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**How do Social Dominance and Minority Influence affect the
Collaboration of Refugee Services?**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
in Psychology

at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand

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2015

Abstract

Social Dominance Theory has problematic implications for humanitarian work: It suggests that stakeholders of the humanitarian sector collectively maintain the social hierarchies that disadvantage the very minorities that they are supposed to empower. Minority Influence Theory, on the other hand, suggests that social innovation in the humanitarian sector can emerge from the bottom-up, thus against the grain of social hierarchies. This thesis explores for the refugee service sector of Auckland, New Zealand, (a) if former refugees are indeed marginalised within the inter-organisational context that is supposed to empower them, (b) if this has detrimental effects on the sector's performance, and (c) if fostering minority influence might alleviate such effects. The first research question was approached through a stakeholder analysis, which revealed that the social hierarchies within the refugee service sector indeed mirror the marginalisation of former refugees in general New Zealand society. Then, stories of positive and negative incidents of collaboration in the sector were analysed through the lenses of Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory. A thematic analysis of negative incidents of collaboration gathered accounts of discrimination through disregard, as well as legitimising myths. The latter concerned the inaccessibility of services, confounding participation with collaboration, voluntarism as unambiguously positive, feelings of indebtedness among former refugees, and the false belief in opportunities in New Zealand. These findings support the idea that social dominance perpetuates social hierarchies in the refugee service sector and thereby negatively affects its performance. However, the assumptions of Social Dominance Theory concerning behavioural asymmetry did not match the data, which indicates different root causes of social dominance than claimed by the theory's authors. Stories of successful collaboration involved factors that facilitate minority influence, such as finding consistency, appealing to common values, enough time, bottom-up accountability in the form of community ownership, and trust. This suggests that facilitating minority influence in the Auckland refugee service sector simultaneously facilitates collaboration. Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory proved to be instrumental to analysing problems within the inter-organisational context of refugee services and for finding indications for future research and better practice.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude towards the dedicated staff and volunteers of the Auckland refugee service sector who made time in their extremely busy work-lives to help me gain a better understanding of the support system that they all provide together. I fell in love with New Zealand all over again by meeting so many truly inspiring New Zealanders, who were born here, or in South-Sudan, Malaysia, Eritrea, Fiji, Somalia, China, Scotland, Burma, Afghanistan...

Vielen, vielen Dank to my equally inspiring supervisors Clifford van Ommen and Stuart Carr, who have guided me through the jungle of theory and data, allowing me to pick up the best from two worlds of thinking. Tēnā kōrua!

Thank you to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee for approving this research.

Thank you to my sister, who supported me with endless patience and cupcakes.

Dylan, you made a year that could have been one of my most difficult, one of my best.

And to my parents, thank you for always walking your talk about your love for learning, thereby teaching me that passion is good, but only becomes great when it is paired with endurance. Also, the proofreading.

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Chapter 1: Social Hierarchies in the Humanitarian Sector

MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe's (2010) analysis of psychological factors that hinder aid effectiveness suggest an ironic possibility: The particular social hierarchies and power structures within humanitarian organisations may foster social dominance, so that the collaboration across these hierarchies becomes compromised by individual motivations to maintain the status quo. They call for a closer examination of the human factors in humanitarian work¹. Particularly, they critically examine the paradox of "homo dominicus" (p.58) in the role of a professional 'do-gooder', who makes a living of others' disadvantage by supposedly trying to eliminate it. This thesis is set out to exemplify why vigilant reflection upon one's position within power hierarchies might be vital to creating successful social services, and how theories of organisational psychology can contribute to the way we work towards social justice (MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010; Carr, Furnham, & MacLachlan, 2012). Specifically, it explores if and how social hierarchies negatively affect humanitarian services and how this might be resolved through an explorative case study of the refugee service sector in Auckland, New Zealand.

MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe's (2010) reasoning is based on Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). This theory is concerned with the psychological dynamics that contribute to the conspicuous stability of social hierarchies. It is founded on the observation that despite all hierarchy attenuating efforts, such as institutionalized welfare and charity, activism and even social

¹ Humanitarian work is defined as deliberate and organised efforts to promote human welfare (Global Organisation for Humanitarian Work Psychology, 2015).

revolutions, almost all societies throughout history have consistently been structured along group-based social hierarchies. These allow dominant groups to deny others access to power based on arbitrary group differences, such as social class, education, ethnicity, culture, or religion. Social Dominance Theory implies that social hierarchies permeate all of society, even humanitarian organisations, and have psychological effects on their stakeholders, which render their work ineffective. This thesis probes this claim by first clarifying if societal social hierarchies indeed pervade the humanitarian sector, and then exploring the effects that this might have on its stakeholders and their work.

Since Social Dominance Theory only gives psychological explanations for the stability of unfair systems without offering any solutions, it is important to note that this does not necessarily imply pessimistic determinism. Kurt Lewin, an icon of social change studies, stated “The study of the conditions for change begins appropriately with an analysis of the conditions for ‘no change’” (Lewin, 1947, p. 74). This means that only after becoming aware of all mechanisms that perpetuate social inequality, one can begin to understand why humanitarian efforts have never succeeded in eradicating poverty, injustice, and inequality. This is why MacLachlan, Carr, and McAuliffe (2010) suggest that acknowledging the fact that humanitarian work is not safe of flawed human factors might guide the way to far more effective means of fostering equality. Accordingly, this study employs a social dominance framework to analyse the conditions under which social change tends to stagnate for the ultimate goal of finding the conditions to successful social change.

However, Social Dominance Theory is a fairly one-sided approach, in that it is only concerned with the ways in which people can be influenced against their own interest. One-sided approaches, that only take pathologies and problems into account without gaging the potential for improvement are an infamous tradition of psychology. Some of the most famous (and most ethically unsound) psychological experiments have revolved around conformity, submission, compliance, and other ways in which individuals subconsciously adapt their behaviour to external social pressure (e.g. Asch, 1956; Milgram, 1963; Zimbardo, 1972).

All these experiments have in common that they examined how unsolicited dominance plays out: Asch's (1956) famous conformity experiment showed how people tend to adapt their behaviour to dominance through numbers, and Milgram's (1963) experiment and the Stanford prison experiment revolved around dominance through unwarranted authority (Zimbardo, 1972). These early social psychological studies and the theories that built on them, including Social Dominance Theory, have spun an intricate nomological web that explains why power structures are often maintained against the interest of most of the population.

However, one of the most renowned psychologists of our time, Steven Pinker (2012), believes that humanity has actually progressed by getting rid of some oppressive social hierarchies. In agreement with this, this thesis integrates Minority Influence Theory as a counterbalance to Social Dominance Theory.

Minority Influence Theory describes how a relatively powerless minority can overturn counterproductive power hierarchies, and incite social innovation precisely because of its minority status. Under the right conditions, this status can lend

minorities the power to convert people, not only evoke superficial compliance. This thesis will thus not only focus on how social hierarchies might pervade and hinder humanitarian work, but also on the factors that might facilitate successful efforts of alleviating social disadvantage.

1.1. Social Dominance

Social Dominance Theory “concerns identifying and understanding the specific intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, and institutional mechanisms that produce and maintain group-based social hierarchy, and how, in turn, this hierarchy affects these contributing mechanisms” (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p. 39). This means that the theory employs a very broad scope to explain the stability of social hierarchies. More specifically, its model (Fig. 1) encompasses the intrapersonal micro level through the concept of social dominance orientation, the interpersonal meso level through the concept of legitimising myths, and the societal macro level through the concept of group-based hierarchies.

1.1.1. Social Dominance Orientation

The differential measure social dominance orientation describes an individual’s tendency to either support or challenge inequality, thereby having explanatory power on the micro level. Sidanius and Pratto (2001) propose that social dominance orientation depends on more or less stable variables, such as temperament, socialization, sex, gender, and one’s social status. With regard to the people that are involved in the humanitarian sector, one would expect that its *raison d’être* - to attenuate group-based hierarchies – implies relatively low social dominance orientation among its

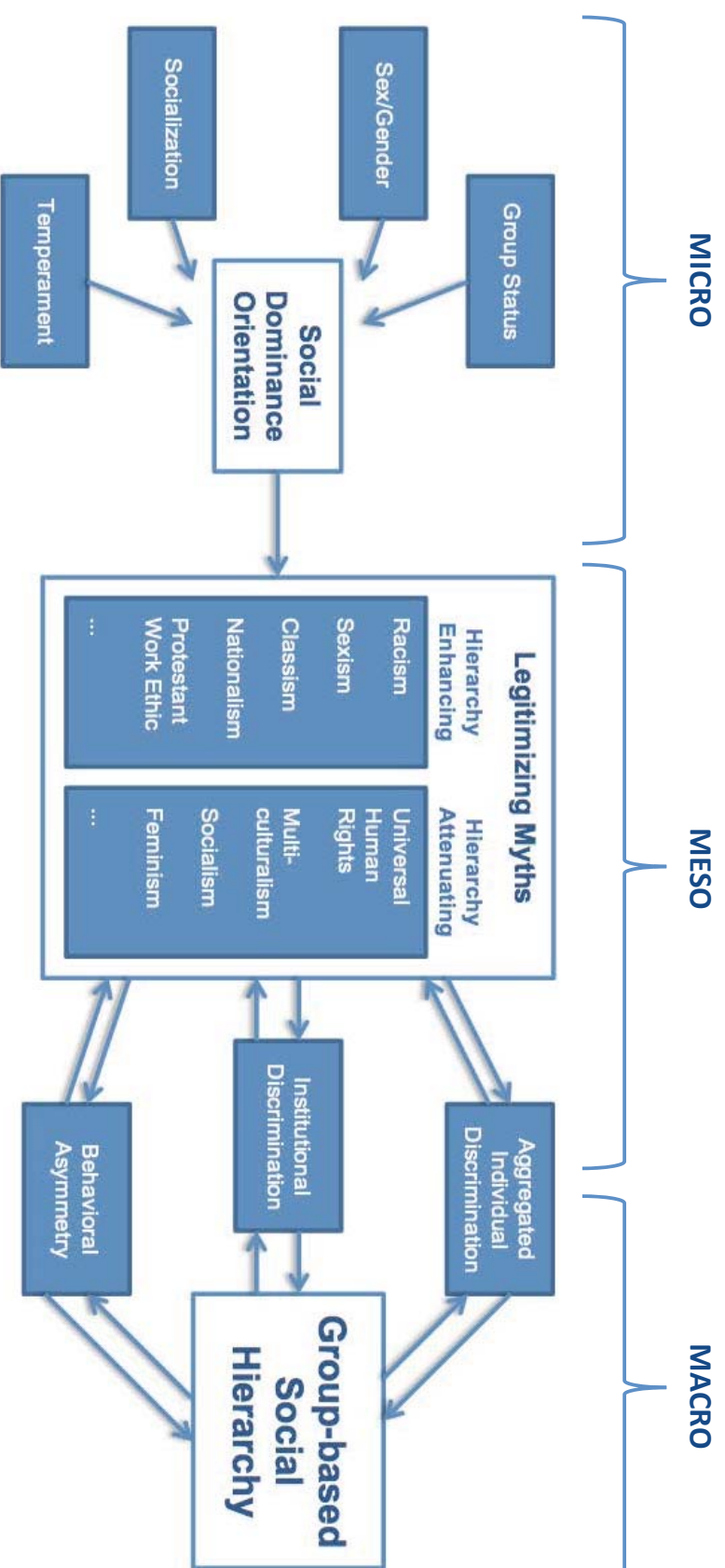


Figure 1. Schematic overview of social dominance theory (Adapted from Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p.40)

stakeholders. This is on the one hand expected, because the sector likely attracts staff with low social dominance orientation, and on the other hand, because the people, who are targeted by humanitarian organisations, inherently hold a low societal position, so its members have no interest in sustaining the given social hierarchies. This thesis will thus not be concerned with social dominance orientation as a personality trait, but focus on group dynamics and situational factors that may foster or inhibit dominant behaviour.

1.1.2. Legitimising Myths

Turning back to the Social Dominance Theory model above (Fig. 1), the degree of social dominance orientation supposedly has an influence on how willingly people take up, promote, and act on social norms that are either in favour or against specific social hierarchies. Sidanius and Pratto (2001) suppose such social norms, which they call legitimising myths, mediate the relationship between the individual and social hierarchies. More precisely, legitimising myths are "values, attitudes, beliefs, causal attributions, and ideologies that provide moral and intellectual justification for social practices that increase, maintain, or decrease levels of social inequality" (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p. 104). This means that people use legitimising myths whenever they feel the need to justify hierarchy-enhancing behaviour. This thesis seeks to identify possible legitimising myths that stakeholders of the humanitarian sector might use to justify the potential existence of arbitrary social hierarchies in the sector.

If the concept of legitimising myths has currency at the psychological level, then one would expect to see legitimising myths reflected in discourses about behaviour that stabilizes or exacerbate social hierarchies. Thus, stakeholders of the humanitarian

sector should make use of legitimising myths in order to explain the subordinate power position of the service user population in the sector when it becomes apparent.

It should be noted at this point that Jost (2011) criticizes Social Dominance Theory for carelessly perpetuating a form of legitimising myth by incorporating evolutionary explanations for social hierarchies in its theorizing: Social Dominance Theory states that human society is naturally structured in hierarchies, and that dominant and subordinate behaviours, which stabilize these hierarchies, are as deeply engrained into us as our genetic code. Jost (2011) argues that this is a naturalistic legitimising myth, which implies biological determinism and therefore discourages reflection on the propagation of social hierarchies.

One could certainly agree with Jost (2011) that Sidanius and Pratto's (2001) claim of a universal human need for social hierarchy is insufficiently supported in their book, and needs to be treated with great caution due to its deterministic implications. While this thesis does take Social Dominance Theory's root in evolutionary psychology into account, it will attempt to argue that the cultural and politically motivated proliferation of legitimising myths and discrimination in humanitarian work has enough explanatory power to understand the existence of social hierarchies in this sector.

1.1.3. System Justification Theory versus Social Dominance Theory

Though Jost (2011) criticises Social Dominance Theory for perpetuating naturalistic legitimising myth, his own work is closely related to the theory. Brandt and Reyna (2012) point out that for two decades, research has used Social Dominance Theory and Jost's System Justification Theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, 2011)

interchangeably. This is against the interest of psychology, as it clutters the psychological discourse with redundant or imprecise terminology. Therefore, the following sections will define the relationship of system justification and social dominance in order to demarcate the boundaries between the two theories, before continuing to draw out Social Dominance Theory's implications for humanitarian work.

While Social Dominance Theory is concerned with the way inequality is created and maintained, System Justification Theory is concerned with an individual's motivation to legitimise the system regardless of its fairness (Brandt & Reyna, 2012; Brandt, 2013). Put simply, System Justification Theory assumes that people not only want to see themselves and the groups to which they belong in a positive light, but also the systems in which they live. Jost and Banaji (1994) see the system justification motive as an addition to established theories of the motivation to maintain a positive self-image (for a critical evaluation of this Eurocentric theory see Heine, Lehman, Markus & Kitayama, 1999) and the motivation to maintain a positive image of one's in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Thus, System Justification Theory is focused on the question why there is resistance to change in any given system, whereas Social Dominance Theory concentrates on the individual-, group-, and organisational dynamics that foster inequality. Since this thesis is concerned with the ways in which inequality might be maintained through social systems, and not just how systems are maintained in general, Social Dominance Theory is the more adequate framework to approach the questions at hand.

Common predictions for humanitarian work

While Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory differ in their scope and focus, they still have significant commonalities (Jost, 2011). Most importantly, they have in common that they emphasize how unequal social systems are produced and maintained collectively by all members of society, even those who are severely disadvantaged by those very systems. Counter-intuitively, both Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory suggest that the power of oppressive social norms lies in the fact that they are not only shared among the dominant members of society, but also between the subordinate and those who promote equality. Thus, System Justification Theory's assumptions should apply to hierarchy attenuating humanitarian efforts, as it also predicts that such efforts rarely surpass the realms of stable social hierarchies.

Differing predictions for humanitarian work

The differences between Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory have important implications for this study. While Social Dominance Theory views the reasons for hierarchy enhancing behaviour in deep-set human instincts that strive for inequality, System Justification Theory would explain hierarchy enhancing behaviour as driven by the human preference for maintaining any given system over changing it, even one that disadvantages some social groups, while privileging others.

