not specifically investigate outcomes for individuals from these groups. Further research is recommended.

It should also be noted that these results pertain to an individual's abilities to generate social capital. While a participant who scored highly for both questions may not *need* to volunteer to be able to generate sufficient social capital, this does not mean that the social capital they generate through their voluntary activities is not useful to them.

5.3 Trust

Social capital was introduced as offering an umbrella under which a variety of social practices can be brought together such as reciprocity, associational life and trust (refer Das, 2004). Coleman (Schuller et al., 2000) cited trustworthiness as central to his social capital framework. Further, Lin (2001) referred to the central role that trust has in collective forms of social capital, such as that proposed by Robert Putnam. However, it was noted that tautological issues arise from these conceptions of trust. For Putnam, trust both produces social capital and develops as a by-product of the mechanisms of social capital (Falk, 2001a).

For this reason, trust was excluded from the definition of social capital used in this research. However, it can still be seen as a consequence, if not a source, of social capital. Accordingly, trust remained an important consideration in the fieldwork. In particular, the degree to which trust was either present or absent was used as an indicator of social capital.

Trust can be considered a measure of the confidence or faith individuals may have in one another. In this sense Beth, who was introduced earlier in this chapter, talked about the trust between the volunteers she works with:

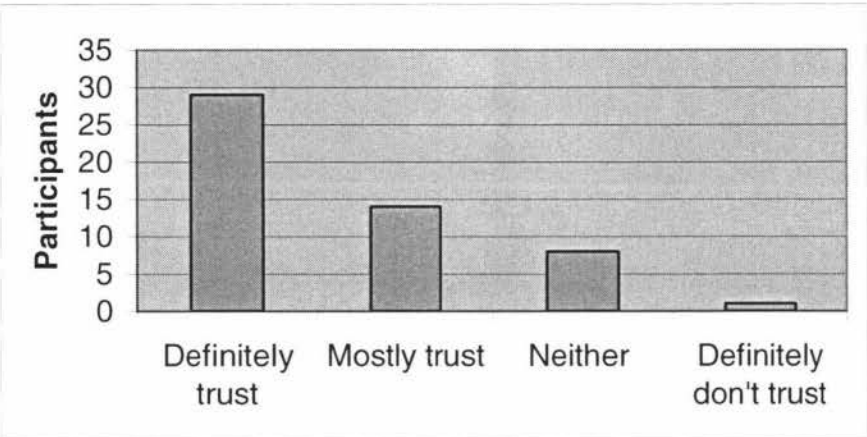
> *In the volunteer network ... you have respect for each person's point of view, you have to, if you're intolerant of them and their points of view, I think you have a problem yourself in being a volunteer. Because as a volunteer it's not your way, it's all your ways as a community worker, it's the community that has to work together. With the other volunteers, there is a hell of a lot of trust there and a lot of respect, because we're all different individuals but we all want the same thing.*

This quote emphasises Beth's view that trust is an important factor in enabling people to work together, towards common goals, in the voluntary association she is involved with. Dianne expressed similar sentiments:

> *I think you have to trust that person if you're all working for the same thing, and (if) somebody's dividing off at another angle, then you're not all working for the same purpose, so you do have to trust.*

Further, the levels of trust held by participants in the telephone survey were assessed. The respondents were asked how trusting they were of the people they work with in a volunteer capacity. They were asked to give a response on a five point scale, where one meant they 'definitely do trust' other volunteers, and five meant they 'definitely do not trust' other volunteers. The results from this question are presented in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7: Levels of Trust with Other Volunteers



The results from the telephone survey indicate that for the organisations surveyed, a reasonably high level of trust exists between the volunteers. Of the participants, 82.7 percent 'definitely do trust', or 'mostly trust', the other people they volunteer with. This finding supports the results from the qualitative interviews, which indicated a relatively high level of trust amongst the members of the voluntary associations that took part in the study.

The research also enquired into the degree to which membership in a voluntary association can influence how trusting an individual is. Moreover, it explored whether volunteers are any more trusting of their fellow volunteers than they are of the people they relate with in their everyday lives. The participants were asked how trusting they are of the people they have regular contact with in daily life, outside of their homes, such as friends, neighbours or the people they work with. They were asked to respond using the same scale as the question that enquired into how trusting they were of other volunteers. Table 5.3 presents the cross-tabulation for both questions.

Table 5.3: Comparison of Trust Between Regular Contacts and Volunteers

	Regular contacts	%	Volunteers	%
Definitely do trust	24	46.2%	29	55.8%
Mostly trust	21	40.4%	14	26.9%
Neither trust nor do not trust	6	11.5%	8	15.4%
Definitely do not trust	1	1.9%	1	1.9%
Total	52	100.0%	52	100.0%

These results indicate that the participants 'definitely do trust' other volunteers somewhat more that their regular contacts. However, the combining of the categories 'definitely do trust' and 'mostly trust' shows that 86.6 percent of respondents (to some degree) trust their regular contacts. This compares with 82.7 percent of respondents (to some degree) trusting other volunteers. Given the data is derived from a small sample, these results do not indicate a material difference between the level of trust the participants held for either their fellow volunteers or other regular contacts they may have.

The finding holds even when the results are analysed further. The participants were allocated a number derived from the variation between their score for each question. For instance, if a participant answered two for both questions, they were allocated a score of zero. Any variation between questions indicated that the participant trusted their fellow volunteers either more or less than the people they have regular contact with in their daily lives. Figure 5.8 presents the results of this analysis.

Figure 5.8: Variations in Trust

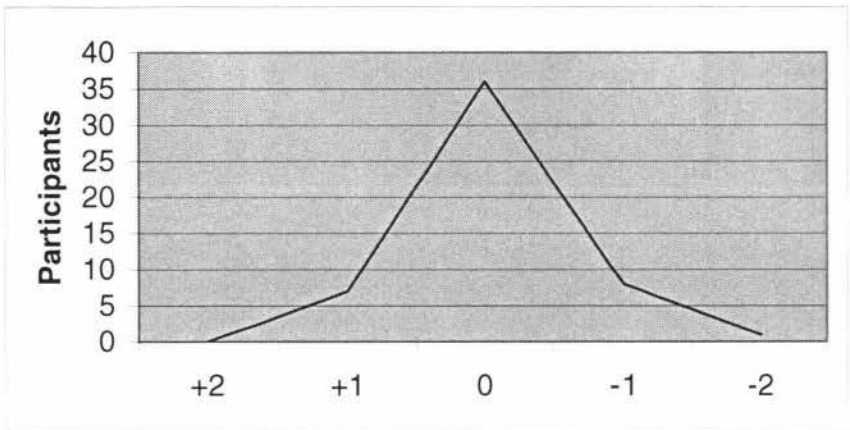


Figure 5.8 suggests that the participants are, generally, no more or less trusting of the people they volunteer with than they are of the people they have regular contact with in their daily lives. One standard deviation equalled 0.5084. The same rating was given for both questions by 69.2 percent of the respondents, and 98.1 percent had no more than a one-point variation in their answer to either question.

Although individuals may not trust their fellow volunteers any more or less than the people they have regular contact with in their everyday lives, there was nevertheless a high degree of trust found amongst the volunteers who took part in this research. Given high levels of trust amongst a population is indicative of high levels of social capital, the findings thus support the notion that voluntary associations can provide an individual with an environment within which to develop social capital.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from the fieldwork pertaining to the mechanisms through which volunteers develop social capital through their voluntary activities.

The research suggests that an individual's bridging social capital is more likely to lead to paid employment than their bonding social capital. Examples of participants potentially

developing their bridging social capital via the social networks available to them, through volunteering, emerged from the qualitative interviews. The telephone survey found that more than half of the respondents indicated they had extended their social networks with people outside the association they volunteered with, as a direct result of their involvement as volunteers. These results indicate that voluntary associations can provide individuals with a suitable environment for developing bridging social capital.

Social capital developed within the associations surveyed was also considered. The demographic data suggested a relatively homogenous group, in respect of the age and ethnicities of the participants. However, the results indicate that the associations surveyed are relatively heterogeneous when other factors are taken into account, such as occupation and levels of education. The findings suggest that the voluntary associations that took part in the study offer their members opportunities to develop bridging social capital, through their connections with other volunteers.

The quality of relationships is a useful indicator of the value of an individual's social capital. The quality of relationships can be increased through greater heterogeneity amongst an individual's contacts. The first section of the chapter indicated a degree of heterogeneity within the associations surveyed. An environment conducive to developing close connections with others is also associated with the quality of relationships. The data from both the qualitative research, and the telephone survey, suggest that the associations surveyed offer such an environment.

