



The Post-Disaster City: Crisis Politics and Social Change in Community Led Earthquake Recovery

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ABSTRACT

Disasters are events of considerable disruption and disturbance. These destructive events rupture perceptions of normality, and in so doing, shed light on obscured and normalised aspects of society. While communities are commonly understood as first responders to disaster, this thesis presents research that deepens our understanding of how communities engage with recovery and how this influences forms of social and political change. In this context, I draw on critical geographies of crisis and hope to frame the potential that emerges from disruption to foster different forms of change. This involves an understanding of the complex dynamics of political and social change in response to disaster, as well as the inter-connected relationship between community led recovery and the actions of the state in responding to crisis. Through investigating this contestation and politicisation, I provide a rich empirical case study to ground the discourses and practices of a politics of crisis and hope at the everyday level.

To achieve this aim, this thesis documents the ongoing recovery of the city of Christchurch in Aotearoa New Zealand following a devastating series of earthquakes. The Canterbury earthquakes that struck in 2010 and 2011 sent shock waves throughout the city and wider region. Loss of life, injury and widespread damage to residential and commercial properties left the city struggling to move beyond the immediate needs for response and into long-term recovery and reconstruction. While the official recovery process has been characterised by a centralised approach to the social, economic and environmental facets of urban disaster recovery, the actions of community organisations and networks have revealed a wider role for citizen participation and engagement. I employ a post-structural methodology to analyse the role of these community organisations in contributing to social and political change in Christchurch, both through official government processes and through autonomous, and potentially radical, projects of co-creation and experimentation.

The findings of this research present a compelling argument for the important role of community led action in shaping diverse forms of disaster recovery, despite the foreclosure of many formal avenues for participation by a centralised government approach. I draw on theories of exception and post politics to argue that the state crafted a political approach to recovery characterised by a discursive and ideological entrenchment of exceptionality and selective de-politicisation. Crucially, I demonstrate how the opportunities facilitated by the rupture of disaster also provide the grounds for possibility and experimentation that challenge this apparent hegemony of neoliberal governance, while creatively and constructively creating alternative forms of society and economy.

The approach of community led recovery thus renders incomplete the attempted foreclosure of democratic participation and provides radical forms of social and political change in the post-disaster landscape. Through the presentation of in-depth empirical evidence, the actions of community organisations and their integral role in producing hopeful manifestations of disaster recovery is highlighted. These forms of community led recovery represent an integral facet for more widely understanding the role of disaster in contesting and reconfiguring society and politics.

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PUBLICATIONS

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GLOSSARY

Aotearoa: The indigenous name for New Zealand.

CBD Red Zone: The central business district that was cordoned off for several years following the 22nd February 2011 earthquake.

Civil Defence: The colloquial term for the New Zealand Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management.

Hapū: Kinship group, clan, tribe, subtribe - section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society.

Kāi Tahu (Ngāi Tahu): The iwi (tribal group) covering a large portion of the South Island.

Liquefaction: The liquefying of soil due to intense ground shaking during an earthquake.

National Government: This term is used to represent the National Party led government that was in power from 2008. This is opposed to the term central government which more widely denotes the level of governance of the state.

Nga Papatipu Rūnanga: The representative bodies of the six Ngāi Tahu Papatipu Runanga in greater Christchurch – Te Ngāi Tuahuriri Runanga, Te Hapu o Ngati Wheke (Rapaki), Te Runanga o Koukourarata, Wairewa Runanga, Te Taumutu Runanga, Onuku Runganga.

Ōtākaro: The indigenous name for the Avon River (Christchurch).

Ōtautahi: The indigenous name for Christchurch.

Pākehā: New Zealand European with settler ancestry.

Residential Red Zone: Residential land deemed uneconomic to repair or remediate. This land was subsequently bought by the New Zealand government at 2007 government valuation.

Moment Magnitude Scale: A logarithmic scale for demonstrating magnitude of an earthquake in terms of the energy dissipated in it.

Rūaumoko: *Atua (god-like figure)* of earthquakes and the youngest child of Rangi-nui (*earth father*) and Papa-tū-ā-nuku (*earth mother*). Also known as Rūaimoko.

Rūnanga: Council, tribal council, assembly, board, boardroom, iwi authority - assemblies called to discuss issues of concern to iwi or the community.

Tangata Whenua: Indigenous People of Aotearoa New Zealand; translates literally as “people of the land”.

Te Rūnanga O Ngāi Tahu: The body corporate of Ngāi Tahu Iwi.

Te Waipounamu: South Island of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Sources: Merriam Webster Online Dictionary and *The Raupō Pocket Dictionary of Modern Māori (2009)*

ACRONYMS

DBH: Department of Building and Housing

CBD: Central Business District

CCC: Christchurch City Council

CCDU: Central City Development Unit

CEDS: Christchurch Economic Development Strategy

CERA: Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Authority

CERF: Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Fund

EQC: Earthquake Commission (previously the Earthquake and War Damage Commission)

LURP: Land Use Recovery Plan

MBIE: Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment

SCRIT: Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuilt Team

SDC: Selwyn District Council

TRONT: Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu

WDC: Waimakariri District Council

PROLOGUE – FROM THE FIELD

Christchurch is at once familiar and alien. The city I spent my adolescence in is in the throes of enormous transition. The familiar landscape of the Port Hills and Southern Alps reassures me that this is indeed the place I grew up in but the cityscape is an odd mix of recollections and a blank canvas; the result of demolition on a mass scale. I can still find the vacant plot of land where my old high school was and even where my favourite café used to be, but in their place the new is emerging.

Residents are hard at work creating temporary architecture, urban gardens, local businesses, art installations and galleries, container shops and new restaurants. Despite the growth, the loss of so much else remains poignant. One of the more bizarre sights is that of the three storey Calendar Girls strip club located in the middle of a vast plain of empty gravel lots and grassed-over land, a lone surviving building in a sea of destruction and hesitant reconstruction.

Heading out to the suburbs two things strike me. First is the apparently targeted nature of billboard graffiti in the lead up to the 2014 election. The conservative National Party billboards are often seen tagged, defaced or destroyed next to immaculate boards from other parties. I also notice the increasing effort in the residential reconstruction. The recovery, while painfully slow for many, is finally underway for some, four years after the first earthquake in 2010. The construction boom is celebrated and advertised by the extraordinary number of billboards for insurance companies attached to fences around houses under repair, touting slogans such as “another house repair made possible by State Insurance”.

If these billboards seek to give the impression that all is well in the Christchurch recovery they are sadly mistaken.

I head out East, and it is grim. Not because the residents have any less care for their neighbourhoods or because this has always been known as the less wealthy side of town, but because the recovery is so obviously slow out here. The roads, the damage, the buildings worsen as we approach New Brighton. This is my side of town. I recognise the landmarks that are left and I start to feel more at home here than I have; less like an outsider and more like I’m returning home.

As we approach the bridge into New Brighton the houses disappear altogether and I am left looking out across acres of empty land in transition to scrub and grass lands. The odd house remains but by and large the area is empty. This is my first look at the Red Zone since deconstruction began as a result of the purchase of approximately 10,000 homes by the government due to land damage.

Having grown up here I cannot help but recall the memories of this place as it used to be. The city centre where I went to school, the interesting characters that frequented Cathedral Square, the wizard and the preacher, the bustling seaside suburbs and the meandering Avon Ōtākaro River. Now the gaping holes speak to the loss, a hesitance in reconstruction that five years on illustrates the trials and triumphs that are shaping a city that is re-emerging, always changing and evolving.

In the suburb New Brighton the earthquake has shaken an already struggling town centre. Buildings have come down and land has sunken, reclaimed by the river. There is little commercial reconstruction, but that has not stopped the residents from making the most of their place. Beautiful art adorns the buildings, community spaces have been created. The people are hard at work for the recovery of their neighbourhood. The well-known beach and pier stand as familiar landmarks, a comforting presence amongst so much change.

Returning to Christchurch for research is an experience of mixed emotions. It is two weeks before the next national election and the politics around the recovery are in the forefront of people’s minds. I have felt like an outsider as the city and its people change. It is a strange experience to be standing at the intersection of two streets you know, but to feel out of place in an alien landscape.

But as I settle into the city and its rhythms I begin to feel a sense of belonging, and connection to this place, and the experiences that have shaped its current state. Buoyed by the traces of familiarity remaining in the streets I used to walk, and the places I used to visit, this place holds many

persevering and lingering traces of life before the quakes, and more importantly, the lives that are rebuilding, recovering and reconstructing.

Ultimately, I'm back because I am incredibly passionate about my work and the fact that I am from Christchurch and doing research here. Too often research is taken away from people and communities and conducted by people with little idea of the context in which they are working. I want to bring this work back to the community and I want it to have an impact on what is happening here.

It is important that we tell the stories of the recovery from this disaster and the many ways in which the government, communities and individuals have contributed. We need to be able to remember what happened and how, because in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is only a matter of time before it happens again.



Community Art in New Brighton, Ōtautahi Christchurch. Source: Author, 2014

1 INTRODUCTION

In the early hours of September 4th 2010, 40 kilometres outside of the city of Christchurch, the earth ruptured, jolting people awake, liquefying the soil and fracturing buildings. In these moments, the residents of Christchurch were rudely reminded of the natural phenomenon of earthquakes. Many woke thinking the earthquake was a shock wave from a large quake in Wellington, the capital city, which is known for its high earthquake risk. But the earthquake on September the 4th was the first of over 12,000 tremors to affect the Canterbury region, an area previously thought at low risk of such events. The September quake, also known as the Darfield earthquake, was considered a lucky escape as the tremor occurred at night, at a shallow depth and located a distance out of the city. No lives were lost and damage to land and buildings could be contained.

However, on Boxing Day in the same year, the earth shook again, this time in the centre of the city. Unfortunately, this was a sign of things to come. Again, a large tremor hit the city of Christchurch on February 22nd 2011. This time the earthquake hit during the weekday lunch hour, was shallow and centred in the city – a much deadlier combination. This time the city was not so lucky. One hundred and eighty-five people lost their lives and many thousands were injured. The Central Business District (CBD) was cordoned off for nearly two years as over 50% of the buildings were demolished due to substantial damage. Guarded by the military, the CBD of Christchurch became a ghost city of vacant lots and rubble.

In the suburbs, the damage was also extensive. Due to the geography of the city, much of the eastern suburbs had been built on reclaimed swampland. This, in combination with the extreme ground shaking that occurred, resulted in the destruction of homes, infrastructure and communities. Because of the intense focus on search and rescue in the immediate days following the earthquake, many of these badly hit suburbs relied on local assistance to make it through the coming weeks. Neighbours supported each other and groups of people from less hit areas came to help people dig the mud and sewage out of their properties.

Unfortunately, the long process of recovery was just beginning. With further large earthquakes in June and December in 2011, recovery was delayed further. While we know some of what is likely to occur immediately following events like these, we know little of what happens at the community level in the long term (Berke et al., 1993; Chang, 2010; Norris, 2006). The political, social and economic processes that impact the way a community ‘recovers’ from such unexpected and

disruptive events are little understood. But as we face more and more extreme climactic events, and as more people are exposed to geophysical hazards as a result of population growth, we need to understand the dynamics of how disaster affected places are creating long term successful recovery (Freeman et al., 2003; IPCC, 2013).

These destructive events are not only important for understanding how communities and governments respond to disasters themselves, but also how different groups in society respond to crisis. When a disaster occurs it destabilises not only the physical landscape but the social and political. This destabilisation ruptures the perceived normality and stability of the political and social status quo, providing not only opportunity but also threat (Handmer & Dovers, 2007; Oliver-Smith, 1999; Pelling & Dill, 2009; Prince, 1920). To understand how government and different scales of society respond to these threats and opportunities is essential in a world increasingly characterised by uncertainty and complexity (Adey, et al., 2015; Chandler, 2014). It is also integral to recognise and understand the role of locally based action in contesting and resisting crisis governance, particularly through harnessing the opportunity of recovery to explore and experiment with new forms of being in society (Greenberg, 2014; Prince, 1920; Solnit, 2009). Through this research, I address the politics of disaster recovery through the lens of crisis governance while specifically interrogating and exploring the possibility and potential for community led recovery in radical and hopeful ways.

1.1 WHY STUDY DISASTER RECOVERY?

There are many aspects of disasters in need of further investigation and critical research. This thesis specifically addresses: i] the role of communities in creating and participating in disaster recovery; and ii] the concomitant role of crisis governance in shaping the context in which this occurs. This research focus emerged out of fieldwork undertaken for a Masters project on the role of community organisations and place identity in fostering immediate grassroots response capacity through a resilience framework. Based in the small community of Lyttelton, a short distance from the city of Christchurch, one year after the February 22nd earthquake I began to listen and collect the stories of those working at the front lines of community response following the events. As their recollections progressed, the local participants started sharing their concerns and challenges as they were emerging through the longer-term process of recovery.

While many people had felt empowered by their initial activities in the response to the disaster, they were increasingly facing challenges interacting with official processes of 'consultation' and participation. This earlier research focussed on the immediate processes of grassroots participation

and community capacity but it was also clear that the dynamic of self-determination and autonomous action in response to the initial event were beginning to clash with the approach of authorities and the actions of government. The struggle of these communities to be genuinely included in the process of recovery appeared to be rife with challenges and hurdles. In addition, the pre-existing context of society and economy were increasingly directing the shape and form of the recovery and the politics that mediated community and citizen involvement.

From this starting point, it is crucial to gain an understanding of the politicisation of disaster that contextualises the actions of communities through the period of long term recovery. This requires framing disaster recovery as a specific time of governance and action, one that arises at the intersection of socio-political systems and a destructive agent, force or hazard (Alexander, 1997; Hewitt, 1998; Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 2002). This conceptualisation of disaster has emerged from decades of research and debate as to the appropriate way to classify and approach these events (Dynes & Drabek, 1994; Tierney, 2007). The historical legacy of disaster studies has evolved from military procedures and mechanistic definitions of hazards towards new perspectives on the socially mediated role of destructive events, particularly through facets such as vulnerability, risk and resilience (Hewitt, 1983; Pearce, 2003; Prior & Eriksen, 2013; Wisner et al., 2004). However, the study of disaster is still a highly-contested area, in part due to the complexity of these events, which Oliver-Smith and Hoffman (1999, p. 21) describe as “a wide array of physical and social events and processes rather than a set of bounded phenomena to be strictly defined”.

Recovery from disaster is one of the least understood areas of this field of study (Chang, 2010; Quarantelli, 1999; Ride & Bretherton, 2011). We know much more about how individuals, communities and regions will respond immediately, but we understand significantly less about how the complex processes of social organisation, politics and economics interact to shape and influence the pathways of local and ongoing recovery (Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Dynes & Drabek, 1994). In this context the term ‘ongoing’ describes recovery action that extends many years from the initial event. It is difficult to define a precise point of closure on disaster recovery and this research acknowledges the open ended nature of these processes. This framing is essential for understanding the impact of disasters into the long-term and the way these events shape socio-political processes and outcomes well beyond the initial phase of responding to threat and risk. In the first instance, there are challenges in defining recovery, which can include the need for an affected place to return to an acceptable state (Chang, 2010) and the increasingly popularly discourse of ‘building back better’ (Khasalamwa, 2009; Mulligan, 2013).

Early studies of recovery have devised models that proceed through periods including emergency, restoration, replacement/reconstruction and commemoration (Haas, et al., 1977). These models have been heavily critiqued for the assumption of linear progression through time and the orderly and inevitable nature of recovery (Berke et al., 1993; Chang, 2010). Other areas of recovery research investigate impact assessment, physical reconstruction, rehabilitation, restoration, and regulatory processes (Chang, 2010; Haas et al., 1977; Quarantelli, 1999; Ride & Bretherton, 2011). While these aspects are extremely important to understand, there is also a need to interrogate the politics that inform and underlie different manifestations of disaster recovery. As Quarantelli (1999) and Dello Buono (2012) have described, there are many ways that recovery can be mishandled or appropriated to cause significant damage beyond the initial disaster event, contributing to what can be considered as 'second' or 'third' disasters.

Consequently, we largely lack a thorough and in-depth understanding of the long term political and social processes of disaster recovery (Berke et al., 1993; Chang, 2010). It is important to conceptualise disasters as political events involving not only decisions made after an event to respond and recover, but also decisions made prior that lead to vulnerability and risk (Khasalamwa, 2009; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999; Pearce, 2003). Vale and Campanella (2005, p. 8) describe how it is possible to "observe who is in power and who is not" through what is prioritised to be rebuilt, providing insight into the power dynamics that mediate disaster recovery. The frequent entrenchment of inequalities and vulnerabilities following disaster and through periods of recovery is a significant driving factor in our need to better understand how the politics of recovery is mediated through different values and ideologies (Brunsma et al., 2010; Giroux, 2006; Khasalamwa, 2009; Mulligan, 2013). As exposure to these events increases due to urbanisation and climate change, the social justice implications of the exacerbation of long term issues of discrimination, vulnerability and injustice are crucially important considerations in designing how to respond and adapt to future disasters.

Despite the potential for these entrenchments there is a small but promising foundation of literature that sketches disasters as agents of progressive social change and transformation (Davis, 2005; Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009). Theoretically, the power of disaster lies in the rupture of everyday life. The basis of this work rests on the principle of crisis as an intense period of change and flux in which new values and ways of being in society can be nurtured. In this way, a disaster is not only a material event but a "multiplicity of interwoven, often conflicting, social constructions" (Aradau &

van Munster, 2011, p. 24). Thus, disaster recovery is not only experienced through multiple social constructions but also holds the potential to prefigure different forms of society and politics. Community led recovery action plays an integral role in shaping the potential for these forms of post-disaster society and politics at a time in which values and norms are being contested and reconfigured. Through this research, I engage this concept of rupture to understand the potential of community led action to reconfigure participation in disaster recovery, and more widely processes of social and political change. Importantly, from this perspective the complex and entangled relationships between affected communities, institutions and the state can be explored through this time of negotiation, contestation and conflict.

1.1.1 Research Questions and Contribution

This research aims to investigate the politicisation of disaster recovery through the involvement of community in the four years following the 2010/2011 earthquakes in Christchurch. Specifically, I document and question the dynamics of interconnected government and community processes for disaster recovery and the ideologies, discourses and values that drive these actions. In doing so, the role of communities and activists in contributing to official and unofficial recovery activities is analysed in the context of the politics of engagement and participation.

To this end the driving research question and sub-questions are as follows:

How are community led approaches re-configuring participation in earthquake recovery; and how does this expand our understanding of social and political change following disasters?

- 1) In what ways does a context of disaster and crisis influence government led recovery?*
- 2) What are the community led and activist responses to earthquake recovery in Christchurch?*
- 3) How do these community led and activist responses interact with government policies and practice?*

This research takes an innovative approach to not only analysing and understanding the participation of communities in disaster recovery, but also the role of these actions in shaping progressive ideas and values that may form possibilities for radical social change. By engaging critical literature that explores the creation of societal alternatives and the role of politics, and undertaking

detailed empirical analysis of the Christchurch recovery context, this thesis goes beyond solely understanding the actions of government, to explore the everyday ways that residents create and shape their own forms of recovery.

Thus, the key contributions of this thesis are two-fold:

- 1) This research contributes rich *empirical* evidence that demonstrates the integral role of community organisations in shaping hopeful and potentially radical practices of disaster recovery. Autonomous and self-directed community recovery action establishes the potential for a re-configuring of participation, plus other dimensions of social and political change following disasters. By demonstrating the lived, everyday experiences of people working at the grassroots level in Christchurch this research privileges the local scale. In so doing, it renders visible the hopeful actions that drive different manifestations of disaster recovery.
- 2) This thesis extends a deeper *conceptual* understanding of the role of disaster in contesting and reconfiguring society and politics. By investigating the actions of communities in the wider context of government interventions toward recovery, this research grounds the importance of disaster as an ongoing event that drives both regressive and progressive social change. Central to this conceptualisation is the role of politicisation in shaping the avenues available to affected communities to participate following disaster in formal political processes, as well as through shaping their own pathways to recovery through contestation, creation and experimentation.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

In light of this purpose, through this thesis I provide a critical perspective on the role of community action in shaping the politicisation of disaster recovery in Christchurch. Necessarily, the scope includes an investigation of the role of government in establishing and influencing the political and social context in which recovery takes place. Importantly, I highlight how the dynamics of crisis and hope can affect political and social change through disasters as crisis events, as well as the ways communities resist, engage and re-create recovery politics and participation. Methodologically, I have carried out this research through an in-depth post-structural, qualitative analysis to appropriately understand the multiple and contextual experiences of participants and organisations in Christchurch following the earthquakes.

The Canterbury earthquakes are situated as a case study to provide the context for a city that is in the throes of ongoing recovery and reconstruction. Christchurch city in Aotearoa New Zealand (Figure 1) provides an important case study for this research, due to the extent of the disaster, as well as the political legacy of extensive neoliberal reforms of the 1980s and 1990s (Kelsey, 1995b).



Figure 1: Map showing the location of Christchurch City in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This focus of this research concentrates on two areas of Christchurch city throughout the recovery between 2011 and 2014. These areas are; the central city and the Eastern Suburb of New Brighton. The rationale for this is twofold. First, the central city of Christchurch has been the focus of extensive government intervention and political manoeuvring following the earthquakes, as well as the focus of grassroots and community action to re-create the spaces of the inner city. The central city thus provides an important snapshot of recovery at both the community and government level, as well as the important role of the private sector in shaping these processes. Second, the damage caused by the series of earthquakes resulted in an uneven burden of loss and vulnerability on Christchurch. The eastern suburbs were significantly more affected by land, housing and infrastructure damage. Given the intensive focus on the central city, particularly by government agencies, it is important to understand how suburbs are responding to the events, as well as how the political framing of the disaster affects the resourcing and support these areas receive.

By analysing the context and experiences of two communities in Christchurch, a spatial orientation on the impacts and vulnerabilities that have emerged because of the disaster can be explored. New Brighton is an ideal suburb to explore as it is comprised of land that has been severely damaged (red zone) as well as land that has been badly damaged, but is feasible to remediate and repair. New Brighton has a cross section of active community organisations that have been present both prior to and following the earthquakes. Some of these organisations now focus solely on local recovery from the earthquake, while others also approach broader social issues.

In relation to this Christchurch context, the use of the concept of 'community' in this research is negotiated as part of an engagement with a complex volume of literature and research on what communities are and how they can be framed (Buckle, 1998; Massey, 1991, 2004; Panelli & Welch, 2005; Putnam, 2001; Welch & Panelli, 2007). Mulligan (2015) describes the need to embrace the concept of community despite the challenges with the concept while cautioning the empty use of the term for research, particularly in the context of disasters. In this research, community features in two prominent ways. First, the case studies are based around place based communities. This has been chosen due to the need to refine and narrow the focus of the study as described above. While this approach does rely on a somewhat geographical focus, the epistemological post-structural approach of the broader research acknowledges and works with the fluid and dynamic nature of these communities. Communities are not seen as fixed entities with singular identities, but as multifaceted, ever-changing networks and relationships between people, households and organisations, as well as multiple identities and histories (Massey, 1993, 2005).

The second engagement with concepts of community in this research is through the framing of 'community responses' to disaster recovery. Here community is framed not only through place based case studies but in a more conceptual manner to counter-pose the actions of both local and central government. Here community led recovery action is an attempt to frame the actions of residents, citizens, individuals and organisations as collectives in their aim to respond to long term needs following the earthquake. Community responses in this research are thus engaged as the diverse forms in which people affected by disasters contribute and organise outside of the processes mandated and conducted by the local and central government. These actions may work alongside or directly with government agencies and institutions but are, in the first instance, initiated at the grassroots level. Despite the challenges with using the term community, academically and otherwise, it is still a useful term despite the potential for alternatives (Mulligan, 2015). I acknowledge that my engagement with community in this context may be considered normative.

However, the purpose of this research is to explore the actions of formalised government politics, and the actions of people and collectives at the grassroots of society that interact with but do not emerge directly from within government institutions. In this case, the use of community is justified to describe and explain the response of these groups in society.

1.2.1 Situating the Researcher

My position and experiences have also played a large role in shaping the direction and focus of this research. This has worked alongside the broader epistemological traditions of post-structuralism which sees 'knowledge' as constructed by the maker (Rose, 1997; Sultana, 2007). This construction of research challenges positivist perceptions of knowledge as objective and achievable through the scientific method (Sharp and Dowler, 2011). However, instead of subjectivity being a weakness through these methods, the positioned researcher becomes a strength in which power relations, privilege and hegemonic discourses can be challenged through the process of the research as well as the results (Sharp & Dowler, 2011; van Hoven & Meijering, 2011). This dynamic has enabled me to angle this research towards an engaged and critical perspective on the earthquakes. As the researcher, I have at different times been inside and outside of these events. As noted by Sharp and Dowler (2011), carrying out research in a familiar situation or context does not necessarily remove the power relations and complexities. My personal experience in social and environmental activism and subsequently, in one of the large earthquakes, including the loss of our family home, led me to start this research and take the direction of critical analysis of the political and social construction of disaster recovery.

The direction of this research has also been shaped through the incorporation of cross cultural and indigenous perspectives. For instance, from the outset of this research, the significant role of the Māori communities in the earthquake response and recovery has been visible. Māori, the indigenous population of Aotearoa New Zealand, played a strong role in both the initial response and the ongoing recovery from the earthquakes, particularly at a governance level through the corporate arm of the Ngāi Tahu Iwi (the main tribal organisation in Te Wai Pounamu/The South Island). This has also included a multitude of research being undertaken by Māori scholars and organisations on the role of Māori groups and culture in the recovery (Kenney & Phibbs, 2015; Lambert, 2014a, 2014b; Tapata-Stafford, 2011). As a Pākehā researcher (New Zealand European with settler ancestry), I acknowledge that I work within a colonised context that has privileged my cultural context over those of others, including the Tangata Whenua (indigenous people of Aotearoa) whose lands were stolen through colonisation.

In this thesis I have not worked with Māori organisations directly as this has not been the specific focus of this research. I have, however, attempted to acknowledge and speak to the colonial context of Aotearoa New Zealand and the politics of disaster recovery. Aotearoa New Zealand as a post-yet-still colonial country provides a context that negotiates indigeneity and colonialism through everyday encounters, particularly in politics. The role of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand society is acknowledged throughout this research through attention to the historical details of colonisation and settlement, as well as through use of Māori language and concepts. It has been important to include these concepts and aspects of Te Reo Māori (the Māori language) as this reflects the importance of privileging indigenous language, particularly for place names which can contribute to the construction of local and national identities (Berg & Kearns, 1996).

Finally, this research has been strongly motivated by my desire to contribute to the disaster recovery in Christchurch by providing a critical perspective on the political and social dynamics which are occurring, while also providing a platform to share some of the stories of recovery at the community level. This desire has been strongly driven from a perspective of social justice, and a need to evaluate and learn from the political and social change experienced in Christchurch because of the earthquakes. My position in this research has also been influenced by the time I spent in Christchurch involved in social and environmental activism, including involvement in campaigns lobbying for better participatory processes in the pre-earthquake re-design of the city centre in 2007. These experiences have shaped my aim to tell stories of community led responses. Furthermore, these motivations have also affected how I have positioned myself and this research in terms of outcomes. Alongside my personal history in activism, I have attempted to align this research and the research outputs with the aim of increasing awareness of what is occurring in Christchurch, and the broader theoretical implications of this approach to disaster recovery. These aspects of my positionality and my experiences shape the form of this research and situate the context of both the research and the researcher.

1.3 THESIS STRUCTURE

The presentation of this research in the form of the doctoral thesis is a purposeful combination of the subjective, emotional and embodied experiences of disaster and recovery, alongside a philosophical and contextual analysis of the political, social and economic factors that shape earthquake recovery and community led participation and action. This structure of the thesis establishes three main sections to present the research: the theoretical and methodological context; the combined results and discussion chapters; and the conclusion and contributions.

The first section addressing the theoretical and methodological context includes chapters *Two*, *Three* and *Four*. In *Chapter Two* I establish the theoretical framework for the research that is grounded in the critical geographies of hope and crisis. This theoretical chapter frames the guiding concepts used in the research to explore the politicisation of different forms of disaster recovery. The aim of this chapter is to position recovery as a site of crisis and hope: a time of heightened politicisation and contestation particularly towards facilitating exceptional forms of politics. In particular, the role of local, community scale organisations in resisting or re-creating these forms of crisis are established as one way recovery is entangled with different manifestations and articulations of politicisation.

Through *Chapter Three* I outline the methodology of this research that establishes a post-structural epistemological research design and the use of qualitative methods. To foreground the discussion of methods and procedures, I first address the need to position disaster as a specific context for carrying out research. Through this discussion I lay out the foundations for a critical and ethical approach to post-disaster research that works with emotional geographies and an ethics of care, to negotiate the tricky dynamics of power, trauma and emotion in this project. Following this, I describe the ethical procedures and methods utilised to obtain data, including semi-structured interviews, online e-interviews, document review and photography.

From this theoretical and methodological foundation, in *Chapter Four* I describe the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. A short history of disaster in Aotearoa is discussed, along with detail of the political and legislative response to these events. In the second half of this chapter I shift the discussion to a summary of the key events and actors involved in the response and recovery to the Canterbury Earthquakes that are the focus of this research.

The second section of this thesis contains three combined results and discussion chapters: *Chapter Five*, *Chapter Six* and *Chapter Seven*. These chapters are structured as a presentation and discussion of the findings across the three themes that emerged from the data in relation to the three sub research questions. Further, each of these chapters is prefaced with a photo essay that is framed with narratives from the interview data. These photo essays represent another form of data in this research and creatively communicate a different representation of the post-disaster landscape. My aim in creating these photo essays is to share and communicate the experiences and realities of post-earthquake Christchurch. From this a greater appreciation of the destruction, creativity and hope that infuses recovery may be garnered alongside the more traditional academic analysis.

In the first chapter of this section, I address the first research question and focus on the discursive and ideological role of the state in shaping the official, government led recovery. Thus, *Chapter Five* critically explores the emergence of exceptional forms of politics in guiding the values and actions of the government through their extended response to the disaster event. Importantly, the role of a centralised approach to disaster recovery is contrasted with an ideological approach that espouses discourses of free market neoliberalism.

Following this, in *Chapter Six* I pivot the discussion to address the second research question on the response of communities and local organisations to earthquake recovery. Through this chapter I analyse the actions of community in disaster recovery and the role of discourses of hope in shaping recovery action outside of government led approaches. This discussion centres the role of the community in shaping a number of important initiatives. These actions focused on the local and everyday scale to create alternative articulations of disaster recovery that are both explicitly and implicitly guided by discourses of hope and possibility. The role of commons, urban greening and community economies are highlighted as manifestations of this approach by community based organisations in Christchurch.

Chapter Seven serves two main aims. In this chapter I address the third research question while also bringing together the findings from *Chapter Five* and *Six*. In the first instance, I address the role of formal participation and engagement within government processes of recovery. These formal processes of participation are integral to understanding the broader articulations of post-disaster politics in Christchurch. Through the discussion in this chapter I argue that the approach of government and communities goes beyond narrowly defined frameworks of exceptional politics to encompass a range of different forms of politicisation, including the attempted de-politicisation of contested issues to manufacture consensus and foreclose democratic debate and dissent. While the case for these forms of de-politicisation and exceptional politics are explored, I also demonstrate the potential for radical forms of hope and experimentation in shaping new political engagements with resistance and contestation. Ending on a hopeful discussion of the varied forms of political engagement by communities, I argue that while tactics of de-politicisation are indeed apparent in the approach to disaster recovery, there are extensive weaknesses and ruptures that allow for radical re-engagements with politics and dissent.

The final section of this thesis concludes the research in *Chapter Eight*. In this chapter I summarise and discuss the main findings and contributions of this research. I focus the discussion on

incorporating a critical understanding of the discourses of government led recovery, the dynamics and practices of community led recovery and the politicisation of disaster through ongoing contestation and conflict in practices of participation and engagement. Lastly, I reflect on the implications of these findings for future research and the need for bringing critical insight into the practices of disaster recovery.

Ultimately, this research is a response to the need for a more in-depth exploration of disaster recovery and what it means for how we organise politically and socially. Through the case study of the Canterbury earthquakes in Aotearoa, I build on the foundation of geographies of hope and crisis to explore the role of disruptive and destructive events in shaping the social and political processes of recovery, particularly as driven by the communities and individuals most affected. To do this I emphasise the importance of understanding the way these groups organise and participate in recovery alongside central and local government approaches.

This thesis is, at the same time, both hopeful and critical of the way disaster recovery has occurred in Christchurch. The implications of this work expand beyond Aotearoa New Zealand, with a growing recognition of the importance of understanding disaster and crisis events. The findings of this research contribute to our understanding of how society copes with 'out of the ordinary' events. To do so this I have built on a foundation of scholarship in disaster studies to incorporate analysis and theory emerging from recent work in human geography on crisis and alternative forms of resistance and hope. Disasters are framed as complex events that disrupt the social and political landscape, and worthy of considerable focus for understanding the potential for regressive and progressive change in society.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Disaster recovery has, in the past, been simplified and mechanised through a hazards and emergency management perspective that still, in many cases, privileges a command and control approach to managing civilians (Chang, 2010; Drabek & McEntire, 2003; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012). Through this thesis I build on more recent work that conceptualises the complex social and political dynamics of disasters and recovery (Khasalamwa, 2009; Mulligan, 2013; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012; Vale & Campanella, 2005). The premise for this investigation is that it is necessary to further understand the complex and nuanced social and political factors that shape different processes of disaster recovery enacted at the local, community scale. Additionally, this requires an interrogation of government approaches to disaster recovery, and how these two scales of society interact and negotiate in recovering from a destructive event.

The theoretical framework engaged in this research integrates perspectives from geography and urban studies into the field of disaster studies and emergency management to build on our current understanding of how disaster recovery occurs. It is now widely acknowledged that 'natural' disasters do not exist. Instead, these events occur at the intersection of society and forces in the natural or built environment (Oliver-Smith, 2015). Since the beginning of the 20th century the study of disaster has provided insight into how the response of individuals and society to these events is largely socially constructed (Quarantelli, 1999; Solnit, 2009). Despite this, within the field there is little research that addresses the potential for social and political change following long term disaster recovery at the local scale. While there is some analysis of the role of disasters in affecting social and political change, much of this is based on analysing large scale regime shifts in political leadership (Passerini, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2009).

Decades of work interrogating the role of crisis, activism, resistance and politics can frame a more integrated perspective on disaster recovery that pays specific attention to the everyday local context. By drawing on disaster studies to shape the role of disaster as an agent of change and disruption, disasters can be framed as socially and politically mediated responses to hazards in the natural and built environment (Dynes, 1988; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999). I build on this combined foundation of critical literature to examine the in-depth political processes of recovery at a local, grassroots level as well as those orchestrated by the central government.

In this chapter I outline the theoretical framework I engage in this research to draw together insight from these important areas of critical geography and disaster studies. To do this I foreground the

moment, event and performance of disaster recovery to explore the way that crisis and hope shifts the political and social landscape following disaster. I begin by positioning disaster as a time of crisis governance through the lens of capitalism and exceptionality to explore the role of the government and the state in mediating processes of recovery. This involves an understanding of the way discourses of crisis are engaged by the state, the private sector, and the public, to extend and/or challenge the social and economic facets of capitalism through the processes of disaster recovery. I then outline a theoretical positioning of hope that situates the possibilities for socially progressive change from the context of disaster recovery. Drawing on theories of autonomous geographies and action beyond capitalism, I discuss the potential for alternative manifestations of recovery politics to emerge at the community level. Theories of politicisation also provide the context for exploring the important integration of participation and democracy in the negotiation and contestation of the post-disaster politics.

2.1 POSITIONING DISASTER RECOVERY AND CRISIS POLITICS

As introduced in *Chapter One*, research on the broader politics of emergency, response and resilience has fostered a growing awareness of the political nature of disaster in critical geography. This has included analysis of the role of inequalities, power and capitalism in shaping the social construction of disaster events, the distribution of severity of the effects of disaster and the socially and political mediated response to emergency (Anderson, 2016; Anderson & Adey, 2012; Grove, 2013; Oliver-Smith, 2015). To understand the broader political implications of disaster recovery the lens of critical geography offers a useful frame for better understanding the politics of disaster recovery. Critical research in geography has recently linked the de-politicisation of resilience with the entrenchment of normative assumptions around power and politics that reproduce and further neoliberal capitalist discourses of self-responsibilisation and individualism (Cote & Nightingale, 2012; Cretney, 2014; MacKinnon & Derickson, 2012). The extension of this argument is that beyond resilience, capitalist oriented norms, values and discourses also permeate broader discourses and practices of disaster recovery politics. De-emphasising the political nature of disaster as occurred in previous decades, has contributed to a wider de-politicisation of recovery that may normalise capitalist forms of development and the societal processes that shape underlying patterns of risk, vulnerability and inequality.

Oliver-Smith (2015, p. 46) describes how the interconnections between capitalism and disaster are clear. He states that these connections “set out a number of general frames that guide both our thought and behaviour regarding those interactions of society and environment that we call

disasters". Extending the work interrogating the role of capitalism and neoliberalism in shaping the processes of risk and vulnerability, these ideologies also permeate the values and practices enacted through processes of ongoing disaster recovery. By drawing on capitalist theories of crisis, it is possible to see how recovery is politicised in specific forms to the benefit or detriment of certain groups in society. In particular, disasters can be framed as both a threat to consolidated forms of power and legitimacy, as well as a mechanism for encouraging alternative and new grounds for economic growth within a capitalist society (Arrighi, 1978; Jones & Ward, 2004; Pelling & Dill, 2009). Crisis, in this research, is situated as a socially constructed concept which is understood and performed in many different ways, particularly with regards to what is classified as a crisis, and for whom (Tadaki et al., 2011). Perspectives from critical geography suggest that crisis has always been an intertwined process with capitalism. For example, the popular framing of 'disaster capitalism', theorised by Naomi Klein (2007) as the manipulation of shocked populations by neoliberal corporate and economic elites.

Crisis is thus a process that simultaneously shapes and is shaped more broadly by the state, capitalist economies and society (Arrighi, 1978; Jones & Ward, 2012). From these perspectives, the manipulation of crisis can be seen as one expression of the internal contradictions of capitalist development and growth (Arrighi, 1978). Therefore, disasters literally and figuratively open new grounds for accumulation that can be taken advantage of to further extend social and economic policies which support the capitalist system (Oliver-Smith, 2015). Thus, the politics of disaster recovery are situated within a context of capitalism as interlinked with opportunities for growth and accumulation that arise through destruction and reconstruction (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Oliver-Smith, 2015; Vale & Campanella, 2005).

However, disasters also present a threat to the status quo as perceptions of the ruptures they cause in normality cultivate a politics of fear towards legitimacy and social order (Tierney, 2008). The contradiction here lies in the opportunities that disasters present to expand and capture opportunities for economic growth alongside the potential for political instability. This dynamic may be compounded by the increasingly interlinked relationship between economic and market functions and the legitimacy of the state (Brown, 2015). As such, the political response to disasters is likely to be one that utilises the crisis of disaster to both maximise the potential to enforce legitimacy through enabling economic and market functions, while also warding off threats to this legitimacy more broadly.

In his formative work in disaster studies, Hewitt (1983) uses a Foucauldian influenced analysis to suggest that the political separation of the disaster event from everyday life represents the desire to distance the destructive event from the social systems and political structures that create risk and vulnerability. Such constructions of 'un' situations through the use of language and discourses of 'unexpected', 'unprecedented' and 'unusual' events lay the foundations for a political response that distances the social construction of vulnerability and primes a population for exceptional political approaches (Hewitt, 1983; Pelling & Dill, 2009). While not directly discussed by Hewitt, this use of exceptional language links to the increasingly cited frame of the state of exception and the politics of disaster (Adey et al., 2015; Anderson & Adey, 2012; Grove, 2013).

Commonly understood, the state of exception relates to Agamben's work on Schmitt's original thesis which places the right of the sovereign in the ability to suspend legal order in response to crisis or threat (Agamben, 2005). Today, the state of exception is an important perspective for understanding how political and economic actors can respond to crisis and the changing role of the state (Agamben, 2005; Honig, 2009; Kisner, 2007). The use of exceptionality as a tool of disaster politics is one way the state can respond to disaster as both threat and opportunity, particularly through the potential to suspend democracy through a state of emergency (Honig, 2009). Thus, a politics of exceptionality following disaster may act as a way for governments to distance themselves from the underlying conditions of disaster risk and vulnerability, while also warding off potential for social unrest.

It has been argued that neoliberal politics have increasingly moved towards normalising the state of exception to foreclose democratic politics and enforce a technocratic and managerial enactment of neoliberalism that entrenches existing power relations (Agamben, 2005; Thomas & Bond, 2016). It follows that, if this is the case, the state of exception may also be more frequently engaged through disaster recovery as a form of crisis governance. This is particularly relevant given the desire of governing forces to cultivate uncertainty as a technique of governance in which "the disaster-to-come is inevitable", something that is increasingly prevalent under the spectre of ongoing climate change and instability (Wakefield and Braun, 2014, p. 5). However, as Adey et al. (2015) note, there is also a need for a wider conceptualisation of the tools for governing crisis, including the context specific articulations of exception and crisis governance. This includes working beyond the state of exception, but importantly pays attention to the multiple ways emergency and crisis can be governed, including before an event occurs through preparedness and afterwards through recovery and adaptation (Adey et al., 2015; Anderson & Adey, 2012).

With this caution in mind, the positioning of crisis in this research also strongly draws on the philosophical orientation of Gibson-Graham's work in *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Care has been taken in this research not to assume the over-arching and exclusive dominance of one form of crisis governance, or to reinforce the intellectual hegemony of capitalist systems and economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006). While the state of exception is drawn on to frame the dual potential for threat and opportunity, careful attention is paid to the specific articulations of these forms of governance in disaster recovery discourse and practice. By doing so the role of capitalism as a force for shaping society following crisis is not theorised to the point where it becomes larger than life, thus excluding any possibility of already-existing or future alternatives (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy, 2014). Drawing on the perspectives of non-capitalism aids in investigating the many forms of disaster recovery and crisis governance both in relation to capitalist processes and outside of these boundaries. By engaging with this critical understanding, crisis and disaster responses can be seen as fluid and malleable depending on the discourses and power relations engaged alongside them.

2.2 HOPEFUL RECOVERY THROUGH EVERYDAY RADICAL ACTION

Beyond understanding the different geographic forms of capitalist disaster politics, the theoretical framework for this research posits that disaster recovery also provides a fertile ground for forms of hope, possibility and resistance at the everyday and local scale (Cretney & Bond, 2014; Dello Buono, 2012; Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009). It is necessary to explore the way different forms of politics beyond capitalism are facilitated through diverse practices and approaches to recovery, particularly at the grassroots scale. If the vulnerabilities that differentiate and distribute the effects of disaster are mediated at least in part by the social and political processes of neoliberal capitalism, then there is the potential to tackle these underlying social determinants of disaster in reshaping the possibilities for a post-capitalist politics through recovery.

The Gibson-Graham (2006) perspective on non-capitalism pays attention to the everyday and localized responses that are shaping resistance and exploring new ways of operating in society. This positioning is useful for deconstructing and understanding the many ways that individuals and communities may react to disasters, particularly in multiple and every day forms. Theoretically, the power of the moment of disaster lies in the rupture of everyday life. Blanchot (1995, p. 4) encapsulates this by describing disasters as sudden, disruptive events which deconstruct life:

I will not say that the disaster is absolute; on the contrary, it disorients the absolute. It comes and goes; errant disarray, and yet with the imperceptible but intense suddenness of

the outside, as an irresistible or unforeseen resolve which would come to us from beyond the confines of disaster.

Disasters are events which shift life outside of normality, sparking a time of uncertainty and at times, perceived chaos. In this way, the disaster is not only a material event but a “multiplicity of interwoven, often conflicting, social constructions” (Aradau & van Munster, 2011, p. 24). These events, often sudden and devastating have provided for years a topic for philosophical inquiry into the nature of the human condition (Aradau & van Munster, 2011; Prince, 1920; Solnit, 2009). Therefore, disaster may be framed as a window into the underlying dynamics that order society. This deconstructs the world to make visible the actions, structures and values obscured by discourses that have been normalised, including the way that uneven power relations have transpired (Aradau & van Munster, 2011; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999).

While disaster capitalism positions disaster as a time for opportunity that is taken advantage of by both the state and the private sector to pursue politically unpopular policies, a more integrated perspective on crisis and disaster is able to explore the way that crises in many forms are used to support and challenge dominant power relations and structures within society. Such nuance allows for actually-existing forms of economic and political manipulation of crisis to be explored as well as the possibilities for resistance and hope. It is likewise important to render visible the multiple forms of economy and resistance which already exist and are fostered through disaster recovery action at different scales (Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006; Healy, 2014).

Within the disaster literature there exists a small amount of literature detailing the role of disaster events as agents of social change (Passerini, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2009; Solnit, 2009; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012). The basic premise of this work asserts that disasters instigate or accelerate processes of social change (Pelling & Dill, 2009). Early research by Prince (1920) noted this phenomenon in relation to the shipping munitions explosion in Halifax in 1917. He described the post-disaster state as:

Life becomes like molten metal. It enters a state of flux from which it must reset upon a principle, a creed, or purpose. It is shaken perhaps violently out of rut and routine. Old customs crumble and instability rules (p. 20).

This theoretical framework positions the concepts of everyday politics, resistance and participation to investigate more detailed understanding of disasters as instigators or contributors to change (Greenberg, 2014; Passerini, 2000; Pelling & Dill, 2009; Prince, 1920; Vasudevan, 2014). Given the alternatives that already exist within and beyond capitalism, there is the potential for radically

hopeful post-capitalist politics to occur during disaster recovery. The theoretical perspective of post-capitalism provides an avenue of exploration into the “politics of possibility” that emerge through alternative forms of community recovery (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxvii). These forms of everyday politics focus on systemic change brought about through activism that aims to shift subjectivities, enact different values and build different ways of being in society in the capitalist present (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006).

More widely, a focus on these potentially radical arrangements facilitates a hopeful perspective on the possibilities for change and transformation (Cameron & Hicks, 2014; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Lawson, 2005). By incorporating theories of non-capitalism with perspectives of radical hope, there is an opportunity to focus on the everyday realities of disaster experience and the possibility for hopeful change that can emerge. It is this very possibility that suggests disasters can act as catalysts for long term social change, even if this is at a localised, every day level for the lives of the residents most affected (Greenberg, 2014; Luft, 2009; Vasudevan, 2014). To build on the critical insight from theories of disaster politics and crisis this thesis deploys these hopeful geographies to this disaster context, particularly with a focus on localised everyday actions and alternative economies that can build societal alternatives to capitalism.