System Justification Theory thus has very different implications for humanitarian organisations than Social Dominance Theory: For instance, Proudfoot and Kay (2014) recommend that organisational change can be achieved by simply

avoiding communicating change measures as such. By hiding the fact that, for example, affirmative action measures are supposed to increase the amount of minorities in a work place, and rather communicating such measures as a means to maintain the diversity that is already in place, managers can expect less resistance to such measures by their employees (Kay et al., 2009).

While the ethical soundness of misrepresenting organisational change measures to stakeholders is questionable, it is important to note that the authors imply that the motivation to maintain the given system can outweigh people's need for domination. This highlights the difference between Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory: Proudfoot and Kay (2014) see people's tendency to justify organisational structures as an obstacle to organisational change that is distinct from their need for social dominance, and can even out-weigh this need. This is particularly relevant in the humanitarian sector, as it provides yet another explanation why its stakeholders, though likely low in social dominance orientation and working towards the well being of low-status individuals, might be accepting of unequal power distribution in the sector.

However, according to System Justification Theory, the same stakeholders should be just as accepting of organisational structures that effectively eliminate arbitrary social hierarchies, which is an assumption that Social Dominance Theory does not allow for. In contrast, according to Social Dominance Theory, dominant stakeholders would never willingly give up their privileges and control, even when their role in an egalitarian system asks for it.

In sum, Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory are easy to conflate due to the fact that in many systems, legitimising the status quo is equivalent to legitimising inequality. This is also the case for the humanitarian sector, since its stakeholders usually differ significantly regarding their social standing. Therefore, this study will take System Justification Theory into account when interpreting its findings in order to avoid confounding the two approaches, and in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how potential social hierarchies might be maintained in humanitarian work.

1.1.3. Discrimination and Behavioural Asymmetry

Turning to the right-hand side of the Social Dominance Theory model (Fig. 1), legitimising myths encourage different forms of discrimination, and these reinforce group-based social hierarchies through aggregation, meaning that they develop their hierarchy-enhancing potential by occurring repeatedly over time. If discrimination in the humanitarian sector paradoxically exists - as would be predicted by Social Dominance Theory - it is expected to be subtle, yet all the more evasive, and therefore stable over time.

Individual Discrimination

Individual discrimination in the Social Dominance Theory model is what is most commonly meant when talking about discrimination in general: One person denying another person access to rights and privileges based on their membership in a specific social group.

An indication for the relevance of this kind of discrimination in the humanitarian sector is, for example, Coates and Carr's (2005) finding that job

applicants' chances to be hired in New Zealand correlates with the socio-economic dominance of their country of origin as perceived by a sample of potential New Zealand employers. Applicants from countries that were rated as highly developed by potential employers were preferred over equally qualified applicants from countries with low socio-economic development, such as China, India, and the Pacific Islands. This study essentially assessed the effect of coming from a background that is understood to be relatively less developed and therefore subordinate to the background of the potential employers.

This allows for building an analogy to the employability of target populations in the humanitarian sector, whom employers inevitably perceive as coming from an impoverished, uneducated background. While Coates and Carr's (2005) results are only tangentially related to the idea that individual discrimination perpetuates the disempowerment of service users of the humanitarian sector, it is well worth exploring if dominant stakeholders of social services such as employers and funders might discriminate against the subordinate minority that they are supposed to serve.

This would result in what Social Dominance Theory calls 'increasing disproportionality', meaning that organisational levels become less and less representative of minorities, the more power they hold (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). Aggregated individual discrimination results in increasing disproportionality, because it makes it less and less likely for a member of the minority to be hired into a powerful position. This is how aggregated events on the meso level, which are driven by micro level dispositions such as social status or social dominance orientation, create structures on the macro level. This thesis will consider evidence of increasing

disproportionality as an indication that dominant stakeholders in humanitarian organisations sometimes ironically disadvantage those whom they should serve (MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010).

Institutional Discrimination

Generally, what is meant by institutionalized discrimination are rules, procedures, or actions of social institutions that disadvantage minorities systematically. According to Social Dominance Theory not only individuals such as parents or peers, spread stereotypes, but also structures and institutions, such as government agencies, laws, or schools (Feagin, 1977; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001).

In this sense, humanitarian organisations, as well as the governments and trusts, which fund them, have the power to either contradict, or feed into oppressive stereotypes through the rules, guidelines, criteria and practices they take on. While these institutions might espouse hierarchy-attenuating values on the surface level, Social Dominance Theory would predict that they ultimately act within the realms of stable social hierarchies, thus never seriously challenge them. This would be reflected in rules, guidelines, criteria, and organisational practices in the humanitarian sector that systematically disadvantage the target populations of humanitarian services.

Behavioural Asymmetry

By behavioural asymmetry Sidanius and Pratto (2001) mean differences in behavioural style that change according to the positions of a person on the group-based social hierarchy continuum. Here, it is important to note that *all* members of society are assumed to behave in a hierarchy-enhancing way that depends on the

hierarchical position of their in-group, even those, who are severely disadvantaged within the hierarchy.

This is a critical, as it highlights that Social Dominance Theory frames the maintenance of social hierarchies as cooperative. It proposes that even those, who have nothing to gain from the existent social hierarchies, irrationally engage in hierarchy-enhancing behaviour. This implies a “basic human predisposition to form group-based social hierarchies” (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001, p. 39), meaning that dominants inherently act in a dominant way, and subordinates inherently act submissively. Taken to the extreme, this would deny humanity’s potential for creating fair social systems.

Social Dominance Theory’s claim of inequality as co-constructed by the disempowered is a highly controversial claim to make, as it – at least partially - blames victims of oppression for their own misery. However, Sidanius and Pratto (2001) state (and others agree, e.g. Jost, 2011) that the phenomena of out-group favouritism and self-debilitation are too prevalent to be ignored, and that these phenomena speak for the collective nature of the construction and maintenance of group-based social hierarchies (Jost & Sidanius, 2004). Before stating any judgment of this critical aspect of Social Dominance Theory, it is necessary to clarify how exactly the theory conceptualizes out-group favouritism and self-debilitation.

Out-group favouritism

Out-group favouritism is a form of asymmetrical in-group bias, in which a subordinate group ascribes more positive value to a dominant out-group than to the members of its own in-group. Social Dominance Theory claims that social groups

show a stronger in-group preference the higher up the social hierarchy they are, which is an extension to Tajfel and Turner's concept of in-group bias in Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)². For the least dominant groups this can extend to such a weak preference for the in-group that it does not out-weigh the positive bias towards dominant out-groups. Members of such low-status social groups thus value members of dominant out-groups more highly than themselves and their fellow in-group members.

For different cultural groups, the phenomenon of out-group favouritism can be linked to Berry's (2009) concept of assimilation. Assimilation takes place when migrants abandon their own cultural background in order to adapt to the culture of their new home country. Assimilation stands in contrast to integration, which is a form of acculturation where migrants value and maintain their own cultural heritage, while also being in close contact and cultural exchange with natives of their new home. Integration is associated with better adaptive outcomes than assimilation (Cheung, 1995; Ward & Kennedy, 1994; Ward & Kus, 2012). For example, integrated former refugees from Cambodia show a lower psychiatric morbidity than those that are assimilated (Cheung, 1995). Out-group favouritism among former refugees could thus be detrimental, because it might encourage assimilation rather than integration.

Jost and Burgess (2000) cite a long history of evidence of out-group favouritism, going as far back as Allport's account of African American "in-group hate" (Allport, 1954, p.148). They operationalize the effect in an experimental study

² Social Identity Theory predicts people to evaluate and treat members of their in-group on average more favourably than members of out-groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

on college students by making up a context of socio-economic hierarchy between the participants' college and another college to represent either a dominant or subordinate out-group. When confronted with a supposedly dominant out-group, participants evaluated their in-group less favourably than their out-group on relevant attributes such as industriousness and intelligence. The increased ambivalence towards members of their in-group when they were confronted with a dominant out-group is interpreted as evidence of out-group favouritism. Supposedly, this out-group favouritism will eventually lead to stabilizing the social hierarchies that initially caused it.

This could mean that the socio-economic advantage of those, who do humanitarianism, over those, whom it is done to, would lead service users to favour the dominant out-group of service providers over their own in-group members, and potentially render them accepting of the lack of service user control in the decision-making spheres of the humanitarian sector.

Self-debilitation

Self-debilitation is – just like out-group favouritism – a phenomenon that has been widely recognized for a long time (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977). Yet, it had not been integrated into a more comprehensive psycho-socio-political theory until the authors of Social Dominance Theory and System Justification Theory reframed the concept (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001). They propose that members of low status social groups internalize the negative stereotypes about them, which come with their group-membership, and ultimately foster these stereotypes by using them as “behavioural scripts” (Sidanius & Pratto; 2001, p.44).

Essentially, stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies through self-debilitation: The low expectations about a minority held by society decrease the confidence and assertiveness of individuals to prove such expectations wrong. This ties in neatly with the well-established theories of learned helplessness and self-efficacy³ (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978; Bandura, 2010) and represents a good example for how Social Dominance Theory bridges the gap between the macro, societal level of analysis and the micro, individual level. It coherently connects learned helplessness and low self-efficacy, thus intra-personal mechanisms, with the interpersonal mechanism of self-debilitation, and the inter-group phenomenon of social hierarchies.

Social Dominance Theory's concept of self-debilitation implies relevant predictions for the effects of humanitarian work, because humanitarianism often focuses on the helplessness and neediness of certain social groups. By putting the spotlight on these traits - and thereby making them salient as behavioural scripts - humanitarian efforts might elicit self-debilitating responses by the people that they are actually supposed to empower. If this were the case, one would expect people, who use humanitarian services, to show little hope about the possibility of changing their situation by themselves, and to remain relatively passive within the humanitarian sector.

However, both out-group favouritism and self-debilitation are contested concepts. Firstly, they are politically explosive in nature. They suggest that the

³ Learned helplessness is a form of conditioning, where an organism, that has learned that certain pain- or stressful stimuli are inevitable, will not try to evade them, even when they become avoidable after all (Abramson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978). Self-efficacy is the extent of the belief in one's own ability to achieve set tasks (Bandura, 2010). Learned helplessness is associated with low self-efficacy.

marginalised parts of society contribute to their disadvantaged situation by buying and feeding into negative stereotypes about them.

What is more, there are also theoretical considerations that contradict Social Dominance Theory's assumptions about these phenomena: Rubin and Hewstone (2004) critique Social Dominance Theory for its poor conceptualization of out-group favouritism and self-debilitation. The authors point out that out-group favouritism might in many cases just represent attempts to explain the given social hierarchy, rather than active support of this hierarchy. They use the example of the loser of a soccer game giving account of his defeat in an interview after the game: His answer is inevitably going to describe the strengths of the winning team and the weaknesses of his own team. However, this would not be an example of out-group favouritism, but simply an attempt at making sense of his accurate perception of reality.

For the humanitarian sector, one could go even further by suggesting that service users have a distinct political interest in expressing out-group favouritism in the sense that 'one does not bite the hand that feeds one'. Framing out-group favouritism as a disposition of marginalised groups, thus as something natural, instinct-like, likely leads to victim blaming and might serve as another legitimising myth that discourages people from changing aspects of humanitarian services that do not agree with the service users. It might be more appropriate and productive to make situational attributions about out-group favouritism and frame it as an adaptive strategy of service users to a social environment on which they depend.

1.1.4. Historical perspective on social hierarchies in humanitarianism

The question of victim blaming or blame in general becomes futile, once social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector and their effects on the individual are put into a historic context. The historic perspective reveals the systemic, multifactorial development of such hierarchies.

As predicted by the late 19th century social theorist Max Weber, the voluntary sector's societal relevance has grown considerably in the 20th century (Kalberg, 1980). Therefore, it has adopted more rational, hierarchical service structures in order to create efficiency (Salamon 1994). Weber foresaw how the pressure of the modern capitalist market system would create a natural selection in all sectors favouring streamlined organisations with rational, hierarchical structures, which would allow for the greatest possible efficiency. According to him, this process would increasingly permeate the personal domain until all civic activity would become structured in the same hierarchical, professionalized way as bureaucracy and for-profit businesses have typically become structured. This suggests that potential social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector might not only be a result of people's need for dominance, but also of market pressures.

The recent development of the voluntary sector seems to not only prove Weber right, but to have taken the professionalization that he predicted to a dysfunctional level: Governments have outsourced more and more of their functions to non-governmental, non-profit institutions in order to create efficiency through systematic civic involvement in a vast array of public domains (Salamon 1994). The large number of humanitarian organisations means that non-profits find themselves under

more pressure to be productive than ever before (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Anheier & Seibel, 1990; Weerawardena, McDonald & Mort, 2010). As the voluntary sector strives to become more and more efficient, it is adopting the rational strategies of for-profit business (Hwang & Powell, 2009). As Baruch and Ramalho put it: Non-profit work “might be not-for-profit, but [it’s] not-for-loss either” (2006, p.43). Highly professionalized organisations are perceived to be most capable of solving complex social issues, and can therefore convince more donors to finance them (Suárez, 2011).

However, Suárez (2011) notes the severe downside of professionalization: It tends to estrange organisations from their community base. Highly professionalized non-profit boards are seldom representative of the communities they serve, but instead of the higher levels of societal hierarchies (Guo & Acar, 2005; Guo, 2007; Suárez, 2011). This is perfectly in line with Social Dominance Theory’s concept of increasing disproportionality (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001).

Professionalized, hierarchical organisational structures thus threaten the main purpose of non-profits, which is bridging the gap between the public sector and civil society. This is why it seems crucially important to elucidate the ways in which social hierarchies may be produced and maintained in humanitarian organisations, and how they might affect their stakeholders.

1.2. Minority Influence Theory

Apart from trying to identify potential problems with social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector, this thesis also takes a solution-oriented approach by taking Minority Influence Theory into account (Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969;

Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008). In the late sixties, the founder of Minority Influence Theory Moscovici conducted a highly influential experiment, which initiated a line of studies about social influence from the bottom up, thus ‘against the grain’ of social hierarchies: Moscovici, Lage and Naffrechoux (1969) showed that under certain circumstances, a minority can influence a majority beyond rational considerations.

The experimenters showed a group of participants, of whom a minority were confederates of the researchers, unmistakably blue slides. Everybody was asked what colour they perceived. While the unsuspecting majority answered ‘blue’, the confederates consistently agreed with each other in that they saw ‘green’. After a couple of rounds of looking at the exact same colour slide, some members of the majority started answering ‘green’ as well. This clever experiment, though set in a laboratory with little external validity, drew attention to the fact that minorities can indeed influence majorities independently of the content of their arguments, thus for no other reason than their social behaviour.

As Moscovici put it: "in social influence, relations with others take precedence over relations with objects and inter-individual dynamics take precedence over intra-individual dynamics" (1976, p.106). This statement summarizes how he explains the special power minorities can hold over dominant groups: From his perspective, humanity is primarily social, and not driven by personal gain, and can therefore be swayed by the most marginalised minority under the right conditions.

This is why minority influence can be regarded as the ‘antidote’ to power that is based on arbitrary social hierarchies. Minority Influence Theory is a

counterbalancing perspective to Social Dominance Theory that complements this one-sided perspective. According to the dual process model of social influence, Minority Influence Theory describes processes that are distinct from and not necessarily in contradiction to the processes that Social Dominance Theory is concerned with (Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008):

Social dominance is a form of majority influence. Majority influence can be powerful, but usually only leads to conformity, thus rather superficial compliance with social pressure (Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008). In contrast, minorities have to be much more invested in order to persist against the normative social pressure exerted by the majority. This can lend them a special legitimacy that forces others to process their standpoint more deeply, and – once they are convinced – truly make it their own (Moscovici, Lage & Naffrechoux, 1969; Martin, Hewstone, Martin & Gardikiotis, 2008). Minority influence thus results in conversion, meaning a private change of mind that precedes and outlasts overt compliance. It complements Social Dominance Theory as it describes the conditions under which people resist majority influence. This study of social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector would thus not be complete if it did not take Minority Influence Theory into account.

What is more, recent psychological studies found that facilitating minority influence within task groups fosters group creativity and social innovation, which could be of major benefit for the humanitarian sector. Diverse task groups who manage to overcome power hierarchies in order to collaborate with each other at eye-level may have a better chance at taking new, surprising perspectives on problems, which can lead to social innovation (Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008; De

Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011). Minority Influence Theory thus holds a lot of promise for improving the collaboration of people from different social backgrounds. This thesis seeks to explore if minority influence can guide better practice in humanitarian work, which might be instrumental in finding solutions for potential problems created by social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector.