Further analysis explored whether the social capital developed by participants, through volunteering, was comparable to the levels of social capital developed in their everyday lives. The findings indicate that most people had developed comparable levels in both environments. This suggests that volunteering may not have a material affect on their abilities to generate social capital. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the social capital developed through volunteering is not useful to them. Moreover, the results indicate that 15.4 percent of participants were able to generate higher levels of social capital, through volunteering, than they were able to develop in their everyday lives. This finding is

consistent with the argument developed in Chapter Three that, for some people, voluntary activity can materially improve their stocks of social capital. In particular, it is reiterated that this social capital could be particularly important for individuals from marginalised or minority groups.

Levels of trust can be used as an indicator of the presence of social capital. The findings indicate that most participants were, to some degree, trusting of the people they volunteered with. However, there was not a significant difference between the levels of trust they had for other volunteers, and the levels of trust they had for the people they had regular contact with in their everyday lives.

In general, the research indicates that the voluntary associations surveyed were relatively heterogeneous, and they provided the participants with an environment conducive to developing bridging social capital. However, this finding is partially qualified. For most respondents, the ability to generate social capital appears to be independent of their participation in voluntary activities. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that voluntary associations can provide some people with access to social networks otherwise not open to them.

Chapter Six: The Labour Market and Social Capital in West Auckland

The previous chapter suggested that voluntary associations could provide an environment, for individuals, which is conducive to the development of social capital. This chapter considers the extent to which social capital thus developed can influence labour market outcomes for them. Further, the chapter considers how the environment in the voluntary sector may influence the social skills and attitudes, and consequently the social capital, of the participants. It enquires into how social capital developed in this way has influenced the labour market outcomes of the participants.

Consideration is given also to how local and/or central government can engage with the voluntary sector, to facilitate the development of social capital. The views of the participants are canvassed, to ascertain how they believe government is currently engaging with the voluntary sector in West Auckland, and how they would prefer to see government engaging with the sector.

6.1 The Role of Contacts and Networks in Finding Employment

A key insight from Pierre Bourdieu's work is that each form of capital is interchangeable. This notion is central to the idea that the social capital developed within voluntary associations can be converted, via the labour market, into economic capital. That voluntary associations may provide an important site for the development of social capital is strongly represented in the literature. For instance, Leonard and Onyx (2003:190) state that 'it could well be argued that the non-profit or voluntary sector is the predominant locus for the generation of social capital' (see also D. Robinson, 1997; Stolle, 1998; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). Propelled by this idea, the fieldwork explored the relationship between

social capital that was generated through the voluntary activities of the participants and the labour market experiences of those individuals.

Perceptions Held by Volunteers

This section first considers how volunteers view the relation between their voluntary activities and paid employment. Several of the participants in the qualitative research had indicated they were aware of the benefits volunteering could have on their labour market outcomes. Joyce, a manager for a non-profit organisation, made the following comment:

> *I have always attributed my current role ... to the learning and my participation in voluntary work. In fact (it is) because I recognised how voluntarism opens doors for me, or provides me with new opportunities, that I got this job.*

This statement from Joyce illustrates that she recognised she might be able to improve her employment prospects through involving herself in voluntary activity. Other examples emerged from the qualitative research. For instance, Dianne performed voluntary work that was arranged through a work placement scheme. This work was a component of her study requirements. She recognised, through undertaking this work, the value of her voluntary activities to her future career. In addition, Sue has been a healthcare worker for many years. She notes that a key reason for involving herself in voluntary activity was to develop community connections, commenting that she '*felt it was important that I learnt about community*' to be more effective in her paid employment.

These examples demonstrate awareness amongst the participants in the qualitative study that their voluntary activities could benefit their labour market outcomes. The participants in the telephone survey were asked whether they had become volunteers, at least in part, to make new contacts that might help their business or careers. Eight respondents (15.6 percent) answered this question affirmatively. Recent research in the United States found almost 25 percent of volunteers, at least in part, volunteered to make new contacts that might help their business or careers (J. Wilson, 2000). The remainder of this chapter

considers the extent to which volunteering has influenced the labour market outcomes of the participants and identifies the policy implications of those findings.

Converting Social Capital into Paid Employment

The research for this study considered how the social capital of the participants has influenced their paid employment in the labour market. It enquired into the influence of social capital from all sources, as well as social capital developed specifically through voluntary activities, on their employment outcomes.

Participants were asked about the method through which they found both their first job, and their current job. This question, and the analysis of the results, was modelled on work done by Dupuis et al (2004). The participants' responses to each question were recorded, and later classified, by the researcher into the categories presented in the 'Method of finding employment' column in Table 6.1. Each category was classified further, to distinguish whether the participant had found the job through their social capital, or in other ways, such as from their own initiative or from a formal job application.

Table 6.1: Method of Finding Employment

Method of finding employment	Code	First job		Current job	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Through friends or other contacts	SC	3	5.8%	7	13.5%
Through job advertisements	OTH	18	34.6%	5	9.6%
Wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer	OTH	3	5.8%	0	0.0%
Through relatives	SC	10	19.2%	4	7.7%
Through an employment agency	OTH	2	3.8%	2	3.8%
Invited to apply	SC	3	5.8%	4	7.7%
Self-employed	OTH	0	0.0%	10	19.2%
Internet search	OTH	0	0.0%	1	1.9%
Worked there previously or on a temporary job	SC	2	3.8%	1	1.9%
Started on a placement or training scheme	SC	6	11.5%	1	1.9%
Through WINZ	OTH	2	3.8%	0	0.0%
Through school	SC	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
Recruitment drives	OTH	2	3.8%	0	0.0%
Other		0	0.0%	3	5.8%
Not currently employed (e.g. retired, beneficiary)		0	0.0%	14	26.9%
Total		**52**	**100.0%**	**52**	**100.0%**

Key: SC = Social Capital, OTH = Other.

The majority of participants found their first job through job advertisements. However, the results from this analysis suggest that social capital has played a significant role in the pathways to employment for the participants in this study. Twenty-five (48.1 percent) of the participants found their first job through using their social capital (refer to the methods marked 'SC' in Table 6.1). The proportion of volunteers who found their current job, through their social capital, is 44.7 percent. Note that some of the volunteers were either retired, or they were beneficiaries. This figure only accounts for those 38 participants who are currently in paid employment. These results are consistent with Dupuis et al's (2004) findings of 45 percent and 48 percent respectively.

A number of examples demonstrating linkages between the voluntary activities of the participants and their labour market experiences emerged from the qualitative research.

Joyce, who was quoted earlier in this section, was invited to apply for her current job after a period of time volunteering for the organisation with which she is now in paid employment. Dupuis et al (2004) note that should an individual find paid employment through their social contacts, they have effectively converted social capital into economic capital. This is consistent with Bourdieu's notion of the convertibility of capitals, which was reiterated at the beginning of this section. Joyce, who was employed in her current position as a result of the networks she had developed through volunteering, provides an example of social capital being converted into economic capital in this way.

Dianne provided a similar example. She had spent some time assisting an organisation with childcare duties, on a voluntary basis. This voluntary work then led to paid employment. Dianne stated:

> *I was doing childcare in there, they just had an area for children to go and play while their parents were doing courses, and from there I went into teacher aiding. So it was from working with the children there, that's what put me into the role of teacher aiding.*

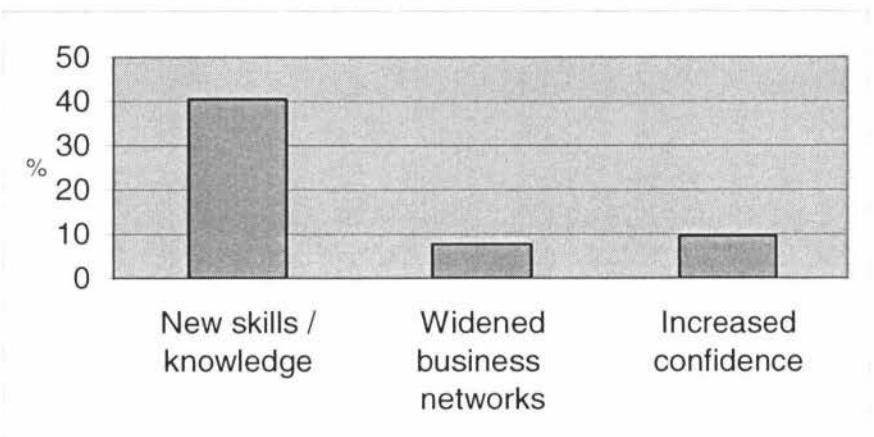
Beth, who is currently self-employed, provided an example of another context through which voluntary activities can be linked to the labour market. Beth had been volunteering for a fundraising initiative at a local institution. She notes:

> *We couldn't get enough volunteers, I was virtually doing it (the work) mostly on my own ... so the Board of Trustees made a proposition, would I be interested in actually taking it on as a business for myself, and just paying them a minimal token rental.*

Beth accepted the proposal. As a direct result of her voluntary activities, she moved into self-employment. As a consequence of that business, Beth subsequently set up a similar operation at a different institution. Additionally, her new venture is on a larger scale and she now employs staff to assist her.

