

COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY:

**An examination of the purpose and intent and structure
of residents' groups in New Zealand**

by

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A thesis
submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Master of Management Studies

**Victoria University of Wellington
2012**

ABSTRACT

Residents' groups have been in existence in New Zealand for almost 150 years yet very little is known about them. The collection of residents', ratepayers' and progressive associations, community councils, neighbourhood committees and the like make up a part of the community governance sector that numbers over a thousand-strong. These groups are featured prominently in our news media, are active in local government affairs and expend many thousands of volunteer hours every year in their work in communities... but what exactly is that work?

From the literature we see these groups can be a source of local community knowledge (Kass *et al.*, 2009), a platform for political activity (Deegan, 2002), critical of government (Fullerton, 2005) or help maintain government transparency and accountability (McClymont and O'Hare, 2008). They are sometimes part of the establishment too (Wai, 2008) and are often heard promoting the interests of local people (Slater, 2004). Residents' groups can be set up to represent the interests of a specific demographic group (Seng, 2007) or focus on protecting or promoting a sense of place (Kushner and Siegel, 2003) or physical environment (Savova, 2009). Some groups undertake charitable activities (Turkstra, 2008) or even act in a negative manner that can impact on the community (Horton, 1996).

This research examines 582 New Zealand organisations to derive a set of purposes that residents' groups perform and ascertains how their purposes differ between geo-social and political locality and over three distinct eras of community development. The thesis also examines the relationship between residents' groups and councillors, council officers, district health board members and civil defence and seeks to uncover if the level of engagement (if any) has an affect on their overall *raison d'être*.

The research concludes with a typology of New Zealand residents' groups along with the key purposes of each type.

PREFACE

The Motivation Behind this Research

I first became involved with residents' groups at the age of 19 when I was elected president of Riversdale Promotions in Blenheim. I had no idea at the time what I was supposed to be doing aside from keeping a chair warm but it started a lifetime fascination with the concept of community and community governance.

This thesis is an attempt to make sense of a sector that has been a mainstay of New Zealand society for almost 150 years. I figured that if someone such as I - who has over 20 years involvement in community governance - can't easily define what residents' groups do then it must be incredibly challenging for those people who have to deal with them as part of their work (council officers, government officials, developers) or who live in their shadow.

I now head up a nationwide project aimed at helping these organisations. The Draco Foundation came out of a desire by the New Zealand Resilience Trust to create a network of resilient communities across the country. One of the key projects of the Draco Foundation is the National Residents' Associations Database (NRAD). The purpose of NRAD is to quantify the residents' association sector by identifying all the groups in the country, then use that knowledge to create a network of trust and self-identity therefore heightening social capital and opening up opportunities to develop communities using a resilience model.

To achieve its overall goal the Draco Foundation needs to help residents' associations become... what? I cannot say "better", because that suggests they are not very good. I can't say "stronger" because it intimates they are weak. I can't say "more professional" as this might give the false impression of a sector consisting of rabble. My problem and one faced by everyone who works within the sector is that it is made up of a diverse collection of discrete organisations. It seems impossible to accurately sum up what a residents' group is or does.

It is my solemnly held belief that these groups are as much a mainstay of our Kiwi society as they are in other parts of the world. The mere fact that residents' groups have been around for the past 148 years must indicate some level of need: even the most autopoietic of organisations would surely die out if there was nobody there to sustain it.

The Construct of Residents' Groups

I've chosen to temporarily assign the construct '*residents' group*' as a place-marker for what is to me a largely undefined phenomenon. Throughout this thesis I will use that term to signify the amorphous category being studied. If I am referring to a specific organisation then I will use the name of the organisation or the term others have used to refer to it. In the following chapter there are many names used for residents' groups with very little consistency applied. For example, the term *progressive association* is used internationally to describe groups with national reach who represent a repressed or developing demographic, yet in this country can be organisations with a similar structure or purpose to those who term themselves *residents' associations*. However, there are *residents' associations* in New Zealand who are entities set up as bodies corporate by property developers and who serve a legal function (in some cases required by local authorities). We also have *community councils* with similar roles to *residents' associations*, not to be confused with *safer community councils*, which perform a completely different function. It is fair to conclude that – just as you can't judge a book by its cover – you cannot judge a residents' group solely by what it is called.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to the academic and administrative staff at Victoria University of Wellington for their assistance, inspiration and guidance. I would especially like to recognise the support of my supervisor, Dr. Urs Daellenbach, for his persistence and good advice, and the examiners who have had to digest my *magnum opus*.

This research wouldn't have been possible without the goodwill of the committee members of residents' groups across the country. Thank you for your participation in this research and for your ongoing commitment to making our communities better places.

Recognition is also due to my colleagues in the Draco Foundation (NZ) Charitable Trust: Jim Candiliotis, Mike MacLeod, and Sir Kerry Burke; my good friend Fiona Bain; Tom Law and Bernie Harris from the Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents' Associations, and; the team from the Newlands Paparangi Progressive Association, and; Bruce and Dawn Patterson of the Grenada Village Community Association.

Most especially I wish to acknowledge the strength and belief of my fiancée, Erin Ebborn, who provided an endless abundance of positivity and enthusiasm to fuel me across the finish line. I am a very lucky man to have had such amazing support.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Is There Room for Residents' Groups in the Community Governance Sector?

In their 1994 study Hasson & Ley classify “ratepayers’ associations” as a type of “neighbourhood organisation” that is “engaged in self-management and the preservation of heritage”. They point out that these organisations are not business, nor government, but rather something borne of the desire of the citizenry to play a part in improving their lot. Despite this, the authors admit there is no one “archetypal organisation” that serves as a template for every type of this group (1994, pp.4-7). While this is borne out by an examination of the literature there is no doubt that residents’ groups feature prominently in New Zealand society.

I most associate residents’ groups with communities of place: suburbs, villages and the like. Some rabble-rouse when property developers move in, some slavishly make submissions to local government, some keep an eye on their community or help distribute information to residents. The functions they undertake appear closely linked to both local government and community, lending credibility – in my mind – to the concept of residents’ groups being part of a wider ‘community governance’ sector.

Community governance is, literally, “governance exercised by communities themselves, such as community self-management or citizen governance” (Reid, 2010. p.81). According to Reid it differs from local governance (e.g. that traditionally undertaken by local authorities) in that the approach from the State is more about collaboration with agencies to achieve the wellbeing of residents rather than just being a purveyor of the traditional roads, rates and rubbish (*ibid*, p.87).

This thesis is about making sense of residents’ groups in terms of their purpose, but in doing so also touches on the place of residents’ groups in broader society. I am a proponent of the literal, community-centric meaning of community governance and argue it is not only a responsibility or activity of the State but also a collaborative form of civil society – the ‘yin’ to local government’s ‘yang’ – undertaken by the people, for the people. If this approach is adopted then it could be further argued that residents’ groups are major actors in the community governance sector and have been for almost 150 years.

Implications for the Sector

My experience of residents' groups in this country is that they are independent, individual and unconnected. Often they are born in response to an immediate need yet once that need is satisfied they remain. These organisations look inward at what is happening to their communities rather than to the wider political or economic environment. I can almost guarantee that whenever I speak with a committee member of a residents' group I will hear one of two frustrations emerge: that they are overworked, and that New Zealanders are apathetic. Yet despite the hard work and frustration of the volunteers involved in them, we have over a thousand of these organisations in this country and they represent an unbroken record of service stretching back almost one and a half centuries.

In my experience many organs of the State are nervous about working with residents' groups, and why wouldn't they be? These groups are alien to many of New Zealanders. So little is known about them and yet they still manage to consistently get themselves mentioned in the news media. They exist – this is known – but why they exist and what purpose or intent they are pursuing is a mystery to many. This research will aid the sector by helping people to better understand what a residents' group is and what it does. It will aid the individuals who work on committees of residents' groups to understand that they are part of a wider community that may share some common aims and objectives. It will aid central and local government officials to better grasp the *raison d'être* of these mysterious organisations. And – hopefully – it will encourage others to take an academic interest in the soul of New Zealand's community governance sector.

The New Zealand Situation

What does it mean when one refers to a “residents' group” in this country? What exactly is their purpose? Does it matter if they are in the heartland of New Zealand or in the middle of our largest city? Do they do different things in different parts of the country? Is there any connection between their objectives and the amount of interaction they have with local government agencies? Do older and newer organisations share similar purposes?

Throughout the post-colonial history of New Zealand there has been an undercurrent of radicalism and activism in our psyche. We cheer the underdog and boo the authoritarian

Goliath. Stanley Graham – a notorious murderer with severe mental health issues – was actually lauded by the public of New Zealand during World War II as he evaded capture by the Police (Carson, 2010). Hundreds of thousands of Kiwis took to the streets to protest the Springbok Tour in the 1980s ... or protest against the protests. We both celebrate our heroes and cringe when we underperform on the world stage (the sports of netball and cricket spring to mind) to the point where the nation literally grieves when we lose a big rugby match. This neurotic anti-authoritarian behaviour lies deep beneath placid waters. Author Gordon McLauchlan once described New Zealanders as having “no moral or social philosophy and no dreams beyond a slavish devotion to materialism,” and New Zealand society as a divisive collection of groups “which exert their power almost exclusively for selfish needs without any sense of a total community” (Verstappen, 2007). I interpret that as an observation on how hard it is to ‘stir up’ a Kiwi, but when you do then the result can be impressive: for example on February 1st 2012 when over 2,000 Christchurch residents gathered next to the civic building to protest against the city council.

I have seen similar streaks of radicalism in every residents’ group I’ve been involved with. McLauchlan tells a home truth in his satirical assessment of our society as a collection of selfish pressure groups, but we should never discount this country’s tradition of being proud, independent individuals. You can see it in our nationalism (“we’re better than the Aussies”), our regionalism (“we have the most sunshine per year”), our urbanism (“let’s buy the rights to the Ellerslie Flower Show and hold it in Christchurch”) even our neighbourhood-centric behaviour (“we don’t have anything to do with the people over the tracks”). So is it so surprising that the sector most concerned with community governance in this country cares more about what happens to the local playground than about the gross domestic product?

Politically this country has undergone radical change in a short space of time. Back in the old days – pre 1989 – people were a lot closer to their local authority: after all, there were a lot more of them back then - 700 Borough and County Councils and special-purpose bodies - and their catchment area was therefore smaller (Ministry of Local Government, 2010). Then in 1989 the 22 regions were whittled down to 16 and the counties and boroughs merged into a system of Territorial (City and District) and Regional Councils while some areas went a step further and had Unitary Councils that combined all the local authority powers in one parcel (*ibid.*). Thus the seat of power and authority at the local government level moved further away from the citizens. Twelve years later the government of the day recognised this and

made an effort to redress the gap by introducing a new Act of Parliament, with then-Minister of Local Government Chris Carter saying “At its core, the Bill reinforces the concept of local government as democracy at the local level - with a broad concern for the well being of its communities.” (2002). The Local Government Act 2002 was designed to create a means by which “New Zealanders in their local communities will promote, in a sustainable way, their social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being.” (Hansard, 2001). According to Leonard and Memon (2008, p.30) these changes “opened a window of opportunity for community engagement and inter-governmental collaboration to an extent that has not been witnessed before in New Zealand”. The success or otherwise of the lofty ambitions of the Act remain to be seen, but the fact remains that local authorities haven’t replaced or superseded residents’ groups, who are still here in great numbers doing whatever they do in communities across the nation.

Structure of this Research

This thesis combines what I already know about residents’ groups with information from the academic literature and compares and contrasts it with the public record and the opinions of the very people who run residents’ groups in New Zealand.

The research first scopes out a broad set of parameters within the construct of what is termed a ‘residents’ group’ then examines the literature to see what has already been said about these groups. Using themes from the literature a baseline set of purposes is created which assists in creating profiles of the purposes of residents’ groups both from public data (constitutions of residents’ groups) and from residents’ group committee members directly.

The profiles are compared with the baseline and with each other, with stratification undertaken in terms of region, rural/urban character and recency, and a typology of residents’ groups is proposed, along with an analysis of purposes of each type of residents’ group. Finally, conclusions from the research are drawn and the implications and limitations of this thesis are discussed.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Residents' groups (in the context of this thesis) have not attracted a lot of academic interest, as is apparent from a search of the literature. Thus the importance of the literature review in this research is such that it extends beyond the traditional gap-finding exercise and becomes a mechanism for creating a baseline for the research itself: a means to create a starting point to identify why they exist. My search found a wide collection of structured observations, undertaken over several years and from many different cultural perspectives, that suggest themes of activity, observation or involvement of the subject organisations under study. These themes are used as a foundation for this thesis.

Residents' groups are many things to many people and this research is heavily influenced by perspectives in the absence of scientific certainty: both to inform the scope and to populate the data for analysis. Some of these perspectives come from my own personal experience with residents' groups, some from the experiences of practitioners who could be considered lay-experts in the field and some come from the people who run these organisations. It is essential this research is viewed in that context along with an acknowledgement of the complex and diverse nature of residents' groups in New Zealand.

Concepts Relating to the Research

Community

Community is a "a group of people who interact directly, frequently and in multi-faceted ways" (Bowles & Gintis, 2002. p.F420). Place identity plays a big part in defining a placed-based community and can be described as a location or area that has meaning to a person or people (Prohansky *et al.*, 1983, p.58) and is often associated with the concept of 'sense of place'. Bott *et al* note that "relationship to place is a fundamental feature of human existence" and define a 'place' as denoting "humans' subjective experiences of, and the meanings attributed to, the locations which they inhabit" (2003, p.100). In this research I've often used the term 'community' along those lines: a defined geographical area with special significance

to the people who reside within those boundaries, for example a suburb or a town. I've chosen to use community in the geographical sense not because a defined physical boundary is the only difference between communities when examining them from an external perspective, but because the 'place identity' of the individuals living there makes it special and unique. As will be explained later in this chapter a residents' group is not necessarily restricted to geographic community, but this is by far the most common way we see their sphere of influence defined.

Community resilience, social capital and community governance

Resilience can be best understood as an antonym of vulnerability; community resilience relates to the strength of a community as opposed to its vulnerability (Gurwitch *et al*, 2007, p.1). The strength of communities is an important factor to government. According to John Hamilton, head of the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, the "underpinning driver for civil defence emergency management in New Zealand is that of the creation of resilient communities" (Finnis, 2004, p.2). Community resilience is constructed of four "networked resources", one of which is 'social capital' Norris *et.al.* (2008)¹.

The term social capital has gone through many changes in meaning since classical times, and Bowles & Gintis (2002, p.F420) go to pains to express that – while it is a form of capital *per se* – social capital is less about what people own and more about what people do. Putnam summarises it as the parts of society "such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (1995, p.67). In other words, it encapsulates that concept of people interacting within a community and has a relationship to the manner that a community organises and governs itself.

Community governance was defined earlier in this thesis not only as a function of the State but also as a community-centric activity with roots in civil society. This is supported by Woods (2001), who describes community governance as activity outside of the scope of the local council that "embrace[s] all activities that involve either the provision of public services within the community, or the representation of community interests to external agencies". Also discussed earlier was the distancing of local government through a number of amalgamations and law changes. In an example that has stark similarities to our own country, O'Toole (2006, p.303) discussed the effect of the restructure of local government in the

¹ The other three are 'trusted sources of information', 'equity' and 'community competence'.

Australian state of Victoria in the 1990s and the effect the amalgamation had on smaller towns, resulting in a “birth or in some cases rebirth” of community associations that went to work addressing the effects through community governance, or in other words “a range of informal non-governmental mechanisms where local people could meet to discuss, plan and execute strategies for the sustainability of their towns.”. According to Bowles and Gintis social capital is linked to community governance, which they sum up by saying “*communities are part of good governance because they address certain problems that cannot be handled either by individuals acting alone or by markets and governments.*” (2002, p.F421). Communities can achieve this because important information about the people who make up the community is available only within that community, resulting in diverse means of communication in the manner best suited to the person/people and situation, and utilising bonds of trust (*ibid.*, F423). In an earlier work O’Toole (2004, p.441) highlighted the capability of community-based groups to replicate “organisational resources” that ceased to exist after local government amalgamation.

Civil society

The *Encyclopedia of Governance* (2007, p.91) defines civil society as a “network of groups, communities, networks, and ties that stand between the individual and the modern state”. The nature of civil society has been widely discussed by the academic community, for example Mahajan presents the popular view of civil society as “opposition to the state” most associated with independent community organisations (1999, p.3471), while Warren noted the general academic consensus of Tocqueville’s link between the workability of democracy and involvement of community in his book *Democracy and Association* (2001). Chandhoke notes the resurgence of civil society as a result of oppressive government (e.g. Stalin’s Russia, South American military-run regimes) and in particular observes that “it was in civil society that individuals and groups set out to challenge unresponsive and authoritarian states through peaceful and non-violent methods”, bringing to the fore a key need to ensure that in a democratic society there is monitoring and accountability attached to power vested in the state (2007, pp.607-8). New Zealand civil society expert and former executive member of the international civil society organisation CIVICUS, Pat Hanley, views the characteristics of civil society as “non-hierarchical, bottom-up, participatory, rights based and anti-establishment” (2010). Hanley also makes a clarification between the state and a typical civil

society organisation and highlights several defining themes that are common among residents' groups, including a focus on the rights of individuals (commonly seen when local battles erupt over re-zoning of land or new developments), the common interest of the community and the importance of society over commerce (*ibid.*).

In Table 2.1 below, Hanley contrasts the focus of the liberal state with atypical civil society organisations. A key (but very simplistic) difference is the focus on an individualist versus holistic paradigm, with civil society organisations focusing on the collective environment that individuals live in, rather than that of the individual themselves.

Table 2.1: Comparative Features of the Liberal State and Civil Society Organisations

The Liberal State	Civil Society Organisations
Property	People
Representation	Participation
Freedom From	Freedom To
The Primacy of Self Interest	The Primacy of Common Interests
Ideology	Moral Purpose
Market Values	Social Values

Source: National Residents' Association Conference 2010

As we will see from the literature there are a number of examples of residents' groups exhibiting characteristics of civil society organisations, and this will be discussed fully at the conclusion of this chapter.

Changing society: three eras of interest in regard to residents' groups and community

Hasson and Ley (1994) observed community underwent 'stages' of change in relation to social geo-political changes at a global level and this influenced neighbourhood associations (of which they attributed residents' associations as a sub-set). It can be argued that, in terms of community development in this country, there are three distinct eras: 1935 – 1970, 1970-2002, and 2003 onward. From the mid 1930s New Zealand had developed as a welfare state, with central government taking a hands-on role in community wellbeing (Chile, 2006, p.411-412). This model started to become less efficacious in the 1960s, which was “a decade of global cultural change that challenged the legitimacy of State actions on behalf of citizens –

particularly as social change leader” and reflected in New Zealand in the Vietnam War protests, the feminist movement and an awakening of cultural independence by both Māori and Polynesian communities, leading to a line in the sand at 1970 when the country moved from developing community in a welfare-state paradigm to a socio-economic paradigm (*ibid.*, p.412). This was the beginning of a change local government’s involvement in community, with special community units of local authorities springing up in response to the “need to find local solutions to local issues” (*ibid.*, p.414). The third era starts with the change to the system of local government in New Zealand at the end of 2002, been hailed as significant in terms of the interface between local authorities and community (Leonard and Memon, 2008; Reid, 2010).

Residents’ Groups in the Literature

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This research is firmly focused on organisational behaviour, namely the *raison d’etre* of residents’ groups. The literature search targeted full-text peer-reviewed academic papers that made mention of the terms “residents’ association”, “progressive association” or “ratepayer’s association”. Truncated operands were used to ensure all forms of each keyword was covered. While there are other names for groups with similar functions, the researcher used terminology most commonly used in New Zealand to limit what would otherwise prove to be an enormous task. While this extensive search using keywords associated with residents’ groups identified many papers that referred to these organisations in passing, none were found that targeted residents’ groups specifically as the primary subject of the research.

A search of peer-reviewed articles turned up 696 matches. Each article’s abstract was examined to determine how relevant it was to residents’ groups. In 485 cases, the articles were not considered because they either were duplicates or did not include sufficient detail about the context of residents’ groups as organisations operating in association with community. In most such cases the relevance to this study was merely incidental, whereby the researcher had made mention of a residents’ group as one part of a larger study or had made use of a residents’ group to gain data. Other articles were ignored because the search terms appeared together in reference to other contexts (e.g. such as medical references to resident

doctor's groups and rest homes). Weight was given to key words that were complementary to the historical record and the researcher's own knowledge (social, community, politics, planning, urban renewal, New Zealand). The review of articles resulted in a total of 211 papers that directly related to the subject. Each article was then read and the paragraph(s) mentioning the search term isolated and added to a spreadsheet for analysis. Surrounding paragraphs were also copied in some instances if this was required to give the information more context.

Attempting to define residents' groups

In 1946 Mess and King (cited in Smith, 2002) defined a community association as a “voluntary association of neighbours democratically organised within a geographical area which constitutes a natural community, who have come together ... to provide for themselves and their community the services which the neighbourhood requires”, but in the context that the organisation was linked closely to a building, such as a community centre. Hasson and Ley (1994) put ratepayers' associations into the broader category of “neighbourhood organisations”. Other researchers have toyed tantalisingly with the concept. In 1976 Twelvetreets (cited in Smith, 2002) studied four established community associations in Edinburgh, while McGibbon (1990) made a study of four communities in Alberta, Canada where residents had banded together to fight local government and developers.

While my search of the literature has not yielded a definitive answer to the question *what is a residents' group?*, particularly in the New Zealand context, such organisations have been mentioned in the literature in passing or in greater depth. A discussion of residents' groups in the literature, arranged into eleven ‘purpose-themes’ will help develop the construct further.

Residents' groups and knowledge

A source of local community knowledge

Although some studies merely mentioned residents' groups in passing (Harrison, 1999) (Godlee, 1992) others had a more practical use for them. Residents' associations have frequently provided information for – or have participated in – research undertaken by universities and institutions. Kass *et al.* (2009) involved residents' associations in a study into

pests in housing projects in New York. Grant (2007) interviewed two residents' association presidents regarding the effect of gated communities on urban design in Canada. As part of a questionnaire to general practitioners, testing for consultation-based problem solving and communication skills, a research company published a survey in their journal *The Practitioner* that asked (among other things) the hypothetical question: what would you do if a local residents' association requests the help of a medical practice to prevent a cellphone transmitter being placed near a school? (Murray, 2005). Beckett (2004) focused on the unconscious barriers presented by a residents' association to a disabled woman trying to participate as a member, while Davies (2002) included the question "Is there a local residents' association where you live?" in a quiz developed for people living in Ottawa and, similarly, Carlson (2001) cited research in Russia (the 1998 Taganrog Household Survey) that included the question "Are you a member of a residents' association?". One residents' association was used as an example for a project on volunteer recruitment (Wilson & Pimm, 1996), while Little Earth Residents' Association – who represent the residents of a housing project in Minneapolis that includes 700 Native Americans – assisted with a university investigation into what health providers and caregivers should know about indigenous culture when they work with Native Americans children with chronic illnesses (Garwick & Auger, 2000). A Japanese Residents' Association was noted as a useful point of contact to access subjects for a survey of Japanese women and British society, providing important cultural advice to the researchers. They discovered the association had a sub-group to provide support for new Japanese settlers in the area that was very popular (Izuhara & Shibata, 2001).

This section of the literature suggests residents' groups are acknowledged by academic institutions as a source or conduit to knowledge about a specific area or demographic. What is not apparent is why there is this confidence, which is unusual considering how academics carefully consider the validity of the data they source for their research. This finding matches my experience in New Zealand where local authorities include residents' groups as part of their community consultation processes.

There is also discussion in the literature that while residents' groups might not be active all the time they can hold institutional knowledge that enables them to act quickly and decisively when needed. Norman observed groups forming for a single, specific purpose and afterwards dissipating or disappearing (Norman, 2004), while Penfold (2004) relates a case from c.1982 of residents' groups adopting a political activism role: experiencing the ebb and flow of

membership and power. These groups appear to be strong when single issues become a focus of popular concern. In addition, residents' groups are described as a source of knowledge that can be useful to the efforts of government. A paper discussing community revitalisation projects in Milwaukee found local government officials have welcomed the involvement of local people in the planning process. The author says they "recognize the value of the local knowledge neighbourhood residents possess". The local residents' associations work with an innovation called "the Data Center" which serves as a clearinghouse of local information. However, lack of resources in this case caused frustration as the government agents were unable to keep up with the level of work the residents' associations were undertaking (Ghose & Huxhold, 2001).

Residents' groups and politics

There are many examples of the link between knowledge and power in the literature (Galston, 1990; Jay, 1994; Turkel, 1990; Mudambi & Navarra, 2004) and this concept can also be seen in relation to residents' groups who, perhaps because of their unique position extant of government and proximally close to the citizenry, are in a position to exert power derived more from what and who they know than from any particular mandate that may result from a democratic society; examples from the New Zealand historical record have already been presented of these groups having influence in the election of local body candidates.

A platform for political activity

A number of examples of residents' groups exerting power can be found in Africa. For example a residents' association stood candidates in local elections in South Africa (Deegan, 2002) and a progressive association in Zimbabwe is an overtly political group (Booyesen, 2003). In South Africa in the mid-1980s a residents' association engaging in political activities resulted in local councillors resigning their positions; four members of the association were killed in response (Saul, 1986), while in 1992 the Swakopmund Residents' Association gained a seat on the local council in Namibia (Lindeke & Wanzala, 1994). Outside Africa the playing field seems considerably safer. In Canada a residents' association member stood as a Mayoral candidate in Vancouver local government elections (Magnusson, 2004) while Fijian ratepayers' associations openly competed in local elections (Ambrose *et al.*, 1997), something also experienced in Wagga Wagga, Australia (Eather, 2000).

Residents' groups and the establishment

Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government

There are examples of residents' groups publically discussing or opposing the activities of the state and business and providing a check-and-balance to power. Fullerton (2005) makes mention of an arterial route that was proposed through a community and opposed by the local residents' association. Such opposition can be organised quickly by a residents' group in contrast to the often ponderous rhythm of government. Novek (2003) cites an example of intensive pig farming in Manitoba, Canada and talks about how "grassroots opposition" was quick to develop through the efforts of the ratepayers' association and a local environmental group. An article about sovereign immunity for an American state reports a case in 2000 where a residents' association filed a law suit against the local authority to stop them building a landfill (anonymous, 2003). Carment (1998) cites an example of a residents' association criticising an incoming government's announcement of the building of 66 housing units in a suburb of Darwin. Rachleff (2001) talks of residents' and ratepayers' associations involved in mass protests opposing local government privatisation plans in South Africa. While in Wales in 1966 the Aberfan Parents and Residents' Association pursued action through the courts against the National Coal Board after mining activity caused ground subsidence that killed 144 people, 116 of whom were school-aged children. The resulting cover-up by the government resulted in a mistrust of authority by that community that lasted for many years (Johnes & McLean, 2000). This is an important point, as there are frequent mentions in the New Zealand media of clashes between communities and authority. For example, an newspaper editorial regarding the deeper public support for Palmerston North residents' group's opposition to a revamp of the city square (The Evening Standard, 2003), and a report of a rural residents' association "squaring up to fight a wine giant over water rights" (The Marlborough Express, 2007). (Mount Victoria Residents' Association Incorporated v The Wellington City Council and Anor HC, 2009 and Creswick Valley Residents' Association Inc v Wellington City Council, 2012). Residents' groups have also successfully used the law to stymie the actions of local bodies. Two recent cases were in Wellington City regarding permission given to set up a brothel (Mount Victoria Residents' Association Incorporated v The Wellington City Council and Anor HC, 2009) and a hardware store (Creswick Valley Residents' Association Inc v Wellington City Council, 2012) in residential areas, while Black and Phillips (2002) make mention of a residents' association bringing a court action for

environmental concerns about a mining operation in Australia and winning. In extreme cases, residents' associations have been involved in more direct action, for example using barricades and rocks to resist government and private forces in South Africa (Desai & Pithouse, 2004). Sometimes the 'fight' might not be directly against government, but against a wider policy objective such as urban planning. When asked about opposition to the establishment of new Wal-Mart stores, consultant Al Norman said "local residents' associations usually know what to do" (Norman, 2004).

Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies

A number of peer reviewed articles suggested residents' groups play a role in maintaining transparency and openness at the interface between government and community in some way or other. The 'Brundall Dale Residents' Association' (name changed by original researcher to protect anonymity) were recognised as "key participants" in a public inquiry into five proposed sites for a motorway service area whereas the 'Fordlow Residents' Association' (name also changed) was a single-issue group that came together to oppose a large housing development in the area and were granted "official third party status" when the developer appealed the council's refusal of planning consent (McClymont and O'Hare, 2008, p.327). In Dunedin, in 1993, a ratepayers' association following the planning processes of major development in Dunedin Harbour filed court proceedings opposing it (Memon and Selsky, 1998, p.594), while in the early 20th Century, a seasonal group – the Summer Residents' Association – was established in Bar Harbour, Maine (USA). Its focus was primarily on the taxes and service provision of the local government (Hornsby, 1993, p.464).

Some residents' groups are presented as wielding direct influence on processes while others can be an important driver for accountability. Sercombe (2006) notes that in small, rural areas "community is a present reality, rather than an abstraction" and thus a residents' association plays a role in knowing what is going on and using that knowledge to ensure government employees do their jobs properly. There seems to be no consistency on how residents' groups exert power; the consensus seems to be that they do so when an issue threatens the local area – or in particular when the prospect of change is introduced.

A part of the establishment

In some parts of the world a residents' group is a legal body, with powers similar to a magistrates court (Wai, 2008). In Canada in the 1900s ratepayers' associations established to

get utilities connected to houses and evolved into “community associations” (Davies and Townshend, 1994) while Bickers (1998, p.180) reports the presence of Japanese Residents’ Associations in Shanghai, China in the tumultuous 1930s. While somewhat independent these groups were “chartered” by local legislation and “ultimately under the direction of their consulates”.

There is anecdotal evidence in New Zealand of residents’ groups undertaking functions normally provided by local authorities, such as managing water supplies (J Candiliotis, personal communication, 2011). While it seems unusual from a civil society perspective for residents’ groups to be part of the establishment (Mahajan, 1999; Chandhoke, 2007; Hanley, 2010) it certainly makes sense from a community governance standpoint (Woods, 2001; O’Toole, 2004), particularly for isolated communities.

Residents’ groups and people

Promoting the interests of local people

In several cases there is evidence of residents’ associations promoting the interest of local people. At the larger end of the scale Ranasinghe and Valverde (2006) cited a confederation representing residents’ and ratepayers’ associations in Toronto making submissions and legal arguments to increase physical distance between new homeless shelters being set up by the Toronto municipality, while Mulroy and Lauber (2004) found evidence of the involvement of a single residents’ association in an intervention to prevent the eviction of potentially homeless families. A contrasting example from Slater (2004) cites a person saying that they joined a residents’ association to “get rid of” undesirable people in the neighbourhood. This overt self-interest has been categorised in recent years as “NIMBY”, or “Not In My Back Yard”. He identifies that NIMBYist attitudes by middle-class residents’ associations have led to a lessening in availability of affordable housing options for lower socio-economic individuals and a growth in the number of homeless. Indeed, residents’ associations are far from pure and angelic: Maney and Abraham (2008) reported witnessing open disdain and rude behaviour by residents’ association members toward immigrant workers at a public hearing. Even though the term “NIMBYism” is contemporary, the attitude of self-interested opposition to change has been around for some time. For example Foran (2004) discusses a case from c.1933 where a local ratepayers’ association protested against the placement of a

dwelling for the homeless sick in its neighbourhood. One of the most powerful statements uncovered in the literature is a direct quote from Justice Frank Iacobucci of Canada's Supreme Court, who – in ruling on a constitutional matter – said:

“The human animal is inherently sociable ... by combining together people seek to improve every aspect of their lives ... through membership of [among other organisations] a ratepayers’ association ... they seek to provide better facilities for their neighbourhood ... the ability to choose their organisation is of critical importance to all people ... It is the organizations which an individual chooses to join that to some extent define that individual.” (Langille, 2009).

Representing the interests of a specific demographic group

Residents’ groups need not be focused on specific geographic areas *per se*. Some have been set up specifically to represent the interests of demographic groups. Breyley (2009) mentions the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association, Liu and Geron (2008) refer to the San Francisco Chinese Peoples Progressive Association while Seng (2007) cites a progressive association that represents Singaporeans and there is also mention of a Slovak-American association early last century (Zecker, 2002) and a national Land Tenants and Ratepayers’ Association in the Caribbean Islands (Abdulah, 2006). The interests of other demographics aside from race have also been represented by this type of group. The New South Wales Women’s Progressive Association represents women in that area (Nugent, 2005) while the Housewives Progressive Association played an important part in improving the health of Australian children through nutrition in the 1930s (Rodwell, 1998). Similarly, there are residents’ associations representing students living on university campuses (Dauner, Greaney, & Reininger, 2003). These examples emphasise the scalability of residents’ associations: they can range from a few people representing a community of a hundred (Kass *et al.*, 2009) to a highly organised group representing hundreds of thousands, as in the case of the Chatsworth Concerned Residents’ Association – a political/representative body in a South African city of about 300,000 (Jacobs & Desai, 2004).

Residents' groups and community

Protecting or promoting a sense of place

Naturally, there are also positive aims in the work these organisations undertake. Dakin (2003) relates a case of the involvement of a ratepayers' association in negotiating with central government to retain aesthetics of a state-owned forestry block and the success they had through working with visual landscape specialists and the leaseholder, while Reid-Smith (2001) cites an example from C.1970 whereby a local library was rejuvenated due to pressure from the residents' association. More recently Kushner and Siegel (2003) discuss a case where a ratepayers' association formed in response to "sense of attachment" to community decreasing after a large municipal amalgamation – to "ensure their community was protected". This case has particular relevance to the New Zealand situation where Auckland's Councils have merged under one banner and perhaps points to a heightened importance of such groups in the new local governance climate.

Improving or protecting the environment

The activities of residents' associations can improve the wider community environment by promoting the interests of their members, even if they do not necessarily represent the views of all, or even the majority, of the community. Savova (2009) talks about the "aspirations of local residents' association vice-President to get an artist to paint houses in bright colours" using visual kinaesthetics to make the community a better place to live, and for plans for a local residents' association to organise information dissemination using loudspeakers to create an "acoustic community". Savova's research highlights the residents' associations involvement in building a 'living museum' that contributes to a sense of place and – hopefully – an improved economic situation. Leifer (2008) examined a residents' association in Manchester that set up a 'playground' for the elderly. They saw a newspaper article about a similar thing in Germany and set one up. The 'playground' provides a meeting place and exercise and is well loved by the senior community.

Charitable activities

Turkstra (2008) mentioned the involvement of residents' association in a public meeting to help address unemployment in Ontario – working side by side with church groups, while residents' association have also been involved in planning outreach strategies for community health projects (Chandler, 2006), as a member of a Library Development Stakeholders Group

to assist a local authority in Australia develop a new library facility (Ledger, 2003) and reducing the level of vandalism in a tower apartment block (Bert, 2002).

New Zealand introduced the Charities Act in 2005 which has set a legal benchmark for what constitutes charitable activity in this country. This has resulted in a situation where organisations might engage in charitable activity, but cannot become charities because they are considered ‘political’, due to their involvement in advocating for change to laws or criticising the actions or inactions of government agencies (Draco Foundation (NZ) Charitable Trust v Charities Commission, 2011). The legal definition of ‘charity’ in New Zealand is unclear and not consistent (Barker and Yesburg, 2011).

Negative behaviour that impacts on people in a community

It has been shown that while residents’ groups may act in the interests of local people, these actions might not necessarily be in the interest of the wider community. Furthermore, they may have direct impacts upon the very people they claim to represent that results in a negative outcome. Examples of these organisations acting in manner that could negatively affect some members of their (geographic) community includes a case in the United States where a residents’ group opposed a local casino using overtones of racism (Horton, 1996), the use of residents’ associations by Sinn Fein in areas of the Orange March routes in Northern Ireland (Lloyd, 1998), and in the same country a residents’ association refusing to allow a certain demographic admission to the association of housing tenants. This action was overthrown at a public meeting by a democratic show of community opposition (Rooney, 1997).

New Zealand-specific research

In his thesis on sustainable management, Rickard (2008) identified ratepayers’ associations as a type of community groups with a “vested interest” in coastal management and monitoring. Craig (2001) examined New Zealand retirement villages as part of a Master of Laws, seeking to explain what the appropriate process for resolving disputes in retirement villages should be. Craig drew upon a case in Queensland, Australia, of a state-wide residents’ group (The Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages, or ARQRV) with a membership of several thousand that provides financial support for members (retirement village residents’) taking legal action against village operators. The ARQRV also undertook lobbying activities

around the rights of its members in a review of the state legislation covering retirement villages.

When Hasse (2001) examined attitudes of local stakeholders to tourism activity in the Tasman area she interviewed the Marahau and Sandy Bay Residents' and Ratepayers' Association. Hasse reported the membership of the group included all residents and ratepayers that lived in the local area, as defined by the group themselves, and considered themselves as the "mouthpiece" of the local community. An issue the group needed to deal with was "apathy" and poor attendance of meetings, except when "something controversial" was going on in the area. A sector of the community (bach owners) felt the group didn't represent them "appropriately" and that "commercial operators dominated the ... committee".

Lawler (2008) looked at three case studies of community planning in her thesis, one of which involved the Timberlea Residents' Association. Lawler acknowledged the involvement of the residents' association in undertaking community planning with the support of the Department of Internal Affairs and local council (*ibid.*, p.72).

New Zealand's historical record

From the New Zealand historical record covering the late 19th century it is apparent that residents' groups had their roots in direct involvement in the election of Councillors and lobbying on behalf of property owners. This tradition continues today (many such associations still organise public 'candidates meetings' in the lead-up to local and general elections) and is mirrored somewhat in the literature.

Residents' associations stretch back at least to 1865 when a report made mention of resolutions the [Christchurch or Canterbury] Ratepayers' Association would "pass in the Town Hall" (Press, 1865). It was a time of ratepayers organising together to battle the authorities with a notice in the Daily Southern Cross newspaper (the precursor to the NZ Herald) calling for a meeting of the [Auckland] Ratepayer's Association to "petition the General Assembly against passing the Water Loan Bill" (Daily Southern Cross, 1872). The Grey River Argus (1875) reported on the perceived lack of success of the Wellington ratepayers' association ("a sort of imitation of the Nelson Reform League") due to a certain level of apathy of the ratepayers of that city, while the Evening Post (1876) made blatant

accusations against a Mr E. T. Gillon² of “misleading the ratepayers to the real state of the Corporation [City Council] affairs”. The issue was over the auditing of the Council’s finances and reported that it was “very desirable” that the upcoming meeting of the local ratepayers’ association be well attended.

Early records of meetings from residents’ groups in New Zealand were reported in major metropolitan newspapers of the day. The Daily Southern Cross (1866) made mention that the [Auckland] Ratepayers’ Association meeting had discussed the urgent need to drain the Market Reserve (to prevent the “ravages of typhus”), while the Evening Post (1875) carried a report that the monthly meeting of the Wellington Ratepayers’ Protection Association was held with 11 people present. Discussion centered around the application of rating income and the issue of inequity, which is significant considering both remain major issues 137 years later. Also of present-day relevance was the suggestion for implementing water meters and the safety of public areas.

A Star (1879) article notes a general meeting of the Christchurch Ratepayers’ Association held in Manchester Street with 60 people in attendance. The article hinted at the heritage of this type of organisation, noting the association had been established based on a similar society in the English town of Tunbridge Wells³, pointing to the colonial and class-based roots of residents’ groups in New Zealand. The meeting focused on who would be put forward as nominees for upcoming City Council elections. This particular association (all men, let it be noted!) were made up of 221 land owners of the area, each of whom had a number of votes (790 in total) to elect the Council. However, the members stated they did not intend to lobby the Council, nor interfere with its operation, but to bring the “ratepayers together for the purpose of discussing public affairs”. Later discussion centered around the choosing of a Mayor and the “immorality” in the way elections were undertaken. Of interest is the report that the members did not intend the association to “die a natural death” post-election, but rather continue to be a “useful organ for many purposes”, a template for many residents’ groups to come. Reference was also made to the work of the Tunbridge Wells association who had raised funds to provide things of benefit to their area but which could not be provided by the Council, such as a “very superior band of music”, a new pump room and

² A Wellington Provincial Councillor (Cyclopedia Company Limited, 1897) and – bizarrely – editor of the Evening Post newspaper at the time this report was published, as reported in his obituary in the Otago Witness (1896). At least nobody could argue about the editorial independence of newspapers in those days!

³ In the 19th century this was a popular spot for “rich business and professional people” (Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, 2012)

walkways. Three days after that meeting another regional newspaper reported on George Grey's visit to Canterbury and the elections underway there. It notes the formation of a ratepayers' association who were "determined that the municipal affairs of Christchurch never again fall into the hands of the class who now go out of office" (Otago Daily Times, 1879).

The earliest record of public use of the term *residents' association* is an Evening Post (1899) article reporting the formation of a "Ratepayers' and Residents' Association for Kilbirnie Ward". A residents' group is still operational in that area today.

Residents' groups still feature prominently in the New Zealand media. A search of Fairfax, NZ Herald, Scoop and Radio New Zealand in the ten years leading up to the end of 2011 show 6,883 reports that mentioned the terms "residents' association", "ratepayers' association", "progressive association", "community council"⁴ and "residents' group"⁵. The reports include opposition to property developments, criticism of local authorities, calls for investigations and enquiries (particularly of the local government sector), and providing a forum for community comment (such as hosting candidate meetings) around local body elections. While I did not undertake a robust analysis of the media reports as part of this research the number of mentions in this sample of the news media (on average 18 per week) over the past decade speaks to the high level of activity of these groups in New Zealand society.

Research Gap

The concept of residents' groups were imported to New Zealand from England late in the stages of colonisation (Star, 1879), and were political mechanisms controlled by the upper-middle classes to influence or select candidates for local government (*ibid.*). These groups are also found elsewhere in the world as far afield as Africa (Rachleff, 2001; Deegan, 2002; Booysen, 2003) and Canada (McGibbon, 1990; Novek, 2003) but there has been little direct research on residents' groups in this country.

The structure, roles, membership and influence of residents' groups are diverse and lacking an identified core yet the construct 'residents' association' and its synonyms are applied with little consistency across contemporary society to a variety of organisational arrangements

⁴ Excluding the term 'Safer Community Council', which is not within the scope of the residents' group construct.

⁵ Search undertaken using Newztext Newspapers media database via <http://www.knowledge-basket.co.nz>

(Hornsby, 1993; Wai, 2008; Bickers, 1998; Jacobs & Desai, 2004). Mess and King's definition is probably the most complete that I have uncovered: although dated it encapsulates a voluntary and place-based nature that may still be valid today. Hasson and Ley's (1994) categorisation of residents' associations as "neighbourhood organisations" again captures some of the genre, but still does not expand out beyond the place into other communities, as the literature indicates (for example Breyley, 2009; Seng, 2007), and likewise with the work of Twelvetrees and McGibbon who studied a limited spectrum of groups. However, many academic papers are a useful record about what a particular residents' group was doing at the time the research was being carried out (e.g. Dakin, 2003; Fullerton, 2005). Research carried out in New Zealand readily acknowledges the existence of these groups and has utilised them as a key source of information on community matters (Hasse, 2001; Rickard, 2008; Lawler, 2008) but has not explored their purpose or activities across the whole population.

Residents' groups appear by-and-large to be an undefined phenomenon unlike government or a business, which are bounded by formal definitions and specific structures. It is apparent that residents' groups can be driven by a set of issues within a community, such as the cover-up at the Aberfan Mine (Johnes & McLean, 2000) or opposition to a housing development in Darwin (Carment, 1998), and be very much focused on the interests of a specific group of people rather than the wider societal good: at its extreme termed 'NIMBYism' (Slater, 2004).

The members of a residents' group could be a general population (Ambrose, Ballard, Chappell, Kabutaulaka, Tarte, & Wesley-Smith, 1997) or a group of people who share some sort of connection such as ethnicity (Liu and Geron, 2008) or gender (Nugent, 2005).

The place that a residents' group operates could be a community as defined by geographical boundaries (Hasse, 2001), but this could also be a community that is defined by a commonly-held sense of place such as a university (Dauner, Greaney, & Reininger, 2003) or through statutory declaration (Wai 2008). The usage is scalable so it could mean a handful of people in a neighbourhood (Kass *et al.*, 2009), to hundreds of thousands across an entire country (Jacobs & Desai, 2004).

The purpose of residents' groups appear to be largely subjective within loose boundaries. There is evidence that residents' groups can be grounded in civil society – that area of a democracy that exists between citizens and the State – where citizens find a place to voice concerns, desires and aspirations and governments have a place to hear them (Rachleff, 2001).

There is contradictory evidence that residents' groups support or are even part of the establishment (Candiliotis, 2011; Bickers, 1998). There is evidence residents' groups take an active involvement in politics (Magnusson, 2004; Ambrose *et al.*, 1997), and at the same time evidence that these groups can have a charitable purpose (Turkstra (2008; Chandler, 2006). In short, there are a number of conflicting reports about what residents' groups actually do.

In New Zealand specifically there is no indication as to how they are legally formed or set up, aside from a basic model required by law for those choosing to formalise themselves as legal entities. Without such an understanding it is difficult to identify, classify or even contact these groups.

Critique of the Literature

While the literature acknowledges residents' groups playing a role in society it is silent on the fundamental nature of these organisations. Nor does the research identify the relationship – if any – between residents' groups and their members with regards to purpose and intent.

Surprisingly little has been written about residents' groups in this country, considering the potential size of the sector, the impact they can have at a community level and the high level of media attention they receive. Not that it would be a easy subject to write about. In my experience the sector is detached and disjointed and it is inherent in the nature of these groups that many display a centric focus while not promoting their activities outside of their specific area of influence (J Candiliotis⁶, personal communication, 2011). The gap evidenced in the literature juxtaposes how little is known of these organisations with how much of an impact they have had – and can have – on communities.

It is particularly important to note that the academic community hasn't ignored this sector completely, as there is ample mention of residents' groups in the literature and examples of these organisations being asked to participate directly in research (e.g. Kass *et al.*, 2009; Grant, 2007). Residents' groups also have featured prominently in the New Zealand media record.

⁶ Jim Candiliotis is the President of the Federation of Wellington Progressive and Residents' Associations.

It is apparent to me that the diverse and broad scope of these groups, combined with a tradition of focusing inwardly, does not lend itself to academic examination. This vested self-interest could suggest a tendency to not cluster or interact with like groups in ways that other organisations do (such as businesses for example).

Despite this apparent disconnect with the wider community, the international and domestic literature – along with historical records and media reports – have suggested a number of activities that enable the reported activities of residents’ groups to be consolidated into something akin to a categorisation of purpose. The eleven themes in Table 2.2 are the result.

Table 1.2: Purpose themes of residents’ groups derived from literature review

Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies
A source of local community knowledge
Negative behaviour that impacts on people in a community
Protecting or promoting a sense of place
Improving or protecting the environment
Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government
Representing the interests of a specific demographic group (e.g. youth, Māori, etc.)
Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)
Charitable activities
As a platform for political activity
Promoting the interests of local people

The analysis of the literature resulting in the eleven themes used as the basis of this thesis was not focused on micro-examination of word meaning or sentence structure, but on specific statements made in that work attesting to the reason why the organisation was mentioned or the activity the organisation was carrying out at the time of the research. In other words, the voice of the respective authors of the published body of knowledge – what they said the residents’ group was doing – is what informed the benchmark purpose-themes. This made the process less complicated and more transparent, resulting in a broad and inclusive starting point for this research. The benchmark purpose-themes do not directly constitute part of the analysis or conclusion of this research but rather provide another building block.

Chapter Conclusion

An analysis of the literature has highlighted the different roles residents’ associations play around the world. These range from representation to advocacy to politics to charity among

others. The *raison d'être* can stretch to serving demographic populations to small single-purpose groups. Due to the lack of a definition a logical question to start with is:

Q1) How do the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents' groups compare with the themes identified in the literature?

Residents' groups have been shown to adopt or take-up the interests of a community with alacrity (Norman, 2004; Penfold, 2004) to the point where government is sometimes not able to keep pace (Ghose & Huxold, 2001). Do these groups change their constitutional purpose to meet the new demands of their community, or are their constitutional purposes worded in such a way as to allow a broad range of activities? To gain a better understanding of how the constitutional purpose of these groups matches their activities I will ask:

Q2) Are the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents' groups aligned with the purposes stated by their committee members? Does the age of the organisation have an influence on this?

There have been enormous social and economic changes in the country over the past 50 years. The nature of work has changed, consumerism is more prolific, travel is easier, our borders have opened up. In that time there has been a significant shift away from rural New Zealand as a growing number of people are attracted to urban areas (Gardner, 2007) in keeping with the general international trend of rural-urban migration (Mohanty, 2009). In other words, our people have gone through a process of 'shedding off' their rural skins and adopting a more metropolitan way of life. We have seen in the literature that residents' groups are driven predominantly by the interests of their members (e.g. Garwick & Auger, 2000; Seng, 2007; Rodwell, 1998; Slater, 2004), rather than a wider societal interest (e.g. Maney and Abraham; 2008; Foran, 2004). New Zealand has a large land area and relatively small population so this might result in a difference in the purposes of those groups in rural areas as opposed to urban areas. My third question is:

Q3) Are there any significant differences in purpose – either constitutionally or stated by committee members – between residents' groups in rural areas versus those in urban areas?

Both the literature (e.g. Ranasinghe and Valverde, 2006; Anonymous, 2003; Rachleff, 2001; Kushner and Siegel, 2003; Lawler, 2008) and public record (The Press, 1865; Evening Post,

1875; The Evening Standard, 2003; Mount Victoria Residents' Association Incorporated v The Wellington City Council and Anor HC, 2009; Creswick Valley Residents' Association Inc v Wellington City Council, 2012;) show residents' groups having a lot of involvement with local government. A final question I seek to answer is:

Q4) Does the purpose (either constitutional or stated) of residents' associations in New Zealand differ dependent upon the region? If so, is their interaction with local governmental agencies relevant?

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Methodological Framework

O’Leary (2004) writes that there are many pathways to get from question to answer, which depends not only on the situation but also the perspective one takes. A paucity of published research on residents’ groups requires a clear explanation of how this thesis moves from Point A to Point B. As noted above, the starting point is the broad definition of which organisations may be included initially as resident groups. The end point is a typology of these groups and a broad spectrum of purposes they undertake, with reference to any significant difference due to the location or age of the organisation.

Research Paradigm

This thesis focuses on the purposes of residents’ groups in New Zealand. To do this, I propose to derive purpose-themes from the literature and test those themes by analysing the public records of residents’ groups and asking the opinions of those who serve on their committees. The methods used in this research are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Research methods

Research Task	Method
Developing a series of themes around the purpose of residents’ groups	Literature review
Develop an empirical baseline of purposes from the public record	Analysis of archives Content analysis
Test the baseline data with what happens in reality	Survey instrument Content analysis
Test the validity of the data across location, urbanity and recency of constitutional data	Stratification of data

Research Questions

- Q1. How do the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents’ groups compare with the themes identified in the literature?

Question 1 tests the many themes extracted from the literature with the official purposes of each residents' group in New Zealand. This will provide the foundation of the research, validating the initial assumptions made in the research design process.

Q2. Are the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents' groups aligned with the purposes stated by their committee members?

It is possible that residents' groups are operating today on constitutions that have not been updated since the time they were originally written. Question 2 checks the validity of the official purposes by seeking the opinion of committee members of these groups to offer their opinion of what the organisation's purposes are.

Q2a. Does the age of the organisation have an influence on this?

Question 2a seeks to answer whether the purposes of residents' groups have changed over time, particularly through the three 'eras' of community development in New Zealand (Chile, 2006; Leonard and Memon, 2008).

Q3. Are there any significant differences in purpose – either constitutionally or stated by committee members – between residents' groups in rural areas versus those in urban areas?

New Zealand society has changed over time, following the global trend with respect to the shift in the population base from rural to urban areas (Mohanty, 2009; Gardner, 2007). Question 3 checks whether residents' groups have different purposes to reflect the polarising effect of urbanisation.

Q4. Does the purpose (either constitutional or stated) of residents' associations in New Zealand differ dependent upon the region?

Question 4 seeks to determine whether there are regional difference in residents' group purposes and;

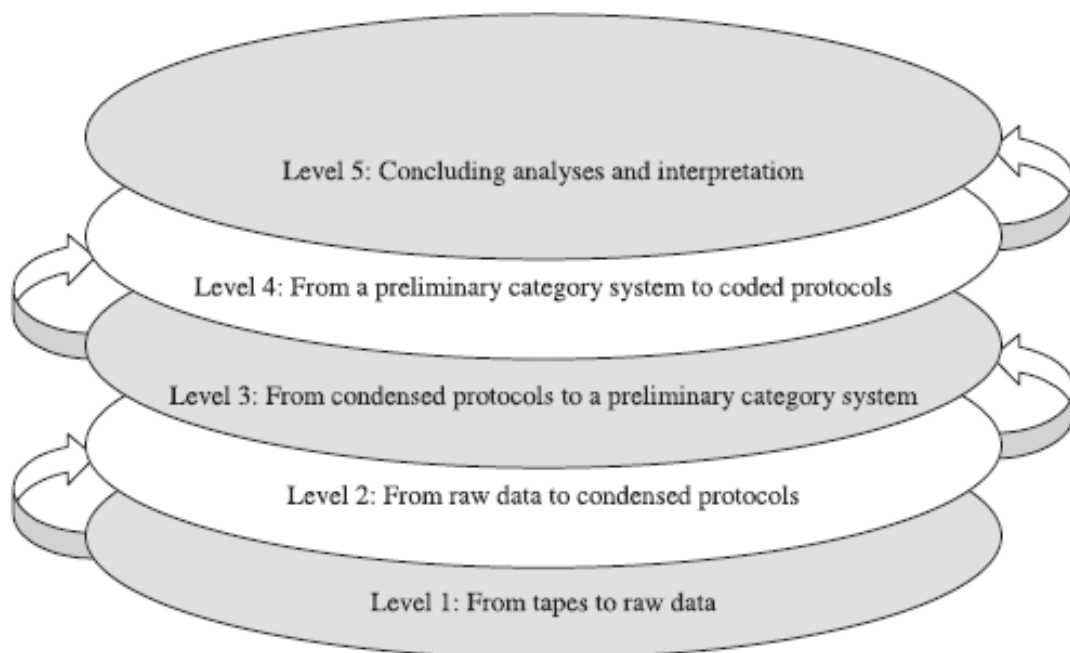
Q4a. If so, is their interaction with local governmental agencies relevant?