1.2.1. Facilitating factors

Consistency

The most important condition to minority influence on majority is the minority's consistency. This became obvious in Moscovici et al.'s original experiments (Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969; Smith & Haslam, 2012). When the researchers' confederates did not consistently agree with each other, or when they changed their opinion throughout the experiment, their influence was essentially nil. A minority that is in disagreement with each other and inconsistent over time has little to no chance at influencing the majority. This effect presented itself as so strong that Moscovici even argued that a minority of one might sometimes be more likely to influence the majority than a minority of several people⁴, because one person is more likely to be consistent than several (Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008).

If his results hold true outside of the laboratory, this would imply that minority influence in the humanitarian sector is only likely when the low-status stakeholders that represent the minority share a social identity, and trust each other based on similar needs and values (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011; Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012). When minority stakeholders are a diverse, fragmented group with differing needs and priorities, minority influence would be

less likely. To illustrate this with an example that fits the research context, refugees are an extremely diverse group of people. One would therefore expect former refugees as a minority in New Zealand to find it particularly difficult to advocate consistently for their rights, since it would be particularly hard for them to find a shared social identity. Their influence on the majority would only increase, once they found unity.

Similarity

Another factor that determines how willingly the majority takes up a minority standpoint is the similarity of the person or group who delivers this standpoint to the majority. In-group minorities are more successful at influencing the majority than out-group minorities. For instance, heterosexual men are more successful at advocating for gay rights than gay men themselves (Clark & Maass, 1988). Similarly, appealing to common values is likely to increase a minority's influence, because this makes aspects of a shared social identity of the minority and majority group salient (Tindale, & Kameda, 2000; De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011). In this vein, Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) showed that people, who emphasise common values to draw work groups together as a unit, make more effective leaders.

This is potentially highly relevant for minority groups in the humanitarian sector, because stakeholders that are perceived as particularly different from the majority of mainstream service providers and funders will have a particularly hard time gaining influence. Potentially, they are only going to be successful if they can convincingly appeal to values that they share with the majority.

⁴ Except for cases in which a single-person minority could be dismissed as simply being an eccentric.

Time and bottom-up accountability

De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, and Baas (2011) claim that the majorities' ability and willingness to process a minority standpoint deeply is to a large extent a function of situational factors such as time and bottom-up accountability. Time constraints hinder minority influence, since the process of conversion is more effortful and time-consuming for the majority than simply going ahead with their own point of view. Kruglanski and Freund (1983) showed that people show certain psychological biases, such as ethnic stereotyping and primacy effects, more strongly when they are pressed for time. Their results indicate that under time pressure, people save time and energy by using less effortful strategies for decision-making. Accordingly, the effortful deep processing that is a precondition for minority influence should be less likely under time constraints. Unfortunately, time constraints are highly likely in the – as a result of the aforementioned struggle for efficiency - chronically underfunded and understaffed humanitarian sector.

Bottom-up accountability, on the other hand, can facilitate minority influence by shifting the balance of power in a collaborative relationship. If the minority can hold the majority accountable for their actions, the majority is more likely to consider the minority input more closely before making decisions. For instance, De Dreu, Koole and Steinel (2000) showed that negotiators are more willing to process information, change their perspective more flexibly, and find common grounds more easily when they are held accountable for their negotiating behaviour.

Bottom-up accountability is already a hotly discussed topic in humanitarian work. For example, mutual accountability is one of the five principles recommended

in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005) to ensure the quality of community development. Despite the official recognition of the importance of balanced accountability however, bottom-up accountability is frequently found lacking (Wellens & Jegers, 2011).

According to De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, and Baas' (2011) findings, time constraints and the lack of bottom-up accountability measures are likely to limit funders' and managers' motivation to include service users and their advocates in decision-making processes. Their findings thus imply potentially valuable guidelines for improving the conditions under which humanitarian work is done: By allowing for more time for projects, and by ensuring bottom-up accountability, the sector could potentially foster minority influence, and thereby social innovation.

In sum, Minority Influence Theory represents an alternative perspective to Social Dominance Theory as it is based on the idea that social hierarchies do not necessarily prevent social change. This theory emphasizes that societal progress can indeed spread from a relatively powerless minority of people to the general public. It states that minority influence is crucial to social innovation, while making varying predictions about the likelihood of minority influence depending on the consistency and similarity of a minority to the majority group, and depending on certain external pressures on the majority, such as time constraints and accountability measures. This thesis seeks to explore whether Minority Influence Theory holds implications for the humanitarian sector that could translate into good practice guidelines.

1.2.2. Minority influence and participation in the humanitarian sector

The relevance of minority influence to humanitarian work has been widely recognized, yet under a different label: The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, as well as many independent authors, advocate for strengthening service user participation – which is essentially a form of minority influence - in research, evaluation, audits, policy planning, policy implementation, budget spending, and other aspects of humanitarian service provision (Carr, 2004; 2007; Hsieh, 2010; OECD, 2005; Stone & Ostrower, 2007; Wellens & Jegers, 2011; 2014).

There is evidence of the practical advantages of participatory approaches to humanitarian work: Not only is participation a safeguard for ethically sound practice (Murphy, 2000; Ramaliu, & Thurston, 2003; Temple & Moran, 2006; Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011), but including service users in decision-making processes in humanitarian organisations decreases their resistance to change (Lawrence, 1969), improves program sustainability (Wellens & Jegers, 2011) and reputation (Suárez, 2011), and is generally considered the basis of empowerment and capacity building in community development (Campbell, 2003; Stephens, 2008). This is why Carr - drawing on years of studying service user perceptions of social services - calls for an “unprecedented shift in power from manager and worker to client” (2007, p. 267). Wellens and Jegers (2011) also link accountability towards service users to the effectiveness of non-profit organisations.

However, they admit to the fact that the economical and social effects of transferring control towards the lowest hierarchy of the service system are under-researched. They come to the conclusion that much could be gained from more

research on the effects of service user influence on service provision. This study will take up Wellens and Jegers' (2011) request for research by exploring the effects of minority influence within the humanitarian sector, thereby potentially bridging the nomological gap between the concept of participation as it is discussed in social work and psychological research on minority influence.

This chapter drew out the two different theories that inspired this research project. In the following, this thesis will explore whether Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory can provide guidelines for improving humanitarian work. Both frameworks will be employed to analyse humanitarian work in the specific inter-organisational context of the refugee service sector of Auckland, New Zealand. It is expected to find evidence of social dominance in accounts of problems within the sector, and evidence of minority influence in success stories. Before stating the specific hypothesis that will guide the main data acquisition and analysis of this thesis, though, it must be established that the Auckland refugee service sector is indeed an appropriate research context for this study.

Chapter 2: Setting the research context

It is necessary to clarify that the Auckland refugee service sector is indeed structured hierarchically, and that its inter- and inner-organisational hierarchies mirror social hierarchies in general New Zealand society. Therefore, a pilot study in the form of a stakeholder analysis, as recommended by Fletcher, Guthrie, Steane, Roos and Pike (2003), was carried out. It was intended to show that the collaboration of Auckland refugee services represents an appropriate context for exploring how social hierarchies affect humanitarian work negatively, and if fostering minority influence might be a solution to this. The following sections will describe the method of this stakeholder analysis and then draw indications for the main data acquisition and analysis from its findings.

2.1. Stakeholder analysis of the Auckland refugee service sector

Newcomers to New Zealand with a refugee background find themselves simultaneously at the bottom of several societal hierarchies: Due to their involuntary displacement, refugees arrive at the lowest level of poverty that exists in the country, and speak little or no English, which hinders them from claiming their rights or connecting with others (Rother, 2008). On top of that, their qualifications are rarely recognized which limits their chances of employment (Mugadza, 2012). Also, their foreign religious beliefs and cultural habits are frequently met with hostility (Chile, 2007), and all these disadvantages often become exacerbated for people who belong to a visible ethnic minority in New Zealand because of racism (Pernice, & Brook, 1996). They thus represent an exceptionally marginalised group within New Zealand society.

According to Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001), as well as MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe's reasoning (2010), the marginalisation of citizens with a refugee background in New Zealand society should be mirrored by their marginalisation in the refugee service sector. These authors predict that social hierarchies are deeply engrained in every social system, and collectively maintained, even within the realms of hierarchy attenuating efforts such as humanitarian work. The following stakeholder analysis investigated whether Auckland's refugee sector is indeed characterized by inter-organisational power hierarchies, which mirror the marginalised position that former refugees hold in New Zealand society.

2.2.1. Method

Procedure

As recommended by Fletcher, Guthrie, Steane, Roos, and Pike (2003), the stakeholder analysis entailed firstly a desk audit of New Zealand government reports and position papers, websites and information material of organisations that cater to refugee needs, as well as recent journal articles and books written on refugee issues in New Zealand (Chile, 2008; Department of Labour, 2004; Gruner & Searle, 2011; Hayward, 2011; Immigration New Zealand, 2004, 2009, 2012, 2013; Lawrence & Kearns, 2005; Mugadza, 2012; OECD, 2008; Rother, 2008; UNHCR, 2013, 2014). This desk audit revealed which government agencies were involved with refugee issues, and which other organisations provided services to refugee communities in Auckland. Key stakeholders were contacted, and face-to-face consultations about the collaboration within the

refugee service sector took place. These conversations sought a more in-depth understanding of how power hierarchies might play out within the sector.

Participants

Initially, two government agencies, an academic expert and three major NGOs that offer refugee services were contacted. All of them replied favourably to the request for a meeting. More stakeholders, specifically from refugee communities, smaller grass-root NGOs, a charitable trust and council staff, were recruited through the snowballing technique, which entailed asking contacted stakeholders for individuals or organisations that they had collaborated with in the past.

Overall, the consulted stakeholders ($N = 23$) included

- four service providers working directly for the government or Auckland council
- staff of six major NGOs;
- staff of two different universities that engage in research and teaching aimed at refugees;
- the manager of a charitable trust;
- two migrant and refugee correspondents of a major New Zealand newspaper;
- eight people with a refugee background, of whom
 - o two worked as service providers,
 - o two were active members of the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition,

- and four were not employed in the sector.

Except for the refugee population, who were represented by an equal number of men and women, the consulted stakeholders happened to be predominantly women, as is typical of the social service sector (McCarthy, 2001; Themudo, 2009). Issues of gender will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Measures

The consultations took place without being audio or video recorded in order to facilitate open, uninhibited conversations about agents within the sector, their collaboration with each other, and common issues of collaboration. Social hierarchies were not addressed directly in order to avoid eliciting responses that would only reflect the presumptions of the researcher. Instead, the initial question for all interviews was: “In your experience, how does collaboration play out in the refugee service sector?” Follow up questions varied according to the stakeholders’ answers. Notes were taken during, and immediately after, these one to two hour-long conversations.

In addition to the one-on-one consultations, Auckland-based events and meetings with a refugee focus were attended in order to deepen insights into the sector, specifically an open meeting of stakeholders with representatives of the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the ‘Meet the MPs’ Forum initiated by the Migrant Action Trust, and monthly meetings of the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition.

2.2.2. Indications for the main data acquisition

Hierarchies

There are several reasons why the context of the New Zealand refugee sector represents an appropriate context for exploring the research questions of this study: First, its clients - citizens with a refugee background – make up a severely disadvantaged part of New Zealand’s population. Accordingly, on an espoused value level⁵ (Edmondson, 1996; Jenkins & Bourne, 2013), refugee service providers are committed to attenuating social hierarchies that disadvantage former refugees, as declared in the New Zealand Settlement Strategy (Immigration New Zealand, 2012). They are engaging in humanitarian work that is ultimately aimed at attenuating the societal hierarchies that disadvantage former refugees.

Yet, the review of information material and websites about organisations of the Auckland refugee service sector indicated that the Auckland refugee service sector is also structured hierarchically, and that people from a refugee background hold little power in this hierarchy (Figure 2).

The government as the major funder is represented by a variety of institutions, such as the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development, Work and Income New Zealand, Housing New Zealand Corporation, the Tertiary Education Commission, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Careers New Zealand, the police, the Office of Ethnic Affairs, and the Department of Internal Affairs, which all commit to the official New Zealand Settlement Strategy

⁵ Espoused values are norms that an organisation explicitly commits to. They do not necessarily predict the behaviour of the organisations’ members (Edmondson, 1996; Jenkins & Bourne, 2013).

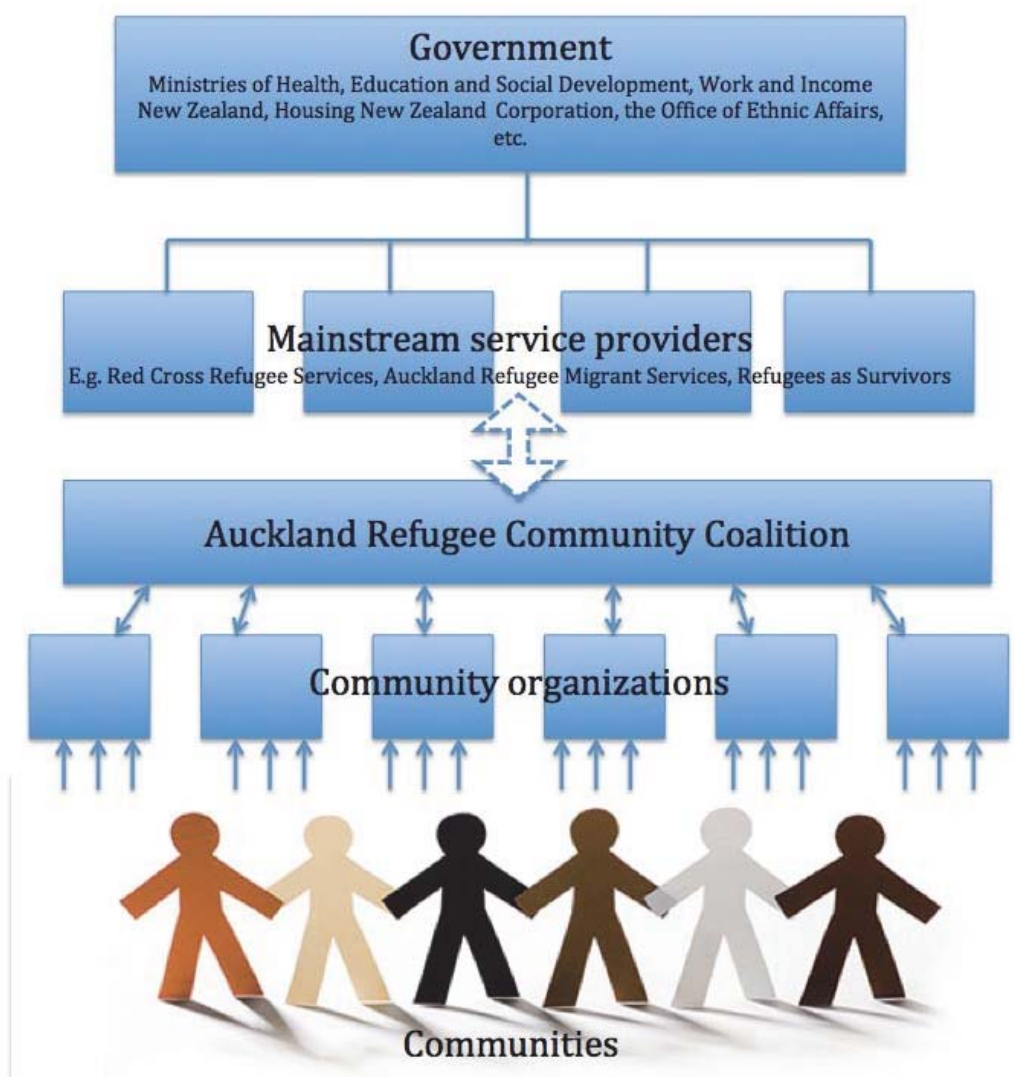


Figure 2. Schematic representation of the stakeholder hierarchy in the Auckland refugee service sector. Lines indicate contractual relationships, arrows informal, mostly voluntary exchange of information and services. (Untitled image, n.d.)

(Immigration New Zealand, 2013). As part of this strategy, the government contracted the Red Cross as a central NGO to assist former refugees at starting a new life as New Zealanders.

