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Being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist

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Abstract

This thesis investigated and analysed the factors which influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists in Australia through multiple case study research. It also examined the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a non-governmental organisation (NGO), and analysed how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia.

Human rights activism is part of a social movement aimed at creating social and political change. It is particularly relevant in these times when questions are being raised about the commitment of some democracies to uphold their obligations under international human rights law.

Multiple theoretical lenses informed this study, including using the being-becoming-belonging framework (Kidd, 1973) to conceptualise the motivation of human rights activists. Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) model of the justice-oriented citizen also framed the analysis about the extent to which the participants sought to change the established structures which cause social problems. Other critical lenses included the concept of the humanitarian gaze, which problematises the seemingly benign motivations of human rights activists to want to change the world (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Tascon, 2015), the action competence framework related to active citizenship (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) and the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

The findings demonstrate that being a human rights activist involves an intrinsic, deeply personal desire to create change, as well as extrinsic factors such as family, schooling, gender and religion which enabled the participants to become human rights activists over time. Many of the participants in my study experienced political socialisation through their family life when they were children, which enabled them to have the knowledge and agency to be human rights activists. Most of the participants had a high degree of social capital and financial support, which influenced their capacity to be and become human rights activists. Some of the participants were also influenced to become human rights activists by the extra-curricular social justice activities provided by their schooling, rather than learning about human rights through their experiences of the formal civics and citizenship school curriculum.
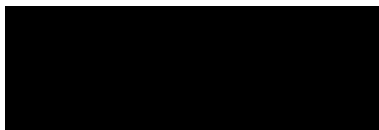
The study found evidence that having a strong sense of belonging to an organisation is a crucial way of maintaining the involvement and commitment of young human rights activists, despite the challenges of trying to create change about human rights issues. Indeed, for some of the participants, their motivation for becoming a human rights activist could be re-conceptualised as belonging-being-becoming rather than being-becoming-belonging.

My study has demonstrated that being and becoming a human rights activist who belongs to an NGO group can provide powerful opportunities for young people to participate in local, national and global citizenship practices. In particular, experiences which involve personal interaction and partnerships between activists, and those whose rights are being infringed, provides a meaningful and inclusive way of being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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My thesis is dedicated to my late father, Dr Allan Hall.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1   Introduction

> Next year will be the last of my mandate. After reflection, I have decided not to seek a second four-year term. To do so, in the current geopolitical context, might involve bending a knee in supplication; muting a statement of advocacy; lessening the independence and integrity of my voice - which is your voice.

> - Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in an email to his staff in December 2017. (Lynch, 2017)

Human rights activism requires asserting the cosmopolitan ideology that human rights are universal against the realist determination of some sovereign states to control their citizenry (Beck & Sznaider, 2006). This tension is apparent in Al Hussein's views quoted above. As the most senior United Nations human rights official, Al Hussein believed that the recent retreat by some democratic countries, such as the United States, from upholding human rights standards made his position as a global advocate untenable (Lynch, 2017). Since then, the United States has withdrawn from the United Nations Human Rights Council, the first time a member state has voluntarily done so (Harris, 2018). Therefore, it is a particularly pertinent time to be examining human rights activism in democracies, as questions are being raised about the commitment of such countries to uphold and promote international human rights standards (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

Human rights activism is an evolving field of research within the citizenship literature. Tawil (2013) argues that a cosmopolitan approach to citizenship is based on the:

> … principle of universality [that] is fundamental to humanist, humanitarian, and human rights perspectives where, in addition to being members of local communities and citizens of nation-states, individuals are also seen as members of a global community of human beings. (p. 3)

Similarly, Osler and Starkey (2003) argue that human rights and citizenship are linked, because the standards set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) form the framework of cosmopolitan citizenship based on an implied 'recognition of our common humanity' (p. 252).

My research investigated what factors influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists in Australia, the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group and how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. My study examined case studies of participants involved in four non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

NGOs are central to international human rights promulgation and protection. Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004) argue that 'nongovernmental factors have been the engine of global expansion of human rights in the post-World War II era' (p. 587). They claim this has occurred because in the post-colonial era, countries feared infringing on the sovereignty of other nations if they criticised their human rights records. Non-governmental actors such as Human Rights Watch have stepped into this space to play a crucial role in promoting international human rights instruments and publicising gross human rights violations. These international human rights NGOs often play a significant role in negotiating and liaising between individuals and governments (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). Being a human rights activist can be dangerous or even fatal. In September 2018, Suad al-Ali, a female human rights activist who led the organisation al-Weed al-Alaiami For Human Rights which campaigned against the Iraqi government, was assassinated in Basra (BBC, 2018). As this example demonstrates, although local grassroots NGOs can be a powerful voice of dissent against repressive government actions, they are often silenced (Ribeiro, Rodrigues, Caetano, Pais & Menezes, 2012). As a result, most human rights NGOs tend to originate in advanced democracies (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004), and this is the case for the organisations in my study.

Internationally, there has been much discussion about how the practice of human rights activism through belonging to NGOs can be conceptualised as a form of active citizenship. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) conducted a large scale International Civic and Citizenship Education Study in 2010 and 2016. The authors of the 2010 report (Schultz, Ainley, Fraillon, Kerr & Losito) argued that research on citizenship education has demonstrated:

> … an increase in the importance of non-governmental groups serving as vehicles through which active citizenship can be exercised: new forms of social participation serve a variety of different purposes, ranging from religious matters to protection of human rights and protection of the environment. (p. 14)

Schultz et al (2010) also found that the collective experience of action experienced through being involved in NGOs is predicated on having the domestic political opportunity to do so. In terms of human rights, they argue:

> … citizens in those countries that are well connected to global civil society- where human rights activism has been intensifying- will become more aware of human rights issues and are more likely to get involved in the international human rights movement. (p. 609)

As a result, there are clear links between human rights activism and belonging to a democracy that allows such activism to take place. Braungart and Braungart (1997) define democracy as a form of political power and governance in which its members must be knowledgeable, participative and active citizens. In a democracy, citizens are able to disagree with the decisions or attitudes of the prevailing government, without fear that such views will lead to limits on their freedoms. The situation in Australia regarding activism is described by Winford (2005), who argues:

> Australian society has been shaped by protests, demonstrations and activism. Indeed, dissent, protest and social change are seen as essential to a healthy, robust, democratic society. And yet agitators, dissenters and social movements that challenge the status quo - *surely among the most active of participants in the process of growing a vibrant democracy* - are inevitably met with the repressive forces of that same society: police, courts, sometimes even gaols. Law is a central and powerful discourse through which many of these conflicts are played out [emphasis added]. (p. 47)

Thus, a tension exists for democratic governments. On the one hand, countries such as Australia want to encourage active and informed citizenship practices, but on the other hand, governments do not like to be criticised or shamed by human rights activists for the way they treat people. It is important that research in the field of human rights activism in Australia is conducted, as Australia is a signatory to all the major international human rights documents. These include the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (also known as the Refugee Convention), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Therefore, Australia has an obligation under international law to uphold and promote the rights set out in these treaties and conventions, even if doing so presents political challenges.

1.2   The contexts of human rights activism

I continue this chapter with a discussion of the broader international contexts of activism in these times. Then I discuss the literature about being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist to inform my study. This is followed by a discussion about the definition of human rights activism, the theoretical frames of my study, the research methodology and my motivation for undertaking this study, before concluding with an outline of my thesis.

Activism aims to create social and political change (Merry, 2006). According to Baumgardner and Richards (2000):

> … to most people, the image of an activist is someone … who hoists picket signs in front of the Pakistani Embassy, marches on the Washington Mall demanding money for cancer research, or chains him- or herself to trees. (p. 282)

The twentieth century saw many examples of this type of activism through street protests for many different causes throughout Western democracies. Some examples include the civil rights movement (Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream' protest march in Washington in 1963), anti-war actions (the Washington protests against the Vietnam War in 1967 and the anti-Iraq war protests in Australia in 2003) and protests against economic inequality (the anti-globalisation marches in Seattle in 1999 and the Occupy Wall St protests in New York in 2011). More recent times have seen an upsurge in street protest activities about issues such as racial inequality (the Black Lives Matter protests in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014), climate change (in New York in 2015), the rights of refugees (the #LetThemStay protests in Australia in 2016) and the Women's March (in Washington in 2017). It is also important to note that such street protests are not confined to leftist political causes, as evidenced by the right-wing white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA in 2017, nor are they confined to Western countries (such as the Arab Spring protests in Tunisia in 2010).