The participants in the telephone survey were asked to make any brief comments about how their voluntary activity had helped them with their work (if at all). The responses broadly fitted within three key categories. They were coded, on completion of the fieldwork, as follows: volunteer work that had helped them develop new skills and knowledge; volunteer work that had widened their business and/or professional networks; or that they had increased their confidence through volunteering, which had then had positive flow-on effects into their working lives. In total, 57.7 percent reported that their voluntary activity had, in some way, benefited them in their paid employment. Figure 6.1 presents the results from this question.

Figure 6.1: Effect of Voluntary Activity on Paid Employment



The participants in the telephone survey were also asked whether anyone they knew from their activities as a volunteer had ever directly played a role in their finding a job. Fourteen (26.9 percent) of the participants answered that, at some stage in their lives, someone they knew from their voluntary work had played a role in their finding paid employment. For those participants who answered affirmatively, they were asked two further questions. First, they were asked about the nature of the involvement of the person who had assisted them into paid employment. Secondly, they were asked whether the work was casual, part-time, or full-time in nature. The results from these questions are presented in Figures 6.2 and 6.3.

Figure 6.2: Type of Assistance from Other Volunteers

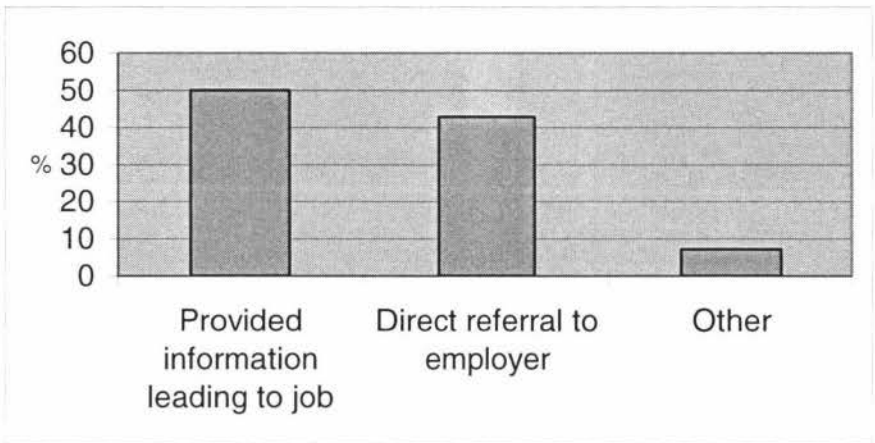
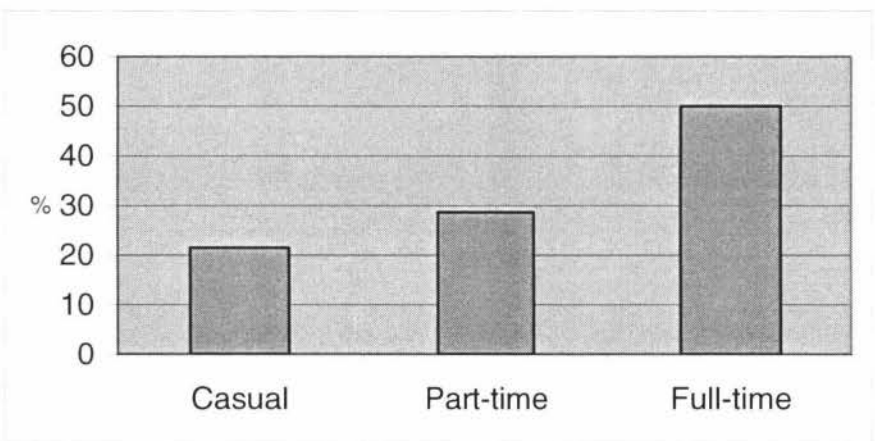


Figure 6.3: Type of Paid Employment Found



Further to these results, it was noted in the previous subsection that eight participants had indicated that one reason they had volunteered was to make new contacts that might help their business or career. Of those eight, six (75 percent) of those who had purposely volunteered to help their business or career had actually found some type of paid employment through the social connections they had developed as volunteers.

The findings from the telephone survey indicate a strong relationship between the social capital the participants developed through their voluntary activities, and their labour market outcomes. More than half of the participants indicated that their experiences as volunteers had in some way positively influenced their working lives. Just over a quarter of

participants had found some type of paid employment with assistance from, to some degree, people they knew through their voluntary activities. The findings again support Bourdieu's notion that social capital can be converted into economic capital, in this case through the labour market.

6.2 Social and Cultural Skills

This section explores a more oblique way in which an individual, through involvement in voluntary activity, can develop social capital that may assist their labour market outcomes. An individual's social networks are the direct mechanism through which they are able to convert their social capital into economic capital, as discussed in the previous section. However, this thesis has also proposed that the culture of voluntary associations may provide individuals with an environment that can enable the development of the social skills necessary to build their social capital.

Indeed, Seyfang (2004:56) notes that volunteering (and other forms of self-help) can be seen as 'appropriate responses to exclusion from employment'. She refers to the confidence, skills and networks that volunteering can bring, leading to 'the social capital which can be drawn upon in order to reinsert oneself into society' (Seyfang, 2004:57). Chapter Three also drew on the work of Witten-Hannah (1999:25-26), who noted that voluntary associations can provide individuals with opportunities to interact and develop co-operative skills; stating further that: 'community initiatives act as a catalyst in the formation of social capital ... they create opportunities for the development of social relationships and ... empower individuals and groups, giving them hope and self-confidence'.

Jane, who was introduced in the previous chapter, has volunteered in the past for Age Concern. She made the following comment:

I suppose working with the elderly; I gained a lot of experience working with the elderly ... we talked quite well together ... their experiences leave me to further develop more for myself, for relationships.

Jane noted that she had '*missed out*' on her grandparents, and her parents had passed on while she was in her twenties. She felt that through her voluntary work, she was given an opportunity to meet people, in this case the elderly, whom she would otherwise not engage with. She believed this contact helped with her social development, in a manner that her family environment had been unable to provide her with. As she notes above, this improved her capacity to build on other relationships in her life. Further, Jane commented that the people skills she has developed through volunteering help her in her current job.

Voluntary associations can also provide an environment that encourages the work culture, through the supportive networks they provide. Dickson (2004:8) notes that 'social capital is thought to affect individual employment prospects in several ways', including the way in which 'the social norms that exist within networks of friends, family and acquaintances ... influence the value that individuals place on paid work'.

The research supports this notion. Joyce, a volunteer for one of the community initiatives that took part in the survey, commented how members of her community have realised that they '*can work as volunteers and get an opportunity to move into employment*'. Moreover, she stated the following:

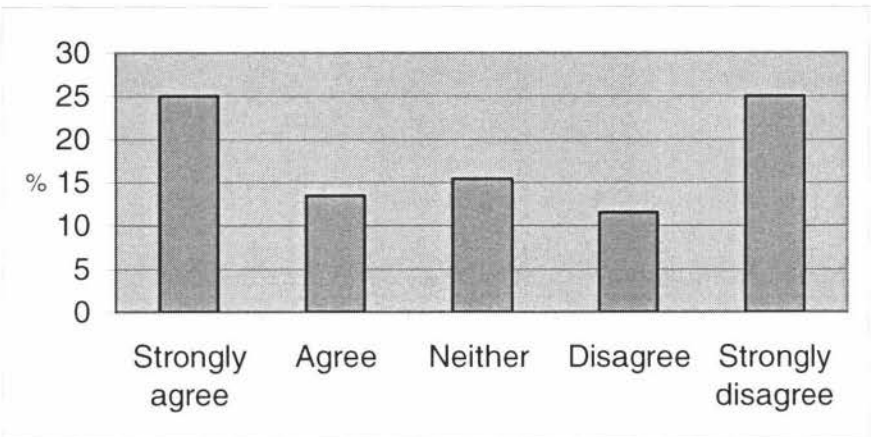
We just bring them up to speed; for example, the work culture. For some of these people, they've never worked. They've left school, had their families, their families have grown up, and now they're at a stage where they're saying, 'Well, what can I do?'