The Red Cross thus works as a largely government-funded link between government agencies and other non-profits that cater to refugee needs, trying to

integrate services into a holistic, efficient and effective care system (Immigration New Zealand, 2009). The non-governmental part of this system consists on the one hand of NGOs that provide services for refugees as part of a broader agenda, for example Auckland Refugee and Migrant Services (ARMS, 2014) or Shakti New Zealand, which supports women in adverse living situations (Shakti, 2014). On the other hand, it consists of NGOs that are exclusively aiming at clients with a refugee background, such as Refugees as Survivors New Zealand, a specialized mental health provider (RASNZ, 2014).

To complement New Zealand's government and voluntary sector, refugee communities have gained some influence on the collaboration between government organisations and NGOs over the past ten years. This is a result of their persistent efforts to make their voices heard, and the service providers' realization that the gap between them and the communities was widening (Gruner & Searle, 2011; Mugadza, 2012). Communities of former refugees have formed a coalition in order to unite their voices and thereby give them more weight. The Auckland Refugee Community Coalition however, works on an entirely voluntary basis as an umbrella organisation of 23 regional – equally voluntarily lead - refugee communities (ARCC, 2014). This organisation is not a service provider, but advocates for the rights of people with a refugee background towards the government and mainstream service providers. The Auckland Refugee Community Coalition plays an increasingly important role as a bridge between the individual community organisations and higher hierarchies of the sector (Gruner & Searle, 2011).⁶

⁶ In January 2015 the ARCC officially became a service provider with its own budget as a result of their growing importance for the sector.

Lastly, there are the service users. There are three categories under which refugees arrive in New Zealand: Asylum seekers, refugees coming to reunite with their families, and so-called quota refugees. The above listed mainstream organisations almost exclusively cater to the latter category, as only quota refugees have legal rights to comprehensive service provision. This is, because quota refugees are granted permanent residence upon their arrival, which “entitles them to similar rights as any New Zealand citizen in terms of access to employment, health care services, education and social welfare” (Mugadza, 2012, p. 40). The current amount of people arriving in New Zealand under the quote category each year is 750.

Thus, the executive power over finances, policy writing and –implementation is located within governmental organisations. Influence on these processes then decreases gradually from large NGOs with broad agendas, to smaller grass-root NGOs that exclusively focus on refugee issues, to a community coalition of representatives of the regional refugee communities, to the individual community-led organisations, and finally, to the service users themselves. Consequently, former refugees remain a disempowered minority not only in general society, but also within the very organisations that work to empower them. This is in line with Social Dominance Theory’s prediction of universal group-based social hierarchies (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001).

The consultations confirmed and complemented the information derived from the desk audit. They also enabled a deeper understanding of the ways in which

some of these stakeholders make meaning of agents within the sector, their collaboration with each other, and common issues of collaboration.

Collaboration

Collaboration across social hierarchies is a limiting factor for an organisation's success in the sector. All contacted stakeholders agreed that collaboration in general, but especially collaboration with former refugees was crucial to providing a comprehensive support system. Everybody acknowledged that the situation of newcomers to New Zealand with a refugee background is very complex, and that a great variety of different organisations needed to collaborate flexibly in order to provide appropriate support for them. An employee in a leadership position at one of the mainstream service providers was able to name over 33 different collaborative partners off the top of her head, ranging from government agencies, to health providers, the police, universities, churches, and a numerous variety of community-bound grass-root organisations. Thus, collaboration is an essential, yet challenging part of humanitarian work in the refugee service sector.

Stakeholders unanimously reported imperfect collaboration with refugee communities. People described confusion over existent community organisations, acknowledging that many grass-root organisations went practically unnoticed when it came to programme planning and service delivery. Then, people repeatedly criticized that there was a counterproductive competition over funding, where dominant players had an overpowering advantage over smaller, grass-root organisations. And lastly, stakeholders from all kinds of backgrounds – from government agencies, NGOs, and the communities – criticized recurring misfits of

provided services and refugee needs, as well as a general lack of communication and coordination with the communities.

Two managers of different mainstream service providers reported that collaboration between their organisations and refugee-led organisations led to an unnecessary strain on staff and volunteers, to an inefficient use of resources, and to clients falling through the cracks of the support system. These perceptions of stakeholders are in line with studies of the sector, which found that failures of collaboration with the communities often result in inadequate service provision (Chile, Elliot, Liev, & Tito, 2007; Gruner & Searle, 2011; Lawrence & Kearns, 2005; Mugadza, 2012).

Yet, five stakeholders (including one from a refugee background), who had engaged in major collaborative projects in the recent past, emphasized that the development of inclusive collaboration in the refugee sector was a success story in progress. This is promising in regards to taking minority influence into account.

The Auckland refugee service landscape as a research context is thus likely to allow for drawing a holistic, solution oriented picture of the effects of social hierarchies on humanitarian work. In the following, we will explore how applicable to this context the causal assumptions made under Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory really are by analysing the narratives of critical incidents of collaboration provided by key stakeholders of the refugee service sector. Based on what was elaborated in the past two chapters, the following hypotheses will guide the analysis of Auckland's refugee service sector:

I. Social Dominance Theory

Narratives of unsuccessful collaboration within the refugee service sector will be characterized by the following factors that tend to perpetuate group-based social hierarchies:

- a) Legitimising myths that explain the existence of social hierarchies that disadvantage people from a refugee background
- b) Individual discrimination against former refugees
- c) Institutional discrimination against former refugees
- d) Out-group favoritism towards more powerful stakeholder groups by former refugees
- e) Self-debilitation by former refugees

II. Minority Influence Theory

Narratives of successful collaboration within the refugee service sector will be characterized by the following factors that tend to facilitate minority influence:

- a) Consistency among the refugee minority
- b) Consistency of the refugee minority across time
- c) Similarity between the refugee minority and non-refugee stakeholders
- d) The absence of time constraints
- e) Bottom-up accountability

Chapter 3: Method

The following sections will first address both the epistemological assumptions that drove the methodology and data analysis, as recommended in Bazeley's guidelines for qualitative research (2013), and the particular ethical issues involved in doing research in the context of refugee services (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011). After this, detailed accounts of the participants, measures, and procedures of the Critical Incident Technique (Flanagan, 1954; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005) and the Delphi Technique (Rowe & Wright, 1999) will follow.

3.1. A critical realist perspective on research in the humanitarian sector

Human factors in the humanitarian sector are generally largely unexplored (Carr, Furnham, & MacLachlan, 2012), and social hierarchies within the humanitarian services provided for refugees have, to our knowledge, never been assessed from the point of view of organisational psychology.

Therefore, a qualitative research design was employed in order to address questions around the psychological dynamics that produce or challenge power structures within humanitarian work. This design was based on the critical realist epistemology in order to explore the nomological network that describes the relationships between social hierarchies and individual tendencies in a humanitarian work context (Houston, 2001).

Critical realist epistemology assumes that, while reality does exist independently from human observation and meaning making processes, there is more to this reality than the empirical, measurable level (Houston, 2001). Apart from the empirical level, it also postulates a causal level of reality, which comprises

an abundance of open systems that are not observable. Critical realism thus – as opposed to purely subjectivist approaches – acknowledges both a stable empirical reality and a transitive subjective reality, and allows for exploring tendencies inherent in their interaction.

Importantly, though, this epistemology does not allow for making predictions, since it postulates that there is no access to the full array of causal mechanisms that drive observed events (Houston, 2001). For this study, it is accordingly assumed that the employed theories about social dominance and minority influence will help understand behavioural tendencies of stakeholders of the refugee service sector when confronted with social hierarchies, but could never reliably predict their behaviour. In this sense, hypotheses are not intended as predictions. Rather, they explicate the theory-based expectations that drive data acquisition and analysis.

Critical realism stresses that people can actively transform their social world, even though the causal mechanisms for these changes might not be observable (Houston, 2001). This is why critical realist research focuses on the voices of those, who are studied, as the closest approximation of internal, unobservable processes of meaning making. By analysing human meaning making processes, the researcher critically examines the explanatory power of theories that try to define the unobservable causal mechanisms that lead to human behaviour. Hypotheses are thus commonly tested against qualitative data, often from case studies (Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 2013). This will also be the case for this study of the Auckland refugee service sector.

Finally, Critical realist research is explicitly value-driven, in that it seeks “to uncover psychological and structural mechanisms [and] challenge their existence where they lead to human oppression” (Houston, 2001, p.851). It thus seems particularly appropriate to approach the research questions from this epistemological position considering the delicate ethical implications of doing research with refugee services.

3.2. Ethical considerations about research on refugee services

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness calls for evidence-based practice in humanitarian work (OECD, 2005). Accordingly, this study seeks to contribute to the body of evidence that practitioners can use to guide their work for communities with members from a refugee background.

However, doing research prior to interventions is not inherently a safeguard for ethical practice, because the research itself can be ethically unsound (Temple, & Moran, 2006). Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln and Nur (2007) point out the risk of applying methodological standards, which are based on Western philosophies of ethics⁷, to studies that involve refugee communities. Research on vulnerable, under-represented, and culturally diverse groups such as people who are or have once been refugees, needs to be done with high levels of reflexivity and care.

In order to secure the safety of target populations of humanitarian interventions, humanitarian work research needs to involve stakeholders at every stage of its process. This is supposed to ensure ethically sound processes and outcomes that fully reflect stakeholder interests (Butler, 2002; Hugman, Pittaway &

⁷ As opposed to, for example, Islamic ethics including the Sharia, or the ASEAN declaration of Human Rights (ASEAN, 2014)

Bartolomei, 2011). Consequently, many consider grounding their practice on participatory research, where the voices of all are equally heard, an ethical obligation, especially when working with refugees (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011).

With this in mind, this study's design was based on extensive consultations with stakeholders from a refugee background. Also, former refugees were represented by a slight majority within the expert panel that informed the main data acquisition. Throughout the research process, the researcher strongly encouraged questions and feedback from all participants. All findings were distributed back to and validated by stakeholders via a web-based Delphi-style survey (Rowe & Wright, 1999), which will be detailed later on. Finally, findings were disclosed in a presentation held at the 2014 Auckland Regional Refugee Summit. The Massey University Human Ethics Committee approved these ethical precautions before any potential participants were contacted (Appendix A).

3.3. Critical Incident Survey

3.3.1. Participants

Based on the findings of the stakeholder analysis, 25 people, each representing a different group of stakeholders were invited to take part on an expert panel that was to inform a survey about collaboration among stakeholders of the Auckland refugee service sector. Of these 25 people, 14 committed to take an active part in the study (N=14) and signed the consent form (Appendix B). In the end, representatives of the following stakeholder groups formed the expert panel (Table 1; identifiers are omitted for privacy reasons):

- Three non-refugee staff and one employee with a refugee background represented government agencies or the Auckland council
- One researcher represented a university involved in refugee education
- Two non-refugee employees, and two employees with a refugee background represented different non-profit organisations from the sector
- Five individuals represented different refugee communities

Table 1

Background and number of participants on expert panel

	No refugee background	Refugee background
Government or council	3	1
University	1	-
NGO	2	2
Refugee communities	-	5

Thus, of the 14 participants in this study, eight came from a refugee background. Furthermore, six participants were male, four of which were representatives of refugee communities. All in all, a purposive sample of stakeholders from different hierarchical levels of the sector with a slight majority of citizens from a refugee background was accomplished.

3.3.2. Measures

The Critical Incident Technique is a conveniently flexible approach to “solving practical problems and developing broad psychological principles” in the work context (Flanagan, 1954, p.327). Originally used with a quite narrow, behavioural understanding of what a critical incident is and the ways to assess it, it has evolved to become a versatile, widely used tool for assessing work-related processes of

meaning making (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005). An advantage is that it opens up conversations over work-related issues, but circumvents forcing research participants to answer direct and possibly uncomfortable questions about their performance. This was the main reason for the choice of method for analysing social hierarchies in the refugee service sector, since direct probing into this delicate topic was likely to distress participants and trigger socially desirable, potentially skewed responses.

The e-mailed questions prompting responses about critical incidents of collaboration were adapted from Flanagan's original suggestions (1954), and read as follows:

1. Can you describe a critical incident of collaboration in the refugee sector, which included individuals/groups/organisations with a refugee background, specifically when something happened which was particularly helpful for you in achieving what you see as an important goal of your own work?

2. Can you describe a critical incident of collaboration in the refugee sector, which included individuals/groups/organisations with a refugee background, specifically when something happened which was particularly UNhelpful for you in achieving what you see as an important goal of your own work?

Participants also had the option to be interviewed personally. Face-to-face interviews started with the first question as stated above (box 1), which was followed up by more detailed questions when necessary, such as "Why do you think they did not hire you?", "What do you think are the most important factors that facilitate such a development?", "Were there any obstacles?", etc. Once the first

response was elaborated in sufficient detail, I asked the second question, again followed by inquiries about details.

3.3.3. Procedure

Stakeholders were contacted via phone or e-mail, or – for the refugee representatives – in person at one of the monthly meetings of the refugee community leaders at the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition headquarters. Everyone was provided with a consent form (Appendix B) and an information sheet (Appendix C), which was explained in more detail when questions arose. Also, participants were given the option either to partake in an online version of the survey or to be interviewed face-to-face. This was necessary, since the sample of participants in this study consisted, on the one hand, of working professionals with very limited time who were likely to prefer answering questions online at their convenience, and on the other hand of people who were likely to find writing in English extremely effortful. Eight participants chose the latter option. The face-to-face interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, and were transcribed within the following 24 hours.

3.3.4. Thematic analysis using NVivo

Data were coded according to the principles of a thematic analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006) using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo for Mac (QSR International, 2014).

Thematic analysis was chosen, because it fits well with the assumptions made by critical realism. Though thematic analysis is not inherently bound up with any specific epistemology, it allows for both an assessment of objective structures that

are described by research participants, and also for an interpretation of their subjective meaning making processes.

Braun and Clarke's recommendations prescribe the coding process in the following way (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87): First, the researcher familiarizes herself with the data by transcribing, reading and re-reading it. This leads to initial ideas, which inform the next step of generating initial codes. In a third step, these initial codes are collated to form themes. Themes are reviewed repeatedly, until they can be defined and named in a cohesive way that fits with the original codes. Finally, themes are reported and illustrated with compelling examples of data. The qualitative analysis software NVivo aids this process by offering simple tools for marking and collating data, visualizing code relationships, and writing memos to track the train of thought that lead to formulating themes (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

This research project followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) recommendations. However, themes and codes were also derived deductively prior to analysis from Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory according to the hypotheses stated in Chapter 2 (Tables 2 and 3). This facilitated a more focused analysis, in which confirmations of and contradictions to underlying theoretical assumptions surfaced clearly.

In practice, the coding process took shape in the following way: After roughly every hour of inductive coding, codes were sorted into the deductively derived axial codes (Tables 2 and 3) or into a temporary folder for codes that did not fit any of the theoretical frameworks. Then, the codes from the temporary folder were revised and

sorted into meaningful axial codes. Finally, all codes were rearranged into sets according to their interrelatedness.

Table 2

Themes and codes based on Social Dominance Theory

Hypothesis I: Social dominance	
a) Legitimising myth	A statement that legitimises social hierarchies within the refugee service sector that disadvantage people from a refugee background.
b) Individual discrimination	An account of one person denying certain rights or privileges to another person presumably because of the latter person's refugee background.
c) Institutional discrimination	An account of an institution systematically denying certain rights or privileges to people from a refugee background.
d) Out-group favouritism	A person from a refugee background expresses a preference for members of a dominant out-group.
e) Self-debilitation	A person of a refugee background deprecates him/herself for reasons connected with his/her refugee background.

Table 3

Themes and codes based on Minority Influence Theory

Hypothesis II: Minority influence	Minority influence is facilitated because...
a) Diachronic consistency	... the minority was consistent over time.
b) Synchronic consistency	... the minority was consistent among its members.
c) Similarity	... the minority was perceived as similar to the majority.
d) Enough time	... the majority had enough time to process the minority standpoint.
e) Bottom-up accountability	... the majority were liable to people from a refugee background.

While repeatedly going through the data, the researcher went back and forth between inductive coding, sorting codes, visualizing relationships by drawing mind-maps and models, creating and refining axial codes, writing memos about her

thought processes, and sharing coding examples with her supervisors for feedback. In the end, codes were only retained if they added to answering the research questions. The coding process was terminated once the research questions could be answered satisfactorily, and reported back to the expert panel as a substantial, yet manageable amount of themes for the Delphi Technique.

3.4. Delphi Technique

The Critical Incident Technique usually simply entails analysing the data gained from survey questions, and then reporting on findings (Flanagan, 1954; Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005). However, for this study the technique was combined with an iterative, Delphi-style design (Rowe & Wright, 1999).