Norris (2002) argues that rising levels of education leads to an increased engagement in protest activities, claiming that:

> … rising levels of human capital and societal modernization mean that today a more educated citizenry living within post-industrial societies has many opportunities to engage in a diverse range of repertoires, including combining electoral activities and protest politics. (p.2)

Activism is a current issue that has rapidly changed and evolved, even during the time it has taken me to complete my research. In particular, the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States in 2016 has energised progressive protest activities in that country. One recent example of youth activism in the United States was organised by the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, who experienced a gun massacre at their school in February 2018. The following month, they organised the March for our Lives protest in Washington D.C., which led to hundreds of thousands of people participating in street protests against gun violence all over the United States (Holpuch & Owen, 2018). In a newspaper article about this protest, Kohn (2018) said:

> There are [many] reasons young people often make effective activists. They have a good amount of free time, are willing to be creative with their tactics and try new things, and are skilled in cutting-edge methods of communication — as we're certainly seeing now with the Parkland students on social media. The Stoneman Douglas youth got media attention because violence was committed against them. Black and Latino youth are not getting that same attention. And in fact, though black youth organized peaceful protest after protest in Ferguson, Mo., Baltimore and elsewhere, the media only covered their grievances when a fraction of the protesters turned violent.

In comparing the Stoneman Douglas young activists with the Black Lives Matter young activists, this commentator argues that race and class influence who is perceived by society, governments and the media as an 'acceptable' type of activist. The extent to which the social, cultural and financial capital of young adults impacts on their capacity to be, become and belong as human rights activists is considered in my research, especially in light of Cruikshank's (1999) claim that active citizens 'are not born; they are made' (p. 3).

In the Australian context, Walsh and Black (2018) argue that young people:

> … face a complex and heavy burden. On the one hand, it is not uncommon to see them characterized either as risky subjects who are a potential danger to themselves and to others, or else as subject to forces that may harm them. On the other hand, they are often portrayed by education and other social policies as globally active citizens who are a source of democratic hope, possibility and even reform. Sometimes, young people experience all of these portrayals simultaneously. (p. 9)

This tension is explored in my research through an investigation of the motivations and influences on young adults to be, become and belong as human rights activists in Australia. Rather than using a deficit model that perceives young people to be apathetic (Gordon & Taft, 2011), I chose to examine young adults who are very engaged in their communities and in the political process at a particular moment in time. I wanted to explore what motivated and influenced them to be that way, in order to understand how organisations and educators can enable more young people to be active citizens. In reviewing the Australian literature, Peterson (2017) argues there has been a lack of exploration of the motivations, values or relationships which underpin youth civic activism and engagement in Australia. Gordon and Taft (2011) also argue that youth activists are 'mostly absent from the theorising in the civic engagement literature' (p. 1500). Similarly, Cuervo and Wyn (2017) argue that 'the concept of belonging is often implicit but under-theorized in discussions of place, space and young people' (p. 220), and my research endeavours to contribute to these scholarly discussions by analysing what motivates and influences young people to be, become and belong as human rights activists.

The term 'youth' is a contested one, and 'it is not clear exactly when one passes from childhood to youth or indeed from youth to adulthood' (Ryan, 2007, p. 247). Although the participants in my study are not children, but young adults aged between 18 and 26 years old, this research analyses their formative experiences as children. This was done in order to determine what motivated and influenced them to be and become human rights activists, by examining factors such as their families, schooling, gender and religion.

Another focus of my research is the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group (Yuval-Davis, 2011). There are many examples of human rights activism where the combined pressure of many people acting in concert proved more influential that acting alone. One NGO that has harnessed this capacity is Amnesty International, which has for decades used the power of the crowd to send a message to governments about prisoners of conscience:

> 'Maybe you just sent one card – but all of these cards are like little drops of water that combine to create an avalanche of pressure'. The avalanche that greeted Nigerian prisoner of conscience Chris Anyanwu was a special delivery of mail sacks containing 11,000 letters and cards from members of Amnesty International and other human rights organisations around

the world. As the prison guards brought in sack after sack of letters and cards from all over the world, Chris Anyanwu sat on a carpet of mail, her spirits soaring. She carefully read each message and pasted them on to the walls of her tiny cell, cherishing the photographs of perfect strangers who at that moment became such perfect friends. 'It was so moving. I gained such strength from them. I knew I had committed no crime and now I knew the world also knew why I was in prison'. An unprecedented international outcry over death sentences and long prison terms imposed on prisoners of conscience resulted in Chris Anyanwu's sentence being reduced. (Amnesty International, 1998)

Since this example, the advent of the internet has increased the interconnectivity and capacity of civil society social movements to create change about human rights issues far beyond letter writing. One recent example of such digital activism is the concept of being 'woke', which encourages society to be awakened to the reality of social inequality and racism. The hashtag #StayWoke often accompanies Twitter posts about issues such as police brutality against African Americans, and the hashtag #MeToo has spearheaded a global movement about the sexual assault of women. There has also been a rise in podcasts as a form of digital activism, which allows direct communication with citizens and sense of belonging to a social movement. Pod Save America, which has over a million listeners per episode, has been described by the New York Times as the 'undisputed king of progressive podcasts' (Zengerle, 2017). According to its founder Jon Favreau:

> The story we've begun to write is the story of an American awakening – the story of a national trauma that is causing us to slowly shake off our cynicism and recognize that democracy is showing up, not just on Election Day but on all the days in between… Democracy is hard, slow, and a constant struggle. That was true before the Trump presidency, and it will remain true long after he's gone. And even though there will always be setbacks and heartaches and loss, the progress we've made and the lives we've changed remind us that there is joy in the struggle, and hope in the difficult journey ahead. (Favreau, 2017)

Many activists express a desire to belong to a group because 'the collaborative, distributive nature of work in an activist group enables participants to accomplish goals they would be hard-pressed to accomplish on their own' (Kirshner, 2007, p. 369). My thesis discusses whether the advent of digital technologies and social media has changed the places of belonging for activists and the methods by which such activism occurs. According to Davies, Evans and Peterson (2014):

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… the debate is still raging about whether or not a traditional form of activism is developing more swiftly and involving more or different numbers of people, or whether we are witnessing a new form of activism. (p. 6)

Digital activism has been spearheaded by organisations such as change.org and getup.org.au, which have provided a platform for social change through rapidly connecting millions of people through online petitions about issues, in a way that could never have been achieved in the past. The founder of change.org, Ben Rattray, describes how having a personal and local connection to a global issue is a vital part of successful digital activism:

> Humans are the sort of creatures who access issues not through abstract ideas or numbers but through the lens of personal narratives… We enable people to tell the kind of stories that mobilise the size of the populations that are required to move issues. And it ends up building this solidarity where people aren't acting out of a sense of charity. They are acting out of a sense of solidarity, which is a very different thing… We live in a nationalised and globalised media environment… but actually the way they can have most impact is to get involved in what's happening in their immediate proximity. (Bryant, 2018)

Similarly, Walsh and Black (2018) argue that for young people in Australia:

> … the local remains important – particularly in relation to where they identify possibilities for enacting their daily citizenship. Our studies of young Australians suggest that despite the almost ubiquitous impact of global factors and forces, the global remains distant and abstract as a site of influence. (p. 109)

Human rights activism therefore encompasses both local and global contexts of citizenship. Yarwood (2014) argues that 'ideas of community and neighbourhood are central to the imagination and development of active citizenship policies' (p. 93) and 'engagement within one's communities is clearly a central prerequisite of active citizenship' (Peterson & Bentley, 2017, p. 48). These ideas about local and global sites of belonging for human rights activists are examined in my study.

Unlike the bureaucratic and hierarchical civil society organisations that prevailed in the twentieth century such as trade unions, where membership involved paying dues and receiving identity cards, more recent social movements have been:

… characterized by direct action strategies and internet communications, loose coalitions, relatively flat organisational structures, and more informal modes of belonging focused on shared concern about diverse issues and identity politics… [they] adopt action repertoires combining traditional acts such as voting and lobbying with a variety of alternative modes such as Internet networking, street protests, consumer boycotts, and direct action. (Norris, 2002, p. 3-4)

In the Australian context, Tranter (2010) reports that young Australians are increasingly moving away from street protests as a form of activism and are instead focusing on online forums. Similarly, Martin (2012) concludes that for today's young Australians:

… political activity occurs in a much more fluid way than before through groups that appear and disappear rather than political activity occurring through well-institutionalised channels such as political parties and trade unions. (p. 222)

My research explores the significance to human rights activists of belonging to the 'well-institutionalised channels' of NGOs in Australia, however it includes an analysis of how online technologies have impacted on their activism and sense of belonging.