In alignment with the perspectives of Gibson-Graham (2006) and the over-theorisation of capitalism, hopeful geographies advocate for an awareness of the everyday forms of experimentation and visioning that aim to create new ways of doing and being in society (Anderson & Fenton, 2008; Head, 2016; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). In this sense, ruptures in the status quo, such as those wrought by disaster, can be seen as “generative moments” of possibility holding the potential for hope (Head, 2016, p. 166). Cameron and Hicks (2014) describe how this engagement with hope is not a form of blind optimism but rather a commitment to action and struggle to create other worlds outside of capitalism and neoliberalism. This emergent imaginary embodies a politics that emphasises the existence and need for the development of forms of non-capitalist relations, practices and values (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy, 2014). Engagements with different forms of economy, the creation and maintenance of economic practices beyond capitalism and prefigurative forms of organising can re-create and renegotiate the values, norms and practices of society (Fickey, 2011; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). While grounded in these material examples of hopeful action, a politics of hope neither avoids nor denies struggle or grief, and is instead attuned to cultivating and illuminating space and practices for the possibilities of life and politics beyond capitalism (Anderson, 2006a, 2006b; Head, 2016).

Autonomous and prefigurative actions that emerge from these hopeful geographies are based on the spatial configurations of alternative and everyday actions that both create and resist the status quo (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Day, 2004; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). These actions encompass the practices of individuals and collectives that approach how they imagine and enact a life beyond capitalism (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010). Often this involves a desire to live free of the rules and regulations of dominant societal institutions (Castells & Kumar, 2014; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). One expression of autonomous action is through community economies which are based on the radical proposition of Gibson-Graham (2006, p. xxii) that “the economy is what we (discursively and practically) make it”. Thus, hopeful geographies frame the process of imagining and creating workable alternatives to capitalism in the present, providing a radical form of localised hope that alternatives can and do exist.

Hopeful geographies challenge more than the physical structures of society and economy. Miller (2011, p. 4) describes creating communities and economies beyond capitalism as a call:

... to work in solidarity with each other’s daily struggles to gain footholds of stability on which to build a different future. We are called to imagine and create new ways of meeting our needs and living together on this shared earth. We are called to participate not just in the emergence of new movements, but of new forms of living. This is not about “reform” or “revolution” but about how we build relationships, communities and institutions that simultaneously meet our immediate needs and open up possibilities for other forms of livelihoods.

These shifts in individual and collective subjectivities contribute to one of the important ways that change can be affected at a larger scale, particularly through encouraging critical thought and questioning of societal norms. Gibson-Graham (2006) describe how alternative discourses of women and new everyday practices of self, contributed to the success of the feminist movement in the 1980s and 1990s. In the context of changing discourses of the economy and capitalist society, they suggest that new subjectivities have the power to construct new possibilities for society and economy (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 1996, 2006). Through hopeful and prefigurative action these subjectivities are performed and reinforced, strengthening the possibilities for enacting change and creating what can be described as “new practices of the self” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxvii).

However, the forms of localised resistance and experimentation engaged through these forms of action and activism have been criticised as too short sighted and parochial to challenge the global dominance of capitalism (Kelly, 2005; Samers, 2005). In response to this, authors such as Hosking and Palomino-Schalscha (2016) argue that these practices are often engaged in a relational manner that goes beyond the local. They argue that these “more-than-local” relations are integral to the transformative potential of community economies (Hosking & Palomino-Schalscha, 2016, p. 5). Others have also argued that these small-scale forms of resistance contribute to wider and interconnected relational approaches to resistance (Chatterton, 2010; Jerne, 2016; Nelson, 2014). For instance, Pickerill and Chatterton (2006) describe the use of everyday practices through autonomous activism as the foundation for a hoped for ‘future in the present’, a process they describe as messy, experimental and highly contextual (Chatterton, 2010; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006).

2.3 THE POLITICS OF PARTICIPATION IN RECOVERY THROUGH CRISIS AND HOPE

Disasters as times of change shock individuals into seeing their lives and society in a way they may not have previously thought (Birkmann et al., 2008). As the politicisation of disaster recovery may also extend or entrench vulnerabilities and inequalities, it is integral to understand how politicisation of these events facilitates both socially progressive and regressive actions. This includes the political and governance mechanisms which enable or restrict democratic engagement and participation. However, given the alternatives that already exist within and beyond capitalism, there is also the potential for radically hopeful post-capitalist politics to occur during the rupture and change experienced through disaster recovery. While these conditions should not be seen as necessary to extend and establish progressive social change (Derickson et al., 2015), the ability to understand the politics of possibility and hope that emerge through alternative forms of community action is needed to more fully explore the multi-faceted dynamics of disaster recovery.

From the theoretical framework outlined to this point, this research engages with disaster recovery through the lens of geographies of crisis and hope to position recovery as a time in which different forms of politicisation are enacted. To frame these processes of politicisation in the context of the government and community led recovery, I adopt a Rancièrian view of democracy that emphasizes the role of political engagement and the increasing potential for tactics of de-politicisation. Here the concepts of politics and the political are differentiated. *La politique* or the police order is the reduction of the realm of the political to matters of policy and governing (Allmendinger & Houghton, 2012; Rancièrè, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2010). On the other hand, *le politique* or the political revolves

around expressions of conflict, dissensus and rupture (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Gill, 2008; Swyngedouw, 2010, 2011). The police order is viewed as the established methods and mechanisms of governing which represent the perceived 'natural' order of society where functions are divided and defined (Dikeç, 2002).

Thus, proper politics, or the political, is seen a disruption of this order, a challenge to the assumed way of functioning and governing society (Dikeç, 2002; Swyngedouw, 2009, 2011). Mouffe (2005a) also differentiates between politics and the political, describing politics as the institutions and modes of governance and the political as the space of power and conflict. Here, politics goes beyond the negotiation of power relations to involve a deeper exploration of different and contested perceptions and perspectives (Darling, 2010). Within the context of this research, the perspective of Mouffe illuminates the negotiations of power and the politicisation of disaster recovery that occur as part of the mobilization of crisis discourses by different actors. As Chatterton (2010, p. 242) describes in relation to prefigurative activism, "this is not just about giving the current system a makeover. It is a radically different, people centred, direct form of democracy".

Many have speculated that governance regimes are shifting to focus on de-politicisation as a technique for removing conflict and disruption, partly through the mobilisation of consensus models of governing (Deas, 2013; Gill, 2008; Swyngedouw, 2010). De-politicisation displaces conflict and reduces the act of the political to the police order, in other words keeping society operating within these boundaries (Rancière, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2010). This de-politicisation, or post-politics, forecloses the opportunities for democratic engagement and seeks to reinforce the hegemony of the governing powers (Deas, 2013; Mouffe, 2005b; Swyngedouw, 2007). In this research, tactics of de-politicisation are investigated as a possible tool engaged by the state to increase the receptivity of the public to disaster recovery policies and practices, particularly in the case of conflict or contestation. This perspective adds greater nuance to explore the way that the state influences individuals and organisations to manipulate crisis situations alongside and beyond the framing of exceptionality.

As Rancière (2004) notes, the political can never be fully enclosed, meaning governance that aims to depoliticise is always bound to fail. Despite these sentiments, scholars are increasingly critiquing the post-political lens as unnecessarily narrow and at risk of perpetuating the dismissal of different forms of conflict and contestation (Bond et al., 2015; Larner, 2014; McCarthy, 2013). Through exploring and understanding the different articulations of resistance and politicisation at the

government and community scale, the ideas of rupture and resistance to the foreclosure of democracy are integral to explore how the different forms of politicisation emerge through post-disaster governance at different scales. This includes expanding an understanding of how community led action may involve different degrees of reinforcing or challenging social and political norms and values in relation to democracy, participation, and the foreclosure of these facets of society. Drawing on the generative “politics of possibility” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. xxvii) this critical perspective on post-politics articulated through hopeful geographies, is strengthened through an exploration of how alternative articulations of politics, participation and engagement can be practiced at different scales through disaster recovery.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have outlined the theoretical framework for this research. Three main facets contribute to new and important findings regarding the dynamics of processes of politicisation in disaster recovery. These are: the role of crisis and capitalism in shaping responses to recovery governance; the possibility for hopeful activism to prefigure and create alternative forms of society and politics; and the role of democracy and participation in shaping broader patterns of the politicisation of disaster recovery. This research aims to deconstruct the mechanistic and procedural paradigm of disaster recovery, to integrate a more thorough and nuanced approach to understanding the political dynamics that underpin the responses of different actors at different scales to the crisis of disaster recovery.

In this theoretical framework I have outlined the justifications for drawing on critical geographies of crisis and hope to more clearly understand the complex dynamics of disaster recovery. Disaster recovery is a time of intense contestation and prioritisation over what is rebuilt, how and by whom, so the processes of governance that shape disaster recovery are essential to better understand. This research pays attention to the many nuances of power within the politics of disaster recovery. This adds depth to an understanding of how crisis governance is mobilised following a disaster, in order to privilege and enact certain values and practices, most notably in relation to neoliberal capitalist forms of society and politics. In relation to this, strategies of exceptionality provide a framework for understanding how an extra-ordinary situation can be managed for gain despite threats to political legitimacy and control.

In contrast to these dynamics, critical geographies of hope frame the progressive potential that arises from the disruption to the status quo often wrought by disaster. This hopeful perspective

illuminates how communities and citizens may be able to challenge hegemonic discourses and ideologies through disaster recovery to prefigure and experiment with alternative forms of society and economy. By drawing on theories of non-capitalism and autonomous activism, the potential for a 'politics of possibility' based on everyday change and resistance emerges. The possibility for radical action through disaster recovery at the local level provides an important avenue for exploring not only the regressive potential of disaster but also the opportunities and space for fostering different ways of being in society.

Finally, these two dynamics of recovery politics are drawn together through a framing of theories of participation and the wider politicisation of disaster. Through a Rancièrian framework of democracy and contestation, the role of de-politicisation and participation as tactics are examined to understand the theoretical implications of crisis governance and community scale resistance on long term politics in a disaster affected place. Understanding diverse perspectives of contestation and resistance is necessary to fully grasp the complex role of communities and the state in crafting the politicisation of disaster recovery.

3 METHODOLOGIES FOR CRITICAL SOCIAL POST-DISASTER RESEARCH

The previous chapter outlines the theoretical framework engaged in this thesis which aims to fully examine the dynamics of political and social change as it exists through community led post disaster recovery. That theoretical perspective lays the ontological foundation for this research, which posits crisis and disaster as phenomena that unveil social and political assumptions. Disasters provide windows of opportunity to not only 'see' the obscured elements of power and politics in society, but also moments of rupture, which make possible opportunities for resistance and change. The opportunity to carry out research in an area affected by disaster, or with people affected by the event, poses a set of challenges but also enormous privilege. The experiences of those affected by disaster are varied and complex, and reflect the many ways that people experience such a life altering event. In this chapter I outline how the post-disaster context of this research influences the need for ethically sound and productive research. In order to carry out such a task, I engage a post-structural qualitative methodology alongside a carefully considered strategy for approaching ethical issues.

This research is, and always will be, close to my heart. Having grown up in Ōtautahi Christchurch and having been with my family for some of the large earthquakes, including one which destroyed our family home, has inevitably shaped the way I see the situation in Christchurch. Ultimately, I am motivated by my desire to record the stories of those working at the community level, and to investigate the role of such catastrophic events as agents of political and social change. To do this I have developed a research methodology that is highly influenced by the experience of disaster as an extraordinary life event. Having seen the many ways people experience and interpret an event such as an earthquake, the post-structural perspective I have engaged logically aligns with the multiple and fractured nature of how we perceive reality.

These elements of methodology also encourage a thoughtful and caring inquiry that sees the important contribution of individuals' stories and experiences, as well as their emotions. Working in a post-disaster context, participants are considered by many to be 'vulnerable'. As will be explored later in this chapter, research has shown that this is often an inaccurate portrayal of the majority of those affected by disaster. However, there are undoubtedly extra considerations and practices that need to be incorporated when working in such an unusual research context. In this work I engage with practical ethical measures to reduce possible harm to participants and to strengthen the foundations of the research. To do this I go beyond the conception of procedural ethics to

incorporate a feminist approach to research ethics and epistemology that engages emotion and an ethics of care. Methodologically, this strengthens the research project by incorporating and working with the role of emotions and emotionality in the research project, rather than shunning this part of the human experience as not relevant to academic research.

To build on the ontological framing outlined in *Chapter Two*, this chapter begins with an exploration of the epistemological positioning of this research. Following this I discuss in depth, the ethical and critical methodologies engaged to fulfil the research aims. Finally, I outline the research design for this project, including the focus on case studies, the specific qualitative methods employed and the techniques of data analysis engaged.

3.1 POSITIONING DISASTER WITHIN RESEARCH

To interrogate the dynamics of crisis and hope in reconfiguring participation and politics following the earthquakes in Christchurch, this thesis is grounded in a post-structural epistemology and mixed methods qualitative methodology. By engaging this post-structural approach I have been able to lay the foundation for a detailed and in-depth qualitative methodology that privileges the experiential knowledge of participants and their ideas around disaster response and recovery in Christchurch. A post-structural interrogation of the social and political processes of disaster recovery challenges the way that disasters are 'known' by exploring the many categories and discourses that shape the way different groups in society approach, and conceive of, disaster recovery. This process involves gaining insight into the ways that the production and construction of knowledge creates and perpetuates forms of power and ideology to shape the dominant societal conception of reality (Gallaher, 2011; Mouffe, 2000).

Through an understanding that challenges the positivist assertions of an objective reality and 'scientific' knowledge, this epistemological positioning sees knowledge as a subjective realm which reflects the hegemony, power and politics of the dominant groups of society (Springer, 2012; Williams & May, 1996). Research thus becomes interpolated in a complex network of power relations that shape the way knowledge is created and dispersed (Williams & May, 1996). In practice, engaging with a post-structural epistemology goes further than the conceptualisation of the subject material into the processes of knowledge creation that are engaged as 'research'. One important aspect of this is acknowledging the role of the individual or group that is shaping the framing of knowledge and the power relations and privilege they impart to the research (Chacko, 2004).

Combining this epistemological framing of knowledge production with the ontological positioning of disaster as a window on the 'disaster of everyday life' (see Blanchot, 1995; Solnit, 2009) sharpens the theoretical lens of this research by interrogating the way that disaster, and our knowledge of these events, are shaped by power relations and politics. One way of working towards this process is to critically appraise the discourses and ideologies that underlie the mainstream political approach to disaster recovery, as well as the ways individuals and communities contribute, resist or challenge these narratives. To do this requires questioning how social constructs and systems of meaning are engaged in disaster recovery. Subsequently it is important to ask who is contributing to and enforcing these discourses and practices, and whom these serve to advantage or disadvantage (Gallaher, 2011).

The role of power is essential to understanding the representation and maintenance of social processes and discourses. In the post-structural tradition, power is positioned as a relation rather than a state or thing that can be taken or given away (Cahill, 2008; Chatterton & Heynen, 2011; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). Power from this perspective is constantly produced and reproduced through discourses and practices that can be multiple, simultaneous and contradictory (Allen, 2004; Cahill, 2008). In this way, times of disaster and crisis can challenge the maintenance of power relations through disruption to the status quo, thus providing the opportunity for people to both witness and challenge with more clarity the hierarchies and hegemony of power relations in society.

This post-structural approach also extends further than the research subject of post-disaster recovery. Just as I engage this perspective to analyse the way we see social processes; the role of power in my positioning as a researcher is also a crucial factor in how this research has been carried out. Because of this epistemological engagement with the subject material and the research process, I have engaged in a strategy of ethics that goes beyond the procedural requirements of ethics committees through care ethics and emotional geographies. In the following sections I will discuss how I have approached these aspects of research ethics in a critical, post-structural framework to foster reflexive and sensitive ethical practice for research in a post-disaster context.

3.2 NEGOTIATING THE ETHICAL TERRAIN OF DISASTER RESEARCH

In December 2011, my family's house was destroyed two days before Christmas in the fourth large tremor to hit the city. On Christmas Eve we had over 40 people come through our home to help us clear the mud and pack up our belongings. Through my own experiences and through observing the

experiences of others in the community, I gained an appreciation of not only the world shattering quality that a disaster can provoke but also the active participation of the community in responding to these events. The stories of assistance and community response that emerged from across the city demonstrate how those affected by disaster are not always powerless in their response. Instead many people actively participate, most are capable and able to express themselves and contribute however they can. Throughout this time I struggled with a range of feelings, from grief and anger to hope and gratitude. I also noted this wide spectrum of emotions and responses in the responses of participants who expressed deep sadness and grief, but also happiness and gratitude to their community and social support networks.

In this doctoral thesis I wanted to engage with this emotional side of the disaster experience through the methodology of post-disaster research. This involves an awareness of the role emotions and empathy for both the researcher and the participants in the process of co-creating research. I have also engaged this as a way of undertaking my research in an ethical manner, particularly given the sensitive nature of post-disaster research. My underlying desire to share the stories of those affected by disaster has led me to adopt this approach to care, ethics and emotion. Here, I want to frame experiences and emotions as another way of knowing disaster, but also to strengthen the ethics of this research, and to do justice to the stories of the participants. Through this I challenge the construction of knowledge as 'emotion-less' and privilege the experiences and emotions of my participants and myself as contributing a valuable perspective on disaster recovery.

I engage care ethics as the logical extension of the post-structural philosophy to the realm of research practice. In this case, the alignment of my research practices with care ethics reflects the post-structural critiques of a single knowable 'truth' and of knowledge as an objective construct (Bondi, 2005; Lawson, 2007). Thus, multiple forms of knowing are expressed through different mediums, including experiences and emotions. Care ethics logically extends the post-structural philosophy into research practice through an engagement with different ways of knowing the world. Here, the role of emotions, empathy and relationships are considered a crucial part of how we understand the world and construct knowledge through research (Bondi, 2005; Edwards & Mauthner, 2002).

3.2.1 Emotions, Empathy and Ethics

While care ethics are often used in research relating to emotional labour and care industries the approach can be used in many arenas of research, particularly in projects that pay attention to the emotional lives and experiences of participants (Pile, 2010). By working with the emotions of myself

and participants I frame this research through the technical lens of disaster recovery and politics, as well as the experiences and very real feelings of those most affected by the event. As Bennett (2004, p. 416) describes:

A focus on emotions, though, illuminates another way of seeing. Emotions expressed by the researched provide information about their (changing) social worlds, their relation(ship)s with others and the 'rules' and structures that permit specific behaviour, allowing/disallowing individuals from expressing particular feelings.

The incorporation of emotions and an emotional perspective into geographical work has been an emerging feature in the past decade (Bennett, 2009; Bondi, 2005; Widdowfield, 2000). Related to a care ethics by focusing on fluid and relational states of being, emotional geography perspectives emphasize the long-neglected importance of emotions for understanding the social construction of the world and social phenomena (Bondi, 2005).

However, a problem can arise in how emotions are defined and understood. Bennett (2004) describes this through the conflicting biological, psychological and structural constructions of emotions. In this research I understand emotions as constructed through social process in alignment with the broader post-structural orientation of this research. Emotions are thus fluid and changing, meaning different things in different contexts and cultures (Bennett, 2004; Bondi, 2005). For the purposes of this research I have engaged with emotions in interviews with participants as an extra perception and expression of experience and feeling in relation to the earthquake recovery. While none of my participants became visibly distressed during interviews, many participants did express strong emotions of anger, sadness, grief and frustration. They also expressed hope, gratitude and understanding, showing the depth, and complexity of the human experience of disaster.

The expression of these emotions added another layer to the text of the interview and provided another way for me as a researcher to understand and portray, to the best of my ability, their experiences and perspectives. I have integrated this approach with my use of multiple forms of media such as photography to explore and present the multiple experiences of disaster recover (see *Section 3.5.4*). The stories of participants that share their experiences in the recovery are illustrated through interview quotes and photographs in the three photo essays that punctuate the discussion chapters. These photo essays and stories are intentionally placed to provide an emotional and visual insight into the experience of disaster recovery that enlivens and enriches the academic and theoretical content of the research.

I have also drawn upon my experiences as a means of connecting and relating to individuals I met through field work. By engaging with participants on the common ground of our earthquake experiences I was able to relate to individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds as individuals with the ability to contribute their important experiences, including their emotions. While the many differences between myself and participants may have made relating to some individuals challenging, and vice versa (participants relating to me), the earthquakes as a shared experience allowed me to build trust and connection on common ground (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). On a relational level this allowed me to build relationships with participants in a meaningful way. While the recorded interviews would often last for 40 to 60 minutes, I would often chat with participants about their experiences and life since the earthquakes for a further amount of time.

It has been important for me to not overestimate or overstate my shared ground with participants, and thus absolve myself from taking care with specific vulnerabilities in post-disaster research populations. For example, one aspect of my positionality as a researcher that I became aware of was the specific differences between my experiences of the earthquake and my participants. Significantly, I had privilege in being able to leave the field after my data collection. This dynamic of privilege is often referred to in the context of research in developing countries whereby the researcher exerts privilege through their mobility and ability to leave impoverished conditions (Chacko, 2004). In my case this related to my ability to leave the political and personal problems of recovery and the ongoing aftershocks to return to my new home in Australia.

Similarly, shared experience in the earthquakes has also not resulted in the absence of other factors of identity that affect how some participants interact with me and the research. This particular dynamic has required me to acknowledge my privilege as a highly educated Pākehā (New Zealander with settler ancestry) and how this shapes the power relations that imbue this work (Chacko, 2004). While identity is largely performative and something that shifts spatially and temporally, these power relations shape both the interactions between me and participants, as well as my world view, and thus construct the knowledge presented in this thesis (Rose, 1997; Sultana, 2007).

By realising and acknowledging both the strengths and limitations of my position and experience in the earthquakes I have been able to interrogate the experience of disaster recovery, while also strengthening the philosophical structure of this work. The integration of positionality, emotions and care ethics into qualitative methodologies as represented here, also symbolises an important step towards developing more nuanced post-positivist methods and methodologies. The following

section will outline some of the practical measures and steps I have undertaken in line with this framework to ensure ethical practices and the safety of participants. These are aligned with the theoretical perspectives outlined above, but deal more with the steps and processes undertaken to shape research practices in the field.

3.2.2 Practical Ethical Measures

When starting this project I knew it would demand a careful approach towards designing and undertaking ethical research methods. On further investigation of specific research and literature surrounding ethical research with post-disaster affected populations, it became clear that in many cases, participants are not usually considered vulnerable in the technical sense (Barron Ausbrooks et al., 2008; Brun, 2009; Collogan et al., 2004a; Gordon, 2007). However, there is a specific need to adapt methods and methodologies to the circumstances of the affected population and to take steps to avoid exacerbating inequalities or existing vulnerabilities (Collogan et al., 2004a).

With a commitment to a care ethics approach and this research that suggests post-disaster methods be carefully designed and undertaken, I have implemented several strategies (Collogan et al., 2004b).¹ As my field work was undertaken three years following the major earthquake events and in a manner that was not interrogating the actual experience of the earthquake, participants were at low risk of the psychological effects of re-traumatisation. Individuals involved in this research were also highly unlikely to be impaired by their earthquake experience to give consent or understand the procedure and protocol of participation (Collogan et al., 2004b). Therefore, one of the main concerns was that in discussing the circumstances of the earthquakes, participants may experience significant grief and distress which re-traumatises and disrupts their daily lives. A further concern was that, being a case of intense interest at both a national and international level, the residents of Christchurch would be overwhelmed and burdened by increasing requests for participation, particularly time intensive interviews.

In order to minimise any potential harm to individual participants in this research project I consulted with Dr Rob Gordon, a clinical psychologist who specialises in post-disaster trauma. Through

¹ These strategies were implemented alongside the traditional ethics committee guidelines of informed consent and participation. This research was approved by the Victoria University Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee (ID: HRE14-145) in 2014. This approval was subsequently transferred to RMIT University in 2014 (ID: 19223). Additionally, the research was reviewed and approved by the voluntary New Zealand Ethics Committee to assure that the procedures and approaches engaged in this project aligned with New Zealand standards for research practice. All participants signed consent forms following reading detailed participation information sheets. Participation was voluntary, typed transcripts were sent to participants for comments and individuals could withdraw their interview data at any time.

conversations with Dr Gordon I created a strategy for approaching possible issues participants may have. I also created a list of questions to guide the discussion if the interview moved into sensitive issues that were visibly upsetting the participant. In addition to these strategies I created a pack of information for individuals regarding trauma and counselling services that I was able to hand out when needed. These strategies are important for research in a disaster setting to reduce stress and aid the individual in contacting professional help (Collogan et al., 2004a; Dodds & Nuehring, 1997). Furthermore, to equip myself as a researcher in these situations I sought out the Crisis Intervention Management Australasia organisation, attending their events and later training in individual and group crisis response skills.

These networks with professional crisis responders, psychologists and counsellors, many of whom work in the disaster context, allowed for me to feel as if I had networks of support that could strengthen my capacity as a responsible and ethical researcher. It was comforting to know I would be able to offer support, as well as information through the counselling services pack that I could pass on to any upset participants. Despite these precautions, none of the participants I spoke with in interviews experienced emotional distress. Instead many reflected that it was good to share their story and to process some of the events that had happened since the earthquakes. Other techniques that I used in to minimise the potential for harm included not questioning individuals on their experiences of the actual earthquake event and positioning questions in a way that emphasized recovery processes and experiences.

Another important step that I took was to extensively contact researchers in Christchurch to gather information on current research and the scope of the community groups involved. I did this to avoid increasing the research burden on community groups that may have been approached or involved with several projects already. The risk of burdening a community with research requests is quite high following a disaster so this step was taken to avoid, where possible, groups being burdened with a request from my project (Barron Ausbrooks et al., 2008; Gomez & Hart, 2013). Furthermore, I stressed to participants the voluntary nature of the project and made a point to empathise with the number of research requests they must be receiving. Part of this involved only contacting potential participants once. While participants can be notoriously difficult to track down and can sometimes require multiple attempts to set up a time and date, I chose not to repeatedly contact individuals to respect either their lack of interest or busyness. If an initial response was received, I would only follow up one more time if no further contact was made. In total, one potential participant was too busy to be involved and two potential participants did not respond after an initial positive response.

In addition to the above strategies for approaching and interacting with participants during data collection I have engaged with several actions that drive scholar activism as a form of reciprocity with participants. This is an important aspect of this research as it goes beyond the idea of 'doing no harm' to attempt to give back to the communities (Mutch & Marlowe, 2013). So, while this research is not directly participatory in its methodology I have borrowed some techniques for communicating and involving participants.

It is this idea of both engaging and assisting those outside of academia that has driven many of the outcomes of this research beyond the traditional thesis layout. Johnsen (2011) notes that one of the issues facing human geographers is their capacity to communicate in a way that reaches beyond the university. One aspect of feedback I received from participants was that while they didn't mind participating in the many requests for research in relation to the earthquakes, many had yet to have any further communication from the research teams.

As a communication strategy for this project I created two forms of engaging with both interested members of the public and participants. The first, a Facebook page, allowed for people to be kept up to date with interesting information on the research focus of disaster recovery, as well as major milestones in the research project such as its completion and the release of a summary of results. In conjunction, I established an email newsletter that was sent out to participants and those who sign up via the Facebook page, several times a year. This newsletter contained updates on the status of transcripts that were sent to participants, as well as small summaries of emerging themes from the data. The rationale behind these measures was to communicate with participants how their stories and experiences were being used in the project and to demonstrate the outcomes of their participation. In addition, I wrote semi-regular web articles summarising main aspects of the research findings and created summaries of published academic journal articles.

These methods provided a way to disseminate the findings of the research to broader audience, while also demonstrating the use and value of the data provided by the participants.

Furthermore, I have remained in contact with some participants, particularly those that I have been able to assist in their access to academic materials or to share emerging pieces of the research. This built on my ability to go beyond doing no harm to create research that assists and benefits the participants, even if in small ways (Lund, 2010). Derickson and Routledge (2015) note that one way academics can support activists is by sharing access to resources available to them through the

university. While the resources available to a PhD student are not as significant as a permanent staff member, I could use the time during my research to support these activist communities in their ability to access academic information, particularly that which they contributed to creating. By doing this and engaging with participants, I have been able to relate to the people participating in my research while also building several meaningful and ongoing professional relationships.

While these measures are practical in their implementation, I believe they set the tone for the research that appreciates the skills and experiences of participants, while also valuing their choice to decline research approaches or participate in another way. This strategy was designed to enact a more empowering form of post-disaster qualitative methodology that goes beyond seeing affected individuals as passive victims of the event. I now turn to a discussion of the methods engaged to carry out this research in the field.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

To engage post-structuralism and care ethics as the epistemological foundation for this research I have carried out a detailed qualitative, mixed methods research design. This strategy builds on the understanding of ethical disaster research practices and critical perspectives discussed above to explore and understand the multiple social and political processes of disaster recovery. A qualitative methodology fits with this research aim, while the use of mixed methods provides insight into different perspectives and forms of gathering and presenting data.

Qualitative data is inherently different from quantitative in that it relies on tacit and experiential knowledge of the researcher and participants (Creswell, 2003). The aim of research that is qualitative in nature is to understand the complex and nuanced meaning and experiences of participants (Fossey et al., 2002). When combined with a critical perspective, qualitative research can provide important questions and critiques of dominant social and political structures and systems (Fossey et al., 2002). Qualitative data is often textual; however, this goes beyond the realm of books to include spoken words, place names and other forms of 'text' (Gallaher, 2011). Similarly, qualitative practices do not generally favour one method over another, instead taking a multi-method approach to gathering data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

In this research, I have engaged traditional qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews alongside newer methods such as internet based e-interviews and photographic images. The use of images provides a different form of text for the reader to see elements of the disaster and the city's

recovery. As demonstrated in *Figure 2*, these methods are interlinked with the broader epistemology and methodology focusing on the social construction of disaster recovery and the analysis of power relations in the processes of community and governance interaction.

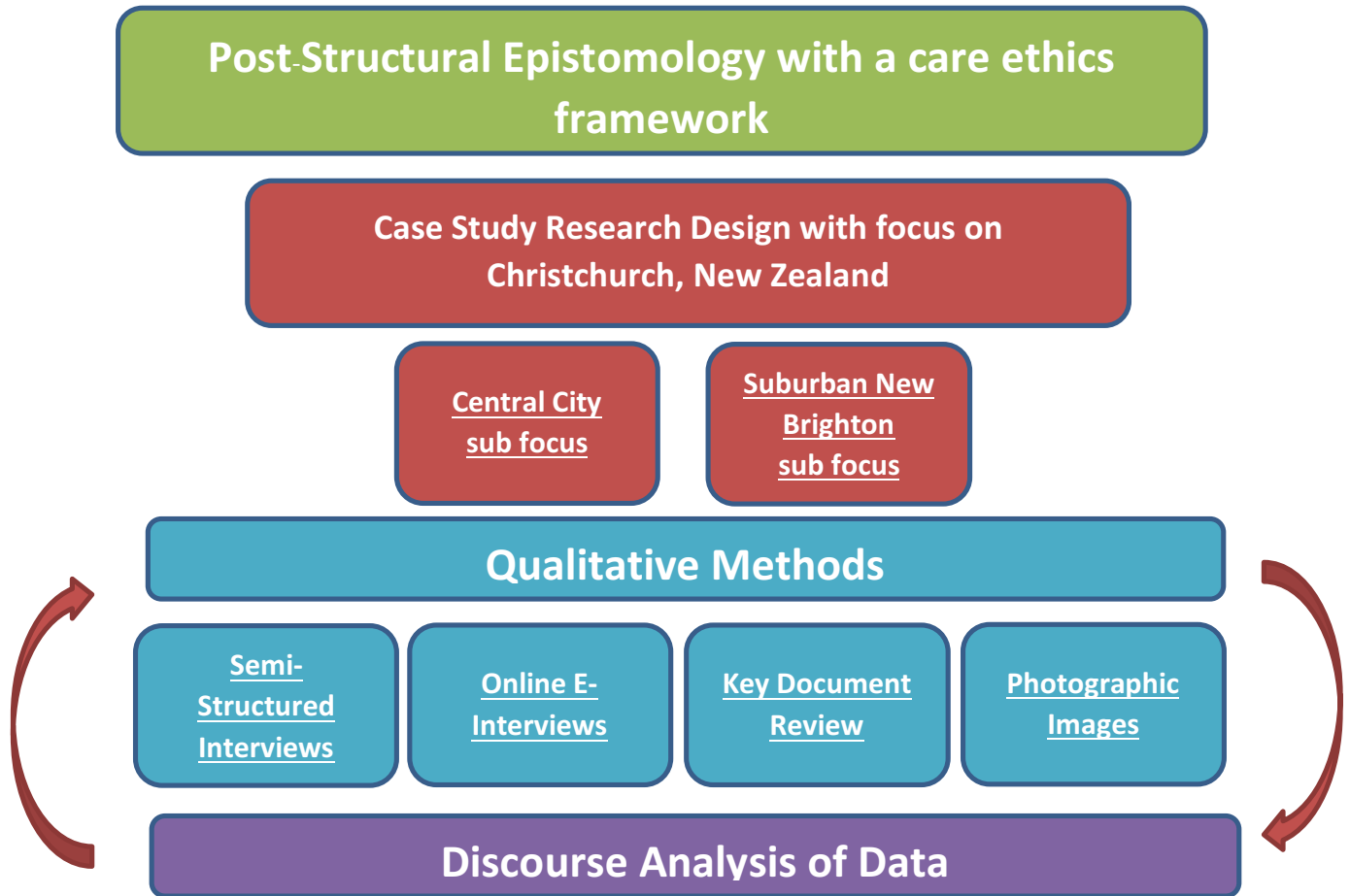


Figure 2: Research Design Framework.

The use of multiple methods in this way forms the strategy of triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Stake, 2005). Triangulation uses the collection of multiple perspectives through different methods to clarify meanings and suggest patterns (Stake, 2005). This technique does not aim to produce data that is reproducible but instead looks to identify different realities and perspectives in a rigorous manner (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). To structure these methods, I have adopted a case study approach that focuses on the primary case of Christchurch City during recovery from the earthquakes.

3.3.1 A Case Study Approach

Case studies provide an important way to focus research and to provide examples and context for building theoretical and empirical research (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake, 2005). According to Stake’s

(2005) classification of case studies, this case has elements of both intrinsic and instrumental purpose. Intrinsically, this research is interested in the case of Christchurch and the approach to politically and socially recover and rebuild. However, Stake (2005) does note that intrinsic case studies do little to build and improve theoretical constructs. While this case study was originally built around the specific activities and occurrences in Christchurch, the purpose of this research has extended to contribute to broader theory on the politicisation of disaster recovery and the possibilities for social change in crisis situations. Thus, some segments of this research approach the intrinsic value of the case study, while others contribute to the theoretical arguments of crisis politics and hope through building and engaging with theory and philosophical perspectives.

The experiences of Christchurch during response and recovery to the earthquakes provide an ideal case for this research because of the unusual nature of the disaster, as well as the social and political context of the region. The Christchurch earthquakes resulted in some of the strongest ground acceleration shaking ever recorded. While the Moment Magnitude of the February earthquake (6.3 magnitude) was not exceptionally large on the world scale, the location, and depth of the tremor resulted in a ground acceleration twice that of gravity in an urban setting (GNS Science, 2011). This resulted in a large scale of damage, particularly in the city centre.

Furthermore, there has been a large involvement of community organisations and groups in the response and recovery to the earthquake events. Initially this response centred around groups such as the Student Volunteer Army and the Farmie Army, later evolving to encompass a variety of community advocacy groups and organisations dedicated to activities such as transitional architecture. Typically the broad focus of many of these organisations and collective groups has encompassed a diverse range of the population. While some groups appeared to attract specific cohorts such as young people or local residents, the wide range of groups focussed on different aspects of the recovery has generally supported a varied range of interests. This wide-ranging focus of these advocacy groups is demonstrated in *Table 1*,² showing the type of groups that operate across Christchurch City. The presence and ongoing activity of these groups provides an ideal case to explore what circumstances aid and assist the creation and maintenance of these organisations, as well as the impact of their presence on the nature and shape of disaster recovery.

² These tables are a representation of organisations active in Christchurch during this research. Not all organisations listed participated in this research. The organisations that did not participate are not listed separately to maintain the anonymity of the individuals interviewed.

Table 1: Community Organisations Active in Earthquake Advocacy in Wider Christchurch 2013-2016

<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Type of Activity</i>
CanCERN	Canterbury wide advocacy organisation originally set up to represent red zone residents in East Christchurch
WeCan – Wider Earthquake Communities Action Network	Group aiming to raise awareness and advocate against the human rights issues and injustices in the earthquake recovery
Empowered Christchurch	Advocacy organisation surrounding land zoning and housing rights
Edible Canterbury	Group advocating for more urban agriculture and food forests
Canterbury Community Gardens Association	Wider organisation that umbrellas the Food Resilience Network, advocates for more community gardens in the recovery of the city
EVO:SPACE Eastern Visions	Group of community leaders engaging with the wider public on ideas for recovery in the eastern suburbs
Network Waitangi Ōtautahi	Organisation supporting the development of a multicultural treaty based society
One Voice Te Reo Kotahi	An umbrella organisation that works with many different community and social groups in the Christchurch area to communicate as an NGO voice with the local and central government on recovery issues
Rebuild Christchurch	Website and network aimed at disseminating information on the earthquake response and recovery
Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu	Iwi representatives involved with CERA and other Māori based issues in the recovery
TC3 Residents	Advocacy organisation for residents who have been land zoned Green-Blue TC3, dealing with insurance and legal issues

The processes of recovery in Christchurch are broad and varied with a large number of organisations across the region participating in a number of different activities. To understand and explore in sufficient depth the activities of these organisations, in conjunction with the governance structures such as the local council and CERA, I have chosen to explore in detail two sub focuses of the Christchurch case study: the central city; and the eastern suburb of New Brighton. This approach has enabled me to narrow down the scope of the project as well as the breadth of participants. Despite being a relatively small city on a global scale, the scale of community led recovery activities at a city-wide level was too large to be analysed in this project. These two cases also allowed me to investigate and explore through experiential insight and knowledge, the topic of community recovery at a deeper level (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 2005).

The rationale for focusing on the central city of Christchurch is due to its centrality, both as the central business district, and in the ongoing recovery discussions and efforts. Due to the large amount of devastation the CBD suffered, including damage to over 50% of buildings, the process of recovery was always likely to be challenging (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2015). Initially led by the City Council, the recovery plan involved extensive consultation with residents and community representatives. However, this plan was overridden by the central government and thus provides an important case for understanding the dynamics between community organisations and different levels of governance. Furthermore, by engaging with the central city, insight into the political use of the recovery is able to be understood, particularly from the point of recovery policies and perceived economic gains and benefits.

Within the spaces that have emerged during the demolition stage, many community organisations have been established, providing services, entertainment and public space which either did not exist previously or that were damaged. This is one of the interesting aspects of the Christchurch recovery that has garnered international attention, particularly through the use of transitional architecture projects and urban agriculture. *Table 2* represents a number of the organisations active in the CBD during the time frame of this research, showing the number and breadth of groups.

Table 2: Community Organisations Active in the Central City of Christchurch 2013-2016

<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Type of Activity</i>
Agropolis	Urban agriculture based group operating from CBD location
RAD Bikes	Community bike shed in the CBD
Greening the Rubble	Organisation that creates installations on vacant plots of land based around greenery and plants
Gap Filler	Focused on transitional architecture projects on vacant land, such as the Pallet Pavilion and The Commons
Plant Gang	Works on environmental artworks in post-earthquake landscape
The VIVA! Project	Project to create a sustainable urban village
A Brave New City	Organisation dedicated to engaging with citizens to envisage new ways of developing the city
FESTA – Festival of Transitional Architecture	Organisation that runs the free public event in the CBD to explore urban regeneration and recovery
Avon Loop Planning Association	Community association for those living in the inner-city Avon Loop
Avon Ōtākaro Network	Organisation advocating for the red zoned land along the Avon Ōtākaro river to be designated for regenerating native bush and community activities. NB: Active in the suburbs the Avon travels through, including the eastern suburbs and New Brighton
Garden City 2.0	Organisation aimed at encouraging local food production. Supplies locally grown food through a CSA-type scheme
Habitat for Humanity	Christchurch focussed HfH scheme focussed on local housing issues, also runs ReStore, a recycled furniture store
Ministry of Awesome	Aims to create a vibrant and connected city through creating ‘awesome’ projects and networks
Life in Vacant Spaces	Organisation that assists with temporary and transitional architecture projects such as those undertaken by Gapfiller and Greening the Rubble

The second sub focus in this research approaches the recovery from a different spatial and socio-economic perspective. This element of the research compares the experiences of disaster recovery in the central city of Christchurch with that of the suburbs. Due to significant damage in both the eastern Suburbs and the city centre there has been tension regarding the appropriate allocation of resources and support for each geographic area. Given the intense focus on the CBD, particularly by the government recovery agency CERA, some people have articulated that the suburbs should have been allocated more focus.

New Brighton is an ideal sub focus for understanding some of the important dynamics that have occurred in the recovery in the eastern suburbs. New Brighton is composed of a mix of socio-economic groups and is an area that has been categorised in different places as red zone and green zone (a classification determined by the level of land damage), allowing for a representation of the issues facing property owners and residents in both situations. New Brighton is also a suburb which has a highly active community sector (as shown in *Table 3*), allowing for a focus on the role of community based action in the recovery of the suburb. The data collected for New Brighton is not representative of all suburbs in the east. However, the high representation of community groups and residents' associations in the area make the focus on New Brighton an interesting case for understanding how community recovery can be carried out and the challenges faced.

The case study of Christchurch, narrowed down with the sub focus on the central city and New Brighton provide the ideal framework for exploring the interactions between community and governance organisations, as well as the dynamics between different geographical and spatial areas in wider Christchurch. The central city provides a focal point for the wide range of community activities and activism that has occurred since the earthquakes, as well as the focus on the 'urban' environment that has come from both community and government organisations seeking to rebuild the central city. This is contrasted with the suburban setting of New Brighton which provides an exploration of the processes of recovery in the suburbs, how this differs and is similar to the case of the central city and the politics of these differences. Overall, both cases provide ideal contexts for exploring the role of community led recovery actions. I now discuss the specific methods engaged to collect the data on the case study and the approach to data analysis.

Table 3: Community Organisations Active in New Brighton 2013-2016

<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Type of Activity</i>
New Brighton Time Bank (no longer operating at time of publication)	Community currency based on the trading of time credits
New Brighton Blanket Bank	Organisation supplying free goods to the community
New Brighton Community Gardens	Community garden
New Brighton Project	Community development organisation that runs the local market, blanket bank, newsletter and other local projects
North New Brighton Residents' Association	Residents' association
New Brighton Residents' Association	Residents' association
South New Brighton Residents' Association	Residents' association
Southshore Residents' Association	Residents association
North New Brighton Community Hub	Group established during the February 22 nd earthquake to provide donated goods and services to the community
ReNew Brighton	Organisation aiming to connect and encourage collaboration between the community groups in New Brighton
New Brighton Business and Landowners Association	Organisation seeking to rejuvenate New Brighton for stakeholders and the community
New Brighton VIVA! Project – Sustainable Coastal Village	Organisation aimed at establishing a sustainable coastal village in New Brighton
SURF – Strategic Urban Regeneration Fund	Community fundraising organisation to lead recovery and regeneration projects.

3.4 QUALITATIVE METHODS

3.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key informant individuals involved in both community organisations and political institutions. This was one of the main methods for obtaining qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews allowed me to understand participants' stories, experiences and opinions at a deeper level than possible through surveys or quantitative data

(Creswell, 2003). Through this method I was able to ask questions relating to the individual's recovery stories, how their organisation is approaching the recovery of the city and their perceptions of the recovery to date. I approached participants who were key representatives of the organisations that were highly active in the central city and New Brighton. I did not specify which individual I wished to speak to but asked if anyone in the organisation would be willing to contribute their time to the project. To do this I used purposive sampling with a focus on variation in order to select a variety of community led organisations active in the community and contributing to projects related to earthquake recovery (Polkinghorne, 2005). Here the focus is on gaining depth and understanding of topics. As Polkinghorne (2005, p. 140) describes:

...the selection should not be random or left to chance. The concern is not how much data were gathered or from how many sources but whether the data that were collected are sufficiently rich to bring refinement and clarity to understanding an experience.

Participants were recruited through an initial email or phone contact. I also encouraged individuals to pass on my details to other people they knew involved in organisations working on community recovery.

Interviews were undertaken at a location suggested by the participant across two research trips in September and November/December 2015. A variety of locations were used, including participants' homes and places of work or local libraries and cafés. Interviews were started by going through the consent and information form, as well as a reassurance that collected information would be kept anonymous in the final thesis and related publications. Because of this requirement, direct quotes in this thesis are not contextualised with demographic data. While I recognise the limitations this approach creates with regards to the full context of the quote, the small size of Christchurch and the tight-knit networks of community organisations raise significant issues with the potential for identification of the data. Once consent forms were signed, interviews were commenced and recorded. Questions followed a semi-structured interview schedule (see appendix for list of indicative questions). After working through the main themes of the interview schedule, participants were asked if there were any other stories or experiences they wanted to share. I would then spend some time with the participant after turning off the recorder chatting and discussing local events or other topics. All participants were given the opportunity to comment on their final transcript and follow up the interview via email.

In total 30 individuals representing 31 community and governance organisations were interviewed. Some individuals belonged to the same organisation as another participant and wished to also

contribute their perspective, while others were involved in multiple groups and thus spoke of their experiences in several different organisations. Of these interviews, several group or pair interviews were organised by members of organisations in which several individuals wished to be interviewed at the same time. This sample size was adjusted as the research progressed in relation to the information gathered and the range of topics and backgrounds covered (Plainkas, 2006). This sample size was approximately what had been aimed for in the early stage of the research and reflected a point at which a number of perspectives had been gathered from different aspects of the recovery. A conscious decision based on time and resources was made to limit the number of interviews with politicians and staff of governance organisations. Furthermore, the official positions of these organisations in relation to many aspects of the recovery are available through secondary documents and media releases which were analysed using discourse analysis as secondary texts (see *Section 3.5.3*). While there were many more organisations and people that could have been interviewed, I made the decision to keep the interview data at this range to keep within the scope of a PhD thesis.

3.4.2 Online E-interviews

For interviews with participants who were not representatives of recovery groups but were members of these organisations and affected communities, I included an online e-interview option. I offered this as an alternative option for individuals who were key informants that were keen to participate but too busy for face to face interviews. The online e-interview is an emerging method that provides a low key and less intense form of participation that is especially useful for interacting with individuals around sensitive issues (Hewson, 2003; Jensen, 2010). Online e-interviews follow a similar semi-structured format as face to face interviews and are carried out using a website survey programme (Hewson, 2003). Other benefits of this method include the ability to target certain populations online using new groups and forums, and the ability to offer a form of participation that can take place at any time in the comfort of the participant's home (Hewson, 2003). Because of concerns that organisations and communities that have experienced disaster may be overwhelmed with research requests, this method provided an ideal complementary practice to in depth semi-structured interviews.

For this method, I used the internet based software Qualtrics to establish the e-interview. I adapted the questions used in the semi-structured interviews to provide open-ended questions that participants could answer. Participants were recruited for the e-interview by a combination of real world and virtual methods. This included posting the link on Facebook and Twitter, as well as asking organisations to send the link and a short description via email or social networks to their members.