The voluntary association that Joyce is involved with is able to offer networks in the community, and social support, to people in this situation. This support can assist people to immerse themselves into the wider community and, ultimately, the labour market. As noted

by Seyfang (2004), this function of voluntary associations can be particularly useful for individuals from marginalised groups or minorities.

In addition to the qualitative study, participants in the telephone survey were asked to provide a response to the following statement: 'You developed the confidence to explore new career possibilities through working as a volunteer'. They were asked to respond on a five point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The results are presented in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4: Confidence to Explore New Career Possibilities



The analysis shows that 38.5 percent of the participants either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' with the statement. This finding, alongside the comments from the qualitative study, support the notion that voluntary associations can provide their members with an environment conducive to developing the social skills and confidence necessary for an individual to build their stocks of social capital.

6.3 Policy Considerations

Chapter Three indicated that social capital could be heuristically useful in guiding the development of social policy. In particular, it built on a broadly Bourdieuian notion of

social capital that suggests the networks which individuals create through their voluntary activities can be converted, via the labour market, into economic capital. Further, through drawing on Jurgen Habermas' notion of communicative competences, it suggested that government could facilitate this dynamic through developing partnerships in the voluntary sector. This section extends these ideas by specifically considering how the voluntary and government sectors can work together. It draws on both the literature, and the comments of the participants who took part in the fieldwork for this thesis.

At local government level, the Local Government Act 2002 lays a foundation for the approach advocated in this thesis. Section 10 of the Act places the onus on local authorities 'to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities'. Section 14 requires local authorities to consider 'the views of all its communities' when making decisions. Additionally, section 52 requires community boards to 'communicate with community organisations and special interest groups' on community matters. For instance, Robinson and Williams (2001) provide practical examples of what this may mean when considering policy implications for Maori. In particular, they note the need for the recognition of customary forms of association within Maori communities, and recognition of the aspirations and concerns of Maori communities in local and central government policy decision-making processes.

Robinson (1999:13) argues that 'collaborative community dialogue' is required at the policy development stage. Also writing about New Zealand, Wallis and Dollery (2002) offer a number of suggestions as to how local government can engage with voluntary associations to build social capital:

> They can provide opportunities for citizens and communities to influence the outcomes of local issues and decisions, facilities and types of infrastructure that allow voluntary associations to develop and flourish, and assistance through grants, advice and training to people involved in developing local service delivery networks. They can undertake monitoring, research and data collection on the strength of the local voluntary sector. They can also facilitate the delivery of

services and funding between agencies, voluntary associations and firms to ensure local needs are being addressed (Wallis & Dollery, 2002:82-83).

This study was conducted in West Auckland. Witten-Hannah (1999) notes that Waitakere City Council's 'West Coast Plan' project for this region may have encouraged the growth of social capital. She notes it has brought together diverse groups of people focused on common interests (the future of their region), providing them with opportunities to interact and develop cooperative skills, and opportunities for participants to build pride and self-esteem in themselves, their community and their 'place'. She notes that prior to embarking on such a project, 'councils need to ensure that policies are in place to enable communities to be fairly resourced ... and that enable and encourage the formation of partnerships and power-sharing with stakeholder groups' (Witten-Hannah, 1999:40). Further, the Waitakere City Council currently has a partnership and advocacy team, whose role is to work with the community to develop partnerships and to encourage community self-empowerment and social enterprise.

At central government level, the Department of Child Youth and Family Services have launched the Stronger Communities Action Fund that has an explicit objective of developing social capital. Taylor (2004:67) notes the initiative has led to measurably increased social capital, as indicated by 'increased participation, the creation of new networks and associations, and greater proactivity' within communities that have taken part. Importantly, increased community participation and networking gives rise to bridging social capital. As this thesis has noted, bridging social capital is likely to lead to greater community cohesion, as it relates to the linkages developed between disparate groups and individuals. As a consequence, it has more potential to enhance an individual's employment outcomes than bonding social capital (which refers to connections within groups). Volunteers from the Ranui Action Project, which receives funding through the Stronger Communities Action Fund, along with support from the Waitakere City Council, took part in the fieldwork for this thesis.

Further, a working paper from the Strategic Social Policy Group of the Ministry of Social Development (Dickson, 2004:37) notes that by international standards New Zealand 'may be relatively social capital rich'. It emphasises that:

> Government has an interest in the development of social capital due to the benefits that arise from socially connected and inclusive communities ... people are more likely to undertake voluntary work, get involved in school boards of trustees, perform jury service and pay their taxes when they feel that they have a stake in these institutions and trust that they operate fairly. In other words, social capital makes it easier for government to govern (Dickson, 2004:38).

Examples of local or central government interventions that can lead to social capital development within the community can also be found in the international literature. Halpern (2005:285) notes that 'the case for active intervention in social capital is very strong'. He discusses a number of ways in which government could promote social capital, including (and not limited to): setting up mentoring schemes (for example, between at risk youth and community leaders), initiating programmes to develop positive networks in the community for young offenders, building networks between firms, employees and the community, and supporting people (particularly youth) into voluntary work. He suggests that a key policy conclusion is that 'policymakers need to consider social capital, along with many other factors, when drawing up and implementing policy' (Halpern, 2005:288). At a minimum, he suggests efforts should be made to ensure policy will not harm social capital.

A number of further examples can be found in the international literature. For instance, Worthington and Dollery (2000) argue that appropriately targeted housing and associated community services policies can help develop a 'sense of place' that can support social capital growth. Kilpatrick et al (2002) include an eight-step strategy manual within their paper to enable communities to build social capital that has partnerships with government agencies central to it. Narayan (1999) outlines seven 'sensitively designed' areas where government interventions can assist social capital building. The potential for time bank

programmes to create pathways to employment through developing social capital within communities was discussed in Chapter Three (refer to Halpern, 2005; Seyfang, 2001, 2004).

The participants in the qualitative study were asked what they believed the role of local and/or central government was in the voluntary sector. There was a general feeling amongst participants that government undervalued the voluntary sector, and that the support that was offered came with too many 'strings attached'. Most of the participants indicated they were grateful for any support they did get. However, the comments indicated that the participants, in this study, did not *perceive* that there was a partnership between their organisations and any government bodies.

For example, Dianne notes that '*the different groups that I've been working with in the community, they all rely heavily on central, or governmental, funding*'. She then commented on what she thought this might mean for a particular voluntary association that she is associated with. This organisation has recently been awarded a government contract:

> *The government is going to have their way of doing things, and want it their way. So all their hard work, over the last ten or twenty years, is out the window. I don't see government working with them, or alongside them. I think they'll take over.*

This comment is salient when considered alongside Susan Arai's (2000) analysis of the effects of increased government intervention in the Canadian voluntary sector, discussed earlier in this thesis. Arai suggests that directive government intervention, in this case, has discouraged many volunteers, thus countering the development of social capital.

Beth echoed similar concerns. She noted the following in respect of the voluntary association she is currently involved with:

> *I do feel sometimes we're being asked for too much for their (government) funding. That is part of the price we pay, I guess, for being funded by them ... the perception*

is even now for us, is that we have big brother watching us with a big stick. If we don't do what big brother wants, then we won't get the money.

The findings from the telephone survey do indicate, however, that the participants desire a partnership with government. During the telephone survey interviews, the participants were told that there are a number of possible types of support for voluntary associations that could be provided by either local or central government. They were read a list, and were asked to indicate which type of government support, from the list, they believed was the most important for developing voluntary activity in West Auckland. They were then asked which type of support they felt was second most important. Table 6.2 summarises the results.

Table 6.2: Most Important Type of Government Support

	First most important		Second most important	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Financial support	25	48.1%	11	21.2%
Knowledge and expertise	12	23.1%	12	23.1%
Physical resources	7	13.5%	19	36.5%
Meeting spaces	5	9.6%	3	5.8%
Promotion or publicity	2	3.8%	6	11.5%
No support at all	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Refused	1	1.9%	1	1.9%
Total	52	100.0%	52	100.0%

Just over half of the participants indicated, as their first response, a category other than financial support. Moreover, just under a quarter of participants indicated, as their first response, that knowledge and expertise was the most important support that government agencies could provide to the voluntary sector. These results suggest that many of the volunteers who took part in this research did want to see active involvement (and not just financial assistance) from government bodies, in the voluntary sector. Further, the participants were given the option of answering 'no support at all' from government. No participants chose this option for either their first or second response.