My study is not focused on the effectiveness of the actions undertaken by the activists in creating change about human rights issues, which is beyond the scope of my research. Rather, the research questions addressed in this study are:

1. What factors influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists?
2. How significant is belonging to a group for human rights activists?
3. How do human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia?

The case studies are focused on four NGOs in Melbourne, Australia: Global Justice, Hope International, Youth against Poverty and Refugee Aid (pseudonyms have been used). Twelve participants across the four organisations were interviewed and observed for this study. Each participant spent at least one day a week volunteering in this role.

1.3   Defining human rights activism

There is a large body of scholarship dedicated to defining activism. Bobel (2007) sees an activist as someone who identifies as a campaigner for change through collective participation in a social movement.   Davies, Evans and Peterson (2014) describe activism 'as being something that is public, collaborative, arises from (and is an expression of) conflict and which takes place voluntarily' (p. 3). According to Kovan and Dirkx (2003), activism involves a:

> …deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings and actions… a shift of consciousness… [that] involves our understanding of ourselves and our self-locations; our relationships with other humans… our understanding of relations of power in interlocking structures of class, race, and gender… and our sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy. (p. 102)

In this way, being an activist involves both an intrinsic, deeply personal desire to create change, as well as extrinsic factors that encourage and enable one to become an activist, such as connecting and communicating with other passionate and like-minded individuals about an issue. Activists therefore have both a personal and a collective identity (Rupp & Taylor, 1999).

Merry (2006) discusses a problem that human rights activists in particular must confront, commenting that:

> If they present human rights as compatible with existing ways of thinking, these ideas will not induce change. It is only their capacity to challenge existing power relations that offers radical possibilities. (p. 41)

Challenging the power relations which exist in society is also part of the justice-oriented model of citizenship developed by Westheimer and Kahne (2004). This concept and its relationship to human rights activism is further discussed in the literature review.

In terms of definitions, Stoecker (2003) uses the term 'advocate' rather than 'activist' to define those who are trying to create social change on behalf of others. According to Stoecker (2003), advocates:

> … see the rules as unfairly benefiting the powerful, and see themselves in a struggle to change those rules… advocacy is a practice of professionals working on behalf of or for a group… [However] there are times when advocacy can actually disempower a community. (p. 42)

This is because a more powerful, although well-intentioned group is acting on behalf of others, rather than the community themselves gaining the skills and experience to enable them to protest about breaches of their own human rights. However, this raises the question: if advocating on behalf of others to protect their rights can be disempowering, can only victims of human rights abuses be human rights activists?

By way of example, in 2015 Rosie Batty received the Australian of the Year award. Ms Batty was the victim of domestic violence perpetrated by her former partner, which culminated in the death of her son at the hands of his father. The Victorian Police Commissioner described her as the most 'remarkable victim' he had ever met in his years as a police officer (Australian of the Year Honour Roll, 2015). The Australian of the Year Honour Roll website describes her as follows:

> Rosie has put domestic violence on the national agenda. Rosie now champions efforts to fight domestic violence, making many media and public speaking appearances to shine a spotlight on the issue and call for systemic changes. Rosie's incredible strength and selfless efforts are an inspiration to many other victims of domestic violence and her courage and willingness to speak out will make Australia a far better place.

In this way, Rosie Batty could be described as a human rights activist as she is campaigning for systemic change to the current status quo about this issue as well as acting personally on her own behalf. However, according to the United Nations, it is not only victims of human rights abuses who can be its defenders. Article 1 of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1999) states that:

> Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to promote and to strive for the protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms at the national and international levels. (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/53/144)

Interestingly, theorists such as Bobel (2007) have found that many participants in social movements do not adopt the nomenclature of 'activist' and in fact there is a 'resistance of some social movement actors to self-identify as "activist"' (p. 148). Similarly, Baumgardner

and Richards (2000) argue that activists are perceived as '''other'' people- weird or dauntingly benevolent' (p. 282). This means that one can 'do activism without being activist' (Bobel, 2007, p. 149). This discrepancy invites a more complex understanding of what it means to be an activist, and this complexity about how human rights activists identify themselves is analysed in my research.

1.4   The theoretical framework of my research

Mt study draws on five theoretical frameworks to address the research questions. Firstly, I utilise the being-becoming-belonging theory of adult education (Kidd, 1973), which includes the elements of self-discovery, affect, social, political and spiritual goals, as well as action, to understand the motivation of human rights activists. According to Kidd (1973), 'being and becoming' can only occur when the self is seen in community with others, thus 'belonging' is also a crucial part of the framework. My research captures human rights activists at a particular moment in time, rather than over time, however the participants reflect upon how their being and becoming as human rights activists has developed over time.

Secondly, my research uses Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) model of the justice-oriented citizen, which addresses injustice through knowledge about social movements and seeks to question and change the established structures which cause social problems. This is in contrast to the personally responsible citizen who undertakes individual actions, or participatory citizens who work within established systems to solve social problems. Thirdly, my research uses the concept of the humanitarian gaze, which problematises the seemingly benign motivations of human rights activists to want to change the world (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Tascon, 2015). The humanitarian gaze has been defined as contributing to a 'recurring geopolitical discourses of North–South relations that naturalize[s] political, economic and social inequality' (Mostafanezhad, 2014, p. 112). My study also problematises altruism as a motivation to engage in human rights activism (Berlant, 2004). Fourthly, my study draws on the belonging framework developed by Yuval-Davis (2011). She defines belonging as a physical and emotional experience which has political effects. Yuval-Davis argues that belonging is structured around three elements: social and geographical locations; emotional attachment to cultural and symbolic practices of social groups; and the value systems that

individuals and groups use to make judgments about their own and others' belonging. These elements are used to analyse the data in the case studies.

Finally, my research uses the action competence framework (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) to analyse how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. Action competence has been defined as 'the appropriate use of knowledge and action to achieve an outcome' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 7). Philosophically, the intentionality of action competence is informed by critical theory (Habermas, 1979), as not only are human actions intentional, but the intentions, motives and reasons all have an intrinsic relation to the actions, so a different intention will lead to a different action as a solution to the problem. The components of action competence involve knowledge and insight about what the problems are, how they arose and possibilities for solution; motivation for and commitment to the issue; visions about future positive solutions; and concrete action experiences (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). In this way, being action competent involves connecting knowledge, intentions, commitment and action, and these lenses are used to analyse the data in my research. In the literature review, I have developed a diagram that demonstrates the relationships between these theoretical frameworks in terms of human rights activism (see Figure 1, p. 56).

1.5   Research methodology

My study uses the interpretative lens of critical theory, which involves researchers acknowledging their own power, engaging in dialogues and using theory to interpret or illuminate social action (Habermas, 1979). This perspective has been chosen because my study considers human rights activists as justice-oriented social actors, and critical theory is similarly concerned with the 'desire to comprehend … the underlying orders of social life - those social and systemic relations that constitute society' (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 211).

The use of case studies is appropriate for this qualitative research, which is explanatory and strives to answer 'why' type questions about contemporary events (Yin, 2009). A multiple case study design based on four NGOs was chosen in order to develop different perspectives on this topic, as well as to enable the analysis of common themes across the case studies (Creswell, 2007).

In order to complete this research, the scope of the study had to be feasible in the time available, and the size of the study was ultimately dependent on the access I had to participants. To some extent these pragmatic factors influenced the choice to have four case studies, as it proved easier to recruit a few participants from many organisations rather than many participants from fewer organisations. In total I interviewed twelve participants across the four organisations. Of these, three were men and nine were women, and their ages ranged from 18 to 26 years old. The following section provide an overview of the four organisations from which the participants were drawn.

Global Justice is an international advocacy organisation that campaigns to protect human rights. Global Justice does not accept financial contributions from governments in order to maintain its independence. This allows it to take action to defend human rights when they are breached, both in Australia and internationally. The current focus of Global Justice's campaigns are the rights of women, refugees and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Global Justice (Australia) website contains an activist portal which includes information for activists about skills, resources, planning, event management, sharing ideas and support. The collection of interview, observational and documentary data from this group provided evidence to support the research questions about being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist.

Hope International is an international community development organisation that advocates on behalf of millions of people internationally, especially children, who live in extreme poverty. The aim of the organisation is to work towards eliminating poverty and its causes. The Hope International mission statement describes the organisation as being:

> … committed to the poor because we are Christian. We work with people of all cultures, faiths and genders to achieve transformation. We do this through relief and development, policy advocacy and change, collaboration, education about poverty, and emphasis on personal growth, social justice and spiritual values.