Individuals were encouraged to 'share' the posts to further the reach of the survey. In this way, the sampling method resembles snowballing in that participants were likely to share the information within their networks (Polkinghorne, 2005). In addition to these virtual forms of communication I created small business card sized notes with the details of the e-interview on them that I distributed through the Christchurch CBD and New Brighton in cafes and libraries. I also put up posters with tear-away details for the e-interview website in community notice boards, cafés and libraries.

Participants who either typed in the web address from the notice or clicked through to the survey from web postings were initially directed to a short introductory page. Participants were then asked to click through to the full information sheet to read before proceeding. Information was provided about who to contact to withdraw their answers from the survey if they desired to do so. To start the online interview, the participant had to tick a box that provided consent and confirmed the individual had read and understood the information sheet. Basic demographic questions were then asked, followed by the open ended in depth questions. Participants were able to leave the e-interview at any time and this was emphasized in the information sheet. The online interview ended with the opportunity to sign up for newsletter updates, and a blurb of information on where to receive help if the interview had prompted any distress.

This method resulted in 108 responses. The length and depth of answers provided through these responses was mixed. Some respondents replied in detail, writing many paragraphs for most questions, while others responded with several lines. All responses however have been useful in sharing the wide range of opinions and experiences of those in Christchurch and by doing so I was able to get a much broader perspective than possible with semi-structured interviews alone. There were some challenges with this method of e-interview. For instance, those with limited technology are excluded from this option (McLafferty, 2010). In addition, there is a potential to miss the target group of respondents (McLafferty, 2010). However, Hewson (2003) has found that research comparing the participant profiles of both online only and non-online methods that demographics were remarkably similar. In some cases, the online samples actually provided better representation across age profiles (Hewson, 2003).

As there is still ambiguity regarding the possibility for digital exclusion in these methods, online interviews were engaged as a secondary method. Thus, the main portion of data collection has been carried out through more traditional face-to-face semi-structured interviews. By gathering demographic data I was able to ascertain the gender, age and ethnicity of the respondents (see

Table 4, 5 & 6). Interestingly, younger age groups were most absent from the survey, with many in older age categories responding. There were eight responses in the age range 18-30 years of age and sixteen responses from the age range 60 and over. This demographic data supports the claims by Hewson (2003) that e-methods are able to achieve a wide range of responses across age and gender.

Table 4: Age range of e-interview participants

Age Range (years old)	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses %
18-30	8	7
30-40	15	14
40-50	30	28
50-60	38	35
60+	16	15
No Response	1	1
Total	108	100

Table 5: Self-described gender identity of e-interview participants

Gender Identity	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses %
Female	81	75
Male	23	21
Gender Queer	1	1
No Response	3	3
Total	108	100

Table 6: Self-reported ethnicity of e-interview participants

Ethnic Identity	Number of Responses
Pākehā/NZ European/Caucasian	78
New Zealander/Kiwi	18
Māori	1
Asian	1
Canadian	2
American	2
No Response	7

NB: Some individuals identified with more than one ethnic category. Participants were able to type their own labels for their identity. The label New Zealander has been listed separately to Pākehā/NZ European due to ambiguity as to the similarities and differences between participants' ideas of national identity.

3.4.3 Document Review

In addition to the analysis of interview transcripts and e-interviews I also analysed secondary documents such as media releases, government reports, official information act requests and parliamentary questions. Document analysis is an important source of data although there are specific ways that the documents need to be chosen and analysed (Finnegan, 2006; MacDonald, 2008; White, 2010). Part of this is due to the complexity of documents as socially constructed and organised objects that reflect different ideologies, discourses and practices depending on the type of document and its authors. In this research, document analysis was an important source of information on the position of different agencies and individuals on various aspects of the Christchurch earthquake. Through detailed analysis of key documents I was able to shed light on the political and social processes of disaster recovery in Christchurch while also providing greater context to the case than interviews alone. The use of documents as an element of triangulation for data collection is thus an important part of this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Stake, 2005).

To choose and categorise the documents I engaged the typology of documents suggested by Scott (1990) which separates documents as personal/official, and official documents as state/private, as well as the classifications of documents suggested by Jupp (2006) and Finnegan (2006). Here I have classified official private documents as official non-state documents to indicate that these documents are freely available to the public but are not related to government procedures or departments. This typology is presented below in *Table 7*.

Table 7: Documents used for Analysis

Personal Documents:	Official State Documents:	Official Non-State Documents:
Life Histories and Memories Diaries Letters Blogs	Government Reports Parliamentary Debates (i.e. Hansard) Documents on Policy Works of Reference Planning Documents Statistic Records (including census data) Official Information Act Requests Cabinet Papers	Research Reports Annual Reports Current Affairs (including media reports, media releases) Social Surveys

From this typology, I analysed official documents from both state and private sources. This includes government reports and cabinet papers as well as media reports and annual reports for various organisations. To assess the authenticity of the documents used, I followed the suggestion of MacDonald (2008), who recommends asking a variety of questions relating to the quality and authorship of documents in order to ascertain the likely value of the document. These questions include: do the documents make sense or contain glaring errors; is there consistency in literary style and typeface; and is the document derived from a reliable source? As all the documents used in this research are from official sources there is less risk regarding the authenticity of documents but it is still important to ascertain the origin and reliability of the source of data. Another important factor to consider is the availability of these documents (Jupp, 2006). Most of the documents used in this research are publicly available apart from the reports provided by Official Information Act requests. However, the information contained in these requests is freely available to any other individual making a request.

There is a plethora of official documents relating to the recovery of Christchurch from the earthquakes. The main rationale for the choice of the documents was the relative significance of the organisation in the recovery and rebuild of Christchurch. These documents, alongside official private sources such as media reports regarding the same organisation and their policies and plans were analysed as to ascertain the representation and position of the organisation on certain issues. Thus, the focus of the documents collected in this research is in relation to the activities of the Canterbury Earthquake Authority and the City Council (see *Table 8*). Outside of these documents, official

parliamentary records and legislation have been utilised to gain perspective on the governing party's position on recovery issues and plans.

Table 8: Analysed Documents and Source

Official State Documents
<p>Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority:</p> <p>Recovery Strategy for Greater Canterbury</p> <p>Community Engagement framework and strategy</p> <p>Annual Reports 2011-2015</p> <p>Cost Sharing Agreement with Christchurch City Council 2013</p> <p>City centre anchor projects overview 2014</p> <p>Briefing to the incoming Minister 2014</p> <p>Transition Recovery Plan 2015</p> <p>City Council Documents:</p> <p>Share an Idea consultation promotion</p> <p>Community engagement materials</p> <p>Christchurch City Council Annual Plans 2012-2015</p> <p>Original council city recovery plan 2012</p> <p>Korda Mentha Report for CCC on financial standing 2013</p> <p>Suburb Profiles 2013</p> <p>Legislation:</p> <p>Environment Canterbury Temporary Commissioners and Improved Water Management Amendment Bill 2010</p> <p>Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act 2010</p> <p>Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011</p> <p>Government Communications:</p> <p>Various minutes of Cabinet meetings</p> <p>Oral questions to Members of Parliament on the topic of the Canterbury earthquakes</p> <p>Written questions to Members of Parliament on the topic of the Canterbury earthquakes</p> <p>Other:</p> <p>Ministry for Education renewal report 2012</p> <p>Department of Building and Housing key indicators for Canterbury house prices 2012</p> <p>New Zealand Census Data</p> <p>Ministry for Business, Innovation and Economics Canterbury Housing report 2013</p> <p>TPA Christchurch Rental Survey 2013</p> <p>Statistics New Zealand report on Canterbury Housing 2014</p>

Official Non-State Documents:

Media Releases:

Political party press releases on topics relating to the earthquake response and recovery

Press releases by community organisations involved in earthquake recovery

Official press releases from governance organisations such as Ngāi Tahu, CERA, CCDU and Christchurch City Council

News Articles:

Articles sourced between 2010-2016 on the topics of earthquake response, earthquake recovery, housing, insurance, legislation, protests and community action in Christchurch, retrieved from:

New Zealand Herald

Scoop.co.nz

The Press

The Otago Daily Times

The Dominion Post

Official Information Act Requests

Costs for the Christchurch Convention Centre plans

Costs for public education campaigns for the city centre blueprint

Net loss of housing stock in residential Christchurch (City Council and Earthquake Commission)

Other

Ngāi Tahu Annual Reports 2011-2015

Supreme Court Ruling for the Quake Outcasts vs Minister for Earthquake Recovery 2014-15

3.4.4 Photographic Images

It is impossible to represent the experience of disaster to those who did not experience the event first hand. This is one of the limitations facing qualitative social researchers of many phenomena. With this research, I have grappled with insider/outsider status due to not experiencing the February 22nd earthquake, despite being in another earthquake of similar magnitude. Just as I can never know the experience of that earthquake in February, many people reading this work will not know the experience of an earthquake or any other major disaster. While the process of recovery is easier for others to observe through media accounts and visiting the affected region, it was my feeling that the words on the pages of the thesis do not do full justice to the scope of damage and the process of recovery in Christchurch.

To represent from another perspective the process of disaster and recovery I took photographs during field work as a way of visualising, for the reader, one version of what was happening in

Christchurch. Visual methods are an important emerging field of inquiry, particularly in geography (Rose, 1996). Thornes (2004) notes that the importance of photographs and images is not just their creation and representation of theory, but also their interpretation. This is something that is particularly relevant and useful to the geography discipline (Thornes, 2004; Rose, 1996). I chose to use images to frame and articulate an additional form of 'data' to represent the physical and cultural reconstruction of the city.

This approach does not have the same complexity as working with participant driven visual methods, but still must be treated cautiously. Most notably, it needs to be acknowledged that visual representations are static and selective, only representing one person's (in this case, mine, as the researcher) of a given situation or context (Kellehear, 1993; Prosser, 2008). Visual representations of phenomena also rely on the cultural and social construct of 'seeing', and are imbued with layers and processes of power (Kellehear, 1993; Rose, 1996). Prosser (2008) describes the importance of visual methods as related not to the physical representation in the image but the meaning attributed to it.

The photo essays are intended to act as another form of representation, bringing a further sensory level to the representations of the Christchurch earthquakes and the affect the disaster has had on communities and the city. They are not intended to fully express or visualise the 'reality' of post-disaster Christchurch, but instead to offer another perspective to consider the event. An important point to note is that while many of the photos often lack people, the landscapes are not without people but instead this reflects the time of capture and the wider context of the area pictured. For instance, many of the photographs were taken during the work week.

In this thesis, I have interspersed these photo essays throughout the written chapters. Each results and findings chapter (*Five, Six & Seven*) is prefaced with a photo essay that visualises the context of the research but provokes thoughts and emotions on the area of focus. These photo essays incorporate the emotional geographies of the research into the text through contextualising and visualising the destruction and recovery from disaster. While emotional and care geographies have been significant in shaping the methodology of this research, the results and findings presented in this thesis largely present the theoretical aspects of social and political recovery. To represent the emotional landscape of this context, these photo essays add to the depth of the thesis and the stories of participants.

To achieve this aim, these photo essays are accompanied with narrative quotes which frame and contextualise the image. This practice is not always necessary or desired in photo essays, as it can interrupt the aim of some researchers which seek to leave the image up to the interpretation of the viewer (Pink, 2001). However, I have chosen to accompany the images with narrative quotes from the interviews as a method for contextualising and framing the images while also elaborating on the emotional landscape within the place represented (Pink, 2001). Furthermore, it is essential to represent the images in a transparent way that acknowledges the subjective experience of disaster.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Throughout this chapter I have outlined the ethical and methodological approaches to gather these data, which have involved an in-depth post-structural orientation, particularly towards the social construction of discourses and ideologies, and the role that emotions and positionality play in the construction of this thesis. To follow through with this methodological positioning I engaged discourse analysis as the main method for analysing the data. Gallaher (2011) describes the value of qualitative inquiry as the interpretation and analysis of the data. Through discourse analysis, I was able to interrogate and deconstruct the discourses, ideologies and power relations in the data to examine patterns of social change and politics in the recovery of Christchurch (Fairclough, 2012; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005).

As described in the earlier discussion on epistemology, discourses are considered to be the systems of meaning that organise social order (Gallaher, 2011; Howarth, 2000). Here, discourse is conceptualized by drawing on the work of Foucault and Howarth (Howarth, 2000; Howarth & Stavrakais, 2000; Sharp & Richardson, 2001; Shirato et al., 2012; Waitt, 2010). This framework serves to theorise discourse in a way that is specifically applied to political and social processes that inscribe meaning in objects, texts and actions and their relations (Howarth & Stavrakais, 2000). According to Foucault, discourses are the 'conditions of possibility' for how people see the world (Sapsford, 2006). Such an articulation of discourse articulates the socially constructed nature of what is considered 'normal' or 'common-sense' (Shirato et al., 2012). A large part of engaging theories of discourses in the research context is the ability to analyse 'texts' (written, enacted, spoken and seen) within their context (Paltridge, 2008). Thus, discourse theory is concerned with the social construction of reality, and the way that these social constructions are represented and mobilised (Howarth, 2000; Paltridge, 2006).

Integral to this theorisation of discourse is the role of power. Here, power and knowledge are intertwined processes that flow through the construction and enactment of discourses in society (Punch, 2014; Shirato et al., 2012). Furthermore, this form of power is framed as a relation rather than an 'object' or 'quality' (Shirato et al., 2012). By acknowledging the power inherent in all social relations, individuals both contribute to and resist dominant discourses (Danaher et al., 2000). However, those with more power or greater power relations in society will often contribute more significantly to discourses which become dominant or hegemonic. The articulation and expression of these power relations often results in the exclusion or 'othering' of certain people, ideas and values to further the hegemony of the dominant discourses (Howarth & Stavrakais, 2000). Such patterns and relations are expressed through 'texts', and discourse analysis provides insight into these dynamics.

To put this theory into practice, the layers of discourse, power and meaning in texts, experiences and stories must be interrogated (Waite, 2010). This process involves questioning what is 'true' as well as exploring the role of privilege and subjectivities in shaping the language and knowledge expressed (Cope, 2010; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Waite, 2010). Further, the role of actors and individuals in the process of constructing 'truth', and how these ideas of reality and truth are perpetuated is another important analysis (Sharp & Richardson, 2001). Sharp and Richardson (2001, p198), for instance describe the principles of Foucauldian inspired analysis as premised on the following aspects which can be used to guide analysis:

- social change as influenced by and an influencer of communications;
- social change as influenced by and an influencer of social practices;
- power relations as influencing the competition and dominance of discourses; as well as the construction of social change;
- challenges to the status quo discuss changes in competition between discourses over time.

While the approach to discourse analysis in this thesis draws on the work of Foucault, the work of other authors also provides insight into the practical application of these philosophies of knowledge to data analysis (Graham, 2005; Hajer & Versteeg, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001). By engaging these perspectives, data analysis in this research is approached in a way that challenges and untangles the dominant constructions of reality and truth, and whom these serve as they are articulated in the various 'texts' gathered as data (Graham, 2005; Sharp & Richardson, 2001).

To develop approach this task of discourse analysis I have engaged in what Creswell (2003, p. 22) describes as the “ongoing process of continual reflection about the data [and] asking analytic questions”.

Practically speaking, I carried out analysis of the data through first digitally coding for themes, discourses and patterns that emerged throughout the process of data collection. All documents, including interview transcripts were uploaded to the software NVivo and subsequently coded for the themes determined by the previously outlined process. NVivo provided an electronic method for storing the data and the analysis. Three types of coding were engaged as suggested by Punch (2014): descriptive, topic and analytic. Descriptive coding provided the demographic and contextual data; this was only applicable to the e-interview data in which demographic information was collected. Topic coding was used in a minimal way for all sources of data as a way of providing contextual details and descriptive information on events and processes related to the research topic (Punch, 2014). The bulk of the analysis was undertaken as analytic coding. This form of coding involved the application of the research questions to provide the material that was used for the in-depth interpretation and discourse analysis. Analytic coding was done for the first time with broad categories of analysis, with subsequent rounds of coding carried out for different iterations of more in-depth discourse analysis themes.

To move beyond analytic coding and to undertake discourse analysis of the data I first laid out a comprehensive strategy for structuring the theoretical themes of the research in relation to the data. To do so I created a framework of themes that emerged from the three main research questions as well as from research interviews and field work notes using the guiding questions suggested by Jupp (2006) and Sapsford (2006). This included questions such as:

- What is allowable in the production of statements?
- What kinds of statements can be made?
- What are the ‘spaces’ in which these new statements are produced?
- What forms of resistance or counter measures are taken against dominant or normalising discourses?
- What discourses are shaping what is seen as ‘right’ and ‘wrong’?
- What is seen as problematic and what is not?
- What alternative discourses exist?

I then created a template of specific questions relating to the research based on these broader questions to explore for each set of data (e-interviews, document analysis and face to face interviews). The data were examined for relevance across these questions in NVivo, while I also coded for basic functions such as topic and demographic details. From the initial notes gathered from these questions another iteration of the research themes was undertaken and divided into nodes for discourse analysis (the NVivo term for codes). The data were subsequently coded through these nodes to provide a network of data to analyse for patterns of power relations, social change and other dominant and resistance discourses.

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have outlined how this doctoral research engages a post-structural methodology that frames the multiple forms of knowing disaster and recovery. To do so I engage a thoughtful and caring inquiry that privileges the contribution of participants' stories, experiences and emotions. I engage a post-structural epistemology through the alignment with these forms of knowing as well as the insight gained into the production of knowledge that creates and perpetuates forms of power and ideology to shape hegemonic ideas of how disaster recovery does and should occur. As the logical extension of the post-structural philosophy to the realm of research practice, I turn to care ethics to go beyond the traditional requirements of the ethics committee to design and practice research that is engaged with best practice guidelines from disaster psychology while also working with, rather than against, the presence of emotions in the research process (Bondi, 2005; Lawson, 2007).

From this methodological foundation I have utilised a detailed, qualitative, mixed methods research design. This strategy builds on an understanding of ethical disaster research practices and critical research objectives to explore the multiple social and political processes of disaster recovery. The research design is comprised of two instrumental and intrinsic case studies – New Brighton and the central city. These geographical areas provided a context to explore in-depth the political and social aspects of community led recovery action. Specific methods used to collect data included 30 semi-structured interviews, over one hundred e-interviews and analysis of a range of government documents. Data analysis was carried out through Foucauldian influenced discourse analysis that positions power in relation to the dominance of certain discourses in society (Punch, 2014). This process involves questioning in the data what is considered 'true', what is privileged and the role of subjectivities in shaping the language and knowledge expressed (Cope, 2010; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Waitt, 2010). In addition, I have created three photographic essays that preface each results

and discussion chapter. These essays lead into the discussion while also providing a visual and emotional context to situate the research. The next chapter of the thesis will outline the context of the research and the social and political history of the Canterbury earthquakes.

4 POLITICS AND DISASTER IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

The previous three chapters have set the scene for this doctoral research by outlining the framing of this research, the theoretical and ontological framework, and the epistemological and methodological undertaking of the project. Now the focus shifts to the case study of Christchurch City in Aotearoa New Zealand before moving into a detailed exploration of the findings of the research project. This chapter provides the important context that shapes the political, social and historical setting of the research. Here I discuss the history of natural disasters in Aotearoa New Zealand and the relevant social and political systems and emergency management legislation that encompasses response and recovery. Following this, the chapter discusses the events in Canterbury, following the first major earthquake in September 2010, to introduce the actors and institutions involved and to outline the timeline of major events in the response and recovery.

4.1 A SHORT HISTORY OF DISASTER IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Aotearoa New Zealand is known for its location on the ring of fire, a zone of high tectonic activity, which runs through the Pacific, Asia and the west coast of North and South America (Rogers, 2013). The location on these plate boundaries contributes to a high risk of seismic and volcanic activity. As a result, disasters have been part of the country's psyche for hundreds of years. In Māori society Rūaumoko is the metaphysical representation of earthquakes and volcanoes, which Māori and the early colonists certainly experienced in the large earthquakes in 1843, 1848, 1855 and 1888 (Rogers, 2013). Volcanoes, lahars, ship wrecks, cyclones and floods are also common threats in the New Zealand landscape.

The 1931 Napier earthquake was one of the most devastating events, resulting in the death of 256 individuals and the destruction of most of the town (Rogers, 2013). The earthquake resulted in a reappraisal of the building codes resulting in much stronger regulation of building for seismic activity (Eiby, 1975). Alongside this, the experience of responding to and recovering from the disaster contributed the creation of the War Damage and Earthquake commission, now known as the Earthquake Commission (EQC), which provides national insurance coverage for individuals and businesses (Hay, 1996). Further large earthquakes to hit the country include the 7.2 magnitude earthquake in the Wairarapa region close to the Capital city of Wellington in 1942, the 1968 Ōrangahua earthquake at a magnitude of 7.1, the Edgecumbe earthquake in 1987 and the eruption of Mt Ruapehu in 1995. These frequency and severity of these events have led to a broader acceptance of the geophysical hazards facing Aotearoa New Zealand (Johnston et al., 1999; Rogers, 2013).

4.2 MANAGING DISASTER THROUGH POLITICS

Because of the historical legacy of disaster and natural hazard risk, the disaster management field has extensive experience in approaching disasters and recovery. Various political and legislative measures have been put in place to anticipate and respond to such disruptive events. However, unlike many countries, Aotearoa does not have a standalone authority that manages disaster events (Brookie, 2012). Instead, disaster response and recovery is managed through the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency and a range of local branches. This approach is legislated through the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act (CDEM) 2002 that encompasses all hazards across multiple agencies (NZ Government, 2010).

The passing of legislation and political frameworks for managing disaster is highly impacted by the political structures of the country which relies on a single Mixed Member Proportional representation system that rotates over a three-year electoral cycle. In the elected parliament, various ministerial positions are assigned to the field of disaster response and hazards management. *Table 9* outlines the relevant ministerial positions held during the period of the Canterbury earthquakes and this research that covers three electoral periods (2008-2011, 2011-2014, 2014-2017).

Table 9: Government Ministers with Disaster Related Portfolios 2008-2017

	Elected Governing Party	Prime Minister	Minister for Civil Defence	Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery	Minister responsible for Earthquake Commission
2008-2011	National Party	Rt. Hon. John Key	Hon. John Carter (2008-2011) Hon. Craig Foss (2011)	Hon. Gerry Brownlee	Hon. Gerry Brownlee
2011-2014	National Party	Rt. Hon. John Key	Hon. Chris Tremain	Hon. Gerry Brownlee	Hon. Gerry Brownlee
2014-2017	National Party	Rt. Hon. John Key	Hon. Nikki Kaye	Hon. Gerry Brownlee	Hon. Gerry Brownlee

Another significant feature of the governance structures of Aotearoa New Zealand that has impacted the shape and form of disaster policy is the extensive early adoption of ‘neoliberal’ policy. Neoliberal

reforms were heralded in with the election of the traditionally Left wing Labour government in 1984, these reforms were wide ranging and extensive and have often been touted as an exemplary case of neoliberal reform (Kelsey, 1995b; Lerner, 2002). This political shift moved the country away from a full welfare state, closed markets and fixed exchange rates to a more open economy based on the increasingly popular neoliberal orthodoxy (Kelsey, 1995a). The policies implemented included the enactment of policies such as the removal of export and domestic subsidies and restrictions on foreign investment, the introduction of monetarist anti-inflationary policy, a reduction in welfare spending and the privatisation of many state assets (Aberbach & Christensen, 2011). The implication of this shift in government policy has been subject to a number of critiques, largely surrounding a notable increase in inequality and poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand (Kelsey, 1995b; Rashbrooke, 2013). The shift to neoliberalism has also encompassed disaster management policy, including a focus to more insurance based approaches to risk factors, particularly surrounding the Earthquake Commission (EQC) that provides domestic natural hazard cover for all New Zealanders with private insurance.

The specific legislation related to disasters and disaster recovery in Aotearoa New Zealand, in particular the New Zealand Civil Defence Recovery Strategy, is considered by many overseas commentators and scholars to be an example of a comprehensive and holistic framework for approaching hazard management (Mitchell, 2006). The strategy is categorised through the distinction between risk reduction, readiness and response. The recovery strategy which sits as part of the wider Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) strategy, is described as having five stages: impact assessment; restoration proposal; funding arrangements; regulatory process; and physical construction (Rotimi et al., 2006). The strategy is also important because of the focus on sustainability as a guiding principle for all public action taken during disaster recovery. Norman (2006, p16) in an analysis of the NZ CDEM strategy described the following elements of recovery:

- minimising the escalation of the consequences of the disaster;
- regeneration of the social, emotional, economic and physical wellbeing of individuals and communities;
- taking opportunities to adapt to meet the social, economic, natural and built environments future needs; and
- reducing future exposure to hazards and their associated risks.

The NZ CDEM strategy takes an explicitly holistic approach based on the principles of sustainable development. These areas are part of greater interconnection between broader areas of governance and disaster management (Mitchell, 2006). In the CDEM legislation and recovery plans there is a significant level of devolution in the responsibilities of disaster response and recovery to local authorities and communities, suggesting their role in managing these aspects of emergency management (Brookie, 2012). This is overridden however, in the initial phases of a large-scale disaster in which a national state of emergency can be declared, enabling a range of powers to be enacted to respond to the emergency (CDEM Act, 2002).

Despite the high frequency of medium severity disasters such as earthquakes, and numerous floods and droughts, the country had not in recent times engaged these policies in response to a widespread urban disaster involving numerous fatalities and extensive destruction of property and infrastructure. The somewhat untested nature of these policies in such a catastrophic event makes the Canterbury earthquakes an important case for understanding the implementation of disaster politics and recovery in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, given the international significance of the existing recovery policy, and the praise received from overseas commentators, this case also provides an important case for learning and understanding how disaster recovery is operationalised in practice from a more theoretical level. This may result in important considerations for other cities throughout the world, as well as how political and social change are theorised following crisis.

4.3 THE CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKES

The sequence of earthquakes that hit the Canterbury region of Aotearoa New Zealand throughout 2010 and 2011 shook the very foundations of the city, physically, emotionally and psychologically disrupting the status quo for hundreds of thousands of people. Beginning with a 7.1 magnitude earthquake on the fourth of September in 2010, minor property and land damaged occurred (Geonet, 2014). However, on the 22nd of February 2011, a 6.3 magnitude earthquake hit close to the city and at a shallow depth (Geonet, 2012). The extreme shaking from this earthquake did extensive damage to the inner city and surrounding suburbs and resulted in the loss of 185 lives (McSaveney, 2013). Further large earthquakes over magnitude 6.0 occurred on the 13th of June and the 23rd of December 2011 (Canterbury Quake Live, 2014).

These earthquakes have had an undeniable effect on the economy, infrastructure and wellbeing of those living in and connected to the region. The New Zealand Treasury and the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority estimated that the earthquakes will cost \$NZ40b in 2011 dollars

(National Business Review, 2013). Overall, the earthquakes resulted in damage to 168,000 homes, 500km of wastewater pipes and 1,000km of roads (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2015). The city has also experienced a net population decline of approximately 7,000 residents as recorded at the 2013 census (Bayer, 2013; National Business Review, 2013). Although it is important to note that this number represents the net loss of population from Christchurch, the number of residents who have left Christchurch due to the earthquakes is likely to be higher due to the migration of workers to the rebuild offsetting the net loss figure. In comparison to other recent major disasters, the enormous scale of the earthquakes on the New Zealand economy society is apparent (see *Table 10*).

Table 10: Comparison of Recent Major Disasters for Death Toll and Economic Damage

Disaster	Countries Affected	Death Toll	Economic Damage	Economic Damage as proportion of GDP
Canterbury 22 nd February 2011 6.3 Mg Earthquake	Aotearoa New Zealand	185	40 US billion	8% GDP
Tōhoku Earthquake and Tsunami 2011	Japan	19,780	335 US billion	4-6% GDP
Pakistan Floods 2010	Pakistan	1,980	10.85 US billion	6% GDP
Hurricane Katrina 2005	United States of America	1,800	200 US billion	1.5% GDP (United States) 118% GSP (Louisiana)

(Sources: Asia Development Bank & World Bank, 2010; Brunsmas, Overfelt, & Picou, 2010; Burby, 2006; Parker & Steenkamp, 2012)

One of the biggest challenges arising from the Canterbury earthquake sequence has been the resulting land damage. This produced remarkable damage to both residential and business properties in the city, with the worst damage located in the eastern suburbs and the Central Business District (CBD). This land damage due to the process of soil liquefaction is caused by intense ground shaking (Tonkin and Taylor & Earthquake Commission, 2012). It occurs in areas of soft soil and is made worse by a high-water content in the soil (Tonkin and Taylor & Earthquake Commission, 2012). Soil liquefaction in Christchurch not only resulted in damage to the foundation and structures of building but also caused extensive damage to horizontal infrastructure such as water, power and sewage provision.

Due to the extensive damage to the CBD resulting in 50% of buildings sustaining damage and the displacement of 1,931 businesses, the decision was made to cordon off the area (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2015). This cordon was maintained for over 850 days until it was finally removed in June 2013 (Bennett et al., 2014). In the residential sector, land was surveyed by geotechnical analysts to determine the possibilities for reconstruction (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2014). Due to the widespread land damage, particularly in areas surrounding the Avon Ōtākaro River and coastal suburbs, the government made the unprecedented decision to buy the land at the 2007 government valuation (GV), thus taking over the insurance contract from the owners and negotiation, in aggregate, for settlement with the insurance companies (Jones, 2014).

4.3.1 Key Institutions and Actors in the Earthquake Response and Recovery

The network of institutions and actors that play significant roles in the Canterbury earthquake recovery is extensive and complex (as shown in *Figure 3*). Emerging from the legislation introduced following the second earthquake on the 22nd February 2011, the establishment of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) and the appointment of the Minister for Earthquake Recovery have significantly shaped the features of institutional involvement in Christchurch. This arrangement has been less than popular in the city, with numerous critiques as to the strategy for managing the recovery, as well as the power dynamics between the government and local institutions and organisations (Bennett et al., 2014; Hayward & Cretney, 2015). Other important organisations include the Central City Development Unit, the Christchurch City Council, the local Iwi organisation Ngāi Tahu and the private construction company Fletchers. The complexity of the relationships between these organisations has been captured by the Auditor General (*Figure 3*), who released the following visual representation of the institutions and their relationships together, and to the aims of the recovery. However, *Table 11* provides a more concise explanation of the main institutions and their roles.

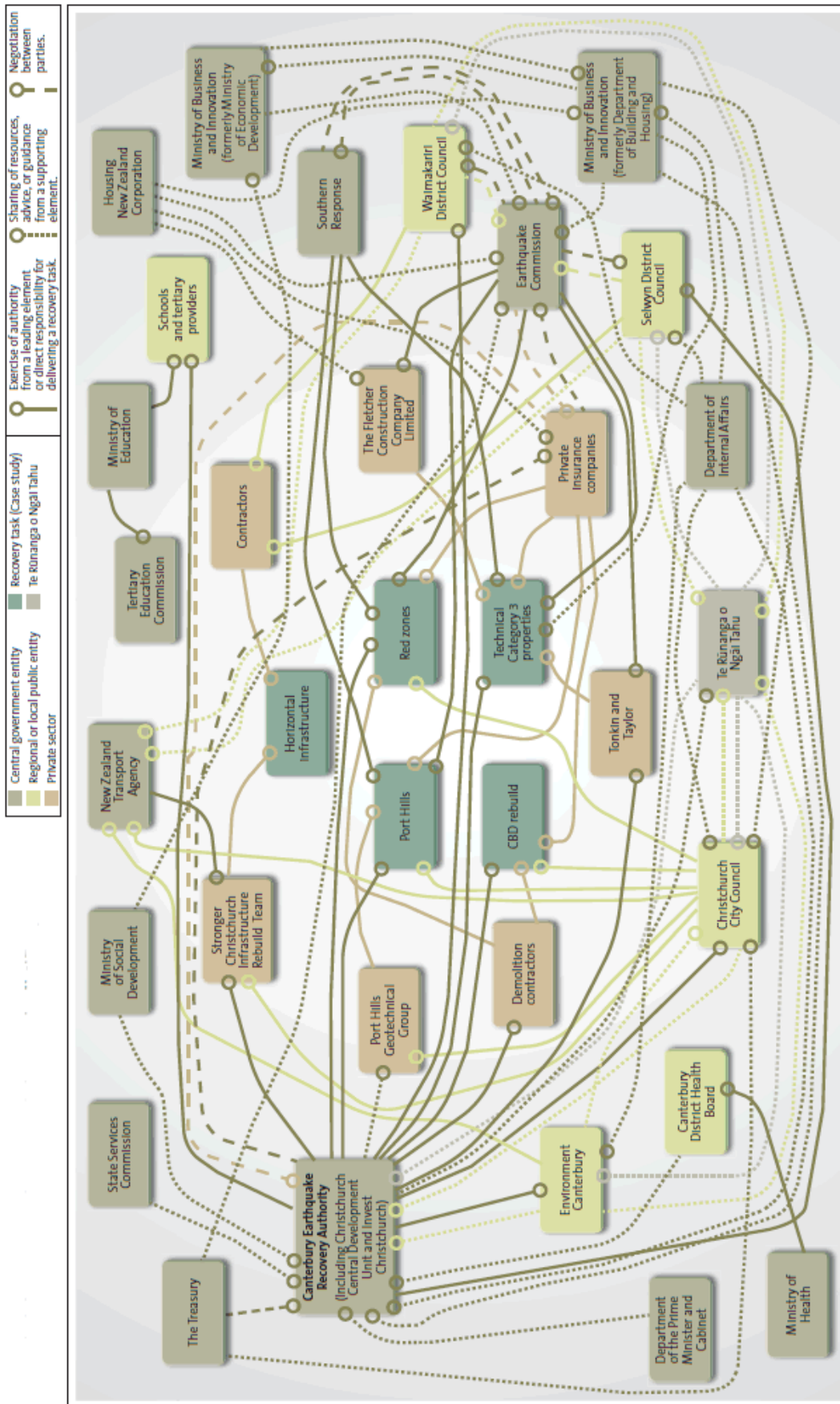


Figure 3: The Auditor General's diagrams of the roles and relationships between the public sector, private sector, Ngāi Tahu and the recovery tasks – featured in the middle of the diagram (New Zealand Auditor General, 2012).

Table 11: Key Organisations in the Christchurch Recovery (for extended version see Appendices)

Organisation	Role in the Recovery
Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)	Public Authority managed by the government to oversee the recovery across wider Canterbury
Central City Development Unit (CCDU)	Development unit created to oversee and manage the rebuild of the central city and particular investments
Christchurch City Council (CCC)	Manages infrastructure, annual plans, and the long term urban plan for the city (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy. The CCC is also partly responsible for a number of rebuild projects laid out through the cost sharing agreement with the Central government
Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT)	Responsible for rebuilding horizontal infrastructure
Ngāi Tahu Incorporated and Te Rūnanga O Ngāi Tahu (TRONT)	Ngāi Tahu leads the Iwi Māori Recovery Programme. This involves identifying, analysing and implementing recovery for Māori specific issues in the rebuild. This has included housing and redevelopment of Māori land, the provision of cultural facilities and the restoration of the environment. Their role also covers ensuring obligations are met under the Treaty of Waitangi
Fletcher Construction	Fletcher EQR manages most of the residential repairs that fall under the Earthquake Commission repair cap. Fletcher Construction is also a large player in the reconstruction of businesses and other buildings, having been awarded a large contract to build a residential development in the CBD East Frame

The Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act (CERR Act 2010) was the first piece of legislation passed following the initial earthquake in September 2010 to grant extended powers to the government and authorities in order to respond to the disaster. The act was widely criticised for its wide-ranging powers, the lack of checks and balances, and the period of time in which these powers were in force (Geddis, 2010; Hayward & Cretney, 2015; McCrone, 2011; Radio NZ, 2012). Critiques prior to the earthquakes of the existing CDEM Act suggested that the short time frame for the extension of recovery powers (28 days) and a lack of clarity surrounding who would be in charge of extended recovery, show that the issues with the existing legislation were not unfounded (Rotimi, 2010). While the need for new legislation to tackle the needs of the city particularly with the relaxing

of provisions to meet the aims of recovery may have been required for such a large and destructive event, it was the scope and breadth of this initial legislation that caused alarm. Concern within the legal community was so high that an open letter to the parliament was written by 27 legal scholars warning them of the transfer of legal power without constraint (Geddis, 2010).

Following the more severe, fatal earthquake on 22nd February 2011, the government announced the country's first State of National Emergency to enact the legislative powers required during a major disaster (Bennett et al., 2014; Brookie, 2012). Further legislation (CER Act 2011) entrenching the transfer of power was then passed in April under parliamentary urgency, a process subject to critique as to its lack of democratic engagement with the public (Hartevelt, 2011a, 2011b; Hayward & Cretney, 2015). This act also established the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). *Table 12* outlines the timeline of events in which these political actions took place in response to the numerous large earthquakes in the city.

Table 12: The First Three years of Christchurch Recovery

2010	
September 4	7.1 Magnitude earthquake, no fatalities, moderate damage to property and infrastructure – The Darfield Earthquake
September 14	Canterbury Earthquake Response and Recovery Act (CERR Act) is passed with unusually wide reaching legislative powers
2011	
February 22	6.3 Magnitude earthquake, 185 fatalities, \$40b in damages – The Christchurch Earthquake
March	The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) is established
April	The Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act (CER Act) 2011 is passed into law
May	The CCC Share an Idea consultation process begins for a developing a central city recovery plan
June	Residential Red Zone created: NZ government buys over 6,000 properties due to land damage
June 13	6.4 and 5.9 Magnitude earthquakes, no fatalities, further damage to residential areas and infrastructure
November	Right wing National Party re-elected in landslide victory. Two Christchurch electorate seats swing to National from left wing Labour party
December 23	6.2 Magnitude earthquake, no fatalities, further damage to residential areas and infrastructure

2012	
February	Government announces Public-Private Partnership charter schools and the closure of public schools. Hundreds protest closures
April	The government overrides City Council recovery plan to implement Central City Development (CCDU) and the 100-day blueprint CBD plan
June	Cost sharing agreement between the government and the City Council is announced after being developed and signed in secret
July	The Christchurch Central Recovery Plan is announced and comes into law, including the Central City Blue Print plan under the management of the CCDU
September	Decision on school closures released: 13 schools closed, 18 merged. Hundreds more protest against the school closures and the management of CERA in the recovery
2013	
February	The government continues to override the democratically elected officials at Environment Canterbury (ECan), the local Regional Council, until 2016. (This legislation initially passed prior to the September 2010 earthquakes)
May/June	Prime Minister John Key endorses state and local asset sales to fund the rebuild. School closure numbers reduced after public backlash
August	Residential Red Zone legislation and buyout offer deemed illegal by the High Court of New Zealand

The establishment of CERA has also caused rifts between local and central government. In Aotearoa New Zealand, local government is the level of government below parliament (central government). There are two main forms of local government: territorial bodies such as city or district councils; and regional councils, the boundaries of which are based on river catchments (Cheyne, 2015). Regional councils focus largely on resource management, land transport planning, biosecurity and emergency management, while city and district councils have a broader range of functions including community well-being, public health and safety, infrastructure and cultural and recreation activities (Cheyne, 2015). While Civil Defence and broader emergency management is the responsibility of the regional council, city and district councils are involved in Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups which are collaborative organisations based on a regional locality (CDEM Plan). Originally, after the September 2010 earthquake the affected local authorities were involved in the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Commission, created under the CERR 2010 Act to advise Ministers on the required recovery action (Brookie, 2012). Following the creation of the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority soon after the February 2011 earthquake, the commission was disbanded and the role of central government increased.

Under the subsequent CER 2011 legislation, the CCC was mandated to be involved in the recovery of the central city. The act required the city council to create and present a central city recovery plan to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, the Hon. Gerry Brownlee, for his approval. The CCC then undertook an extensive process of consultation, participation and engagement with the residents of Christchurch through what became known as the Share an Idea campaign in May 2012. This campaign resulted in over 100,000 ideas being submitted through workshops, a two-day expo, digital feedback forms, and snail mail (Bennett et al., 2014).

This material was collated and presented by Gehl Architects in the draft Central City Plan which was then opened for a further round of feedback from the public in August 2012, and then presented to Minister Brownlee in December. However, this plan was not accepted by the Minister, who at one point described it as a “pretty big wish list” (Sachdeva, 2011, n.p.). The government instead chose to re-develop the plan using a panel of developers and planners in 100 days through the 100-day Blueprint process that also established the Christchurch City Development Unit (CCDU). Almost one year after the original CCC city plan, Prime Minister John Key and Minister Brownlee announced the blueprint. The new plan removed a lot of the integrated approach to regulation in the CCC plan and redeveloped the spatial orientation of the plan to include precincts and 18 major anchor projects such as a large sports stadium and convention centre (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012a). Transport related elements of the plan were released through the Accessible City documents a further fifteen months after this initial announcement.

The CCC was thus largely side lined in the recovery process for the CBD. This was a politically charged move because of the decision to create a rival organisation (CERA) rather than divert resources to support the council (led by Mayor Bob Parker at the time). This was seen to be part of a wider politics of diminishing local representation in the region, particularly in light of the 2013 decision to extend the ECan Temporary Commissioners bill, which in early 2010 removed the democratically elected officials from Environment Canterbury the regional council and replaced them with government appointed commissioners (Hayward, 2014). One of the more controversial outcomes of this removal of democratic processes has been the anchor projects, which the city council has been required to partly fund through a cost sharing agreement. This agreement has also been controversial as it was created and signed in secret over the course of a truncated negotiating period of only three days as demanded by Minister Gerry Brownlee (Conway, 2013; Voxy, 2014). The cost sharing agreement has resulted in the council, and thus ratepayers, being financially responsible for

large projects which were not originally in the democratically consulted on plan presented from the Share an Idea process. This has led to complications between the agency of the Council, which is able to make some decisions, such as to keep and repair the Town Hall, against the wishes of the government, but unable to make others, such as to remove the plans for a convention centre or sport stadium (Bennett et al., 2014).

While Mayor Bob Parker and his council were initially regarded as having come through the earthquake response period in a strong manner, the political machinations around leadership and delays with consent processes and regulations led to criticism of the elected officials (Hayman et al., 2012; Sachdeva & Heather, 2012). Ultimately, this led to an almost near replacement of the council in the 2013 local government elections which saw nine out of thirteen councillors not receiving re-election (Bennett et al., 2014). Lianne Dalziel, previously the local Labour electorate MP for Christchurch East was elected mayor replacing Bob Parker. The new Mayor has become known for her community minded approach and commitment to encouraging local participation and engagement, particularly through the processes for creating a new district plan in 2014 and 2015. Despite some conflicting issues with the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, Mayor Dalziel has worked to create an amicable relationship between the CCC and CERA to move the recovery forward.

The other major partner, alongside the CCC and CERA in the recovery is Ngāi Tahu. As the corporate division of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Iwi (tribal groupings – see glossary), Ngāi Tahu have played a major role in the recovery of Christchurch to date. Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) has been an important factor in ensuring the participation and representation of Māori groups. The Treaty, which led to land wars and the dispossession of indigenous land from 1840 onwards, was reclaimed in the 1980s as a feature of the Māori land rights movement (O’Sullivan, 2015; Walker, 1990). Te Tiriti o Waitangi now acts as an important document across many aspects of policy, with some organisations and public sectors addressing their obligations under the Treaty and in alignment with the principles of the Treaty (Humpage, 2015).

To ensure Māori representation in the recovery, the CERR Act legislates for consultation with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Iwi. The relationship between Ngāi Tahu and CERA aims to build meaningful relationships that fulfil the obligations of CERA as a government agency under the Treaty of Waitangi (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012b). The Iwi Maori Recovery programme is led by Ngāi Tahu and identifies that issues pertaining to the hapū (family

groupings) of Ngāi Tahu and other Māori Iwi are understood and undertaken in an appropriate way in the rebuild (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012b). This includes issues such as housing, land restoration, the provision of cultural facilities and services and the restoration of natural features such as the Avon Ōtākaro River (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012b). It is important, however, to recognise that Ngāi Tahu do not speak for all Māori and are a representative organisation for Māori interests. Also of note, iwi have evolved as a major player in the development of new commercial and residential projects due to their large land holdings, in part due to the settlement process under the Treaty of Waitangi (Wood, 2015).

On the 16th of April 2016, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority disbanded in accordance with the CER 2011 Act which included a sunset clause for the disestablishment of the organisation. The Greater Christchurch Regeneration Act 2016 aimed to provide a new legal framework for ongoing recovery in the city, to be described a shift in roles to 'regeneration'. Three organisations were created from this process: Ōtākaro Limited, a Crown company to manage the delivery of key anchor projects orchestrated through the government central city recovery blue print; Regenerate Christchurch to oversee the long-term development of the central city and residential red zone; and the Greater Christchurch Group as part of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

4.4 SUMMARY

Aotearoa New Zealand has faced a significant number of disasters in the past and will most likely continue to do so. The political approach to disaster and emergency management in the country is orchestrated through the Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and Strategy. More widely, the political and social context has influenced how emergency management has been planned for, particularly in relation to the neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. The Canterbury Earthquake sequence occurred throughout 2010 and 2011, initiated by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake on September 4th 2010. The most devastating of these earthquakes occurred on the 22nd February 2011. Following this earthquake 185 people lost their lives and the city faced significant damage to residential and commercial buildings as well as challenges arising from land damage due to liquefaction.

In response to the September earthquake, the government enacted a state of emergency under existing civil defence legislation. In response to the end of this emergency declaration, the government enacted new legislation that went beyond the powers for recovery vested in the existing Civil Defence Emergency Management plan to extend a centralised government role in the

recovery of the city. After the significantly more damaging earthquake in February the government introduced further legislation to create a new government department, the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, to oversee the management of the recovery from a number of angles, including psychosocial, economic and infrastructure recovery. This move has been controversial and resulted in a renegotiation of roles and responsibilities across a wide range of actors in the response and recovery to the disaster.

PHOTO ESSAY ONE - LIVING THROUGH RECOVERY –

Driving through the suburbs of the East, the uneven distribution of earthquake damage is shockingly apparent. While some suburbs in the city appear untouched, many suffered land damage so severe that rebuilding was declared not possible by the government. Throughout these ghost suburbs, native and introduced species alike are reclaiming these spaces so that the Ōtākaro Avon River now meanders through a corridor of greenery and wildlife that stretches out to sea. But these 'red zones' are also strewn with debris from deconstructed and demolished houses. Many households were glad to receive a settlement for their homes but others resisted the buy-out policy, reluctant to leave their homes and properties. The images in this first photo essay document the human footprint of these neighbourhoods and the loss wrought by the earthquakes and the government recovery policies on this landscape.



“The pressure on these people, you can imagine the stress they were going through because of the aftershocks.

The pressure of...we've got to choose, we've got to go. Where are we going to go? What are we going to do?”