The participants were also asked if they would like to make any comments on what government involvement they would like to see in the voluntary sector, or any concerns they had around current involvement in the sector from government. A diverse array of responses was recorded. The comments were classed into seven general categories upon completion of the fieldwork; the results are presented in table 6.3.

Table 6.3: Preferred Government Involvement

	First comment		Second comment	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Financial support	15	28.8%	3	14.3%
Public acknowledgement/publicity	10	19.2%	0	0.0%
Less interference and bureaucracy	10	19.2%	2	9.5%
No comments	6	11.5%	0	0.0%
Resources, expertise and/or partnership	8	15.4%	8	38.1%
Tax incentives or government assistance	2	3.8%	6	28.6%
Recognition of role of Treaty of Waitangi	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
Monitoring and accountability	0	0.0%	2	9.5%
Total	52	100.0%	21	100.0%

The respondents considered financial support to be the most preferred form of government involvement. However, the responses indicate a desire on the part of the participants to receive support from government in a variety of ways, other than simply receiving financial assistance. In particular, a number of participants indicated through their first comment that they wanted more resources and expertise (15.4 percent) and more public acknowledgement and publicity (19.2 percent). These types of support can only come through partnership, as they require understanding and dialogue between sectors. For those ten participants whose first response was that they would prefer less interference and bureaucracy, three of them indicated, as a second response, that they would like to see more resources, expertise, and/or partnership. This suggests that for them, active government involvement is welcome, so long as it is not directorial. The suggestions noted earlier in this section regarding how government could work more closely in partnership with the voluntary sector, help build networks in the community, and support more people into

voluntary activities would go some way towards meeting the needs that have been expressed by participants in this research.

Chapter Three identified that marginalised groups, in particular, could benefit from government interest in social capital (refer Aguilera, 2002; Judge, 2004; Seyfang, 2004). King and Waldegrave (2003) consider how social capital can be mobilised to impact upon the capacity for marginalised groups to find employment, through policy initiatives that are focused on the structure of their social networks. They caution that policy should be 'based upon an accurate understanding of the ways in which the cultural (in the broadest sense) characteristics of a particular population influence the relationships that its members have with other fields or domains within the wider society' (King & Waldegrave, 2003:241). In practice, Aguilera (2002:853) notes that 'programs that attempt to bring valuable labor market information to individuals and communities lacking employment-related information are likely to be effective in reducing inequality'.

Portes and Mooney (2002:326) endorse the notion that social capital can be usefully employed in developing social policy. However, they make the following point: 'bureaucratic top-down formulas that posit social capital as a magic wand for local ills will consistently fail ... future successful experiences of community development will be achieved one at a time by combining existing community networks with careful nurturing of local skills and the provision of strategic external support'. This thesis does not suggest that social capital is a 'magic wand'. It does support, however, local and/or central government engaging with voluntary associations in the community, in partnership. One outcome of understanding the needs of the community, and the needs of specific voluntary associations, is that social capital, developed through voluntary activity, has the potential to assist a reasonable number of individuals into paid employment.

6.4 Conclusion

Central to this thesis is Pierre Bourdieu's idea that the various capitals, including social and economic capital, are interchangeable. The proposition that the social capital an individual has developed, through their voluntary activity, can assist them into paid employment (thus converting that social capital into economic capital) draws on this notion.

This chapter identified that participants in the study were aware that their voluntary activities might help them in their paid work. Moreover, the telephone survey found that almost half of the participants found their first job through using their social capital. Further, over half of the participants in the telephone survey indicated that social capital developed through volunteering had, in some way, contributed positively to their paid employment. This result was supported by examples from the qualitative study. Moreover, around a quarter of the participants in the telephone survey indicated that someone they knew from their voluntary activities had, in some way, directly assisted them into the labour market. Thus, the research for this thesis supports Bourdieu's notion that different forms of capital are interchangeable.

The research findings also support the notion that the environment and culture of voluntary associations can help an individual develop the social skills necessary to build their social capital. In this vein, the telephone survey identified that over a third of the participants had developed the confidence to explore new career possibilities through their involvement in the voluntary sector.

The chapter considered the political implications of the research. The thesis draws on Jurgen Habermas' notion of communicative competences to highlight the value of government working in partnership with the voluntary sector, to assist the conversion of social capital developed in that sector, into economic capital via the labour market. Further, this thesis suggests that local government also has a responsibility to work in partnership with the voluntary sector, due to the requirements of the Local Government Act 2002.

Working in partnership requires a dialogue between sectors, and an undertaking by government to understand the specific needs of groups within the voluntary sector. Waitakere City Council appears to have made efforts to work in partnership with the local community, in the manner envisaged here. However, the research for this thesis indicated there was concern amongst the participants that there was not enough (local and central) government support, and that it came with 'too many strings attached'. This thesis has noted that ill-considered government interventions have the potential to discourage volunteers and negatively affect social capital development. This said, the majority of participants indicated a desire to work in partnership with government.

The results presented in this chapter need to be considered in light of the suggestion, made in the previous chapter, that the participants' abilities to generate social capital are, generally, independent of their voluntary activities. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that voluntary activities can be a useful strategy for an individual to employ, should they wish to develop their social capital specifically for the purposes of enhancing their opportunities within the labour market. This chapter has, once again, highlighted that individuals from marginalised groups and/or minorities could, in particular, benefit from strategically involving themselves in the voluntary sector.

Both local and central government have the opportunity, and to some extent a responsibility, to facilitate the processes that can enable the development of social capital in the community through engaging in partnerships with voluntary associations; social capital that has the potential to assist individuals into paid employment.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

This thesis has explored the relationship between social capital developed through voluntary associations and economic forms of capital via the labour market. It found that individuals can develop social capital through working as volunteers, and that this social capital can influence their labour market outcomes. Moreover, social capital can be heuristically useful in guiding the development of social policy aimed at facilitating this process.

These findings rest on several key propositions, each of which has been explored in this thesis. The first proposition is that voluntary associations provide an environment, for individuals, conducive to the development of social capital. The second proposition is that an individual can convert the social capital they have generated from their voluntary activities into economic capital. An individual converts social capital into economic capital when their social networks positively affect their labour market outcomes. The final proposition is that government can actively facilitate this process through policy mechanisms.

7.1 The Social Capital Concept

Social capital, as applied in this thesis, is defined as the 'Resources embedded in social networks accessed and used by actors for actions' (Lin, 2001:25). Through focusing on the individual, issues associated with collective notions of social capital are mitigated. Social capital at the collective level does not allow a distinction to be made between the collectively owned resources of the group, and the abilities of individual actors to obtain them. This is a position that can easily lead to tautological statements where a positive or negative outcome can be seen as indicative of either the presence or absence of social capital.

The strength of the concept of social capital lies in its heuristic rather than theoretical value. To this end, Bourdieu's notion that each of the capitals are interchangeable is key to understanding how social capital developed by an individual in a voluntary association can be converted into economic capital via their labour market outcomes.

The distinction between bridging and bonding social capital is also critical to this analysis. Bridging social capital refers to socially inclusive relations, and encapsulates relationships between groups in the wider society. Bonding social capital, alternatively, refers to socially exclusive relations, and is concerned with social relationships within groups. Bridging social capital is more likely to benefit an individual's labour market opportunities than bonding social capital, as it is concerned with that individual's social networks in the wider society.

7.2 Social Capital and Voluntary Associations

Voluntary associations are an important site for the development of social capital (Leonard & Onyx, 2003; D. Robinson, 1997; Stolle, 1998; J. Wilson & Musick, 1997). Further, the concept of social capital is heuristically useful for understanding the value of resources embedded in social networks, such as those developed within voluntary associations.

There is no simple causal relationship between an individual's voluntary activities, and the level and value of the social capital they might accrue from these activities. There are a number of factors that can influence the quality of the social capital obtained in that environment. For instance, the resources available to an individual from their social capital will be determined by the variety of networks they have access to, and the resources that already exist within those networks (Aguilera, 2002). Research also indicates that as an association becomes more formal and/or hierarchical its capacity for developing social capital lowers (Arai, 2000; Halpern, 2005; Sharpe, 2003). Further, the quality of social capital an individual may generate is related to the social acceptability of the associations within which that social capital is developed (J. Wilson, 2000). An individual's own

desires, motivations and socio-economic status to begin with, also have some bearing on the social capital they are likely to generate through involving themselves in voluntary activities (Arai, 2000; King & Waldegrave, 2003).