Hope International states that it is committed to improving the lives of the poor by recognising people's physical, social, spiritual, economic and political needs, providing emergency disaster relief, advocating for victims of injustice and poverty, promoting community leadership and public awareness and demonstrating Christian engagement by

example. The organisation also opposes proselytising and coercion of any kind and is therefore dependent on gaining the consent of the communities involved. The focus of this research is on the activities of the Hopesters, a sub-group of the organisation that enables young people aged between 15 to 26 years to be 'empowered to take action on issues of global poverty and injustice'. According to its mission statement, the organisation aims to influence:

> … Australian culture, government and business to do their share to end extreme poverty and injustice… joining together with a network of young people across Australia, we speak out with one voice to advocate for those living in poverty. We influence our world through grassroots campaigning- one classroom, campus or community at a time.

The Hopesters have a local, national and global focus for their activities, which includes taking action through school and university groups, organising national conferences, campaigning on issues like child labour and undertaking development work overseas. The focus of this research is specifically on the advocacy work done by the Hopesters, rather than fundraising activities. The analysis of data from this group provides a different perspective about human rights activism than Global Justice, as it focuses on the activism of young people who belong to a Christian development organisation.

Youth against Poverty describes itself as Australia's largest youth-run organisation, where over 150,000 young people aged 16 to 26 years lead a movement to end poverty. According to the organisation's mission statement, 'change starts with a simple belief- that extreme poverty is unacceptable. Beliefs turn into action, and enough informed action will end extreme poverty in our lifetime'. As part of this goal, Youth against Poverty has partnerships with other organisations in the Asian and Pacific regions to develop community and education centres for young people. It also aims to raise awareness and influence policy in Australia in order to end extreme poverty, and it is this activist work which is the focus of my research. In addition, Youth against Poverty lobbies the Australian government for increased funding of the foreign aid budget. Although Youth against Poverty does not specifically position itself as promoting human rights activism, it can be described as engaging in this activity because it situates the work it does as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for the reduction in extreme poverty, which is human right. The aims of Youth against Poverty are

similar to those of the Hopesters, except that the former are not a division of a larger organisation.

Refugee Aid is an asylum seeker support and advocacy organisation in Australia. Refugee Aid has a number of functions, including working at both an individual and a structural level to create a just refugee determination system; empowering asylum seekers by fostering their independence and self-determination; engaging, educating and working with the community as the key to creating social change; working from a social justice model that is committed to human rights; remaining an independent organisation that does not accept government funding; as well as valuing the needs and wants of asylum seekers. Refugee Aid differs from Global Justice in that in addition to undertaking advocacy work, it also provides material aid to refugees such as food, housing, employment and legal advice. My research did not involve interviewing asylum seekers themselves, but rather those who advocated for the protection of the rights of asylum seekers. The data from this group provides a different perspective on human rights activism, as it focuses specifically on the rights of one group, namely refugees.

1.6   Motivation for undertaking this study

My interest in this area stems from my experiences as a former human rights campaigner with an NGO when I was at high school and at university. I am also a secondary school humanities teacher, and I have taught students about human rights in my civics and citizenship classes. I have also facilitated student engagement in human rights activism through belonging to NGOs as part of an extra-curricular program at a secondary school where I was teaching.

The role of a teacher in undertaking or promoting human rights activist activities with his or her students is controversial in Australia. Most recently, in 2016 the former Prime Minister of Australia, Malcolm Turnbull, condemned teachers who wore 'Teachers for Refugees' t-shirts in their classes as part of a protest against the Australia's government policy of detaining asylum seekers in off-shore detention facilities. He labelled the plan 'absolutely inappropriate in classrooms… teachers should be focused on teaching' and 'linked the activism to recent poor results in science and maths and the three-yearly international PISA standard' (Karp, 2016). This example indicates how elected officials in a democracy can try and halt the work of human rights activists, who in this case were trying to raise awareness about Australia's

breach of its international legal obligations as a signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), for which the United Nations had criticised Australia (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2016). Examples such as this prompted me to think about the tension that exists for governments. On the one hand, they want to encourage active and informed citizenship by young people, as evidenced by Goal 2 of the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2008) to create active and informed citizens. On the other hand, governments feel threaten by the actions of human rights activists when it challenges existing government policy. These examples led me to consider the role of schools in promoting human rights activism and the motivation of young people to become involved in human rights activism.

An experience I had on a volunteer tourism ('voluntourism') trip to Cambodia with a group of students from an international school in Asia (where I was teaching at the time) also informed my thinking about this topic. On this trip, the students visited a village in rural Cambodia to help them with building houses, and part of the cost of their trip went towards funding the building materials for the houses. The students spent a day in the village helping the local people to hammer in nails for the flooring of their new houses that had been partially built beforehand. It was quickly apparent that most of my students were unskilled in using a hammer, and as a result they received many minor injuries during the day, much to the bemusement of the local people (many of whom were missing limbs due to landmine accidents and yet were skilled at hammering nails). At the conclusion of the day, the local people demonstrated much gratitude towards my students at a ceremony and many photographs were taken to commemorate the event. On the bus trip back to Phnom Penh, I learned that the local people had been waiting to move into these houses for three months before our arrival, but were unable to do so until after our visit when they were officially opened. In their reflections about the trip, many of my students discussed how inspired they felt to have 'helped poor people' by providing them with adequate housing. The problematic nature of this trip was the catalyst for my thinking about the issue of human rights activism and service, and whether a helping narrative of 'good intentions' is enough or whether it can be harmful. On one level, these Cambodian people benefitted by receiving housing that was paid for by my students, and my students benefitted by having an altruistic experience. Yet

it troubled me that there was such pageantry of the 'helpers and the helped', when just providing the money for the houses that the local people then constructed themselves would have achieved the same outcome for them (although not for my students, who would have missed out on the feel-good experience and the school, which would have missed out on the positive public relations photographs of my students and happy Cambodian children in front of the houses, which were widely used in the schools prospectus). On another level, I wondered whether doing something flawed like this was better than doing nothing, and perhaps the harm caused was outweighed by the benefits, as without having the experience my students would not have donated the amount of money necessary to build the houses. This experience challenged my thinking around these issues and was part of the inspiration for wanting to conduct research in this field about the motivations and influences on becoming a human rights activist.

1.7   Chapter outline

Chapter One introduces and outlines the aims of the study, research questions, theoretical context, research methodology and motivation for the study

Chapter Two discusses the literature about human rights activism

Chapter Three provides an outline of the research methodology, a justification of the data collection methods and data analysis, and the validity and limitations of the study

Chapter Four presents the discussion and findings about the first case study, Global Justice

Chapter Five presents the discussion and findings about the second case study, Hope International

Chapter Six presents the discussion and findings about the third case study, Youth against Poverty

Chapter Seven presents the discussion and findings about the fourth case study, Refugee Aid

Chapter Eight provides the conclusions from my study

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

Human rights activism involves communities advocating for the protection of their own rights, as well as for the rights of strangers in other countries whose rights are being infringed. In this way, human rights activists can 'play a critical role in translating ideas from the global arena down and from local arenas up' (Merry, 2006, p. 38).

This review explores contemporary research about human rights activism as a way of establishing the place of my study within the broader literature. The field of human rights activism has not developed in isolation; rather, it draws upon existing bodies of scholarship about related areas such as human rights, citizenship, critical theory and post-colonialism. In particular, this literature review is structured around five theoretical frameworks: being, becoming and belonging (Kidd, 1973), justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), the humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Tascon, 2015), belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). I have developed a diagram that illustrates the relationship between these theories in terms of human rights activism at the end of this chapter (see Figure 1, p. 56).

2.2   The human rights context

It is important to canvass some of the debates in the literature about human rights, before examining the literature pertaining to human rights activism in particular.

The recent 'age of terrorism' has raised questions about the usefulness of a human rights framework in contemporary society. Piazza and Walsh (2010) summarise this debate by asking whether governments can prevent terrorism while also respecting human rights, or whether authorities must trade-off some human rights in order to reduce terrorism. Piazza and Walsh (2010) also describe the shift that occurred within the policy community around this issue, particularly in the United States. The terrorist events of September 11, 2001 led to the conclusion that limiting rights (such as the right to a fair trial and freedom of speech) was a necessary tool for supressing terrorist groups. In more recent times, the rise of ISIS, the increased frequency of terrorist attacks in Western countries and the election of Donald

Trump as President of the United States of America has led to further crackdowns on the human rights of suspected terrorists. For example, Human Rights Watch has documented cases where the rule of law was abandoned under the French State of Emergency in cases of suspected terrorists, including searches without warrants and detention without trial (2016). President Donald Trump has also argued that 'torture absolutely works' to combat the spread of terrorism (Weaver & Ackerman, 2017), in contravention of international human rights conventions.