Question 4a will compare and contrast those differences (if any) with the level of engagement and contact the groups have with local government agencies or activities such as councils, district health boards and civil defence.

This research casts a wide net across a broad strata of theoretical work requiring themes to develop a set of generic purpose statements. Moretti *et al.* (2011, p.420) support qualitative content analysis as a “valid and reliable way” to interpret data. Conventional content analysis techniques are described by Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p.1279) as immersing oneself in the data, “coding” important concepts, recording initial impressions and analysis, labelling, and categorising the codes.

Schilling (2006, p.29) outlines a model for content analysis in the form of five steps: converting information into data; creating “condensed protocols” – the basic building blocks of the analysis; structuring the building blocks into a “category system” and then producing “coded protocols” that can be analysed and interpreted (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Qualitative content analysis spiral



In the context this research content analysis involves extracting the purpose-statements of the data to be studied (whether that be constitutions or survey results) and entering them into a spreadsheet. The data is then analysed and coded along the lines of the themes derived from the literature. In the event of a purpose falling outside of a pre-existing theme it is either noted

as a sub-theme or – if completely divergent – a new theme, or “emergent category” (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005, pp.1279-1280), is created. During this process key concepts and decisions are recorded to ensure consistency.

At the conclusion of the data analysis process the sub-themes are collapsed back into their themes (unless they ‘fit’ closer to new themes). This approach is “appropriate when existing theory or research literature on a phenomenon is limited” and enables the researcher to derive information from data without inflicting “preconceived categories or theoretical perspectives” (*ibid.*).

Criticism of the content analysis technique includes its simplicity, which prevents “detailed statistical analysis”, and its lack of qualitative value (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008 p.108). There is a threat to the validity of extrapolated data if “skills of analysis are lacking”, as the rigour of the methodology depends upon the effort exerted by the person using it (*ibid.*).

Despite these criticisms, the use of this method was viewed as appropriate because of the need to provide a benchmark of purposes to undertake a secondary content analysis process and construct a survey, in a juxtaposed dearth and plethora of empirical data on the subject matter.

SCOPE

As mentioned in Chapter 1 I have worked with and with and within residents’ groups for over 20 years and have a broad understanding of this sector. To enable the scope of the research to be developed, the construct residents’ group must first be defined. As a starting point only, in order to create a construct with which to undertake a search of the literature, the definition is based on the researcher’s own experiences and knowledge.

Groups that are legally formed in New Zealand must submit documentation to the Companies Office at the time of registration. These documents are readily available as part of the public record. Those legally-formed entities that do not exist for the pecuniary gain of members fall into two categories: incorporated societies and charitable trusts. One of the documents these entities must submit is their constitution (or trust deed) – the ‘rules’ of the organisation.

This research is not about business or commerce, and I am excluding that sector by focusing on organisations that are not set up for the financial enrichment of their members (such as

business associations, for example). And while there are many residents' groups in New Zealand who are not legal entities (National Residents' Association Database, 2011) it is practical for the purpose of time and cost to focus on those who are currently registered with the Companies Office, thereby achieving two goals:

1. Securing ready access to the constitutional documents, and;
2. Having some confidence that the organisation is active.

Thus for the purpose of this thesis a residents' group is broadly defined and identified as:

An organisation that is legally formed under New Zealand law, in whose members do not have a pecuniary interest, which self-identifies as being a residents' association / ratepayers' association / progressive association / community association / neighbourhood association / precinct society / community council.

This definition captures not only those 'traditional' groups that exist in suburbia and who parry with the local council on sporadic or ongoing issues, but also such groups as bodies corporate and ethnic societies, which is in keeping with the findings of the literature review. Drawing on this broad definition allows the initial population and sample for the research to be identified as well as a basis for searching the literature and developing protocols for the data analysis.

Secondary Data

Sourcing data from many different places lends a robust quality to research (Rountree & Laing, p.106). The constitutional data and that gathered from the survey relating to organisational purpose (organisational data) will be categorised using the purpose-themes identified in the literature review, modified when new themes are identified. This opens up the thematic categories to the possibility of new themes that may be unique to New Zealand, might not have been reported in the literature or might have been overlooked during the literature review. Having multiple sources of data enables the researcher to compare, contrast or correlate information and present. To introduce further rigour the data will be stratified using organisational demographics both geographic (divided into: local government boundaries; level of urbanisation) and temporal (date of the organisation's formation) to allow a comparative analysis to be undertaken of the purpose of New Zealand resident's groups by

region, district, population density and age, and providing a means of statistical analysis that will allow correlations to be assessed.

New Zealand public data

Population

A population of residents' groups was developed by searching the New Zealand Government's Companies Office register for the terms in Table 3.2. These data were added to the list of residents' groups already identified on the National Residents' Association Database (www.Residents.org.nz) and provided by the Draco Foundation (NZ) Charitable Trust for the purpose of this research. That database had 707 entries listed on it at the end of 2011 and when added to the 1,350 already identified through the Companies Office resulted in a total of 1,369 organisations (duplicates removed).

Table 3.2: Results of Companies Office search 29/11/2011

Search Term	Returned
Ratepayers	289
Progressive	70
Residents' Group	37
Residents' Society	92
Neighbourhood	76
Community Council	75
Community Association	218
TOTAL	1350

A spreadsheet was populated with the names and any other information available for the organisations. The organisation names (and other available information) were compared and 112 duplicates were further removed.⁷

⁷ An example of this is a double entry for the *Charleston Neighbourhood Committee* and the *Charleston Neighbourhood Association*, where the former is the name entered onto the National Residents' Association Database and the latter is the 'official' name registered with the Companies Office. Care was taken to only remove true duplicates through comparing other organisational information such as address or contact person. The 'official' name was retained.

Each of the remaining 1,257 organisations was individually checked against the records stored in the register of incorporated societies and charitable trusts. At this stage the organisations were vetted to ensure they fitted within the scope of the research. 529 were found to be struck-off or not registered, 122 were obviously not residents' groups in the context of this research (Table 3.3), and 18 did not have constitutions available to download from the Companies Office website. These 18 were not approached for their constitutions as the researcher felt this may introduce an unnecessary bias because of the personal attention paid to those particular organisations and not to others.

Table 3.3: Reasons for exclusion of groups from population

Type of Activity	Detailed Description	Reason for Exclusion
Sports organisations	Groups that exists with the primary purpose of promoting and providing sport as opposed to general recreation	These groups, while benefiting community, are acting only in the interest of people who play sport, not a specific demographic or place
Business organisations	Groups set up to create a competitive advantage in an area through business networking and joint promotion	These groups represent a community of interest, not of place or people, and exist with an overall aim of benefit members in a pecuniary manner
Community House or Community Hall committees	Groups with the sole purpose of managing a community asset	While these groups provide a valuable service to community in the spirit of residents' groups, they do not have a purpose beyond holding and maintaining an asset
Church-based community organisations	Community based groups attached to a church or religious organisation, usually with a high social-service function	These were excluded if a purpose was missionary (spreading religious teaching) in nature
Environmental groups	Organisations that have a primary focus of protecting the natural environment or habitats	The groups are not focused on people, rather on ecology

Additional information (organisational demographic data) was gathered on those that passed the initial vetting (Table 3.4) and their constitutions were downloaded. Personal information on was collected to assist in the distribution of the survey instrument to committee members

(via the Secretary of each organisation) and follow-up information. The result was a total of 588 organisations that fitted within the scope of the research.

Table 3.4: Information sourced from the Companies Office Register

Statutory information			
Status Whether the organisation is currently registered.	Number The Companies Office ID number of the organisation.	Registration Date The original date of registration.	Constitution? Whether a constitution exists on the Register for the organisation.
Organisational information			
Organisation Name The name of the organisation, as it appears on the Register.	Address The most likely address for the organisation. Note that this was often not the registered address (sometimes these addresses had not been updated since the formation of the group), but the most recent address of the Secretary or Treasurer.		
Personal information			
Contact name A contact name if listed. If not, this information was sometimes gleaned by historical reports and documents submitted by the organisation and available on the Company Office website.	Role The role of the contact person (e.g. Chair, Secretary, etc.).	Email A contact email address. This was essential as it was believed that a better response rate would be gained by approaches through multiple media.	Phone If a phone number was listed it was recorded, in case individual groups needed to be contacted post-survey.

Organisational demographics

Source 1: Companies Office

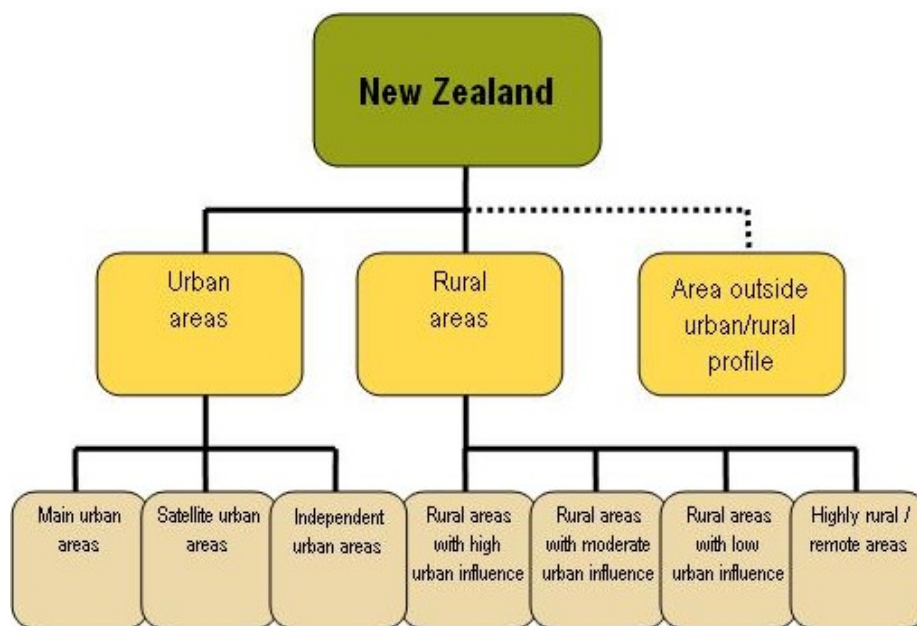
The age of the association forms part of the public record, as does the recency of its ‘purpose’ clause. It is assumed that the time when the organisation was formed will influence the concepts underlying its purpose statement, unless that statement has been updated in the interim. An example might be where an organisation was constituted in 1936 to ‘keep watch’ on a borough council that no longer exists. By comparing the organisational purpose statements in the constitution with the present-day opinions of the members – in aggregated form – conclusions will be able to be drawn on the connection these groups have as a whole between stated purpose and contemporary *raison d’etre*.

Source 2: Statistics New Zealand

Geographic data areas required to accurately place each respondent organisation within the geographic boundaries of various local authorities (TLA, RLA and Community Board) and

District Health Board for the purposes of answering Question Four. It is also need to ascertain the level of urbanity of the organisation. The two Statistics New Zealand documents used were the *2011 Annual Areas List* (which shows the constituencies – council, general electorate, etc. – for each mesh block) and the *Urban/Rural Profile: Geographic Concordance* spreadsheet, which shows where each mesh block fits on a seven-point scale of urbanisation (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2: Urban/rural profile (experimental) classification categories. Source: Statistics NZ



This method was used even though the respondents were asked in the survey to indicate the rural/urban nature of their area, to serve as a means to compare the survey response data with public data. No organisation in the scope of this study was an “area outside urban/rural profile”.

Statistics New Zealand provide software that allowed me to identify meshblock codes for each of the groups responding, based on their street address. An online tool also provided by Statistics New Zealand was then used to identify the meshblock for those groups with PO Box address. Finally, the list was checked and adjusted to ensure the meshblock code represented the geographic area the group represented. This was done by manually checking each address against the area the organisation ‘represented’ (for example, the Churton Park Community Association would be checked to ensure the address was actually in Churton Park). The accuracy of the meshblock attribution was not possible as in most cases the a residents’ group covers more than one meshblock. However, it was important to ensure the meshblock

represented accurately the ward, district/city and region along local government boundaries. Using cross-tabulation the 2006 meshblocks for were used to extrapolate an urban/rural classification from the latest (2011) list. The address list of the participant organisations were then populated with data from the Annual Areas List.

Some areas of the country come under the authority of a City or District council (Territorial Local Authority, or TLA) along with a Regional Council (Regional Local Authority, or RLA) and there are a few areas that only have an RLA (called Unitary Councils, as they combine – or unite – the functions of both city/district and regional local bodies). Dividing the residents’ groups into their regional areas provides a basis for comparison (as per Question Four), as these are well-defined geographical areas, recognised under New Zealand law and free of any ambiguity. As some residents’ groups do not have TLAs *per se*, this study will only use that secondary geographic distinction to provide overall contrast and context.

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data are used to gain the perspectives of people who run the organisations under examination, providing a contemporary and ‘insider’ perspective to residents’ groups and a balance to the published literature and constitutional documents. These views are required to answer Questions Two, Three and Four.

Consideration was given to using focus groups, conducting interviews or undertaking a survey. Rountree & Laing (pp.106-7) define focus groups as a “gathering of research participants organised by a researcher to discuss... issues relating to [their] topic”. Some of the weaknesses with this method include cost of time and resources, the low sample size, and skill requirements of the facilitator. While this method has been tried and proven over many years, the size of the sample would be too small to provide a truly representative picture of residents’ groups across New Zealand and would not allow the comprehensive comparison needed to address the questions being examined by this research. Conducting interviews presents a similar problem of sample size and is again costly and time-consuming. Hence, a survey was chosen to capture primary data. This method enables the researcher to seek the required information from the population of residents’ association committee members in a manner that is relatively cost-effective and broad-spectrum.

A survey of committee members of residents' groups from across the country, that drew on a smaller survey undertaken as part of the 2010 National Conference of Residents' associations, was undertaken during January to March 2012. This survey sought to bring to light the individual respondent's understanding of the purpose of their organisation, their attitude toward it, and some insight into where they thought their organisation fitted within the taxonomies outlined in this research. The 2010 survey was updated to reflect the learnings gained from my literature review and to focus it into an interesting but brief collection of 15 questions. A small number of questions was chosen to avoid complexity for the respondents and to reduce the time burden on them, thus reducing potential barriers to gaining a good level of response.

The survey was anonymous in the sense that it did not identify the respondent, only the respondent's organisation. This was communicated clearly to participants. Approval from the Victoria University Human Ethics Committee for the survey was sought and granted.

Operationalisation of variables

This thesis asks four main research questions which in turn are based on variables from four sources of data: Statistics New Zealand, the New Zealand Companies Office, a survey of residents' groups, and a review of the international literature. These sources provide 18 key variables that have been operationalised in order to address the research questions, which is shown in the table at Appendix 3. A flowchart of the relationship of these variables to the data sources and research questions is included as Appendix 4.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the main body of data used in this research uses a mixed-methods methodology called concurrent triangulation strategy. It uses "separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method and the strengths of the other method" (Creswell, 2003, p.217), in other words choosing this design allows a researcher to take advantage of the strengths of quantitative and qualitative methods while offsetting the weaknesses. The data needed to achieve this are theoretically all available in the public record (constitutional documents of residents' groups) yet the age of that data

could bias any conclusions based on it. Therefore another set of data must be attained to compare it with, such as the personal opinion of those people who are closely involved with residents' groups: the committee members. The validity of the relationship between these datasets can be checked through stratifying the data and analysing it along known paradigms, such as time and political and geo-social locale.

Because of the need to marry-up the individual survey data (of which there might be multiple responses for any one organisation) and the constitutional data (which is already in group format), and the qualitative and quantitative nature of the survey data (including ordinal, nominal, scale variables as well as open-ended questions) a 'data transformation' (*ibid*, p.220) approach was chosen. This "involves creating codes and themes qualitatively, then counting the number of times they occur in the text data" (*ibid*, p.221), enabling qualitative and quantitative data to be compared fairly. This model allows for equal weighting of both quantitative and qualitative data with the final analysis predominantly quantitative: in other words, qualitative data are transformed into quantitative prior to analysis. An example is shown in Table 3.5, where variables *etla* and *erla*, Likert scale responses of engagement with local authorities sit alongside *ccbd* and *cdhb*, nominal responses of contact frequency with local government agencies and *pur1-6*, purpose themes derived from an open-ended question.

Table 3.5: Example of data transformation approach

SurvID	etla	erla	ccbd	cdhb	pur1	pur2	pur3	pur4	pur5	pur6
1001	3.33	2.00	999.00	4.00	0	1	0	0	0	1

However, criticism has been made of mixed methodology and it is not popularly used in the field of organisational studies (Azorín & Cameron, 2010, p.95). Mixed methods research is difficult and considered more expensive in time and money, requires more skill from the researcher and can be difficult to get published (*ibid.*, p.97).

Despite that, I believe this approach will improve the quality of the research by providing a proven methodology to compare and contrast these data. While it reduces the power and individuality of the more qualitative data it enables a cleaner comparison with the information contained in the organisations' constitutions. Aggregating the qualitative data set is an efficient way of extracting broad themes and marries nicely with the methodology chosen to establish the benchmark purpose-themes.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

Analysis of Constitutional Data

A total of 588 constitutions were individually read and codes applied to the stated purpose (sometimes called “aims” or “objectives”) using standard content analysis technique (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). The purposes that fitted within the 11 purpose-themes derived from the literature were used as a basis for the initial classification. An explanation of each theme is below.

Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies

This would often be overt when present in the constitution. Examples include ‘monitoring activities of local authority’ and ‘taking an interest in council activities in the area’.

A source of local community knowledge

Purposes that identified the organisation as a repository of community knowledge, an active gatherer of local current events (e.g. ‘a watchdog for the community’), a disseminator of knowledge (e.g. ‘make residents aware of council activities’) or a means to educate (e.g. ‘hold workshops in the community on matters pertaining to local importance’).

Protecting or promoting a sense of place

Any purpose that addressed ‘community spirit, a ‘focus’ for the community, ‘vision’, ‘community building’ or ‘togetherness’.

Improving or protecting the environment

This relates to any part of the physical environment, including – but not limited to – the natural environment (‘ecology’), the built environment (‘buildings’, ‘character’), or the historical environment (‘heritage’).

Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government

An adversarial purpose specifically stating the organisation’s willingness to legally or otherwise oppose actions of the State, or openly questioning its actions regarding the community.

Representing the interests of a specific demographic group

Where the purpose relates to a particular community of shared interest rather than place.

Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)

Where an organisation has a purpose that involves collaborating or cooperating with an agent of the State, such as Police, Department of Conservation or local bodies.

Charitable activities

Where the term charity or charitable was specifically identified as part of a purpose.

As a platform for political activity

Organisations that had as a purpose to ‘advocate’ or ‘lobby’, be directly involved in promoting candidates in local or general elections, or ‘protesting’.

Promoting the interests of local people

Often overtly stated but also ‘giving voice to’ or ‘representing’ local people, providing a ‘link’ between community and local or central government, liaising or cooperating with kindred organisations, or ‘assisting’ residents to deal with agents of the State.

Additional themes were developed as required. Once all the constitutions were analysed the sub themes were re-grouped back into their main purpose-themes. This process resulted in 5 additional themes that are in addition to the 11 original ones and are included in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Additional purpose themes derived from analysis of constitutions

Theme	Description	Examples
Social Capital	When the purpose is bringing people together or creating networks – in essence, directly enabling social capital.	"Organising activities" "Bringing people together"
Safeguard /improve community wellbeing	When the purpose focuses on improving the standard of living or quality of life (as opposed to a ‘sense of place’ or the improvement of physical attributes).	"improve economic/social/ recreational/cultural attributes " "welfare of residents" "civil defence"
Source of inspiration or leadership	When the purpose creates a role for the organisation in taking action on behalf of and for the betterment of the wider community.	"planning for the future" "providing a forum" "promoting the area"
Body corporate	When the purpose identifies a role in managing the common affairs of members who have a sole vested interest in the group.	"promulgate the rules" "enforce the bylaws"
Own / operate community asset(s)	When the purpose is to own property for the benefit of the members or wider community.	"manage the communal assets" "operate a community hall"

The content analysis also allowed a typology of residents' group to be developed. In developing these types consideration was given to the end-users of the organisation and their relationship to the group. For example, some groups provide services to a specific race or age of people. Some represent only the interests of people who have a financial interest in an area. Some 'sell' resources/services to a select few (through an elite membership scheme) while others provide such resources to all and sundry. Analysis of the constitutions showed three discrete types and three sub-types of residents' groups (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Typology of residents' groups

Type	Characteristics	Occurrence
Demographic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name often indicates a specific demographic (e.g. Auckland Somali Community Association); • Purpose identifies serving a specific demographic. 	10
Demographic Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sub-set of the 'Demographic' type; • The demographic community is also an area-based community (e.g. a retirement village). 	5
Body Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose is asset focused; • Purpose includes promulgation of rules for members; • Maps, legal definitions and other technical information included as part of constitution. 	78
Body Corporate Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sub-set of the 'Body Corporate' type; • In addition has a focus on people (welfare, interests, etc.) and/or; • Has a focus on utilisation of the land for a communal good (e.g. Mataka Residents' Association operates the communal land as a farm for the benefit of members), and/or; • Provides an essential service (such as water reticulation) to financial members of an organisation. 	23
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation covers a geographic community, reflected in the name of a suburb/town (Newlands Paparangi Progressive Association) or an area (Inner City East Neighbourhood Group); • Area is scalable, can be small (a street: Jacksons Road Residents' Association) or large (a city: Dunedin Ratepayers' and Household Association); • Purpose often includes promoting the interest of local people; • Purpose often includes improving community wellbeing; • Purpose often includes enhancing the physical environment; • Is not either of the two body corporate or the demographic categories. 	434
Community Hybrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sub-set of the 'Community' type; • Communally owns an asset that: - • is used as a focus for the geographic community (e.g. Parakao Hall Society), or; • is an essential service (such as a town water supply or postal service) to a community. 	32

While there could be other ways to slice these organisations there are very clear and logical boundaries that distinguish these types of groups. The guidelines below provide a clear indication of the purposes and audience of each of the main types and the sub-types.

Demographic residents' groups

Type: Demographic

Perhaps the easiest type to identify is 'Demographic'. Essentially these groups are set up to cater to the needs of a specific race or age of people. Examples are the Senior Citizens Association Palmerston North, the Papakura Tongan Community Association and the Northland Filipino Community Association. The Waterfront Residents' Association is a unique case, constituted to provide education and services to older people, with nothing in the constitution that indicates a specific geographic area.

Sub-Type: Demographic Hybrid

A sub-type of this is a cross between the Demographic and Community types, which I have called 'Demographic Hybrid'. This organisation covers retirement villages and rest homes – a demographic grouped into a physical space – but could apply to, say, a group set up for the residents of a public housing complex where all the occupants were refugees or migrants from a specific country. Examples include the Selwyn Village Independent Residents' Society and the Summerset In The Orchard Residents' Association.

Body corporate residents' groups

Type: Body Corporate

I was told by one developer⁸ that many local authorities require a residents' association be set up by the developer as part of the resource consent requirements. This could explain the large number of this type of residents' group. Whereas Demographic type groups often can be identified by the name, the 'Body Corporate' type is not as obvious. However, the constitution will contain a set of legal definitions and will in most cases be drafted by a law firm. There will often be either maps or technical descriptions of the area. The purpose of this

⁸ Ethics Committee conditions of the survey prevent me from referencing this source.

type of group is solely focused on property, characteristics of the area that maintain value (often expressed through design guidelines) and the promulgation of rules.

Sub-Type: Body Corporate Hybrid

A sub-type I have named 'Body Corporate Hybrid' is a synthesis of the Body Corporate and Community types. These groups are still focused on communal assets and rules, but incorporate provisions for the welfare, wellbeing and general interests of the people living in the area as well. An example is the Morven Residents' Society, a body corporate that owns and manage the water supply and reticulation and the road access, while the Beaumont Quarter Residents' Society and Hokimai Heights Residents' Association are both examples of bodies corporate that have the interests/welfare of the residents of the locale as a purpose. The Sanctuary Residents' Association undertakes pest control while another example of this hybrid are groups such as the Mataka Residents' Association and the Meadowlinks Farm Estate Residents' Association, both of which own and operate farms for the benefit of the members, and the Riversdale Terraces Residents' Society which operates a retail power and water supply for a developed area. The latter didn't fit into the 'Community Hybrid' category because their constitutions are still focused on the technical and legal operations of a specific piece of land owned jointly by members, as opposed to covering areas that go outside this scope such as land owned by central or local government, or non-member residents. The Rangitoto Island Bach Community Association was established to work in conjunction with local authorities and the Department of Conservation and to develop rules and bylaws for the area, while still promoting the interests of the members and improving the area for the public.

Community residents' groups

Type: Community

The 'Community' type of resident group is perhaps the one most people would readily identify with in this country. These groups are place-based but the area they cover is scalable, from a single street to an entire city. They have a clear focus on the residents of the area, the physical environment, general wellbeing of the community or information distribution and sometimes have a civil society purpose (such as monitoring local government) included as part of their constitution. They do not have a primary focus on communal assets or the

enforcement of rules (e.g. the Rakino Ratepayers' Association and the Newtown Residents' Association).

Sub-Type: Community Hybrid

A sub-type – the 'Community Hybrid' group – has similar purpose attributes and area of effect as the Community type, but in addition operates an asset that can be either communally owned (for example the Duncan Bay Residents' Association operate a local water supply) or owned on behalf of the wider community (such as the hall owned and operated by the Okaihau Community Association).

Table 4.3 shows the highest number of each type of residents' group are based in the nation's largest region, Auckland (body corporate 39, community 134, demographic 8). Body corporate-type residents' groups also feature relatively highly in Wellington (14) and Northland (12). Community-type residents' groups are spread throughout New Zealand with the exception of Southland, with a high occurrences in Canterbury (82), Wellington (54) and Waikato (43). Demographic-type residents' groups occur in small numbers in Bay of Plenty, Northland, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu/Wanganui and Canterbury.