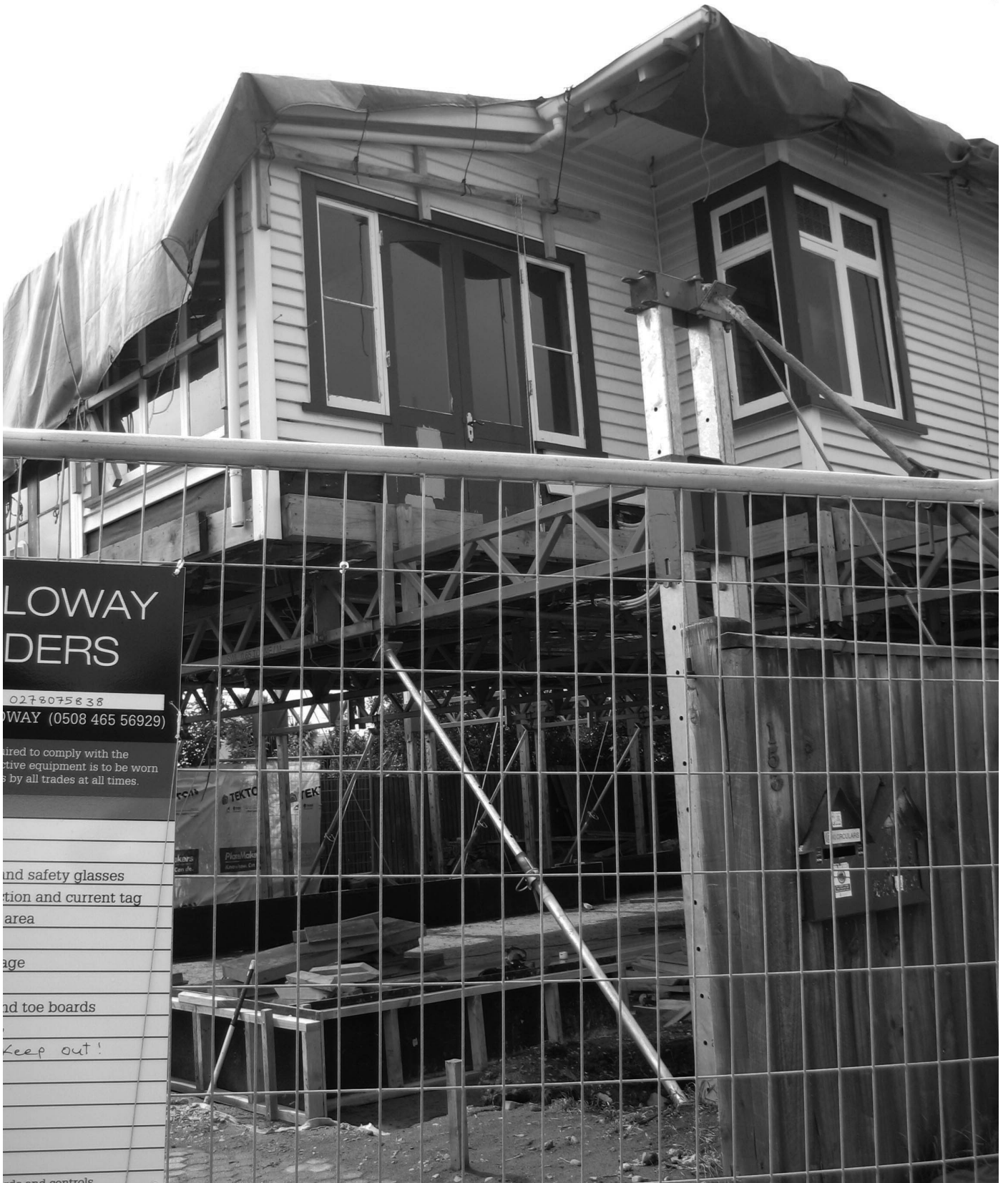
“That's how they achieved depopulation.
They've stolen four years and they plan to
steal more of my life.”





“They just seem like the wizard behind the curtain in the Wizard of Oz. Booming voices of, ‘No you can't do this.’ ‘Get out of your house.’”





“Now we live in a house, we don't live in a home.”

“People still come back and visit their sections...
they wrote us letters to say, ‘Thank you for
saving our trees.’”



5 GOVERNING CRISIS – THE POLITICS OF DISASTER RECOVERY

Disasters such as the earthquakes that hit Christchurch are multi-scale phenomena that are not limited to localised boundaries (Tierney, 2012). These events induce a ripple effect across many aspects of the affected society. There is a need for further research in emergency management and disaster studies to understand the long-term social and political outcomes of such destabilising events (Quarantelli, 1999; Tierney & Oliver-Smith, 2012). Of the literature that does exist, few studies discuss in depth the role of politics, democracy and participation in the local processes of disaster recovery. Given the central role of government, the private sector and community organisations in the creation and maintenance of recovery policies and actions, these dynamics form an essential part of how disaster recovery occurs, and for whom these recoveries serve.

As a time of crisis, disasters can be characterised by the disruption and disturbance of social and political systems. These events simultaneously represent a rupture in the status quo and the continuation of pre-existing societal dynamics. Disasters are abnormal in that they disrupt, disturb and destabilise the foundations of society and what is perceived to be 'normal'. However, these events also represent the manifestation of underlying patterns of inequality and injustice (Bullard, 2008; Derickson et al., 2015). As Hewitt (1983) notes, the representation of these events as separate from everyday life distances those in power from the way unequal distribution of vulnerability and disaster impacts. Increasingly, crises like disasters are governed through a politics of exceptionality that is theorised as a space both inside and outside of the law that justifies the use of exceptional acts in response to a crisis (Agamben, 2015; Anderson & Adey, 2012).

To understand the intricacies of disaster recovery it is necessary to comprehend the pre-existing politics at different levels of society prior to the earthquakes and the way the uncertainty and rupture of disaster morphs and shifts to create specific forms of politicisation enacted through recovery. The New Zealand process for emergency management is considered unique for its emphasis on disaster governance, and the holistic aims in which this emphasis is framed, particularly surrounding community engagement and involvement (Mitchell, 2006). Despite this praise, the Christchurch earthquakes have represented a significant challenge to the processes of disaster governance and politics in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As such, the multifaceted nature of crisis governance in Christchurch is evident. In the sections that follow I outline the processes of crisis governance in the city as carried out by the New Zealand government. To do this I critically analyse the actions of the government within the context of

broader debates of exceptional politics and crisis governance. I pay attention to the role of neoliberalised capitalism as a driving factor for rationalising and justifying the centralised expansion of state function in the post-disaster context.

The actions of the government represent the nexus of state ideology and action in the contradictory post-disaster landscape that provides both threats and opportunities to dominant power structures. Within the broader patterns of exceptionality based politics in the Christchurch recovery, three patterns emerge:

- the move towards the centralisation of disaster recovery;
- the use of the disaster as a time to enact extra-ordinary politics that extend the powers of the state through normative values and the restructuring of power relations; and
- action taken by the state against threats to state legitimacy and power.

Drawing on the rich and informative accounts of crisis politics, in combination with emerging research on disaster and capitalism, in this chapter I outline a framework for understanding these political processes of disaster recovery following the Canterbury earthquakes. To do so I present the findings of the in-depth discourse analysis of official documents, parliamentary records and media releases to outline the main dynamics of the government approach to disaster recovery in Christchurch.

5.1 EXCEPTIONAL POST-DISASTER POLITICS

Governing disaster recovery represents a time in which the boundaries between normal and abnormal, exceptional and unexceptional, crisis and everyday are blurred. Increasingly, the actions of governments, regimes and elites in response to crisis are framed through the concept of exceptionality as devised by Agamben, Schmitt and others (see Agamben, 2005; Anderson & Adey, 2012; Honig, 2009). Agamben's (2005) framing of the state of exception is prevalent in these accounts of the space in between the rule of law and sovereign power and the role of crisis in mediating these forms of governance. This approach to governmentality, security and sovereignty is increasingly pervasive as a technique of governing that has become anything but exceptional (Agamben, 2005). In this section, I outline the aspects of exceptionality that emerged through the techniques and tactics of government led recovery in Christchurch.

To explore the manifestations of crisis politics in the disaster context it is useful to first understand how disasters can be framed as exceptional events. In his formative work on vulnerabilities and hazards in society, Hewitt (1983) suggests, through a Foucauldian influenced analysis, that the separation of the disaster event from everyday life represents the desire to separate the destructive event from the social systems and political structures which create the impacts. Such constructions of the 'un' situations through the use of languages and discourses of 'unexpected', 'unprecedented' and 'unusual' events lay the foundations for a political response which distances the social construction and politicisation of disaster effects (Hewitt, 1983; Pelling & Dill, 2009). This serves a dual purpose. First, by engaging discourses that represent the 'un-ness' of a disaster, political and economic elites can distance themselves from the inequality which heavily influences the distribution of damage and destruction in an attempt to mitigate potential threats to legitimacy and power (this is discussed in further detail in *Section 5.4*). Second, by engaging these discourses of separation, political and economic elites can prime the populous for exceptional acts, because exceptional acts are often justified in light of exceptional events.

In this way, the state of exception, while typically applied to contexts such as war and asylum, is also relevant in the context of disaster recovery. As the state of exception justifies the right of a sovereign nation to suspend constitutional protections in response to perceived or actual threat, there is the potential for these techniques to be engaged following a disaster and throughout recovery (Ek, 2006; Lee et al., 2014). Enabling a state of exception establishes a scenario in which the sovereign power simultaneously sits within and outside of the law (Lee et al., 2014). This establishes what Agamben (2005) describes as a space of anomie, or as described by Ek (2006, p. 365) a form of "inclusive exclusion". Here the right of a sovereign power to suspend the rule of law allows for the state's actions to simultaneously sit within and outside of the legal order (Lee et al., 2014).

According to Agambian theory, the source of sovereign power is 'bare life', "life without context, meaning or history – the state of nature – so that sovereignty may be installed as the power that orders it" (Dillon & Reid, 2000, p. 131). The source of sovereign power is thus intimately tied to a state that Gregory (2006, p. 406) describes as "exposed and abandoned to violence". Spatially, exception in this form is manifest in the concept of the camp and the creation of a territory outside the norm (Gregory, 2006; Neocleous, 2006). However, as these forms of governance are increasingly prevalent and engaged in a number of contexts, the shape and form of exception are arguably no longer exceptional and instead represent the norm (Brassett & Vaughan-Williams, 2012).

Despite this increasing prevalence, scholars warn against assuming an all-encompassing view of this engagement of exception as a pervasive form of global governance (Anderson & Adey, 2012; Neocleous, 2006). Anderson and Adey (2012) note the governance of emergency and crisis draws on many more strategies, techniques and technologies than the state of exception alone. Thus, the state of exception should not be seen uncritically as a pervasive and inevitable facet of global politics, but instead as one way in which crises are responded to and governed. As Neocleous (2006) illuminates, the use of emergency and exception is not something that can be considered historically novel or new. Indeed, exceptionality can be theorised as an integral part of law and violence (Neocleous, 2006). Despite the theoretical contestation over the specific manifestations of exception, sovereignty and power, the point remains that the state of exception represents one of many techniques for governing through crisis (Anderson & Adey, 2012).

To expand the possibilities of crisis governance beyond (but inclusive of) the idea of the state of exception, it is possible to see exception as a form of governmentality. The main idea emerging from the growing literature on the state of exception is that out of necessity the sovereign power can suspend the law, legislate new laws and expand powers (Thomas & Bond, 2016). This technique of governing however has wide-ranging and differentiated consequences. Dillon and Reid (2000) describe governmental power like sovereign power, as a strategic order of power relations. Here, the broader relevance of the state of exception underlies the way in which crises, emergencies and thus disasters are engaged as events that suspend, challenge and shift forms of governmentality.

Furthermore, other aspects of disaster politics may contribute to an exceptional framing but are also not usually classified within Agambian theory. For example, Tierney (2008) suggests that the concept of elite panic encapsulates the broad trend across historical and geographical cases in which those in power react to disaster in a way that entrenches existing privilege and power structures. As disasters constitute a threat to, or crisis of the status quo, authorities can react through tightening social control in order to minimize potential threats to power (Grove, 2012; Hannigan, 2012; Pelling & Dill, 2009). A prominent example of this form of regressive political change and elite panic is the response by governments towards non-governmental organisations engaged in disaster relief and response. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, Tierney (2008) argues elite panic led to the mismanagement of disaster response and the exacerbation of social vulnerabilities. Theories of disaster capitalism also shed light on the accumulative processes of capital that manipulate crisis events to gain new markets and grounds for expansion values (Arrighi, 1978; Harvey, 2006). The

state is seen as highly implicated in these processes of capitalism as way to cultivate legitimacy, something that is often threatened following a disaster (Brown, 2015; Farazmand, 2007).

Therefore, drawing on the work of Anderson and Adey (2012), the state of exception as theorised by Agamben (2005) is one of many ways of governing disaster as a form of crisis. The use of exceptionality in justifying and governing crisis is clearly evidenced in many cases; however, a more nuanced reading of the context and conditions in which crises occur sheds light on the underlying societal inequalities, the pressures of authority to maintain legitimacy and the increased need of the state to maintain and improve economic function. Neocleous (2006) suggests that the state of exception may in fact be used to return to a state of normality rather than to extend a state of politics out of the ordinary. This represents the actions of the state to ward off the potential for unrest and disruption that comes with crises and emergencies, while also providing a way to entrench and solidify the role of the state in facilitating economic functions. In the sections that follow I outline the many complicated dynamics of exceptionality based post-disaster politics in Christchurch, while also paying attention to other aspects of crisis governance such as elite panic and the role of capitalism and the state.

5.1.1 Exceptional Politics in Christchurch

While there are many forms of crisis governance, immediately following the Canterbury earthquakes the government engaged in an approach that appeared to heavily rely on exceptionality and the use of crisis to support the aims of the state, particularly through a strong focus on economic growth and the centralisation of state power. Initially, the rhetoric from the ruling National party at the central government level strongly indicated that they intended to place value on the social needs of the communities affected. John Key, the Prime Minister at the time, made strong statements in 2011 in this vein:

Progress is certain, things will get better. Christchurch will rise again. On behalf of the government, let me be clear that no one will be left to walk this journey alone. New Zealand will walk this journey with you.

On other occasions, Prime Minister Key declared that that no one would be worse off because of the earthquakes. Arguably, these statements are firmly situated as post-disaster rhetoric aimed at reassuring a traumatised and unsettled population (Button, 2010). However, the reality of recovery has been far from these statements as the rest of this chapter uncovers. Furthermore, the actions of the state in Christchurch demonstrated a remarkable deviation from the legislated and planned Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and Strategy (Ministry for Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2006; NZ Government, 2002). This diversion from rhetoric and the legislated planned

procedures for disaster recovery acted as a way for the state to consolidate legitimacy while maximising the potential for economic growth under the politics of exceptionality.

To elaborate, the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act (CDEM Act)³ is the main legislative mechanism to respond to and prepare for disasters in Aotearoa New Zealand. Mechanisms in the Act include the ability for local civil defence groups⁴ to manage response and recovery, as well as an extensive set of guidelines and procedures for different aspects of disaster response and recovery (Brookie, 2012). This civil defence legislation has been globally recognised as ground breaking due to its all agency, holistic approach to response and recovery that focuses on economic, social and infrastructure requirements (Mitchell, 2006).

Despite this, the National Party led government introduced wide-ranging disaster legislation through the Canterbury Respond and Recovery Act 2010 immediately after the original non-fatal earthquake on 4th September 2010, and again through the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 following the second fatal earthquake in February 2011.⁵ This legislation was enacted in combination with an array of other policies including: the wholesale purchase of damaged residential land; the compulsory acquisition of commercial land; the removal of local government powers; and the state response to insurance issues.

One of the main reasons espoused in the media for the shift to new, untested legislation following the earthquakes was the need to extend the legislative powers of the government following the end of the technical declaration of a state of emergency.⁶ The legislation introduced after the February earthquakes was justified by the government by citing their lack of confidence in local civil defence groups and local government to manage the recovery (Brookie, 2012). However, on close reading of the Civil Defence Act it is clear that there were already provisions for local civil defence groups to control the ongoing recovery of communities.⁷ In the event that the Minister does not have

³ The Civil Defence Emergency Management Act will henceforth be referred to as the Civil Defence Act.

⁴ Also known as CDEM Groups, these configurations are partnerships between local authorities, emergency services, service/infrastructure providers and government departments.

⁵ This legislation will be referred to collectively as “earthquake legislation” unless specific elements of individual acts are being discussed.

⁶ A National State of Emergency was declared following the 22nd February earthquake. This was the first ever national state of emergency to be declared because of a civil defence emergency. The declaration did not change the powers of the state but allowed for the Director of Civil Defence Emergency Management to exercise powers under the CDEM Act 2002 (Carter, 2011).

⁷ There were however some legal issues with ongoing recovery that did need to be addressed in relation to the Resource Management Act. These issues were one of the significant justifications for emergency legislation (Department of Internal Affairs, n.d.).

confidence in the competence or ability of the local organisations to carry out recovery there is a provision for a different chain of command. Specifically:

Recovery Co-ordinator Sections 29 and 30 of the CDEM Act provide that, where the Minister of Civil Defence is satisfied that a CDEM Group *is, or is likely to be, unable to ensure the effective carrying out of recovery activities in its area*, a Recovery Co-ordinator responsible to, and funded by, the Director of CDEM may be appointed. It is expected that the appointment of a Recovery Co-ordinator will be made in consultation with the CDEM Group(s) (Ministry for Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2006 – emphasis added).

While one of the main reasons espoused by the government in the media was their lack of confidence in local leadership to govern the recovery, the new legislation clearly goes beyond this justification. Given the possibility for managing the earthquake recovery within existing civil defence legislation, it then becomes a question of why the government took the step of introducing such unprecedented legislation.

The enactment of this new earthquake recovery legislation in 2010, alongside further legislation enacted in 2011, suggests a form of crisis politics that is heavily influenced by exceptionality and the desire to infuse the recovery with certain ideological perspectives. First, both the 2010 and 2011 Acts have been criticised for the extraordinary transfer of legal power from parliament to the executive branch. An open letter of legal professionals to the government following the 2010 earthquake, states the concerning nature of the legislation:

There is a risk that the desire to do “everything we can” in the short-term blinds us to the long-term harms of our actions. In particular, abandoning established constitutional values and principles in order to remove any inconvenient legal roadblocks (Geddis 2010, n.p.),.

The document goes on to outline the “extraordinarily broad transfer of law-making power away from Parliament and to the executive branch, with minimal constraints on how that power may be used” (Geddis, 2010, n.p.). This includes the ability of ministers through an ‘order in council’ to change almost any statute in the country without parliamentary process (Geddis, 2010). It is also important to contextualise these comments with the fact that this “extraordinary broad transfer of law-making power” occurred before the most devastating and fatal earthquake in the following year (Geddis, 2010, n.p.). Considering the damage that was sustained in February 2011, and the wide scale effort to co-ordinate the extensive search and rescue efforts and building damage in the CBD in particular, it is hard to see how these powers were necessary for a comparably smaller, less catastrophic earlier event (in terms of damage sustained in the city of Christchurch).

Thus, the actions of the government to pass into law this legislation align with a form of exceptional politics in which the government as the sovereign power simultaneously acted outside of and inside of the law. This follows the rationale of Agamben (2005) who theorises one aspect of the state of exception as the allocation of power to a state, part of government or individual beyond the previous bounds of law. To respond to the earthquakes effectively the government appears to have justified the approval of legislation that impinged on human rights in relation to the right to appeal, and to extend and change the powers of the executive in an extensive manner (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, & Office of the Minister of State Services, 2011, p. 19).⁸ Prime Minister John Key was reported in the media as stating that the “unique set of circumstances” warranted this wide-reaching legislation (Otago Daily Times, 2010, n.p.).

Of most concern in the legislation was the ability for the newly created Minister to change almost any statute in the country through an ‘order of council’, a prohibition on the Courts to examine the Minister’s need for an order of council and the immunity of the Minister from prosecution for actions taken under an order of council (Geddis, 2010). While Aotearoa New Zealand does not have a written constitution, the implementation of this legislation that transferred the ability to change parliamentary acts to the executive branch, represents a large shift in power. According to legal experts this shift abandons constitutional values and principles in the name of expediency (Geddis, 2010). This form of crisis governance demonstrates how exceptionality can be implemented as a technique of governing through crisis in which the overarching authority of the state establishes a centralised direction for the recovery.

The passing of this bill into law also utilised the moment of crisis to justify and expedite the truncation of the democratic process and rights. Just as Honig (2009) warns, by engaging the moment of crisis as an exception there is a tendency to suspend democratic rights and processes. As described in the media, the earthquake legislation was rushed through parliament bypassing the usual democratic processes for consultation, scrutiny and participation (Hartvelt, 2011b). This set a concerning trend for the involvement of community and residents in the recovery, something which

⁸ Under the heading of ‘Human Rights’ the memorandum to Cabinet states: “The proposals in the paper appear to have human rights implications but have not been developed in sufficient detail to determine whether [there are] any limitations [placed] on rights or freedoms affirmed in the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 (NZBORA)... In particular, that assessment will need to consider the consistency of the proposals with the right to natural justice affirmed in section 27(1) of NZBORA. The proposal to truncate or remove appeal rights (in respect of compensation for compulsory acquisition, resource management decisions and decisions related to heritage buildings, archaeological sites and wahi tapu) could limit that right.” (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery & Office of the Minister of State Services, 2011b)

has been a point of contention in the ongoing government led recovery, particularly as engagement was reduced to a 20-person committee appointed by the Minister for Earthquake Recovery.

Furthermore, the drafting of the bill was subject to an unusual allocation of ministries and a truncated process that involved a small team from the Ministry for the Environment working over the weekend to draft and table a bill related to disaster response and recovery (Gobbi et al., 2011). Communication with the Ministry of Civil Defence for this research revealed the minimal extent to which civil legislation and policy was taken into account when drafting and enacting the earthquake recovery legislation. Ms Stuart-Black described the drafting process for the 2011 bill:

The [Civil Defence] Ministry has identified limited information that relates to the drafting of the CERR and CER Acts, partly because the drafting was co-ordinated by other agencies. The Ministry of Economic Development was responsible for co-ordinating the CER 2011 Act (OIA response 22 October 2015).

Further Official Information Act requests to the Ministry of Economic Development stated that no information existed regarding consultation with the Civil Defence Ministry. This response also suggested contacting the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA). Further requests to CERA resulted in a response from Acting Chief Executive John Ombler stating that CERA had no documents on how the Civil Defence Act was engaged in the operation of CERA and the drafting of the legislation. Mr Ombler ended the response stating that he had “no ground to believe that the information is held by another agency subject to the [Official Information Act]” (OIA response, 20 November 2015).

These documents suggest that despite having an extensive Civil Defence strategy and plan in place prior to the Canterbury earthquakes, the government paid little or no attention to the research and best practice guidelines laid out in existing legislation. To remove the drafting of the legislation from the Ministry whose main aim is to manage and prepare for disasters, to the Ministry of Environment (justified in relation to their focus on the Resource Management Act) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, suggests the desire to infuse the recovery approach with an ideological framework that privileges economic concerns.

According to Rotimi (2010) there were significant issues with the civil defence legislation and strategy in the case of a widespread disaster that required long term recovery. These critiques suggest that to approach the massive challenge of response and recovery in relation to the earthquakes, new or adapted existing legislation may have been required. However, to have acted in

a way that appears to have disregarded the current legislation and strategy, along with the expedited and truncated democratic process, this 'exceptional' legislation suggests a political move to influence and gain control of all aspects of the disaster response and recovery process.

In the case of Christchurch, this legislation paved the foundation for the enactment of further examples of 'exceptional' and unprecedented actions that engaged a variety of political, economic and legal tools. Concerns were initially raised in local media that the broader approach to recovery, particularly in the long term, was "bureaucratic, militaristic and the opposite from the community led approach Christchurch needs" (McCrone, 2011, n.p.). Experts also noted the lack of international precedent and evidence to support the top down government driven approach, particularly given the proven international experience against top down, fast track approaches (McCrone, 2011).

In this section I have argued that the political and legal approach of the government to the Canterbury earthquakes represents the state of exception through an approach that has sat both inside and outside of the law. These practices of government through the crisis generated by the earthquakes have resulted in the enactment of a plethora of crisis governance approaches. As Braun (2014) describes, government in advanced capitalism is characterised by the *ad hoc* implementation of a variety of tools, technologies and techniques. In the sections that follow I outline two patterns that have emerged from this form of exceptional post-disaster governance in Christchurch to demonstrate how these legal and political approaches have impacted the recovery on the ground in the city.

5.2 CENTRALISING DISASTER RECOVERY FOR ECONOMIC GAIN

The actions of the New Zealand government in centralising the earthquake recovery through exceptional politics suggest an ideological perspective which sees the role of the state as the facilitator of capitalist economic and market functions (Brown, 2015). In this section I argue that through the destructive agent of disaster the state can seize the opportunity for growth and the expansion of capitalist market functions and values. To carry out this role in Christchurch a form of disaster politics which engaged a state of exception has been, and is still, enacted. The centralisation of post-disaster policy and action in Christchurch has become one of the main political dynamics of the recovery effort that has laid the foundation for further interventions and actions of exceptionality. I discuss the broader implications of this approach to crisis governance and focus on the entrenchment of norms and the restructuring of power relations in the recovery.

In the Christchurch recovery it is possible to see the framings of exceptionality in light of the aims of the state as a facilitator of economic and market growth. Here, the opportunity is also provided to use the purported rupture in everyday life to expand not only the literal representations of capitalist society (through explicit focuses on economic growth, market approaches and private enterprise), but also the figurative constituents of capitalist society through re-enforcing hegemonic values and norms. To enable and enact these actions the New Zealand government took an approach that saw the centralisation of disaster recovery to the highest authority in the country through the creation of a new government department – CERA, as described in the previous section.

An in-depth reading of cabinet papers in relation to the 2011 earthquake recovery legislation reveals far more attention was paid to the perceived and actual economic benefits of government action, than on the integration and practice of community engagement and social context of recovery. In fact, the role of community engagement, an element thoroughly emphasized in broader disaster recovery literature as integral to successful recovery (Kweit & Kweit, 2004; Pearce, 2003; Vallance & Love, 2013), was largely reduced to a 20-person committee. In these cabinet papers the importance of the recovery is described as related to the need for Christchurch to provide a “prosperous, productive platform for [New Zealand’s] growth strategy” (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, 2012, p. 7). In relation to the need for intervention in the central city, the government describes in the papers the ‘underlying principle’:

The government should do enough to successfully kick-start the market and build confidence and momentum by providing the right conditions for reinvestment (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, 2012, p. 12).

These policies represent the complex repertoire of actions available to a state following a disaster to maintain control and to make the most of the opportunity presented. The apparent focus on economic growth and prosperity as a result of recovery and reconstruction is consistent with the ideology of the state that sees its role as the facilitator of the economy and market relations.

In fact, the disaster did kick-start the wider New Zealand economy after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the related New Zealand recession. In 2014, one opposition politician aptly described the New Zealand economy as being based on milk and disaster (referring to the country’s high reliance on dairy farming) (Wilson, 2014). Economic growth in Aotearoa New Zealand has been buoyed by the increase in GDP resulting from the construction and recovery boom. From the period of 2009 to 2014 the Canterbury region grew (by the measure of GDP) more than 30% in contrast to the National average of 22% (Statistics New Zealand, 2015). Numerous mentions of the potential for

GDP increases and the economic potential of the earthquake recovery are peppered throughout government press releases, official speeches and parliamentary debates illuminating the saliency of the topic to politicians and economists in the first few years of recovery.

Further examples of the use of crisis governance to advantage the government agenda also show a degree of forethought and planning. One of the most obvious examples of this was the introduction of wide-ranging education reforms in Christchurch which involved the closure of many schools in the poorer eastern suburbs (O'Callaghan, 2013). This restructuring also included the introduction of privately run and operated, but partially publicly funded, charter schools, described by then MP Lianne Dalziel in the media as an "insensitive experiment" (The Press, 2011, n.p.). Further, in a move reminiscent of the opportunistic introduction of charter schools to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, the government cabinet had already flagged the possibility of education reforms less than a month after the February 22nd earthquake in 2011. One participant described the disruption and upset these reforms caused:

I think that this school thing is definitely political play. It's so wrong. It's so wrong on so many levels because it was almost like they're taking advantage of our loss. Taking advantage of our loss and going 'oh well it was broken anyway, let's do it a different way now' (Interview Participant 4).

The reforms also led to several prominent court cases and prolonged battles by communities to save their schools from closure, something that few were successful in achieving (O'Callaghan, 2013, 2015). This move to privatise education fits into a broader neoliberal ideological perspective which seeks to monetise aspects of society that had previously been state run or public assets (Harvey, 2005). Thus, the earthquakes were framed as an ideal time to attempt reforms in areas such as education that may not have been previously possible.

The implications of this political manoeuvring have had widespread ramifications throughout Canterbury and the earthquake recovery. Many participants also felt that the government had exploited or made use of the circumstances to drive these economic priorities. While this doesn't necessarily reflect the motivations of the government it is suggestive of the responses of the community to the manner in which the recovery policies were communicated and enacted. For example, one individual working on a project in New Brighton noted that the recovery was highly linked to the government's desire for economic growth out of the disaster:

It does stem back to economics, and that's the way the government looks at Christchurch, it's an economic boom. The GST [Goods and Services Tax] revenue of the place over the next 20 years is nuts (Interview Participant 13).

Other participants also described their perception of the government's role in the recovery as driven by economic concerns. An interviewee working in the central city described this as:

It's the trickle down economic view, I think. ...There's been some very big, grand decisions made (Interview Participant 18).

Interestingly, participants described the inconsistencies in this response, noting the difference between the rhetoric of the government's approach and the actual implementation. A participant working in the central city noted this by saying:

I don't think there's much evidence in Christchurch that they do believe in letting the market rule. That's not what they've done with the city (Interview Participant 10).

Another also described the selective use of free market approaches, particularly when it came to supporting other political and economic elites:

Well the Market will determine, that's what Gerry [the Minister for Earthquake Recovery] said to us right from the beginning and what is being told to us over time is that the market will decide...

The market will determine and if [they] need to step into the market to ensure that at a later stage...[they'll] be able to make sure [their] mates improve. That's the sort of conversation that I have around my community (Interview Participant 3).

These observations reflect the broader literature on neoliberalism and the seemingly contradictory nature of the concept as it applies to the techniques and technologies of governing. While neoliberalism was thought to espouse certain actions of free market rule such as the reduction in the role and size of the state, what this case reinforces is the incoherent and inconsistent forms of neoliberal governmentality that can be enacted by the state following a crisis (Castree, 2006; Harvey, 2005).

The attention paid to the economic aspects of a disaster is not, in itself, problematic. Such a destructive disaster is likely to have an impact on the functions of the economy and the market for trade and exchange. Furthermore, the focus on economic factors is one factor of many driving the shape and form of the recovery at different levels. Following a widespread disaster like the Christchurch earthquake, there is likely to be a need for some degree of centralised control, particularly in the immediate instance for co-ordinating search and rescue, demolition and

infrastructure challenges. However, it is obvious that the central government, through unprecedented and far reaching legislative tools in the realm of the state of exception, acted beyond immediate needs and extended their centralised influence into the realm of medium to long term recovery. Not only does this raise questions about who such economic strategies benefit, but these actions also firmly contradict the best practice evidence from a plethora of other post-disaster case studies which emphasize the importance of local control, community participation and involvement and strong local governance structures (Kweit & Kweit, 2004; Mitchell, 2006; Vallance & Love, 2013; Wilson, 2009).

The exceptional nature of these political and legal decisions in disaster recovery has also formed a pattern with other actions taken by the National led government prior to the earthquakes. One of the most far reaching examples of this outside of the earthquake recovery legislation has been the full removal of democratic elections for the regional council body Environment Canterbury (ECan) in relation to highly contested water and agricultural issues in the area. The suspension of democracy at this level, established several months before the first earthquake in 2010, was extended in part through justifications based on the earthquake recovery. This indicated the further enclosure of the democratic right to participation and representation under the auspices of emergency. In 2012, when the suspension was extended until 2016, the New Zealand Law Society noted this move saying:

That explanation [of the earthquakes] cannot be said to justify the Bill's suspension of local democracy. Parliament has already enacted the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 to facilitate earthquake recovery, and that Act gives sweeping emergency powers to the Minister and to the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (New Zealand Law Society, 2012, n.p.).

In doing so, the government has been able to maintain control over the direction of ECan without representation from the citizens of Canterbury in addition to the wide-ranging powers of earthquake recovery legislation under the guise of earthquake recovery.

In a further concerning development, the use of this sort of state of exception environment in order to pass unprecedented legislation has not been limited to the immediate period of response and recovery but extended into the medium and long term. The 2011 earthquake recovery legislation contained a built in sunset clause requiring the legislation to be re-assessed in 2016. However, during the time of research in 2014 and 2015, the Christchurch Regeneration 2015 Bill extended executive powers through orders of council until 2021. The continued centralised focus of authority and decision making power at the ministerial level led to both left wing parties - the Greens and

Labour - initially removing their support for the bill (Stylianou, 2016). This further entrenchment of power in long-term recovery demonstrated that, in this case, actions taken in the name of exceptional circumstances have had, and will continue to have, long reaching and wide-ranging consequences long after a technical state of emergency has ended.

The actions by the government suggest the entrenchment of a neoliberal governmentality that is steeped in exceptionality and the foreclosure of democracy. As Thomas and Bond (2016, p. 1) discuss in relation to the politics of the Environment Canterbury (regional council) legislation, such a move represents the “abandonment of efforts to disguise neoliberal encroachments on democracy”. As such, the post-disaster politics of the Christchurch recovery appear to have acted as an opportunity for consolidating the power of the government, and attempting to protect the legitimacy of the state from the spectre of disorientation and disruption that crises provoke. To further explore this complexity between contradictions of ideology and governmentality I now turn to a discussion of two key examples of the government’s actions: the entrenchment of values through the residential red zone; and the restructuring of governance and power relations.

5.2.1 Entrenching Normative Values through the Residential Red Zone

The Christchurch recovery demonstrates the complexities in understanding the role of the state and capitalism in managing and indeed manipulating crisis and disaster. This includes cases where the role of the state is enhanced to maximise economic benefits and capital accumulation. As I have argued, the New Zealand government has outwardly pursued a recovery agenda strongly driven by an economic agenda that privileges neoliberal free market approaches, practices and values. However, as many scholars have noted, neoliberal ideology is increasingly characterised by an incoherent and contradictory pattern of discourse and actions that seemingly counteract each other and other forms of neoliberalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). In this section, I outline one of the ways that these seemingly contradictory facets of neoliberal governmentality through disaster politics actually act to reinforce and strengthen the ideological and discursive aims of the state. I do this through the example of the residential red zone policy, which affected a range of suburbs in the city, including New Brighton.

The re-zoning of residential land damaged by the process of liquefaction was one of the first actions of the government that demonstrated the continuation of exceptional governance beyond the immediate aftermath of the disaster. In this case, the government chose to ‘re-zone’ significantly damaged residential properties, largely in the city’s poorer eastern suburbs to guarantee certainty and allow for reduced social disruption in the residential recovery (Jones, 2014; Office of the

Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, 2011). However, the government buy-out offer did not follow the typical processes to declare land fit for residential or industrial purposes, but instead offered insured residents the 2007 government value for their damaged property in exchange for ownership of property and the insurance claim attached to it. At the announcement of this policy in June 2011, properties were classified as shown in *Table 13*.

There were immediately problems with the scheme. First, residents were only made aware of two options involving sale to the government in official communication. This resulted in many residents believing their only option was to sell to the government. Many residents, particularly in close knit communities, did not want to sell to the government and questioned the validity of the geophysical studies done on their land, particularly in some communities where very little liquefaction above the ground surface had occurred (Gates, 2015). The two options provided in official government communication were:

Table 13: Government Zoning for Land Damage

	Red Zone	If the home is insured subject to Government Valuation 2007 price buy-out offer
	Orange Zone	Further research necessary to determine viability of the land in Eastern Christchurch
	Green Zone	Rebuilding able to occur, although some foundation changes may be necessary
	White Zone	Further research and data needed to determine possibilities for land affected by rock fall in the south east of Christchurch

Option A- Accept a buy-out from the government at 2007 government valuation.

Option B- Accept a payment for the value of the land only from the government and negotiate with their personal insurers for a settlement for their home.

Technically, however, residents were also able to stay on their land and negotiate with their insurer for their entire settlement. This was not listed as an Option C on official communications. Furthermore, residents accused the government of placing pressure on residents to accept the offer. Other tactics included threatening the compulsory acquisition of properties without compensation, and the removal of essential services from properties that refused to sell (McGrath et al., 2015). This situation was compounded for residents by the difficulties in obtaining public data held by the

government such as the rationale for how zoning decisions were made and the results of geotechnical surveys (Hutching, 2012).

The costs and benefits of this approach to the government are important in light of the rhetoric and ideological perspectives espoused in the wider recovery approach. Because of the significant damage to land and housing, in combination with the red zoning of residential houses and an influx of workers for the reconstruction industry, Christchurch faced a severe housing crisis. This situation saw average rental prices increase by 13.1% (adjusted for inflation) compared to the national average of 9.1% (Goodyear, 2014). Likewise, the number of people living in temporary dwellings such as tents, campervans and other improvised shelters increased by 50% (Goodyear, 2014).

Despite these and many other similar statistics and studies, the Minister for Earthquake Recovery Brownlee denied that any crisis in housing existed and adamantly stuck to National party philosophy in approaching the issue, at one point saying that “the solution is best left to the market” (Berry, 2012a). As one participant described:

I think the government should have stepped in a long time ago. You’ve got the rich getting extremely rich with exorbitant rents... then you’ve got the people that are struggling [and] what does the government say? ‘There’s no housing issue’ and you’ve got people living in sheds (Interview Participant 26).

However, in almost direct contradiction to Minister Brownlee’s statement on the housing situation, the red zoning policy deliberately and extensively intervened in both the market for residential housing and the insurance market. As one participant described ironically:

The economy will take care of itself, that’s what underpins capitalism anyway, the market will decide. Apparently with a whole lot of intervention (Interview Participant 17).

Therefore, while the approach of the government to the housing crisis mirrors traditional neoliberal policies that see the role of the state reduced in comparison to the free market, this contradicts the logic of direct state intervention that was also present. In this case, the government intervened in specific aspects of the housing market while still aspiring to the ideal of free market approaches. Despite this contradiction, the actions of the state can be seen as somewhat coherent when viewed through the underlying logic driving neoliberal norms and values.

Using this example of the red zone process and the lawsuits that followed, these underlying norms and values become apparent. More than a year after the initial announcement, further problems with the legislation emerged. The situation for those who were uninsured was considerably worse

than those who were insured and thus offered Option A and B as described above. These uninsured residents were offered 50% of the 2007 government valuation. The court action that followed resulted in the High Court of New Zealand ruling that the entire red zoning process, not just the 50% offers, had been carried out illegally. As Jones (2014) outlines, the government used a legal argument called the 'third source of power' to argue for the red zoning. This power essentially allows the government to argue it can carry out anything not directly prohibited by law (Jones, 2014). Interestingly, the use of this legal argument meant the government did not use the 'exceptional' earthquake legislation (the CERR Act 2010 & CER Act 2011) in order to enact these policies. Instead the government argued that they were acting within the law as they were not directly acting outside of the law. The group of 46 home owners who launched the legal actions (calling themselves the Quake Outcasts) were also vindicated as the ruling declared that the offer removed "a fundamental right by 'declaration', as the red zoning decisions arbitrarily and unlawfully interfered with the fundamental right to the use and enjoyment of one's home" (Jones, 2014, p. 155).

For the purposes of understanding the contradictory yet coherent logic in the government's approach, two elements of this example are important. First, the rationale for the reduced offer for those without insurance shows a deliberate privileging of the values and norms associated with neoliberal capitalist ideology. This can be seen in the further 2014 Supreme Court ruling (the final court ruling in the Outcasts case) where the government argued that those who consciously chose as individuals not to have insurance policies should bear the risk of that decision (McGrath et al., 2015).⁹ This rationale explains the ideological functions that such 'roll out' policies serve. Peck and Tickell (2002) describe roll out neoliberalism as the extension of the role of the state to strengthen the norms and values that support the ideological system. This form of neoliberal governmentality emphasizes an approach to individual risk, choice and responsibility (Guthman, 2008; Weidner, 2009). In this case, the government undertook increased intervention to buy damaged properties to maintain certainty, but also to reproduce and reinforce capitalist norms and values, particularly around choice and responsibility.

Second, the way in which this policy was enacted demonstrates one way exceptional politics can be engaged to achieve these aims. While the earthquake recovery legislation provided the means

⁹ In the Supreme Court ruling this argument is countered by the Quake Outcasts with detailed information on the circumstances of the small number of home owners who did not have insurance. This includes an individual whose policy had lapsed after a recent cancer diagnosis and an elderly couple who thought the bank handled their insurance among other explanations (McGrath et al., 2015).

necessary to zone land through the creation of a separate recovery plan for the area, the government instead used the third source of power explained earlier. Remarkably, the Supreme Court ruling describes one reason for the government's avoidance of the earthquake recovery legislation as a desire to avoid the requirement for consultation with affected communities (as stipulated in the CER 2011 Act concerning recovery plans).¹⁰ Therefore, while many lawyers and disaster experts were concerned about the minimal role of community engagement and participation in earthquake recovery legislation itself, in enacting the red zone policy the government took remarkable actions to avoid even these minimal requirements by engaging the third source of power argument.

This sort of legislative and political manoeuvring supports the argument that the government undertook the deliberate manipulation of legal and political tools to achieve their desired outcomes without the input or consultation of the community. Not only does this run counter to the importance of community engagement and participation outlined in the government's own cabinet papers on the earthquake recovery legislation, but suggests that earlier concerns about the exceptional approach of the government were well founded. A public figure working in local government commented that as a result of this approach the government had done "*some quite extraordinary things ... with the powers that they gave themselves and [there has been] very little transparency and public accountability over it*" (Interview Participant 2).

The state of exception engaged through the initial phases of the earthquake recovery has contributed to a pattern of behaviour by the government that intervenes selectively to advance the ideological perspectives deemed important to those in power. This example from the earthquake recovery clearly demonstrates the selective actions of the government to intervene in one aspect of the housing market while explicitly leaving another to the 'free market'. Such actions show the contradictory nature of post-disaster governance and governmentality that supports research by other scholars on neoliberalism (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Larner, 2011). This example also illuminates the limitations of a view of crisis governance that focuses solely on the state of exception as it may limit examination of the multiplicity of approaches available to governments following a disaster or crisis (Anderson & Adey, 2012).

¹⁰ An internal document referenced in the Supreme Court ruling, and later released by OIA request, shows that one of the 'cons' listed for choosing this option was the "community expectation that their views may change decisions" (OIA Response, 5 August 2015). Additionally, the CER 2011 Act requires that the government consult with the Minister appointed community forum, Minister Brownlee confirmed in court documents that the community forum had not consulted on the red zoning of land (McGrath et al., 2015).

5.2.2 Restructuring Governance and Power Relations in the Central City

A key aspect of theories of exceptionality is the exercise of power and the relations of the enactment of power (Agamben, 2005; Ek, 2006; Gregory, 2006). While this is largely discussed in relation to the nature of the sovereign, Dillon and Reid (2000) point out that governmental power has a similar network of power relations. In this second exploratory section, I discuss the implications of the 'exceptional' earthquake legislation, and the precedent it established on the structuring of power relations in the central city. I outline example of the central city recovery plan and the restructuring of power relations and governance between local and central government that followed.

In addition to the treatment of the residential sector, the central city was also the focus of intense interest from both the government and private sector. In a move that saw the extensive use of top down directive governance, the recovery of the central city was almost exclusively taken over by the central government in 2012. As history shows the construction and reconstruction of cities provides a canvas on which the politics of the time are imprinted (Vale & Campanella, 2005). The recovery of Christchurch is no different. Following the creation of the military guarded city cordon and red zone (not to be confused with the residential red zone), and after the city undertook an extensive process to engage citizens and re-create the central city, the government ordered a new 100-day blueprint to replace the Council led and consulted plan.

Following this decision and the creation of a new unit within CERA to manage the central city recovery, the main authority to manage the task was removed from the democratically and locally elected council. This was described by one participant as a negative interruption in the momentum for public engagement and participation in the city:

Share an Idea [the council led consultation process] was great, but as it happened, with the events and timings that things happened, just as Share an Idea was probably going to start actually trying to do something, that was when CERA was created and jumped up and down all over the top of that and there hasn't really been any public engagement by the government since (Interview Participant 17).

Cabinet papers identify that the aim of the new recovery plan was to "re-establish a functioning market and create a recovery that is self-sustaining in the medium to long term" (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, 2012, p. 2). This suggests a move away from the goals outlined by the CCC and Gehl Architects that focused on people friendly cities, low rise and green buildings and local infrastructure. In contrast, the final government led plan for the CBD describes the aims of the recovery with terms such as 'attractive business environment', 'encouraging

investment’ and concepts such as ‘smart cities’ (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012a). On the issue of consultation, cabinet papers describe the opinion of the Minister for Earthquake Recovery that no further consultation was required given the extensive Share an Idea process despite the change in priorities and direction (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery, 2012).

After the 100-day plan was released, it was clear that some aspects of the original plan had been maintained, for instance the focus on the Avon Ōtākaro River and a children’s playground. However, the team significantly re-worked the plan spatially to provide a Central City Blueprint. This blueprint contained the details of 16 precincts and ‘anchor projects’ including a retail precinct, an emergency services precinct, a large convention centre and sports stadium and a performing arts precinct (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2012a). Media reports since the initial phase of the plan have revealed that of those 100 days only ‘20-something’ days were devoted to design work, something that has been widely criticised in the media as too short a time in which to re-design an entire CBD (Harvie, 2015).

What these actions show is the potential for the government to extend their command and control approach to wider aspects of the Christchurch recovery. This includes actions taken against the recommended guidelines for disaster recovery that emphasise stakeholder engagement and community participation (Office of the Minister for Canterbury Earthquake Recovery & Office of the Minister of State Services, 2011a), and the principles of city making and design as espoused by many critics in Christchurch (Bennett et al., 2014). Participants who worked in community development and design echoed these concerns when discussing the CBD recovery process:

They had a hundred days in which to create a plan for the central city and they used this precinct mode which I find I’m not comfortable with it as a design principle ... cities that work well are cities that grow as the need arises, that are much more organic in that respect (Interview Participant 3).

I think right from the moment they overturned the council’s draft plan there was probably a good year or a year and a half of them completely misunderstanding their role and how city building works... (Interview Participant 10).

The legislative framework that enabled one person, the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, to have the ultimate decision making power for approving the central city recovery plan was, as has been

discussed, passed under urgency to allow for exceptional powers and controls. Just as Honig (2009) describes, the justification of exceptional politics often results in compromises in the democratic nature of the political arena. In Christchurch, these exceptional political decisions were made without further consultation and democratic involvement of the citizens of Christchurch. Here it is possible to see how these exceptional politics can extend into medium and long term recovery arrangements.