The history of modern-day human rights can be traced to foundational documents such as the Magna Carta (1215), which stated 'we will not deny or defer to any man either justice or right' (Bradley, 2001, p. 6). This document contained principles that are fundamental to notions of justice and the rule of law and is still frequently referenced today despite being over 800 years old. Other foundational documents such as the United States Bill of Rights (1789) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1793) sought for the first time to limit the powers of the sovereign and introduced 'notions of a universalised humanity' (Tascon, 2015, p. 18). In the twentieth century, the events of the World Wars and particularly the horrors of the Holocaust led to the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948). This was the first time that fundamental human rights were universally protected, regardless of the laws of sovereign states. The 'golden rule' of Christian belief, that one must treat others as you would like to be treated, has been described as echoing in the UDHR (Ishay, 2008). Article 1 states that:

> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Thus, the UDHR codified a moral vision that had been developed historically into a legal document. However, despite the existence of many international human rights treaties which have been agreed to by the majority of countries in the world (including Australia), the concept of human rights is still a contested term, both politically and philosophically. Indeed, philosophers such as Singer (1995) even take issue with the existence of rights belonging exclusively to humans, rather than other conscious animals.

There is a fierce debate amongst human rights scholars about whether rights are inalienable, that is, able to be taken away. In Hannah Arendt's seminal work, *The Origins of*

Totalitarianism (1951), she articulated the notion of the right to have rights (Birmingham, 2006). Arendt (1951) argued that the events of World War II meant that stateless people (such as Jewish people in Germany) lost their rights, as they had no government to protect them. According to Parekh (2004), Arendt's (1951) argument was 'not simply that their rights could no longer be protected, but that the very existence of rights was abolished in their becoming stateless' (p. 42). Therefore, the loss of citizenship rights led to the loss of human rights, meaning that rights are not inalienable to personhood but rather contingent on citizenship. Parekh summarises Arendt's (1951) position on human rights as follows:

> Without the right to action – to live in a world where your actions have meaning – and the right to speech – to be able to communicate meaningfully and formulate opinions – we are deprived of our humanity and hence are absolutely rightless. (p. 45)

In 2015, more than a million refugees crossed into Europe as a result of internal events in Syria and East Africa (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2015). The rights of refugees fleeing a well-founded fear of persecution are protected under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), which has been widely ratified by most European countries. However, there has been much ill-treatment of genuine refugees travelling to these countries seeking asylum during this crisis, and thousands of drowning deaths (UNHCR, 2015). Refugees are therefore constructed around a major paradox, as 'precisely the figure that should have incarnated the rights of man par excellence, the refugee constitutes instead the radical crisis of the concept' (Agamben, 1995, p. 3). The dual issues of terrorism and refugees have meant that the commitment of the international community to the protection of human rights has been questioned in recent times, as states seek to subvert their obligations under international law. This again raises Arendt's (1951) question about whether human rights exist if they are not able to be exercised.

The extent to which human rights are universal is also contested. Donnelly (2003) argues that the universality of rights is based on the essential moral nature common to all human beings. However, Otto (1999) questions this notion and argues instead that rights only exist when they are exercised or removed, and therefore do not inherently dwell in each person. This echoes Arendt's (1951) argument about the existence of rights being contingent on citizenship. This argument also reflects the Foucauldian idea that 'liberty is a practice rather than an institutional or legal guarantee and must be exercised in order to be attained' (Otto,

1999, p. 10). Amartya Sen (2004) describes some of the intellectual scepticism about the conceptual soundness of human rights, arguing that:

> … the central idea of human rights as something that people have, and have even without any specific legislation, is seen by many as foundationally dubious and lacking in cogency. A recurrent question is, where do these rights come from? It is not usually disputed that the invoking of human rights can be politically powerful. Rather, the worries relate to what is taken to be the 'softness' (some would say 'mushiness') of the conceptual grounding of human rights. Many philosophers and legal theorists see the rhetoric of human rights as just loose talk—perhaps kindly and well-meaning forms of locution—but loose talk nevertheless. (p. 315-316)

Proponents of the universality of human rights have also been criticised for denying the plurality of the human condition, particularly regarding religious and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (Osten-Sacken & Uwer, 2007). Post-colonial theorists such as Darian-Smith and Fitzpatrick (1999) also argue that the human rights paradigm imposes an exclusionary, hegemonic agenda, which links human rights with democracy under the guise of universality.

The protections given to human rights under international law is also debated. Hathaway (2002) argues that:

> Human rights law… stands out as an area of international law in which countries have little incentive to police noncompliance… [as] human rights treaties impinge on core areas of national sovereignty. (p. 1938)

In addition, Harris-Short (2003) argues that international human rights can be 'imperialist, inept and ineffective' (p. 130). She discusses:

> … the inherent limitations and fundamental weaknesses of an international legal system founded on a 'society of States' in which the voices of the local and particular are effectively silenced. (p. 130)

Recently, there has been a move away from these debates to focus instead on the social processes of human rights implementation and resistance. That is, 'instead of asking if human rights are a good idea, it explores what difference they make' (Merry, 2006, p. 39). This is the

stance adopted in my study, which is focused primarily on the influences and motivations of the participants to be, become and belong as human rights activists, rather than the debates about the philosophy of human rights, which is beyond the scope of my research.

2.3   Being-Becoming-Belonging

The being-becoming-belonging framework has been adopted in my study because it facilitates an analysis of how and why the participants choose to be, become and belong as human rights activists.

In his influential essay 'Relentless Verity: Education for Being-Becoming-Belonging' (1973), the Canadian adult education scholar James Robbins Kidd argues that the dynamic relationship between the concepts of being, becoming and belonging must be the 'heart and central goal' of education (p.7). My study uses these concepts to analyse how adults be, become and belong as human rights activists who 'shape and change society' (Onyx, Kenny & Brown, 2012, p. 56).

The framework of being-becoming-belonging arose out of the seminal works of humanist psychologists such as Allport's *Becoming* (1955) and Maslow's *Towards a Psychology of Being* (1962). Kidd (1973) describes the struggle these theorists faced in focusing solely on the concept of being, as it is a 'time-bound and existential concept that ignores the necessity of the person changing and growing' (p. 7). Becoming is therefore an integral part of the process of being, as it represents how ones being changes over time.

The relevant elements of Kidd's (1973) being-becoming-belonging model of adult education for my study of human rights activists are self-discovery about one's being; the influence of affect and cognition on becoming; the incorporation of social, political and spiritual goals into one's being; as well as action that arises out of formal and informal activities which can be self-directed (Kidd, 1973). Affect and cognition are essential components of being-becoming-belonging, because it 'does not just happen as a simple inevitable process, but as the result of conscious choices' (Kidd, 1973, p. 8). According to Kidd (1973), 'being-becoming is limited to an individual existence, isolated from others if one fails to place in the equation belonging' (p. 7). Thus, the importance of including belonging in the framework as well.

The philosophical underpinnings of the being-becoming-belonging framework can be found in the book *Being and Time* (1927) by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. In his writings, Heidegger argues that existence does not occur in time, but rather is itself time, therefore becoming is being over time. Heidegger also explores the notion of being-in-the-world, where existence means being able to stand outside of a phenomenon and understand it whilst at the same time being a part of that same phenomenon. This idea was very influential to Foucault, who stated that his 'entire philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger' (Milchman & Rosenberg, 2003, p. 3). Besley and Peters (2007) argue that under a Foucauldian approach 'we cannot approach the question of the self without locating it within the network of values and social practices that come to characterise the culture of a particular time' (p. 5). In my methodology, a critical theory approach is adopted as a way of examining the power relationships that exist in the real-life context of the case studies (Habermas, 1979).

The framework of being-becoming-belonging has also been applied to other educational settings. Grace (2001) uses it as a citizenship educator to discuss his queer life narrative, which he describes as a:

> … critical engagement with the queer self that investigates the personal and difficult journey to be, become, belong, act, speak, and represent oneself as a queer person, citizen, and educator in diverse cultural and social spaces. (p. 1)

In a different context, the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009) for pre-school children is titled Belonging, Being and Becoming. This document rationalises the re-ordering of the terms in this way because it describes children as belonging to families first before they develop a self-identity. According to Leggett and Ford (2016), the Early Years Learning Framework has a 'strong focus on developing relationships between identity and belonging for children and the ways social and cultural contexts include or exclude the learner as a participant' (p. 195). Both of these examples have relevance to being-becoming-belonging in terms of human rights activism, because they recognise the self as being situated within a social and cultural context, which in turn influences ones 'being'.