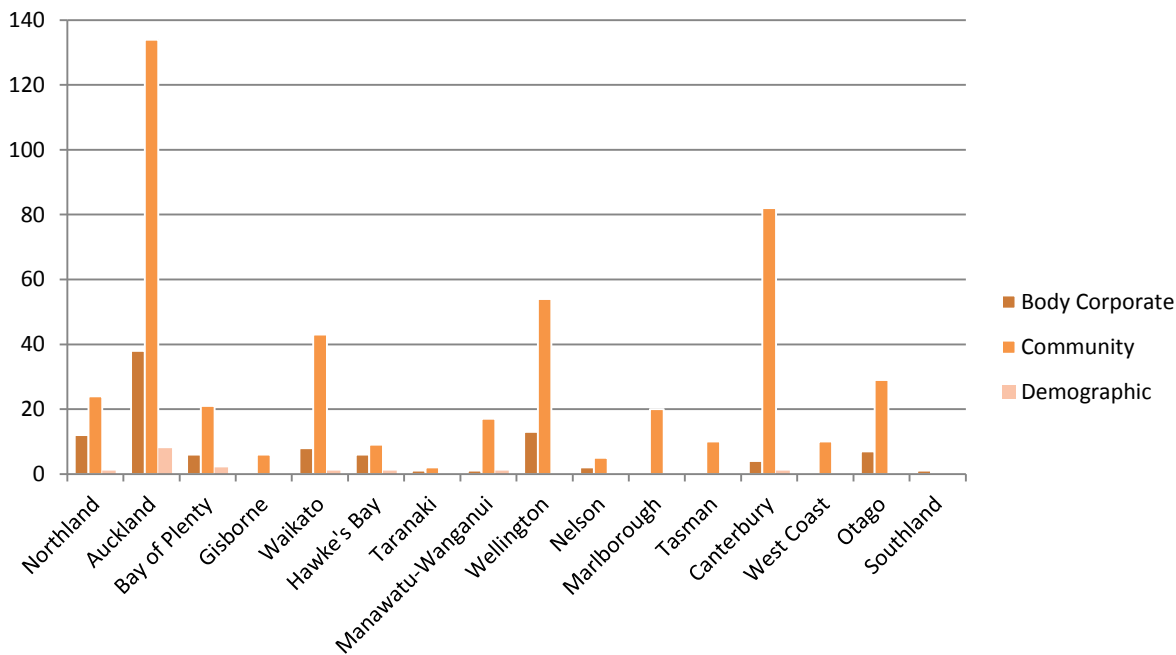
Table 4.3: Distribution of body corporate, community and demographic groups (n=582)

	Northland	Auckland	Bay of Plenty	Gisborne	Waikato	Hawke's Bay	Taranaki	Manawatu-Wanganui	Wellington	Nelson	Marlborough	Tasman	Canterbury	West Coast	Otago	Southland	Total
Body Corporate	12	39	6	0	8	6	1	1	14	2	0	0	4	0	7	1	101
Community	24	134	21	6	43	9	2	17	54	5	20	10	82	10	29	0	466
Demographic	1	8	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	15

There is no apparent relationship between the distribution of each type of group as a whole, aside from the draw of Auckland's population. The community-type groups do seem to focus around population centres with the highest occurrences in Auckland (134), Canterbury (82), Wellington (54), Waikato (43) and Otago (29).

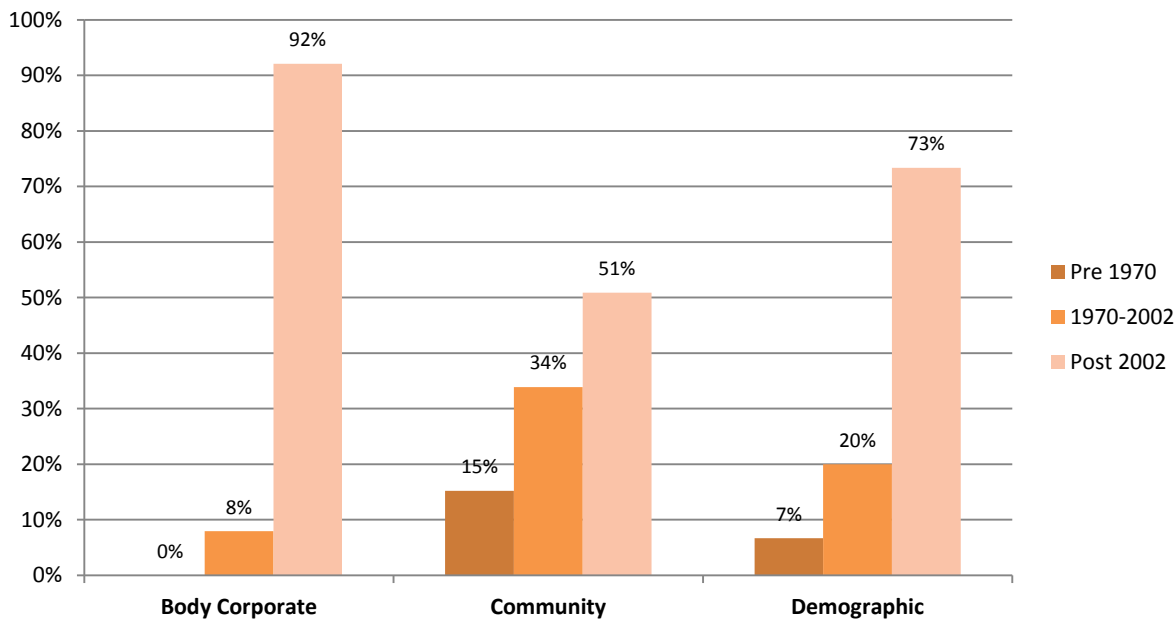
Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of each major type across the regions of New Zealand.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of body corporate, community and demographic groups (n=582)



A comparison of the age of each organisation (Figure 4.2) shows body corporate-types are a relatively new phenomenon, with 92% started post 2002 and 8% in the 1970-2002 time period. None existed prior to 1970. There has been a steady growth in community-type groups with 15% started pre-1970, 34% between 1970 and 2002 and the remaining 51% since 2002.

Figure 4.2: Formation era of residents' groups by type (n=582)



When looking at rurally-based residents' groups the demographic type are noticeable by their absence (Figure 4.3, Table 4.4). Among the other two it is interesting that there are no community-type residents' groups that identify with owning or managing assets. This comes as a surprise, as one conjures thoughts of bucolic community halls in the heart of our New Zealand countryside. It might be explained by the existence of separate hall management organisations in rural areas. Rural bodies corporate-type groups also have a focus on protecting the physical environment (16%), promoting a sense of place and general wellbeing of their members (13%) and promoting the interests of local people (10%). The main purposes of rural community-type groups are promoting local interests (70%), environment (49%) and wellbeing (42%), leadership (36%) and being a source of community knowledge (34%).

Figure 4.3: Purposes of residents' groups in rural areas by type (n=197)

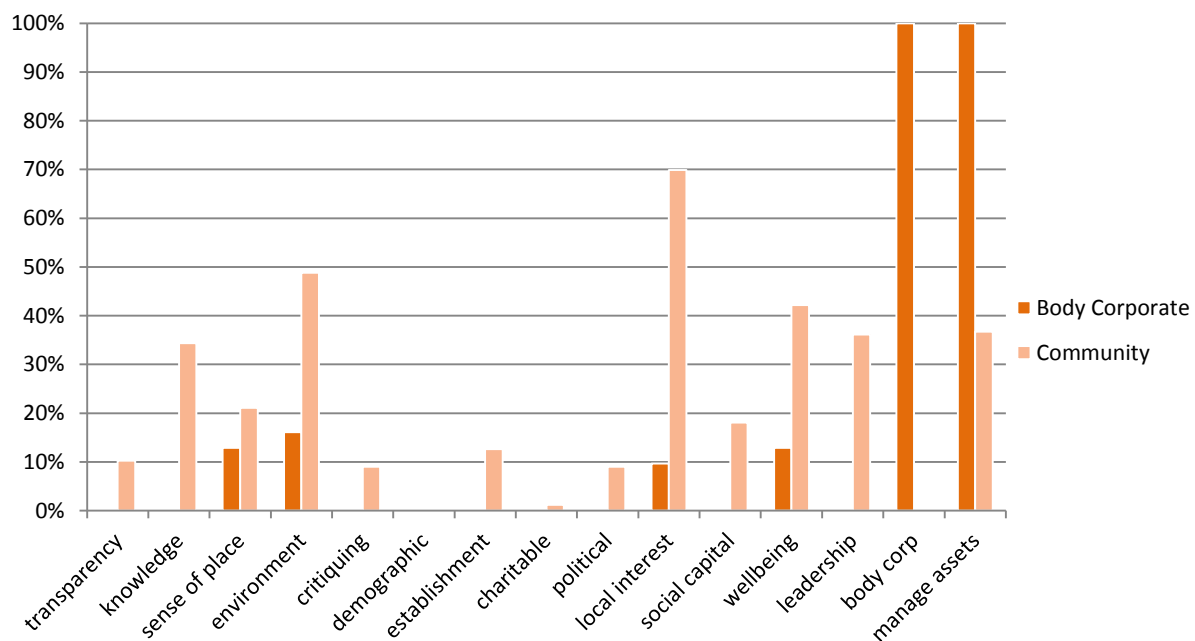


Table 4.4: Purposes of residents' groups in rural areas by type (n=197)

	transparency	knowledge	sense of place	environment	critiquing	demographic	establishment	charitable	political	local interest	social capital	wellbeing	leadership	body corp	manage assets
Body Corporate	0%	0%	13%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	10%	0%	13%	0%	100%	100%
Community	10%	34%	21%	49%	9%	0%	13%	1%	9%	70%	18%	42%	36%	0%	37%

All demographic-type residents' groups are found in urban areas. Those urban-based groups have as key purposes the wellbeing of their community (40%), interest of their people (33%), the development of social capital (27%). This is in keeping with their mission, which is people, rather than place-focused (Figure 4.4, Table 4.5). Community-type groups have a high focus on local interest in urban areas (77%) and in the wellbeing of the community in general (41%). Body corporate-types have a lower general wellbeing focus in urban areas (7%).

Figure 4.4: Purposes of residents' groups in urban areas by type (n=385)

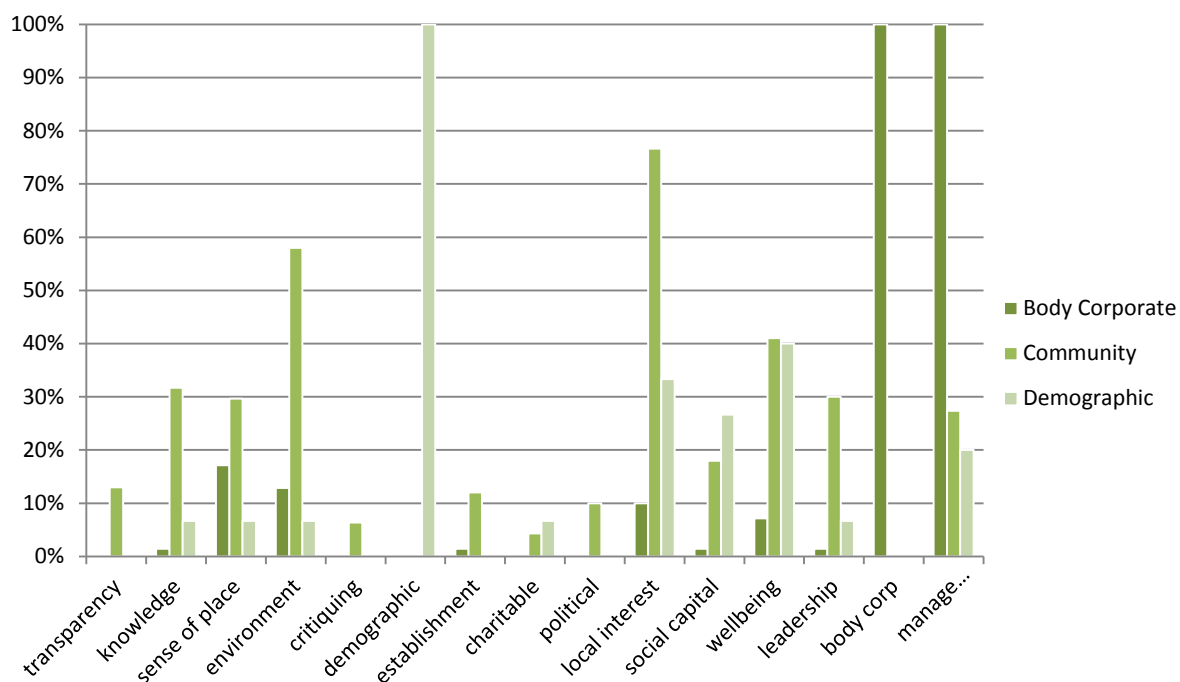


Table 4.5: Purposes of residents' groups in urban areas by type (n=385)

	transparency	knowledge	sense of place	environment	critiquing	demographic	establishment	charitable	political	local interest	social capital	wellbeing	leadership	body corp	manage assets
Body Corporate	0%	1%	17%	13%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	10%	1%	7%	1%	100%	100%
Community	13%	32%	30%	58%	6%	0%	12%	4%	10%	77%	18%	41%	30%	0%	27%
Demographic	0%	7%	7%	7%	0%	100%	0%	7%	0%	33%	27%	40%	7%	0%	20%

Analysis of Survey Data

The survey instrument was influenced by a previous survey piloted in 2010 as part of the National Residents' Association Conference held in Wellington. A notable addition to this survey instrument is SurQ13, which asks participants to indicate (by ticking a box) the purposes their organisation performs in their opinion. These purpose-themes were derived from the literature review.

Other information was sought in the survey and used for the purpose of this research, such as the average hours spent per month on organisational business, the level of engagement and frequency of contact with a variety of agencies and organisation, and an additional open-ended question again seeking the purpose (in the respondent's opinion) of the organisation (SurQ3). Some data were gathered that did not make it into the final research, such as the best and worst parts of being on a residents' group committee and suggestions for ways residents' groups could improve their service to their community.

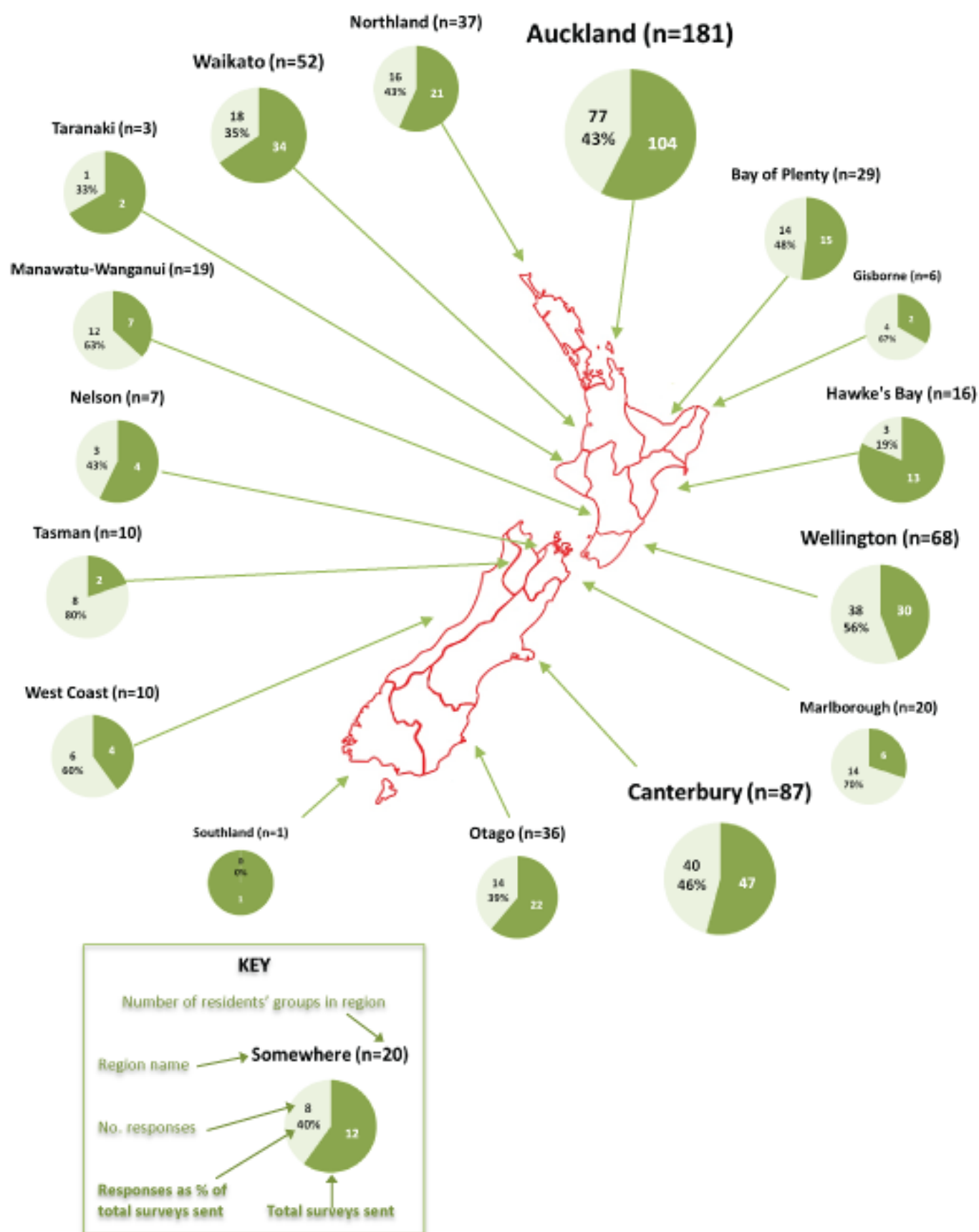
Response rate

The survey received 658 usable responses from 266 discrete organisations, averaging 2.5 responses per organisation (Table 4.6). That equates to a 46% response rate of the 582 organisations that fell into the scope of this study (after 6 exclusions, see below). Figure 4.5 indicates the national distribution of the organisations and the response rate per region. Due to the scope of the research the full spread of groups is not represented here, as – in addition to the 6 exclusions – there were a further 547 organisations that could not be used, either because they had been struck off or not registered on the Register of Incorporated Societies (529), or did not have constitutions available (18).

Table 4.6: Survey distribution and response by group, *sans* excluded organisations (n=582)

	Auckland	Canterbury	Wellington	Waikato	Northland	Otago	Bay of Plenty	Marlborough	Manawatu-Wanganui	Hawke's Bay	Tasman	West Coast	Nelson	Gisborne	Taranaki	Southland
Surveys sent	181	87	68	52	37	36	29	20	19	16	10	10	7	6	3	1
Surveys received	76	40	37	18	16	14	14	14	12	3	8	6	3	4	1	0
Response Rate	42%	46%	54%	35%	43%	39%	48%	70%	63%	19%	80%	60%	43%	67%	33%	0%

Figure 4.5: Map of residents' group distribution and response rate by group, *sans* excluded organisations



Response rate and reliability are discussed later in this chapter. Each of the 660 responses was entered into a spreadsheet and analysed as shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Analysis of survey data

Survey Question (SurQ)	Method of Analysis
SurQ3) In your opinion, what is the main purpose of your organisation?	Each purpose-theme was assigned a '1' if it was present. Responses were aggregated and assigned to each organisation.
SurQ5) Please rate the importance of residents' groups to New Zealand society overall.	The average of all responses over the entire set is used (n=660).
SurQ6) On average, how many hours per month do you spend working for your organisation?	The average of all responses over the entire set is used (n=660).
SurQ9) Describe the level of engagement between your group and your City/District Council.	The <u>average</u> of the sum of the responses was assigned to the organisation (n=266).
SurQ10) Describe the level of engagement between your group and your Regional Council.	See SurQ9.
SurQ11) How many other residents' groups do you have regular contact with (at least once every six months)?	The <u>sum</u> of the responses was assigned to the organisation (n=266).
SurQ12) In your role as a committee member, how much contact do you have with the following .[<i>Councillor, council officer, Community Board, civil defence, District Health Board</i>]	In the case of multiple responses the <u>lowest</u> number (highest frequency) was assigned to the group.
SurQ13) In your opinion, which of the following roles does your residents' group perform? [<i>List of the 11 purpose-themes derived from the literature</i>]	The organisational group was assigned a purpose if a majority of respondents selected it in a <u>consensus</u> approach. A tie was treated as a majority (this is explained further below).
SurQ15) On the scale, show how important you think residents' groups are to New Zealand society.	See SurQ5.

Care was taken in the aggregation of data from individual to organisational level, with particular concern around preserving the integrity of the data. Achieving this was not straightforward, as can be seen from the table above, and some further explanation is warranted.

Responses to open-ended SurQ3 (open-ended purpose question) were analysed using the same content analysis technique as the constitutional data using the original 11 purpose-themes plus the 5 additional derived in the constitutional analysis. No further purpose-themes were identified during this process. SurQ5 (importance of residents' groups) was replicated using slightly different wording and a smaller scale as SurQ15 and is useful in establishing reliability of the data. Due to the varying numbers of responses per organisation in SurQ6 (hours per month) it was not feasible to derive an average hourly effort for each organisation

so the data are presented an average number of hours across the whole sample. SurQ11 (other residents' groups in contact with) relates to the external contacts per individual, per group (and is reported as such). Other options such as averaging the sum or choosing the maximum were considered but cannot be guaranteed representative of the group. Regarding SurQ12 (frequency of contact with local authority agents): as the level of contact is reported at a group level in this research it is assumed that, for example, the contact of an organisation is "Weekly" if at least one respondent states this, even if other respondents never have contact or indicate a less-frequent level of contact.

Main Datasets

Four key datasets were established:

- **[Con(all)]** - constitutional data from the entire sample (n=582);
- **[Con(rsp)]** - constitutional data from organisations that responded (n=266);
- **[Sur#(all)]**⁹ - data from an analysis of survey questions 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 (n=660), and;
- **[Sur#(grp)]**² data from the above survey questions aggregated into organisational groups (n=266).

Stratification of Data

Using a software tool produced by Statistics New Zealand called Classification Coding System (CCS) meshblock codes were extracted from the groups' addresses. This coding was then manually checked to ensure accuracy and to apply meshblock codes to those groups with post office box addresses using the Interactive Boundary Map at <http://apps.nowwhere.com.au/StatsNZ/Maps/default.aspx>.

Meshblock data enabled each group to be categorised along political boundaries such as electorates and wards, and further enabled a classification of urbanity for each group based upon Statistics New Zealand data.

⁹ The '#' indicates the number of the survey question.

The data were stratified in the following ways:

- **[Region]** - The geographical boundaries of Regional or Unitary Councils as defined in the Local Government Act 2002, which requires the boundaries to conform to one or more water catchment areas (Local Government Act, 2002);
- **[Urbanity]** - Rural or urban in nature, as defined by Statistics New Zealand;
- **[Type]** - Type of residents' group as defined by the typology developed from the constitutional analysis.
- **[Age]** - The age of the organisation, based upon data supplied by the Companies Office.
- **[ConAge]** - The age of the constitution with respect to the most recent time the purpose statement was updated, based on data supplied by the organisations themselves to the Companies Office.

Unitary council areas

Five of the 16 regions in New Zealand are governed by Unitary Authorities, instead of the Regional/City or District combination. The survey instrument gave no option to participants to rank the level of engagement with a unitary authority. 42% of respondents who lived in the five unitary regions scored both SurQ9 and SurQ10 (*Describe the level of engagement between your group and your ...Council*) the same while 19% ignored one of the questions but answered the other. Of the remainder, 35% answered both questions within 2 points of each other. Based on these statistics it was decided to take an average score of the two survey questions to ascribe to a Unitary Authority engagement variable (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Example of aggregating SurQ9 and SurQ10 to create score for unitary authority

	Q9.	Q10.	Unitary Authority 'Score'	Aggregated Score
Respondent 1	4	2	Average = 3	Average = 3.33
Respondent 2	3	3	Average = 3	
Respondent 3	missing	4	Average = 4	

Exceptions

Groups

There was some grey area around the scope for including groups in this study as it was not possible to define what a residents' group was at the outset. Most such groups were weeded out in advance but due to the multiple sources of information some slipped through. This resulted in a requirement for 6 groups to be excluded from the study after the research had begun. These are represented in Table 4.9. The exclusion in no way diminishes the value of these organisations or the work they do for their respective communities.

Table 4.9: Exclusions of residents' groups post-survey

Organisation Name	Reason for Exclusion
The Progressive Jewish Congregation Of Auckland Trust Board	Primarily religion-focused
Shakti Community Council	Primarily an education /welfare provider
Waitarere Beach Progressive and Ratepayers' Association	Duplicate
Strathmore Park Progressive and Beautifying Association	No constitution available
Hikurangi Friendship House	Primarily a service /welfare provider
MPHS Initiative For Neighbourhood Learning	Primarily an education provider

Eight survey respondents were also excluded, for the reasons outlined in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Exclusion of survey respondents

Organisation Name	Reason for Exclusion
First Imperial Apartments Body Corporate	Not found in Companies Office register
Mission Bay Kohimarama Residents' Association (x2)	No constitution available
Muriwai Beach Progressive Association (x2)	No constitution available
Porirua Surfing Troupe Incorporated	Not within scope of this research
Riverhead Citizens Hall Society Incorporated	Not listed in database pre-survey
Riverhead Community Courts Club Incorporated	Not within scope of this research

Exclusion of ‘negative behaviour’ theme

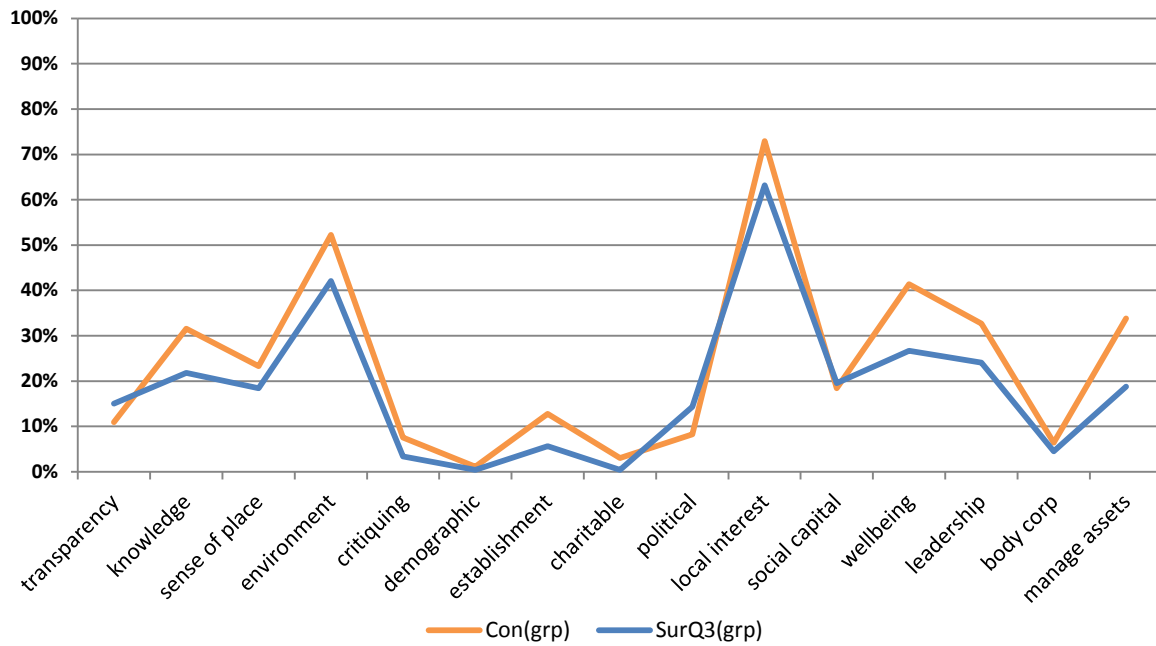
It was obvious through the analysis of SurQ13 (where participants were given the opportunity to tick boxes next to the 11 purpose-themes derived from the literature) that there was confusion over the purpose-theme “Negative behaviour that impacts on people in your community”. One thing in particular that indicated confusion was the number of annotated comments on the surveys that expressed confusion or surprise. Many people who ticked the box also changed the wording, for example by prefixing the statement with the word “Preventing”, thus changing the nature of the purpose-theme. In addition there were no examples anywhere in the constitutional purpose-statements, or in the answer to SurQ3 (the open-ended question about the organisation’s purpose) to indicate this purpose existed. For the purpose of clarity I removed this purpose-theme. This decision and its implications is discussed more fully in the limitations chapter.