Six volunteers were interviewed, in some depth, during the qualitative fieldwork undertaken for this research. The (primarily quantitative) telephone survey enquired into the experiences of fifty-two volunteers. The participants were drawn from nine different voluntary associations in West Auckland. The research asked about the extent to which bridging and bonding social capital was found in these associations, and how relevant it may be to an individual's labour market outcomes.

The heterogeneity of the relationships an individual can develop through their voluntary activities indicate the extent to which an individual may be able to generate bridging social capital through those activities. The fieldwork considered the heterogeneity of both the participants' exogenous and endogenous relationships, which they developed through volunteering.

Examples emerged from the qualitative fieldwork of participants developing contacts outside of the association they volunteered for, through their voluntary activities. Further, it was found that just over half of participants in the telephone survey had developed friendships, contacts or networks outside of the association with which they volunteered. The telephone survey also asked about the levels of heterogeneity within each of the voluntary associations. It was found that just over one-third of participants thought other people they volunteered with were different to themselves, and that the association within which they volunteered was diverse. Thus, the research indicates that voluntary associations can provide individuals with an opportunity to develop bridging social capital.

The research also asked about the quality of the social capital that might have been available to the volunteers in the study. Examples emerged from the qualitative study of grassroots/informal associations encouraging the development of social capital that can be useful to individuals' labour market outcomes. The telephone survey found that nearly two-

thirds of participants believed they had relationships with other volunteers that they considered, to some degree, 'close'.

The literature suggests that voluntary associations can provide an environment conducive to developing social capital. However, the fieldwork has indicated that for most participants, their abilities to generate social capital were independent of their voluntary activities. Further, trust is one indicator of the presence (or absence) of social capital. No material difference was found between the levels of trust the participants had with other volunteers, and the levels of trust they had with other people with whom they interacted with on a regular basis. Nevertheless, around one in six respondents did appear to generate considerably more social capital from their voluntary activities than they did from their 'everyday lives'.

This finding is significant given that research suggests some groups of people, such as those in marginalised groups and minorities, are able to generate, through their voluntary activities, social capital otherwise inaccessible to them (Aguilera, 2002; Judge, 2004; Seyfang, 2004). The implications of this will be canvassed further on in this chapter.

7.3 Social Capital and the Labour Market

Pierre Bourdieu's idea that each of the capitals are interchangeable is central to the notion that social capital developed in the voluntary sector can be converted, via the labour market, into economic capital. Further, the social capital notion suggests that individual actors can purposively draw on the resources embedded in their social relations to improve their chances of personal profit, such as finding paid employment.

Research in the United States indicates that nearly a quarter of volunteers became involved in voluntary activity, at least in part, to help their business or careers (Hodgkinson & Weitzman, 1996). Amongst the West Auckland volunteers who took part in this study, around one in six indicated that this was, at least in part, a reason for their volunteering.

However, researchers such as Norwood (2001), Rotolo and Wilson (2003) and Wilson (2000) argue that the impact of social capital on an individual's employment outcomes is minimal and/or largely unsubstantiated by empirical evidence. Dupuis et al (2004) argue that as the labour market becomes more fragmented, and as recruitment systems become more professionalised, the role of social capital in job search may diminish. Consequently, a simple causal relationship between volunteering and labour market outcomes is improbable. However, for some individuals, particularly those from marginalised or minority groups, social capital developed through volunteering can improve their labour market outcomes.

This position is supported by King and Waldegrave (2003), Lin (2001) and Portes (1998), who suggest that social capital can explain variations in access that different groups have to employment. They each draw on the work of Burt (1992) and Granovetter (1974). Granovetter's notion of the 'strength of weak ties' highlights the role that disparate social ties (or bridging social capital) can have in improving an individual's employment outcomes. Their work accords with Bourdieu's instrumental approach to social capital, that focuses on the benefits that can accrue to an individual.

The qualitative research showed participants finding paid employment, and entering into self-employment, as a direct consequence of their voluntary activities. While the majority of participants in the telephone survey found their first job through job advertisements, just under half used some form of social capital to find their first job. Volunteering was found to have helped over half of the participants in their careers, in some way. Further, just over a quarter of the participants reported they had received some form of direct assistance into paid employment from people with whom they had volunteered. Of the eight participants who had indicated they volunteered, at least in part, to further their business or careers, six reported that they had been assisted into paid employment through the social connections they had developed as volunteers. These findings support Bourdieu's notion that social capital can be converted into economic capital; in this instance, through the labour market.

Labour market outcomes can also depend upon the quality of the networks available to a volunteer (Aguilera, 2002; Bourdieu, 1997; Dickson, 2004; Healy, 2001). In particular, within the search for employment, the range and nature of an individual's connections can be more important than the number of them. Further, a voluntary environment that supports the work culture and/or provides individuals with the opportunity to develop their confidence and social skills, can lead to social capital that can assist people in other facets of their lives, such as furthering their outcomes in the labour market (Seyfang, 2004; Witten-Hannah, 1999).

The qualitative research identified participants who had improved their capacity to develop social connections, through their experiences as volunteers. It also found an example of an organisation that was able to provide avenues for people, who had been out of the labour market for some time, to develop the skills required to reinsert themselves back into paid employment. Further, just over a third of the participants in the telephone survey indicated that they had developed the confidence to explore new career possibilities as a consequence of working as a volunteer.

The notion that social capital can influence an individual's employment outcomes has its critics. The research found that if an individual already has well-developed social networks, it is less likely they will benefit in the labour market from the social capital they develop through their voluntary activities. This may also apply to those already in high status (or at least secure) employment. However, voluntary activity can generate social capital for an individual that can lead to paid employment. To this end, voluntary associations can be useful for individuals from marginalised or minority groups (Seyfang, 2004).

7.4 Developing Social Policy

Bourdieu's notion that social capital can be converted into economic capital links social interaction to the economy. This idea has been explored by a number of researchers (see Falk, 2001a; Francois, 2002; Midgley & Livermore, 1998; Paldam & Svendsen, 2004; D.

Robinson, 1997). This notion then raises the question of the role of social capital in the political economy. The policy implications of the concept centre, first, around whether or not government 'has any business' creating policy that influences how an individual invests their social capital. Secondly, it must be asked whether or not policies that account for social capital can actually be effective, even if they are implemented.

Government policy inescapably influences connections between people, and thus how they invest their social capital (Judge, 2004). Therefore, it can be argued that deliberate use of social capital might better shape social policy outcomes than if the potential implications of it are ignored. Further, this thesis refutes the neo-liberal claim that state intervention (i.e. the welfare state) crowds out voluntary associations and thus diminishes social capital. Countries such as the Netherlands and Sweden have extensive welfare states, yet have social capital indicator scores amongst the highest in the world (Healy, 2001). Conversely, neo-conservative social policies in Canada were shown to impact negatively on the development of social capital (Arai, 2000).

This thesis supports an active role for local and/or central government, and indicates that social capital can be heuristically useful in guiding social policy. It builds on Bourdieu's (1997) position that investment, through government policy aimed at developing social capital, is required to create and maintain social capital. Additionally, Szreter (2000) and Falk (2002), using Habermas' notion of 'communicative competences', emphasise the importance of a policy environment that promotes fair and equitable communication between stakeholders in the community and government, and that this is required within civil society for the development of social capital.

Furthermore, a coordinated policy response would seem appropriate, to ensure pre-existing economic limitations are accounted for, and to minimise the chance of contradictory policy being developed (Das, 2004; Halpern, 2005). 'Volunteering' encompasses a variety of activities, and policy should be flexible enough to take into consideration both the disparities that exist within the voluntary sector and the varying needs, motivations, and desires of people who volunteer.

It was noted earlier in this chapter that bridging social capital is more likely to benefit an individual's labour market opportunities than bonding social capital; to this end it is suggested that policy should focus on developing this form of social capital. At a minimum, it is suggested that both positive and negative impacts of social capital be considered, alongside other factors, when drafting and implementing social policy. In particular, policymakers should consider whether a policy might be harmful to social capital. For instance, it may not be beneficial to build bridging social capital within at-risk communities, if it is at the expense of the bonding social capital that holds those communities together (Leonard & Onyx, 2003).