2.4   Volunteering, service learning and activism

Being an unpaid member of a group that takes action to create change about human rights issues can be conceptualised as a form of volunteering. Hill and den Dulk (2013) define volunteering as 'a citizen's intentional, organised efforts to address matters of public concern' (p. 180).   However, theorists such as Bobel (2007) argue that activism goes beyond volunteering to intentional actions aimed at creating change that is often political in nature.

The theoretical foundation of understanding young people and volunteering is linked to service learning, which involves students having an altruistic approach to community engagement which focuses on charities and helping (Dewey, 1916). In an article entitled *Why Service-Learning is Bad*, Eby (1998) argues that many service-learning programs implicitly individualise social problems, which has the effect of diverting attention away from structural, systemic explanations.   Similarly, Stoecker (2003) argues that 'service learning is about providing service - feeding the poor' whereas activism is more about the Freirean (1970) notion of 'social change - asking why the poor have no food and then acting on the answers' (Stoecker, 2003, p. 37).   Kahne and Westheimer (1996) also argue that in contrast to community service programs that involve activities like cleaning parks, tutoring children and serving food to the homeless, activist groups seek to influence public policy and change institutional practices, often with a social justice focus.

The distinction between service learning and activism is also reflected in the debates in the literature around passive and active citizenship. Ross (2012) distinguishes between the active and passive citizens as follows:

> … while many politicians would settle for a passive citizen (the 'good citizen', who votes, subscribes to the state, obeys the law), many others – including most progressive educators – would hope to empower young citizens, to critically engage with and seek to affect the course of social events. This critical distinction been active citizenship and passive citizenship must be analysed, in both policy and practice. (p. 7)

Likewise, Aldenmyr, Wigg and Olsen (2012) argue that there has been a shift in the literature from 'defining citizenship as a [nationalist] status towards a thicker understanding of citizenship as an active social and identity making practice underscored by the concept of

active citizenship' (p. 266). Similarly, Ginwrighta and Cammarota (2007) argue that young people need opportunities to engage in what they term 'critical civic praxis':

> … community-based organisations in urban communities can provide youth with access to networks, ideas, and experiences that build individual and collective capacity to struggle for social justice- the chance to engage in critical civic praxis. As a result of collective engagement in community alliances and intergenerational networks, and exposure to political information and ideas about social change, urban youth collectively respond to community and school problems. (p. 694)

In their article *Educating the 'Good' Citizen: Educational Choices and Pedagogical Goals*, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that there are three types of citizen: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen and the justice-oriented citizen. Their summary of the attributes of each is reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1
Kinds of Citizens

		Personally Responsible Citizen	**Participatory Citizen**	**Justice-oriented Citizen**
DESCRIPTION		Acts responsibly in his/her community	Active member of community organizations and/or improvement efforts	Critically assesses social, political, and economic structures to see beyond surface causes
		Works and pays taxes	Organizes community efforts to care for those in need, promote economic development, or clean up environment	Seeks out and addresses areas of injustice
		Obeys laws		
		Recycles, gives blood	Knows how government agencies work	Knows about social movements and how to effect systemic change
		Volunteers to lend a hand in times of crisis	Knows strategies for accomplishing collective tasks	
SAMPLE	**ACTION**	Contributes food to a food drive	Helps to organize a food drive	Explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes
CORE	**ASSUMPTIONS**	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must have good character; they must be honest, responsible, and law-abiding members of the community	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures	To solve social problems and improve society, citizens must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time

Table 1: Kinds of citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 2)

Using Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) model, it can be argued that human rights activists seek to be justice-oriented citizens who address injustice through knowledge about social movements and seek to question and change the established structures which cause social problems. This is compared with the more passive personally responsible citizen, who

undertakes individual actions, or participatory citizens who work within established systems to solve social problems. However, as Westheimer and Kahne (2004) point out, these types of citizens are not necessarily either/or propositions, but rather exist on a continuum:

> … those committed to educating social activists who practice justice-oriented citizenship would ideally want to couple critical analysis of root causes of injustice with opportunities to develop capacities for participation. They want students to be able to both analyze and understand structural causes of deeply entrenched social problems and gain the skills and motivation to act by participating in local and national politics and community forums. (p. 6)

My study examines how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia using the lens of the justice-oriented citizen.

2.5 Influences on being a human rights activist

Being a human rights activist is a difficult and time-consuming undertaking which requires individuals to make a significant commitment to protect the rights of other people. The first research question examines what factors influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists. This involves examining the relevant literature about families, schooling and gender.

2.5.1 Family

Social scientists have identified a strong relationship between young people's sense that they are competent civic actors as individuals and their desire to participate in social activism groups (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). DeJaeghere, Josic & McCleary (2016) argue that agency is 'more socially than individually constructed [and] embedded in relationships with peers, family and communities' (p. 4). It is therefore important to consider the influence of individual and group factors on the agency that young adults possess as part of being engaged civic actors.

One element of this is the extent to which young people experienced political socialisation when they were growing up, which enabled them to feel that they had the knowledge, capacity and agency to create change (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010). The literature in this area has changed over time. In the 1950s, Hyman (1959) argued that the political understanding of young people was mainly influenced by the modelling they experienced through their

families. However, later scholars such as Torney-Purta (2004) suggested that young people constructed political knowledge mainly through their peer groups. In fact, McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) argue that young people who have had civic experiences outside of the home, through school and community-based activities, are often able to challenge the political views of their parents, which in turn prompts parents to increase their own civic knowledge.

Gordon and Taft (2011) have also noted that much of the research about youth socialisation has focused on the role of adults and families, rather than exploring the agency of young people themselves to form their own political identity. Indeed, the youth activists that Gordon and Taft (2011) interviewed took exception to being called remarkable by adults for the work they did. The researchers noted that 'an infantalising discourse of exceptionalism makes it even more difficult for adults to recognise young people's political power' (p. 1506), and these concepts are explored in the case studies.

Human rights activists are often highly educated, economically advantaged and drawn from the same privileged social class. Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004) state that populations with more resources are more likely to engage in movements such as human rights, because:

> … once basic human needs have been met, citizens can turn their attention to other needs. The human rights movement is often considered an example of such post-materialist movements… citizens who are better educated may possess the [social and] cultural capital needed to be aware of their rights, to recognise when those rights have not been met, and to possess the tools needed to articulate the demands and to organise for change. (p. 596-7)

Further evidence for this is provided in the latest International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (Schulz, Ainley, Frallion, Losito & Agrusti, 2016) across 19 countries, which found that socio-economic status, measured using parental occupation and the number of books in the home, was positively associated with student civic knowledge. This study also found that parental and student interest were the strongest background predictors of expected civic engagement. Social capital is developed through the informal education transmitted through family, political parties and cultural groups which enables individuals to have the attitudes and knowledge required to succeed in society (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). Social capital also involves features of social organisation such as networks and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995). According to Kahne, Chi and Middaugh (2006), social capital 'is embedded in the structure of relations between actors

in a given setting. It exists neither within a given individual nor apart from a set of social relations' (p. 389). In this way, social capital can be linked with the concept of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011), and this is discussed later in this literature review.

The findings of the the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (2016) also has implications for the conceptualisation of human rights activism as a form of active citizenship, if it is contingent on people's socio-economic status and positive familial experiences. According to DeJaeghere et al (2016):

> Sociological and anthropological studies of education debate how youth agency can be constrained by structures of class, gender, and racial inequalities in society, and they acknowledge that social change is not easily achieved even though education may foster aspirations and individual agency. (p. 2)

Black (2017b) also argues that low socio-economic status affects a range of attitudes to and capacities for civic participation by young people, and that many young people are promised the ability to contribute to social justice programs even while they themselves have little access to it. These concepts are discussed in the case study chapters which examine the influence of families and socio-economic status on the knowledge and capacity of participants to be and become human rights activists.