Reliability

While the population of residents’ groups covers the entire country, it is not large and this presents some problems in a statistical sense. Using a standard distribution would produce a very high margin of error. Considering the size of the population of residents’ groups (1,135), the size of the sample (582) and number of organisations responding (266) it would appear to unfairly bias the data toward unreliability. Usually the normal approximation to the binomial distribution would be used, but Morris (undated) proposes that *“when the target population is less than approximately 5000, or if the sample size is a significant proportion of the population size, such as 20% or more, then the standard sampling and statistical analysis techniques need to be changed”* and it is more appropriate to use the normal approximation to the hypergeometric distribution. Applying a statistical analysis in this manner with a sample size of 266, a population of 1,135 and a p of 0.24 results in a 99% confidence level with a margin of error of $\pm 2.26\%$.

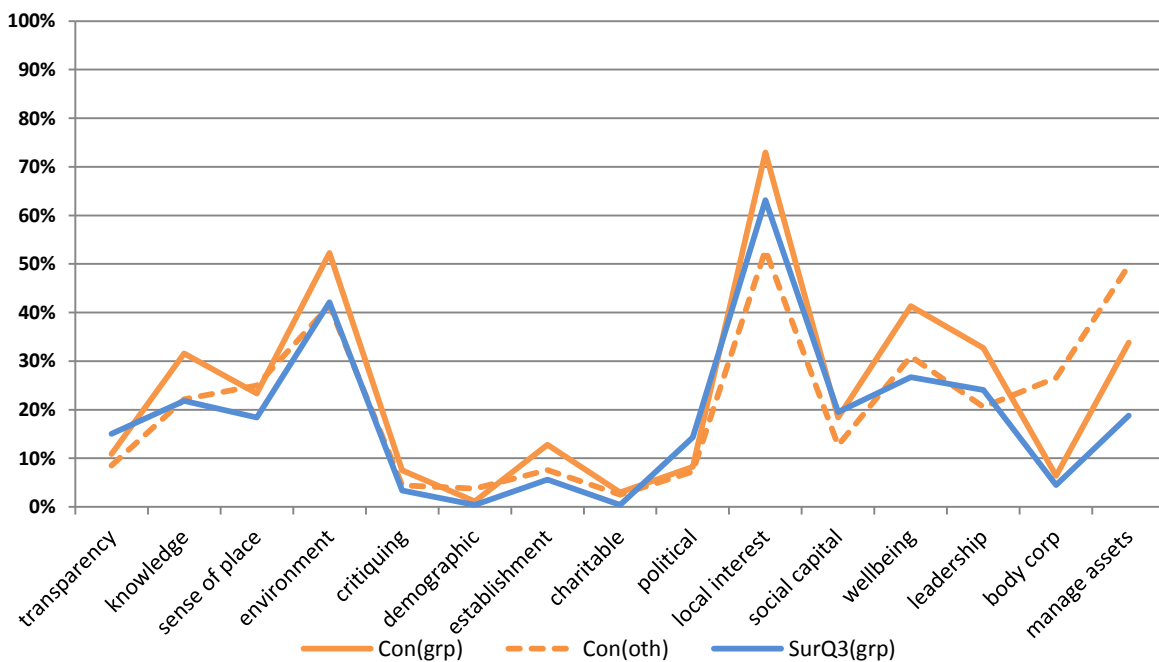
An indicator of reliability of the coding is the correlation between the answer to SurQ3 and the analysis of purposes contained in the constitutions. Despite these two datasets being independent of one-another the correlation between them is very high (0.96) as shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Constitutional Con(Grp) and stated SurQ3(grp) purposes (n=266)



Further reliability might be established through comparing the constitutional analysis of groups responding Con(grp) to groups that did not respond Con(oth). Note that in Figure 4.7 the correlation between these two datasets is high (0.86). Note the difference in the body corporate purpose, which reflects the low response rate from BC-type groups (discussed later).

Figure 4.7: Constitutional purposes of groups responding Con(grp) and not responding Con(oth), and stated purposes of groups responding SurQ3(grp) (n=582)



The number of responses per organisation ranged from 1 to 7 when both electronic and paper survey responses were combined. In the case of multiple responses the data received from respondents were aggregated to produce an overall dataset of each of the 266 organisations: if any of the multiple respondents stated a particular purpose then that was counted for the organisation overall. Table 4.11 is an example.

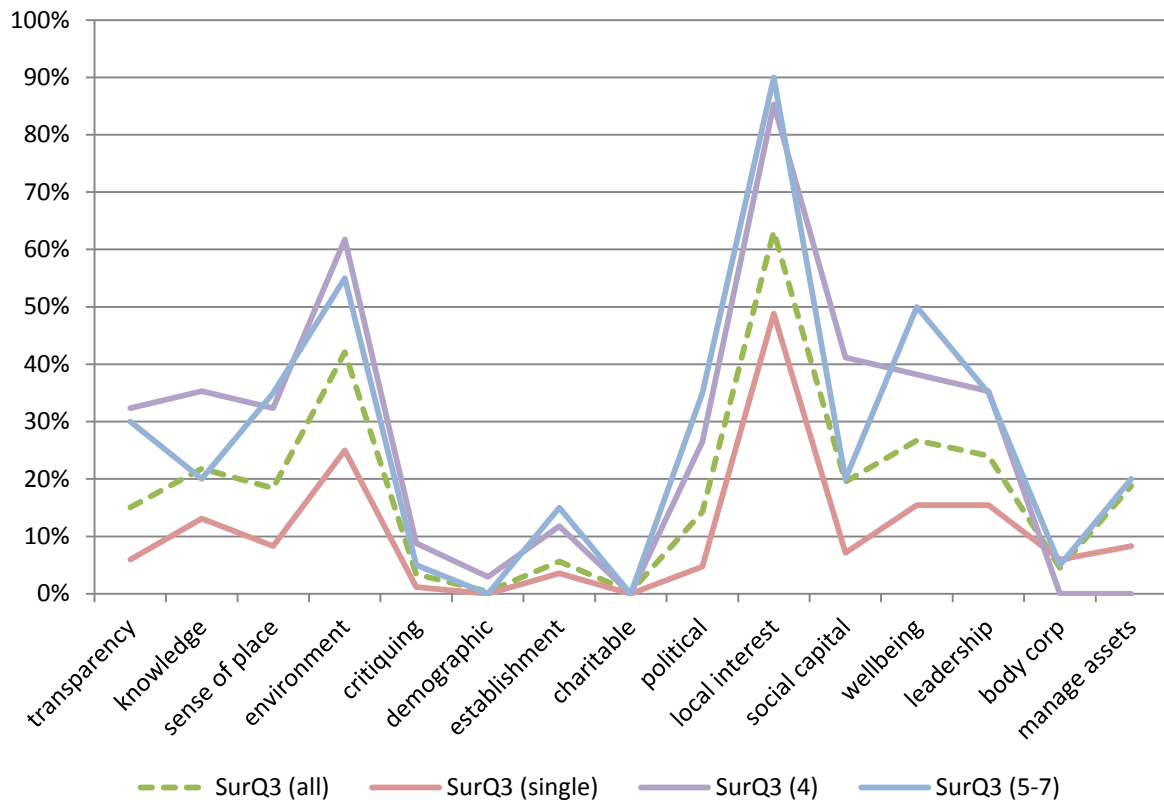
Table 4.11: Example of coding of purpose statements for three respondents from one residents' group

SurQ3	Code	Purpose-Theme
Advocate for rural residents	10	As a platform for political activity
to be an advocate for the rural residents in issues which may affect the rural life	11	Promoting the interests of local people
to have a voice for rural residents when decisions are being made	2	A source of local community knowledge
to encourage rural residents to put in submissions to Council		
to be a link for rural services and ideas		

Two separate respondents said their group was an advocate (political activity). One respondent said the group was a voice for residents' and made submissions to Council (promoting the interests of local people) and link to services and ideas in the community (source of local community knowledge). No matter how many respondents identified the purpose it was included only once.

To ensure the reliability of the data, I compared the responses of the 84 organisations with only one response made to SurQ3 (the open-ended survey question) asking the purpose of the organisation with the 34 sending four responses and 20 sending 5-7 responses. Figure 4.8 illustrates the high inter-rater reliability among the survey participants. However, the large gaps between single-response and multiple-response groups indicates the bias effect (in this case inflation of purpose occurrences) the method of aggregation has on the overall data, although the net effect (green dotted line) when all data are combined reduces that inflation. It could be argued that the net figure is a fairer indication of the total responses from residents' groups as opposed to the single-response figure (red line), which relies on the respondent to have ultimate knowledge of the organisation's purpose. While aggregation seems a far-from-perfect method it is important to remember that SurQ3 was only one of three independent means of identifying the purpose of residents' groups.

Figure 4.8: Inter-rater reliability of SurQ3 single and multi-person responses (n=266)



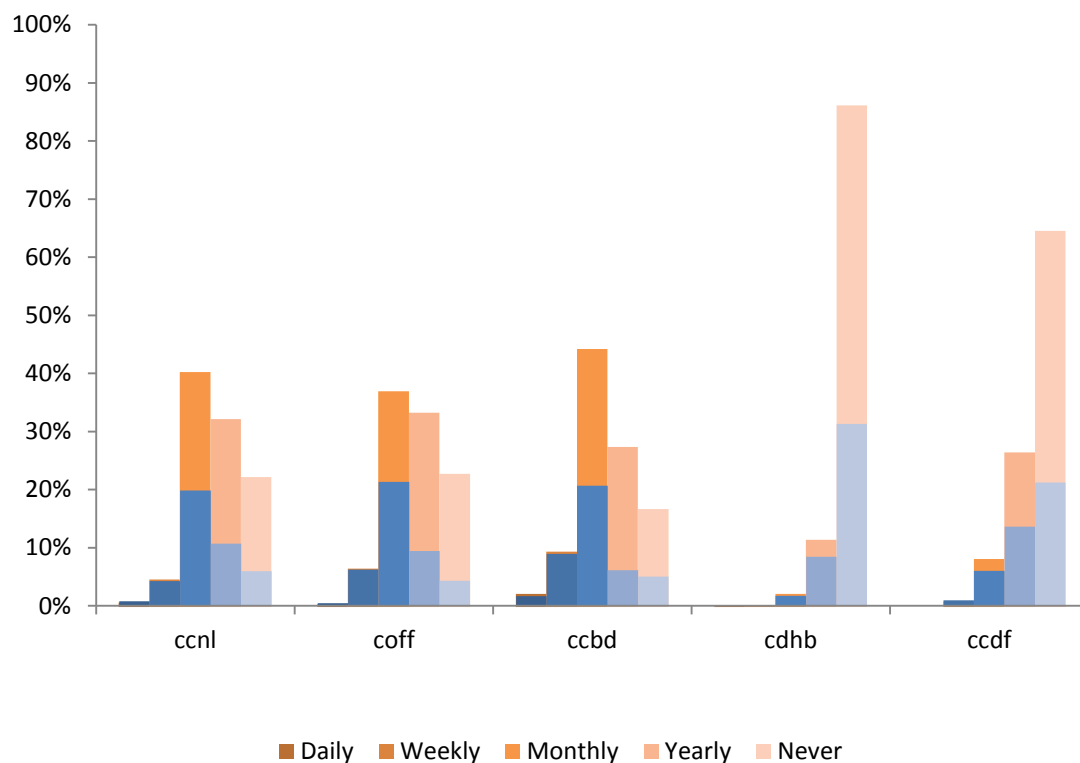
When compared with the total set of data for SurQ3 the single-response dataset had a correlation of 0.97 and the 4 and 5-7 response datasets had a correlation of 0.93 and 0.95 respectively. However, the high correlation continues between the single datasets and 4 and 5-7 datasets was 0.88 and 0.91 respectively. The correlation between 4 and 5-7 response datasets was 0.91. This shows a high inter-rater reliability. Table 4.12 shows the correlation between the data.

Table 4.12: Correlation between SurQ3 single and multi-person responses (n=266)

Correlation between:	Correlation between:	Correlation between:
Single response and 4 responses 0.88	4 responses and 5-7 responses 0.91	Single response and 5-7 responses 0.91
Single response and all responses 0.97	4 responses and all responses 0.93	5-7 responses and all responses 0.95

Figure 4.9 shows the correlation between the data from SurQ12 (frequency of contact with local authority agents) both in aggregated and raw form.

Figure 4.9: Correlation between aggregated Sur12(grp) and raw Sur12(all) data (n=658)



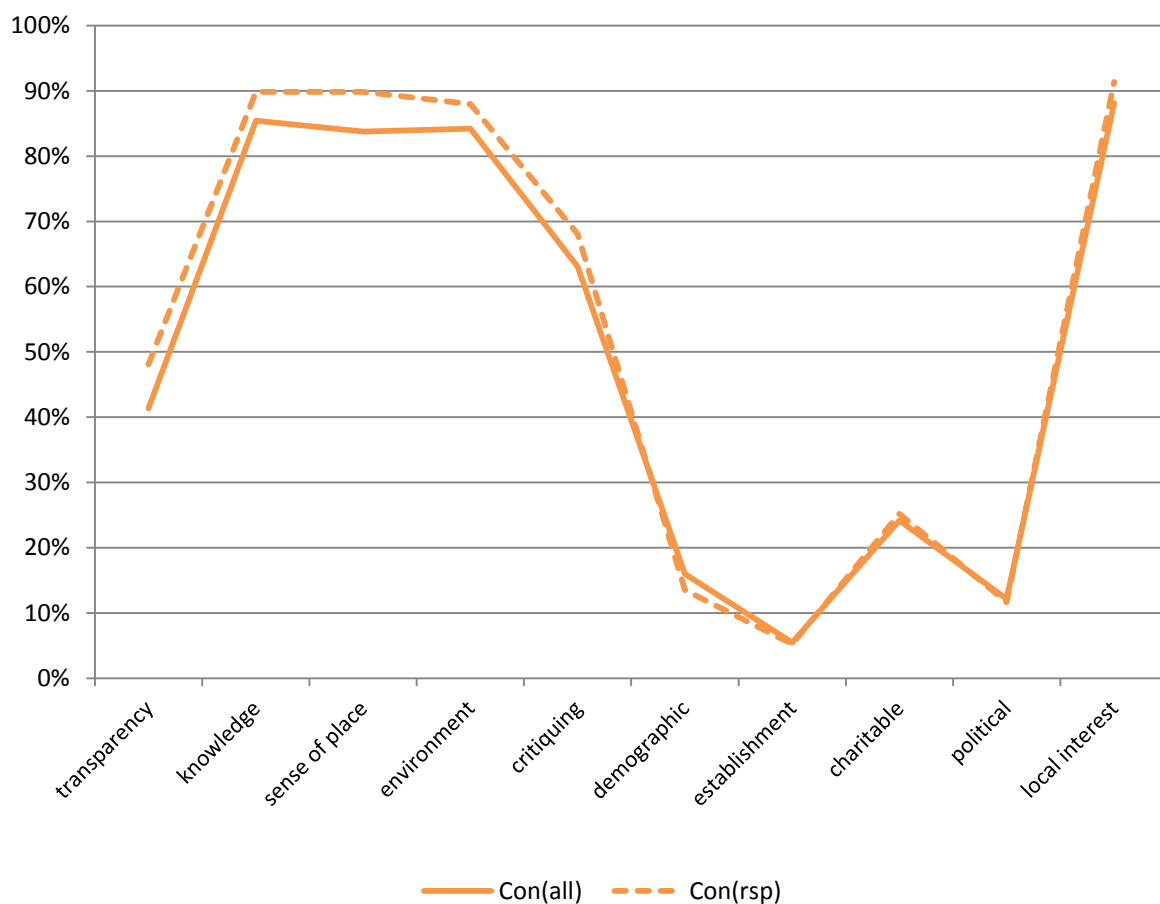
Note that the correlation between the aggregated Sur12(grp) and unaggregated Sur12(all) data are very high (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Correlation between SurQ12 single and multi-person responses (n=266)

CCNL – Councillor	0.92
COFF – Council Officer	0.79
CCBD – Community Board	0.85
CCDHB – District Health Board	0.99
CCDF – Civil Defence	0.97

Figure 4.10 shows the correlation between the data from SurQ13 (closed-ended question on purpose of organisation, based on the 10¹⁰ literature review purpose-themes) both in aggregated and raw form. This data was aggregated from individual response into organisational groups using a ‘consensus’ approach, similar to how a vote would be taken in a meeting. If the majority ticked a purpose in SurQ13 (or the vote was tied) then that purpose would get assigned to the group. The resulting datasets are closely aligned.

Figure 4.10: Comparison of aggregated Sur13(rsp) with un-aggregated Sur13(all) data (n=658)



Whenever data are manipulated there are risks to their integrity, from choosing an improper method of aggregation to simply transposing data or losing it altogether. By comparing and contrasting tranches of data, some dependent (aggregated versus non-aggregated) and some independent (constitutional versus survey), I have provided a check against integrity loss.

¹⁰ As explained earlier the “negative behaviour” theme was excluded post-survey.

Table 4.14 summarises the correlation between all aggregated and raw datasets. The high correlation suggests the data represents consistency after it has been ‘moulded’ from individual responses to groups representing organisations as a whole.

Table 4.14: Summary of correlation between aggregated and raw datasets

Survey Question	Aggregation Method	Correlation
Q3 (Purpose of organisation – open question)	Purpose theme counted if identified at least once.	1.00
Q9 (Engagement with City/District Council)	Average of the sum of individual responses.	1.00
Q10 (Engagement with Regional Council)	Average of the sum of individual responses.	1.00
Q12a (Contact with local Councillor)	Lowest score counted for each official.	0.92
Q12b (Contact with council officer)		0.79
Q12c. (Contact with Community Board member)		0.85
Q12d (Contact with DHB member)		0.99
Q12e (Contact with civil defence officer/manager)		0.97
Q13 (Purpose of organisation – closed question)	Consensus (majority rules) of purposes selected.	0.99

Chapter Conclusion

This research is based upon data derived from two main sources, namely the constitutions of duly formed residents’ groups (as per the scope of this thesis) and survey instruments sent to committee members of those groups. The survey was primarily based on 11 purpose-themes derived from the literature, although one of those themes (negative behaviour) was subsequently excluded due to the apparent confusion exhibited by respondents answering the question.

Both the constitutional and survey data are representative of the population of residents’ groups in New Zealand. At best estimation there are 1,135 residents’ groups in this country and just over half (51%) fell into the scope of the research. Many of the groups excluded were not legal entities currently listed on the Register of Societies and Charitable Trusts. A total of 651 responses from 266 discrete organisations were received which (out of the 582 groups sent surveys) was a response rate of 45%. The margin of error is $\pm 2.26\%$ with an accuracy of 99%.

The data gathered appear reliable, as shown by the close correlation between two independent datasets namely purposes identified in the constitutions and purposes identified in an open-ended survey question (SurQ3). It is acknowledged that this might be because the majority of respondents checked their answer with the organisation's constitution – and indeed there were four respondents who included photocopies of the purpose statement from their constitution with their survey response. The data seem to be highly representative of New Zealand residents' groups as a whole, as is indicated by a comparison of the constitutional purposes of groups that both did and did not respond, and the stated purposes of the groups that responded. While some manipulation was required to match the constitutional and survey data, the inter-rater reliability between the datasets is high.

A further breakdown of residents' groups into types reveals no large difference between rural and urban areas in terms of community-type groups, a lack of any demographic-type group in rural areas and a higher focus on general wellbeing in rural areas by bodies corporate than their urban cousins.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Question One: “How do the purposes of New Zealand residents’ groups compare with the themes identified in the literature?”

Constitutional purpose

An analysis of the constitutions supported all bar one of the themes of the literature review. The theme that was not supported by the constitutions was “Negative behaviour that impacts on people in a community”. This was expected, as it is not in the interest of these organisations to openly identify their intention to undertake activity that could damage their community, nor is it likely that any such group would aim to do such a thing.

In general there was a close fit to the literature. Five additional purposes were identified as well, resulting in a total of 15 purpose-themes (Table 5.1):

Table 5.1: Purpose-themes identified in constitutional analysis

Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies
A source of local community knowledge
Protecting or promoting a sense of place
Improving or protecting the environment
Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government
Representing the interests of a specific demographic group
Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)
Charitable activities
As a platform for political activity
Promoting the interests of local people
Social capital
Safeguard / promote community wellbeing
Source of inspiration or leadership
Body corporate
Own / operate community asset(s)

The five purposes not previously identified in the analysis of the literature related to improving social capital, safeguarding community wellbeing, being a source of inspiration or leadership, being a body corporate for the purpose of managing a residential development and owning/operating community assets. It is important to note that these activities were all addressed in the literature somewhere, but they were not included as they did not – in this researcher’s analysis – feature to the point where they ‘stood out’ enough to contribute to a theme of their own. I further address the findings of this question in my critique.

Stated purpose

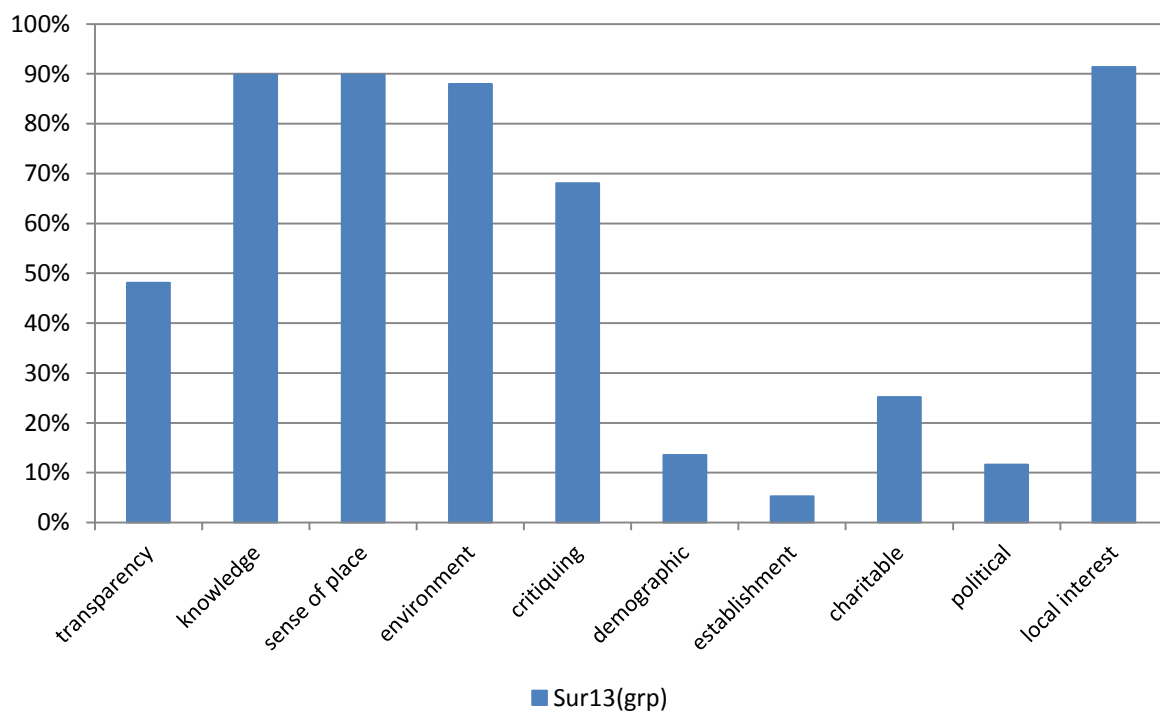
SurQ13 asked the committee members of residents’ groups to identify which purpose-themes were relevant to their organisation using the list of 11 themes developed from the literature. The results are presented in Table 5.2 and displayed as Figure 5.1.

Table 5.2: Purpose-themes identified in SurQ13

Occurrence of purpose-themes in survey responses (closed-ended question)	Frequency	
	No.	%
Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies	129	48%
A source of local community knowledge	242	90%
<i>Negative behaviour that impacts on people in the community</i>	100	38%
Protecting or promoting a sense of place	241	90%
Improving or protecting the environment	236	88%
Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government	184	68%
Representing the interests of a specific demographic group	38	14%
Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)	14	5%
Charitable activities	69	25%
As a platform for political activity	32	12%
Promoting the interests of local people	246	91%

The predominant purposes identified by the respondents revolve around promoting the interests of local people (91%), being a source of community knowledge (90%), protecting or promoting a sense of place (90%) and improving or protecting the environment (88%). Very few identified as being a part of the establishment (5%) but a quarter indicated they had a charitable purpose.

Figure 5.1: Purpose-themes identified in SurQ13 (n=660)



A weakness of the survey was the inclusion of the theme “Negative behaviour that impacts on people in the community”. As already mentioned, this purpose was not featured in any of the constitutions. My critique reflects on the wisdom of including it as part of the survey instrument, as there was indication that many respondents found it confusing, with some changing the statement to read “Preventing negative behaviour...” and annotating the survey instrument with queries about it. This created doubt over the validity of this particular part of the question, and as such it was excluded from the remainder of the research.

Question Two: “Are the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents’ groups aligned with the purposes stated by their committee members?”

Committee members were also asked to indicate their organisation’s purpose in an open question (SurQ3). Table 5.3 presents the responses to this question, which was quantified using the same content-analysis technique used for the constitutional data. Note the additional purpose-themes that were not given as an option in SurQ13 (highlighted).

Table 5.3: Purpose-themes identified in SurQ3

Occurrence of purpose-themes in survey responses (open-ended question)	Frequency	
	No.	%
Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies	39	15%
A source of local community knowledge	58	22%
Protecting or promoting a sense of place	49	18%
Improving or protecting the environment	112	42%
Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government	9	3%
Representing the interests of a specific demographic group	1	0%
Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)	15	6%
Charitable activities	1	0%
As a platform for political activity	38	14%
Promoting the interests of local people	168	63%
Develop social capital	52	20%
Safeguard /improve community wellbeing	71	27%
Source of inspiration or leadership	64	24%
Body corporate	12	5%
Own / operate community asset(s)	50	19%

The purposes identified most frequently by the respondents in the open-ended question were the promotion of the interests of local people (63%) and improving or protecting the environment (48%), while around a quarter also indicated their purpose as safeguarding/improving community wellbeing (27%), a source of inspiration or leadership (24%) and a source of community knowledge (22%). Very few identified as being a part of the establishment (5%) but a quarter indicated they had a charitable purpose.

The analysis of constitutional purposes (Table 5.4) indicates a majority (73%) of organisations exist to promote the interests of local people. Just over half (52%) aim to improve or exist the environment, while 41% aim to safeguard or improve community wellbeing. 34% of groups own or operate community assets and one third have an inspirational/leadership function. Just 3% have a purpose that specifically identifies charity.