The Delphi Technique is a method that aims at finding consensus or concurrence about a certain topic within a group of people, who are considered experts on this topic. It entails an anonymous survey of expert opinions, which are then pooled and fed back to the expert panel for feedback and further elaboration. In this way, each participant evaluates all the different perspectives of the expert panel. This ensures comprehensive, well-informed findings, which are validated by the feedback of the entire expert panel.

Originally developed in a military context, where it served rapid, well-informed decision-making, the Delphi Technique later became an instrument for organisational development (Rowe & Wright, 1999). In this study, it serves the purpose of ascertaining the validity of the researcher's analysis through the participants' review.

3.4.1. Participants

Of the fourteen original participants, only ten participants (N=10) of the expert panel gave a rating. Their status within the sector was assessed for the analysis of their input, but cannot be reported due to the risk of compromising their anonymity. Four dropped out at this stage, and all but one excusing themselves for being too pressed for time.

3.4.2. Measures

Measures are inherently bound up with procedures in the Delphi Technique (Rowe & Wright, 1999). They were developed as follows: The raw data gained from the answers to the Critical Incident Technique questions were coded, and the codes were collated into overarching themes, which were pooled across the sample, and then fed back to the research participants in a randomised order, where participants were asked how much they agreed with each of them on a five-level Likert scale. Also, participants were asked to comment on the statements if necessary. The themes that were confirmed in their relevance by the Delphi survey will be discussed in the findings chapter, while the complete list of statements for the online survey can be found under Appendix D.

3.4.3. Procedures

The research participants were asked to rate the presented themes for relevance and encouraged to comment on each of them for clarification. Based on their comments, the themes were refined one last time. Initially, it was planned to ask for another rating, but the conceptual clarity of findings in Round II allowed for sparing the remaining participants' time and effort by simply presenting them with the finalized

themes, so they could make use of them as a personalized guide to improve collaboration in their everyday work life. The final step was thus to present the participants with the finished thesis (Figure 3).

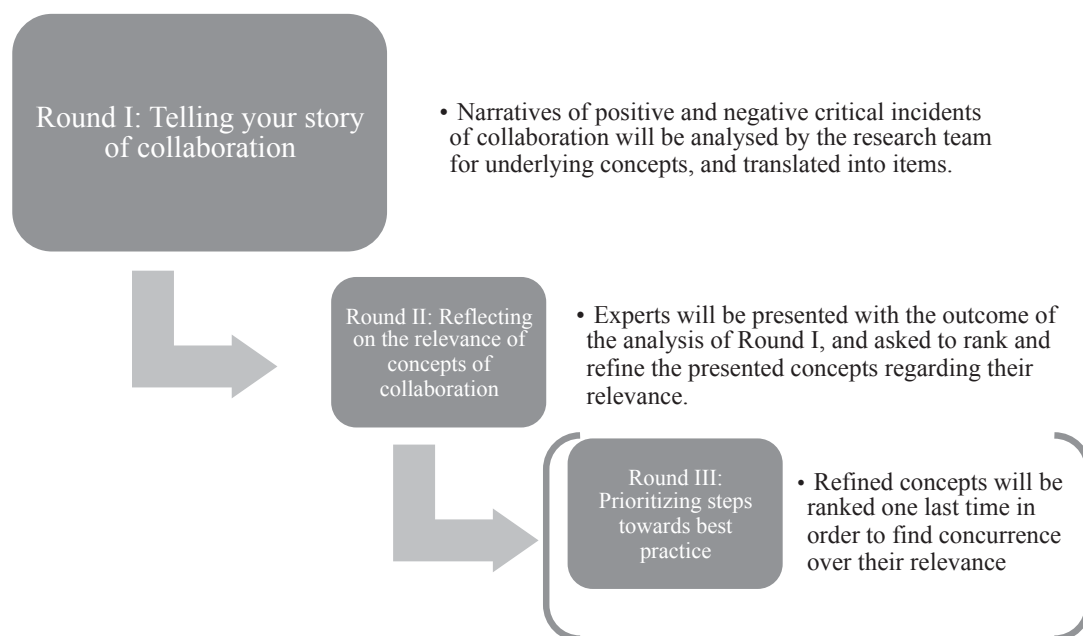


Figure 3. Iterative survey design based on the Delphi Technique (adapted from Rowe & Wright, 1999). In the actual study, Round III did not include a ranking.

3.5. Credibility and validity

Questions of credibility and validity were approached according to both the suggestions made by Bazeley (2013) and by Barbour (2001). Firstly, all processes that led to conclusions were carefully recorded in memos. For the sake of transparency, memos, coding and writing samples were exchanged between the researcher and her two supervisors. Finally, the Delphi Technique design, and two public presentations on this study and its findings ensured transparency towards research participants and the object of study, the refugee service sector in general.

Comparing and triangulating findings across participant groups and methods represented another strategy to ensure the credibility and validity of the qualitative analysis. Inconsistencies were closely examined in order to find as many alternative explanations for findings as possible, as we will see in Chapter 4.

Qualitative findings are interpretive in nature (Bazeley, 2013; Gergen, 1985). It is impossible to draw a clear line between the description and interpretation of qualitative data (Bazeley, 2013) - or any kind of data, according to postmodern authors (Gergen, 1985). Therefore it is important to clarify why the report of findings and their discussion appear in two distinct chapters ('Findings' and 'Discussion'). The separation of the two chapters in this thesis is not to suggest objectivity, but to facilitate the reiteration of the interpretative process that took place, as suggested by authors such as Braun and Clarke (2006), and Bazeley (2013). By describing how the researcher made sense of the collected data first, and then discussing the significance of the findings in the light of existing literature, as well as discussing their limitations and implications for future research, the analysis is most accessible to scrutiny.

Chapter 4: Findings

Before elaborating on the individual themes that were developed through the Critical Incident Analysis and the Delphi survey, this section will give a brief overview of all findings: Codes that concerned social dominance through individual and institutional discrimination (Hypotheses Ib and c) were aggregated to the theme ‘disregard of refugee voices’. Also, several kinds of legitimising myths (Hypothesis Ia), which justified the marginalised position of refugees within the sector, were gathered from the data. These concerned the inaccessibility of services, confounding participation with collaboration, voluntarism as unambiguously positive, feelings of indebtedness among former refugees, and the false belief in opportunities in New Zealand. The data did not match the concept of out-group favouritism (Hypothesis Id), whereas there were descriptions of shyness that resembled the concept of self-debilitating behaviour (Hypothesis Ie), which will be considered.

Themes that described factors that facilitate minority influence included ‘consistency’ (Hypothesis IIa and b), ‘appealing to similar values’ (Hypothesis IIb), ‘enough time’ (Hypothesis IIc), ‘bottom-up accountability’ (Hypothesis IIe), and ‘trust’ (deductive theme). The next sections will draw out all these themes in detail and link them to significant quotes from the expert panel.

4.1. Hypothesis I: Social dominance and failed collaboration

4.1.1. Hypotheses Ib and c: Disregard as discrimination

All members of the expert panel with a refugee background reported discrimination in one way or another. Without exception, they expressed anger or despair over not

being taken seriously and therefore being disregarded, likely due to the stigma of the “*uneducated refugee*” (Expert A), who “*doesn’t know anything*” (Expert B), and whose opinion is therefore worth less than the opinion of the average person.

To illustrate, Expert B claimed that the main reason for failing collaboration was

[j]ust ignorance. Ignorance about the background where we [people with a refugee background] come from.

When asked how this ignorance affected people from a refugee background in terms of collaboration with service providers, he clarified that people feel ignored in aspects of their identity that do not fit the refugee cliché, such as their qualifications and visions for service provision, or when they demand resources so as to take service provision into their own hands. He thus made an interesting connection between people’s ignorance – in the sense of a lack of knowledge – about the refugee experience, and people ignoring – in the sense of disregarding – people from a refugee background.

His account fits with those of other participants, who reported that dominant stakeholders within the sector gave them too little attention, failed to listen to them, paid them little to nothing at all, or did not hire them in the first place, because of the stigma that comes with their refugee background. Apart from these forms of individual discrimination, they also mentioned forms of institutional discrimination such as funding or scholarship, which are impossible to attain by former refugees due to their inappropriate criteria, or valuable qualifications that are not recognised in New Zealand. Overall, former refugees described their experience of being disregarded and their cause being ignored as an active - though not necessarily

conscious - form of denying them access to the sector, thus as a form of social dominance.

Participants without a refugee background seemed to be aware of negative stereotypes about the refugee population, as well, and of instances of discrimination related to such stereotypes. Participants with no refugee background referred to the stigma about former refugees implicitly, for example by criticising others for being patronizing and close-minded towards people with a refugee background, or by explaining to the researcher that

just because one doesn't speak English, doesn't mean they're [not] intelligent (Expert C).

Also, three major service providers critically pointed out that refugee voices quickly become ignored or forgotten when the interests of dominant stakeholder groups and those of former refugees conflict. They thus described acts of social dominance through disregard.

Furthermore, in the Delphi survey, six out of ten people recognized a lack of refugee representation at the top levels of the sector, thus increasing disproportionality. One anonymous participant commented:

Over my 10 years in the sector, I have seen little evidence of refugee representation at the top levels.

The expert panel thus was generally aware of discriminatory assumptions commonly held about refugees, and their likely consequences for the decision-making processes within the sector. From the concurrence of both the accounts of failed collaboration by former refugees and non-refugee stakeholders, one can infer that discrimination against former refugees indeed occurs in the refugee service

sector. This discrimination on the basis of the stereotype of former refugees being incompetent apparently does not necessarily present itself in open antagonism, but in a rather quiet, passive form of social dominance: Disregard. This stabilizes the counterproductive social hierarchies within the sector, just as predicted by Social Dominance Theory.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, people working in the humanitarian sector can be expected to have relatively low social dominance orientation, meaning they commonly do not get involved with the sector to dominate a minority. It is thus unsurprising that the people in power, who were questioned for this study, were not only aware of, but on many occasions explicitly opposed to the marginalisation of people with a refugee background in their sector. They called for more participation, and more refugee-centred, strength-based approaches:

[T]he process itself did not incorporate [a refugee-centred approach]. A refugee-centred approach could be described as one that places the needs and wishes of refugees as paramount in all decisions. Post-critical approaches are inclusive and enable agency as well as the formation of trusting relationships. They incorporate methods that are strengths and rights-based. (Expert A)

Assuming this sample was representative (an issue which will be discussed in Chapter 5), how can discrimination and the resulting marginalisation of refugees in the sector persist, when even the majority objects to this?

The data allows for considering legitimising myths, as indicated under Hypothesis Ia, as reasons for this apparent paradox. Several themes within the

narratives of the expert panel seem to legitimise social hierarchies within the sector despite obvious goodwill.

4.1.2. Hypothesis Ia: Legitimising myths

Inaccessibility: Fate or social dominance?

Former refugees seem to struggle with accessing refugee services, not only as service users, but also when they want to take on an active role in shaping these services. The term ‘accessibility’ came up frequently throughout the desk-audit, the consultations, and 20 times (according to NVivo word count equivalent to 0.12% weighted percentage of all five letter words) within the critical incident narratives.

However, there is a difference between how dominant players of the sector use the term, such as government agencies, researchers, or employees in leadership positions at mainstream service providers, as opposed to how former refugees use it. The former describe inaccessibility mostly as something that is inherent to the refugee situation, for example Expert F:

For people from refugee backgrounds, the New Zealand [...] system can be complex, difficult to understand and hard to navigate.

In contrast, former refugees frequently articulated being actively denied access, most commonly, as seen in the previous section, through being ignored.

Certainly, there seems to be an overall agreement that some of the reasons for the inaccessibility of the sector are beyond anyone’s immediate control, such as the common language barrier, or unfamiliarity with certain aspects of life in New Zealand, such as public transport or computer literacy.

However, this characterisation of inaccessibility as an inherent difficulty of the refugee fate seems too narrow considering the many examples of individual and institutional discrimination through disregard which the expert panel reported. Apart from situational difficulties, there also appear to be obstacles to accessing refugee services as a former refugee that are a direct result of the power imbalances between mainstream service providers, and service users and their advocates. Expert D describes what creating easier access to decision-making roles in the sector would mean to former refugees:

So, if a little eye could be open for them, you know? Or a little window. That will make a difference, and the refugee background, when they see one of their representatives in high level, they will think: Yes, they are doing it! And you will see the difference, you know? [...] They will feel oh, yea, he's there, he's helping. And it's just the feeling, you know? They are not saying, these people, they are not representing us.

This quote questions the dominant discourse of inaccessibility as a passively occurring phenomenon, and instead suggests that former refugees often encounter closed “eyes” and “windows” when they try to represent their community. It indicates that framing inaccessibility as naturally occurring works as a legitimising myth by suggesting that former refugees need the support of more dominant stakeholders in order to overcome obstacles that are inherent to their situation. It detracts attention away from the fact that some of these obstacles might have been created by these very stakeholders in the first place.

Participation versus collaboration

Participation is a widely used term in the refugee service sector with very positive connotations. It is one of the six main goals declared in the Settlement Strategy (Immigration New Zealand, 2012), and comes up in almost every mission statement of all major service providers and the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition. In the narratives of negative incidents of collaboration, collaboration was often equated with different forms of participation. In the following, it will become clear how this misattribution of language to actions legitimises dominant behaviour by suggesting reciprocal, eye-level interaction where there is none.

Before discussing findings from the critical incident technique, it is necessary to define and differentiate the terms ‘participation’ and ‘collaboration’. Participation is defined as the act of taking part in something (Participation, 2014). In contrast, collaboration is defined as the act of working with someone to produce something (Collaboration, 2014). Collaboration thus always entails participation, whereas participation is a wider term that does not necessarily entail collaboration, because it is not necessarily aimed at a specific product. Collaboration implies that all parties that collaborate profit from this collaboration by creating a mutually beneficial product. Collaboration without a product that benefits all collaborative partners is not collaboration, but exploitation. It is thus crucial to differentiate between participation, where a party is merely invited to take part in an action that is initiated by someone else, and collaboration, where two (or more) parties are expected to work together and profit from this shared activity.

In the narratives of failed attempts of collaboration, the two terms were frequently confounded in a way that serves the maintenance of social hierarchies. Repeatedly, these narratives were about consultations with former refugees. Consultations are participatory, not collaborative, since they happen entirely on the terms of the party that initiates them. Superficially, they might serve the common goal of creating better services, but there is no guarantee for the consulted party that their input is going to be implemented.

And indeed, stakeholders depicted critical incidents of consultations as a unilateral process, where more powerful stakeholders gained information and legitimacy, while they ignored refugee input that was not in line with their own interests. This phenomenon was not only described by two representatives of the refugee communities, but also by NGO and government employees without a refugee background, such as Expert A:

There were discussions with all stakeholders in the initial process of implementing the strategy and in this sense there has been positive collaboration. However, decisions made by the lead agency have not always reflected input from that collaborative process. Furthermore, when there were conflicting ideas, there did not exist a further process to resolve these, but executive decisions were made which appeared to favour one party. The collaborative process thus resulted in a divisive outcome.

Expert A criticizes the described processes as ineffective collaboration, because a dominant organisation failed to implement the refugee input, because it conflicted with other plans. Importantly, this expert does not recognise that the described consultation is not collaboration at all, but participation. Defining this kind of

consultation as collaborative, rather than merely participatory obscures the fact that there is a hierarchy between the initiators of consultations and the consulted, where the former are setting the terms of the interaction, and the latter remain relatively powerless.

Confounding this terminology conceals the actual problem with participatory measures: Although well intentioned, they easily become exploitative when they are not accompanied by formalized accountability towards the consulted community, since funding and authority ultimately remains with the dominant stakeholder groups. In this way, the sector's emphasis on participation, rather than collaboration can be considered a legitimising myth as it promotes certain interactions between two parties as more egalitarian than they actually are. It effectively conceals that participatory measures, such as consultations, do not imply a significant redistribution of power in the form of authority and resources.

“Voluntarism is a good thing”

Volunteers are hugely appreciated in the refugee service sector, but this appreciation might be a poor substitute for actual power in the eyes of refugee volunteers, and detrimental to the long-term development of the sector. While social services might never become entirely independent of unpaid workers, depicting voluntarism as something unambiguously positive can serve as a legitimising myth that justifies unfair payment schemes.