Government should work in partnership with the community, particularly in view of Habermas' ideas. Working in partnership means understanding the social needs of the community. The Local Government Act 2002 requires local authorities to engage with community organisations and special interest groups on community matters. Understanding the needs of communities requires government to understand the different organisational structures, aspirations and concerns of voluntary associations. This is particularly the case when those associations represent different cultural interests. The Treaty of Waitangi makes this an imperative in respect of Maori interests. The cultural differences of other groups, such as Asian and Pacific peoples, should also be taken into consideration.

The qualitative research identified a general feeling amongst the participants that government undervalued their voluntary work. They appreciated the support they received from local (and in some cases central) government, but felt it often came with too many 'strings attached'. They did not, generally, perceive themselves to be working in partnership with government. However, the telephone survey indicated that the participants in this study did wish to work in partnership with government. Half of the participants indicated, from a series of options, that non-financial forms of support, such as the provision of knowledge and expertise, or of physical resources, were the most important forms of government assistance for developing voluntary activity in West Auckland. When asked to comment on their preferred form of support, just over one third alluded to a type of

assistance that would require understanding and dialogue, or partnership, between the voluntary and government sectors. This would entail support such as more resources, expertise, public acknowledgement of the work undertaken, and/or publicity for that work.

The literature canvassed for this research indicates that local and/or central government in New Zealand can assist the development of social capital in voluntary associations in a variety of ways. Wallis and Dollery (2002) outlined how local bodies can work with the voluntary sector to build social capital, including the following possibilities: community involvement in decision making, targeted assistance such as grants and training, research and monitoring of the voluntary sector, and coordination of both public and private assistance. At local government level, the West Coast Plan provides an example of Waitakere City Council promoting social capital development, through its bringing together of diverse groups of people, and its engendering of cooperation amongst them (Witten-Hannah, 1999).

At the level of central government, the Stronger Communities Action Fund seeks to develop social capital through encouraging increased levels of participation within communities (Taylor, 2004). Such policies reflect international opinion about the value of centralised initiatives to promote social capital in local communities (refer Halpern, 2005; Kilpatrick et al., 2002; Narayan, 1999; Seyfang, 2004; Worthington & Dollery, 2000).

New Zealand policymakers have recognised the contribution social capital can make to the analysis of policy options, and have expressed interest in measuring the outcomes of policy orientated at the development of social capital (Spellerberg, 2001). Most available measures of social capital use quantitative assessments of trust, and other aspects of civic involvement (Healy, 2001). It is acknowledged that these methods can provide valid information, though it is suggested that qualitative measures also be employed. Statistics New Zealand has produced a 'Framework for the Measurement of Social Capital in New Zealand' (Spellerberg, 2001). It draws on quantitative techniques, but cautions that quantitative measures can only indicate the existence of social capital, and that qualitative measures are required to understand the quality of the networks and relationships being

studied. Community benchmark surveys, that combine a range of methodologies, are one possibility for measuring policy initiatives that aim to develop social capital (Healy, 2004).

7.5 Future Research

This research has considered the experiences of a small group of volunteers, affiliated to nine voluntary associations based in West Auckland. The results cannot be considered indicative of the national population of volunteers. Nevertheless, the research does suggest that a relationship exists between the social capital an individual can develop through voluntary activity and the labour market. Further research on a wider population, over a larger geographical area, could assess these findings further, and the validity of the policy suggestions that follow from them.

A number of points could be addressed in such research. Questionnaires developed for future work in this area could enquire further into the level of diversity amongst the participants surveyed. A degree of incongruity was found within the present research between the participants' perceptions of diversity within the associations they volunteered for, and the level of diversity identified in the demographic statistics that emerged from the fieldwork. Most participants in this study were New Zealand Europeans, and a high proportion of them were over the age of fifty. Yet just over a third of participants believed that the association they volunteered for was, to some degree, 'diverse'. Diversity can encapsulate a variety of factors beyond age and ethnicity. To this end, questionnaires developed for further research could be designed to capture these other factors.

It is recommended that steps be taken to address participant self-selection in future research. The participants in the present research were self-selecting from the voluntary associations that took part. It is possible that younger people or people of different ethnicities, in each organisation, did not respond to the requests to take part in the research proportionately. This may be the case, given that the response rate from volunteers in the one community initiative based in a lower socio-economic and multi-cultural community

was lower than that for other associations. The thesis suggests that, in particular, individuals from marginalised groups and minorities can benefit from the social capital they can develop in voluntary associations. However, the research did not specifically enquire into the veracity of this possibility. Further research could aim to determine the degree to which this suggestion is warranted through ensuring the research sample is proportionate to the socio-economic range of the voluntary associations being studied.

The fieldwork found that one in six of the participants surveyed indicated they had developed new business or professional relationships, or new contacts with local body officials, through their voluntary activities. Further research is needed to determine the full extent to which the conclusion is warranted that these 'professional' ties would be more valuable to an individual's labour market outcomes than the other social relationships that the research identified.

Further work could be carried out to consider how cultural differences might affect the findings from the research. Social capital can have different meanings for peoples from different cultures, which can have implications for social policy. For instance, the guidelines and eligibility criteria for the support of voluntary associations should take into account, and recognise as equally valid, the different organisational structures, norms, values, and aspirations of varying communities. This study has only surveyed those associations constructed within a European tradition.

Finally, the research found that for the majority of participants, their abilities to generate social capital were independent of their voluntary activities. However, the results of the analysis were based on a small sample size, and the indicators were derived from just two questions. It is acknowledged that the results should be considered as being indicative only, and further research is recommended.

The labour market information an individual can obtain through the social capital they generate from their voluntary activities can improve their labour market outcomes. Labour market information is a valuable resource, yet the literature surveyed for this project

indicates that it is not equitably distributed through society. Moreover, it suggests that targeted government support of the voluntary sector, that provides opportunities for marginalised or minority groups to develop social capital, is one option available to government to assist people into paid employment.

Voluntary associations are an important part of the fabric of our society. De Tocqueville's observation that they formed the 'social glue' of nineteenth-century America may be just as pertinent in twenty-first century New Zealand. This study has highlighted the relationships between the social networks an individual can develop through volunteering and their economic outcomes via the labour market. Through contributing to an understanding of the role that voluntary associations have in society, it is hoped that this, and future research, will contribute positively to developments in the voluntary sector, and to the realisation of some of the policy suggestions made in this thesis.

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Appendix A: Telephone Survey Questionnaire

Telephone Survey Questionnaire

SOCIAL CAPITAL IN VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS: LABOUR MARKET RELATIONSHIPS AND OUTCOMES

Survey ID no (Q1):	

Date:	

Gender of participant (Q2):	Male	1
	Female	2

Name of voluntary asscn	Ranui Action Project	1
referred from (Q3):	Ark in the Park	2
	Friends of Arataki	3
	McLaren Park Community Project	4
	Titirangi Fire Service	5
	Ecomatters Environmental Trust	6
	Friends of Whatipu	7
	Massey Amateur Swimming Club	8
	Karekare Landcare	9

Introduction

Hello, could I please speak to (name as per consent form).

Good morning / afternoon / evening (name of interviewee). My name is Chris Davidson from Massey University.

You recently indicated that you would be willing to take part in a survey that I am conducting regarding your experiences as a volunteer. Are you still interested in doing this?

IF YES

The interview will take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete. Is now a good time to do this?

IF YES

Thanks for offering your time, it is much appreciated. Everything you say will be confidential and you may ask questions about the survey at any time and decline to answer any question.

Section One: Demographics

First, I would like to start with a couple of questions about yourself.

Q4 May I ask the age group you belong to?

18 – 19	1
20 – 29	2
30 – 39	3
40 – 49	4
50 – 59	5
60 +	6
Refused	20

Q5 Which ethnic group do you identify with?

Record here for later coding:	
NZ European	1
Maori	2
Samoan	3
Cook Island Maori	4
Tongan	5
Niuean	6
Chinese	7
Indian	8
Other (specify)	9
Refused	20

Note 1

Section Two: Experiences as a volunteer

I now have some questions about your experiences as a volunteer

Q6 How many years have you been a volunteer for (name of association referred from)?

1 year or less	1
2 years or less	2
4 years or less	3
6 years or less	4
8 years or less	5
10 years or less	6
Greater than 10 years	7
Refused	20

Q7 How many other organisations, if any, have you been involved with on a volunteer basis?