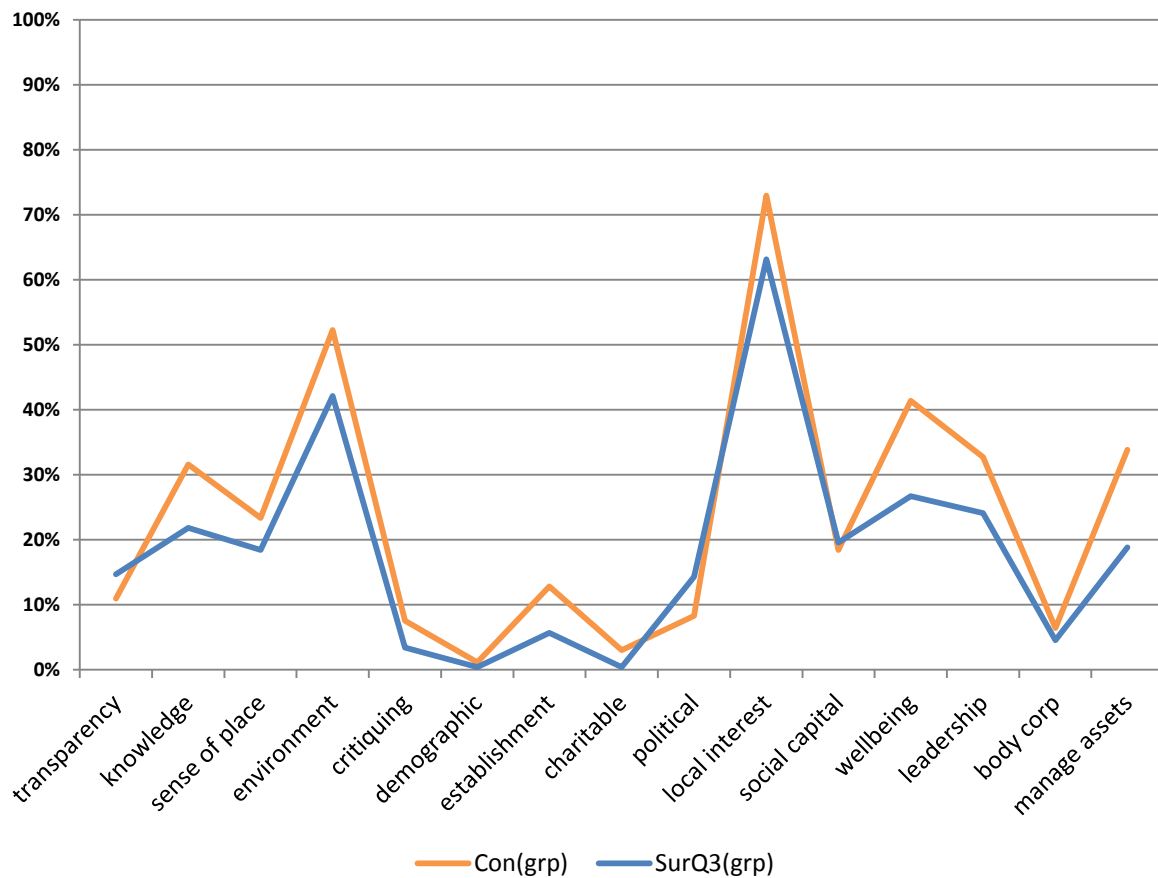
Table 5.4: Occurrence of purpose-themes in constitutions

Stated Purpose (constitutions)	Frequency	
	No.	%
Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies	29	11%
A source of local community knowledge	84	32%
Protecting or promoting a sense of place	62	23%
Improving or protecting the environment	139	52%
Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government	20	8%
Representing the interests of a specific demographic group	3	1%
Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government)	34	13%
Charitable activities	8	3%
As a platform for political activity	22	8%
Promoting the interests of local people	194	73%
Develop social capital	49	18%
Safeguard /improve community wellbeing	110	41%
Source of inspiration or leadership	87	33%
Body corporate	17	6%
Own / operate community asset(s)	90	34%

As has been shown, there is a close relationship between the purpose themes identified in the respondent organisations' constitutions relative to constitutions from the organisations that didn't respond. There is also a high correlation between the individual data from SurQ3(all) and that same data when aggregated into organisational groups SurQ3(grp). Thus the dataset of constitutions from the groups that responded Con(grp) provides a strong basis for comparison with the aggregated data from SurQ3.

Figure 5.2 compares and contrasts the occurrence of purpose-themes from the constitutions Con(grp) with those of the open-ended survey question SurQ3(grp). It is notable that the frequency of 'promoting interests of local people' is the highest in both datasets, followed by 'promoting or protecting the environment', 'wellbeing of community', 'inspiring leadership' and 'being a source of local knowledge'. In fact the data correlates almost exactly (0.96).

Figure 5.2: Constitutional purposes compared with open question SurQ3 (n=266)



“Does the age of the organisation have an influence on this?”

A sub-part to this research question is around the age of the organisation, or more specifically the most recent date the purpose of the organisation was updated in the constitution. Hasson and Ley (1994) observed community underwent ‘stages’ of change in relation to social geo-political changes at a global level. According to Chile (2006) 1960s New Zealand saw a move from the citizenry to question the way governments did things that affected how society developed. A third important date impacting upon residents’ groups occurred at the tail end of 2002 when the Local Government Act was introduced.

Splitting the groups into these three eras produces the data in Table 5.5 and displayed in Figure 5.3. Notable is the increasing number of bodies corporate being styled as residents’ groups since 2003, possibly due to the reformation of local government in 2002. The groups owning or managing assets fell in the middle period but recovered, due to the proliferation of bodies corporate. The number of organisations that have a constitutional purpose of critiquing

or opposing government dropped (11% and 10% in the periods up to 2002, falling to 3% after that date) as did those who have a purpose of ensuring transparency and accountability of government (14% pre 1975 to 9% post 2002). This could be explained by the introduction of the Charities Act 2005, which created stricter criteria for groups registering as charities. Also in decline are the occurrence of promoting the interest of local people, and protecting or enhancing the environment. As might be expected from Chile's observations, sense of place as a purpose has become more noticeable post 1975 along with a focus on leadership.

Figure 5.3: Constitutional purpose by discrete time period (n=582)

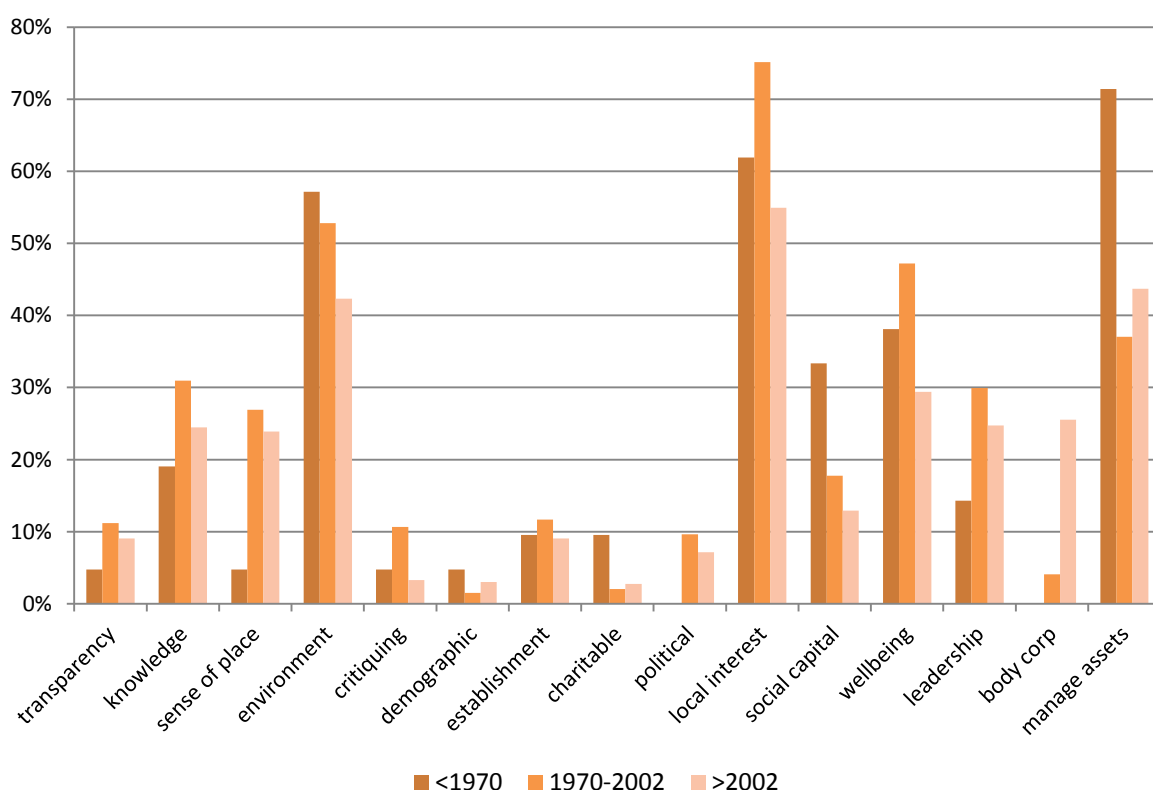


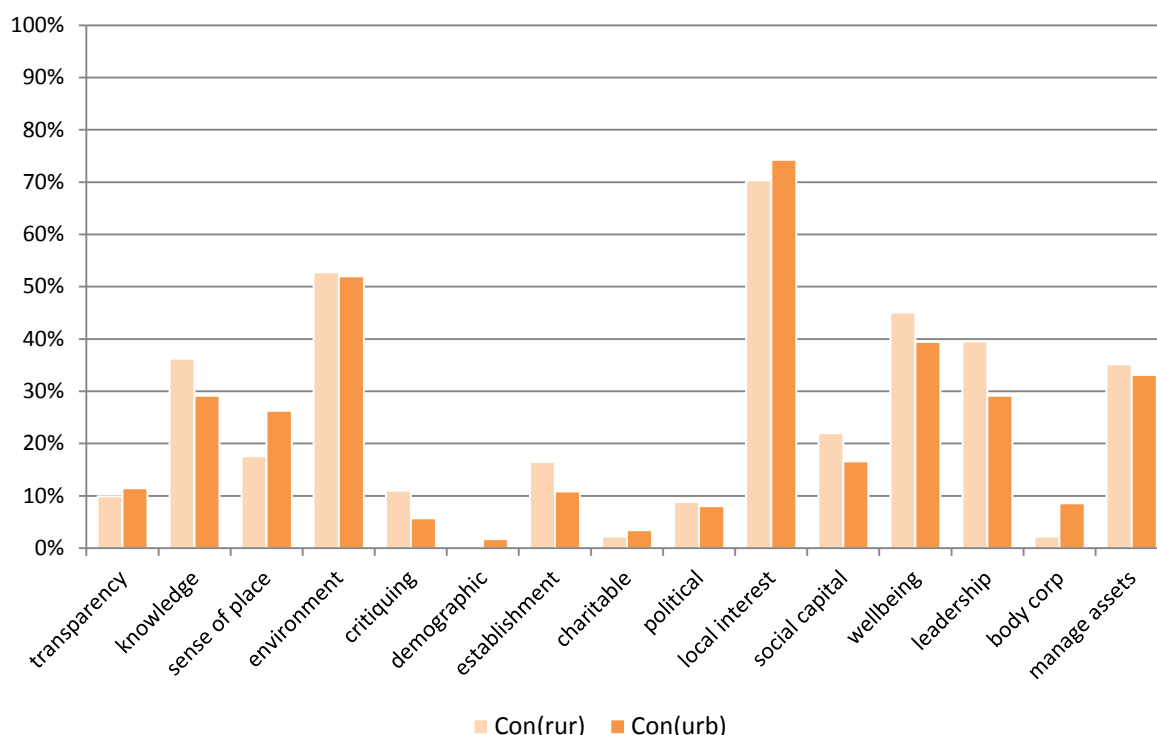
Table 5.5: Constitutional purpose by discrete time period (n=582)

	transparency	knowledge	sense of place	environment	critiquing	demographic	establishment	charitable	political	local interest	social capital	wellbeing	leadership	body corp	manage assets
Con(<75)	14%	21%	7%	64%	11%	4%	18%	7%	4%	71%	29%	43%	18%	0%	68%
Con(75-02)	10%	31%	27%	52%	10%	2%	11%	2%	9%	74%	18%	47%	30%	4%	36%
Con(>02)	9%	24%	24%	42%	3%	3%	9%	3%	7%	55%	13%	29%	25%	26%	44%

Question Three: “Are there any significant differences in purpose – either constitutionally or stated by committee members – between residents’ groups in rural areas versus those in urban areas?”

There was very little difference between urban and rural-based residents’ groups based on their constitutions, aside from the tendency of bodies corporate (2%, 9%) to be more urban-based (Figure 5.4. Table 5.6).

Figure 5.4: Comparison of constitutional data based on level of urbanity (n=266)



Rural-based residents’ groups tended to more often state as a purpose being a source of local knowledge (36%, 29%), leadership (40%, 29%), critiquing government (11%, 6%), and the general wellbeing of community (45%, 39%).

Table 5.6: Comparison of constitutional data based on level of urbanity (n=266)

	transparency	knowledge	sense of place	environment	critiquing	demographic	establishment	charitable	political	local interest	social capital	wellbeing	leadership	body corp	manage assets
Con (rural)	10%	36%	18%	53%	11%	0%	16%	2%	9%	70%	22%	45%	40%	2%	35%
Con (urban)	11%	29%	26%	52%	6%	2%	11%	3%	8%	74%	17%	39%	29%	9%	33%

A comparison of stated purposes (Figure 5.5 and Table 5.7) shows rural respondents believed their groups had more of a focus on the physical environment (54%, 36%) and interests of local people (70%, 59%), in keeping with an expectation that rural areas preserve the more traditional ways of life, such as the welfare-state community era proposed by Chile.

Interestingly, even though roughly a third of residents' groups state in their constitution that they own or manage assets, less respondents overall responded with this purpose, with a marked difference in the urban responses (Constitution 33%, SurQ3 14%). This could suggest a divesting of assets or management responsibility of assets by residents' groups.

Figure 5.5: Comparison of SurQ3 data based on level of urbanity (n=266)

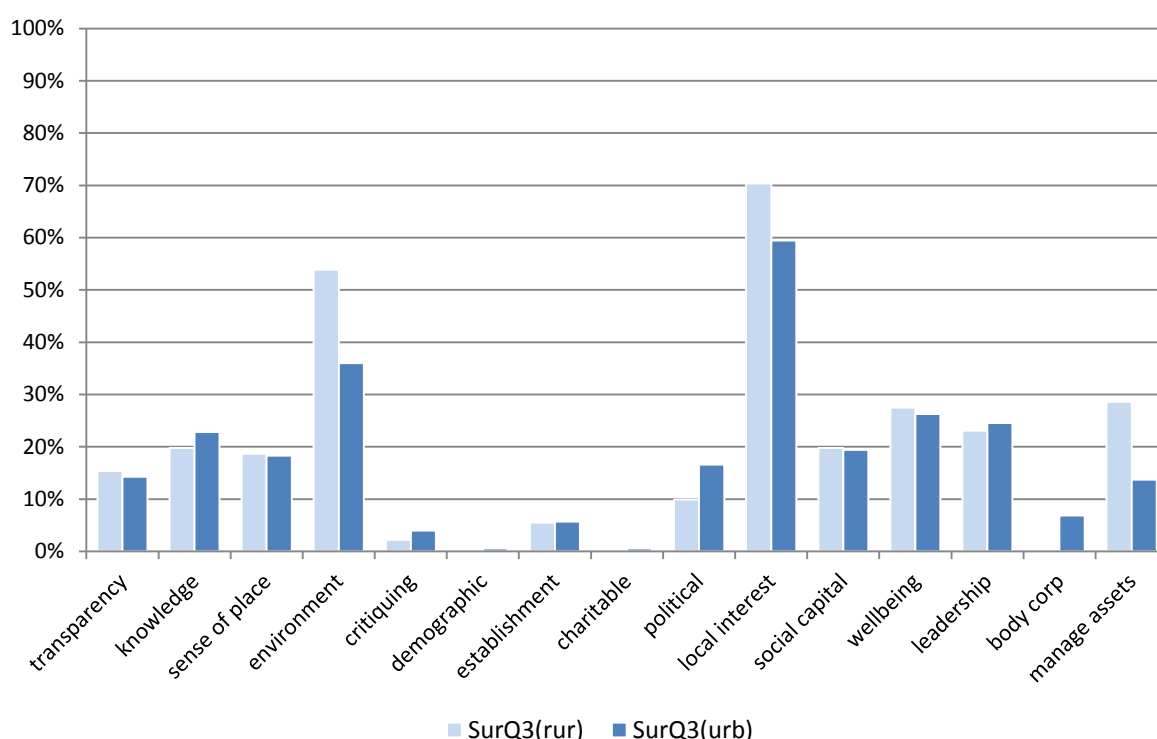


Table 5.7: Comparison of SurQ3 data based on level of urbanity (n=266)

	transparency	knowledge	sense of place	environment	critiquing	demographic	establishment	charitable	political	local interest	social capital	wellbeing	leadership	body corp	manage assets
SurQ3 (rural)	15%	20%	19%	54%	2%	0%	5%	0%	10%	70%	20%	27%	23%	0%	29%
SurQ3(urban)	14%	23%	18%	36%	4%	1%	6%	1%	17%	59%	19%	26%	25%	7%	14%

Question Four: “Does the purpose (either constitutional or stated) of residents’ associations in New Zealand differ dependent upon the region?”

A full regional analysis was not possible, due in part to the distribution of the residents’ groups in the scope of the research and in part to the response rate from differing parts of the country. The regions analysed as part of Question Four are outlined in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8: Regions included in Q4 analysis

Region	Population	Response
Tasman	10	80%
Marlborough	20	70%
Manawatu-Wanganui	19	63%
Wellington	68	54%
Bay of Plenty	29	48%
Canterbury	87	46%
Northland	37	43%
Auckland	181	42%
Otago	36	39%
Waikato	52	35%

Table 5.9 provides a breakdown of constitutional purpose by five major regions. Canterbury stands out in many instances with three quarters of the organisations citing protection of local interest as a purpose, as well as sharing a high focus on sense of place (44%) along with Wellington (37%). Canterbury also had the lowest bodies corporate (5%) and manage/own community assets (20%) occurrences.

Table 5.9: Constitutional purposes by major regions (n=424)

	Auckland	Waikato	Wellington	Canterbury	Otago	Range	Spread
transparency	12%	8%	9%	6%	17%	6-17	11
knowledge	25%	31%	28%	30%	31%	25-31	6
sense of place	18%	15%	37%	44%	14%	14-44	30
environment	50%	35%	46%	52%	39%	35-52	17
critiquing	6%	10%	4%	3%	0%	0-10	10
demographic	4%	2%	0%	1%	3%	0-4	4
establishment	10%	12%	7%	9%	0%	0-12	12
charitable	6%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0-6	6
political	10%	4%	9%	3%	17%	3-17	14
local interest	56%	63%	65%	75%	67%	56-75	19
social capital	13%	8%	21%	23%	14%	8-23	15
wellbeing	33%	29%	28%	45%	22%	22-45	23
leadership	20%	31%	21%	31%	19%	19-31	12
body corp	22%	15%	21%	5%	19%	5-22	17
manage assets	46%	46%	44%	20%	44%	20-46	26

Table 5.10: Constitutional purposes by minor regions (n=115)

	Northland	Bay of Plenty	Manawatu-Wanganui	Marlborough	Tasman	Range	Spread
transparency	8%	0%	16%	5%	10%	0-16	16
knowledge	14%	14%	47%	20%	50%	14-50	36
sense of place	24%	24%	5%	25%	20%	5-25	20
environment	46%	45%	47%	45%	40%	40-47	7
critiquing	0%	14%	16%	5%	10%	0-16	16
demographic	3%	10%	5%	5%	0%	0-10	10
establishment	8%	10%	21%	30%	0%	0-30	30
charitable	3%	0%	5%	0%	10%	0-10	10
political	8%	0%	5%	10%	0%	0-10	10
local interest	49%	55%	68%	70%	70%	49-70	21
social capital	8%	17%	16%	35%	10%	8-35	27
wellbeing	35%	41%	32%	50%	80%	32-80	48
leadership	32%	28%	53%	30%	50%	28-53	25
body corp	35%	21%	5%	0%	0%	0-35	35
manage assets	51%	34%	53%	35%	10%	10-53	43

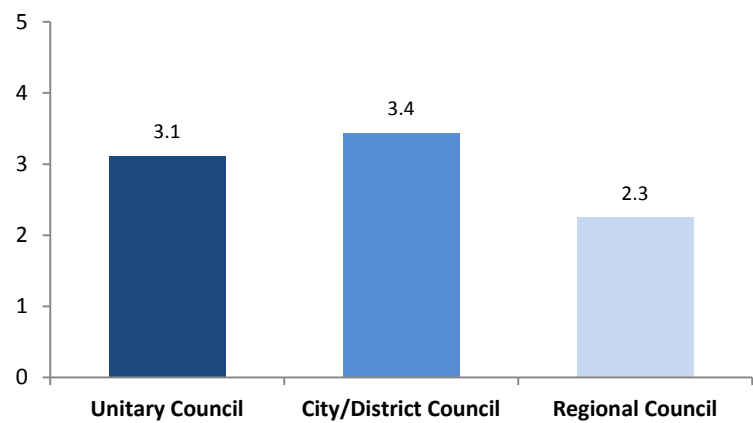
Table 5.10 shows Tasman standing out as having a high focus on wellbeing (80%) and a low focus on management/ownership of community assets (10%). Bay of Plenty residents' groups had no constitutional purposes focused on government transparency and accountability, while almost a third (30%) of Marlborough groups had a 'part of the establishment' purpose. Examples of this purpose includes working with Police to reduce crime, cooperating with Councils for the betterment of the community, and working in partnership with government agencies such as the Department of Conservation. Northland groups had a lower-than average focus on the interests of local people and a very high rate of bodies corporate.

“If so, is their interaction with local governmental agencies relevant?”

Survey participants were asked to indicate their level of engagement with their regional and city/district council on a Likert scale between 1 (low) and 5 (high). As 5 of the 16 regions are unitary authorities the results are divided into three parts: Unitary Council, City/District Council and Regional Council. Respondents within Unitary Council boundaries were given the same answer choices in the questions (e.g. asked to rank both City/District and Regional Councils, with no mention of a Unitary Council) and this was brought to my attention a number of times by annotated comments on the survey forms from the respondents. Many (105 responses) did not answer the Regional Council question. An aggregate of the answers to both these questions was assigned for the groups with Unitary Councils.

Figure 5.6 shows respondents had a higher level of engagement with their City/District Council (average 3.4) than their Regional Council (2.3). Those residents’ groups with Unitary Councils reporting a fairly high level of engagement (3.1).

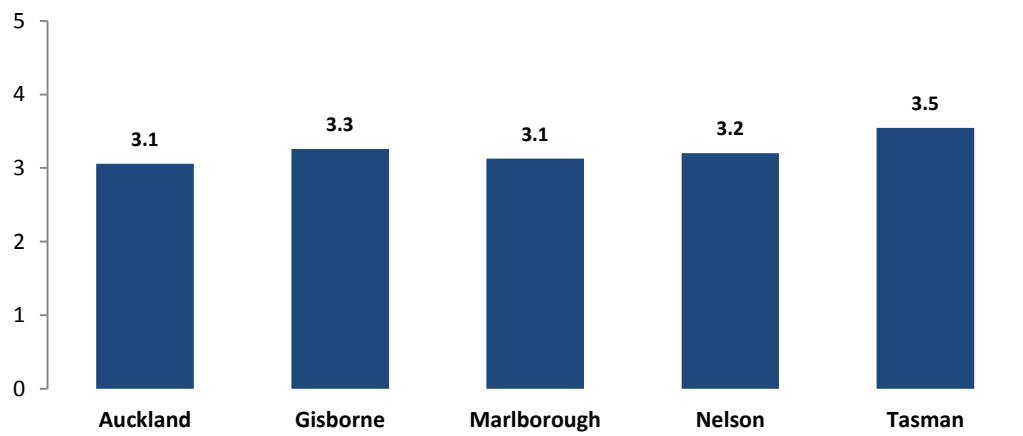
Figure 5.6: Level of engagement with local authority n=266



This result was not unexpected. The same question asked of delegates at the 2012 Residents’ Associations Conference in Wellington resulted in similar results with City/District Council scoring an average of 3.6 and Regional Councils scoring 2.2 (Coburn and McLeod,2010. p.31).

There was very little difference in the level of engagement of residents’ groups and their Unitary Council (Figure 5.7), with Tasman scoring the highest (3.5) and Auckland sharing the lowest ranking with Marlborough (3.1).

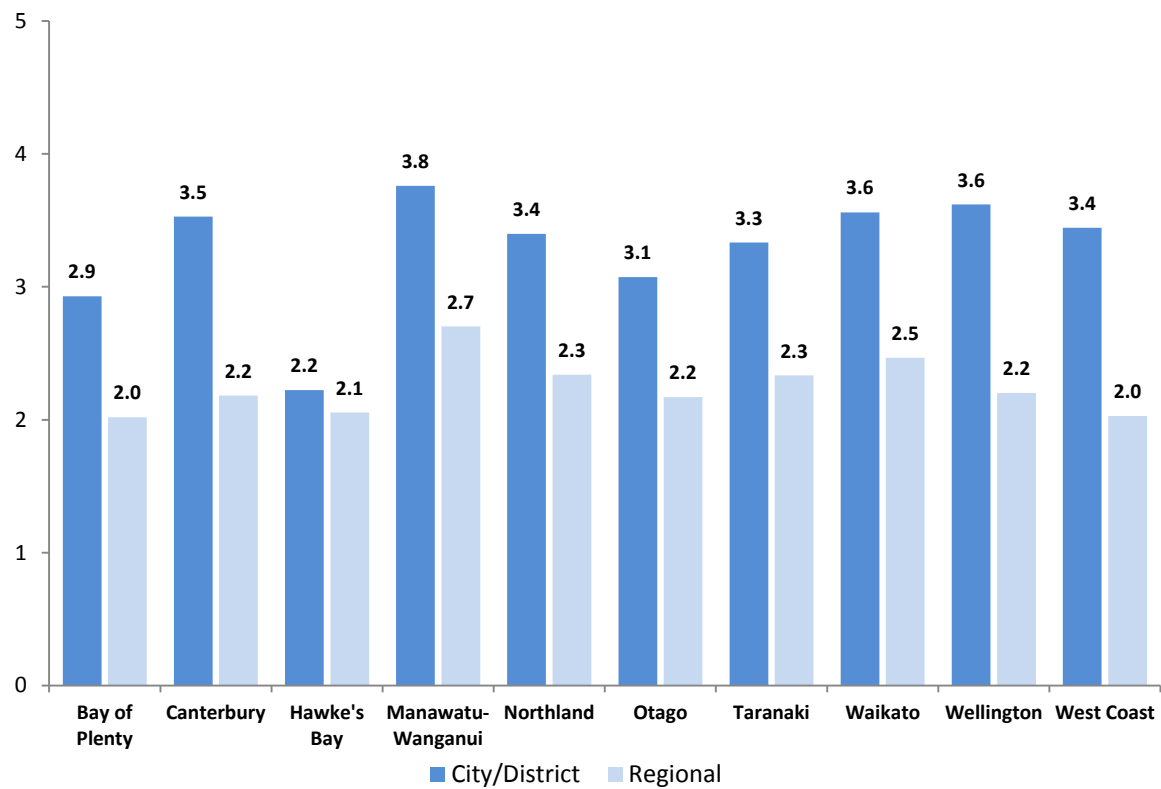
Figure 5.7: Level of engagement with unitary council n=266



Engagement with City/District Councils (Figure 5.8) was consistently higher than their regional counterparts across the country, although Hawke’s Bay groups reported was very

similar levels of engagement (2.2 vs. 2.1). Note that this region supplied a very small sample (3 of 16 responded). Groups in Manawatu-Wanganui reported the highest level of engagement with both their City/District (3.8) and Regional Councils (2.7) with Waikato (3.6/2.5) close behind.