It has been argued that fair pay in social welfare is a vital precondition to poverty reduction, and secures dignity and justice (MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010). Pay discrepancies, in contrast, are demotivating (Carr, Chipande, &

MacLachlan, 1998; Stuart, Hodgson, Vent, & Purcell, 2005), and can irrevocably antagonize groups who should be working together (MacLachlan, Carr, & McAuliffe, 2010).

All members of the expert panel that took part in the Delphi survey agreed that relying too heavily on unpaid work from stakeholders with a refugee background had detrimental long-term effects. Expert E explains:

There is only so much time that people can give as volunteers in any organisation [...]. You can work for a few years and after that you have to survive, you have to take care of your family and other duties that you may have.

This expert goes on to describe that organisations that rely heavily on volunteers suffer from fluctuating personnel that cannot fully commit to their role in the sector, because of other obligations. All other refugee participants, and two non-refugee participants, supported this opinion that former refugees are very rarely in the position to give as much volunteer work as is needed.

Additionally, fair pay is a matter of principal. As Expert F puts it:

[A]s a matter of principal, people should be paid for the work they do and volunteerism is often a stop gap for the failure of the state to provide sufficient health and social support for refugees.

Thus, Expert F agrees that dominant stakeholders use the positive connotation of voluntarism to legitimise their own inaptitude to offer adequate support.

Importantly, though, several stakeholders justified voluntarism by emphasizing that former refugees, who volunteered in the sector, often came into employment through their volunteer role:

[Voluntarism] is a valuable pathway into employment (anonymous participant in Delphi survey).

It was also argued in the Delphi survey that voluntarism is a form of capacity building, and eventually empowers former refugees:

[Voluntarism is] a successful pathway to employment with a good outcome for former refugees and communities.

Expert E disagrees, and the Delphi survey showed that at least two others take a similar stance on the notion of the capacity building potential of volunteer work. Expert E described in his critical incident interview how the very phenomenon that mainstream service providers like to see as capacity building weakens refugee communities, because it draws their best people away from community-based initiatives, and into mainstream employment. He thus describes a kind of brain drain that might serve the individual in the short-term, but decreases the influence of the refugee stakeholder group on the sector in the long-term. Thus, as long as refugee-led organisations are unable to pay competitive salaries, it seems unlikely that they will be able to compete with more dominant players in the sector in other respects.

To summarize, using voluntarism as a euphemism for unpaid work can be regarded as a legitimising myth that justifies employment and salary discrimination in the refugee service sector. Experts argued that the positive connotation of the term hides the problems that arise from not paying former refugees for their accomplishments in the sector. Such problems are the additional strain on the individual, the resulting lack of long-term commitment of community representatives, and the stagnation of progress for refugee-led organisations, which

cannot gain influence in the sector because their top levels leave the grass-roots behind to move up in the sector's inter-organisational hierarchy.

The last sections were concerned with legitimising myths that justify social dominance within the sector. Yet, Social Dominance Theory also predicts that legitimising myths justify subordination where it is not necessarily in place. The data suggest that such legitimising myths indeed circulate amongst stakeholders with a refugee background.

Indebtedness

Three former refugees expressed feeling indebted to New Zealand society in general, or to refugee services in particular. According to their statements, former refugees are lucky to be allowed in New Zealand and grateful for the refugee support system. As Expert D puts it:

[T]he good thing is, it is a small country, but big heart, and they give us a big hug, like, you know, we find many ways, you know, to contribute in other way, it was really a good opportunity, I always say, we are lucky we are here. [...] We are trying, but I'm not sure how far we've been gone. Nearly fifteen years now I'm here, we are digging, we are digging. [...] So, we hope to pay back to New Zealanders, you know, or the Kiwi, to pay them back the good thing they have done to us.

This quote exemplifies how former refugees linked gratitude and indebtedness. Along with their praise for New Zealand, they expressed feeling obliged to give back, obey the rules, and try their best to integrate.

While gratitude can be an elating and empowering feeling, seeing former refugees as indebted can be interpreted as a legitimising myth. It elevates the

refugee service system to the level of a good deed. It justifies compliant behaviour by former refugees in the face of social dominance, because in this interpretation the provided support is a privilege, not a right.

This obscures the factual circumstances under which refugee services are provided: The government fulfils an international obligation to grant persecuted individuals residence and the same rights that all other New Zealand citizens hold (UNHCR, 2010). The obligation thus lies on the side of the service providers, not the refugee communities.

It is important to note, that the two participants with a refugee background, who hold rather influential positions within the sector, never expressed sentiments of indebtedness, whereas these were strikingly frequent for all other experts with a refugee background. Instead, the relatively more powerful stakeholders with a refugee background made straightforward demands and expressed complaints.

This observation suggests that expressed feelings of indebtedness serve a social purpose that only applies to some stakeholders with a refugee background. A possible interpretation is that buying into the legitimising myth that refugees are indebted to New Zealand society is an adaptive strategy of people who feel overpowered by the given circumstances. It is a political strategy for those, who have no other strategies available than promising to pay back whatever they might receive.

In this way, the data confirm and challenge Social Dominance Theory simultaneously: On the surface level, the refugee minority might justify the social hierarchies within the sector by proclaiming their indebtedness, thereby transferring

the primary right to decide over the sector to those they feel indebted to. This is in line with Sidanius and Pratto's (2001) idea of hierarchy enhancing legitimising myths that mediate subordinate behaviour such as out-group favouritism and self-debilitation.

However, Sidanius and Pratto (2001) frame hierarchy enhancing behaviour as inherent to human nature, which is an unsupported claim that others have called a naturalistic legitimising myth in itself, as was mentioned in Chapter 1 (Jost, 2011). In this study, only those refugee experts seemed to use the legitimising myth of indebtedness, who needed it for the particular, rational purpose of pleasing the people, who hold significantly more power than them. Naturalistic explanations for this are unnecessary, as it is only sensible to adapt one's behaviour according to one's social situation in this way.

Opportunities aplenty

One former refugee brought up another legitimising myth:

So, the helpful is, because we are in peaceful country, it's green, and there's opportunity [...] there is plenty of choices in here.

Three people agreed in the Delphi survey that there are plenty of opportunities in New Zealand, so that it is up to the individual to improve his or her life. This is significant, because several experts disagreed with this point vehemently. Expert F points out how the meritocratic myth that New Zealand offers plenty of opportunities to former refugees hurts the communities:

Our welfare policies are geared to punish beneficiaries to 'incentivise' them to work. But work where? If you are a poorly educated refugee with limited English, employment discrimination is a massive barrier and often this sector of the population end up

in highly exploitative work situations if they manage to find work at all. [...] We need to do more to support refugees and migrants into work as a crucial part of the welcome we like to think we offer.

There was thus tension between stakeholders, who have an optimistic perspective on opportunities for former refugees, and stakeholders, who press that this perspective is unrealistic and encourages victim blaming. From their point of view, unemployment among communities of former refugees is a result of discrimination and the lack of jobs.

Not acknowledging this justifies social hierarchies indirectly, since it places the main responsibility for personal hardship with the individual. It is a legitimising myth that extends beyond the refugee service sector, since it encourages a punitive attitude towards individuals, who fail within the supposedly working economic system, and likely evokes self-blame and low self-esteem among former refugees.

4.1.3. Hypothesis Id: Lack of out-group favouritism

The data did not support the idea that former refugees contribute to the stability of social hierarchies by favouring non-refugee stakeholders. The above-described feelings of indebtedness and gratitude seemed to be the only noteworthy form of positive appraisal of the majority group. Instead, some minority members criticized dominant stakeholder groups for being ignorant, and for acting in a territorial and dominant way. This is in contradiction to Social Dominance Theory, since it would predict the least powerful members of a system to show significant signs of appreciation for dominant stakeholder groups. Potential reasons for the lack of out-group favouritism will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.1.4. Hypothesis 1e: Shyness - Culture, self-debilitation, or adaptive?

The idea of self-debilitation as a hierarchy enhancing behaviour received some support through non-refugee experts, who described reserved or shy behaviour by former refugees as something that hindered collaboration, for example, Expert G:

[C]ommunities can feel quite, not ashamed, but feel, feel quite, reserved about letting us know when things are going wrong.

Such behaviour can be interpreted as self-debilitation, as it implies that refugee stakeholders are not assertive about their own agenda, thereby allowing dominant stakeholders groups to dictate the terms and conditions of collaboration. In this way, shyness contributes to stable social hierarchies.

One reason for holding back whilst collaborating, suggested by Expert C, was cultural differences in communication style:

Auckland is, as you know, Sarah, so, so diverse and all the different agencies we are from, agencies we work with, um, you know, we have to be able to understand different communication styles, different ways of interacting.

Certainly, cultural differences can lead to misunderstandings between stakeholder groups in the refugee sector (Lawrence & Kearns, 2005).

However, attributing incomprehensible behaviour by former refugees to cultural differences might be another legitimising myth. It deflects the attention away from power hierarchies as a reason for group differences, and onto a reason that is inherent to the refugee situation and cannot be changed, or should even be respected by the dominant parties: culture. Assumed cultural differences might often really be socio-economic differences.

This interpretation is supported by the fact that two stakeholders described shyness as a universal problem with former refugees. Cultural factors that are universal among refugee stakeholders, but do not apply to people with no refugee background, are highly unlikely due to the cultural diversity among former refugees. More likely, characteristics that are shared by the entire refugee community are due to factors that result from being or having been a refugee.

Therefore, power hierarchies between former refugees and their collaborative partners are a more probable explanation for the shy behaviour. Hesitation to report on problems within one's community – as reported by Expert C - might be a strategy to maintain a positive image towards someone who holds power over this community. It is not necessarily a result of culturally based understandings of, for example, saving face. Again, just as for the feelings of indebtedness, the most influential people with a refugee background, who were interviewed for this study, were far from shy about expressing their own ideas for the sector, concerns about problems within the refugee communities, and criticism towards the mainstream service providers.

This allows for the interpretation that the described reservation of refugee stakeholders is a form of conflict avoidance by people who have much to lose and little to gain when entering into conflict with dominant stakeholder groups. It remains unclear, if shyness can be interpreted as self-debilitating behaviour that stabilizes social hierarchies in the sense of Social Dominance Theory. As with the legitimising myth of indebtedness, there is no indication for interpreting such behaviour as a result of a natural human appreciation of social hierarchies. It can be

explained entirely as a rational, adaptive strategy to survive in a given social system.

4.1.5. The consequences: Distrust and more social dominance

The large majority of social dominance related codes were located within the narratives of negative incidents of collaboration. Thus, the data suggest that social hierarchies in the refugee service sector indeed hinder collaboration through discrimination, legitimising myths, and, potentially, self-debilitation.

A major outcome of failed collaboration that people described was increased distrust. Many accounts ended with sentiments of disappointment and anger towards the collaborative partners. Expert B compares his organisation's struggles to a plant without sun, and concludes that dominant organisations hold refugee-led initiatives back, because

they don't know what we're trying to achieve in this country.

Expert G, on the other hand, explains difficulties when collaborating with a refugee community:

[T]hey're not communicating on their end about what's going on, so there's lots of distrust built up.

Expert H expresses his anger over feeling disregarded by stating:

I would rather choose to work voluntarily than to work in an institution where it doesn't honour the people.

These quotes show how stakeholders feel personally affected by failed collaboration in a way that makes future collaboration with the same partners less likely.

Also, an expert in a relatively powerful position within the sector reasoned that new attempts at collaboration needed to be more thoroughly planned, more

transparent, more extensively evaluated, and more selective regarding the people included in the collaboration. As a reaction to failed collaboration, this stakeholder thus resolved to exercise more control, rather than giving up control. This is precisely the opposite of what actually facilitated collaboration in the past and lead to positive results, as we will see in the next sections about minority influence.

4.2. Hypothesis II: Minority influence and successful collaboration

As expected, Minority Influence Theory provided a helpful framework for analysing narratives of successful collaboration. Specifically, the factors consistency, common values, enough time, bottom-up accountability through community ownership, and trust appeared to result in better collaboration.

4.2.1. Hypotheses IIa and b: Consistency

The main factor reported as facilitating collaboration was the unity of the refugee minority. This became particularly evident in accounts of the development of the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition. This organisation accommodates 23 community-based refugee organisations representing 12 different countries. Consequently, consistency does not come naturally to the extremely diverse group of people who volunteer for this organisation. Expert E remembers:

[Unity] was an impossible task, an impossible, because um, even people from the same country are divided. Because what has made refugees in the first place is that fact that um, one tribe is killing another tribe, you know, for whatever reasons that may be, and when that happens, it's difficult for people from different tribes to be together and sit around the same table.

Thus, not only people from different countries, but even (or especially) those, who have the same regional background, had to manage significant differences before being able to work together.

However, it appears as though the realisation that the refugee community, as diverse as it may be, needed to send out consistent messages over a significant amount of time in order to gain influence on the majority-led refugee sector, eventually brought people together. Members of the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition, and two stakeholders without a refugee background reported that they needed to spend a lot of time beyond their paid work hours over approximately six years to help build the relationships between community leaders that were necessary to collaborate productively.

Expert E mentions another important factor that convinced refugee communities of the value of a coalition: government funding for snacks, a room to meet, and petrol vouchers seemed to signify a turning point in the development of the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition:

There's unemployment that is really affecting in refugee, um, communities, and they couldn't sustain it without funding.

It not only made coming together easier, but also reassured community members that their engagement was recognized. Thus, the process of finding unity among the refugee minority cost significant amounts of personal commitment, time, and some financial support.

The main point here is that building synchronic and diachronic consistency was recognized as significant to increasing minority influence both by the refugee communities and by the majority. While individual voices and differing opinions

among former refugees should ideally all be heard, most informants for this study, and all those from a refugee background, agreed that consistent messages across all refugee communities and across time have the best chance at provoking a reaction from the majority.

4.2.2. Hypothesis IIc: Similar values and interests

The aforementioned messages seem to gain the most influence, when they appeal to values that former refugees and the non-refugee majority have in common. Two accounts about the same successful collaborative project focusing on childcare by both a refugee expert and a non-refugee expert came to the same conclusion: Collaborative projects, which focus on common values, were particularly successful. Expert I explains:

The target group were women who were often very isolated, from across all ethnic refugee backgrounds, and their preschool children. This is a group that engenders empathy and which other organisations are keen to connect with.

In the same vein, other stakeholders of both dominant and refugee-led organisations described similarly positive effects of focusing projects on education, sports, environmentalism and conserving refugee stories.

In contrast, several projects that focused on employment support were described as rather problematic. For example, Expert J described a failed employment support project as

delivered from the New Zealand perspective of 'Do it yourself'.

The expert considered this perspective inappropriate for former refugees, since they required more basic support. Expert I used the example of a similar project to point

out that former refugees and mainstream service providers often have very different expectations when it comes to employment support, which can become an obstacle to collaboration once these expectations are not fulfilled.

These findings suggest that projects which emphasize the similarity of former refugees and the majority are easier to implement than projects which provoke clashes of values and interests. This is in line with the aforementioned research that suggests collaboration between a minority and a majority is more likely to succeed when the minority is similar to the majority (De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003)

4.2.3. Hypothesis IIId: Enough time

Time appeared as a crucial factor to minority influence in the refugee service sector. It is closely related to the aforementioned factor consistency. Minority Influence Theory predicts that the success of minority influence to depend on synchronic consistency among the minority members, as well as diachronic consistency over time.

In the narratives of failed collaboration, the latter was deemed difficult to achieve, because the refugee service sector is highly dynamic. This necessitates constant reconsideration and adaption to new circumstances, as Expert G explains in an account of successful collaboration:

The reason why we do our needs assessments and talk very, go through quite a slow process each year, is so that we really get the communities' input into the program. And it changes ever so slightly every year, so we address [that].

This expert continues to describe how certain community demands come up repeatedly before “*the time is right.*” Then, they finally have an impact on the sector. Thus, initiatives need time to persist throughout changing trends within the sector.

The expert panel described successful collaboration in the sector more as an on-going process, rather than an activity with a clearly demarcated beginning and an end. Expert G proclaimed that collaboration needed to be unrelated to funding schemes, because these imposed unrealistic timeframes on collaboration. All experts participating in the Delphi survey agreed. One commented:

Effective collaboration emerges from relationship building which in itself involves commitment of each organisation in the partnership to ensuring a solid and mutual knowledge, understanding, respect of the other organisation, along with an openness to learning and capacity building during that process of collaboration. This takes sufficient time.