In a similar manner to the handling of the residential red zone, these enactments of exceptional politics are imbued with the apparently contradictory and incoherent expression of capitalist and neoliberal ideologies driven by the role of the state as the facilitator of capital and market functions (Brown, 2015). A raft of arguably ideologically influenced change was made in the central city blueprint including the removal of environmental standards, and the removal of strategies to preserve heritage buildings (Bennett et al., 2014). The Minister for Earthquake Recovery has also been quoted in local media as saying “I always had the view that the rebuild would be led by developers and investors” further suggesting the argument that the intention of the government in intervening so significantly following the earthquakes was driven by a desire to facilitate market and economic capacities (Stylianou, 2014, n.p.). As an additional example, the case for the controversial convention centre project was also justified through this approach in which the government “considers itself to be best placed to explore ancillary commercial relationships with the private sector” (Finance and Expenditure Committee, 2013, p. 3). Here, the political management of the earthquake recovery is suggestive, yet again, of a strategy from which both the economy and the political elite benefit in a mutual relationship.

Furthermore, to action the Central City Blueprint, the government needed to acquire land as well as shift their relationship with the local council. These acts required a complex negotiation of new power dynamics and relations in the city that arguably would have been difficult to achieve without the crisis provided by the earthquakes. To afford the expensive and large-scale anchor projects laid out in the Central City Blueprint a cost sharing agreement was required between the council and central government. However, the cost sharing agreement was signed in secret from the public and negotiations were only allowed to be carried out over 3 days as shown by an Official Information Act request (Voxy, 2014). The agreement also locked in successive councils to pay for large portions of the anchor projects that has not been consulted on or chosen by the people of Christchurch. One individual working in the council described the reason the council made the decision to vote for the cost sharing agreement:

The main reason why people seemed to vote for it was that government were picking up the cost of a convention centre. It was \$250 million. In my view, the council sold itself at 250 million. We sold the sovereignty of the city for the cost of a new convention centre (Interview Participant 2).

In a release to the media, Ruth Dyson, Labour MP for a Christchurch electorate scathingly described the process as imposed by Minister Gerry Brownlee:

This iron fist approach by Mr Brownlee allowed no sensible time for reflection, thought and long term planning. What was originally supposed to be 17 days of negotiation were truncated to just three days (Dyson, 2014).

Further, the cost-sharing agreement cemented the government lead on the majority of the projects in the CBD, entrenching their control on the recovery process (see *Figure 4*).

It is clear at this point that one of the motivating factors behind the government lead in the central city recovery has been the economic and investment potential of reconstruction and rebuilding. Even an individual working at the council described the plan as:

The blueprint is, in a sense, an investment plan, it shows where the money is going to be put and then developers around it are to respond accordingly (Interview Participant 27).

The problem then arises in relation to nature of the social recovery of the central city beyond its purpose as a focus of economic activity. Participants in the community sector also noted this prioritisation of economic concerns. As one person said, *“They have the wrong priorities. It should be people first, not businesses and things like sports complexes and rugby”* (E Interview #37). The role of the central city as urban space that serves social functions is not absent from the plans themselves, which do emphasize green space and other concepts, but it is certainly absent from the documents which describe the motivations and drivers for how the government has approached recovery processes.

Crown and Christchurch City Council Cost-Sharing Negotiations — Project Lead

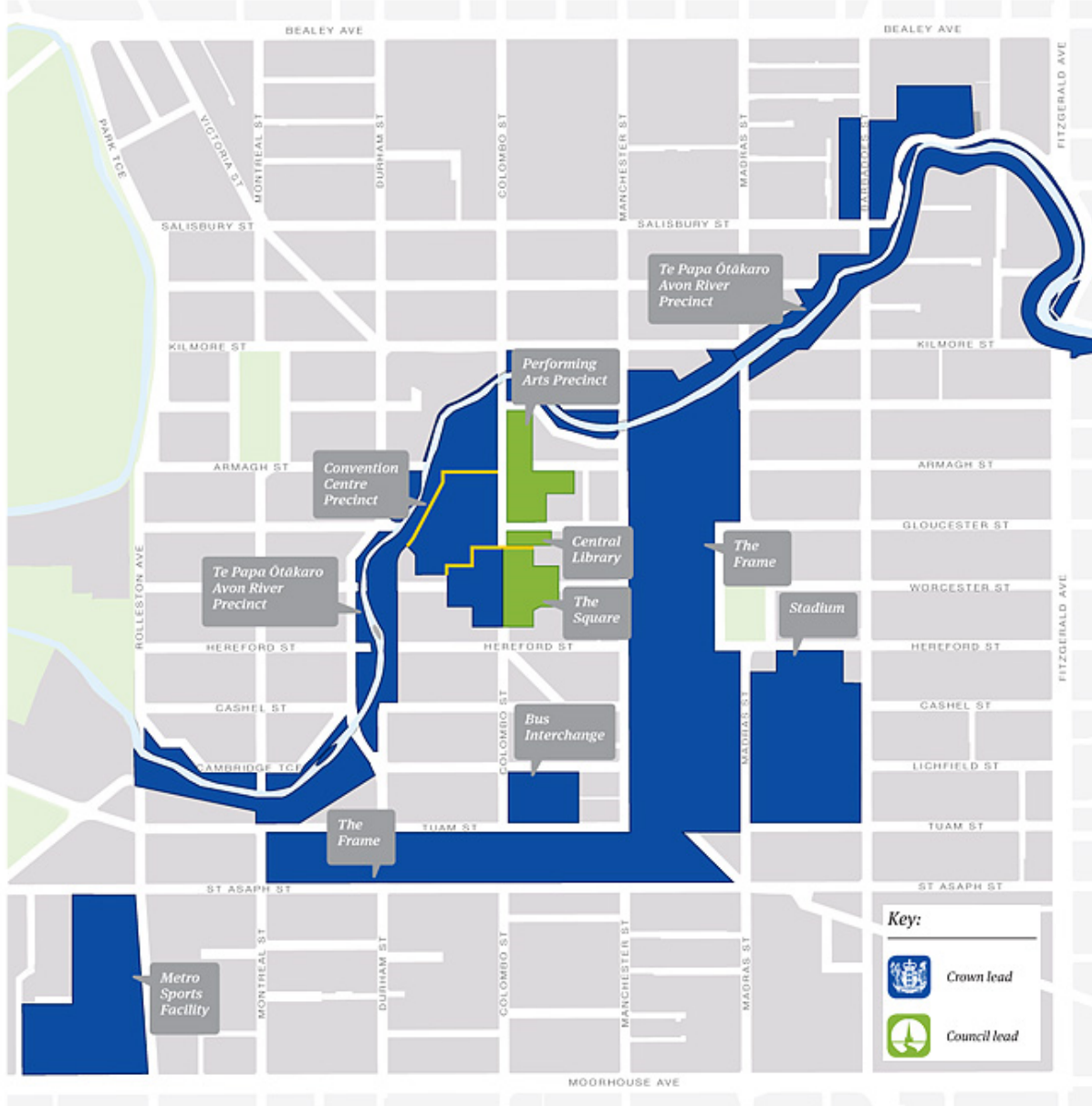


Figure 4: CCDU diagram of the precincts in the Christchurch CBD and the lead agency. Government led projects are highlighted in blue and Council led projects in green clearly demonstrating the government control of CBD projects (Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority - Te Mana Haumanu ki Waitaha, 2013).

Essentially, the way the state has intervened in the recovery process represents the possibilities that exceptional legislation can enable into the long term. These consequences go beyond the possibility for the extension of executive powers in the earthquake legislation to manifest as political dynamics that can influence the physical and social landscape of the Christchurch central city for many years to come. As one individual commented:

I think what we've seen since is that those fears [over the extraordinary powers in the CER 2011 legislation] have been vindicated because the government have done things that are just extraordinary. Whether it was knocking down heritage buildings, whether it's taking private property in the central city and repurposing it, taking away public roads, public parks, Centennial pool ... extraordinary things that the government have done with the powers that they gave themselves and very little transparency and public accountability over it (Interview Participant 2).

As Brown (2015) notes, with the evolution of the ideology of neoliberalism, the legitimacy of the state has become intimately tied to the performance of the market. The conditions created by the earthquake in Christchurch provided the ideal opportunity to further these market ideals in practice, as well as through the entrenchment of norms and values such as individual choice and responsibility. However, what also emerges from this complex set of circumstances is that while the 'market' may receive the assistance of the government, the citizens and residents of Christchurch who inhabit and interact with the 'market' have in many cases, been left without adequate support and resources. Thus, the contradictory and complex nature of capitalist relations in the present are extended and deepened in the post-disaster political context through the aid of exceptionality based crisis politics.

5.3 ACTING AGAINST THREATS TO POWER AND LEGITIMACY

By enacting the state of exception in the political approach to the medium and long term recovery of Christchurch, the government has, in many regards, narrowed the possibilities for participation and the breadth of democratic potential in the city. As discussed previously, the actions taken by the state in the residential red zone and the planning of the central city suggest a rationale to bypass usual legislative and political processes. However, just as the moment of disaster represents opportunity for the state, it also presents a threat and challenge to the status quo.

A small but significant portion of literature on the politics of disasters points to the destabilisation of existing and dominant political regimes and ideologies as a result of the effects of crisis and disaster. The previous two sections have explored in depth the processes and practices of exceptionality based intervention by the New Zealand government following the earthquakes to maximise benefits and strengthen hegemonic norms and values. In response to the use of exceptional powers and political tactics it is reasonable to expect resistance in some degree. As Farazmand (2007, p. 149) describes, "no government is immune to the chaotic crises that can cause system breakdown and transformation or regime change". To act against this the state and ruling powers can engage a number of tactics to manage and minimise the possible disruption to networks and flows of power

and legitimacy. This section addresses the mechanisms through which the government has acted against the possible threats to power and legitimacy that arose out of the destabilised post-earthquake landscape in Christchurch. I argue that these dynamics emphasize the unstable and incomplete nature of states of exception, and the way states and authorities have to work to maintain and progress exceptionality based politics.

Anderson and Adey (2012) describe the lack of research into the many different ways emergencies and crises are governed beyond and inclusive of the state of exception. From the data analysis for this part of the research a pattern began to emerge in which participants described the ways the government had established a boundary between them as residents and the institutions of governance such as CERA. It became apparent that one of the characterising elements of this relationship between CERA and 'others' was a degree of intimidation and bullying behaviour. The work by Hewitt (1983) discusses the way framing disasters as 'un' events contributes to the separation between the effects of disasters and the social systems that created the patterns of vulnerability that influence the worst affected. As such, disasters and crises can reveal the structural and political inequalities and injustices in society, leading to possibilities for destabilising political power. Similarly, Drury and Olson (1998) posit that disasters are linked to political unrest, and that this disruption is linked to factors such as previous political unrest, the level of political repression present, and the wealth and equality of the society affected.

These upheavals are of course most concerning to those who benefit from the arrangements, and perceived stability of non-crisis/non-disaster life (Green, 2005; Solnit, 2009). Tierney (2008) suggests that the concept of elite panic encapsulates the broad trend across historical and geographical cases in which those in power react to disaster in a way that entrenches existing privilege and power structures. As disasters constitute a threat to, or crisis of the status quo, authorities can react through tightening social control to minimize potential threats to power (Grove, 2012; Hannigan, 2012; Pelling & Dill, 2009). Thus, political change following disaster can be considered either progressive, if the changes are made to address exposed inequalities or injustices (Greenberg, 2014; Solnit, 2009), or regressive, if change is undertaken to maintain a political structure through the disaster period (Birkmann et al., 2008). In the context of the Christchurch recovery I suggest that this approach had several outcomes with regards to threats to legitimacy and power; the limiting of democratic possibilities and the use of bullying, threats and intimidation.

5.3.1 Limiting Democratic Possibilities

One of the first actions taken by the government in reaction to the threat disasters pose has been to limit the sphere of democratic possibilities for engagement and participation. This has mostly been carried out under the justifications of emergency, necessity and thus exceptional politics. In doing so the government has attempted to bound the possibilities for dissent and upheaval as well as maintain a hold on power and control, particularly through a centralised disaster recovery approach. As one participant said when asked about the role of government in the recovery approach:

It was elite panic. 'We don't know what's going to happen', and what that meant is they had a fundamental distrust in the citizens, and the business leaders, and developers and the council to actually work together to do what was needed for the city. And so they took complete control of the whole process and I think that was a big mistake (Interview Participant 10).

As this participant describes, the apparent elite panic of the government resulted in the exclusion of many citizens and organisations from participating in the recovery, particularly in the central city. This dynamic was also expressed through the exclusionary and distanced approach the recovery authority CERA took towards engaging with residents.

Many participants described their relationship with CERA as disjointed and disconnected. The tightly controlled command approach to disaster recovery may have been intended to contain the disaster situation and influence the outcomes of recovery. However, the conditions also had the effect of limiting transparency and communication between the government and citizens. As one individual commented:

It's a very ivory tower approach and it's stupid, there's no need for it. I think they've got more entrenched into it, central government's gotten more entrenched rather than less so (Interview Participant 13).

This dynamic also extended to political decisions that were made without the input of residents such as the first attempted redevelopment of Victoria Square in the central city. Following significant public outcry, the process was abandoned and re-started to include a new consultation process. Before this point, however, the government justified the lack of participation and engagement because people had already had their say through the 'Share an Idea' consultation. It is important to note that the 'Share an Idea' process was conducted by the council almost four years prior and that the resulting plan for the central city had been overridden by the government's blueprint.

Other media reports and accounts by participants have also indicated the lack of transparency around the operation of CERA, particularly in the central city recovery and the ability to access

information through the Official Information Act (Hutching, 2012). As noted by one participant, this has created an atmosphere of distrust and conspiracy in the city where rumours are unable to be disproven due to secrecy and a lack of transparency:

What's telling about that is that when things are run so secretly there is no ability to [disprove rumours]. Rumours like that happen because it's not transparent and those rumours start to get believed that they're true, who knows? But they certainly won't release any OIA information on anything that's interesting (Interview Participant 10).

In contrast, the attention paid to high profile announcements such as the nearly \$16,000 spent on announcing the Convention Centre project to a group of approximately 90 delegates demonstrates the elite and arguably exorbitant nature, surrounding the release of certain information to specific groups of people involved in the recovery.

The few actions that were undertaken by the government through the exceptional earthquake legislation appear to have been carried out to circumvent or minimise the involvement or participation of the public. This has included the decision by Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee to take away the right of appeal of landowners in a long-running dispute on land boundaries and new developments, which was labelled by Justice Chisholm as an unnecessary use of powers (Berry, 2012b). Similarly, a court case challenging the closure of Phillipstown School by Education Minister Hekia Parata, which was justified using the earthquakes, also ruled that the consultation process had been conducted illegally (McCrone, 2013).

As mentioned previously the government also went to great lengths to avoid the minimal requirements for consultation in the earthquake legislation in the implementation of the residential red zone in which they used the principle of the 'third source of power' to acquire land (Jones, 2014). Commentators and legal rulings have suggested these moves were made in good faith through bad processes with the aim to ensure quick and efficient decision making following a major disaster (Berry, 2012b; McCrone, 2013; Wright, 2011). Whether or not this is an accurate description of the motivations of those in government, these approaches have arguably reduced the possibilities of participation for residents.

This dynamic has also set up a dualistic relationship between the government and citizens, characterised by the othering of residents in opposition to the authority of government. In doing so, the possibilities for political activity and democratic participation are reduced and, in some cases, removed altogether as possibilities. Honig (2009) agrees, describing the regressive potential of

exceptional politics that can cultivate an environment in which democracy is seen as expendable. In Christchurch, the use of these tactics on a population already affected by the trauma of a disaster has resulted in frustration and dissatisfaction with the inclusion and treatment of residents and citizens.

Thus, there is evidence to suggest resident engagement in the Christchurch government was seen by the government as not just expedient for a fast recovery process, but also as something to fear. This established an antagonistic relationship, which appeared to foreclose opportunities for building constructive collaborations and relationships. These actions were undertaken to defend and enforce the state of exception that allocated the government a degree of centralised control over the recovery. This dynamic is explored in further detail in *Chapter Seven* in the wider context of community and government action in the recovery.

5.3.2 Bullying, Threatening and Intimidation

This antagonistic foundation also established a dynamic that was expressed through the way departments and ministers approached residents and other organisations. Despite the action taken by the government to defend and enforce these exceptional post-disaster politics, what also emerged from the data collected from a variety of NGOs, community organisations and individuals was the way the government appeared to have engaged another tactic to limit the potential for dissent. To respond to the increasing challenges and critiques of the centralised disaster approach and the suspension of democratic processes and principles, a pattern of government bullying and intimidation tactics emerged. This appeared to be used against both individuals who were deemed problematic in their advocacy and activism, as well as organisations, including the city council and businesses.

This dynamic first started to emerge in this research through e-interview data. When asked how the government had handled and approached the recovery, a remarkably negative attitude towards the Minister for Earthquake Recovery Gerry Brownlee emerged. Minister Brownlee was described negatively by many individuals, one described him as “*an arrogant bully*” (E-interview #13), while another noted that “*Brownlee has actually insulted anyone with any contrary views*” (E-interview #6). Other participants described offensive comments made in the news such as a media article in which Minister Brownlee made derogatory comments about residents, including that they were “*carpers and moaners*” (Dally, 2012, n.p.). Other respondents described the broader government led recovery as dictatorial, autocratic, bullying, disempowering, domineering, exclusive and deceptive.

However, more broadly the pattern of bullying and intimidation appears to have occurred at almost all levels of the recovery process. As reported in one media article, a local business owner whose property was marked for compulsory acquisition described CERA's approach as "my way or the highway" and said he felt the approach was "intimidatory (sic) and deprived him of being properly compensated for his building" (van Beynen, 2014, n.p.). Minister Brownlee even took aim at The Treasury following the release of a government investment report that criticised the handling and governance of key central city recovery projects, describing the department and report as "utter tripe", "disrespectful" and "well outside its mandate" (Price, 2016, n.p.). Those in local NGOs and social services described the ramifications this dynamic was having as a form of revenge culture that they had not seen in previous governments:

This government seems to have a revenge factor in it. If an organization starts up and says that they don't like what they're doing, like the Gambling Foundation against the casino in Auckland ... central government money starts disappearing. They're actively trying to destroy the people who come stand up and say things they don't like to hear. I don't think I've ever seen that before (Interview Participant 7).

At the local government level, these tactics were also deployed concerning the use of special powers under earthquake legislation. In a media report on the release of OIA documents, Minister Amy Adams appears to threaten the use of these powers if the council does not agree to an Order in Council (the provision under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act 2011 to alter existing legislation) that would speed up the district planning process and truncate public engagement and consultation. In the email, Minister Adams responds to a request by Mayor Lianne Dalziel to extend the period of consideration for council approval to the Order in Council process:

It should be noted that the Council should not consider the current track of a truncated process under the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Act the only option. An incoming government will always have the option of special legislation to create a standalone plan process for Christchurch... I would urge the Council to carefully consider the relative risks and merits of proceeding with the current track (Young, 2014, n.p.).

The use of threats rather than the actual implementation of the broad range of powers available under the act appears to be one of the main tactics engaged to achieve the aims of the government in the recovery. Few Orders in Council have been enacted under the exceptional earthquake recovery legislation, however the apparent intimidation technique utilised by Minister Adams suggests that the power of the laws also lay in the possibilities for threats of further and more wide-ranging action. Given the removal of democratic elections and councillors in Environment

Canterbury, it would be reasonable to assume that the possibility of the government acting on these threats was considered very real.

Likewise, those in the residential red zone faced similar techniques of intimidation to convince and coerce landowners into signing agreements for the state purchase of their red zoned property. As one couple explained in an interview:

Participant 16: The pressure on these people, you can imagine the stress they were going through because of the aftershocks... [the government] just played on those emotions.

Participant 17: Getting phoned every two weeks by government departments.

Participant 16: We were getting harassed.

Participant 17: It wasn't just CERA or EQC. It was government departments phoning us up and saying, 'you do realize if you don't sign this agreement then we'll remove your essential services. You won't have insurance and your mortgage, your banks will foreclose on you'.

Participant 16: We then started to read legislation and we started to look at our rights and we realized that removing our essential services would be a breach of our human rights... [this] has frustrated a great number of people because if they knew that, they wouldn't have left. A lot of people left homes that were undamaged.

Others felt that the government had engaged in “*delay tactics*” (Interview Participant 23) to encourage people into accepting the agreements. This was a particular grievance of the uninsured Quake Outcasts where the government took 15 months to make the initial 50% of government valuation offer on their property after wider red zone announcements for fully insured red zone land (McGrath et al., 2015). The Prime Minister John Key further expanded this perspective towards those in the red zone when he made the following comment following a court ruling:

One option is the government says: “Thanks very much, it's been a lot of fun. If you don't want to take the offer, that's where it's at” (Greenhill & Fox, 2013, n.p.).

After an outcry from residents who claimed the long and drawn out process had been far from “fun”, the Prime Minister apologised for the comments but said they “needed to be taken in context” (Greenhill & Fox, 2013, n.p.). Despite this many still saw the remarks as a threat. The approach of the government in these matters shows not only a disregard for the circumstances of

the residents of Christchurch but also illuminates the apparent tactics of a government attempting to gain control of an unpredictable context.

In response to the threat that the earthquake posed to the legitimacy of the state the government attempted to manage these conditions through the imposition of a dual approach that first restricted access to information and transparency, and second, engaged in intimidation and bullying tactics to silence critiques and possible threats. I suggest that what Farazmand (2007) describes as the 'hyper uncertainty' surrounding the disaster context drives this response to justify and enforce exceptionality based post-disaster politics. It appears the government lost confidence in the ability to govern at a distance through the legal and political strategies of exception. Instead the mere threat of critique and dissent in the Christchurch recovery has instigated an approach of bullying, intimidation and threatening behaviour to enforce the centralised approach to the recovery and to cultivate and protect legitimacy and order (Pelling & Dill, 2009).

5.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have discussed the integrated politics of crisis and disaster that were enacted through the Christchurch earthquake recovery process. I have focused largely on the actions of the central government to critically analyse how the politics of crisis governance and exceptionality shaped the form of recovery taken at the official level. While disasters are acknowledged as a socially constructed and determined phenomenon that interact with hazards in the environment to create risk and vulnerability, there is still an underlying reluctance within disaster studies more widely to see disasters as inherently political events (Olson, 2008). I have outlined how, in this case, the recovery from the Canterbury earthquakes has been imbued with different layers of politics and political approaches at the central government level, which have specifically aimed to cultivate and entrench the value and role of the economy as facilitated by the state.

These actions have been largely characterised by an approach to crisis governance that enacts a politics of exceptionality in which the actions of the government sit both inside and outside of the law (Ek, 2006; Lee et al., 2014). The use of recovery legislation that breached the constitutional parameters of executive power to grant power to the newly created Minister of Earthquake Recovery represents an overarching approach to crisis in which it is acceptable to disregard legislative and constitutional boundaries. Contradictorily, these actions also remain within the law due to the right of a sovereign nation to suspend the rule of law during a crisis or emergency. Thus, a

politics of exceptionality was engaged in the recovery of Christchurch that has largely been utilised to justify an expansion and centralisation of the role of the state.

This approach to disaster recovery has been engaged in a way that extends and entrenches forms of pre-existing politics, particularly in relation to neoliberal capitalism. In the first instance the allocation of managing and drafting the earthquake legislation to the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment over the Ministry for Civil Defence is indicative of an approach to disaster response and recovery by the government that was characterised by an attempt to privilege economic and market concerns. However, the extension of free market or neoliberal ideology in the recovery has occurred in a somewhat contradictory and incoherent manner. As noted, the government approach has utilised a state of exception to expand and centralise the role of the state, something that runs contrary to mainstream neoliberal discourse. In practice, these actions can still be seen to reinforce the hegemony of capitalist norms and values despite the apparent contradiction. Most notably the purchase of large tracts of land in the central city area to control and manage land demand was justified with the aim of providing certainty to the market and investors. In this way, actions that appear contradictory to neoliberal discourse can in fact reinforce the values and dominance of the free market economy. This is particularly interlinked with what Brown (2015) describes as the increasingly entangled relationship between the performance of the market and the legitimacy of the state. What these dynamics demonstrate is along the lines of Brenner and Theodore's (2002) actually-existing neoliberalism in which different spatial, cultural and social contexts manifest different forms of neoliberalism that are adaptive and relative to their environment.

To maintain these forms of politics the New Zealand government have moved to dismiss and minimise the possibility of dissent and threats to legitimacy. While the Christchurch recovery has not been characterised by an overt form of authoritarianism as is often the case with forms of exceptionality politics (Gregory, 2006; Lee et al., 2014), there were definite representations of bullying and intimidation that occurred by actors in the central government towards local government representatives, business people and individuals. These forms of intimidation had the effect of closing down democratic possibilities and nurtured a culture of bullying and threatening behaviour towards residents. The politicisation of post-disaster democracy is something that is discussed in later chapters but it is introduced here as it foregrounds the broader political approach of the government and wider implications for interacting and working with citizens and residents. The presence of these forms of regressive politics also suggest a fear of loss of legitimacy in the wake of

the disaster in the city and affirm earlier analysis on the role of the state in cultivating legitimacy through reinforcing the role and function of the free market economy.

Through discussing these patterns and politics of recovery in Christchurch, this chapter has stressed the necessary complexity underlying these interactions within the politics of disaster recovery. The role of the state in this context is thus something that is simultaneously inside and outside of the rule of law, coherent and incoherent. In many ways, this complexity stresses the importance of integrating a fuller perspective of crisis politics into our understanding of disaster response and recovery. This requires going beyond a single understanding of crisis governance. As Adey et al., (2015) note, there is a need to conceive of the many different ways of governing emergency beyond and inclusive of the state of exception. In this chapter, I have explored this complexity to demonstrate how the government enacted a form of exceptional politics that side-lined democratic processes, enforced a command and control approach to crisis governance, and privileged forms of neoliberal capitalism in the recovery of the city.

PHOTO ESSAY TWO – CREATION FROM DESTRUCTION –

Immediately after the earthquakes communities came together to provide food, shelter and support to each other. Many stories told of the impromptu and informal centres set up during this time of disruption and shock. As the weeks and months passed communities broadened their focus. Grasping the opportunity that lay in the rubble, groups and individuals started to organise to reclaim vacant lots, to grow plants in the cracks of the pavement and to adorn the ruins with colourful art.

This photo essay documents the hopeful actions of residents as they negotiate the long process recovery. Often political, these interventions provide a window of understanding into the atmosphere of recovery in the three years following the major earthquakes. The images here also represent a spirit of creativity and experimentation in the face of crisis that has had an undeniable impact on the landscape of the city.



Faces from the Collection

Here's to repopulating a place that's been emptied and dramatically changed. Across our altered cityscape, portraits from Christchurch Art Gallery's collection have been selected to appear in vacant lots, on surviving buildings and newly exposed walls. Time to enjoy a bit of unexpected company while we bring this place back to life.

Tony Fomison
New Zealand, 1939-90

No! 1971
Oil on canvas

Collection of Christchurch Art Gallery
Te Puna o Waiwhetu, purchased 1973.
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“The earthquake happened and then the next minute it's like, ‘Oh, shit. How do we do life now?’”



“The truth is that actually there's a lot of power in community...

I would like us to be able to voice back an alternative vision of what we would like to see.”



“In Christchurch right now, I feel like the entire citizenry is engaged in discussions that most people aren't interested in in cities that haven't had something like this happen to them.”

“Whole recovery is political. Utterly political. Had we had a different minister leading we would have had a different recovery.”





“[The earthquakes] enabled some of the more radical views, like positive radical views, to have a presence in the city which I think is pretty powerful.”

6 RESISTING CRISIS POLITICS THROUGH EVERYDAY ACTION

Despite the bleak realities of the post-disaster context and the opportunistic and occasionally ruthless nature of crisis politics, such a tale only represents part of the picture. The actions of those at the centre of disaster represent significant potential for resistance and re-creation, particularly at the grassroots level. Discussing the political dynamics of the Christchurch earthquakes solely focused on central and local government would be a narrow and misrepresentative account of the response to this disaster. This chapter shifts the focus of this thesis to account for the role of community based organisations and individuals in the two case study areas (New Brighton and the central city) in their efforts to contribute to official recovery activities and, in many cases, to direct their own pathways to recovery. In many countries, particularly Western democracies, macro-level post-disaster change that topples a political system is rare (Passerini, 2000). However, these forms of research generally only consider large scale or macro level political and social changes. In contrast, this research explicitly investigates the potential that lies in the rupture of society that disaster creates at the grassroots level; the level of community organisations, networks and their relationships to others. Therefore, in this chapter I explore the radical potential and hope that lies in the everyday and often mundane aspects of disaster recovery, as well as the grassroots led response to the central government recovery process.

To frame this, I engage several theoretical perspectives to construct a perspective of 'hope' that counters and resists that of 'crisis'. As Adey and Anderson (2012) note, there is a need to explore the many different responses to crisis. I argue that this statement extends to not only formalised structures of government and institutions but also the multiplicity of responses at different levels of society, including the grassroots. To do this I explore the actions of community led recovery carried out by collectives in Christchurch. To understand the political and social context of these actions I engage the frameworks of autonomous geographies and community economies to analyse how local level changes and shifts in behaviour and organisation can affect broader scale change. Here, a relational and multi-faceted conceptualisation of community led recovery action emerges from the conditions of disaster to shape the way individuals and organisations respond and engage with, and outside of, centralised government actions.

Drawing largely on face-to-face and e-interview data with community organisations in Christchurch, this chapter describes the different forms post-disaster community led recovery has taken, as well as the potential for these actions to influence wider processes of societal change. To do this I first describe the community activities that form the foundation of understanding alternative hopeful

recovery action. I then discuss in-depth two facets of these actions: the role of autonomous community action; and shifts in post-disaster subjectivities, values and norms. Together, these areas of community led recovery form a narrative which shows the multiple and contextualised responses to disaster and the centralised government response.

6.1 RESISTING CRISIS POLITICS AND PRACTICING HOPE

Alongside and within the proliferation of crisis, both enacted and theorised, is the emergence of a new hopeful paradigm of political, economic and social change (Anderson, 2006a; Braun, 2005; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Harvey, 2000; Pow, 2014). This paradigm rejects excessive familiarity with the idea of crisis, and particularly the overwhelming dominance of capitalism in these narratives (Derickson et al., 2015; Gibson-Graham, 2006). Through the lens of hope, this philosophy prioritises the need for progressive alternatives to be envisioned and enacted. This section will foreground a discussion of how community led action following the earthquakes was undertaken in a way that provides a form of resistance and re-creation. Drawing on a hopeful view of post-disaster action illuminates the multiple forms of recovery practiced in any given context. In Christchurch, this approach sheds light on the many ways that people work within, alongside and outside of the centralised government led recovery and capitalist discourses of economy and society.

While the approach of government may have foreclosed many options for participation and engagement, through the data it is clear that residents of Christchurch resisted these actions and moved to create their own alternatives. Actions have ranged from explicit resistance and traditional marches and protests, to more every-day forms of action that focused on re-creation and transformation. The variety of these approaches have created an environment in which the top-down command and control approach to recovery led by the government is resisted, challenged and re-created. Through this articulation of resistance, the boundary between disempowerment and empowerment blur to highlight the ways that communities are simultaneously subject to top down command and control, while also acting in a way that resists and re-creates hopeful alternatives to government led recovery. These actions and dynamics at the community level demonstrate the spaces that are also created for hopeful alternatives to the status quo.

Hope is an integral feature of this dynamic. The call for more hopeful geographies and perspectives in general has emerged from the increasing prominence of critical perspectives on the perceived consolidation of neoliberal and capitalist forms of development (Braun, 2005; Derickson et al., 2015; Pow, 2014). Here, hopeful and utopic thinking is argued as absent from the debate as to how those

of the 'left' should approach creating and visioning change. Gibson-Graham (2006) suggest that hegemonic thought around capitalism has contributed to a pervasive lack of alternatives and hope for a different way of organising society. Chatterton (2010) also suggests that in recent times some scholars have been hampered by a lack of imagination. As a constructive alternative, hopeful and utopic geographies encourage an exploration of possibility and imagination based on improving injustice and cultivating progressive values (Anderson, 2006a; Braun, 2005; Chatterton, 2010; Harvey, 2000).

When investigating the intertwined politics of community led recovery action, hopeful perspectives demonstrate the possibilities for change that exist both in the present and the future. Here, the future is "constantly being folded into the here and now" to create and enact a different world (Anderson, 2010, p. 2). The disruptive space of disaster provides the grounds for which questions of the past and the future are drawn into the present through the tasks of remembrance and reconstruction. In the presence of restrictive and regressive forms of crisis politics, the role of hope in post-disaster recovery is to question what the past means in the present and how the future can be different. This may include questioning the values and practices of society, but also the highly socially constructed conditions that lead to the determinants of disaster in the first place such as structural vulnerabilities and risk. Hopeful action moves beyond recreating the status quo or bouncing back to the pre-disaster state to engage and enact different practices, norms and values to affect greater societal change.

Scholarly work on the geographies of hope cover the terrain of utopias and the legacies of utopic thought in carving out space for different ways of conceiving of society and our relationship to each other (Anderson, 2006; Braun, 2005; Harvey, 2000). These perspectives frame hope as emerging from everyday action through a lens of possibility and potential (Anderson, 2006a; Head, 2016). While this framing can be critiqued as too small scale or too focused on localised action, scholars such as Head (2016) and Gibson-Graham (2006) contend that these small-scale actions progress possibilities and render visible the potential for different futures. To conceptualise and understand the possibilities for hopeful post-disaster change beyond the theoretical lens, I engage the ideas of autonomous action and community economies. The practice of experimenting and creating different forms of society and politics through these actions encapsulate an ethos of hope. Significantly, this work pays attention to different understandings and forms of economy in creating a different a different world (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy & Graham, 2008). In *Chapter Five* I outlined the government's approach to recovery politics which, at an ideological level, is indicative of a

neoliberally influenced idea of economy and society. While the government strategy appears particularly incoherent at times, this is a typical application of varied neoliberalism in current politics (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). However, through ideas of community economies and autonomous action importance is placed on already-existing alternative forms of economies, values and practices and how these create new possibilities in society, particularly in the aftermath of disaster.

In this way, autonomous action is useful as it represents practices that seek to shift the practices of capitalist life to everyday alternatives (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Pickerill & Chatterton, 2006). These alternatives to capitalism are envisioned and enacted through how people live their everyday lives, participate in politics and constitute their identities. Chatterton and Pickerill (2010, p. 476) describe the use of everyday practices as a foundation for a “hoped for future in the present” in a process that is messy, experimental and highly contextual engaging in acts of both resistance and creation. Similarly, Gibson-Graham (1996, 2006) describe an emerging political imaginary that involves the reconfiguration of the political and economic landscape, “at a time when hope is finally getting a hearing and a battering” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. ix). By their argument, the narrow view of capitalism adopted by many scholars in progressive spheres has obscured the way we see forms of action that already exist that challenge the hegemony of capitalism as ‘the only’ form of economy (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy & Graham, 2008; Miller, 2011).

One of the characterising features of autonomous action and community economies is a desire to re-create the world in the present, something that also closely aligns with prefigurative political theories steeped in modern anarchism (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Gordon, 2007). The emphasis of these actions is placed at the everyday and local level (Chatterton, 2010). This is a particularly important aspect for understanding different scales and facets of post-disaster social and political change. Many analyses of post-disaster political change have focused on wider regional or national level politics (Passerini, 2000). However, disasters are often localised phenomena that occur in a relational network of power relations, identities and political dynamics. Thus, these events often disrupt smaller scale, everyday life to a greater degree. As such, community led post-disaster action may not be explicitly labelled political or directed at the level of parliamentary politics but still represents a form of political resistance and re-creation.

Hopeful community led recovery is rendered visible when paying attention to the varied manifestations of local scale autonomous recovery politics and action. In Christchurch, recovery actions were initially based around providing immediate support to neighbours, local groups and vulnerable people. This included groups like the Student Volunteer Army that assisted hundreds of

people to dig out their homes from mud and silt. As the process of recovering from the earthquakes has progressed these activities have become more focussed on creating spaces for recovery, resisting government led actions and supporting social networks and community. In addition, social service providers have borne a significantly changed and in some cases increased workload after the earthquakes, showing the diversity of organisational structures that are participating in creating alternative and different forms of recovery to the government led plans.

Community recovery actions in the city and suburbs had many diverse aims. At the neighbourhood level, communities have engaged extensively in the creation and support of social networks, which have fostered a sense of connection throughout the experience of the earthquakes. These networks have formed the foundation of how some people saw their participation in the earthquake recovery:

I help at local primary school in a variety of ways (friends of school, parent help, road safety) participate in discussion on community FB pages belong to local tennis club (family membership) attend yoga (in neighbouring community) try to be a good neighbour to [pre-earthquake] and [post-earthquake] neighbours (E-interview #13).

Other activities at localised scales have included a growing participation in community gardening activities and urban food foraging, as well as community currencies and timebanks. These activities have provided a way for people to be involved in their local community as well as respond to the earthquakes.

At a broader scale, some organisations have emerged in direct response to the task of recovery. These organisations and NGOs undertake the tasks of leading community recovery projects that provide pathways for people to be involved in the recovery while also significantly altering and contributing to the post-disaster landscape. The main organisations active in the city are Gap Filler, Garden City 2.0, The Social, Greening the Rubble and Life in Vacant Spaces. Life in Vacant spaces is a broader organisation that assists in facilitating and maintaining the requirements for other groups to engage in 'transitional' recovery based projects, particularly on land owned by businesses or developers that is currently vacant. Gap Filler, one of the original community recovery organisations based around 'transitional' projects, are a community group that install and maintain interactive and provocative installations, art and public spaces mainly the central city area (although some projects have been placed in suburban areas). Greening the Rubble engage in similar projects with a focus on green spaces, interactive gardens and reflective public spaces, while Garden City 2.0 focus largely on urban food production and distribution including projects that actively maintain food production sites in the central city. The Social is an example of a slightly different organisation as they are more

focused on providing venues, space and opportunities for performances, art and creativity in the city, particularly considering reduced workshop space and venues as a result of building demolition.

There are many other organisations involved in community recovery in Christchurch; however, these are some of the larger organisations that feature prominently in the recovery and are explored in-depth in this chapter. As shown in *Figure 5* the actions of communities in Christchurch can be broadly grouped as three main areas of community recovery. Specifically, these are: locally based neighbourhood social support based on immediate interactions within new and pre-existing networks; pre-existing NGOs and social service organisations that expanded their area of focus and in some cases handled an increased workload; and grassroots organisations and projects that emerged specifically in response to the earthquakes such as urban agriculture and transitional architecture.

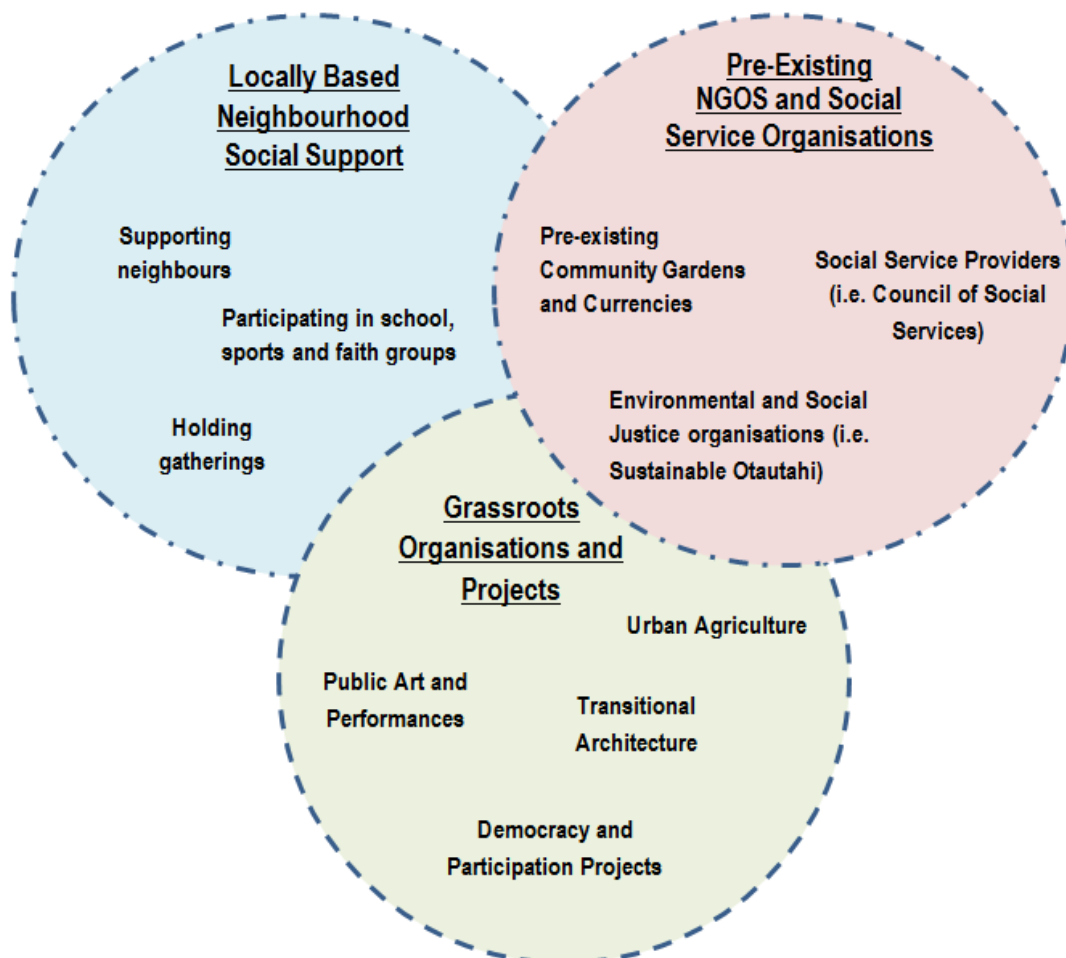


Figure 5: Three domains of community led recovery action in Christchurch.

The purpose of grouping these activities is to visually represent the diversity and interconnectivity of community recovery approaches. This schematic draws heavily on the philosophical framework of Gibson-Graham's community economies theory; in this work the importance of seeing the different forms of economy is emphasized (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Here I extrapolate this idea to emphasize the different forms of community recovery rather than categorising a broad group of 'community recovery' action. In doing so I demonstrate the many forms of recovery that exist, within and beyond the official government led recovery that has been dominated by neoliberally driven discourses of economic growth, competition and privatisation. The importance of schematics, such as those used in community economies theory, is to pay attention to these alternative forms of organising that already exist in the present but that are informed by ideals beyond the societal status quo.

Combined, these three areas of community action provide the foundation for understanding the way people are resisting and creating hope out of the disaster experience. The actions of localised community recovery initiatives that emerge in response to the earthquakes largely fell within the realms of locally based initiatives or grassroots projects. From those that worked in the community sector who participated in this research, the role of these pre-existing organisations in assisting communities in recovery was clear. However, in this research I have focused largely on the actions of grassroots organisations and projects and locally based neighbourhood social support. The role of pre-existing NGOs and social service organisations is an extremely important avenue of research but is beyond the scope of this project to focus on all non-governmental forms of the recovery. From the data on these grassroots and local responses two main outcomes of these actions have emerged, which have resisted government recovery and created hopeful alternatives. These are the creation of physical manifestations of recovery through material change and the fostering of different values, norms and ways of being in society.

These forms of material change from community led action have significantly contributed to the evolution of the post-disaster physical and social landscape of the city. The actions of community organisations following the earthquakes took advantage of the earthquakes and the perceived opportunities it provided. As one participant described of the earthquakes "*I think it's just thrown down power structures*" (Interview Participant 5). In doing so, community led projects created real progress and hope in reconstructing the city in ways that people could interact with and take ownership of:

The only people who actually seem to be doing any good are the little community groups like Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble. If it weren't for them, the city would be completely dead (E-interview #40).

Another participant noted that *"the government did very little to support on a grassroots level"* so they explained *"most of the initiatives and support has come from the hard work of those already in the community... communication between groups and organisations set up, brought about or existing within the community"* (E-interview #52). This work provides an avenue of community action that not only contributes to wellbeing and the emotional processing of the disaster event, but also creates spaces in which communities can co-create. Participants described this as particularly empowering:

I think what is happening locally is really good... it's really exciting, it's very empowering. It feels like we're finally in a space where we can do stuff that's going to make the difference we've been trying to do for eons (Interview Participant 1).

The presence of these activities provided not only avenues for productive community led action, but also an environment that nurtured hope and possibility *"I feel really hopeful about community and its ability to respond and become stronger, and the city can be repaired as a result."* (Interview Participant 5)

In Christchurch, the rupture in perceived normality has created not only material change but also a fostering of different values and norms that challenge hegemonic discourses of society and politics. The hegemony of neoliberally capitalist discourses pervades everyday life to the point that it normalises certain values and ways of being in society (Leitner et al., 2007; Mirowski, 2014). When everyday life was disrupted in Christchurch the perceived normality of this state was also challenged. Some people described how radical views had been 'enabled' by the earthquakes (Interview Participant 10). Others described a sense of community that emerged from the experience saying:

There's definitely a sense of community since the earthquakes. People are looking out for each other more... they'll help each other, they're concerned for each other... (Interview Participant 25).

The potential from these moments of shared experience and disruption were expressed in many of the projects community organisations worked on. These projects focussed on providing public spaces and commons, creating alternative systems of food production and distribution and challenging norms and values around consumption and consumerism. Because neoliberal variants of capitalism have been particularly effective at producing forms of governmentality that internalise and appropriate discourses of individualism, privatisation and self-responsibility these micro

resistances form a wider web of resistance that is recreating how people perceive themselves and others in society (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Peck, 2006).

I suggest that the post-disaster environment, while not a state to be desired, provides a fertile ground for the propagation of new, hopeful forms of being and doing in society that have ramifications within and beyond periods of disaster response and recovery. Thus, the rupture in the status quo that is feared by elites is utilised as a space in which the possibilities for a different way of operating emerge (Davis, 2005; Drury & Olson, 1998; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999). In doing so the practices of community led disaster recovery become a source of hopeful action which can ground alternative experimental forms of society and politics.

It is already acknowledged that communities and local organisations are vitally important stakeholders in the immediate disaster recovery process, however there is still much to understand in longer term social processes (Berke et al., 1993; Kweit & Kweit, 2004; Vallance, 2011). In Christchurch, the work of these organisations has been at the forefront of the grassroots movement to enact change in the recovery of the city. Alongside the forms of crisis politics enacted by the government, these actions have worked both in tandem and separately to the actions of those at different levels to facilitate and support social and political change. A large part of this action has been in creating pathways that foster both material change and action that facilitates emergent identities, values and norms in communities.

6.2 CREATING COMMUNITY RECOVERY THROUGH MATERIAL CHANGE

Many post-disaster community organisations in the city are engaged in work that is reconfiguring the physical and social landscape through recovery. In this section, I argue that while many post-disaster organisations do not actively claim to be political, their actions speak to a desire to shift power relations and influence material change. To do so I examine the way that community led recovery actions have undertaken a form of prefigurative politics through autonomous action and community economies. Through building the city anew from the rubble of the earthquake, space for the emergence of radical and creative experiments in society has resulted in material change. Here, the focus of community activities has been to “build the world anew” (Maeckelbergh, 2011, p. 2). To explore this idea more fully I engage two main examples: the creation and occupation of post-disaster space; and the role of urban food production.