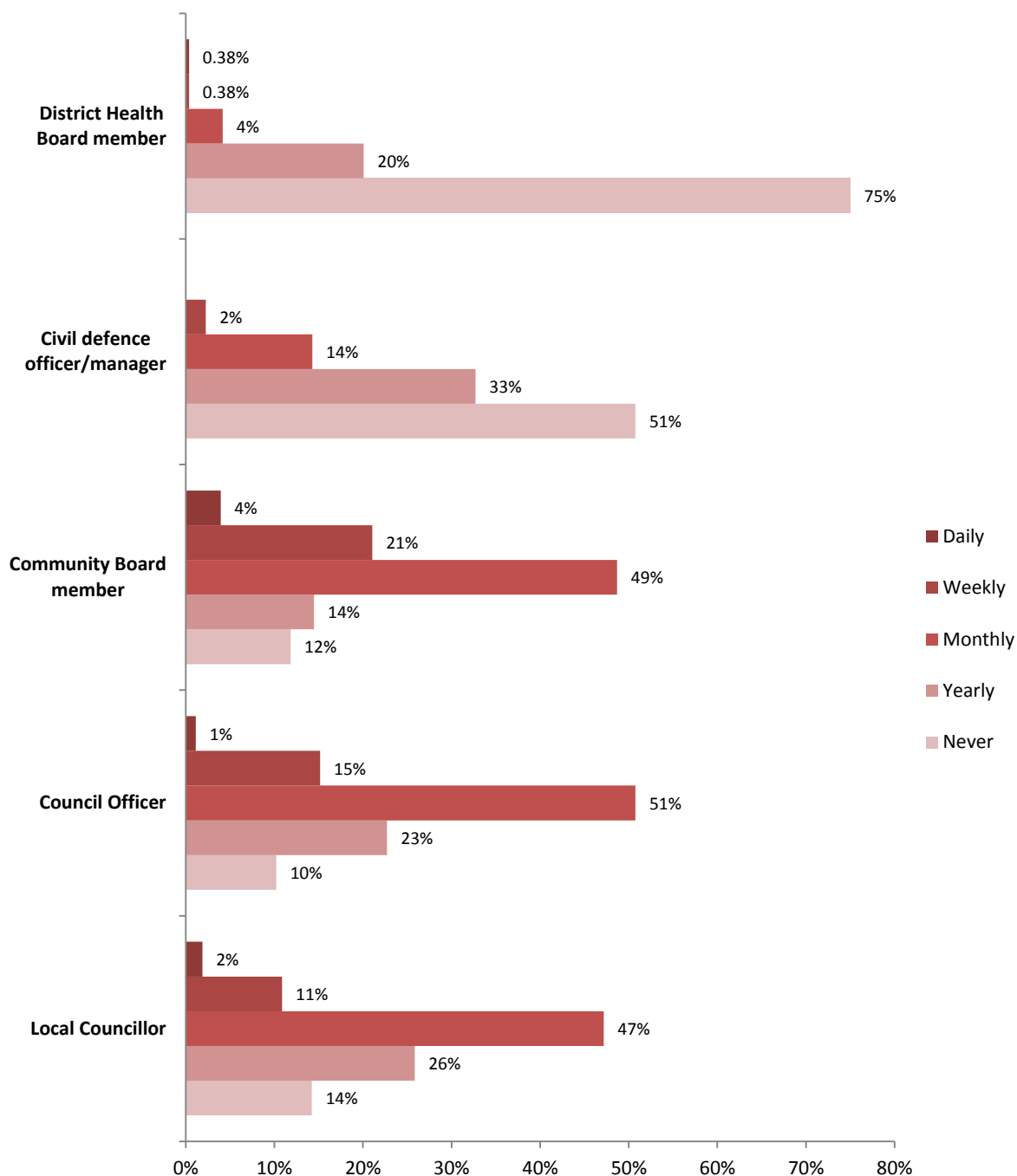
Figure 5.8: Level of engagement with city/district and regional councils n=266



Residents’ group committee members were asked to indicate the frequency of contact they had with five different local state agents: District Health Board members, civil defence officers/manager, Community Board members, council officers and local Councillors. Residents’ groups reported the lowest frequency of interaction with District Health Boards, with 75% reporting no contact and only 4% reporting less-than-yearly contact. Civil defence officials also had a low level of contact: 51% of residents’ groups reported no engagement with civil defence while a third reported they had contact on a yearly basis. There were 76 groups responding who had a Community Board in their area (Auckland’s ‘Local Boards’ were not included, as they have a slightly different role and make-up than Community Boards). Generally the contact level was high, with almost half (49%) of groups reporting monthly contact with their Community Board and 21% in touch weekly. This was similar to

contact with council officers: 51% of groups reported being in touch with a council officer on a monthly basis, while 15% were in touch weekly (Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9: Frequency of interaction with local agents of the state n=269

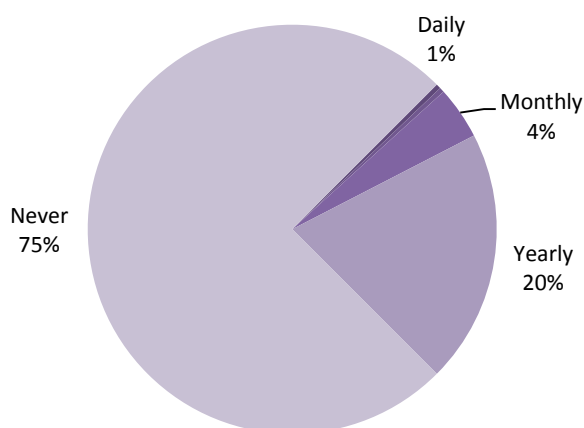


The following charts drill down to each local government agent and analyse the contact residents' groups have with them at a regional level. Note that some regions were excluded as part of the regional analysis because of small sample sizes.

Contact with District Health Boards

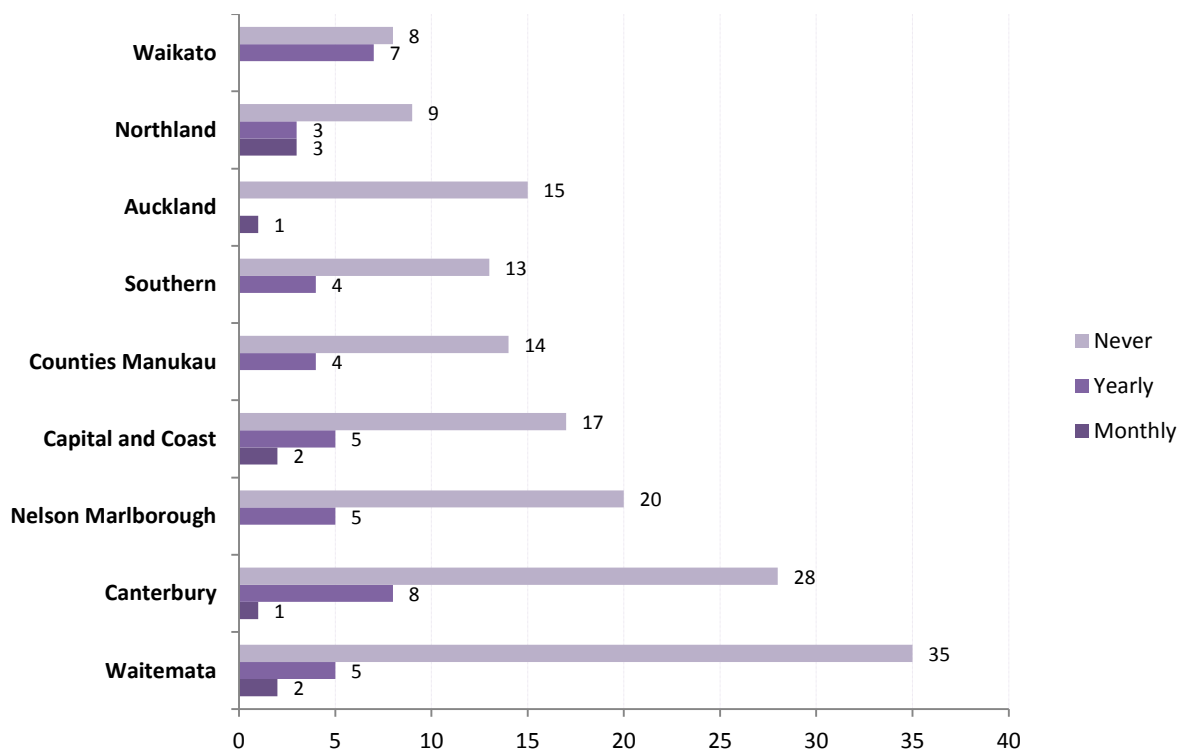
Figure 5.10 shows that there was very little contact with District Health Board (DHB) members and residents' groups across the board. No residents' group reported weekly contact with a DHB and one reported daily contact but only because they were their spouse.

Figure 5.10: Frequency of interaction with district health board member (n=262)



Only the areas with 15 or more responses from residents' groups are included in Figure 5.11. Waikato had the most contact with residents' groups, with just under half having yearly contact (there were no daily or weekly contacts).

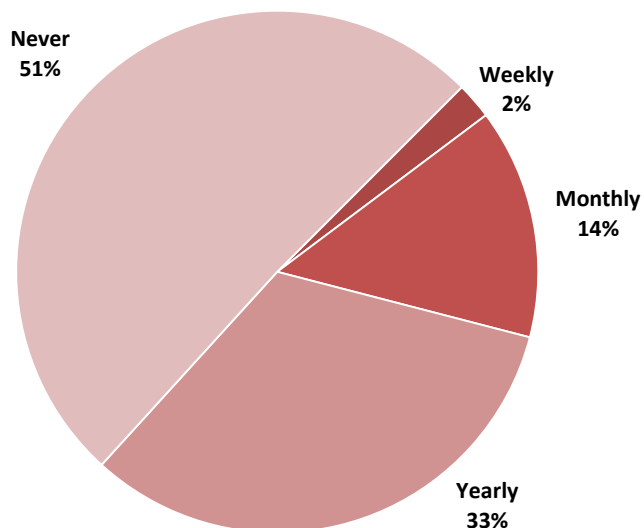
Figure 5.11: Frequency of contact with residents' group by district health board area (n=209)



Contact with Civil Defence

Figure 5.12 shows over half (51%) of the groups responding to the survey never have contact with a civil defence officer or civil defence manager. A large number of groups (33%) have contact with civil defence once per year.

Figure 5.12: Frequency of interaction with civil defence officer/manager n=264



This pattern is reflected in the regions, particularly in Auckland, where 70% of residents' groups report no contact with civil defence (Figure 5.13). Manawatu-Wanganui region also features for a lack of contact.

Figure 5.13: Engagement with civil defence in North Island regions (n=174)

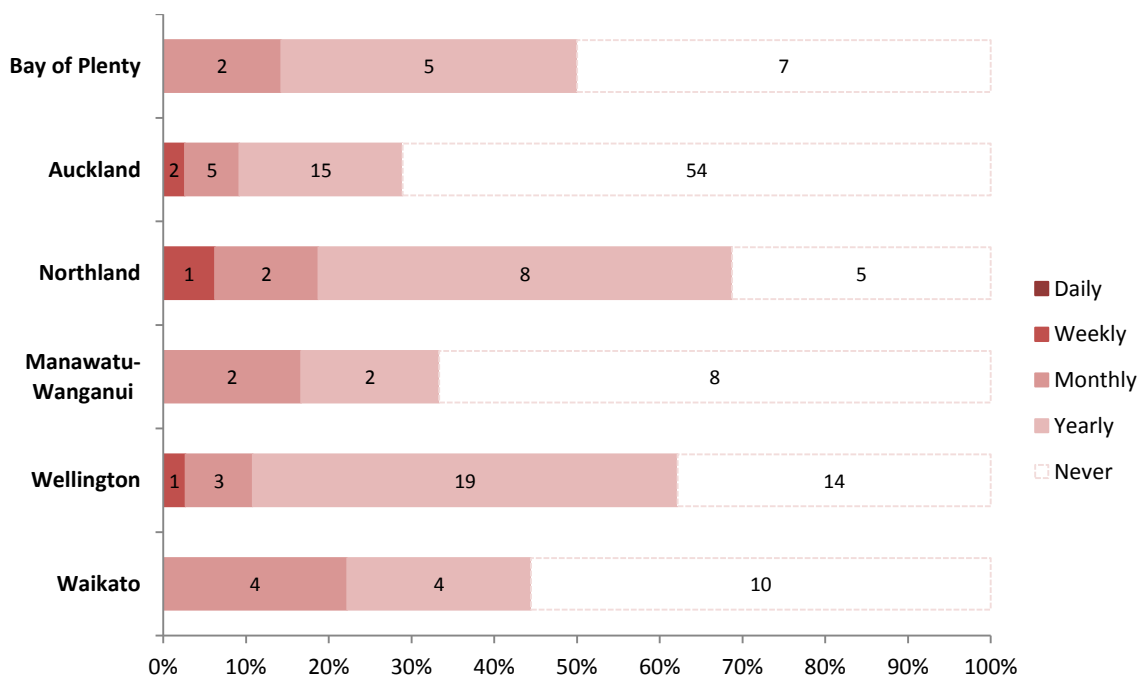
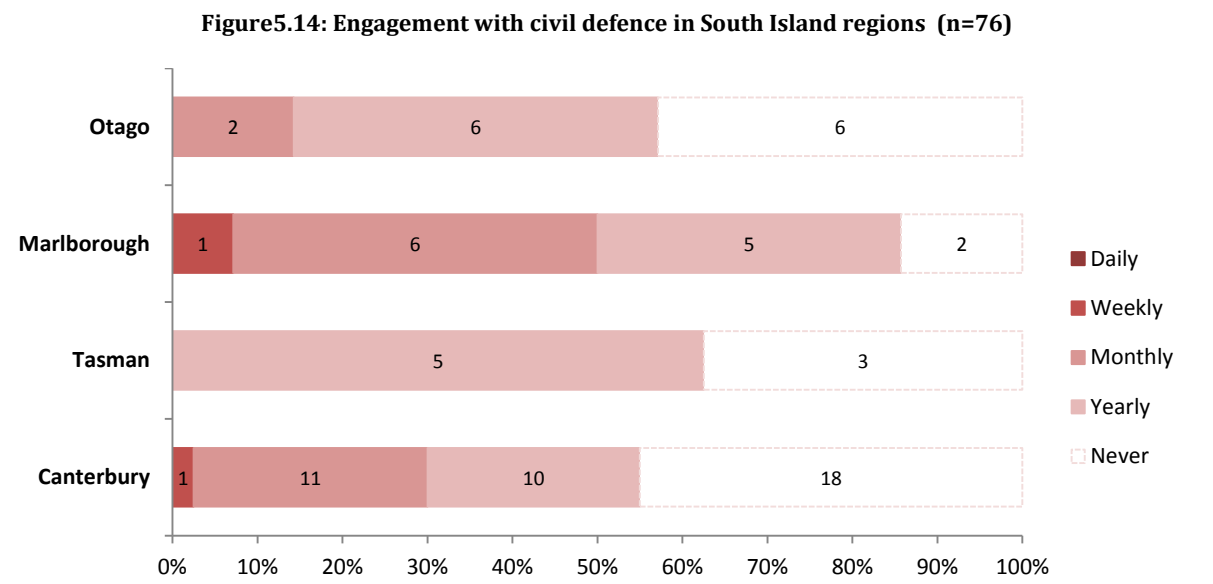
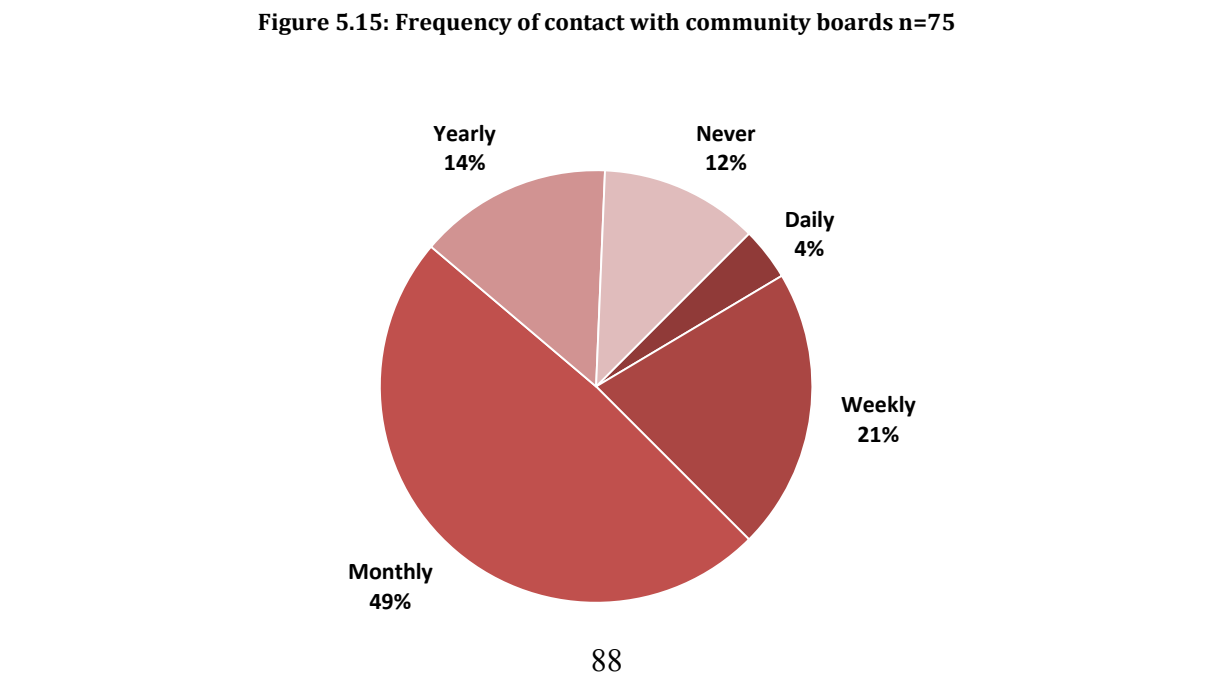


Figure 5.14 shows South Island residents’ groups fare better with civil defence. Marlborough tops the country with half the groups reporting contact either weekly (7%) or monthly (43%), while 36% of groups reported yearly contact. Canterbury had the least contact with civil defence in the South Island with 45% of groups reporting they never see a civil defence officer or manager, surprising considering the proximity of the earthquakes to the survey date.

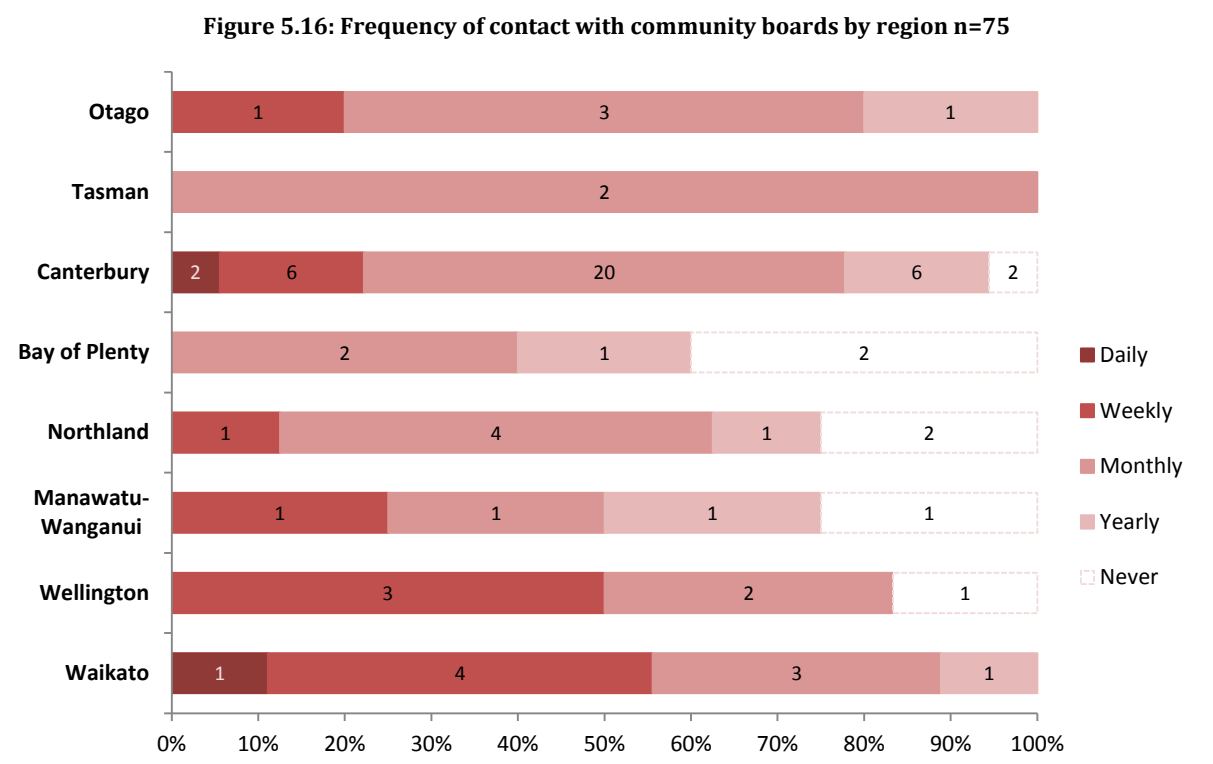


Contact with Community Boards

Nearly three quarters of the 75 residents’ groups with Community Boards in their areas responded that they had contact at least monthly (Figure 5.15), with a further 14% indicating they had contact at least yearly (one group did not answer the question so was disregarded).

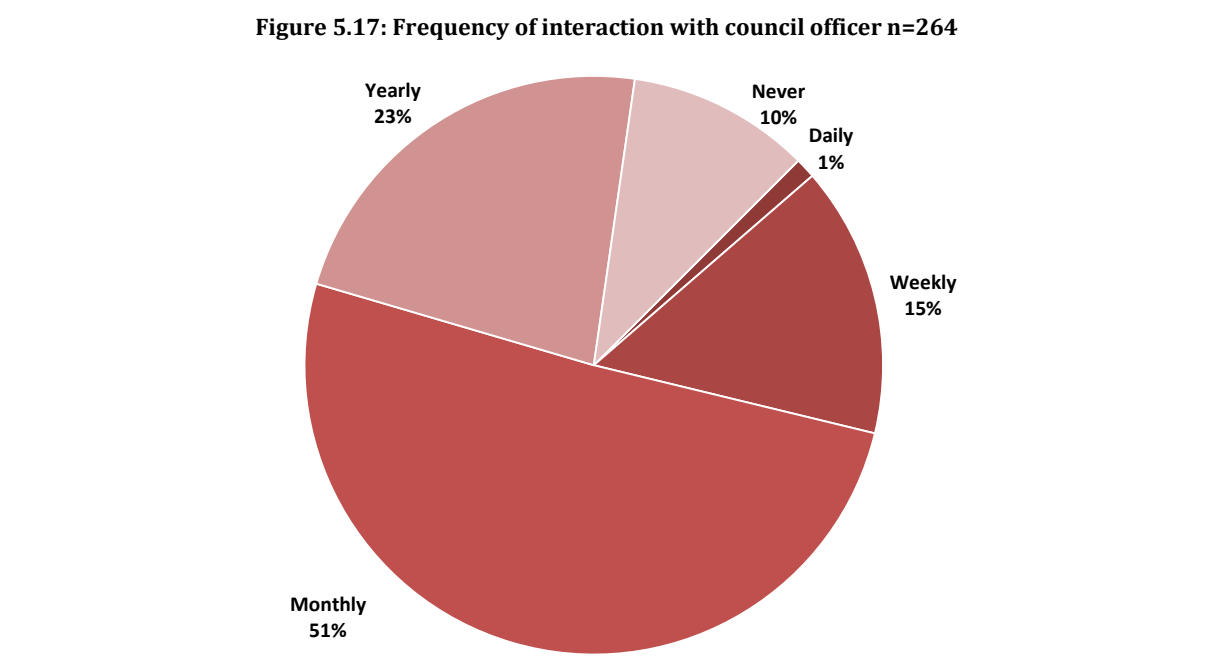


Otago and Waikato enjoy the highest rate of contact with Community Boards, while 40% of Bay of Plenty groups reported never having contact (Figure 5.16).



Contact with council officers

Just over half (51%) of residents’ groups have monthly contact with a council officer (Figure 5.17). In total, 90% of residents’ groups said they had some form of contact at least yearly.



Figures 5.18 and 5.19 show a healthy level of contact with council officers in both islands. Bay of Plenty (30%) and Auckland (18%) councils have some room for wider engagement with residents’ groups, while 38% if Tasman and 29% of Waikato groups have weekly contact with council staff.