This statement emphasises the long-term character of successful collaboration in the refugee service sector. It also indicates that there is an interaction of time and trust as facilitating factors to minority influence, a point that we will come back to later.

4.2.4. Hypothesis IIe: Bottom-up accountability and community ownership

Bottom-up accountability and community ownership as forms of minority influence went hand in hand in the narratives of successful collaboration. Stakeholders described four particular collaborative projects as successful and also founded on the principle of community ownership, meaning that the primary authority over all decision-making processes in the project lay with the community that was affected

by it. Expert G went as far as to state that only community ownership can truly challenge the “*weird power balance and dynamic*” between mainstream service providers and the refugee minority. According to this expert, collaborations can only be successful and sustainable, if they develop from the bottom-up, meaning that they need to be initiated and therefore owned by the communities. This supports Minority Influence Theory’s assumption that collaboration profits from bottom-up accountability and the ensuing minority influence.

However, some experts did not think that bottom-up accountability necessarily meant community ownership, but could also be created through relatively soft measures, such as consulting service users, or including former refugees in the evaluation of projects. One contributor to the Delphi survey emphasized that refugee-led organisations can use “*media, OIAs, questions in the house, and ministerial processes*” to create bottom-up accountability, thus exert minority influence.

This definition of bottom-up accountability contrasts with the already described accounts of discrimination through disregard. There is reason to doubt that bottom-up accountability in the form of participatory measures is effective, since there were many examples of dominant stakeholders ignoring refugee input, thereby ultimately dictating collaborative relationships.

Yet, the ‘soft’ bottom-up accountability measures seem to be the standard procedure. To quote an anonymous comment from the Delphi survey:

Their accountability reporting mechanism should include feedback from service users. They love well articulated reports and

professionally written reports that knows right things to say but have not gone beyond the report.

What this comment implies is that having bottom-up accountability measures in place might satisfy some stakeholders of the sector, but should not be limited to simple book-keeping. One participant in the Delphi survey put it simply:

We need to do this better.

The association some stakeholders made between community ownership as effective bottom-up accountability and successful collaboration might indicate how to do collaboration better.

4.2.5. Trust: Precondition and consequence of minority influence

Trust is a mechanism that traditionally comes up in the literature on minority influence as a consequence of similarity, not as a distinct facilitating factor. Yet, in this study, the word ‘trust’ appeared 19 times in the narratives of positive incidents of collaboration (weighted percentage among all five or more letter words: 0.39%) and never in association with similarity. In comparison, it only came up twice within negative incidents of collaboration (weighted percentage among all five or more letter words <0.05%). This indicates that stakeholders found the concept of trust meaningful to their experience of positive incidents of collaboration, but did not associate it with similarity.

Instead, the concept was used in two distinct ways: First, trust was said to facilitate minority influence by increasing the minority’s confidence in taking an active part in collaborations (thereby overcoming the aforementioned shyness). For example, two participants explained that former refugees find it easier to relate and

talk to members of dominant groups, such as funders, when these groups include refugee representatives, whom they trust more.

Then, trust encouraged dominant stakeholders to actively give up control, which then led to more effective collaboration. To illustrate, Expert A described a project in which the project initiators

were keen to not hold any power in th[e] process,

because of their trust in the expertise held by former refugees. The project initiators' willingness to give up control was thus described as trust-based. Two reported outcomes of this particular project were reciprocal learning and enthusiasm about future collaborations.

An anonymous comment in the Delphi survey explains:

[Trust] is absolutely essential. [...] The experiences of the mainstream party may be prejudicial in terms of being able to communicate and relate positively with their refugee-background colleagues, or to trust their world view, cultural knowledge, competencies etc.

This comment highlights that trusting collaborative relationships not only help the refugee minority to act and communicate more freely, but also decrease prejudice and the need to dominate among the majority. In these two ways trust can facilitate minority influence and lead to more effective collaboration.

Another trust-related concept reported by two non-refugee experts that facilitated and resulted from collaboration was friendship between collaborative partners, which had required— as drawn out above - enough time to build. Neither Minority Influence Theory, nor Social Dominance Theory provide adequate

categories for this concept, yet it was treated as highly relevant in the two stories of successful collaboration. The implications of this will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3. Conclusion

The codes concerning social dominance and factors that facilitate minority influence were numerically compared for negative versus positive incidents of collaboration (Table 4).

Table 4

Numbers of coding incidents for the axial codes 'Social dominance' and 'Minority influence: Facilitating factors' across all unsuccessful versus successful critical incidents of collaboration.

	Social dominance	Minority influence: Facilitating factors	
Unsuccessful collaboration	43	3	46
Successful collaboration	16	56	72
	59	59	118

The comparison shows that narratives of failed collaboration were coded in a way that fits well with the social dominance framework, whereas the codes used on the narratives of successful collaboration matched the minority influence framework. A Pearson's chi-squared test shows that the distribution of codes was significant, $X^2(1, N=118) = 57.005, p. < 0.01$. A closer examination of the relatively high number of social dominance related codes within positive examples of collaboration (16) showed that these incidents of coding usually concerned problems that were resolved later on in the narrative. Thus, these incidents of coding did not contradict the assumption that successful collaboration is void of

social dominance. All in all, the distribution of micro-events of social dominance or factors that facilitated minority influence was in line with the hypotheses.

5. Discussion

This study contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that organisational psychology has important implications for humanitarian work, and should therefore inform practice in the non-profit sector (Carr, Furnham, & MacLachlan, 2012). Specifically, it showed how Social Dominance Theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) and Minority Influence Theory (Moscovici, Lage, & Naffrechoux, 1969; Martin, Hewstone, & Gardikiotis, 2008) apply to collaboration in the Auckland refugee service sector. While this study was exploratory in nature, and was therefore meant to produce more and better questions rather than giving definite answers, practitioners may still draw implications from it for their work with disempowered social groups. The following sections will sum up the findings and discuss their significance. Another section will be dedicated to considering the limitations of this study, followed by a list of implications for practice. Finally, this thesis will conclude with suggestions for future research.

5.1. Findings concerning Social Dominance Theory

Firstly, the study confirmed for the Auckland refugee service sector, what MacLachlan, Carr, and McAuliffe (2010) suggested: The power hierarchies within humanitarian services ironically disadvantage the very social group that they are supposed to empower. Through a desk audit and stakeholder consultations it was established that former refugees hold a similarly marginalised position, as they do within New Zealand society in general, within the inter-organisational context that is supposed to empower them. As predicted by Social Dominance Theory, the Auckland refugee service sector is affected by increasing disproportionality. The

more powerful a position in the sector is, the less likely it is to be occupied by a representative of the refugee minority. This means that former refugees have little formal influence on the services that are provided for them.

This study then explored how the disadvantaged position former refugees hold might come to be and how it affects the sector's performance. To this end, experts from various levels of the sector were asked to tell stories about successful and unsuccessful collaboration that included former refugees. Their narratives were analysed through the lenses of Social Dominance Theory and Minority Influence Theory in order to elucidate potential causal mechanisms that determine the success of collaboration across social hierarchies.

Individual and institutional discrimination

The narratives of failed collaboration comprised examples of individual discrimination against former refugees. According to these stories, dominant stakeholders have denied former refugees pay, employment, or promotion where it was due in the past, and also ignored their input when it conflicted with their own interests. Additionally, stakeholders of the refugee service sector reported institutional discrimination in the form of unattainable funding schemes and unrecognized qualifications. These forms of discrimination have stifled refugee influence on the sector, and evoked distrust within the communities towards those who are supposed to support them.

Legitimising myths

Social Dominance Theory proposes legitimising myths as the mechanism that mediates hierarchy-enhancing actions within the sector. This study showed that

stakeholders indeed give pseudo-rational explanations for existing social hierarchies, which discourage constructive criticism of the current system:

First, the inaccessibility of the sector was framed as inherent to the refugee situation, rather than being a result of discrimination. When talking about inaccessibility, study participants emphasized aspects of the refugee experience, which service providers have no control over, such as the language barrier, or computer illiteracy, and neglected mentioning active exclusion and discrimination as a reason for the lack of refugee influence on decision-making processes.

Service providers also frequently confounded the terms ‘participation’ and ‘collaboration’. Calling participatory measures such as consultations collaborative obscures that participation does not necessarily entail a redistribution of power and lets interactions between mainstream service providers and former refugees appear more equitable than they really are.

Furthermore, some stakeholders described voluntary work by former refugees as very positive, whilst neglecting the disempowering effects of excessive voluntarism. Such effects were recognized within the reports of stakeholders, who explained that former refugees are very rarely in the position to work without pay, and that refugee-led organisations, which cannot offer competitive salaries, tend to lose their best staff to mainstream service providers. This hurts refugee communities in the long run as their own projects stagnate due to the lack of permanent staff.

Social Dominance Theory predicts disempowered social groups to comply with the systems that disadvantage them by using legitimising myths (Sidanius &

Pratto, 2001). This was indeed the case for the interviewed stakeholders of the refugee service sector, who held particularly marginal positions. Their stories of collaboration emphasized their indebtedness to New Zealand society in general, and the refugee support system in particular. This places them in an unfavourable position for challenging decisions made on their behalf.

Another legitimising myth that was used by a participant with a refugee background was that there were plenty of opportunities in New Zealand, so it was up to the individual to make the right choices and earn a comfortable lifestyle. This belief was however opposed by other stakeholders, who pointed out that it leads to victim blaming, since the difficulties that former refugees experience are largely systemic in nature and can hardly be controlled by the individual.

Finding evidence of social hierarchies and the mechanisms that support them in the refugee service sector is in line with the claim made in Social Dominance Theory that social hierarchies are a universal, collectively maintained phenomenon. Many would certainly find these findings surprising or even scandalous. After all, the sector is dedicated to helping former refugees and uses significant amounts of tax money to this end. It is counter-intuitive that former refugees are disempowered by the very people who are paid to empower them.

However, one could argue that the findings only support the theory on the surface level. Other findings contradicted Social Dominance Theory, which prompts alternative explanations.

5.1.2. Findings contradicting Social Dominance Theory

The study showed that dominant stakeholders within the sector, such as funders and managers, explicitly and sincerely oppose the marginalisation of former refugees within the sector. Throughout the research project, the goodwill of the people, who work in this sector, was undeniable.

Furthermore, former refugees criticised dominant collaborative partners and the refugee service system in general, for example for incidents of discrimination. In fact, all experts readily pointed out flaws of the refugee support system in some way or another, which contradicts not only Social Dominance Theory, but also the related System Justification Theory (Jost, 2011). The common ground of these theories is that people irrationally defend unequal systems, even against their own interest, which is supposedly proof of a bio-psychological human inclination to maintain social hierarchies. Yet, the expert panel criticised the refugee support system extensively throughout their narratives of collaboration and in the Delphi survey. Do these findings then mean that there is a hidden, subconscious instinct that drives people to maintain social hierarchies against their explicit beliefs?

5.1.1. Alternative explanations

There are other explanations for the contradictory behaviour by stakeholders of the refugee service sector. As stated in Chapter 1, there are historical reasons for the hierarchical organisational structure of humanitarian services. Organisational hierarchies are efficient, and efficiency is valued highly in a free market economy (Hwang & Powell, 2009). From a profit-oriented perspective, it only makes sense to

put members of dominant social groups in charge of humanitarian services since they are most likely to be well educated and resilient.

However, profit-oriented strategies conflict with the humanitarian, non-profit goals of the voluntary sector (Suárez, 2011), and so do the actions and beliefs of dominant stakeholders within the sector as shown in this study. The pressure to maintain their own position in a system that is geared for efficiency, and not necessarily effectiveness, jeopardizes their commitment to the overarching goals of the sector. It is thus unnecessary to assume an inclination to dominate as a dispositional trait to explain social dominance in the refugee service sector. This only distracts from finding systemic solutions for the problems created by social hierarchies.

In sum, this research project did neither support Social Dominance Theory's claim of a subconscious need for inequality, nor System Justification Theory's claim that people irrationally comply with unfair systems. It would be more accurate to say that the current refugee support system in Auckland sometimes incentivises social dominance, subordination, and/or system compliance, and that people adapt to the given circumstances.

Still, Social Dominance Theory proved to be a helpful framework for analysing incidents of failed collaboration. Employing this framework revealed that stories of failed collaboration in the refugee service sector are often stories about social dominance, which supports MacLachlan, Carr and McAuliffe's (2010) demand to reflect more thoroughly on the psychological effects of social hierarchies in the humanitarian sector.

5.2. Findings concerning Minority Influence Theory

Stories of successful collaboration included all the factors that facilitate minority influence that were anticipated in Hypothesis II. First, consistency among the extremely diverse refugee minority was described as difficult to achieve, but crucial for the impact of refugee-led initiatives on the sector.

Then, stakeholders found it beneficial to focus collaborative projects around topics that are universally valued by the New Zealand majority and different refugee communities.

Further, minority influence depended on having enough time, since the dynamic nature of the refugee service sector necessitates minorities to be adaptive to a changing environment and yet show consistency over time, as well as build relationships with their collaborative partners.

The narratives of successful collaboration included several examples of projects that were initiated and therefore owned by refugee communities. This community ownership guaranteed bottom-up accountability, which was otherwise found lacking. The findings imply that fostering bottom-up accountability through community ownership facilitates minority influence, and renders collaboration more likely to succeed.

5.2.1. Unexpected concepts relating to minority influence

A deductively found factor that facilitated minority influence was trust. Much like in Chua, Morris, and Mor's (2012) study on intercultural collaboration, trust was described to "lubricate" (Chua, Morris, & Mor, 2012, p. 117) social interaction by simultaneously rendering the minority more open and assertive, while encouraging

the majority to actively give up control. It was seen as both a precondition and a consequence of successful collaboration. The concept of trust, which was developed in this study, is thus distinct from the concept of trust as a result of similarity that is usually used in Social Identity Theory and Minority Influence Theory (De Dreu, Nijstad, Bechtoldt, & Baas, 2011; Tajfel & Turner, 1979;).

This difference might be a result of a particular commonality of Chua, Morris, and Mor's (2012) study and this study. The studies both considered collaboration in a culturally (and in other respects) diverse context, where collaborating partners can hardly rely on their similarity to communicate effectively. Chua, Morris, and Mor (2012) emphasize the importance of culturally competent management that fosters affective trust amongst co-workers by counterbalancing and preventing misunderstandings based on cultural differences.

This study supports their claim that cultural competence builds trust, and thereby facilitates collaboration. Additionally, the data indicated that not only cultural competence, but also the ability to critically reflect on social status and how it affects behaviour facilitates collaboration. This kind of competence encourages dismantling legitimising myths that might stand in the way of effective collaboration with former refugees, and it encourages actively giving up control in order to attenuate counterproductive social hierarchies.

In conclusion, incidents of successful collaboration involved many factors that facilitate minority influence, which suggests that the refugee service sector should systematically foster minority influence in order to improve its performance.

5.3. Indications for practitioners

While the qualitative nature of this study does not allow for inferences and generalisations, its findings can still be used to articulate guidelines that are likely to improve collaboration in the Auckland refugee service sector:

First, addressing legitimising myths will likely decrease the negative effects of social hierarchies in the sector. The findings suggest that stakeholders can become aware of false reasoning that justifies the marginalisation of former refugees in decision-making processes. For example, the majority of participants in the Delphi survey rejected the notion that New Zealand offers plenty of opportunities to people with a refugee background. Such discourses can lead to serious injustices towards the refugee population, and should therefore be taken seriously and addressed openly. There should be active reflection and investment into research on legitimising myths about inaccessibility, participation, voluntarism, indebtedness, or potential others, because these might systematically misguide work in the sector.

Second, refugee communities and those who seek to empower them should value and foster their unity as a minority in New Zealand. Unity is only sustainable when it is founded on democratic decision-making that values each voice equally. Since the population of former refugees in New Zealand is extremely diverse, it is particularly hard to align the messages of their individual members, a measure also recommended by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005). Mainstream service providers should continue their financial support for the refugee communities' efforts to form unions, and open up ways for the professional

development of people within refugee-led organisations. This may in some cases be preferable to hiring people from a refugee background into positions at mainstream service providers, since it allows refugee-led initiatives to grow and flourish.

Third, when collaborative partners first come together, their efforts are more likely to succeed if they focus on shared values and interests. This does not mean that projects that address controversial issues should not be initiated. However, difficult issues might necessitate an established, resilient relationship of trust between the collaborative partners who tackle them.