The impetus gained through the rupture of everyday life because of the earthquakes has provided an important driver for inspiring and maintaining community action. As one individual noted, the

context of the earthquake has been important for shaping a sense of urgency and opportunity for this sort of activism:

I suppose what happened was the earthquake come along and we suddenly thought there's going to be a really big opportunity here to do something really good. If we don't step in and if we don't join forces with other people who want things to be better, it's going to turn out a bit shit (Interview Participant 1).

While autonomous activism is occurring in many places during times of non-disaster, the actions are often in response to broader perceived environmental, social and economic crises (Chatterton, 2010). The importance of the moment of disaster and of the rupturing of everyday life it provides is to open space and opportunity to extend existing autonomous action and to create new action in response to the ever-evolving challenges of recovery.

As a manifestation of prefigurative politics, autonomous action and community economies in the post-disaster environment provide a way to contextualise the types of hopeful change enacted in many community led recovery groups. Chatterton and Pickerill (2010) describe these actions as multi-faceted reactions to complex crises rather than solely oppositional movements. Here, autonomous action provides a framework to understand material change through community action as a practice of hope; actions that are taken with the desire to create, experiment and envision alternatives to the status quo. Community economies also contextualise alternatives to understandings of economy and society and how these are practiced in the post-disaster environment. Specifically, in earthquake recovery in Christchurch, these actions have been represented by projects that create common spaces, alternative currencies and different forms of social service provision. These community led actions have created pathways for people to be involved in and shape their own recovery, a stark contrast to the foreclosure of participatory engagement in central government recovery processes. To understand the radical potential of these experimental, imaginative and creative forms of community recovery I now turn to a discussion of two elements of action in Christchurch, commoning and urban gardening.

6.2.1 Commoning and Collaboration

One of the most prominent aspects of community led recovery in Christchurch has been the transitional projects that have established spaces for communities and the public to participate, engage and create. Widely regarded as the 'transitional architecture movement', these projects have contributed to art installations, public spaces, facilities, and opportunities for participating in the rebuilding of the city. The outcomes of this action have contributed to a geography of hopeful

autonomous activity that has generated a progressive and outward focus through creating and manifesting change in urban space.

Most of these projects have been undertaken in the central city. Examples of these projects include Gap Filler, which creates public art instalments and public facilities (*Figure 6*), Greening the Rubble, which creates public green spaces in abandoned sections, and FESTA, which hosted a festival of transitional architecture and art for several years. In the suburbs, there are similar albeit smaller projects (*Figure 7*). In New Brighton, spaces have been created on vacant lots that provide areas for people to gather and interact.



Figure 6: Free mini golf as part of the 'Retro Sports Facility' at The Commons site in central Christchurch 2014.



Figure 7: A community gathering space in New Brighton 2014.

There is also diversity in the activities carried out by these organisations as not all activities relate to transitional public space:

There's RAD bikes ... which is little bike shed, you can fix your own bike... [There's] Gap Golf, the Dance O Mat, Sound Garden ... The Commons, the Retro Sport's facility, which is basically this great sports equipment but then we run sports events as well (Interview Participant 18).

Other activities take more of a conceptual approach in which they seek to engage the public in urban space, particularly in visioning possibilities for the future of the city. A participant described one such interactive project in the central city:

The billboards pose questions about the future of the city, and what their life [is] like in the future of the city. How do they imagine life [is] like in 2070? (Interview Participant 17).

These forms of engagement with the post-disaster environment from community led organisations suggest the formation of a citizen led recovery effort that is shaping how the way the city is emerging from the disaster. Projects run by groups like Gap Filler provide vibrancy and utility to city space. Beyond this purpose the organisations engaged in these activities are also contributing to broader aims of shifting norms and material change in society.

Explicitly and implicitly, many of these projects aim to change perceptions of space, the economy and engagement. For example, Dr Ryan Reynolds and Chloe Waretini from Gap Filler, one of the main organisations devoted to experimenting and creating post-disaster space, discuss in relation to collaborative design processes the importance of balancing “social and ethical concerns” with financial aspects (Reynolds & Waretini, 2016, n.p.). Furthermore, they place emphasis on creating meaningful opportunities for engagement and collaboration with citizens (Reynolds & Waretini, 2016). These motivations and ideologies driving organisations such as Gap Filler provide space in the post-disaster environment to experiment with different ways of prioritising outcomes and working with the public. In Christchurch, these philosophies have manifested through the creation of projects such as the Dance O Mat, the Commons and the Pallet Pavilion. Other projects by organisations such as Greening the Rubble and Plant Gang have incorporated native plantings, interactive gardens and soundscapes into the rebuilding city.

One key aspect of these actions is the element of commoning and the creation of public space. While the central city had previously been the domain largely of business and shoppers, the space left by the earthquake destruction provided a blank canvas for new experiments in how to instigate, manage and create public space. A driving force behind these actions was a belief in the positive role of the public in recreating the city:

I'm a pretty strong believer that the public and individuals of the public acting within public space are what make cities function and there's an enormous intelligence in the public (Interview Participant 10).

Importantly, these projects aim to restructure power relations and negotiations around land rights and public vs. private property. For example, the Pallet Pavilion, a project to create public performance and gathering space, was created on land leased to the organisation Gap Filler for free. As director Coralie Winn discusses in an online interview, “we [Gap Filler] don't pay for land. It's in our principles that we won't pay to use the land” (Creative Spaces, 2016). Further costs required to keep the pavilion open for another year were subsequently crowd-funded. While the nature of these projects is often transitional, hence the term ‘transitional architecture’, Reynolds and Waretini (2016, n.p.) describe the value as not in the temporary nature of the activities but that the “value is in what is enabled when you open yourself up to new experiments and collaborative processes”.

This sort of creative process of re-creation aligns with the purposes of autonomous action in which the focus is on creating through experimentation new ways of operating in society. As a participant noted, these projects also led to a shift in awareness of the importance of the commons in Christchurch:

There is really an increasing understanding of the commons as an idea, that there is a public good and a commons and a sort of shared resource ... that aligns quite nicely communities of people and communities of care (Interview Participant 10).

The role of commons in influencing different forms of care and relating to others is important as a way of creating an ethical practice of being-in-common (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Because capitalist modes of development have relied heavily on the privatisation and enclosure of commons to facilitate the continued accumulation of capital, there is significant potential to resist these processes in alternative forms of property and commons (Harvey, 2011; Jeffrey et al., 2012). Furthermore, cultivating alternative commons has a broader impact on the influence and creation boundaries and practices that inform a community, something that is integral to fostering non-capitalist forms of life within the capitalist present (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Martin, 2009; McCarthy, 2005).

It is worth noting here that engagement with the idea of commons and commoning is not always free of problematic power relations and historical legacies. In fact, questions should be raised between the interconnections between recent resurgence in commoning and forms of colonial power that may assume that land ownership can and should be commoned to the greater public. In

Christchurch, the negotiation of land rights and colonial injustice play into the experimental commons projects but may still be reproduced or enforced. One way that the colonial context of commons and land has been incorporated into the GapFiller project 'The Commons' is through a large billboard presenting different forms of commons in the history of the area, including the marginalisation and disenfranchisement of Māori land rights. Shown in *Figure 8*, the billboard discusses the issues around commoning in a settler country such as Aotearoa New Zealand.



Figure 8: 'The Commons over time' billboard displays information on the complex relationships with land and power in Christchurch over the last several hundred years.

Other arts based activities have also reclaimed space, not explicitly with the intention of creating commons but to specifically encroach upon on and reclaim privatised or exclusive space. In one example, an arts performance reclaimed public space that had been perceived as exclusionary due to the focus on high-end shops:

I guess another thing I should say is that we did it in the Restart mall which was a commercial space and we were challenging that. Kind of being like, 'what is public space and what's it there for?' Because the Restart mall was all very expensive shops. No one from

Christchurch can shop here it's just tourists. So, it was kind of nice to be able to occupy that space and do things that were low [tech], low budget and free (Interview Participant 14).

Actions like these left some participants feeling more connected to the city and their communities, providing evidence to suggest that enlarging the commons in this way can also have other effects on how people engage with space and politics:

I feel much more connected to Christchurch and those around me now than I ever did pre-quake. I feel that we have begun to focus more on the 'soft' sides of recovery (or maybe creation) like communities and active citizenship (E-interview #55 [participant's own text and emphasis]).

These engagements with community led projects for recovery have fostered these traits as an integral part of their philosophy and action. They describe their projects as creating spaces of possibility:

We try and perceive and identify deficiencies in the city and offer active solutions... We create a project – an artwork, a public space, an amenity – and place it in the public realm as a temporary, small-scale, low cost and low risk experiment (Reynolds, 2014, p. 169).

Projects like these have created not only material change but have also influenced shifts in wider values and norms that provide hope and possibility for the future. The actions of these organisations speak to a desire to shift the way citizens are involved in the creation and design of the city and the values and norms that are privileged in doing so.

Through these examples in Christchurch, it is possible to see the autonomous actions that are contributing to creating material change that runs contrary to neoliberally capitalist systems such as the privatisation of land and social services and the de-politicisation of participation and engagement, while still existing within the capitalist present (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010).

Interestingly, most of these organisations emerged after the earthquakes. While there were aspects of autonomous action occurring before the earthquakes, the earthquakes appear to have provided the space and impetus for the proliferation of community led and collaborative processes that are re-thinking the way the space, markets and ownership is negotiated and enacted. The rupture in normality from the earthquakes has provided a context in which these alternative forms of engaging with the city are flourishing in a messy, experimental and creative way.

6.2.2 Urban Gardening and Greening

The act of growing food, cultivating green spaces and forming new systems for the distribution of food also emerged as an important facet of community led action in Christchurch. The radical potential of this work lies in the possibilities for restructuring society around different norms, values

and practices (Purcell & Tyman, 2014). The distribution and production of food is a common aspect of autonomous and prefigurative activism that seeks to create a new world in the present. The role of green space and gardening is a key facet of many localised responses to crises, particularly disaster and war (Krasny & Tidball, 2009; Tidball, 2014). Okvat and Zatura (2014) suggest that interactions with nature, gardening and green spaces strengthen psycho-social resilience while others such as Tidball (2014) link the phenomenon of post-crisis greening around the world to the idea of biophilia – the mutual interconnection, evolution and adaptation of humans with the environment.

In this section, I outline the urban gardening activities carried out in Christchurch and discuss how they are situated in a wider political and social landscape of autonomous change.

In Christchurch, there has been a proliferation of these food and gardening related activities specifically in response to the disaster through recovery and everyday life. The radical possibilities of food production and urban greening lie in the restructuring of societal relations that arise from these autonomous and prefigurative actions. Not all urban food production and greening is political, but many of these activities are influenced by philosophies and strategies that speak to a desire to shift norms and values (Galt et al., 2014; Purcell & Tyman, 2014). Examples of the projects undertaken in Christchurch include an urban farm initiative through the Agropolis organisation (*Figure 9*), greening projects through Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble and numerous local community gardens (*Figure 10*).

The ethos behind these organisations is informed by a desire to take control of the recovery and lead from the community. As one participant described:

[There are] also community gardens. I mean sure we've got an edible garden out in the front... That was [name removed] being like, 'oy, council. Don't put flowers in there. Put some fruit in there. That'd be real cool.' ... Agropolis is a community led thing (Interview Participant 14).

Agropolis, one of the main urban agriculture projects in the city operated as a collaboration of multiple organisations and individuals. The purpose of the project was described as a “scalable productive farm tailored to a bustling urban environment, an edible landscape and a shared space accessible to all, where citizens support budding students to grow a form of collective enterprise specialising in local food and social goods” (FESTA, 2016, n.p.).



Figure 9: The Agropolis gardens on High Street 2014.



Figure 10: The thriving New Brighton Community Garden 2014.

As authors based in Christchurch discuss in relation to the organisation Garden City 2.0 that part-managed the Agropolis project, these projects aim to foster a new way of being in society in opposition to what is seen as the reinforcement of the status quo by government recovery authorities:

This disconnection with the land, and subsequently with our food production, goes back to the founding of Christchurch... The Central City Recovery Plan and Land Use Recovery Plan are merely reinforcing this same incongruence (Peryman, et al., 2014, p. 468).

Post-disaster recovery action like Agropolis that creates structures for re-scaling food production and waste not only influence material change through experimenting and providing new social and economic systems for producing food but also provide a context in which the relationship between people in a community and with the land can be renegotiated. These aspects of the Agropolis project are expressed through their focus on social issues through the lens of environmental crises and creating sustainable environmental transition to other forms of operating, particularly in an urban environment:

The natural characteristics of the landscape have been suppressed and modified to suit the extraction and consumption of goods and displacement of our waste... With encouraging and enabling recovery structures, people might have begun to sow large gardens with the use of tools and seeds from community gardens, knowing that supermarkets would be closed in certain areas for some years to come. From this, a culture of transition towards urban ecological resilience could emerge (Peryman, et al., 2014, p. 468-9).

Tidball et al., (2010) note that this kind of transformation and adaptation through greening activities is particularly relevant in the post-disaster context as there is the potential to engage the space of opportunity created in the chaos. These activities represent the manifestation of hopeful alternatives to the status quo that exist within and outside of the capitalist status quo. As other forms of community economies activity suggest, the practice of creating alternatives to capitalism is already present in many forms and it is by engaging a hopeful perspective that the radical potential for re-imagining and re-creating social systems is visible.

Furthermore, neoliberal variants of capitalism are not just a way of structuring economic relations but also a social system (Mirowski, 2014). Fostering and creation of different norms and values challenges this hegemony at the everyday level (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010). Urban gardening and greening projects can contribute to this through challenging the structure of neoliberal social relations, particularly through the rejection of dominant ideas such as individualism. One project in the suburb of Kaiapoi involved the proposal to create a food forest on government owned red zone land using existing fruit trees. Participants involved in the project expressed their desire to keep the trees to create community infrastructure to support the local food bank, which they noted was increasingly in demand:

Our concern was that across the river, they were cutting fruit trees down and here we have food banks in Kaiapoi and people are going to food banks more and more regularly now. Even middle income families. We're thinking, there's fruit trees here ... why on earth would anybody want to cut them down? (Interview Participant 15).

Other community garden projects go beyond the aim to create food and garden spaces to provide important social services to marginalised people in society.

Half of [other participant's] job is social work. She's almost a social worker but that's what we like though. We're all about, we're about gardens but we're about people. In fact, there's a saying, some famous gardener said it, I forget his name, a New Zealand gardener. 'Gardening is as much about plants as it about people'. That's really our motto - 'Growing communities' (Interview Participant 25).

The role of community gardens in valuing non-paid work and the qualities of people not usually valued in a capital driven society and helps to express different norms and values. Such actions may challenge the individualistic and privatised nature of neoliberal social relations and instead place emphasis on collective action and collective rights to food and land. While these projects exist at a small scale, when considered as a global movement they act as a form of resistance and restructuring of food production and distribution (Levkoe, 2011). As Young and Schwartz (2012) describe, these small-scale rebellions against capitalism have real potential to contribute to larger scale change while simultaneously creating a materiality in the here and now.

Projects such as Garden City 2.0 and Agropolis are examples of activities that are also carried out in other non-disaster situations. In the post-disaster context in Christchurch these projects have flourished both to engage in the politics of recovery while also creating community led recovery trajectories. The significance of this is the proliferation of these activities beyond what existed prior to the earthquakes. Furthermore, many people in these organisations explicitly describe the importance of the disaster for providing the opportunities and impetus to establish and drive their actions. The radical potential of creating new systems for growing and distributing food, managing common land and interacting with others in the community lies in the possibilities for exploring, creating and experimenting with new ways of doing and being in society (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Gibson-Graham, 2006). Galt et al. (2014, p. 134) describe these subversive politics of food as creating networks of solidarity that "have the potential to transform the sites, places and ways of doing things". In Christchurch, the spatial reconfiguration of the city after the destruction and demolition has provided an ideal context for expanding this cultivation of transformation.

6.3 FOSTERING ALTERNATIVE NORMS AND VALUES

Creating material change in Christchurch after the earthquakes is one way that action taken at the scale of the 'everyday' challenges dominant forms of capitalist society and politics. As has been introduced in the past section, participation and engagement with post-disaster projects that create material change can also provide the potential for contributing to shifts in values and norms. The broader context of disaster recovery, including the rupture in people's everyday lives and the shift in the role and operation of government, provides fertile ground for a shift in how people relate to themselves and others. It is possible that the experience of disaster exposes potential for new subjectivities, power relations and norms to emerge.

Disaster recovery can become a space and opportunity for power relations to be actively challenged through the creation of new forms of being, as individuals and as communities. Here, the focus is on the potential of the disaster experience to disrupt dominant discourses. In this section, I argue that the practices of community led disaster recovery, described previously, foster new subjectivities that challenge the perceived hegemony of capitalism. The experience of disaster challenges a dualistic interpretation of resistance and domination through capitalism to explore the multiple ways communities responded and shifted through carrying out autonomous recovery action. Capitalism functions as a signifier and organiser of "space, identification and desires" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 148). Neoliberal variants of capitalism therefore create subjectivities that reinforce the parameters of an ideology while also providing the mechanism through which the means of government can be transformed (Weidner, 2009). These neoliberal subjectivities are encouraged to expand the role of the calculated individual that makes rational decisions and takes full responsibility for the consequences (Guthman, 2008; Lemke, 2001). To challenge the hegemony of capitalism in the everyday there needs to be both recognition of the existing diversity in subjectivities as well as the creation of new ways of being in society (Galt et al., 2014; Gibson-Graham, 2006)

One of the main ways different values and norms to the capitalist status quo have emerged is through networks of social support and participation. The practices of community organisations that have responded or been created out of the earthquakes demonstrate the everyday ways that neoliberal values can be challenged. One participant described these shifts in communities and organisations as related to "*evolution or a kind of dynamic mutation or adaptation to a totally different circumstance*" (Interview Participant 29). An important aspect of adaptation to the earthquake context was not accepting the status quo as it had been before the disaster and instead recognising and working towards something better for people and communities:

To me [the word recovery] has really heavy connotations of replacement as an acceptance that what we had before the earthquakes ... was acceptable and did help people flourish and create well-being for themselves, and it didn't (Interview Participant 17).

The destabilisation and destruction of the disaster provided the context in which collectives created, extended and cultivated different communal ideas, values and norms. As one person noted, after the earthquakes one of the main questions was “*how do we do life now?*” (Interview Participant 1). Another remarked that “*[the earthquakes] definitely create an opportunity for different thinking*” (Interview Participant 17). This led to possibilities for reconfiguring the way people saw themselves and others in the wider context of society.

Many of these opportunities arose out of necessity in the immediate circumstances following the earthquakes. The potential of this disruption was noted as a powerful force for shifting routines and instigating change in how people relate to others. This was described by several participants who discussed how this occurred in their neighbourhood:

People's freezers also were off because of the electricity crisis, so a lot of things were happening around food to do with harvesting stuff out of the garden to eat, having community cookouts because people were like, 'We've got all this frozen meat or just refrigerated meat. It's going off. What do we do?'

My neighbours... On the one side are amazing vegetable gardeners, and on the other side never grown a vegetable in his life. He's a local fireman. Down the road are the community builders, the two ladies who build community, that's just their thing.

Somehow, they all came together. As a consequence, [my neighbour] the fireman who's never grown a thing in his life, now has a flourishing vegetable garden because he learned from [my other neighbours] on the other side how important it is to have that. Also, he just found out it was so delicious and so easy and fun and all of that stuff (Interview Participant 1).

Other, more formally organised activities largely revolved around supporting others in the community and coming together through a “*sense of community*” (Interview Participant 25). As a participant noted:

The driver is that whenever I feel frustrated or I feel like I'm not getting anywhere, I just have to take a step back and go, 'I'm doing this for this community and I'm a part of this community and my children are part of this community and so are my friends.' We want something better and if I can spend some time helping move that forwards, then I'll do it (Interview Participant 4).

From the data, the role of volunteering and volunteer labour played a large role in supporting community led recovery activities and organisations and added to the sense of community people described:

Really it is about the volunteers. Making sure that they're safe and welcomed and that they work to their abilities, as well (Interview Participant 26).

The communal and collective nature of many of these organisations emphasised the importance of collaboration and connection with others in a way that has the potential to challenge dominant ideas of individualism and privatisation. Discourses of care and support featured heavily in how people described their organisations and the changes they had experienced since the earthquakes:

There's definitely a sense of community since the earthquakes. People are looking out for each other more and you will notice that in here too, with the volunteers, they'll help each other, they're concerned for each other (Interview Participant 4).

Just as creating different forms of food production challenge the corporatisation of food security, creating different ways of interacting and valuing activity challenges the neoliberal values that have underscored the status quo in Western societies (Galt et al., 2014; Gibson-Graham, 2006).

In some ways, these types of community activities that foster different ways of being with others provide the basis for a post-capitalist politics that shifts both the subjectivities of individuals while simultaneously providing the groundwork for an alternative way of operating in society (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy, 2014; Miller, 2013). Comparing these shifts to those undertaken by second wave feminism, Gibson-Graham (2006) note that it is necessary to both change the discourses surrounding the issue as well as provide new everyday practices. Miller (2011, p. 4) describes this as a call to “participate not just in the emergence of new movements, but of new forms of living... how we build relationships, communities and institutions.”

Other participants described the way the earthquakes had opened space for different values to be communicated and explored in other aspects of life. For example, one participant described the role of women in leading many of the art based community recovery projects and how this contrasted with their experiences before the earthquakes:

I've actually found that a lot of the spearheads of the Christchurch art community are women... it's actually really bizarre to have female leaders ... because Christchurch has got that old boys club reputation and I really love the idea that we can ... make it more gender fair. I think maybe it's a bit of leap, but I feel like a lot of artwork that women do is quite transient. It's not big and monumental, it's more sensitive and socially engaged and

temporal. That's what works now. Because the time for big monuments is over, they'll just fall down (Interview Participant 14).

Interestingly this participant describes the way they perceive these changes in leadership as having also affected the values espoused by the projects. Other examples of these shifts in norms and values are represented by projects in the city that discuss the changing social landscape after the earthquake such as the posters shown below as part of the Art Box installation which feature commentary on the increasing role of women in construction with the title 'Rebuilding Preconceptions' (Figure 11). Other projects such as a free book fridge situated on a landscaped vacant plot, one of the early Gap Filler projects, explicitly set out to "invite new thoughts and experience" (Reynolds, 2014). The aim here is not to go into specific detail of the gendered dynamics in the Christchurch recovery. However, these examples do demonstrate the potential that has emerged from the disruption of the quakes and that is featuring in the recovery through shifting and evolving values and norms, including those related to gender.



Figure 11: Posters pasted on temporary shipping container structures. One reads "Rebuilding Preconceptions" and features a female construction worker. 2014.

Furthermore, the actions of many groups speak to broader aims that re-create new values and norms around consumption, capitalism and the economy. In the context of the earthquakes, these values have been nurtured through community led recovery action that has provided the foundation

for exploring different ways of being in society. As discussed earlier in this chapter, many of the projects undertaken by communities create potentially radical material change in pursuit of hopeful alternatives to capitalism. These projects also represent the incorporation of values and norms that extend the projects beyond material change and toward the creation of new systems for relating to each other collectively. At a surface level, one way this has occurred is through projects that aim to challenge the way people engage with certain topics. One participant described their organisation as “changing the way people think about the city, participation or the uses of land” (Interview Participant 18) (for example, see *Figure 12*). Others noted the importance of emphasising and valuing local networks particularly through food: “[we’re] looking at how we can become more local... we can sustain ourselves” (Interview Participant 17).



Figure 12: The Gap Filler Dance O Mat project created public space to encourage a low-cost form of entertainment.

From another perspective, some of these community led projects are reconfiguring the values that underpin capitalist relations in society. These projects re-create networks and economies in a way that values social support and resists the commodification of life as a form of neoliberalism (Gibson-Graham, 2006; Healy, 2014; Miller, 2013). A good example of this has been the People’s Independent Republic of New Brighton Group that was established as a humorous attempt to highlight the disparity between the resourcing of the central city recovery and that undertaken in the suburb of New Brighton. However, the page soon morphed into a hub of community economic activity where it became a source of people engaging in sharing goods, skills and services:

You put out a call on there, I need something done and people are just going, I'm a graphic designer, I'm an architecture, I'm a this, I'm a that and it's just for me hosting another forum (Interview Participant 13).

Another participant described how their food forest project was looking toward the future to change the way food and support for those on low incomes was operated. They believed that by creating an extensive food forest network they would be able to “*get rid of food banks. You then effectively have got this little community of food forests that feed the surrounding homes*” (Interview Participant 15). Some communities also saw a resurgence of alternative currencies like time banks and bartering networks. Other projects created public goods and common areas as discussed earlier in the chapter. Even post-quake artwork carried a message that challenged the pervasive consumerism of the status quo as shown in *Figure 13*.



Figure 13: 'The Best Things in Life are not Things' mural in New Brighton, 2014.

The emergence of these diverse forms of economies represents what Gibson-Graham (2006) describes as non-capitalism that exists within and outside of the current capitalist system. Reimagining and experimenting with the notion of ‘the economy’, whether explicitly or implicitly, can shift how individuals see themselves positioned within society as well as provide everyday practices which can reshape those views and subjectivities (Gibson-Graham, 2006). Discourses of self-responsibility, individualism and free choice are complex elements of neoliberal subjectivities

that rely heavily on self-policing and governing at a distance (Rose et al., 2006). By enacting different values and resisting the encroachment of neoliberalism in everyday life these post-disaster projects at the small-scale build possibilities for alternative subjectivities and relationships in communities. Of interest here is the way that these forms of community action emerged from the experience of the earthquakes and the way this experience shifted people's perceptions and values. The All Right study found that 67% of people felt the little things mattered more after their experiences in the earthquakes and that 82% of people had a better sense of what was important to them after the disaster (All Right?, 2014). While these quantitative studies do not provide detail or context on these perspectives, the statistics combined with the qualitative context of this research do indicate that many people responded to the earthquake with a shift in their perceptions of everyday life.

The radical potential of these de-centralised, community and individually focused shifts and transformations lies in the possibilities for challenging and shifting norms and values. Without the earthquake, this work could undoubtedly occur. However, in Christchurch the moment of crisis opened space for new relationships to emerge. This dynamic lays the foundation for further change and transformation in the way communities operate. Following a disaster, the rupture in everyday life provides space in which subject positions become more fluid and shifting. Here, the radical potential of post-disaster community action lies in the extension of these alternative subjectivities that can act to challenge hegemonic understandings of neoliberal governance, responsibility and identification. These forms of micro resistance cultivate small-scale steps towards wider transformation of identities, norms and practices in society (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

6.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter I have outlined aspects of hopeful community led recovery action that occurred in Christchurch within an interconnected landscape of post-disaster social and political action. As discussed in *Chapter Five*, the re-ordering of the status quo through the entrenchment of existing power relations and governance following a disaster represents the struggle of these forces to re-establish the hegemonic mode of operation in society. However, this struggle inherently displays the possibility for challenge and resistance present at a time of crisis. Indeed, as I have shown in this chapter, the actions of community organisations have occurred both in response to and despite the top down centralised approach of the government. This suggested that while the government led recovery perpetuated dominant ideological perspectives in the pursuit of certain forms of economic growth and individualist rationalities, their overarching response had not fully foreclosed the possibility for alternatives.

Communities in Christchurch resisted and worked alongside government led recovery by creating and negotiating their own spaces of recovery, both symbolically and physically. By engaging in these actions, people could process the events of the disaster while also partaking in and shaping the emergence of new politics around disaster recovery. This potentially blurs the lines between the power dynamics of the victimized and the empowered to suggest that the political identities that emerge from disaster do so in a complex negotiation of hope, action, resistance and control. However, these community actions ultimately play an important role in fostering spaces of hope and possibility for the future of Christchurch, as well as wider processes of social and political change.

The forms of community led recovery that are discussed in this chapter represent the emergence of hopeful and prefigurative action that is motivated, in part, by a desire to create a different world in the present (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Levkoe, 2011; Maeckelbergh, 2011). In alignment with Gibson-Graham's (2006) alternative theorisation of economies, and Chatterton and Pickerill's (2010; 2006) theorisation of autonomous geographies, the actions undertaken by some communities in the earthquake recovery demonstrate the possibilities that arise to foster different societal practices and relationships. In Christchurch, these actions have occurred differently across time, space and scale to contribute to a foundation of recovery activity led by collectives to serve the needs of communities and visitors to the city. In this chapter I have specifically discussed how some of these actions have facilitated a hopeful form of action that has contributed to several important aspects of recovery: through material change as a result of communing and collaboration and urban gardening projects; and through fostering alternative norms and values.

The projects that have facilitated these actions, such as Gap Filler and Greening the Rubble, represent the potential of grassroots action even in the context of a controlled and centralized government response to disaster. These activities also demonstrate the potential that arises from the collaboration of communities when they can lead activities that are informed by the local context and needs. As Derickson et al. (2015) note, some radical scholars assume that crisis is needed for social change, which is dangerous given the inequality that is frequently fostered and exacerbated in post-crisis contexts. Therefore, it is integral to understand how the post-disaster landscape fosters change in a way that is not necessarily predicated on the crisis itself but part of a wider interaction of spatial, political and social factors. Furthermore, actions such as those undertaken in Christchurch should not be seen as only the result of the disaster context. While the disaster context has created conditions that have facilitated some aspects of these activities, many of the actions have continued into long term and exist beyond disaster recovery functions.

In exploring how the actions taken by communities in the recovery challenge dominant ideological perspectives, values and practices, the post-disaster context can be framed as one of many instigators of contestation that provide opportunities to resist and re-create different ways of doing and being in society. This point encapsulates the broader aim of this research project to explore the spaces of contestation, collaboration, engagement and participation at the community level following a disaster that also exists within the wider context of other social and environmental challenges. In the past two chapters I have outlined the foundations for how the government has responded, and the approach of communities to working alongside, within and outside of the government approach. I now turn to an analysis of how these actions sit within the wider context of politicisation following disaster and the practices of formal participation.

PHOTO ESSAY THREE – PARTICIPATING IN CRISIS-

In the two years following the earthquake, the central city was cordoned off. The public were excluded from this space by military guard while the occasional celebrity was allowed access to view the fallen buildings and rubble. During this research the central city cordon had been lifted for nearly two years however the landscape was still a mosaic of exclusion and inclusion. Likewise, consultation and community engagement left some residents feeling involved while others felt marginalised and unheard. The physical form of recovery in the city visualises these processes, from large billboards advertising government anchor projects to the simple act of residents observing buildings in different states of ruin or demolition. This photo essay depicts the landscape of the city through this lens to explore how residents were excluded, included and informed about the ongoing recovery from the earthquakes.





“There's not a lot of democracy that goes on in these sorts of processes.”



“It's not Lego land you know? We're not all painted smiles.”



“It's a hellishly complicated thing, the earthquake recovery process. I do feel for the people who are in positions of responsibility to just make it happen...

But I don't feel that they're doing the best job possible by in large.”

“The community's getting much more informed about a lot of issues and so that gives you a certain strength as well to be a bit stroppier and expect to be listened to and responded to.”





“One thing I heard was [the Chief Executive] was concerned people may grow too attached to the temporary projects, which is always a worry for government.

We wouldn't want people to actually like things that are there! (Laughs)”





“I am a political person. I see things through a political lens generally. I think it's political on lots of levels, but it's not political activism and it's not party political.”

7 POLITICISING DISASTER RECOVERY

Disaster recovery is a necessarily political process rife with contestation, conflict and competing priorities (Olson, 2008; Pelling & Dill, 2006). Through the disruption, destruction and reconstruction emerges complex dynamics of power, control and privilege in the form of recovery. In the previous two chapters I have outlined the shape of two multifaceted approaches to the recovery of Christchurch at the government and community level. I have described how the tightly controlled and centralised approach of the government has utilised an exceptionality informed politics that has foreclosed democratic possibilities and maintained the supremacy of neoliberal market function as facilitated by the state. In contrast, the actions of community organisations that have sprung up in the cracks of the government approach work towards informing a socially progressive form of recovery politics that seeks to re-create new ways of doing and being in society. However, these dynamics do not exist in isolation; the actions of community and government involve a multiplicity of relational interactions at different scales that is expressed both ideologically and discursively.

In this section I introduce a further perspective – the practices of government led, formal participation and consultation that influenced how residents and communities could be involved in the official process of recovery. I begin by discussing these processes in the context of participatory governance, particularly following disaster, but ultimately this foregrounds an integral analysis of how these practices are intermeshed with wider political processes. I draw these data together with the analysis of the previous two chapters to position disaster recovery as a politicised process that integrates a context dependent expression of crisis, exception and resistance. I frame the state of exception as emerging from pre-existing politics to foster an approach to crisis that suspends democracy, obscuring structural determinants of disaster as well as restructuring governance in the medium to long term.

The emphasis of this analysis is placed on these enduring and ongoing forms of politics. As the immediate aftermath of disaster is a time in which decisions must often be made in haste to protect lives and respond to significant damage and destruction, these actions often suspend or interrupt political and decision making processes. How these interruptions and suspensions are influenced by pre-existing politics and how these in turn influence the ongoing politics of disaster recovery is the central focus of this chapter. Drawing on Swyngedouw's (2010, 2011) theorisation of post-politics, I explore how the techniques and rationalities of post-politicisation have formed an integral element of the strategies of exceptionality both prior to and beyond the exceptional event.

To deepen this engagement with exceptionality and post-politicisation, and to strengthen my engagement with perspectives on community resistance and re-creation, I also explore how spaces exist to challenge these dynamics. From the foundation of understanding community recovery action as a form of prefigurative activism contributing to micro-resistance and new ways of operating in society, community led action and participation forms an integral dynamic that resists and re-creates the foreclosure of democratic participation. As mentioned earlier, neither the approach of the government nor community exists in isolation; to set up a dichotomy between the two would be false. Here I discuss the dynamics of post-disaster participation as a specific form of engagement that sits within a wider context of politics and power relations.

In the sections that follow I first address the complexities of these dynamics by describing how participants interacted with and perceived the role of formal participation processes led by the government in the recovery. I then turn to an analysis of the dynamics of this participation by interrogating the politicisation of disaster recovery, particularly through the lens of Rancièrian concepts of democracy and post-politics (Rancière, 1995, 2004; Swyngedouw, 2011). I argue that the selective use of participation and consultation by the government represent the strategic use of aspects of a de-politicisation agenda that set the boundaries for exclusion and inclusion and attempt to construct a consensus for techno-managerial fixes to the issues of disaster recovery (Swyngedouw, 2010). From this basis, I suggest that despite the mobilisation of techniques of de-politicisation, the foreclosure of democracy is always incomplete, particularly following the rupture of disaster. Here I emphasize the role of hope in shaping a politics of possibility that challenges techniques of de-politicisation in the recovery while also generating new engagements with practices of politics.

7.1 'PARTICIPATING' IN DISASTER RECOVERY

A broad shift from practices of government to governance in the last several decades has led to an integration of forms of participatory and direct democracy, particularly through consultation and engagement with public decision making (Lovan et al., 2004). Subsequently, the involvement of community in formal participation processes is also widely considered an important determining factor in the success of disaster recovery initiatives (Pyles, 2007; Vallance, 2011). Despite this, the practice and theory of participation is highly contested and politicised, no less so than after a disaster. Inherent in this is the role of power in shaping how participation is conducted, the discourses privileged in shaping recovery and for whom these recoveries serve. There are also circumstances unique to the disaster context such as: the need to balance the complexity of

immediate survival needs and responsibilities to protect life and repair infrastructure; as well as the ongoing need to foster and facilitate trust and collaboration between government and affected communities (Berkes & Campanella, 2006; Ophiyandri et al., 2010; Wisner et al., 2004). As a result, there is a complex interaction between the actions taken by a government or state authority in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and the ongoing implications of these actions, particularly surrounding the involvement and participation of residents and citizens.

Both theoretically and practically, the ideal role of formal participation and engagement in government processes is a contested topic (Cornwall, 2008; Healey, 2003; Innes & Booher, 1999; Lovan et al., 2004). Over the decades, much has been said on how to practice participation, the different levels or types of participation and the benefits and costs (Arnstein, 1969; Cornwall, 2008; Healey, 2006; Innes & Booher, 2004). Theoretical perspectives that influence participatory approaches to decision making arise from a diverse range of perspectives, including notions of communicative action, structuration theory, consensus building and deliberation (Brand & Gaffikin, 2007; Healey, 2003, 2006; Innes & Booher, 1999).

The use of participatory processes in Christchurch, despite a wider foreclosure of democratic potential, suggests an engagement with politics in which a focus on consensus and participation justify and extend certain forms of governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Darling, 2014). This form of recovery governance arguably emerges from a broader trend towards deliberative and communicative forms of democracy that privilege the idea of rational debate, deliberation and consensus (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Bond, 2011; Healey, 2006). Developed from the work of scholars such as Habermas, deliberative practices have been engaged in urban planning to improve the quality of decisions made, increase the legitimacy of institutions and government and to build capacity in the community (Barnes et al., 2003; Newman et al., 2004). Perspectives on deliberative democracy are based around the idea of consensus based decision-making, rational deliberation, justice and debate (Abelson et al., 2003; Dryzek, 2013; Healey, 2006). In practice, participatory processes are widely engaged in mainstream processes through the use of tools such as citizens' juries, education programmes, public hearings and comment procedures (Carson, 2011; Head, 2007; Innes & Booher, 2004).

Despite popular uptake, the idea of rational deliberation and consensus is increasingly challenged and critiqued (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002; Hillier, 2003; Swyngedouw, 2011). Radical democrats posit that conflict is essential to pluralism in democracy and thus by seeking consensus, contestation

is minimised or foreclosed (Mouffe, 2000). Others such as Bond (2011) caution against establishing consensus based politics versus agonistic politics as a binary but instead point to the complex interactions between these different practices and discourses and the potential for reflexively understand and practicing participation, particularly through the lens of power relations. Legacy (2016) also describes the productive spaces beyond the binary of consensus and agonism which encompass the multiple spaces and relationships that consist for political engagement between the state and citizens.

Thus, the ideal of participation sits as a contested practice. While an important aspect of democracy, participation cannot be necessarily positioned as a wholly beneficial or positive practice in all instances – this will be explored in more detail in following sections. The trend towards increasing participation is important to understand as the recognition of the role of community action following disaster grows (Singh-Peterson et al., 2015; Stark & Taylor, 2014). While there is not a large tract of literature covering the specifics of formal post-disaster recovery participation there are some studies that have explored the importance of these processes in this context. This research has included work investigating the importance of participation and community engagement as part of the general move away from the dominance of command and control approaches (Paton, 2006; Pearce, 2003; Waugh & Streib, 2006). Concerning participation during recovery, Berke et al. (1993, p. 3) note that recovery policy making is “intensely political” and thus stress the importance for communities to initiate collective actions soon after a disaster to establish equitable recovery practices. Wider participation in formalised and governance processes have, in some cases, been shown to improve the success of post-disaster initiatives, increase trust in authorities and assist in the psychological processing of the disaster experience (Davidson et al., 2007; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Kweit & Kweit, 2004; Sullivan, 2003).

Kweit and Kweit (2004, p. 369) in an analysis of two contrasting case studies of communities in the United States during recovery from floods found that a local administration that engaged the community in decision making were “more likely to believe that citizens had an effect on decisions made and that the city made attempts to involve them”. The role of participation in post-disaster housing initiatives, particularly in the global south, has also been highlighted as integral to the success of these projects (Davidson et al., 2007; Ganapati & Ganapati, 2008; Lawther, 2009; Ophiyandri et al., 2010). Vallance (2015) however notes that there are significant difficulties in achieving post-disaster participation despite a broad acceptance of the importance of the practice in this context. Other scholars have also raised questions about the practice of incorporating

participation following disaster given the particularities of not just the post-disaster context, but also the historical legacy of emergency management and the specificities of each disaster (Davidson et al., 2007; Olshansky & Chang, 2009; Pearce, 2003). Thus, the specificities of the post-disaster context remain a lesser understood aspect of participation and democratic involvement despite the widely-acknowledged benefits and importance of community and citizen trust and buy in to recovery activities (Stark & Taylor, 2014).

7.1.1 Central Government Participation Processes

In Christchurch, opportunities for participation and engagement with the processes of recovery were focussed through central government, local government and citizen initiated processes. The command and control approach of the central government resulted in formal opportunities for participation in some areas being reduced or removed entirely. As introduced in *Chapter Five*, this is indicative of the foreclosure of many democratic possibilities in the city. The interview data collected for this research suggested that this has been frustrating for many residents and organisations who perceived a huge opportunity for new practices and forms of urban design and community involvement in the reconstruction of the central city and suburbs.

Despite this frustration, there was still a selective engagement with certain approaches and tools of consultation and participation, which form an integral part of the politicisation of disaster recovery. Initially, the exceptionality-influenced process to pass the earthquake legislation used urgency to truncate parliamentary democratic procedures. This symbolised the first of many ways democracy was foreclosed in ongoing political processes through the response and recovery to the earthquakes. In non-emergency times, the main processes for participation and engagement with the public by the government are engaged through the parliamentary select committee process and the representative electoral system. The select committee process is an important part of strengthening legislation and involving participatory processes in law making. As McLeay et al., (2012, p. 3) state:

The open and participatory select committee process, with considerable revision and amendment powers in the hands of the committees, enhances the legislative process.

The ruling National government has been widely criticised for overusing the process of urgency to bypass thorough select committee scrutiny, particularly for legislation regarding the earthquake recovery and Canterbury water management (Gall, 2012; McLeay et al., 2012; Mueller, 2011).

Urgency is a necessary and important power that allows for legislation to be passed under circumstances that require either a substantial amount of work to be cleared through extending the sitting hours of parliament or in the case of a timely and necessary response (Gall, 2012; McLeay et

al., 2012). Following a major disaster there is clearly a role for the state to take decisive action that responds to the need to save lives, supports those worst affected and enables a response to damage to infrastructure and buildings. In this case the legislation introduced after the September 2010 earthquake was passed with multi-party support through urgency that completely bypassed the select committee process to enable ongoing amendments to the legislation in the aim of supporting recovery (Brookie, 2012). However, because of this legislation and the powers granted to the Minister for Earthquake Recovery, these actions also had wide ranging and ongoing impacts on broader processes for participation and consultation.

Most notably, the Minister for Earthquake Recovery could bypass requirements under the Resource Management Act and other statutory requirements for consultation and public notification (Brookie, 2012; Gall, 2012). These powers were used among other things to fast track land zoning changes by omitting public consultation, something that was later deemed an action outside of the purpose of the earthquake recovery legislation by the judiciary (Berry, 2012b). In contrast to this approach, CERA did, on a number of occasions, carry out public consultation for projects. For example, CERA conducted consultation with the community on the Land Use Recovery Plan, the use of red zoned land in Waimakariri, and the plan to transition from CERA to a new government organisation in 2016. These processes largely involved written and spoken submissions from the public, community organisations and other stakeholders. However, many projects run by the department were not subject to these forms of public consultation. In 2014, The Press reported that their investigation had shown CERA had only consulted with the public on two of the twelve central city recovery anchor projects with officials maintaining that the Share an Idea process run by Christchurch City Council in 2011 was sufficient (this use of the Share an Idea consultation will be discussed in further detail later) (Harvie, 2014).

Regarding central government processes for involving and engaging residents, participants were overwhelmingly negative in their assessment. Of the residents that participated in the e-interviews, the majority expressed feelings of exclusion, disempowerment and marginalisation in the wider processes of recovery. Participants described the government led recovery as dictatorial, autocratic, bullying, disempowering, domineering, exclusive and deceptive (E-interview #5, 9, 23, 36, 70, 83, 93). A significant portion of these participants felt that the government had actively excluded residents and affected communities from the recovery:

[I'm] feeling like a forgotten citizen. Without actively involving myself in activities I would not have known what is going on (E-interview #101).

[I feel] absolutely and intentionally excluded from the rebuild process, from a macro to an individual level... everything is top down and no room for community (E-interview #34).

Others said: *“the government have failed to involve people in the recovery”* (E-interview #30) and that they felt *“dismissed”* by the Minister (E-interview #32). This perception of active exclusion of residents from the recovery was linked by some to the difficulty of conducting participatory or engagement processes in the city (Interview Participant 15), while others pointed to the time it takes to involve people in ‘democracy’ (Interview Participant 3). As one participant commented, the attitude of government to consultation was *“‘Here’s your formal consultation process, you only get to do this once every five years”*. The interviewee went on to exclaim *“Are they fucking nuts? Consultation is daily... that’s the power of conversation”* (Interview Participant 13). There was a significant feeling that the government had missed out on opportunities to understand the unique problems of residents and the possible solutions by excluding so many residents and communities (Interview Participant’s 15, 16, 13 & 25).

In terms of the central government participatory processes that did occur there was a distinct feeling that the government engaged only in tokenistic or shallow consultation. Many of the staff in organisations such as CERA were noted as supportive of wider community involvement, but that *“at the higher level, support is not particularly there”* (Interview Participant 18). Similarly, residents described their belief that the government only consulted with communities to give the appearance of engagement, when in fact they *“only pretend to have consulted”* (E-interview #109). Another resident described this as *“tokenism”* (E-interview #77). These terms represent the significant feeling of disengagement with the official government recovery processes in Christchurch and show the expanse of emotion behind the opinions of many residents in the city. As one participant described:

There seems to be a façade of asking people’s opinions and taking people’s ideas on board. But it’s just that. They don’t actually listen (Interview Participant 14).

Others described the predetermined nature of decisions and the use of participatory processes to ‘rubber stamp’ decisions (Interview Participant 3). As one participant said *“It’s not consultation. It’s: ‘this is what we’ve got. Shall we put a blue cover on it or a pink cover?’”* (Interview Participant 6).

The predominant mode of engagement for the community with central government processes beyond that of consultation laid out in the earthquake legislation, was the creation of a community forum to advise the Minister for Earthquake Recovery. This arrangement was also the focus of similar criticism and concerns. In the legislation, the provision was made for the appointment of at

least 20 members of the community by the decision of the Minister to advise on issues relating to the recovery in an ongoing capacity (New Zealand Government, 2011). The committee was not established to advise on the immediate issues facing disaster response, but instead to provide an engagement model for medium to long term issues facing communities, particularly as they emerged through the creation and implementation of different recovery plans. As a result, 39 individuals were selected from across the regions of Canterbury, including Selwyn, Waimakariri and Christchurch, including representatives from business groups, Pacific and Māori communities and residents' associations. In a 2015 report, a local National Party Minister described the forum as "one of the most important links between the government and the community and has been involved in every major decision about the recovery" (Wagner, 2015, p. 3).

While the creation of a community forum was a welcome attempt to include citizens and communities in the recovery, participants reported significant problems with this vision in practice. Issues with information availability were raised due to the extensive redaction of 'commercially sensitive' information, as well as how well individuals could represent the diverse views of their communities. According to one participant, the proposed model for the community forum was that the members would discuss the proposals and decisions with their wider communities and then bring back their findings to the forum where they would be discussed and advice given to the Minister. However, when information was frequently and substantially redacted or embargoed this severely affected the ability of community forum members to discuss proposals with their respective 'communities'.