1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
Greater than 5 (Specify)	6
0	7
Refused	20

IF INVOLVED IN MORE THAN ONE VOLUNTEER GROUP GO TO QUESTION 8 (OTHERWISE GO TO QUESTION 9)

Q8 Including all your voluntary activity, approximately how many years of voluntary work have you done?

Less than one year	1
1 to 5 years	2
6 to 10 years	3
11 to 15 years	4
16 to 20 years	5
Greater than 20 years	6
Refused	20

Q9 How would you rate the quality of the relationships you have developed with the people you volunteer with at (name of association referred from) on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means you have developed some very close friendships and 5 means not at all close?

Very close friendships	Close friendships	Neither close or not close	Not close	Not at all close	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Note 2

Q10 Through volunteering, sometimes people widen their social connections beyond the organisation they are volunteering with. For instance, people they are volunteering with may introduce them to their friends or people they work with. Has your involvement with (name of association referred from) led to you developing any friendships, contacts or networks outside of (name of association referred from)?

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	20

IF YES GO TO QUESTION 11 (IF NO GO TO QUESTION 12)

Q11 Briefly, how would you describe the nature of those contacts or networks? (e.g. friendship, business)

Q12 A recent survey indicates that one reason people volunteer is to make new contacts that might help their business or career. Has this been a reason for you becoming a volunteer?

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	20

Note 3

Q13 Would you say that the people you volunteer with at (name of association referred from) seem more or less educated than yourself, on the 1 – 5 scale where 1 means you believe most are significantly less educated, 3 means some are less educated and some are more educated and 5 means you believe that most are significantly more educated than yourself?

Significantly less educated	Somewhat less educated	Some more / some less	Somewhat more educated	Significantly more educated	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q14 Would you say that the people you volunteer with at (name of association referred from) seem to earn more or less from their jobs than yourself, on the 1 – 5 scale where 1 means you believe most earn significantly less than yourself, 3 means some earn less and some earn more and 5 means you believe most earn significantly more than yourself?

Earn significantly less	Earn somewhat less	Some more / some less	Earn somewhat more	Earn significantly more	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q15 Taking into account factors such as age, occupation, ethnicity and education; how would you consider the diversity of the people you volunteer with at (name of association referred from), on the 1 – 5 scale where 1 means very diverse and 5 means very similar?

Very diverse	Diverse	Neither diverse nor similar	Similar	Very similar	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q16 Thinking for a moment about how trusting you are of the people you have regular contact with in daily life outside of your home, such as friends, neighbours or people you work with, could you please apply the 1 – 5 scale where 1 means that generally speaking you definitely do trust people you have regular contact with and 5 means that generally speaking you definitely do not trust people you have regular contact with?

Definitely do trust	Mostly trust	Neither trust nor do not trust	Mostly do not trust	Definitely do not trust	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Note 4

Q17 Thinking about how trusting you are of the people that you work with in a volunteer capacity, could you please apply the same scale?

Definitely do trust	Mostly trust	Neither trust nor do not trust	Mostly do not trust	Definitely do not trust	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q18 Could you briefly tell me what your primary motivation was for joining (name of association referred from)?

I am now going to read a series of statements to you that touch on some of the different reasons that people volunteer. At the end of each statement, could you please give me a response on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means you strongly agree with the statement and 5 means you strongly disagree?

Q19 I had a strong desire to involve myself in the particular area of work in the community or for the environment that this organisation is involved in.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q20 I had specific skills that the organisation needed and I was happy to help them out.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q21 I wanted to get involved in some practical volunteer work and meet some new people.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q22 What words might you use to describe the nature of the relationships you have with the people you work with on a volunteer basis?

Q23 Could you tell me how often during a typical week you talk on the telephone with friends, neighbours or relatives?

More than once a day	Several times a week	Once or twice a week	Once or twice a month	Rarely or never	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Note 5

Section Three: Experiences as a paid worker

I now have some questions about your experiences in the workforce

Q24 May I ask your occupation?

Record here for later coding:	
Legislators, administrators / managers *	1
Professionals *	2
Associate professionals and technicians *	3
Clerks *	4
Service and sales workers *	5
Agriculture and fishery worker *	6
Trades worker *	7
Plant and machine operators and assemblers *	8
Elementary occupations *	9
Retired	10
Unemployed	11
Student	12
Home executive	13
Beneficiary	14
Other (specify)	15
Refused	20

Note 6

IF CURRENTLY EMPLOYED GO TO QUESTION 25 (OTHERWISE GO TO QUESTION 26)

Q25 How did you find your current job?

Record here for later coding:	
Through friends or other contacts	1
Through job advertisements	2
Wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer	3
Through relatives	4
Through an employment agency	5
Invited to apply	6
Self-employed	7
Internet search	8
Worked there previously or on a temporary job	9
Started with the employer on a job placement or training scheme	10
Worked there while studying	11
Through WINZ	12
Through school	13
Student job search	14
Recruitment drives	15
Don't know	16
Other (Specify)	17
Refused	20

Note 7

Q26 How did you find your first full-time job?

Record here for later coding:	
Through friends or other contacts	1
Through job advertisements	2
Wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer	3
Through relatives	4
Through an employment agency	5
Invited to apply	6
Self-employed	7
Internet search	8
Worked there previously or on a temporary job	9
Started with the employer on a job placement or training scheme	10
Worked there while studying	11
Through WINZ	12
Through school	13
Student job search	14
Recruitment drives	15
Don't know	16
Other (Specify)	17
Refused	20

Note 7

Q27 Has anyone you know from your activities as a volunteer ever played a role in your finding a job?

Yes	1
No	2
Refused	20

IF YES GO TO QUESION 28 (IF NO GO TO QUESTION 30)

Q28 Which of the following two options most closely describes the nature of their involvement? State 'other' if neither of these options are relevant.

Provided information leading to job	1
Direct referral to the employer	2
Other (specify)	3
Refused	20

If response is 'Other', record here:

Q29 Would you describe the work you found in this way as:

Part-time	1
Full-time	2
Casual	3
Other (specify)	4

Voluntary activities can help you with your work in a variety of ways. I will now read out a series of statements that touch on some of them. Could you please give a response on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 means you strongly agree with the statement and 5 means you strongly disagree?

Q30 You have learnt new skills that opened up career possibilities through working as a volunteer

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q31 You became aware of new career possibilities through getting to know new people in a v voluntary setting

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q32 You developed the confidence to explore new career possibilities through working as a volunteer

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

Q33 You became a volunteer at least partly to develop your CV

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Refused / Don't know
1	2	3	4	5	20

IF AGREED WITH ANY OF THESE STATEMENTS GO TO Q34 (OTHERWISE Q35)

Q34 Would you like to make any brief comments regarding how your voluntary activity has helped you with your work, if at all?

Section Four: Role of government

I now have some final questions on the role of local and central government within the voluntary sector

Q35 There are a number of possible types of support for voluntary associations that could be provided from either local or central government. I'm going to read a list, when I have finished could you please indicate which one you believe is the most important type of government support for developing voluntary activity in West Auckland?

Financial support	1
Meeting spaces	2
Physical resources	3
Knowledge and expertise	4
Promotion or publicity	5
No support at all	6
Other (specify)	7
Refused	20

If response is 'Other', record here:

Q36 Which would you rate second most important?

Financial support	1
Meeting spaces	2
Physical resources	3
Knowledge and expertise	4
Promotion or publicity	5
No support at all	6
Other (specify)	7
Refused	20

If response is 'Other', record here:

Q37 Would you like to comment on what government involvement you would like to see in the voluntary sector or any concerns you have around government involvement in the voluntary sector?

NOTES

1. Classifications as per Statistics New Zealand 2001 census question.

2. Modified from: Leonard, R., & Onyx, J. (2003). Networking through loose and strong ties: An Australian qualitative study. Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 14(2), 189-203.

3. Source of research referred to: Wilson, J. (2000). Volunteering. Annual Review of Sociology, 26, 215-240.

4. Modified from 'National Statistics UK' social capital question bank.

5. Modified from: Wilson, J., & Musick, M. (1997). Who cares? Toward an integrated theory of volunteer work. American Sociological Review, 62(5), 694-713.

6. Classifications as per New Zealand Standard of Occupations 1999

7. Classifications as per: Dupuis, A., Inkson, K., & McLaren, E. (2004). Pathways to employment for young New Zealanders: Effects of social capital. Retrieved February 9, 2005, from www.vms.vuw.ac.nz/vuw/fca/vms/files/Dupuis%20Inkson%20and%20McLaren.pdf.