2.5.2 Schooling

In Australia, the importance of understanding, promoting and protecting human rights has been recognised through multiple explicit emphases in the Australian school civics and citizenship curriculum over recent decades. In 1997, the federal government promoted the development of civics and citizenship education in Australian schools through the Discovery Democracy program (Curriculum Corporation, 1997). This created 'a critical mass of support for a renaissance of interest in this topic' (DeJaeghere & Tudball, 2007). Following this, the development of a nationalised Australian Curriculum was first approved by the Ministerial Council of Commonwealth, State and Territory education ministers in 2009 (ACARA, 2012). However, during the time it took for the Australian curriculum to be developed and approved, there were a number of years where civics and citizenship education was not emphasised in the curriculum of Australian schools.

The current national civics and citizenship curriculum (ACARA, 2016) contains multiple explicit references to human rights, such as an understanding of:

- how human rights values are consistent with Australian values (Year 7 Civics and Citizenship), and
- the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Year 10 Civics and Citizenship)

The Australian Curriculum also includes general capabilities such as ethical understanding (which includes references to human rights) and emphasises how such capabilities 'play a significant role in the Australian Curriculum in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century' (ACARA, 2016). Both the Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA, 2008) which aims to create active and informed citizens, and the civics and citizenship component of the Australian curriculum, 'inject a conscious social change and justice agenda into the purposes of Australian schooling' (Walsh & Black, 2018, p. 131).

Despite it being mandated curriculum in many states, the recent Australian National Assessment Program-Civics and Citizenship (NAP-CC) demonstrated that Australian school children lacked knowledge about civics and citizenship, including about human rights and democratic processes. The report by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) indicated that in 2016, only 38% of Australian school students in Year 10 possessed the fundamentals deemed necessary to become active, informed citizens (2017). Parker (2018) argues that in many countries, curriculum for human rights education 'remains at best opaque and at worst so under-developed as to include only "mentions" of something called "human rights"' (p. 5). Although an analysis of the extent to which human rights education is implemented in Australian schools is beyond the scope of my study, I do consider the influence that the participants' schooling had on the development of their skills, knowledge and competencies as young adult human rights activists.

Article 2(2) of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) states that the pedagogy of human rights education should include:

a. Education about human rights, which includes providing knowledge and understanding of human rights norms and principles, the values that underpin them and the mechanisms for their protection

b. Education through human rights, which includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners

c. Education for human rights, which includes empowering persons to enjoy and exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others

Therefore, formal classroom tuition 'about' human rights is only one element of a human rights education pedagogy, which also includes learning 'through' and 'for'. This can occur through informal extra-curricular opportunities for young people to exercise their rights and to respect and uphold the rights of others, such as belonging to an NGO group. McGivney (1999) describes informal learning as 'learning that takes place outside a dedicated learning environment and which arises from the activities and interests of individuals and groups, but which may not be recognised as learning' (p. 10). The importance of informal learning as an area of research about active citizenship within schools was enhanced by an international comparative study which was conducted in seven European countries by the European Commission, entitled *Informal Learning of Active Citizenship at School* (Scheerens, 2009). This study found that the values and norms of school life provide an exercise ground for important dimensions of civic behaviour that exist in wider society, which includes an understanding about and protection of human rights. It was hypothesised that that the microcosm experience of learning to create change at school enabled students to 'learn about the rules of the game, what it means to be part of an organisation and what civic behaviour in such a setting requires' (p. 25-26). This is also acknowledged by ACARA (2012), which states that:

> Children in schools are citizens but they need opportunities to build their understanding and experience to become active adult citizens. The school plays an essential role in the provision of opportunities for preparing active, informed citizens to ensure the continuation of Australia's parliamentary, liberal democracy. (p. 5)

The extent to which both the formal school curriculum and informal learning experiences that the participants had when they were at school influenced them to become human rights activists is analysed in the case studies.

It is important to note that since the commencement of my study, there has been a shift in curriculum emphases and recognition of the importance of youth voice, agency and engagement in Victorian government schools. In May 2018, the Department of Education and Training released a policy document entitled *Amplify: Empowering students through voice, agency and leadership.* It states that:

> Young people who find their own voice in supportive school environments are more likely to develop a confident voice, a capacity to act in the world, and a willingness to lead others. By empowering students we enhance student engagement and enrich their participation in the classroom, school and community. (p.4)

This policy document sets out the requirements for active citizenship involvement as a way of empowering *all* young people in Victoria, Australia. This must now be reflected in all government schools' strategic plans and is an area for future research.

2.5.3 Gender

Gender is another factor which I consider when examining what motivated and influenced the participants to be and become human rights activists. Saha (2004) found that boys in Australia have a stronger commitment to civic freedoms than girls, whereas Atkeson and Rapoport (2003) and Haste and Hogan (2006) report that girls are more likely than boys to subscribe to attitudes concerned with social justice and to relate their concerns to social activism. In addition, another Australian study found that girls were more likely to hold positive views about human rights than boys (Saha, 2004). Internationally, the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (Schulz et al, 2016) also indicated that female students demonstrated higher civic knowledge than male students, however female students were less inclined than male students to anticipate active political involvement in the future. These findings provide support for Ferree and Mueller's (2004) argument that women activists are often slow to define what they do as activism and are more likely to be involved in grassroots or behind the scenes work. Similarly, Bobel's (2007) research discussed examples of women who resisted the 'activist' label, as they were unable to perceive of themselves as political dissidents without conflicting with their gendered identification as a non-radical.

Explanations for these findings draw on Gilligan's (1977) influential work about the ethics of care. She and other theorists argue that women are socialised to develop the characteristics

of nurturance, care and protection (Gilligan, 1977), rather than dominance and attacking the status quo (Noddings, 1992). Gordon (2008) argues that gender inequality can channel women away from leadership roles and into more informal positions within social movements:

> Women's roles as caretakers, mothers, and community members profoundly shape their activist commitments in ways that are both empowering and problematic. Being a social movement participant necessitates that one attends community meetings, participates in protests and demonstrations, and forms alliances with allied activists, among many other activities. There is a public character to these social movement activities… and a requisite mobility needed to engage in these activities. (p. 33)

The reluctance of female activists to name themselves as such also has echoes with the feminist social movement, where some young women are reluctant to be called a feminist despite being committed to equality between the sexes (Bobel, 2007). In the case studies I examine the role of gender in being a human rights activist and discuss whether the female participants were reluctant to categorise their work as activism and why.

2.6. Motivation to become a human rights activist

The first research question examines what motivates young adults to be and become human rights activists. According to Davies, Evans and Peterson (2014), activists have multiple routes to engagement:

> Some may be driven by altruistic tendencies, and/or a desire to develop specific skills and knowledge which may be used for future social and educational advancement. It is possible that a feeling of efficacy and ability to benefit from networks and individuals that make engagement a pleasant, and achievable reality. (p. 6)

Similarly, Atkenson and Rapoport (2003) argue that activists often possess a strong, intrinsic helping intentionality which compels them to do the work that they do. Prosocial behaviour is defined as voluntary behaviour intended to help others and includes 'intentions, goals, and predispositions to work towards the betterment of society such as the alleviation of poverty or suffering' (Saha, 2000. p. 10). This behaviour is sometimes called altruism, a term which Eisenberg (1996) describes as being morally motivated. Social psychologists such as Piaget (1997) and Kohlberg (1976) have been influential in explaining how people establish the moral

values of doing no harm to others, having empathy for the plight of others and actively trying to improve the life of others. One way (but not the only way) that individuals can internalise the moral values of society is through the influence of religion. According to Saroglou, Pichon, Trompette, Verschueren and Dernelle (2005), religious people tend to perceive themselves as prosocial and helpful, however other studies have found that the behaviour of religious people often does not confirm their perception of themselves as altruistic (Ji, Pendergraft & Perry, 2006). The extent to which an intrinsic helping intentionality and religion influenced the participants to become human rights activists is examined in the case studies.