There are also challenges with this model in terms of the reliability of individual members to feedback the diverse opinions of a wide range of people, as well as the burden of these people as volunteers to undertake this role. Advisory committees such as this tend to be premised on the idea of inclusive representation, to serve as a voice for communities and the public. But as other scholars have noted the reality of representation is not often matched by reality (Barnes et al., 2003; Skanavis et al., 2005). As Skanavis et al. (2005) describes in relation to environmental disasters, these forms of participation can also represent a non-deliberative and politicised mechanism for a one-way flow of information from the public to the government. This is particularly relevant in this case given the frequent use of embargo and redaction that reduced the ability of community forum members to 'consult' with their wider communities. Subsequently, there was a perception among participants that the community forum was not transparent or able to communicate effectively with

the wider community, one respondent described the forum as having been “*silenced*” (E-interview #18), and another described it as a “*secret club that is dysfunctional*” (E-interview #70).

7.1.2 Local Government Participation Processes

City councils in the region following the earthquakes engaged in wider processes for consultation and engagement as prescribed in the Local Government Act 2002 in response to the specific issues of reconstruction and recovery. Generally, participants spoke more favourably of participation that was run by local government. This included public consultation presentations and submission processes for notified consents under the Resource Management Act as well as other issues that had flow on effects to the recovery such as the Replacement District Plan. The Christchurch City Council was seen as more supportive and open to community involvement, particularly after the local body elections in 2013 saw a new mayor and many new councillors elected. As one participant said:

People within council have been very supportive; the urban planners, urban designers. As time has gone on, the councillors and the mayor, too and we've had support or help, assistance from people within different departments when we need it (Interview Participant 18).

As described previously, in fulfilling the government requirement to provide a recovery plan for the central city to the government for approval, the Christchurch City Council also launched the Share an Idea project. This process led by the council to propose a central city recovery plan was extremely well received by the public. The consultation campaign involved two stages of participation, first a multimedia approach that resulted in over 100,000 ideas being submitted through workshops, a two-day expo, digital feedback forms, and snail mail (Bennett et al., 2014). This material was collated and presented by Gehl Architects in the draft Central City Plan which was then opened for a second round of feedback from the public in August 2012, and then presented to Minister Brownlee in December. However, this plan was not accepted by the Minister, who at one point described it as a “pretty big wish list”, the government instead chose to re-develop the plan using a panel of developers and planners in 100 days through the 100-day Blueprint process that also established the Christchurch City Development Unit as discussed in *Chapter Five* (Sachdeva, 2011, n.p.).

While participants regularly discussed their frustration and anger at the replacement of the first draft council led plan, what was clear was that this initial process was well received and fostered a sense of ownership and involvement in the initial stages of the recovery. As one participant said:

The government completely overrode the plans we made for ourselves and suddenly came up with their own incredibly unaffordable plan and then bullied the City Council into agreeing to pay for a lot of it. As a result of their grandiose ideas other people were shut out (E-Interview

59).

Because of the influx of infrastructure and construction activities as part of the reconstruction there was also an increase in the statutorily required council consultation processes for projects such as changing speed limits and determining new roads and infrastructure. One participant who worked for the council even noted that they were concerned about “*over consultation*” (Interview Participant 27). They said they had never seen consultation like it with the opportunity for individuals to submit on a number of different stages of projects such as the Accessible City plan and other changes to regulations and planning. Furthermore, the consultation summary for the Land Use Recovery Plan carried out by Environment Canterbury (the regional council) noted in regards to the participation rate:

While consultation initiatives may have yielded greater participation in pre-earthquake times, for example 1800 made written comment on the Urban Development Strategy (UDS) (2005), there are currently a significant number of post-earthquake processes and Plans being prepared which are calling for public comment. Also, there has now been an extended period of post-earthquake planning and consultation, and that combined with individuals’ personal earthquake circumstances is likely to be contributing to participant fatigue (Global Research, 2013, p. 3).

However, a framing that solely focuses on the quantity of consultation and the likelihood for fatigue obscures two important issues. One is that despite these processes at the local level, participants still felt significantly excluded and marginalised, including when they had been involved in formal processes. This indicates that these forms of participation were not effective in engendering feelings of contribution and empowerment, possibly due to the potentially ineffective nature of some ‘public hearing’ type submission processes (Skanavis et al., 2005). Participants expressed notions of exclusion in relation to wider conceptual approaches to recovery rather than a focus on the smaller details for which consultation was legally required. For instance, many participants expressed dismay at the priority placed by the government on building stadiums and convention centres over housing and social issues.

Second, despite these opportunities to participate in these consultation processes at the local government level, the council and other local authorities were perceived as being significantly hampered by the powers allocated to CERA that removed authority from the city council:

I feel sorry for the council, because they are in a very difficult position. They can't really promise anything, because they don't have any money. They don't really have a whole lot of power, because of the formation of CERA and CCDU (Interview Participant 17).

These issues demonstrated further challenges with the power dynamics enacted through the crisis governance tools engaged by the central government that entrenched power relations that favoured centralised control and shifted power relations between government and communities. Here, the politicised nature of recovery is demonstrated through the power relations that interplay between different arms of government as well as different priorities for recovery.

This suggests that in leading the recovery of Christchurch from the earthquakes the central government showed not only contempt for legal processes of democracy but also a broader disregard for principles of genuine participation. Results in this area demonstrate the highly selective and politicised use of formal participatory processes in Christchurch. Thus, the emerging issue from the data was not that there was a complete absence of participation processes in the recovery, but that these processes were lacking in the areas that mattered most to residents: they were not considered genuine when they were carried out; and they were located within a wider context of a perceived lack of democracy. As a result, the use of centralised powers in Christchurch alongside a haphazard approach to community engagement, has demonstrated the politicised nature of a recovery that has left many residents feeling excluded and disempowered. This political engagement with consultation and participation sits within the wider context of disaster politics and exceptionality, in which the immediate response to a disaster instigates wider shifts in democratic politics beyond the initial phase of destruction and into long term recovery.

7.2 POLITICISING CRISIS IN DISASTER RECOVERY

As is clear by this stage, the recovery of the city from the earthquakes has been significantly entangled with political processes, discourses and ideologies. To understand these forms of post-disaster politicisation in greater detail I now turn to a discussion of how political and participatory processes in Christchurch have formed an integral part of the wider approach to crisis governance. One that is reliant on both exceptionality and tactics of de-politicisation that extend beyond the immediate space of emergency response into ongoing recovery.

The disruption and destruction of disaster renders visible the importance of principles of democracy and disagreement to facilitate equitable forms of recovery (Handmer & Dovers, 2007; Wilson, 2009). To enact practices of recovery following disaster is to discuss and facilitate the prioritisation of different forms of creation and reconstruction (Rozario, 2005). As many scholars have illustrated, for recovery efforts to be successful they generally have to have the buy in and support of residents and citizens, those most affected by a disaster and those who will live in the disaster affected place

(Kweit & Kweit, 2004; Ophiyandri et al., 2010; Pearce, 2003; Vallance & Love, 2013). These processes of recovery and reconstruction are fraught with tension, conflict and competing priorities (Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 1999; Rozario, 2005). Thus, the ongoing responses to a disaster become a site of politicisation through the contestation of the values, practices and forms of recovery that are supported and resourced. What is of interest here is the way this politicisation of disaster recovery is enacted to serve different forms of recovery for different groups in society.

As discussed in *Chapter Five*, in the medium to long term of the Christchurch recovery, exceptionality driven politics privileged and fostered certain forms of discourse and ideology beyond the need for an immediate response in a manner that foreclosed democratic processes and participation. I argue the normalisation of these discourses that rationalised and justified the forms of exception also crafted an illusion of de-politicisation that fostered acceptance that there is no alternative (Macgregor, 2014; Williams & Booth, 2013). One aspect of this dynamic in the recovery of Christchurch has been the selective use of participatory processes despite the foreclosure of others. As Honig (2009) notes, exceptionality politics following emergency can threaten the foundation of democracy through cultivating an ongoing acceptance of suspension. In a similar manner, the encroachment of neoliberalised capitalist values in the sphere of governance “undermines the equality that forms its democratic soil” (May, 2010, p. 151). Increasingly, participatory and consensus based forms of democratic government are seen as a tool of neoliberal governmentalities that attempt to depoliticise and evacuate the political (Swyngedouw, 2007). This indicates a wider neoliberal governmentality that works through government at a distance and fostering individualised self-responsible citizens (Flinders & Buller, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2007).

The varied nature of neoliberal governance is implicated in a wider trend of de-politicisation linked to consensus oriented and deliberative participation processes (Deas, 2013; Gill, 2008; Swyngedouw, 2010). De-politicisation, post-democracy or post-politics thus broadly describe the foreclosure of opportunities for democratic engagement as expressed through conflict and dissent to reinforce the hegemony of governing powers (Deas, 2013; Mouffe, 2005b; Swyngedouw, 2007). While many authors argue that these processes do indeed foreclose and shut down ‘the political’, I engage this framework to illuminate the tactics and techniques engaged to craft the *appearance* of consensus and de-politicisation, and to deny and displace the highly politicised and conflict laden context of disaster recovery.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, patterns of governance have been enacted beyond the context of disaster recovery in Christchurch through what has been described as a “more authoritarian and interventionist” form of neoliberal discourse, as well as efforts to disrupt and stifle dissent through exception (Bond et al., 2015, p. 5). The concern is that alongside these forms of exception, attempts have been made to manufacture consensus as a technique to further displace conflict and dissent and to support a politics that is increasingly undemocratic. Effectively, this reduces the sphere of the political in Aotearoa to what Rancière (1999) describes as the police order; the established methods and mechanisms for governing which represent the ‘natural’ order of society (Dikeç, 2002). Throughout the Christchurch earthquake recovery, practices and techniques of de-politicisation were enmeshed with forms of exception to promote specific priorities and discourses for disaster recovery in an attempt to minimise and de-legitimise other perspectives and actions. This agenda appeared to emerge from the foundation of exception that enabled both the pre-existing politics of the disaster affected place to be obscured at the same time as limiting the possibilities for alternatives and dissent in ongoing processes of recovery.

7.2.1 De-politicisation and the Supremacy of the Market

In the context of Christchurch where the government selectively engaged participatory tools alongside exceptionality-based politics, the post-political perspective provides further insight into how the different forms of power enacted through disaster recovery, legitimate and value certain forms of politics over others. Here, the use of discourses around consensus and participation in crisis governance represents one expression of the attempted de-politicisation of democracy and an ongoing engagement with politics of exceptionality following disaster. These techniques of governance can extend and cultivate acceptance for the politicised aspects of recovery in a manner that obscured the underlying neoliberal rationalities to further normalised values and norms around the role of the government and the economy. In some cases, this was achieved through minimising or reducing the possibility for participation by the public and communities.

The government attempted to distance the role of the political in a way that acted to maintain the hegemony of current discourse and ideology to the exclusion of alternatives. As Williams and Booth (2013) describe, de-politicisation is expressed through the naturalisation and normalisation of conflict and difference, a framing of ‘there is no alternative’. For instance, one participant said about the government’s recovery approach: *“They don’t see it as ideological. They don’t have ideology, only the lefties have got ideology. It’s common sense to them.”* (Interview Participant 6). Here, the tactic of de-politicisation enacted by the government aimed to communicate policies in a manner

that was justified through normalisation and ‘common sense’, thus excluding alternative views, dissent and conflict.

The specific context of disaster contributed to conditions that fostered these aspects of de-politicisation. As mentioned frequently in this thesis, the idea of disaster as a time of crisis can provoke fear from the governing elite as a time in which power dynamics in society can be challenged (Tierney, 2008). Exceptionality based politics in response to this is one form of crisis governance that is particularly concerning due to the suspension of democracy (Honig, 2009). Scholars focused on post-politics have also described the notion of crisis as an apparatus that deepens de-politicisation through the use of fear to create a broad and relatively unchallenged consensus on an issue (Swyngedouw, 2010, 2013). These techno-managerial fixes can be utilised to assure the public that the elites in charge have the skills to solve the crisis, or in this case recovery from the disaster. This is similar to Williams and Booth’s (2013) assertion on the foreclosure of alternatives and relates to what Rancière describes as the ‘partition of the sensible’ that outlines the way in which change in response to these supposed crises is required to be within the bounds of the current system (Rancière, 1999). Thus, the specific conditions of crisis can be used as a way to placate the public into relinquishing engaged public discussion and debate on the causes and possible solutions to an issue.

Threats to the status quo are now regularly engaged as a context to engage techno-managerial solutions that allow for changes to be made at the margins to ‘solve’ a problem (Macgregor, 2014; Swyngedouw, 2010). In this way, de-politicised solutions do not threaten the police order or the normalised function of governance and institutions which are structured around neoliberal forms of capitalism (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2013). In the recovery in central Christchurch, the solutions purported by the government to the challenges of recovery and the ‘threat’ of economic harm were mobilised through the implementation of investor driven projects that aimed to stimulate the market, improve investor confidence and stimulate development. This is represented through cabinet documents in which the Minister describes the need for investor confidence through the intervention of the government and in the media where the Minister said he “always had the view that the rebuild would be led by developers and investors” (Stylianou, 2014). In response to suggestions of anti-democratic practice following the removal of recovery powers for the central city from the local council, Minister Brownlee described these as “absurd” and is quoted in the media as saying “there’s been a collaborative process and a discussion process going on for

quite a while” (Radio NZ, 2012, n.p.). Notably, this ‘collaborative process’ did not involve public or community consultation.

This use of de-politicisation alongside the forms of exception discussed in *Chapter Five*, further entrenched these specific economic priorities and goals at the expense of genuine democratic processes in long-term recovery. In particular, the use of fear and threat were engaged in response to the threats to legitimacy and power that disaster can instigate (Pelling & Dill, 2009; Tierney, 2008). In attempting to reaffirm the normalised discourses and values of a neoliberal society and economy, the state acted in a way that enforced their authority to handle the disaster without the need for radically different approaches (Swyngedouw, 2010). This dynamic went beyond an initial phase of emergency response in the immediate aftermath of the disaster to infiltrate ongoing forms of politics in the city. Here, the extension of pre-existing neoliberalised politics, including the suspension of democratic processes, was enforced as the best option for a successful government led recovery. This distanced any underlying structural causes or contributors to the disaster and reinforced the hegemony of capitalist forms of development in securing the successful recovery from the disaster (Macgregor, 2014; Williams & Booth, 2013). In another case, the government’s reliance on highly technical information based on land damage and geology, which was repeatedly refused release to the public realm, represents the use of experts to legitimise decisions that are “deemed too complex for ordinary citizens to comprehend or to judge” (Swyngedouw, 2011, p. 372).

In some cases, participatory processes involving the public were also used to gain legitimacy or strengthen the case of rebuild projects despite a lack of relevant or recent engagement with the community. In one example, the Central City Development Unit (a unit of CERA) initiated a project in 2014 to re-develop one of the few city squares in the central city that had not been substantially damaged. This was part of a wider controversial project to establish an Avon River Precinct in the city. In response to claims that there was an absence of consultation on these projects the Chief Executive of the CCDU justified these actions because of the findings of the Share an Idea consultation process conducted by the city council in 2011 (McCrone, 2014).¹¹ Share an Idea has been mentioned before as the wide ranging participatory urban design process that was initiated by the city council several months after the February 2011 earthquake that created a plan for the central city that was later redeveloped by the central government. Using participatory processes

¹¹ After significant lobbying by community organisations, community ‘engagement’ was later carried out for the re-development of Victoria Square in the Avon River Precinct in 2015, but this process was also criticised. In particular, one commentator described the process as “infantile” and a “burst of box ticking” (Yardley, 2015, n.p.).

such as Share an Idea that were carried out three years prior to a new project, and not specifically related to that project, represents the wider approach by the government to pick and choose participatory processes in a shallow manner. One participant described the implications of these actions:

Any involvement of residents so far has been window dressing and in no way a real ownership of the future direction of the city (E-interview #108).

In another case, a participant felt like an interview they had done for CERA had been misused by the department in the lead up to a national election in a way that represented work done by the community as significantly supported by the government.

This approach to governance emerged in Canterbury before the earthquakes but represents the wider use of tactics of de-politicisation and the way these pre-existing forms of politics can be entrenched, normalised and obscured following disaster. By framing government led disaster recovery in Christchurch as something that has no alternative and is driven by consensus through the selective use of participatory methods, the government has attempted to depoliticise the inherently political nature of disaster recovery to legitimise their actions. Thus, the focus of the recovery has been constructed not only using fear and threat but also a focus on urgency and the need for a particular kind of expertise. The focus of the government was carefully targeted towards how the current system already has the solutions to the issues raised by the experience of disaster and recovery. This obscures debate around the notion that effects of the disaster are, at least partly, a result of the political and ideological structure of society. As a result, this has acted to narrow the political possibilities of disaster recovery through extending “the hegemony of neoliberal economic and technocratic rationalities” (Bond et al., 2015, p. 4).

7.2.2 Framing Exclusion and Inclusion

As I have argued, the broad consensus communicated by the government regarding the ideal form of recovery was grounded in a form of neoliberalised governmentality that reinforced assumptions of economic growth, the importance of investors and expert technical advice. This approach utilised the perspectives and actions of some residents, while excluding others, to communicate a coherent and agreed upon vision for the recovery of the city. While participatory processes were undertaken as part of many official plans and processes, generally participants perceived these to be shallow, disingenuous and tokenistic in a way that attempted to cultivate the appearance of engagement. Those that disagreed with the rationale or ideological perspective were considered extreme or working against the interests of the city.

As Allmendinger and Haughton (2012) describe, the de-politicisation of disagreement does not necessarily reduce or remove conflict but instead displaces it to the borders of what is considered reasonable or rational. This contributes to a depoliticised order of governance with defined roles, processes and accepted outcomes. Agamben's theorisation of exceptionality draws on the idea of exclusion to argue that the 'police order' suspend the law to literally class dissenters outside of the law (Agamben, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2007). This has not necessarily been the case in the Christchurch recovery. The theoretical perspective of exception is thus useful to understand the justifications and political processes for suspending the rule of law. However, to more clearly articulate the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion it is necessary to look beyond exception to other dynamics of crisis governance. Through perspectives on post-politics, it is possible to see how the tactics such as bullying and marginalisation that were introduced in *Chapter Five* attempted to reduce dissent and conflict to construct a form of consensus surrounding the ideal form of recovery.

In Christchurch, this resulted in many opponents to the government being the target of threats and insults, particularly from the Minister for Earthquake Recovery. Previously, I linked this retributive form of governance to the concept of elite panic and threats to legitimacy following a disaster. I touched on the role of these actions in limiting democratic possibilities as well as the nature of the bullying and threatening behaviour that emerged from the data. Participants described how they had been harassed by government departments while others described concerns with losing funding they relied on for their organisations. These actions suggested a form of othering in actions, beliefs and opinions that were considered outside of the government led consensus on how the recovery should be carried out. The actions of the government in this way crafted spaces of exclusion in the recovery that do not clearly fit within Agamben's concept of bare life that demarcates the spatial concept of 'the camp' to signify the literal and political exclusion of bodies under a state of exception (Agamben, 2005; Ek, 2006; Lee et al., 2014).

Instead, the use of these tactics engaged exclusion in a way that legitimised certain points of agreement around the earthquake and the recovery, while distancing, discrediting and excluding others. Wilson and Swyngedouw (2014) describe this as an ultra-politics that excludes and contains those with different political and economic views. One manifestation of this in the recovery has been that an elite group were afforded the privilege of being involved in important decision making in the recovery to the exclusion of other opinion and views:

It's become a high level political process. It's the city, there are always politics and I think we are getting quite good at our local politics and arguing in a sort of civil and constructive way.

But the problem is that so many of the decisions are being led by a small handful of people at the top end of CERA and Cabinet who have interest in communicating what they see are the important issues (Interview Participant 10).

In this way, these actions represent the outcomes of de-politicisation in which conflict and dissent are pushed to the margins and portrayed as outside of normality and rationality (Swyngedouw, 2007). Here, the role of exclusion is to reinforce the normalised structure and function of society to protect the status quo of politics, society and economy (Swyngedouw, 2011). This also leads to what Swyngedouw (2011, p. 378) describes as an agenda that organises “the commons in the interests of the elite”.

The use of these techniques was seen by participants as related to the desire of the government to push their own agenda and priorities rather than develop a participatory approach to recovery priorities. As one participant described:

In general, I'd say it's been very much driven by the need to provide economic certainty. It is the assumption that if the economy is good then everything else is good. That kind of trickle down economic view... I think the process by which it's happened has been quite fraught. There's been a real lack of consultation on certain things and lots of missed opportunities (Interview Participant 18).

Another described this approach in a more sinister manner; they believed that this approach had been motivated by a desire to support those in positions of social and financial power to exploit the opportunities of the earthquakes:

I think that the National Party, there is an ideology, which is money, and they're more concerned about looking after their mates and the higher levels of power and money. So that probably underlies a lot of what they do and what they're really interested in. I think they're really interested in people investing in the central city more than they are about making it a place for people, they're about getting it done fast and making money (Interview Participant 5).

Here, the exclusion of citizens and community in the recovery was framed as the result of the ideological approach of the government, which favoured economic priorities and actions that re-enforced pre-existing networks of power and wealth. The implications arising from the exclusion of the community supported these practices and contributed to a de-politicised agenda to foreclose democratic participation and opportunities for genuine engagement beyond the political and economic elite.

A broader issue has also emerged with displacement of conflict to the realm of the judiciary as a consequence of these exclusionary tactics. As Allmendinger and Haughton (2012) note, de-politicisation often results in the displacement of disagreement to the forum of the courts, something that is financially draining and time consuming. Through the exceptional legislation enacted by the government some legal appeal processes were removed, however some pathways for legal recourse existed in other areas. This has included extensive court cases and appeals related to the selective buy outs of damaged land in the residential red zone, a high court challenge of the consultation processes undertaken by the Minister for Education in closing schools and challenges to pay-outs made by the Earthquake Commission (the government disaster insurance scheme).

There are two risks of the litigation approach. The first is the narrowing of space for democratic dissent and the exclusion of conflict (Catney & Doyle, 2011; Swyngedouw, 2011). Court cases marginalise those that do not agree with the manufactured consensus purported by the government, and undermines the foundation of democracy, particularly as it sets a precedent for the further suspension of democracy to any perceived or real threat (Honig, 2009; Macgregor, 2014). Second, there is a risk that a reliance on the courts to settle disagreements and conflict relating to the politicisation of disaster will lead to a phenomenon described as ‘corrosive community’ (Picou et al., 2004; Picou & Marshall, 2007). Identified in relation to technological disasters, the concept of corrosive community describes how community recovery can be deferred due to lengthy, expensive and draining lawsuits which are complex, particularly when related to scientific or technical claims (Picou et al., 2004).

Overall, these spaces of exclusion and inclusion in the recovery have created an environment in which space for democratic inclusion, debate and disagreement has been narrowed. This has left residents feeling powerless and marginalised:

I feel like the citizens were treated as objects, victims to be ‘helped’ and ‘rebuilt’ after the quake, and that has caused a long-term side-lining for most of us. In the end, you cease to care about the rebuild because it is being ‘done’ to us, not with us (E-interview #36).

The politicisation of recovery has thus occurred at many levels and is particularly heightened despite a concerted engagement with tactics of de-politicisation.

It has been noted that politics in Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in Christchurch, are increasingly retributive in nature (Hayward, 2012, 2016; Thomas & Bond, 2016). Hayward (2016) describes the risk of what she calls a FEARS model of governance emerging in the Christchurch recovery. This

intertwines the concerns of exclusion and retributive justice through the acronym FEARS: Frustration, Exclusion from the environment, Authoritarian decision making, Retributive justice and Silenced democracy (Hayward, 2012, 2016). Likewise, Thomas and Bond (2016) link this to the evolving style of neoliberalised governance in Aotearoa New Zealand that exemplifies the increasingly normalised actions of government to suspend democratic processes. In the Christchurch recovery, these actions are visible through the unconstitutional command and control focus of the government on prioritising selective market functions, but also in the approach to stifling dissent and conflict. Participants thus described the retributive actions of the government and ministers as one tactic utilised to exclude and isolate dissent.

According to some participants, these actions mark a change in politics in Aotearoa New Zealand:

There was a gap between the politicians and the community. The politicians tended not to seek revenge, not openly anyway. It's much more evident now (Interview Participant 6).

When asked about the possibilities for protesting, another participant described how they were always conscious of their organisations reliance on funding from CERA and the CCC:

We never thought of protesting because we are also aware that our funding comes from the council who is involved with CERA. And we're also aware that if we want to do things on CERA owned land in the future, we're going to have to get along. So we haven't really thought about that (Interview Participant 5).

These perspectives describe how these exclusionary approaches can limit some forms of democratic debate and dissent. Given the contested nature of disaster recovery and the inherent conflict involved in decisions around prioritising what is rebuilt and how, the use of de-politicisation and exclusion reduced the possibilities for involvement of community in the recovery and increased fear of retributive and authoritarian responses to dissent.

7.3 HOPE AND RE-CREATION THROUGH GRASSROOTS POLITICS OF RECOVERY

As I have been careful to stress throughout this chapter, the forms of de-politicisation and post-politics that emerged through this case represent the attempted foreclosure and displacement of conflict and the political from the sphere of earthquake recovery. Thus, de-politicisation in this research points to an engagement with a specific rationality and array of techniques that aim to craft the appearance of a de-politicised context to further certain values, discourses and practices. In this section I draw on this distinction to pivot the discussion to explore the way radical politics have emerged in the cracks of this approach. In doing so I also sympathetically align with emerging critiques of the post-politics paradigm that suggest an already-existing potential within many forms

of activism and local action that challenges the notion of a post-political present and future. To explore these notions, I draw on earlier concepts outlined in *Chapter Six* regarding hope and community led action to discuss the emergence of new political possibilities at the local level in Christchurch.

While a useful frame to understand the more repressive dynamics of post-disaster recovery, the lens of post-politics has been recently critiqued as offering no new insight on the appropriation of political concepts such as consensus to support and maintain the hegemonic ideologies and discourse (Larner, 2014; McCarthy, 2013). Another critique raises concerns that theorising de-politicisation as hegemonic may act to create the very conditions it is describing, resulting in a subsequent foreclosure of democratic possibilities (Bond et al., 2015). In several cases, articulations of post-politics sit uncomfortably with the growing literature on autonomous, locally focussed forms of progressive politics that situate the role of challenging forms of capitalism within the lens of the everyday. Indeed, the framing of post-politics may act to obscure the less adversarial forms of activism through everyday action (Bond et al., 2015; Larner, 2014). In this research these theories perform the useful task of illuminating the patterns of governance that have shaped aspects of disaster recovery in Christchurch. Beyond this, perspectives of hope and resistance can also frame the possibilities for change and hope that emerge from this context.

As discussed in relation to creating hopeful alternatives to capitalist forms of being in society, the earthquakes provided an opportunity for many groups and local neighbourhoods to expand and explore different modes of relating to each other and broader processes of society around commons and food production. Within these community organisations there was also an awareness of what many participants described as the highly political nature of the recovery. The tactics of de-politicisation were relatively visible to them and not necessarily successful in cultivating a consensus on appropriate forms of recovery in the city. People described this as implicit in the context of disaster recovery. One participant said *"I think it is a political process because New Zealand is a political country"* (Interview Participant 22) and another noted *"Of course it's a political process... There is no context in which it would not be a political process"* (Interview Participant 29).

These participants were more likely to see politics as something that pervades everyday life and is inherent in the decisions made and actions of government and communities. While the engagement of some participants with these ideas of politics were largely normative and driven by framings of the party-political process and formal decision making, the nature of these comments indicated that

the attempts to foreclose democracy and processes of politicisation in the recovery were significantly incomplete and relatively visible to those working on the ground. This aligns with Bond et al.'s (2015) point that understanding post-politics and radical alternatives needs to be situated within more empirical research to understand the different and 'messy' enactments of such processes. In this case, the messy politics of disaster recovery illustrated how despite de-politicising tools foreclosing formal avenues for democratic participation and reducing the remaining avenues to shallow and disingenuous forms of participation, many organisations also found others ways to participate through disrupting and engaging with the political.

One of the challenges with engaging this conceptualisation of de-politicisation is the need to contextualise and broaden an understanding of politicisation, resistance and radical alternatives. There is a specific concern that in positioning radical democratic principles as the counter to post-politics, through a dualism of the post-political and the properly political, that the diverse and varied possibilities for re-democratisation and resistance are obscured (Davidson & Iveson, 2015; Legacy, 2016; O'Callaghan et al., 2014). As Legacy (2016) describes through the case of transport planning in Melbourne, despite the use of communicative planning techniques used to foreclose conflict and participation, citizens and communities crafted new 'shadow' participatory processes that significantly contested government narratives and re-politicised the debate and planning decisions. These dynamics draw attention to the need to see post-politics not as a "condition that has been realized but rather a tendency" (Davidson & Iveson, 2015, p. 4). Through this repositioning of post-politics it is possible to see the significant tactics and techniques that attempt to craft a de-politicising approach to participation and citizen involvement alongside the contextual, ever-changing and diverse forms of resistance, re-politicisation and disruption (Featherstone et al., 2015; Legacy, 2016; O'Callaghan et al., 2014).

7.3.1 Experimentation and Hope in Shaping a Politics of Possibility

In the face of this complexity, and to move away from a binary between radical politics and post-politics, the many varied forms of politicisation and disruption at different scales needs to be recognised. In this case, the potential for post-disaster community led action to influence, shape and inspire forms of politics that resists de-politicisation arises from the concept of rupture and disruption, particularly in alignment with theories of hope and possibility. For Rancière, a 'properly political gesture' involves articulating dissent that disrupts the police order (Rancière, 1999; Swyngedouw, 2007). Further, the political can never be fully foreclosed; resistance will always form outside of the attempted closure of politics (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012). According to Rancierie (1999, p. 30), these forms of politics make:

...visible what had no business being seen, and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise; it makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise.

There is significant contestation within scholarly circles as to what constitutes these forms of proper politics, particularly given the concern and threat of post-political co-option (Larner, 2014; McCarthy, 2013). To avoid hopelessness and the paralysis of 'there is no alternative' it is arguable that it is necessary to explore, particularly through empirical evidence, how ruptures, dissent and resistance beyond a tightly defined moment of 'proper politics' may occur to challenge the tactics of de-politicisation. Indeed, it is possible to stretch the idea of the properly political to explore alternative forms of community action through disaster recovery. These attempts to contest and disrupt the 'police order' or normalised functions of society may also overlap with or be co-opted into forms of de-politicisation. However, without exploring the potential of these actions to expose and disrupt the "incompleteness and vulnerability" of post-political processes, the space for alternatives is, ironically, markedly narrowed (Larner, 2014, p. 300).

In Christchurch, through the actions of community organisations in shaping their own forms of recovery that intersect and diverge from government led recovery, different forms of politics have emerged in the cracks of the de-politicising agenda. Interestingly, some scholars have described the need to explore how alternative forms of power in the disaster context are "contested, negotiated and reworked" (Adey et al., 2015, p. 13). Meanwhile, others have described the "always contingent, contextual and partial" nature of post-politics following crisis (O'Callaghan et al., 2014, p. 4). The scope for this complexity in both fields of inquiry converge through the actions of communities in Christchurch that align with the principles of community economies and autonomous activism through their desire to re-negotiate relations between people, communities, the land and governance. These forms of prefigurative actions have emerged in spite of the centralised government response as well as in the gaps of 'official' recovery. Community led action has thus cultivated a politics of possibility that disrupted, contested and re-worked power in the context of earthquake recovery (Gibson-Graham, 2006).

Here, hope through a politics of possibility is enacted through contestation and resistance that works within and outside of the attempted de-politicisation of the earthquake recovery. Hope can be considered both a process that engenders possibility and potential for everyday life to be different and an orientation towards openness and connections (Anderson, 2006; Gibson-Graham, 2006; Head, 2016). The importance of hope in shaping these forms of politics is in the potential for

alternatives and an embrace of contestation and difference. The actions taken by these organisations represent not only the cracks in a post-political strategy that aimed to displace conflict and dissent, but also embody the interconnected and messy relationships that configure how these political ruptures occur both outside and within the institutions of the state and configurations of 'community'.

In many cases, participants described the earthquakes as an opportunity for providing these ruptures in the façade of governance that is maintained through the perceived normality of the status quo. These ruptures opened space for politics around the identity of the city and contestation over the actions taken in the name of recovery. This instability was a site of productive engagement with conflict, and generative of a politics of recovery that had the potential to produce alternative social and built environments in the city:

It's not just that the systems broke down in Christchurch following the quakes, the political and physical systems were all under massive pressure and a lot of them failed and became unstable. It's also that the understanding of what Christchurch is became unstable as well. Is it still going to be a city of gardens? Or is it going to be the city of sport?... or like what is Christchurch going to be? (Interview Participant 10).

Organisations involved in transitional architecture and projects creating new forms of public space and commons, often engaged in politics in a manner that went beyond normative conceptualisations of 'politics'. As one interviewee from a transitional organisation said:

[Our organisation] generally doesn't throw its weight ... behind political causes so much because we don't think that's very wise for us... The form of what we do is political, by changing the way people think about the city, participation or the uses of land... more like that (Interview Participant 18).

One of the strengths of this approach according to one participant was the 'open dialogue' around projects and the "easy to read" and "honest" agenda about what they are attempting to engage and do through their work (Interview Participant 10). Here the focus is not on party politics through the formalised systems of governance but with a broader conceptualisation of the political in the sense of challenging the status quo and experimenting with alternatives. This focus on the political nature of relationships and power dynamics, particularly around the processes of recovery broadens the scope of recovery politics at the community level. This extends an understanding of the political in line with Rancièrian theory that sees the rupture of norms and values through the police order as the moment of proper politics (Rancièr, 1995, 1999). These actions also represent the role of embracing experimentation and the new political possibilities that can challenge an overarching

narrative of post-politicisation (Larner, 2014). Engaging with the rupture caused by disaster provides an opportunity to capitalise on the disruption to cultivate new forms of politics that exist outside of the formal sphere of government and consultation based participation.

The ongoing and wider influence of these forms of creation and resistance appeared to manifest in shifting values towards politics and engagement within the city. For example, one participant said:

In Christchurch right now, I feel like the entire citizenry is engaged in discussions that most people aren't interested in in cities that haven't had something like this happen to them. Most people never get to think about how we want the roads set up, what the long-term plans should look [like] (Interview Participant 29).

Other organisations specifically aimed to forge hope through fostering new forms of engagement and debate around the potential for change in the city:

[We] really just sought to give people a way to connect with the future, and give people an opportunity to have hope, and dream, and connect with their visions of what would be possible when there's this level of devastation and building something new (Interview Participant 17).

Thus, the very conditions that created the opportunity to expand exceptional and post-political forms of governing also provided a context in which alternative articulations of power and politics also emerged. Particularly given the regressive nature of many the recovery policies enacted by the government, the messy processes of power relations in the post-disaster political context are exemplified through these entangled processes of empowerment and disempowerment. What is clear, however, is that for some, the experience of disaster and recovery opened space for generative possibility and potential to explore different forms of politics.

Beyond autonomous and experimental projects such as those focused on activities like commons and food production, many grassroots organisations also worked to create alternative spaces for participation and political engagement with and beyond the narrowly defined government processes of recovery. These forms of community led recovery action also form the basis for citizen led experiments and interventions in democratic processes. These forms of participation broadly sit alongside the three areas of community led recovery introduced in *Chapter Six*, which are based on local neighbourhood support, pre-existing NGOs and grassroots organisations, but also include the protests and direct action that occurred towards certain decisions and issues.

These activities also formed a trajectory of organic and emergent citizen participation that sits outside of formalised processes. While not endorsing forms of party politics, these forms of community led recovery represented an engagement with the political that is enacted through creation, experimentation and political commentary. Self-organisation and autonomy were increasingly important to how people saw their role in the recovery:

The government has failed to involve people in the recovery. People have organised themselves (E-Interview #11).

Another participant described the numerous activities they undertook in their communities to organise activities for the recovery: *“All this is done informally. WE share among each other what works and what doesn’t”* (E-Interview Participant 62) [participant’s own emphasis].

Other organisations worked to enable greater and more genuine participatory processes for the public. For instance, one community organisation, A Brave New City, explicitly mobilised to encourage and facilitate participatory engagement of citizens with the recovery of the city. One participant described this as:

Our immediate reaction was one of there's an amazing opportunity here ... to build something new, with a completely different ethos to driving the decision-making process (Interview Participant 17).

Groups like A Brave New City utilised experimentations in the form and processes of local democracy to enact a different form of politics through recovery. The focus of these organisations was specifically based around facilitating the involvement of citizens in the recovery through supplementing and strengthening the role of community, particularly through encouraging an imaginative view of what the re-created city could be. Another organisation, EVO:SPACE, engaged in a project to canvas and collect ideas from residents to understand their visions, preferences and opinions on major reconstruction projects in the city’s eastern suburbs and red zones.

In a similar manner to that described by Legacy (2016), citizens and residents created and engaged with these participatory processes to re-politicise the issues of recovery. Others utilised tactics more familiar to traditional modes of activism such as protests and advocacy organisations with the aim of interrupting and directly contesting decisions made at different levels of government. One participant described their tactics in an advocacy organisation as *“we are trying to create an entity that cannot be ignored”* (Interview Participant 23). These forms of disruption included nominating new candidates in local body elections, campaigning on issues through raising awareness and seeking solidarity from other groups, nationally and globally, and through rallies and protests.

Notably, many protest rallies were held to contest the removal of democratic elections for regional council, the slow settlement process for residential insurance claims and the proposed pay rise for high level staff in the Christchurch City Council. Generally, these projects emerged from grassroots collaborations that desired a greater and more genuine input into official decision making processes on specific issues through attempting to creatively intervene and disrupt the post-politicisation of consensus driven government participation projects. While this aspect of community action is not within the scope of this research, it is important to note these actions as they indicate the level of dissent and conflict that was simultaneously in response to and marginalised by the post-political approach taken to the recovery.

Autonomous projects that explored the spaces and opportunities in the post-earthquake landscape also engaged with alternative modes and processes of engaging the public in their own work. Beyond crafting an interface between residents and those in positions of institutional or state power, these forms of community led recovery action explore new forms of engaging with the success or failure of their work. As Reynolds (2014, p. 169) describes, this strategy involved ongoing, iterative and experimental forms of 'consultation' and engagement:

We try to perceive and identify deficiencies in the city and offer active solutions... we create a project ... and place it in the public realm as a temporary, small scale, low cost and low risk experiment. More consultation, so to speak, comes from monitoring how the public uses, embraces, ignores or rejects the project. We have to watch, listen and reflect, then adapt it (or remove it) in response to implicit or explicit feedback... our bottom line is the benefit to the public.

Exemplified here is an attitude that embraces the potential failure or success of a project through an experimental politics of possibility (Gibson-Graham, 2006). The central city, where many of these projects are located, has, as discussed in earlier chapters, been the focal point for significant government intervention in a manner that strongly resembles a penchant for post-political tactics and techniques. However, the strong presence of these grassroots, community and locally driven projects that explicitly tackle new ideas of participation, engagement, public space and commons demonstrates the incompleteness of the post-political project. Indeed, the slow progress in the central city towards commercial reconstruction, which some participants attributed to government intervention, in many ways created the physical space for these projects to flourish, fail and be re-invented.

In another sector, the absence of NGOs and social services from official consultation and governance was seen as problematic. In many cases, these organisations worked in between the community and official government organisations. In the recovery, participants described how these organisations have taken on an extended workload and have had the wider issues of recovery increase the usual challenges of working in NGOs and the social service sector. As one participant described, they had to actively advocate for their inclusion in recovery governance:

When the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority had a description of itself initially, there was a box for all the government and local government... Then when push came to shove and the [recovery] strategy was published, the NGOs had disappeared. We came together around that, putting up our hands and saying, 'hey' (Interview Participant 6).

Discussing these issues with individuals who work in these sectors has been an important as it has demonstrated the multi-faceted nature of 'community' action and the many different forms and organisational structures that can contribute to grassroots recovery. Importantly, these organisations may not always be 'seen' in the work of disaster recovery as they are not new or emergent groups specifically tackling the task of recovery. In order to counter this, different social service sectors and NGOs established an advocacy group, Te Reo Kotahi – One Voice, in order to give voice to these organisations as many people felt the lack of representation was inhibiting an effective dialogue between central and local government and social service providers.

The negotiation and reworking of relationships illuminates another binary which is frequently present in research on post-politics – that of the state and the community. While the government has led and directed clear attempts to engage in post-political techniques, this has not meant that the role of the state should be seen as one of complete control. Instead, what has been negotiated through the re-politicisation of the recovery by community organisations is a shift in the role and responsibility of the state in an increasingly diverse and complex context. Rather than rejecting the state entirely, social service organisations challenged their exclusion to work with government and state services. Similarly, many organisations who carried out autonomous and potentially radical action engaged in negotiated relationships with different levels of government. This was not always successful, especially when departments such as CERA held authority over projects, land and finances. But in some cases, collaboration between different parts of the state and other organisations led to productive moments of change such as the joint funding of a community designed and led orchard in the central city to be resourced by the city council, CERA and local organisations.

However, despite the successes in re-politicising aspects of the recovery, as noted by several participants, there were still significant challenges around contesting wider issues. This was described as related to people's perceptions of "*not enough publics*" to go around the multitude of issues (Interview Participant 10), a sense of diffuse responsibility in which it is not possible to determine who to protest to (Interview Participant 6) as well as general feelings of exhaustion. There are also concerns that the sort of actions described above as collaborations may become co-opted to represent the very form of de-politicisation they initially disrupted (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014). It is important, however, to recognise that with these concerns of co-option comes a potential for paralysis in which nothing is possible in the face of the inevitable foreclosure of 'the political'. That citizens in Christchurch are repeatedly attempting to engage with and disrupt these political processes, despite ongoing challenges, speaks to the potential for different ways of engaging with moments of politics and challenges the narrow notion of proper political actions that can be proffered as the alternative to post-politics.

7.4 SUMMARY

In this final discussion chapter I have explored the how formal and informal modes of participation have facilitated different forms of politicisation in the context of disaster recovery. To do so I have introduced the formal participatory processes for communities and residents to be involved in the earthquake recovery in Christchurch and described how these have been resisted and co-opted for different aims. This has laid the foundation for exploring the varied dynamics of politicisation that have emerged not only through the government actions as described in *Chapter Five*, or solely through the community led actions described in *Chapter Six*, but through the multiple, varied and entangled relationships and networks in the post-disaster city. The evidence presented in this chapter encapsulates these complex relationships between what is politicised and the techniques of de-politicisation that are engaged in response to contestation.

I have argued that the government has specifically engaged in a political strategy that is significantly broader than that explained solely through the lens of exceptionality. Alongside the actions of exception and the suspension of aspects of the law, the actions of the state perpetuate and extend tactics of de-politicisation. Drawing on the increasingly popular theories of post-politics I have demonstrated how the crisis generated by the disaster was engaged to craft the appearance of a consensus on the right way to carry out recovery that supported a focus on economic and technocratic rationalities. This has resulted in the foreclosure of aspects of formal participation in

government led recovery as well as the disingenuous engagement of some participatory techniques to craft the appearance of this consensus.

However, as a number of scholars have noted, perspectives on post-politics can also foreclose opportunities for resistance. In the last section of this chapter I raised the cases of resistance and contestation that have arisen in the gaps of the de-politicised approach to broader earthquake recovery. By expanding the idea of rupture, it is possible to see how a more flexible perspective on proper politics illuminates the complex forms of resistance and contestation that explicitly politicised the recovery and the actions of the government. Here the actions of communities not only contested government led political processes but also experimented with different forms of participation and engagement in re-creating the city.

These complex relationships between autonomous and self-led community projects, collaborative political engagements between government institutions and the public, and the dynamics of post-politicisation represent how hopeful alternatives co-exist and are entangled with forms of de-politicisation. Thus, hopeful action that emerged in the face democratic foreclosure was cultivated through the opportunity provided by the disaster and the enactment of a politics of possibility.

8 RECOVERING FROM RECOVERY

After seven and half years of aftershocks, both geological and political, Christchurch is emerging from a state of hesitant reconstruction and recovery. This thesis provides a snapshot into the dynamics of community led recovery for the four years following the initial tremors in 2010 and 2011. The process of recovery is open-ended and difficult to define. Does recovery cease upon achieving an economic or social metric? Does the transition from recovery begin separately in the mind of every individual affected by the event and its ongoing ramifications? It does not seem possible to fully and completely declare an end to disaster recovery for the diverse range of people who lived through the earthquakes. Indeed, it may even be necessary for many to also recover from the disaster of recovery itself.

Through an in-depth and rich case study, I have provided a window into this challenging period of disaster recovery. I have focused on the role of community organisations in reconfiguring participation to present important insight into the potential for a politics of hopeful recovery, as well as the regressive political potential that follows crisis. The account of disaster recovery presented here is necessarily context specific, however the ideological and discursive facets represent a broader exploration of the opportunity rupture provokes and the possibility for an alternative politics to emerge. In this final chapter I draw together the findings of this thesis to summarise and examine the main contributions this research has made. I begin with a summary of the main results chapters before deepening the discussion to focus on the original contributions of this research towards understanding the manifestations of crisis and hope through disaster recovery.

8.1 THE POLITICS OF RECOVERY

Throughout this research, I have presented grounded empirical evidence to argue that the actions of community organisations play an integral role in producing hopeful disaster recovery practice. More widely, this shows the importance of understanding disasters as thoroughly political ruptures that bring an insight to the contestation and reconfiguration of society and politics. The data and stories offered here demonstrate a number of important findings and contributions to our understanding of disaster recovery as well as how the politics of crisis and hope is enacted.

In *Chapter Five* I addressed the first research question “*In what ways does a context of disaster and crisis influence government led recovery?*” I argued that the actions of the New Zealand government in response to the earthquakes represented an approach characterised by discourses of crisis that articulated a state of emergency and exception. This state of exception emerged from narratives of

crisis and emergency to justify legal and legislative channels that suspended aspects of democratic process and participation. From this, three consequences were apparent:

- the move towards the centralisation of disaster recovery;
- the use of disaster to enact extra-ordinary politics that extend the powers of the state; and
- action taken by the state against threats to state legitimacy and power.

One of the main findings of this research focus was the command and control approach that directed government led earthquake recovery. The ramifications of this centralised approach have gone beyond the immediate context to infiltrate an array of decision making processes in central and local government institutions. This has also influenced how communities could be involved in the recovery. Notably, legal scholars maintained that these actions represented a breach of the unwritten constitution of Aotearoa New Zealand and an unprecedented transfer of power from the legislative wing of government to the executive. These actions have resulted in an approach to crisis governance that sits both inside and outside of the law (Ek, 2006; Lee et al., 2014). Significantly, the creation of legislation that allocated a transfer of power from parliament to the executive enabled a number of actions that have been challenged in the courts as illegal and outside of the law. The justification for these actions largely relied on the exceptional nature of the disaster and a desire to protect economic interests in the city, as well as an efficient and swift recovery.