Figure 5.18: Engagement with council officers (North Island regions) n=174

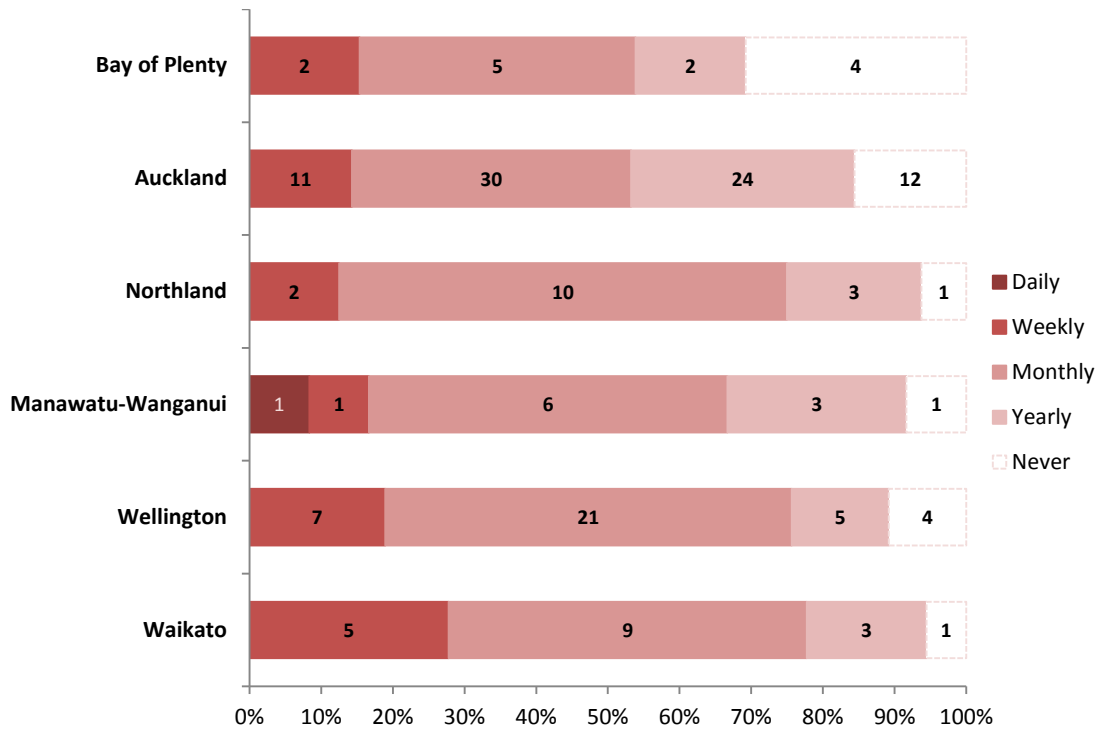
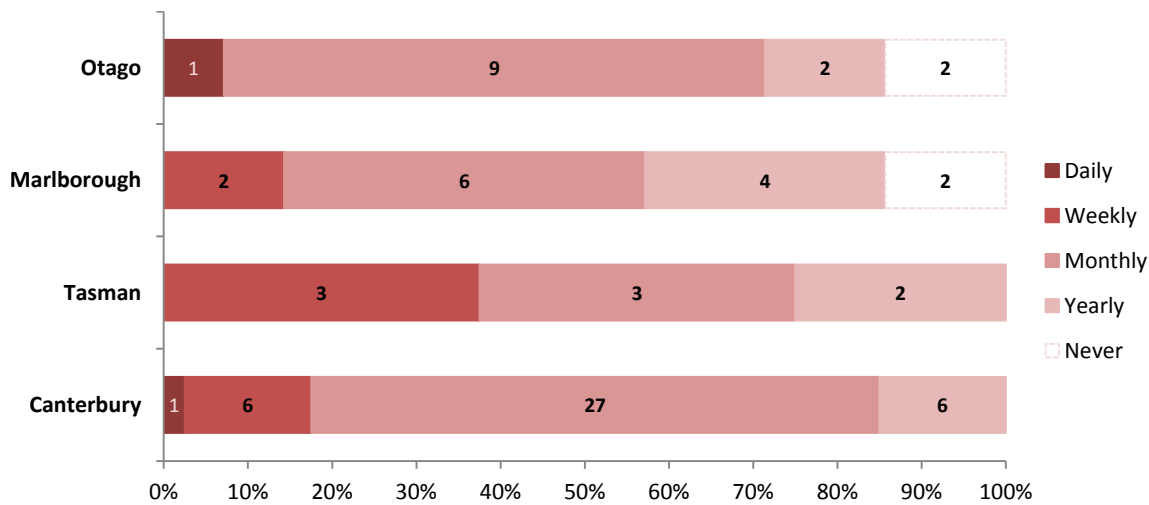


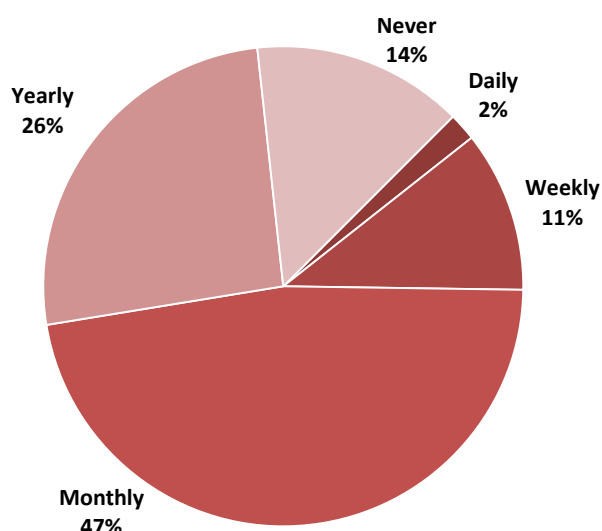
Figure 5.19: Engagement with council officers (South Island regions) n=76



Engagement with Councillors

Surprisingly the number of residents' groups who never have contact with an elected member of their council(s) is higher than those who never see council officers. Residents' groups seem a natural fit with political officials, who can tap in to local knowledge and contacts through those organisations (Figure 5.20).

Figure 5.20: Frequency of interaction with local councillor n=267



Both Waikato and Tasman had high level of contact with elected members. Canterbury was a clear leader in council officer and Councillor contact overall (Figures 5.21 and 5.22).

Figure 5.21: Engagement with councillors (North Island regions) n=174

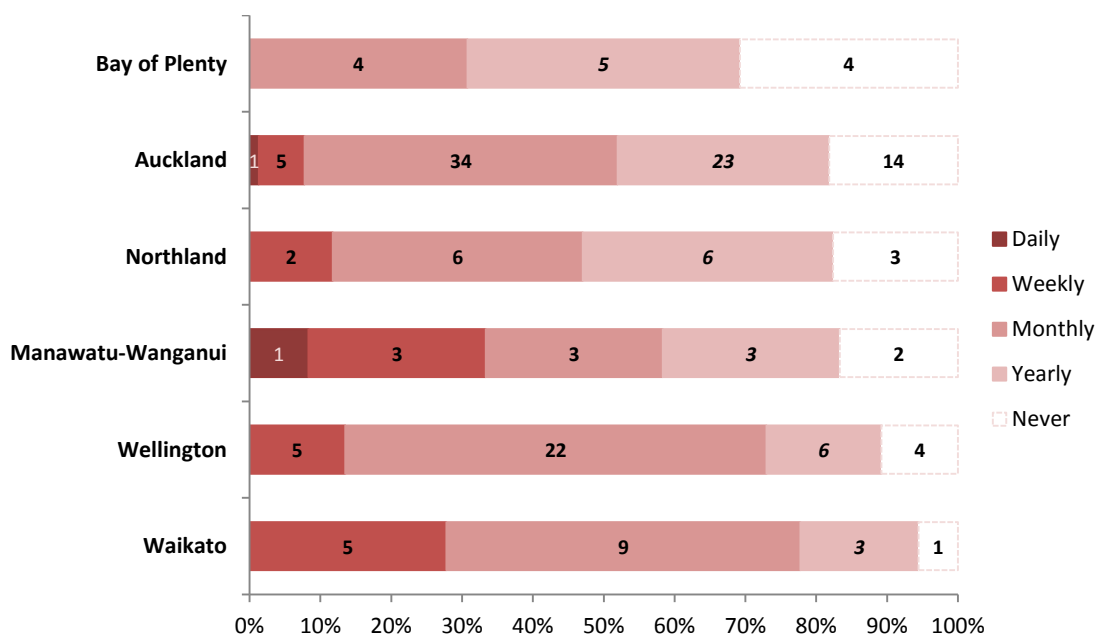
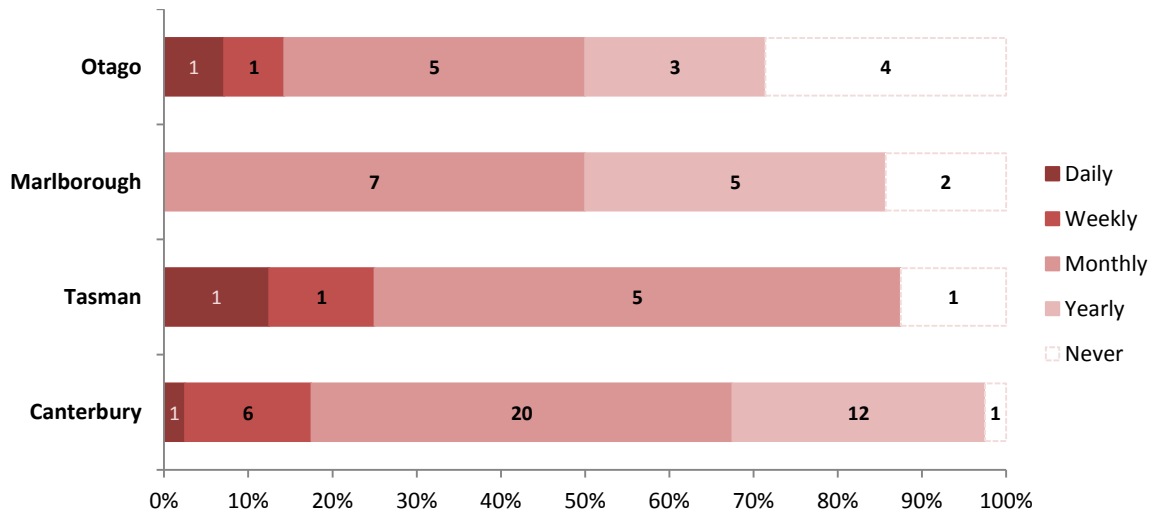


Figure 5.22: Engagement with councillors (South Island regions) n=76



Chapter Conclusion

In addition to the 10 purpose themes (*sans* one excluded) derived from the literature a further 5 were identified during content analysis of the constitutions. These were subsequently validated by the response to the open-ended question in the survey and to a large extent in the closed-ended question as well. Promoting the interest of local people was the most frequent purpose identified in both constitutional and survey data, followed by improving/protecting the environment.

Considering the history of involvement in local government affairs and how residents' groups feature in the New Zealand media, critiquing government was very low in constitutional data and even less so in the survey data, although there is clear evidence that between 10-15% of groups keep an eye on what government is doing with regard to their communities. Charitable purposes were rare and respondents gave less prominence to being a source of local knowledge, safeguarding/improve community wellbeing or being a source of inspiration or leadership than their constitutions indicate.

It was observed that as new organisations have been created, or existing constitutions updated, less focus has been placed on the physical environment, management or ownership of assets, and running activities which boost social capital. Body corporates have begun using nom-de-plume of residents' groups especially in the past decade. Charitable purpose dropped

post 1970 but was replaced in kind by an embracing of political purposes, reflecting the great changes New Zealand experienced in its communities at that time. Promoting local interests peaked in the period 1970-2002 but has fallen since, mirroring the commitment to improving general wellbeing and being a source of local knowledge.

Another surprise was the similarity between residents' groups in rural areas compared with those in urban areas. When the body corporate and demographic type groups are removed the difference in urbanity is slight, with urban community-type groups moderately more focused on preserving/protecting the environment (58% versus 49%) – despite the survey data indicating the opposite over entire population – and more likely to have a charitable purpose (4% versus 1%). Rural groups (37%) were more likely to own or manage community assets than urban groups (27%).

The survey data showed a greater difference between urban and rural areas. As was mentioned, urban residents' groups (all types) were less likely to have the purpose of protecting the environment than rural groups. Rural group respondents were more likely to state that promoting local interests was a purpose (70%) than urban groups (59%).

There were some regional differences in purpose. Wellington and Canterbury had a strong focus on sense of place, which could be explained by the compact and unique features of the Wellington cities and the recent adversity faced by the people of Canterbury and the subsequent outpouring of emotion toward the city and region. Canterbury also topped the number of groups promoting local interests (75%), while having a very low (5%) number of bodies corporate-type residents' groups. Tasman (50%) and Manawatu-Wanganui (47%) both featured high for being sources of local knowledge, Marlborough showed a high level of cooperation and collaboration with state agencies (30%) and 80% of Tasman's groups had general wellbeing of the community as a purpose.

It was difficult to find a link between the residents' group purposes regionally and the engagement with local governmental agencies. For example, Marlborough's unitary council had a very average engagement score (3.1) yet this region showed the highest indication of collaboration with the state. Some general observations can be drawn when looking at the data across the country. For a start, it is very clear that regional councils do not engage as much with residents' groups as district/city or unitary councils. This may be due to the greater role territorial local authorities play at the grass-roots level: such things as maintenance of

roads and footpaths, street lighting, graffiti, rubbish collection, playgrounds and the like, where regional councils often have more strategic or less visible roles to play at the community level. But that only explains the difference if engagement is a one-way street. It is not, and it is clear from the data that regional councils have a big opportunity to engage more with residents' groups.

Another agency that has significant impact on communities are the 20 district health boards, whose members are voted in as part of the local government elections. Fully three quarters of residents' groups have no contact with DHB members, while 20% of groups see their DHB member once a year.

That over half (51%) of residents' groups did not report contact with civil defence officers or managers is very surprising considering the heightened urgency of local authorities all over the country to disaster preparedness since the Canterbury earthquakes. Yet again, an opportunity surely awaits those officials who are seeking to engage with communities.

There was a high level of contact between residents' groups and Councillors and council officers, with a minority of groups never having contact with one or the other.

In summary it seems that residents' groups simply are who they are, with little difference between the groups in urban and rural areas. Yes, they have changed over time with a reduction in charitable purposes and an increase in political ones, and the advent of a new body corporate-type emerging over the past 10 years. There are some differences at the regional level but these are minor and in many cases logical (Wellington's unique character and Canterbury's English identity and subsequent devastation linking to sense of place, for example).

Nor does the level of contact or engagement with local governmental agencies seem to make a large difference in purpose. For the most part they are concerned about the interests of local people, what goes on with the physical environment and many aspects around community such as sense of place, social capital and general wellbeing.

Perhaps most surprisingly (and pleasing) is that residents' groups walk the talk, their committee members showing they know their organisations well.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to determine the purposes of residents' groups and identify any relationship between such groups based on activities, area, age or urbanity. In particular, this research asked:

- How do the purposes of New Zealand residents' groups compare with the themes identified in the literature?
- Are the constitutional purposes of New Zealand residents' groups aligned with the purposes stated by their committee members? Does the age of the organisation have an influence on this?
- Are there any significant differences in purpose between residents' groups in rural areas versus those in urban areas?
- Does the purpose of residents' associations in New Zealand differ dependent upon the region? If so, is their interaction with local governmental agencies relevant?

Sufficient data was collected from both the public record and the organisations themselves to address the objectives of this research. It was found that, based upon themes derived from the literature and thence from content analysis of the data, there are three main types of residents' group in New Zealand:

Type I: Demographic, a group focused on a specific ethnicity, age or other demographic feature defining a community;

Type II: Body Corporate, a group set up as part of a property development to own and manage community property and promulgate rules and design guidelines;

Type III: Community, a group serving residents within a geographic community.

In addition a sub-type (hybrid) was identified for each:

Type Ia: Demographic Hybrid, a demographic place-based residents' group (i.e. a retirement village community association);

Type IIa: Body Corporate Hybrid, a body corporate residents' group that runs an essential service (i.e. water supply, roading, pest control) for its members;

Type IIIa: Community Hybrid, a community residents' group that operates an asset or service benefiting the wider community (such as a community hall, postal service or community centre).

A major purpose across the board for residents' groups was *promoting the interests of local people* ('giving a voice' to- or 'representing' local people, providing a 'link' between the community/member and government or other organisations, 'assisting' residents to deal with government). This was evidenced in each of the three types, the regions, the urbanity and the age. This is supported in the literature by Mulroy and Lauber (2004) who highlighted a residents' group's efforts to intervene on behalf of vulnerable citizens, and Ranasinghe and Valverde (2006), Slater (2004), Maney and Abraham (2008) and Foran (2004) who presented evidence of 'NIMBYistic' behaviour by residents' groups.

Savova (2009) and Leifer (2008) both pointed to residents' groups *improving or protecting the environment*, which featured prominently for many residents' groups in New Zealand. This purpose addressed not just the natural environment but all the physical environment, including heritage. It included such things as 'general advancement', 'enhancement', 'development' or 'improvement' of an area, and creating a 'good place to live'.

Safeguard / improve community wellbeing was not identified as a purpose theme in the literature review but emerged as a popular purpose through the survey, especially with community-type residents' groups. Examples of this included anything that improves the economic, social, recreational or cultural attributes of a community, improving the 'quality of life' and 'welfare' of residents', supporting specific measures such as 'civil defence', 'neighbourhood support'. Groups also undertook 'community projects' and sought to improve 'sustainability'.

A final key purpose is being a *source of local community knowledge*, identified in the literature by Kass *et al.* (2009). This not only means holding knowledge on behalf of a community, but also 'notifying' of new things affecting the community, 'being a watchdog', providing 'education', 'raising awareness of local issues' and having an 'involvement in local affairs'.

Table 6.1 shows the main purposes for each type based upon frequency of occurrence in the constitutional and survey data.

Table 6.1: Main purpose of residents' groups based on type (n=582)

Type	Main purposes
Demographic	Representing a demographic group, general wellbeing, promoting local interests
Body Corporate	Body corporate, managing/owning community asset, sense of place
Community	Promoting interests of local people, protecting environment, general wellbeing

Implications

Implications for the community governance sector

Little has been specifically written on residents' groups in New Zealand, yet they have played a significant part in communities for almost one and a half centuries. I argue that if local authorities are the heart of community governance then community-type residents' groups are its soul: as a source of knowledge and leadership, protecting and preserving the physical environment, promoting the interests of local people and safeguarding their general wellbeing.

Such groups operate in isolation, with many hours of volunteer effort being expended on achieving their lofty ideals. A major theory underpinning community – that of social capital – does not seem to apply to residents' groups as a whole, as it is rare for these organisations to be in contact with other residents' groups, even if they are neighbours (Candiliotis, 2011). Yet there are common bonds that bind community residents' groups together and where there is commonality there is surely opportunity to work smarter and exploit synergy.

This research will assist residents' groups to reflect on their constitutional purposes and check they are in keeping with the expectations of their committee members and the needs of their communities. It will also aid people establishing new groups by informing them when setting their objectives and will provide residents' groups as a whole with an identity that can be debated, tested and – perhaps – adopted.

One of the findings of this research is the inconsistency between community-type residents' groups. While diversity is to be celebrated in keeping with the concept of 'sense of place' and the importance of that to humans, a modicum of consistency in this sector might create a

smoother interface between the groups and the communities they serve. An example is the purpose of critiquing or opposing government: some groups undertake this function yet despite the ideals and importance of civil society, it might be that such groups detract from serving the community's best interests by focusing on adversarial techniques rather than community development. On the other hand the transparency and accountability of government is well evidenced in the historical record (we can see that this was a key reason why such groups were started) and can be argued to be a valid function of community governance, yet many groups did not indicate this as one of their purposes. This thesis does not advocate for any one particular purpose, but a discussion is encouraged across the community halls and meeting rooms of New Zealand about good practice and commonality, about who residents' groups exist for and how communities benefit from them.

Implications for local government

Local government plays an important role in the governance of communities, though there is a subtle difference between local governance and community governance: the latter arguably more about self-governance than being governed (O'Toole, 2004; Woods, 2001). Nevertheless there is a strong link between councils and residents' groups – particularly the community and body corporate types – and this research will help clarify the nature of such groups to both the elected and administrative agents of local government.

Perhaps the biggest implication for councils is the opportunity for engagement between civil defence staff and all types of residents' groups. It has been shown that residents' groups exist primarily to protect and promote the interests of their community members as well as safeguarding general wellbeing, so it seems a viable proposition that their links into their communities are utilised for the purpose of 'building a resilient New Zealand'.

Regional local authorities could also benefit by putting a greater focus on engaging with residents' groups, who are holders of local knowledge and as such can be 'eyes and ears' for agencies that are an additional step away from the communities they serve, particularly considering both regional councils and community residents' groups share a common purpose of protecting environment.

Implications for central government

This research shows central government could benefit from developing relationships with residents' groups with regard to the welfare and wellbeing of community, and through gaining and disseminating information. A clear example are the opportunities for District Health Boards to utilise residents' groups as a point of contact for communities of place or shared experience (e.g. senior citizens, ethnic groups).

The presentation of a typology of residents' groups could also assist those mechanisms of government that further develop understanding of community, such as Statistics New Zealand, the Department of Internal Affairs Local Government Operations or the Office of the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Implications for researchers

The academic community now has a starting-point if their interests tend to either residents' groups, the community governance sector or the structure of community in New Zealand. It is hoped this research has provided a useful perspective, particularly in relation to the three types of residents' group and the 15 purpose-themes.

Limitations

The most limiting factor of this research, in my opinion, stems from the lack of a useful definition of residents' groups. As a student of management emerging into the world of academia it feels like I am taking a liberty to fill such a large gap in the literature. I hope I have done so with suitable rigour and humility.

Limitations of the literature review

A significant limitation of this research was the scope of the literature review, undertaken in 2010 when I first started this project. The review searched for a limited number of key words but presented a number of new terms (community council, for example), these terms were subsequently used in a revised search of the Register of Incorporated Societies and Charitable Trusts in late 2011. On reflection it would have been useful to revisit the literature review

again in light of those terms. On the other hand, the primary focus of this research is residents', ratepayers' and progressive associations and the size of project was threatening to stretch beyond the scope of a masters thesis.

Limitations of the constitutional analysis

In hindsight it would have been useful to record details on the membership of the residents' groups when undertaking the content analysis of the 582 constitutions. While the flavour is captured in the purpose statements, particularly in relation to the three types identified in this research, having a second point of reference would add an extra level of rigour to the typology.

Limitations of the survey

This research would have benefited from an analysis of the constitutional data in advance of the survey being designed. This would have enabled the option of adopting the five additional purpose-themes derived from the constitutional analysis into the survey instrument, resulting in more robust data. The inclusion of the literature-derived purpose-theme 'negative behaviour that impacts community' in the survey caused confusion among many of the survey participants although had little impact on the overall quality of the other data analysed.

The questions around engagement with regional and city/district councils would have benefited from more in-depth consideration. While including a third question for unitary councils was – in hindsight – a better option, there is no guarantee this wouldn't have created confusion, as people might not relate to the term 'unitary' council (for example, Marlborough and Gisborne both have 'district' councils that happen to be unitary authorities).

A further limitation was not allowing participants to select an option between 'monthly' and 'yearly' in the question relating to contact frequency with Councillors, council officers, Community Board members, District Health Boards and civil defence. The gap between the two was too great and may have prevented some respondents from accurately portraying their level of contact.

Limitations of the researcher

I definitely favour inductive research, discovering as I go rather than adopting a positivist approach to the world. This has been a significant limitation for me and possibly reflects in the thesis itself both in a negative way (in terms of my skill as a statistician) and positive way (in that I needed to exert a lot more discipline and rigour to develop my thesis).

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APPENDIX 1: COVER LETTER



Survey of Residents' Group Committee Members

██████████ Resident Association

20 January 2012

Dear Secretary/Committee Member,

I am undertaking a Masters of Management Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. My thesis aims to produce a better understanding of residents' associations by examining the opinions of people who serve on their committees. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

Note that "Resident's Groups" is a general term we have used in the survey to describe a range of civil society organisations that represent people. These include residents', ratepayers', progressive and neighbourhood associations, community councils, residents' societies and community associations. They can range from representing people in an apartment block, a whole suburb, or an entire community across the country.

This survey is a key part of the research project. Your voluntary participation will provide information on the activities and aims of residents' associations. As such I am asking for your assistance with this research.

Could you distribute this questionnaire to all your committee members and request each one to complete it and send it back, or complete it online? It will take around ten minutes to fill out.

The survey can also be completed online at www.Residents.org.nz/survey.

It is essential that as many of your committee as possible participate in this survey by the closing date, March 1st 2012.

The survey is anonymous - nobody aside from my thesis supervisor and I will see these survey forms. It asks for no information that could identify individual participants; however the forms (both paper and online) will have a code number so I can identify your association.

A summary of the thesis results will be sent to all residents' associations who participate. Some of the key findings will be made public via the media and through the www.Residents.org.nz website and a full report will be presented at the 2012 Community Governance: Beyond Resilience conference in Christchurch.

Thank you in advance for your support.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jarrod Coburn', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jarrod Coburn
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Organisation ID: 1001

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Organisation ID: 1001



Page 1

Survey of Residents' Group Committee Members

Instructions: One survey form per committee member. Please do not discuss the questions with one-another, it is important that each person completes the survey individually. I would be grateful if you could return the forms by Thursday 1st of March 2012. The survey will take about ten minutes to complete.

Or complete this form on the internet: www.residents.org.nz/survey

Please note that the term "residents' group" includes residents', ratepayers', progressive and neighbourhood associations, community councils, residents' societies and community associations.

Q1) On the scale below please show us whether your organisation is in a rural area, an urban (city) area, or somewhere in between:

(circle a number)



Q2) Please tell us what your organisation's legal structure is:

(tick ONE box)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Incorporated Society | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Charitable Trust | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Some other type, or no legal structure | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unsure/Don't know | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Q3) In your opinion, what is the main purpose of your organisation?

(write the main purpose of your organisation)

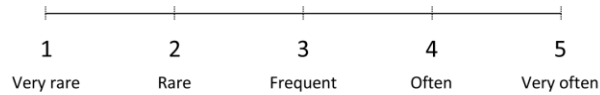
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.....

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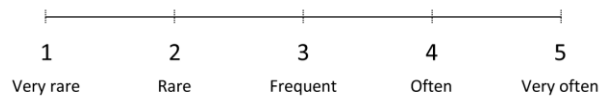
Q9) Describe the level of engagement between your group and your **City/District** Council:

(circle a number)



Q10) Describe the level of engagement between your group and your **Regional** Council:

(circle a number)



Q11) How many other residents' groups do you have regular contact with (at least once every six months)?

(write a number below)

.....

Q12) In your role as a committee member, how much contact do you have with the following:

(tick **ONE** box in each row)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
Local Councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Council officer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Board member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Health Board member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Civil Defence officer/manager	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q13) In your opinion, which of the following roles does your residents' group perform?
 (tick as many boxes as you need to)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Maintaining transparency and accountability of government agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A source of local community knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Negative behaviour that impacts on people in your community | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Protecting or promoting a sense of place | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Improving or protecting the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Critiquing or opposing activities of local or central government | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Representing the interests of a specific demographic group (e.g. youth, Māori, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Part of the establishment (i.e. an agent of the government) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Charitable activities | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| As a platform for political activity | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Promoting the interests of local people | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

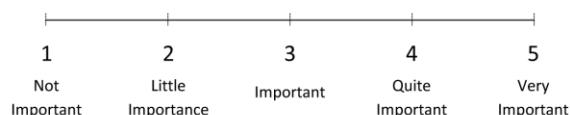
Q14) How could residents' groups in general improve their service to the members of their community?

.....

.....

Q15) On the scale below, show how important you think residents' groups are to New Zealand society.

(circle a number)



Thank you. The results of this survey will be made available in late May 2012 on www.Residents.org.nz.

**Please return this form to: Jarrod Coburn, Victoria Management School, PO Box 600, Wellington 6140
 by Thursday 1st March 2012.**

APPENDIX 3: OPERATIONALISATION TABLE

Source	Datum	Compare With	Construct	Output (research question)
Statistics NZ	Mesh block location	Purpose analysis Address/Location	Geographic location of organisation	See Questions 3, 4a and 4b below
Statistics NZ	Rural/Urban (Mb)	Address/Location	‘Urbanity’ of organisation	Q3. Understanding of purpose rural vs. urban
Statistics NZ	District (Mb)		TLA covering organisation’s area	Q4a. Difference in purpose in region or district
Statistics NZ	Region (Mb)		RLA covering organisation’s area	
Statistics NZ	DHB (Mb)		DHB covering organisation’s area	
Companies Office	Address/Location	Statistics NZ data	Geographic location of organisation	n/a
Survey	Engagement (TLA)	Stated vs. perceived purpose	Engagement with TLA Engagement with RLA Overall engagement with local authorities	Q4b. Relevance of interaction with local government
Survey	Interaction (Councillor)			
Survey	Interaction (Officer)			
Survey	Interaction (Civil Defence)			
Survey	Engagement (RLA)			
Survey	Interaction (Cmty Bd)			
Survey	Interaction (DHB)		Engagement with DHB	
Survey	Perceived purpose	Stated purpose Perceived purpose Perceived themes Literature themes Recency of purpose	Understanding of purpose Stated activities Current activities Comparison of themes Contemporality of purpose	Q2. Stated purpose vs. perception of committee members Q1. Comparison of stated and perceived purposes with themes in literature
Companies Office	Establishment date			
Companies Office	Last purpose update			
Companies Office	Stated purpose			
Literature	Purpose themes			

APPENDIX 4: OPERATIONALISATION FLOW CHART