Fourth, collaborations between mainstream service providers and communities should be regarded as a process, rather than an event with a distinct beginning and an end. Therefore, they should be established outside of defined funding periods. If collaborations cease with the end of a contract, this can lead to disappointment and anger among the collaborative partners, and thereby cause more damage than good. The distrust created by failed collaboration is likely to discourage or impair collaboration in the future.

Fifth, wherever possible, communities should own the solutions to their problems. Community ownership is another safeguard for good practice recommended by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005). It means that communities should hold primary authority over planning, funding, and implementation of projects that are aimed at them. This is the only way to ensure 'hard' bottom-up accountability and shift the imbalance of power between service providers and –users.

Finally, collaborative partners should invest in building trust. The theories employed in this study did not focus on the concept of trust. Its association with collaboration in diverse work groups has only just come into focus of psychological research (Chua, Morris, & Mor; 2012). However, the concept was highly prevalent in the accounts of successful collaboration, and should therefore be explored more thoroughly.

5.4. Limitations of this study

There might have been several selection biases regarding the expert panel: First, the people, who were invited to the expert panel, were made aware of the focus of the study. People, who chose to participate, were thus likely to be particularly eager to improve collaboration in the sector, and particularly open to scrutiny regarding their own collaborative activities. Those, who did not participate, might have had very different perspectives on some of the themes that were raised. However, this only underlines the relevance of the findings regarding legitimising myths, since the expert panel likely consisted of particularly reflective and careful stakeholders of the refugee service sector. The fact that they still engaged in discourses that justified social hierarchies in the sector allows for the supposition that legitimising myths might be even more prevalent in the sector than they were in the discourses of this expert panel.

Since time was limited, it was a priority to find representatives of all the hierarchical levels of the sector. While the heterogeneity of the refugee population was considered, the timeframe for this thesis did not allow for taking this diversity into account during the recruitment of the expert panel. The experts with a refugee

background were assumed to be representatives of the refugee communities in general, since they were all connected to the Auckland Refugee Community Coalition, which is an organisation that aims to unify refugee voices to advocate for their rights. However, most experts with a refugee background were born in African countries, and all of them spoke English very well, which might have biased the refugee perspective in this research project.

Also, there were no Māori experts on the panel. The researcher identified several experts within the Auckland refugee service sector who identify as Māori, but unfortunately none of them were able to make time for this research project. This limits the data as it excludes a crucial, and potentially very different perspective on collaboration with newcomers to New Zealand.

Another limitation of the findings comes with the deductive manner in which the data were coded. The thematic analysis was theory driven, which always raises the question of whether the researcher would have come to the same conclusions if she had been wearing different theoretical lenses or if she had been analysing in a purely data driven way (Bazeley, 2013). Since the overarching aim of the study was to show how particular theories of organisational psychology apply to the humanitarian sector, this was a given, but should still be noted to highlight the interpretive, subjective character of this qualitative study.

And finally, the Critical Incident Technique is prone to biases such as attribution errors or memory lapses, as it relies fully on self-report (Flanagan, 1954). This encourages future research that employs different methods to similar research questions in order to assure the validity of this study's findings.

5.5. Indications for future research

The arguments made so far would gain political impact from quantitative evidence. Therefore, the following sections will present five directions for future inquiries that will likely enable researchers to make more generalised statements about the relationship of social hierarchies and humanitarian work.

This research project presents a first step towards creating an inventory that measures social dominance and minority influence in humanitarian organisations. Such an inventory could be useful for further research on the effects of social hierarchies on humanitarian work, as well as for programme evaluations.

Creating such an inventory would necessitate a factor analysis. Factor analyses serve the purpose of subsuming manifest variables, for example forms of discrimination or forms of bottom-up accountability, into latent constructs, such as social dominance and minority influence. The variables found in this study could be tested against data acquired through questionnaires distributed to a much larger sample of stakeholders of humanitarian services. Their results would enable researchers to quantify the relationship between the different variables found in this study and their respective latent constructs. Creating efficient measurement tools for assessing social dominance and minority influence might boost research on these constructs and their implications for humanitarian work.

Then, performance comparisons of organisations that use different collaborative strategies should confirm the relationship between social dominance and unsuccessful collaboration, as well as minority influence and successful collaboration. Such quantitative comparisons might, for example, confirm that

collaborations that offer fair pay, build on community ownership, and where the collaborative partners trust each other, will be more successful in their goals than those, who rely heavily on volunteers, only use ‘soft’ measures of bottom-up accountability, or fail to establish trust. Correlations or regression analyses with causal implications could determine the predictive value of different forms of social dominance and minority influence for successful collaboration. Importantly, performance measures that indicate success of humanitarian services need to be firmly based on the interests of the communities, and should thus be developed from their perspective in a participatory manner (Hugman, Pittaway, & Bartolomei, 2011).

Also, research on the interaction between social hierarchies and collaboration needs to take long-term effects into account, since collaboration was found to be a process that might not show its results for years after it was initiated. This suggests longitudinal studies that document the development of collaborations over long periods of time.

Longitudinal designs would enable researchers to measure the effects of social hierarchies on collaboration in a quasi-experimental manner by, for example, comparing different collaborative strategies and their outcomes across organisations. This could reaffirm and refine the understanding of causal links between social dominance and problems with collaboration, and minority influence and successful collaboration that was acquired in this study.

5.6. Conclusion

Social Dominance Theory sheds a light on social services that reveals problematic human factors in humanitarianism. However, there is no doubt about the good intentions of people working in the Auckland refugee service sector, who go far beyond their comfort zone to create positive change in the lives of others. In order for them to be successful, the findings of this study strongly suggest that the refugee service sector becomes restructured in a way that accommodates its stakeholders better. Not only do former refugees deserve a fair chance to take their communities' fate into their own hands, but the non-refugee stakeholders of the sector should also not become conflicted between their own altruistic intentions, and incentives that push them to work in the interest of a neoliberal agenda.

Minority Influence Theory gives clues how to create systems that promote social innovation from the bottom-up. This study has shown that not only former refugees profit from a more balanced distribution of power within the refugee service sector, but non-refugee stakeholders also experience less frustration, more rewarding work relationships, and can report better outcomes after programs, where power and responsibility was shared equally.

This explorative research project thus reaffirms McLachlan, Carr and McAullife's (2010) call for improving humanitarian work by running humanitarian organisations according to psychological evidence. The psychological theories that have been successfully applied to for-profit work will not do in the non-profit sector, since the goals, relationships, motivations, attitudes, and all other psychological dynamics within and between the people working there are very different to those of

people, who solely work for profit. This project represents a step towards creating organisational structures in the humanitarian sector that help people achieve positive social change, rather than hinder them.

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Appendix

**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**
ALBANY

20 May 2014

Sarah Hahn
c/- Professor S Carr
School of Psychology
Massey University
Albany

Dear Sarah

HUMAN ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION – MUHECN 14/021

What social factors inhibit versus enable collaboration among refugee service organisations in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand? Applying Bourdieu's theory of social capital to the voluntary sector

Thank you for your application. It has been fully considered, and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern.

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, a reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. George'.

Dr Lily George
Acting Chair
Human Ethics Committee: Northern

cc Professor S Carr, Dr C van Ommen

Appendix B



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

School of Psychology
Massey University
Private Bag 102-904
North Shore
Auckland 0745

Service User Participation in the Refugee Service Sector
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

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

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

Signature:

.....

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....



Service User Participation in the Refugee Service Sector

INFORMATION SHEET

Who is doing this research?

I, Sarah Hahn, am conducting this research as part of my Master thesis. My supervisors are Prof Stuart Carr and Dr Clifford van Ommen, both from the School of Psychology, Massey University.

What is this research about?

The research question driving this research is:

How is collaboration done among the Auckland refugee services? Can psychological theory inform good practice?

In order to answer these questions, I would like to work together with an expert panel of about 20 key stakeholders of the Auckland refugee landscape such as yourself. Participating in this study would mean representing your institution/community/organization in an online survey. As a participant, you will be asked to provide me with insights of your experience with collaboration over refugee matters. Your input is going to feed into a collective effort of the expert panel and the researchers to prioritize issues of collaboration and identify valuable good practice examples. We encourage you to discuss your participation and your representative role with other members of your institution/community/organization before agreeing to become a member of the expert panel. If appropriate, we will provide you with a letter requesting permission of your institution/community/organization for your participation.

Why were you selected as a participant?

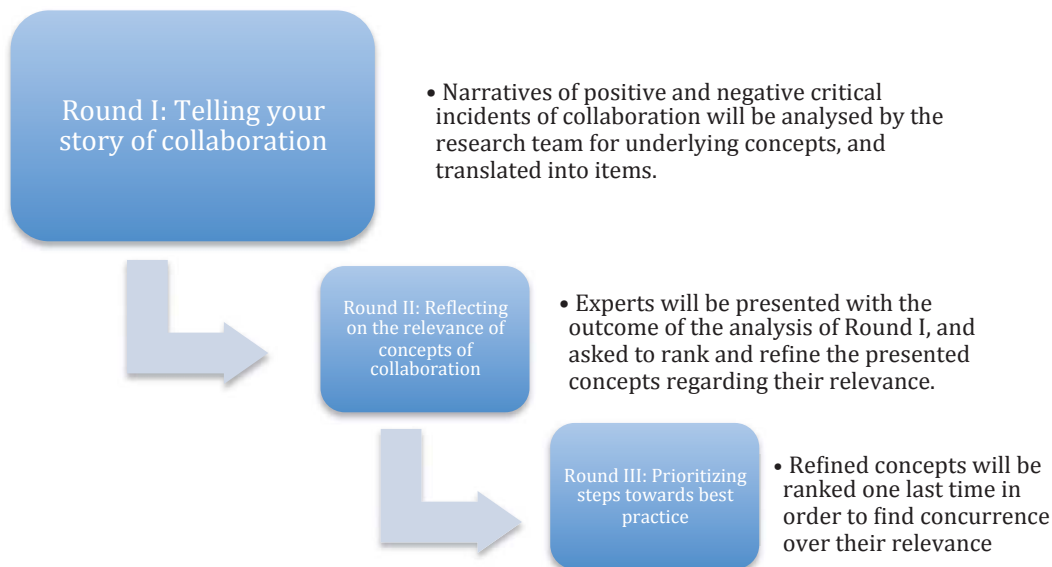
You were recruited as a representative of your institution/community/organization based on a stakeholder analysis of the refugee service landscape of Auckland. This analysis included personal consultation with many key stakeholders. These consultations, as well as recent literature on participatory research methods informed the selection of organizations that were invited to participate in this study. The expert panel is supposed to represent the broadest spectrum of cultural diversity possible and all organizational hierarchies of the refugee service sector. The timeframe of this project is limited to 1 month. Your participation will be online, and it won't exceed four hours of your time over the entire course of the project. There will be no compensation for your efforts other than full access to the results of this participatory research.

How will this project unroll?

- 1) After agreeing to participate, you will be asked to give one positive and one negative example of collaboration in the refugee sector from your own experience. These narratives are expected to be between one and three pages long, depending on how

much detail you are willing to provide. Please hand in your narratives until 25 September 2014.

- 2) The narratives of all experts of the panel will be translated into generalized concepts by the researcher.
- 3) These general concepts will be pooled and fed back to you as a list of items.
- 4) The experts will then be asked to rank these items individually regarding their relevance, and also comment on them where they feel the need.
- 5) The researcher will then refine the ranked items based on your comments, and feed them back to you for a final ranking.
- 6) The experts will give their final individual ranking.
- 7) The final results of this process will be discussed in my completed thesis, which I will send to you as soon as it went through the submission process, presumably in early 2015.



Please feel free to contact my supervisors or me at any given time via e-mail or phone if you have any questions or concerns. You can withdraw from your participation in this project up until Round II commences (25 September 2014). Until then, your participation will have had no effect on the data collection, and you data can be deleted if you wish. Later on, you may still withdraw, but your input will have informed the research method and will therefore need to be part of my thesis.

What will happen to your input?

Your narratives will only be visible to my supervisors and me. There will be no identifiers in the items generated from your narratives, so that your input will stay anonymous towards all other members of the expert panel. All data collected in this study will be safely stored for five years and then destroyed.

You will have full access to the findings of this study.

Participant's Rights

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

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study at any given time;*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*

- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *Completion and return of the questionnaire implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question.*

Project Contacts

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Committee Approval Statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application 14/021. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Lily George, Acting Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800 x 43279 email humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz

Appendix D

What is involved?

Completing the survey will take approximately 10 minutes. Your responses will contribute to research on collaboration, minority influence, and social hierarchies in the refugee service sector. Click on the next button at the bottom of this page, which will take you to the survey. Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Who is doing this research?

My name is Sarah Hahn and I am a Masters student in Psychology at Massey University being supervised by Professor Stuart Carr and Dr Clifford van Ommen.

Your rights as a participant:

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, completion and submission of the questionnaire implies consent. You have the right to decline to answer any particular question. In order to protect your privacy the survey is anonymous. Data resulting from this research will be securely stored at Massey University for 5 years, after which it will be destroyed. The information you provide will be used in my Master thesis and submitted for assessment and the findings may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific conferences in New Zealand and overseas.

Contact Information

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me or my supervisors. A detailed report outlining the findings of this research study will be made available to all participants in March 2015.

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1. Open questions
 - a. Have you ever been a refugee
 - b. For which organisation of the refugee service sector do you work/volunteer
 - c. In which position

No other demographic data.

2. The following statements should be rated in a randomised order on a matrix scale

Strongly disagree Disagree I don't have an opinion about this Agree Strongly agree

With the option to click 'I don't understand' for participants with a refugee background

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. Please comment on your answer, so that the statements can be corrected/refined where necessary

- There are more and less powerful organisations in the sector, largely depending on the hierarchy of funding mechanisms.
- When there is a conflict of interest between a mainstream service provider and a refugee-led organisation, the mainstream service provider usually rules.
- Dominant organisations can always use collaborative projects so that they become aligned with their own interests.
- When there is a partnership between a mainstream service provider and a refugee-led organisation, the refugee-led organisation has little say over the terms and conditions of this partnership.
- Funders and mainstream service providers have no formalised bottom-up accountability to service users.
- Since they have to compete with other stakeholders over funding, service providers often become territorial over resources and information, and therefore unwilling to collaborate.
- There is little to no refugee representation in the top levels of the organisational hierarchies in the refugee service sector.
- Expertise derived from lived experience is not as useful as expertise from formal education.
- People from a refugee background can't contribute effectively to the refugee service sector, if they do it on a voluntary basis.
- A good service is a service that becomes redundant very quickly.
- Pathologising approaches to service provision reinforce negative stereotypes about former refugees. They should be avoided at all times.
- Bottom-up accountability needs to be institutionalised, because as it is, refugee interests don't come first in the refugee service sector.
- Refugee-led organisations that rely heavily on volunteers can't progress, because they will inevitably lose their best people to mainstream organisations, who can pay competitive salaries.
- Only large, mainstream organisations have the capacity to provide services efficiently.
- Former refugees need a lot of assistance to develop the capacity to succeed in the New Zealand system.
- There are plenty of opportunities for everybody in New Zealand. Ultimately, it is up to the individual to improve his or her life.

- Residents and citizens of New Zealand, who come from a refugee background, have a lot to be grateful for.
- Capacity building does not only require teaching, but also employing former refugees and funding refugee-led organizations.
- Over all, the refugee service sector has made great progress over the past ten years. The main goal that hasn't been achieved yet, though, is refugee representation on top levels of the refugee service sector.
- Refugee-led organizations often suffer from internal conflicts. They don't necessarily have the capacity to manage large budgets.
- The best way for refugee voices to be heard is when they are united as one.
- Collaboration is the best way to learn from each other. This is why it is important to have a high tolerance for mistakes and failure, because they are an inevitable part of learning.
- Trust is most important for successful collaboration. If there is no trust, there is no open communication and no resilience in collaborative relationships.
- As an organization, becoming more efficient is bad for building relationships and trust.
- Efficiency is not a good reason to collaborate. Collaboration needs time, flexibility, creativity, and trust, in order to be effective.
- It is important to view a partnership as separate from 1-2 year funding schemes or specific, short-term projects, because collaboration is a long-term activity that needs many years to develop and fulfil its potential.
- Refugee representatives have different responsibilities to their own community, the wider refugee community, and the New Zealand community. It is important to distinguish these clearly when entering into collaboration with mainstream service providers.
- Time constraints kill collaboration.
- All essential refugee services should be provided by former refugees.