In Christchurch, this form of exceptionality politics was enacted to facilitate specific economic and political priorities within the disaster recovery in to key ways. First, through the buyout of red zone damaged residential land whereby insured owners were offered a purchase deal to the exclusion of a small number of uninsured homeowners. On the surface, this policy sits inconsistently with the neoliberal discourse of avoiding market intervention. However, on closer observation, these actions supported specific values to reinforce the political and economic status quo. By emphasizing the individual responsibility of uninsured landowners, the government in the Supreme Court justified discrimination as the consequence of choice and risk. Thus, while ultimately intervening in the market, the government acted in a way to reinforce and extend the roll out of neoliberal values. The complexity of these ideological and discursive threads that run through the governance of disaster recovery represent the contradictory nature of many forms of neoliberalism as well as the context dependent manifestation of states of exception (Anderson & Adey, 2012; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Larner, 2011).

Second, this approach also influenced the governance structures of the city to privilege the role of the market over the role of citizens and the public in contributing to the recovery. Through a number of mechanisms allowed, in part, through the CERA legislation, the government was able to intervene in local government processes in order to direct the priorities driving central city reconstruction while undermining the public processes of consultation and participation. The importance placed on indicators of investment and economic growth suggested an explicit focus on economic priorities above those produced by residents through earlier council led plans such as Share an Idea. A focus on economic priorities is not inherently problematic. However, combined with the erosion of participatory democratic processes and the claims of bullying and intimidation from participants, local government officials and business owners, the approach of the government to prioritise this aspect of the recovery represents the value placed on this aspect of society over others.

In *Chapter Six* I addressed the second research question “*What are the community led and activist responses to earthquake recovery in Christchurch?*” Despite the top down and centralised response led by the central government, there were substantial efforts to resist, create and negotiate a diverse range of community led recovery actions and spaces. The findings of this thesis demonstrate the potential for positive and socially progressive community led disaster recovery that challenge dominant ideological narratives of capitalist economic growth and individualistic rationalities. What is remarkable from the evidence presented here is the way in which communities could work both alongside and outside of a highly centralised government led recovery. Through a philosophy of hope these alternative forms of recovery cultivated a politics of possibility in this post-disaster environment.

Community led recovery in Christchurch supported inspiring and radical attempts to reconfigure new ways of being in society through these experiments in different ways of participating in the recovery, relating to each other and occupying space in the city. These actions, led by groups at different scales, from NGOs, to social services, to residents’ organisations, orchestrated a number of practical and material projects in Christchurch that many participants described as the most successful aspects of the recovery. This thesis has focussed on three main avenues of action that were engaged by communities to reconfigure the social and political landscape:

- Commons and collaboration;
- Urban greening and gardening; and
- Shifts in values and norms.

These forms of community led recovery represent the emergence of hopeful and prefigurative action that is motivated, in part, by a desire to create a different society and economy in the present (Chatterton & Pickerill, 2010; Levkoe, 2011; Maeckelbergh, 2011).

Community actions in the recovery were highly successful in reconfiguring the social and physical landscape of the city. Commons and collaboration were manifest in a number of community actions that represented a desire to re-work relations between the public and space in the city. These organizations contributed to material change in the recovery through creating projects such as The Commons, The Pallet Pavilion, community gardens and orchards, and public art projects. An emphasis was placed on engaged citizens and the public with the recovering city while also facilitating shifts in norms and values. New forms of community economies were created that encouraged experiments in different forms of valuing private and public property and different processes for organising and operating community groups. Other community led recovery projects utilised the transformative potential of alternative forms of food production and distribution. Many of these actions were consciously driven by a desire to seek change in the city and to utilise the period of recovery to experiment in positive ways with transformation.

In many cases these desires were connected to the government led recovery with the intention of creating a different vision for the city and the opportunities presented by the recovery. Thus, the actions of community groups can be seen as a concerted and conscious effort to *direct* the potential of the public towards transformative and potentially radical new forms of organization and society. This finding illuminates the radical action that can occur through community led disaster recovery to contribute to the creation of new worlds beyond capitalism. By taking care not to assume the all-encompassing nature of capitalist and neoliberal hegemony, these forms of resistance and creative experimentation emerged as a defining feature of the politics of community led recovery in Christchurch.

Furthermore, through engaging in these actions, people were able to process the events of the disaster while also partaking in and shaping the emergence of new politics around disaster recovery. This blurred the lines between the power dynamics of the victimised and the empowered and suggested that the political identities that emerge from disaster do so in a complex negotiation of hope, action, resistance and control. These community actions play an important role in fostering spaces of hope and possibility for the future of Christchurch, as well as wider processes of social and

political change. It is vitally important to recognise these forces of progressive, hopeful change that exist alongside and within the regressive forms of centralised politics following disaster. The highly complex and diverse range of recovery politics is a central finding of this research and demonstrates the need for continued awareness and analysis of the use of crisis and disaster to further political aims.

In *Chapter Seven* I addressed the final research question “*How do these community led and activist responses interact with government policies and practice?*” I introduced the role of formal community participation in earthquake recovery and explored how the findings of *Chapter Five* and *Chapter Six* brought together these aspects of formal and informal participation. Many of the actions taken in response to the earthquakes heightened forms of crisis governance and foreclosed aspects of democracy and participation. The state of exception that framed official disaster recovery policy emerged from pre-existing neoliberalised democratic politics that sought to suspend democracy in the face of real or perceived crisis. Importantly this manifestation of disaster recovery politics had significant ramifications for the form and practices of enduring and ongoing democracy and citizen participation in Christchurch.

The use of some formal modes of participation and consensus based processes, as evidenced by the creation of the Community Forum and the public notification of some projects, demonstrated a move to position the recovery as a partially de-politicised process. The tactics engaged by a number of government departments, most notably CERA, involved the use of participatory processes to craft the appearance of consensus to minimise conflict, contestation and dissent. These tactics helped mobilise values and norms that defend and reinforce the status quo of political and economic structures. Following Swygendouw (2010, 2011, 2013), this form of selective de-politicisation represented the foreclosure of political possibility through narrowing the space for alternatives and the potential for contestation and dissent.

However, this foreclosure was not complete. Arguably the attempts by the government to de-politicise the issues surrounding recovery revealed significant inconsistencies in their approach that were relatively visible to the participants in this research. Furthermore, the findings presented here clearly demonstrate the potential of, and possibility for, hopeful and radical shifts in how people engage with each other, their communities and wider political processes following disaster. Beyond the material change described earlier, actions undertaken by community organisations were entangled with official and formal processes to contribute to contestation and debate around

different forms of disaster recovery. Many organisations also undertook action that crafted new forms of engagement with the politics of recovery, through new organisations, different avenues for participating in decision making and through experiments in democratic organisation.

Such forms of hopeful resistance re-politicised and contested the normalised discourses of capitalism and the market that dominated the government led approach to recovery. Other organisations explicitly resisted the decisions and decision making processes orchestrated by the central government to refocus and centre issues that had been presented as inevitable despite involvement of local communities. Thus, the attempted de-politicisation of the recovery that sat alongside a strategy of exception was countered by a hopeful engagement with the politics of recovery that highlighted the politicisation of the decisions made while also reconfiguring how some communities and individuals engaged with politics and governance.

8.2 DISASTER RECOVERY: HOPE AND CRISIS IN CONTEXT

This thesis has provided a grounded, in-depth exploration of the everyday experiences of communities as they negotiate the politics of disaster recovery. The evidence and discussion presented here explores the entangled relationship between community and government led recovery and the discursive and ideological manifestations of these approaches. I have explicitly sought to challenge two binaries: that of empowered and disempowered citizens and that of de-politicisation and the properly political. In doing so I have demonstrated the potential for resistance and re-creation at the local scale even in the face of a highly centralised enactment of crisis politics. The everyday actions that shape the emergence of these forms of resistance frame the hopeful politics that can emerge from the space of rupture, and thus possibility, following disaster. This not only expands our scholarly understanding of how hope and crisis are practiced but also represents the diversity of actions, and their interconnections with wider struggles, responding to the destruction of disaster and, in this case, the violence of government led recovery.

In this manner, disaster recovery is framed as a time in which politics can be prefigured for both progressive and regressive aims. In the first instance, the role of pre-existing political ideologies, discourses and histories is integral for understanding how the politics of disaster recovery is shaped by both the past and the present. This underscores how the approach of the government extended and entrenched already-existing forms of neoliberal governance while also manifesting new forms of politicisation. The varying temporal nature of different forms of recovery politics is also intertwined with the diversity of community led approaches that aim and affect the post-disaster landscape and

populous in different ways. These forms of politics in many ways prefigure the potential for a different future through action taken in the present for both regressive and progressive aims.

These interconnected but diverging pathways for disaster recovery at the government and community level sit within a space of contestation and tension, and as this thesis shows, cannot be resolved through a singular theoretical explanation. Instead this research holds these complexities and contradictions as integral to the lived experience and manifestation of these forms of disaster politics. Through this tension it is possible to see both the foreclosure of democracy and forms of the political while also holding in sight the ever-present potential for rupture, dissent and resistance. The idea of rupture as a result of a crisis event or disaster and the value that a window of sight into the operations of society can foster is thus integral to the wider contribution of this research.

From the broader contribution of this thesis, this research has provided important insight into three dynamics of disaster recovery politics. These more specific contributions address the empirical contribution of a diverse and detailed case study and draw on a number of observations and findings detailed in the thesis. In the following sections I discuss these contributions in turn: the enactment of politics of crisis and exception, the diverse manifestations of hopeful community led recovery and the implications for democratic participation and practice following crisis.

8.2.1 Grounding a Politics of Exception

This research has provided a detailed exploration of how a politics of crisis can manifest at the scale of government following disaster. Building on a foundation of critical literature on crisis and governance, this thesis described in detail the processes and outcomes of disaster recovery when driven by these political approaches. Thus, this case study has provided insight into what a politics of exception means for ongoing political involvement and participation as well as the potentially benign appearance of these forms of democratic foreclosure.

The findings of this research demonstrated how facets of the government led recovery drew on the time of disaster as an opportunity to expand and entrench the prevailing business driven neoliberal ideology. The opportunistic engagement of disaster as a time of crisis is not a new idea and builds on a number of theoretical perspectives that ground the practices of capitalism, crisis and exception (Agamben, 2005; Arrighi, 1978; Ek, 2006; Pelling & Dill, 2009). My contribution here is to provide a grounded understanding of how these are actually enacted in different aspects of disaster recovery. In the first instance the centralisation of disaster response and recovery by the government was achieved through legislative tools to suspend aspects of the rule of law and transfer parliamentary

power to the executive wing. A clear finding of this research suggested, however, that rather than use the full force of this power, as allocated under a state of exception and emergency, the Minister for Earthquake Recovery and cabinet instead used the wider mandate of the political approach and the threat of specific powers to achieve their aims.

Further evidence of this is demonstrated in wide ranging use of legal and political arguments beyond the earthquake legislation. For example, the CER Act 2011 was not utilised in the process for purchasing large tracts of damaged residential land. Instead a 'third source of power' argument was wielded to avoid even the bare requirements for basic communication and consultation with affected communities outlined in the CER Act 2011. Such dynamics demonstrate two critical points. First, the centralisation of the state and the selective involvement of government in the market represents the messy reality of exceptional crisis politics, particularly with regards to the contradictions that emerge when interrogating the discourses, actions and outcomes of neoliberal governance. Second, a politics of exception may have, at times, appeared benign but was wielded in a manner that subtly but surely attempted to foreclose democratic and political possibilities.

The political approach to recovery also reinforced the position that 'there is no alternative' both with regards to neoliberal governance and towards the direction of the recovery. This was enacted not only to de-politicise and ward off conflict around the best approach to the recovery but also as a technique of governance that impacted many residents' lives. In particular, the threats and intimidation experienced by participants who contested government policies or practices in the recovery demonstrated the power of this approach. In the case of red zoned land this resulted in a number of residents who felt their choice to stay had been taken away from them, in part due to the communication of their options by the government and also due to the intimidation those that stayed on their land faced. The political approach of the government extended the ideology of actually-existing neoliberalism while also reinforcing a narrow scope for alternative forms of governing recovery.

By exploring this dynamic in more depth, this research also highlighted the sensitivity of those in positions of power to aspects of their ideological approach. The evidence presented in the thesis demonstrates a sustained focus on an agenda of economic growth and investment as the best pathway to facilitate recovery from the earthquakes. The government demonstrated particular sensitivities to the legitimate questioning and critique that then arose. This was demonstrated by the public reprimand of citizens, journalists and even in one case The Treasury. This research found

that many of these actions re-enforced the government's wide-ranging extension of power into a range of institutional aspects of the recovery and represented a desire to widen the centralised approach to maintain control of the recovery.

Ultimately, this contribution provides evidence for the manifestation of crisis governance as directed by the central government through a politics of exception and techniques of neoliberal governmentality. Of significance here is the manner in which the event of the earthquake, as a moment of rupture and disruption, was folded into the politics that existed before the disaster and the ongoing politicisation of recovery. Thus, the consequences of a politics of exception can extend beyond the immediate response to a disaster to shape and mould the long-term governance arrangements of the city and the democratic possibilities for the public. In Christchurch, this acted to not only obscure the pre-existing politics that led up to the event, such as the suspension of regional elections months before the earthquakes, but also to de-politicise the ongoing recovery as without alternative. The ongoing nature of exception enabled the command and control approach to roll into many other aspects of life in Christchurch and the recovery efforts. This is best exemplified by the almost immediate plans for substantial education reform, first noted in cabinet minutes weeks following the February 2011 earthquake and controversially announced to the public in the following year. Understood as a multi-scale and temporal process of governance, the state of exception was thus found, through this case study, to have a wide ranging and significant impact on the shape of recovery policies and the role of the public in the re-construction of the city.

8.2.2 Rendering Visible Everyday Hope

In line with the main aims of this research, one of the significant contributions made by this work has been to document and understand the multiple practices of community led recovery that have fostered hope and possibility in the face of disaster. These forms of recovery challenged the binary of empowered versus disempowered citizens while also facilitating the opportunity to participate and shape potentially radical social change in Christchurch. A significant contribution of this research has been to pay attention to the everyday, local and even mundane practices of community recovery to illuminate what is possible following disaster. By privileging this scale of action I have been able to demonstrate the potential and possibility that emerges from the same rupture used by the state to extend its command and control.

My findings thus demonstrate how hope is practiced in everyday life amid crisis. Independent of, and in response to the actions of government, community organisations and local neighbourhoods have founded the frontline of a radical movement towards fostering hope in the recovery of

Christchurch. The wide array of activities engaged at the local level challenged the hegemony of the command and control approach orchestrated by the government and countered the status quo by opening space for alternatives. This presents a powerful story of what is possible and the determination of people to affect change in their households, neighbourhoods and communities. This story contributes to the growing literature on the role of hopeful, locally based community driven forms of economy and social organisation. Specifically, the research findings add to our understanding of the potential for these actions to resist and re-create tactics of neoliberal governance. Through building on the work of Gibson-Graham (2006), Healey (2014) and Cameron and Hicks (2014), I engaged the broader framework of community economies alongside that of autonomous geographies presented by Pickerill and Chatterton (2006) and Chatterton and Pickerill (2010), to explore how and why communities and organisations engaged in post-disaster action.

A number of more specific contributions can also be made from this finding. First, the actions engaged by communities in Christchurch represented a spectrum of actions. From the community groups that initiated immediate response, to the varied roles of organisations in the ongoing recovery, a diversity of actors and actions worked to strengthen community based approaches to disaster recovery. Organisations like Greening the Rubble and Gap Filler have played, and continue to play, an enduring role. These organisations have been established as long term actors in the community led recovery of the city. However, many of their projects are transitional and feature in a transient and ever-changing landscape. Moving with the needs of landowners and government construction projects, the temporary installations to engage the public represent a creative approach to the uncertain nature of disaster recovery.

Other projects acted as fleeting interventions, such as the brief but lively performances undertaken by the arts organisation The Social. These interventions offered momentary commentary on the recovery and aimed to intrigue and engage the public with the processes of recovery and the politics of the reconstructing landscape. More long term projects established in suburbs responded to the needs of residents by supporting and extending social networks that had flourished in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes into the role of recovery. Projects such as community gardens and alternative community currencies were often extensions of pre-earthquake organisations that had responded to the new and different needs of the public following the disaster.

The diversity of actions across this spectrum was also mirrored in the varied areas of change that organisations targeted in the recovery. Even amongst groups with similar approaches there were

consciously aligned differences that allowed the organisations to fill different niches. For example, Greening the Rubble specifically focused on improving green space in the city through temporary and transitional projects that created urban gardens and installations. Gap Filler, while also creating transitional projects, took a more experimental approach to engaging space to fulfil the needs of the public more widely. While both groups also worked together, the differences and similarities were a source of strength in the overall approach of community led recovery.

The differences across time and space also applied to the level of engagement and involvement with formal and informal political processes. Organisations such as A Brave New City aimed to directly intervene in political engagement to create alternative options for collaborating and participating in the re-imagining of Christchurch. Other organisations as EVO:SPACE conducted participatory processes to gather information that could be used alongside local government processes in determining the eventual use of the residential red zone. Some groups openly decried party politics but maintained that they engaged in politics through facilitating encounters with urban space and the role of the public in the recovery.

Thus, community led recovery cannot be specified as one particular type of organisation or activity, but rather the strength of a diverse range of scalar and temporal actions that crafted a network of organisations, individuals and neighbourhoods responding to the ongoing and ever shifting needs of recovery. Through the empirically rich case study of the Christchurch earthquake recovery, this contribution adds complexity and depth to our understanding of how alternative futures may emerge in the present to resist hegemonic politics at different scales and temporalities. By building on the community economies and autonomous geographies literature, the picture of community led recovery that emerges through this thesis demonstrates the power in this diversity and the importance of attending to varied time and spatial scales in the work of resistance, and in our scholarship of resistance.

A further contribution from this research has been the importance of urban space in reconfiguring notions of property, ownership and the public. Community led recovery in the central city involved negotiating new relationships with landowners and businesses to carry out projects. Gap Filler's approach was to never pay for the use of land. Through their projects and those of others, the public could engage with the materiality of the commons through disaster recovery. Beyond this the projects drew in citizens and residents to take ownership of their own recovery, providing opportunities to not only actively participate in the commons spatially but also through the creation

of these spaces through working bees and workshops. The role of earthquakes in destabilising the status quo of land ownership and occupation was crucial for these activities.

The implications of these forms of community recovery also resulted in the blurring of boundaries between use and sharing, economy and society, participation and formal politics. Gardening and greening activities challenged the business as usual approach to food cultivation and distribution and reframed perspectives of nature in cities and the use of urban space. Organisations such as Agropolis, an inner city urban farm, were explicitly discussed within the context of resisting the legacies of colonisation and ongoing attempts to reaffirm the status quo through the business led city redevelopment blueprint. Art installations provided colour and creativity to the city while also provoking important questions about the role of democracy, bureaucracy and social values in the recovery of the city. One case of this involved large posters on a shipping container art gallery that captioned an image of a female construction worker as “rebuilding preconceptions”. Thus, the discursive impact of community led recovery acted to blur the boundaries between the action taken, for instance gardening, and the wider social, economic, cultural and political factors that intersect with these everyday actions.

By engaging in a diverse temporal and scalar approach, community actions thus presented a very different form of recovery than that presented by the government. This autonomous and self-directed recovery consisted of a politics of space, place and identity that centred on feeding communities, imagining the possibilities for the city and using the opportunity of disaster to create long lasting change. Groups played different roles in contributing to this recovery but were largely driven by a desire to see positive change emerge from the earthquakes to create a more socially just city and more connected and involved public. The wider implications of these hopeful actions resulted in a playful and experimental enactment of creativity in the process of recovery that paid attention to the relationship between the material form of reconstruction and how communities and the public imagined themselves and their possibilities in the present moment.

Furthermore, these hopeful engagements in a politics of possibility render visible the potential for alternative ways of relating to each other, society and the economy beyond the moment of disaster. This research supports the growing literature on small scale and practical forms of change that prefigure an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. By fostering a hope for alternatives through a creative and experimental approach alongside material projects, the autonomous community led recovery forged new possibilities for the city of Christchurch that feed into a broader hope for

alternatives to capitalism on a larger scale. Thus, community led action is positioned as both resistance to the regressive governance of the state in response to disaster but also as part of a wider movement towards creating long lasting and equitable social change.

8.2.3 Ruptures in the Foreclosure of Democracy and Participation

In the final contribution of this thesis, the research presented here explored how community and government approaches shaped an intertwined political context of recovery. Through the numerous examples of neoliberal crisis governance a number of tactics emerged to selectively de-politicise aspects of the recovery. This included the exclusion of dissenting voices, the use of fear to encourage techno-managerial solutions and the spectre of further crisis. However, while these forms of de-politicisation have been well documented in the growing literature on post-politics, this research challenged the notion that such dynamics fully foreclose or narrow the realm of proper politics. The actions of the government demonstrated a clear pattern of attempted de-politicisation through the use of shallow and flawed consultation processes in a number of cases. This dynamic of engaging some aspects of participation while foreclosing others was framed within the context of neoliberal governance and the move towards de-politicisation. This slow and subtle form of ever encroaching neoliberal authoritarianism was re-enforced through the process of earthquake recovery but was intimately entangled with the history and politics of Aotearoa New Zealand stretching back through decades of neoliberal reforms.

Thus, many attempts at consultation were perceived by participants as shallow and disingenuous. This technique was interconnected with a politics of exception and the extension of crisis governance into long term recovery. These findings reinforce what we know about many of the forms of consultation and engagement that are increasingly practiced at different levels of neoliberal governance (Darling, 2014; Deas, 2013; Legacy, 2016; Swyngedouw, 2009). Adding to this literature, this thesis provides further empirical evidence that details the specific use of these techniques alongside a politics of exception. The findings also indicate that many communities were aware of and acknowledged the thin space of consultation that was available to them through formal channels. Some organisations attempted to carve space for themselves in these processes such as advocacy and social service organisations while other groups worked outside of these formal channels. Other organisations relied on funding from local and central government but were critical of the wider processes of governance and recovery. What this represented was the way the public and organisations could work within, outside and alongside formal avenues of government participation.

Many organisations worked outside of these forms of participation to cleave open the cracks in the attempted foreclosure of democratic engagement. One of the main contributions from these findings is the challenge to all-encompassing perspectives of post-politics. Many scholars have suggested that the increasing encroachment of de-politicisation and post-politics has reduced the political to shallow forms of consensus and public engagement to the point where genuine or 'proper' politics is extremely rare (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Swyngedouw, 2007, 2010; Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014). This research, building from the perspective of Larner (2014) contests this by illustrating the diverse practices that emerge to challenge the foreclosure of democracy. These creative practices of participation and democracy acted to resist the encroachment of further neoliberal capitalist 'solutions' the challenges of disaster recovery. The fractures that emerge in the social and political sphere following a crisis thus have the potential to not only extend regressive forms of politics but also to facilitate new engagements with the political and to foster resistance to threats to democracy and participation.

The findings of this research document how local and everyday actions can provide the basis for reworking and reimagining a participatory democratic politics despite tactics of de-politicisation. The hope for this sort of democratic and participatory disaster recovery has been sown in the actions of the organisations that have consciously intervened in the physical and political landscape to disrupt, contest and organise alternative pathways to recovery. Hope for a different form of society has grown out of the organisations that have created and experimented with new ways of growing food, organising communities and working with businesses. Significantly, hope rendered visible the potential for a different future in the here and now, something that is frequently foreclosed in the face of discourses of 'there is no alternative'. These forms of hope are driven and influenced by values and norms as indicated in Chapter 6.3, it is important when focusing research on rendering these forms of hope visible that attention is also paid to unpacking and understanding how these values drive different expressions and enactments of change. In this case, by re-politicising the post-disaster landscape both directly and indirectly, community led action has driven the emergence of a different, experimental and potentially radical form of recovery that has, in some cases, been driven by values of communal ownership, togetherness and an attention to participatory processes. Thus, even faced with the significant challenges arising from disaster, many communities in Christchurch would not accept the de-politicisation of recovery and acted to intervene in the post-disaster landscape politically and materially.

8.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

As with all research, this thesis has limitations and strengths. These aspects of the research process allow for future projects to build on and strengthen our understanding of how events like disasters hold the potential for different forms of change. One of the limitations of this thesis has been the challenges around presenting the data collected in interviews in a situated context. Because of the rigorous ethical standards for a post disaster case study, combined with the small size of Christchurch and the close-knit nature of these community organisations, I was unable to impart many details regarding the organisation that respondents represented in their interviews or their location. These are important details for understanding the data, but in this case, I have compromised by using secondary sources that are publicly attributed to members of organisations alongside the anonymous data in order to provide a small amount of context for the reader.

A further limitation of this research has been the breadth of the topic. The aim of this doctorate was to investigate the connections between crisis, rupture and politics at the community level. This necessarily involved analysing the role of government as a crucial actor in the recovery process. I acknowledge this has contributed to a binary between government and community which would be a fruitful avenue for further investigation. While the wide scope of the research has acted to highlight these connections, the lack of specificity and detail can be seen as a weakness of this approach. However, I believe this wide scope is also a strength when framed within the context of the many research projects undertaken in Christchurch. There are numerous research projects that have taken a refined approach to more specific aspects of recovery, the strength of this thesis lies in the overarching focus on connections between different organisations and scales.

The findings of this research also raise questions as to how academics and community organisations can evaluate change at the local level as a result of community led recovery. While I have identified the changes occurring in the material landscape and the evidence that is indicative of a shift in norms and values, this is an exciting area of further research that has been beyond the scope of this project. I hope that the research as it is presented here will contribute to a foundation for understanding these diverse forms of politics following disasters and in times of 'normality'. Similarly, this research provides one interpretation of the actions taken by government and community. The aim of this approach has been to provide a window of insight into the possibilities and constraints of the post disaster context to privilege the actions of the everyday. This renders visible these forms of recovery where they have been previously less visible.

8.4 FUTURE AVENUES OF RESEARCH

Empirically, this thesis has provided rich case study evidence on one of the less understood area of disaster studies. Through this case study, the political and social processes of disaster recovery are exemplified as complex multi-scale dynamics situated within a context specific neoliberal capitalist economy and society. From this perspective, disaster recovery can be understood through the multiple and co-existing forms of politicisation that drive the values, norms and practices that are privileged and contested. Beyond this, several further questions and avenues for research have emerged. Given the potential for this intense politicisation combined with the exclusion of the public, it is of concern that the potential for participation can be so significantly altered and constrained by the government in power at any given time. This thesis has demonstrated the potential for exclusion and disenfranchisement that can result when recovery approaches reduce the opportunities for public engagement, participation and contestation. While there is always a need for quick decisions in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to save lives and prioritise resources, the long-term processes of recovery need to be available to the wider community if there is to be a democratic and participatory response to disaster.

Combined with a business as usual approach to community consultation, these processes of disaster recovery may ignore both issues of heightened politicisation and contestation and the potential for increased barriers to genuine participation. The question of how to carry out more genuine and participatory forms of disaster recovery through government channels is undoubtedly an important subject for future research. Research in this area would be extremely valuable to further understand how to build capacity and support for plans that facilitate disaster recovery that serves the communities affected as well as the economy and the government.

Furthermore, this research has shown the significant potential for community led recovery in emergency management beyond the already recognised capacity of immediate response. The actions of communities in Christchurch were considered by many participants as the most successful aspects of the wider recovery. These avenues for participation, many focussed at the local level, provided a context for people to contribute to the recovery as well as providing important projects that brought people back into the central city, providing support to local businesses and facilitating social networks. Examples of community led recovery from Christchurch thus demonstrate potential lessons for how other communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and globally could be more successfully and genuinely involved in disaster recovery. Further research is needed to explore how

these examples could provide insight or templates into how community led forms of recovery in different political and social contexts could occur as well as in the face of different forms of disaster.

Beyond the implications for disaster scholarship, this research has also raised important questions for the study of alternative politics. The role of community led organisations in shaping hopeful and constructive alternatives to the capitalist status quo warrants further investigation regarding the long term and ongoing potential of these activities and the role of the private sector in supporting or co-opting these initiatives. As many proponents of post-politics warn, groups engaging in potentially radical activities are often co-opted to support the status quo (Wilson & Swyngedouw, 2014). There were some emerging concerns from participants regarding the use of their organisations and projects by the government and others to support different agendas. Continuing thorough empirical investigations of radical political interventions at the everyday and local scale would be extremely useful for positioning the potential of these community led actions to disrupt de-politicisation and the threat of co-option to these activities. Similarly, there is a need to understand how these forms of community action can be evaluated in the context of radical political interventions. It is important that qualitative research investigating how values and norms can shift with community led action is critically evaluated to contextualise how change is occurring and the impact of this change on wider societal and political systems. This is highly interconnected with the challenges around the post-political turn. As community activism is increasingly seen as co-opted it is integral to distinguish how these forms of change can be evaluated.

Similarly, the transitional nature of many of these activities may prove an important avenue of inquiry to understand the role of experimentation and temporary projects in future forms of radical politics. A theme throughout the contributions of the findings of this research has been the diverse manifestation of temporal and spatial approaches to community recovery activities. In this case the diversity of approaches has strengthened the wider response of communities to the disaster. The role of different spatial and temporal dimensions in shaping everyday autonomous forms of activism beyond the disaster context would add depth to our understanding of how alternatives to capitalism can and are emerging in the face of neoliberal governance.

Finally, this research has drawn on a small but growing methodology for using emotional geographies in disaster contexts (Bennett, 2009; Bondi, 2005; Lund, 2010; Whittle et al., 2011). In this research, emotional geographies shaped the methodology that took care to negotiate the post-disaster terrain in a compassionate and ethical manner for participant and researcher. Further

research into the role of emotions and care in the politics of disaster recovery at community and government level would be a fruitful avenue for diversifying the scholarship on disaster recovery and strengthening holistic perspectives on the role of disasters in shaping social and political change. Of interest for further inquiry is the manner in which emotions can be utilised to de/politicise or de/legitimate certain issues over others and the dynamics of power and privilege that drive these reactions. This topic of research would also contribute to the wider drive of critical geographers to comprehend emotional geographies and an ethics of care in challenging research contexts.

EPILOGUE

As I conclude this research project, over six years after the first quake that changed so many of our lives, Aotearoa New Zealand faces yet another recovery from a devastating earthquake. In the early hours of the 14th of November 2016 ten fault lines ruptured simultaneously resulting in a 7.8 magnitude earthquake that took two lives and was felt from Invercargill at the bottom of the South Island to Auckland at the top of the North Island. With morning came an assessment of the destruction of parts of State Highway One, multiple damaged buildings in the capital city and the realisation that the foreshore had in some places lifted by 2-5 meters.

Politicians in helicopters flew over giant ruptures in the ground, local Marae opened their doors and fed hundreds of people, and donations poured in from around the country. Less than 48 hours after the earthquake serious questions were being raised: why is the organisation monitoring tsunami gauges not funded for 24-hour operation? Why were so many buildings damaged in Wellington despite the distance from the epicentre? Should the central city have been closed to the public for days to assess the safety of buildings?

Already the politics of disaster has risen to the forefront. The questions asked, the values prioritised and the allocation of resources are all political and no less so than after a disaster. Through this research journey, since our rude awakening on the morning of September 4th 2010, I have aimed to explore these questions more fully, to demonstrate how politics and politicisation mediate and shape the post-disaster environment at different scales.

For this thesis, I set out to understand one small part of this wider equation - how communities participated in and shaped their own diverse forms of long-term recovery to influence political and social change. What has emerged from this aim is a complex picture of the multi-scalar politics of disaster recovery, as presented through the stories of those involved in both community and government led recovery.

Through this research, I have stressed the importance of acknowledging the political nature of disasters and understanding the multiple manifestations of these politics as they occur through discourses and practices of recovery. It is essential to understand the discursive and ideological drivers that constrain or enable a politics of crisis or hope. The dynamics of politicisation that are explored through this thesis represent a context dependent manifestation of local histories, political strategies and discourses of neoliberal capitalism.

While it is impossible to prescribe what form the politicisation of disaster recovery will take in another event in New Zealand, let alone another country, the findings of this research hold important lessons and insight into the dynamics of governance through crisis and the role of communities in these processes.

Globally, the rise of conservatism and increasingly divisive politics across a number of nations adds urgency to the need to understand how crisis, be it real or perceived, is manipulated, articulated and acted upon. It is particularly important to comprehend and act against any move towards more authoritarian styles of governance and government. In the context of an ever-warming planet and the associated increase in severity and frequency of climatic events, the rise of these forms of governance point towards a concerning trajectory of future disaster politics. With the exacerbation of vulnerabilities and inequalities that characterise the uneven effects of disaster, there is also a need to move beyond merely understanding these dynamics towards creating and experimenting with alternative practices and forms of life after disaster, and ultimately, life after capitalism.

In Aotearoa, we will continue to face geological hazards as well as the shifting terrain of climate hazards. The recent earthquake sequence in November 2016 has brought about an even wider awareness that our country has entered a phase of heightened geological activity. Scientists now believe a magnitude 7.8 earthquake in Fiordland in 2009 represents the end of a relatively quiet period in New Zealand's geological history.

Needless to say, if one thing is certain in the Shaky Isles, it is that we will experience more geological hazards in the future. It is more important than ever to understand and enact recovery politics that champion socially and environmentally just practices, build capacity and strength in our communities and resist the creeping foreclosure of democratic principles and processes in New Zealand politics. It is indeed necessary to look at how we can plan for and enact disaster recovery in a manner that does not require communities and individuals to have to recover from recovery itself.

This necessarily requires moving beyond a politics of crisis in response to routine and exceptional events. In these scenarios, when the slide into despair and fear are all too familiar, the importance of hope rises the fore. This research and the incredible stories of hope and strength from Christchurch communities demonstrates the potential and possibility for people to come together, to build something new, to experiment, and in the face of failure and challenge, to try again. This builds hope that underpins resistance, contestation and creativity.

While this action and solidarity has emerged from the shared experience of disaster and for many, trauma, these are by no means conditions to be welcomed. Yet the power that lies in our response to these unwelcome situations is the practices that embed the potential and possibility of a better future into the present day. Hope arises through the mundane, the regular and the (un)exceptional acts that occur in neighbourhoods, across backyard fences and at the local community centre. The stories of this research represent this potential and the hope that the lure of crisis politics will be resisted, from which a more caring and just future will emerge.



Sewn hearts adorn a fence surrounding rubble in the suburb of Ōhinehou, Lyttelton. Source: Zack Dorner, 2012.

APPENDICES

ETHICS APPROVAL



Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
Research and Innovation office
NH&MRC Code: EC00237

Notice of Approval

Date: **18 March 2015**

Project number: **19223**

Project title: ***The Post Disaster City: Urban democracy, participation and social change in community led earthquake recovery***

Risk classification: **More than low risk**

Chief investigator: **A/Prof Wendy Steele**

Approved: **From: 18 March 2015 To: 7 August 2016**

The above application has been approved by the RMIT University HREC as it meets the requirements of the *National statement on ethical conduct in human research* (NH&MRC, 2007).

Terms of approval:

- 1. Responsibilities of investigator**
It is the responsibility of the above investigator to ensure that all other investigators and staff on a project are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure that the project is conducted as approved by HREC. Approval is valid only whilst investigator holds a position at RMIT University.
- 2. Amendments**
Approval must be sought from HREC to amend any aspect of a project. To apply for an amendment use the request for amendment form, which is available on the HREC website and submitted to the HREC secretary. Amendments must not be implemented without first gaining approval from HREC.
- 3. Adverse events**
You should notify HREC immediately (within 24 hours) of any unexpected, unanticipated or unforeseen adverse events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
- 4. Annual reports**
Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an annual report. Annual reports must be submitted by the anniversary of approval (18 March) of the project for each full year of the project. If the project is of less than 12 months duration then a final report only is required.
- 5. Final report**
A final report must be provided within six months of the end of the project. HREC must be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
- 6. Monitoring**
Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by HREC at any time.
- 7. Retention and storage of data**
The investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.
- 8. Special conditions of approval**
Nil.

In any future correspondence please quote the project number and project title above.



cc: Dr Peter Burke (Ethics Officer/HREC secretary), Raven Marie Cretney (student researcher).

Sent: Thursday, 7 August 2014 2:45 PM
To: Julie Stephens
Cc: Raven Cretney; Meagan Tyler
Subject: Quest Ethics Notification - Application Process Finalised - Application Approved

Dear ASPR JULIE STEPHENS,

Your ethics application has been formally reviewed and finalised.

» Application ID: HRE14-145
» Chief Investigator: ASPR JULIE STEPHENS » Other Investigators: MS Raven Cretney, DR MEAGAN TYLER »
Application Title: The Post Disaster City: Resilience, Social Change and Earthquake Recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand.
» Form Version: 13-07

The application has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted for two (2) years from the approval date; 07/08/2014.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the Office for Research website at: <http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php>.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment. It should also be noted that it is the Chief Investigators' responsibility to ensure the research project is conducted in line with the recommendations outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).'

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee
Phone: 9919 4781 or 9919 4461
Email: researchethics@vu.edu.au

New Zealand Ethics Committee

1 August 2014

Raven Cretney
Victoria University
PO Box 14428
Melbourne
Victoria 8001
AUSTRALIA

New Zealand Ethics Committee application 2014#13

Dear Raven Cretney

Thank you for submitting your application **The Post Disaster City: Resilience, Social Change and Earthquake Recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand.**

The committee has reviewed and approved your application. We wish you all the best for the project.

In the future if any ethical issues do arise in your research we urge you to return to the committee and seek our advice.

Yours Sincerely

Martin Tolich

Convenor

<http://www.nzethics.com/>
nzethicscommittee@xtra.co.nz
48 Glendevon Place, Dunedin 9013
A registered Charity #CC50073

INTERVIEW INFORMATION SHEET

INFORMATION SHEET for participants involved in the research project “The Post Disaster City: Resilience, social change and earthquake recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand.

Semi-structured face to face interview

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “The Post Disaster City: Resilience, social change and earthquake recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand” through engaging in a face to face interview.

This project is being conducted by student researcher Raven Cretney as part of PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Dr Meagan Tyler and Associate Professor Julie Stephens from the College of Arts.

Project explanation

This research project focuses on the long-term response of community and government to the 2010/11 Christchurch earthquakes. This project seeks to work with community groups involved in the recovery from the earthquakes to better understand the role of local level initiatives in successful and democratic disaster recovery.

To analyse this in the context of the Christchurch rebuild I will be looking at how communities have been affected by the earthquakes and the subsequent interactions with government officials and policies regarding the rebuild of residential areas and the inner city. This project will also explore what Christchurch residents think of resilience and how useful the concept is at a local level for community recovery.

I hope to contribute to our growing understanding of the Christchurch earthquakes and the rebuild by providing insight into the importance of community based recovery for contributing to resilient post disaster recovery as well as providing insight into how resilience is understood of at the local level.

What will I be asked to do?

Participating is entirely voluntary. If you agree, you will be asked to participate in a semi structured interview lasting between 30-60 minutes. This will take place at a mutually agreed time and place. You will be asked for permission to record the interview and for you consent to participate in the project. You do not have to answer any question you do not wish to.

What will I gain from participating?

As a participant you will be kept informed and up to date with the progress of the research through an email newsletter. You will also be invited to presentations and seminars on post disaster recovery when presented by the researcher.

How will the information I give be used?

Information received through the interviews will be kept confidential and will be only used for the purposes of findings in the final doctoral thesis and related publications. Participant identity will be hidden through the use of pseudonyms which will be attributed to a broad category of involvement in the recovery of the city. You will be able to choose your pseudonym. Information that may identify you as an individual will be withheld.

For example an individual may be able to be identified as a member of the community through the information they give. Identifying information within interview transcripts will be removed from published material to maintain anonymity in this case.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There is a small risk that discussing the circumstances surrounding the earthquakes and the recovery from the events will prompt upsetting memories and feelings of grief. The researcher will be prepared with resources to assist you in this case.

How will this project be conducted?

In the semi structured interview you will be asked questions regarding your involvement in post-earthquake recovery activities and plans. You will also be asked your opinion on topical political and social issues in Christchurch both in the past and at the time of the interview. You do not need to discuss anything upsetting about the earthquakes or any details of events that may prompt distress.

For example, you will be asked questions such as “How would you describe the earthquake recovery in your local area?” However questions are not rigid and we are interested in a wide range of opinions and experiences.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Interviews will be undertaken at a venue at the agreement of both researcher and participant such as a public library or café. You will receive a copy of your transcript and have the opportunity to comment on or clarify any points made by you.

All data will be kept securely for five years following the end of the project. You can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. You can also request your interview data be removed from the study up until 1st March 2015.

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM for participants involved in the research project “The Post Disaster City: Resilience, social change and earthquake recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand.

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

You are invited to participate in a project investigating the role of local and government level approaches to post disaster recovery in Christchurch.

This research project focuses on the long-term response of community and government to the 2010/11 Christchurch earthquakes. This project seeks to work with community groups involved in the recovery from the earthquakes to better understand the role of local level initiatives in successful and democratic disaster recovery.

To analyse this in the context of the Christchurch rebuild I will be looking at how communities have been affected by the earthquakes and the subsequent interactions with government officials and policies regarding the rebuild of residential areas and the inner city. This project will also explore what Christchurch residents think of resilience and how useful the concept is at a local level for community recovery.

I hope to contribute to our growing understanding of the Christchurch earthquakes and the rebuild by providing insight into the importance of community based recovery for contributing to resilient post disaster recovery as well as providing insight into how resilience is understood of at the local level.

In the semi structured interview you will be asked questions regarding your involvement in post-earthquake recovery activities and plans.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Interviews will be undertaken at a venue at the agreement of both researcher and participant such as a public library or café. You will receive a copy of your transcript and have the opportunity to comment on or clarify any points made by you.

All data will be kept securely for five years following the end of the project. You can withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. You can also request your interview data be removed from the study up until 1st March 2015.

This research has ethics approval from both the New Zealand Ethics Committee and the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee.

CERTIFICATION BY SUBJECT

Date: _____

I, _____ (name)

of

_____ (address)

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study:

“The Post Disaster City: Resilience, Social Change and Earthquake Recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand” being conducted at Victoria University by: Dr Meagan Tyler, College of Arts.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by:

Raven Cretney

and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Semi Structured face to face interview

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept anonymous.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher

SAMPLE FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Opening questions:

- 1) Can you tell me a little about your background and how you became involved in [organization]?
- 2) How did [organization] begin?
- 3) Can you tell me about what [organization] is working on now?

Recovery:

- 4) What has motivated you to become involved in the earthquake recovery?
- 5) How has the National government worked with your community group?
- 6) How was the Local government worked with your community group?
- 7) How have you or your organization **participated in formal processes** around the rebuild?
- 8) What other **informal activities** have you or your organization been involved in?
- 9) How would you describe your **relationship with decision makers** with regards to the rebuild?
- 10) Have you felt that you as an individual or organization has been **excluded** from the official recovery and planning processes?
- 11) How well has **collaboration** between the two levels of government and the community worked so far?
- 12) How would you ideally work with the government?

- 13) How do you feel the **national government** has *facilitated recovery* in general to the earthquakes? If so, how?
- 14) How do you feel the **local government** has *facilitated recovery* in general to the earthquakes? If so, what?
- 15) How would you describe the treatment of the rebuild of the **central city** as opposed to **suburbs** and other areas?
- 16) In an ideal world how would you like to see the earthquake recovery be carried out and who would be involved?

- 17) Do you see the earthquake recovery as a **political process**? If so, how?
- 18) Have you noticed a change in how people in your community engage with politics and decision making?

Resilience:

- 1) Have you heard of resilience? In what context?
- 2) Do you think the idea is useful in Christchurch as part of the recovery?

ONLINE E-INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible - examples and stories are encouraged. Feel free to use names of individuals, however we will change these to protect to privacy of those in the community

If you would like to be added to the email mailing list for updates on this research, including findings reports please list your email address below

The following questions involve basic demographic data that we are collecting to understand the groups of people responding to the e-interview.

Age Range:

- 18-30
- 30-40
- 40-50
- 50-60
- 60+

Gender:

Suburb of Residence:

Ethnicity:

Please choose a pseudonym. If you do not wish to do this one will be randomly allocated to your responses.

Please tell us about your current involvement in your community:

-Page Break -

The following questions address the recovery of Christchurch as a result of the on-going earthquakes:

How would you describe how the earthquake recovery is going in your local area?

-Page Break -

Who do you think should be involved in the earthquake recovery and how?

How well do you think the national government has *involved community groups* and organizations in the recovery?

How well do you think the local government has *involved community groups* and organisations in the recovery?

How do you think the recovery of the Central City is being treated? How is this in comparison to the recovery of suburbs and the city as a whole?

-Page Break –

How have you or your organization participated in formal processes (submissions, community engagement forums etc) around the rebuild? If so, what were these?

How have you or your organization informal activities (community organisations, protests etc) around the rebuild? If so, what were these?

How did you feel about how your involvement was treated within the rebuild process? Have you felt excluded or included in these processes?

-Page Break –

The following questions address the idea of resilience and how this is being used in Christchurch

Have you heard of resilience? What does the idea mean to you?

Do you think the idea is useful in Christchurch as part of the recovery? If so, how?

-Page Break –

Thank you for your time and effort in contributing to this research project. We hope this research will support the ongoing recovery of Christchurch and other communities affected by disaster.

If any of the topics covered in this e-interview have prompted upset or anxiety and you would like to talk to someone, you can contact the following services:

Lifeline - 0800 543 354

The Low Down: You can free text 5626 (emails and text messages will be responded to between 12 noon and 12 midnight).

AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE CHRISTCHURCH RECOVERY

Key Organisations Involved in the Christchurch Earthquake Recovery		
<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Notable Departments and Subsidiaries</i>	<i>Role in the Recovery</i>
Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)	-Residential Red Zone Programme -Community Resilience Team -Community Forum -Community in Mind (Psycho-social recovery) -Future Christchurch (in conjunction with the CCC)	Public Authority managed by the Government to oversee the recovery across wider Canterbury
	Central City Development Unit (CCDU)	Development unit created to oversee and manage the rebuild of the central city, particular investments
Christchurch City Council (CCC)	-Urban Planning Team -Building Consents -Community Resilience (including a Chief Resilience Officer)	Manages infrastructure, annual plans, and the long term urban plan for the city (Greater Christchurch Urban Development Strategy. The CCC is also partly responsible for a number of rebuild projects laid out through the cost sharing agreement with the Central Government
Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team	Partnered with a number of organisations including CERA, CCC and the NZ Transport Agency	Responsible for rebuilding horizontal infrastructure
Ngāi Tahu Incorporated	Iwi Māori Recovery Programme (as described in the CERA Recovery Plan)	Ngāi Tahu leads the Iwi Māori Recovery Programme. This involves identifying, analysing

		and implementing recovery for Māori specific issues in the rebuild. This has included housing and redevelopment of Māori land, the provision of cultural facilities and the restoration of the environment. Their role also covers ensuring obligations are met under the Treaty of Waitangi.
Fletcher Construction	Fletcher EQR	Fletcher EQR manages most of the residential repairs that fall under the Earthquake Commission repair cap. Fletcher Construction is also a large player in the reconstruction of businesses and other buildings, having been awarded a large contract to build a residential development in the CBD East Frame

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