Post-colonial theorists have problematised this seemingly benign and well-intentioned motivation to 'help others'. Mostafanezhad (2013) argues that a good intentions paradigm is the legacy of a 'gendered, sentimental colonial encounter' (p. 486), where 'the cultural politics of race, class and gender are strategically obscured' (p.486). In her book *Compassion: The Cultural Politics of an Emotion*, Berlant (2004) argues that:

> … we do not like to hear that our good intentions can sometimes be said to be aggressive, although anyone versed in, say, the history of… imperialism knows volumes about the ways in which genuinely good intentions have involved forms of ordinary terror… and control. (p. 5-6)

Tascon (2015) argues that human rights activism arose from Enlightenment ideals to abolish slavery and child labour and provide humanitarian aid to victims of disasters. She argues that the concept of the humanitarian gaze:

> … is organised by a relationship of unequal power premised on humanitarianism, a discourse that shows some to be (persistent) victims, and others as aiding them. This then predisposes the privileged that aid them to seek 'others' as figures of pity or, at best, as fighters to be 'more like us'. (p.7)

The power imbalance that arises with humanitarianism, where those in the Global North feels morally obligated to help victims in the Global South, can also be seen in the motivation of human rights activists. The humanitarian gaze refers to a 'way of looking at troubled others… [through] the discourse of human rights… some of which may not be "listenable'' by non-Western traditions' (Tascon, 2015, p. 15). The concept of the humanitarian gaze therefore questions the motivation of privileged Western human rights activists 'to think that he or she

is there to help the rest of the world' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 630). In her article *The Problem of Speaking for Others*, Alcoff (1991) writes:

> Although the speaker may be trying to materially improve the situation of some lesser-privileged group, the effects of her discourse is to reinforce racist, imperialist conceptions and perhaps also to further silence the lesser-privileged group's own ability to speak and be heard. (p. 632)

The humanitarian gaze has been defined as contributing to a 'recurring geopolitical discourses of North–South relations that naturalize[s] political, economic and social inequality' (Mostafanezhad, 2014, p. 112). This concept is derived from Said's (1978) seminal work about how images of orientalism represented the colonial gaze which reflected how the West came to understand itself in opposition to the Other. According to Tascon (2015), activism can be:

> … configured through an axis of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1980) in which knowledge production reproduces a particular form of power… knowledge for the creation of a politically active subject. (p. 38)

In this way, knowledge about the 'distant suffering' of others is used as a lesson to enable other (more privileged and powerful) actors to learn to be politically active through acting on their behalf (Hoijer, 2004, p. 513). According to Kapoor (2004), the North's superiority of the South is taken for granted, and representations of subjects from these places are therefore framed 'in terms of an us/them dichotomy in which '''we'' aid/develop/civilise/empower them' (p. 629). This echoes the concerns of Spivak (1988), who examines the ethics and politics involved in the othering process of representing the subaltern. Spivak (2004) also states that 'the idea of human rights ... may carry within itself the agenda of a kind of social Darwinism - the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit' (p. 524). She proposes that the partial answer to the aforementioned issue is that those most directly affected should be the drivers of these programs.

However, Article 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1998) states that 'everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms'. Therefore, it can be argued that all

people have the right to be human rights activists, not just victims of human rights abuses, and indeed many human rights abuse victims may find it too difficult to be human rights activists because of the trauma they have experienced (Satterthwaite, 2018). In addition, the post-colonial theorist Moore-Gilbert (1997) charges Spivak with reinforcing the self-obsession of the West by focusing too much on questions of reflexivity, without providing guidance about how upholding the rights of others can be supported without reinforcing a superiority dichotomy. In my case studies, the power relationships that are implicit in the motivation to be a human rights activist and the implications that follow are discussed.

2.7 Belonging

The second research question examines the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group. Identity has been defined as an 'ongoing and performative process in which individuals draw on diverse resources to construct selves… identity can never be something that is just interior because identity is necessarily relational' (Watson, 2006, p. 509). In this way, questions of self-identity must necessarily be bound up with questions of belonging and non-belonging (Kidd, 1973). Theories of belonging draw on the influential work in the psychology field developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979). Under their conceptualisation of social identity theory, people perceive themselves as belonging to an ingroup, compared with other comparable groups that person does not identify with called outgroups. According to Horowitz (2017), the collective identity of activists involves a relationship between a social identity and 'an injustice frame to create a new in-group' (p. 1). The extent to which this applies to the participants in my study will be examined in the case studies.

Yuval-Davis (2011) defines belonging as a physical and emotional experience that has political effects, or a feeling of being 'at home' (p. 10). She argues that belonging is structured around three elements: social and geographical locations; attachment to cultural and symbolic practices of social groups; and the value systems that individuals and groups use to make judgments about their own and others' belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). These facets are political because they construct boundaries that define who is excluded and included and who belongs and does not belong. An important part of self-identity therefore lies in the collective identity that people gain through belonging to groups of others. In Probyn's (1996) view, identity is always in transition and is produced through the combined processes of being

and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. Similarly, Walsh and Black (2018) argue that 'the theoretical link between citizenship and belonging is particularly useful for considering the experience of those who do not belong, or do not feel that they belong' (p. 42), and these ideas are explored in the case studies.

In relation to the first element of social and geographical locations, Appadurai (1996) argues that globalisation and the internet has meant individuals are increasingly linked to multiple sites of belonging, rather than limited to a single community, a fixed geographical location or a culturally defined set of social practices. More recently, Castells (2015) has claimed that contemporary society has evolved to become networks of outrage and hope, where belonging has moved away from attachment to a national status into reconstructed cosmopolitan communities.

The second element of the belonging framework is about an emotional attachment, 'an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future' (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10). This is achieved through the repetition of social and cultural practices undertaken by the group. Youniss, Bales, Christmas-Best, Diversi, McLaughlin and Silbereisen (2002) suggest that the social bonds, affiliation and emotional support gained through belonging to a community with shared commitments (such as a human rights activist group) can sustain civic involvement despite intimidating challenges, frustrating experiences and a sense of hopelessness at ever being able to create effective change. The case studies explore how belonging to a group enables participants to negotiate the tension between hope and optimism for the future on the one hand and the political realities and compromises involved in human rights activism on the other. This concept also links with having an emotional commitment to the issue and an intention to address the issue through future positive solutions, as discussed below in Jensen and Schnack's (2006) action competence framework. It is also interesting to consider belonging in terms of Black's (2017a) findings that 'young people in low socio-economic communities may lack [a] sense of belonging and recognition, finding themselves instead to be subjects of distrust or wariness' (p. 127) by their communities. For example, Black quotes one young person saying that 'a lot of people have the perception that teenagers are just making trouble and all of this' (p. 127). Black (2017a) argues that 'such observations reinforce the provisional or conditional experience of citizenship for many young people' (p. 127), and these concepts are explored in the case studies.

The third element of belonging outlined by Yuval-Davis (2011) is the value systems that individuals and groups use to make judgments about their own and others' belonging. This also links to the social, political and spiritual goals outlined in Kidd's (1973) being-becoming-belonging framework. The groups considered in this study are part of a growing secular global social movements concerned with poverty alleviation and universal human values. Yuval-Davis (2011) discusses how human values transcends borders; rather than focusing on ethnic, national and religious belongings, cosmopolitan practices and discourses focus on global, universal human rights. However, Yuval-Davis (2011) also cautions against the development of 'group think' operating, where it is assumed by the group that there is only one correct position to reach (for example about human rights), if only they could raise the consciousness of others high enough. This critique also links to the problematic nature of the good intentions paradigm described by Berlant (2004), and the neo-colonial humanitarian gaze described by Mostafanezhad (2014).

2.8 Action competence

The third research question addresses how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. Being an informed, active and participatory citizen is complex work that requires opportunities for people to develop 'knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, thoughtful, responsive and involved in matters of civic concern' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 14).

My research applies the action competence framework to analyse how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens. Action competence was developed by the Danish educational theorists Jensen and Schnack (1997) as an educational pedagogy for school aged children engaging in environmental activism. They situate the theory of action competence in a framework of education for democracy and human rights, arguing that:

> Democracy can and must be decided in many ways, which, among other things, pertain to liberty, equality and solidarity. But it can also be said that democracy is participation. In a democracy, the members are not spectators, but participants; not equally active participants in everything all the time, naturally, but always potential participants who decide for themselves in what and when they will be involved. Education for democracy is thus also socialisation and qualification for the role of being a participant. It is in this light that the

concept of action competence should be seen. Developing action competence becomes a formative ideal in a democratic approach to education. (p. 165)

Philosophically, the intentionality of action competence is informed by critical theory (Habermas, 1979), because not only are human actions intentional, but the intentions, motives and reasons need to have an intrinsic relation to the actions, meaning that a different intention will lead to a different action. Jensen and Schnack (1997) further explain the term action competence:

> A critical perspective is necessary and must be related to a concrete action. Additionally, the actions that are initiated must be directed at, and also put into perspective of, the problem that is being worked on. Furthermore… collective actions are both important and necessary if one really wants to change things. (p. 173)

Jensen and Schnack (1997) argue that although actions are always performed by individuals, it is possible to perform common actions that become part of a collective experience. In this way, 'responsible intentionality' can be seen to align 'with the aims … of democratic and participatory citizenship' and to develop 'hope and optimism through practical experiences in working collaboratively' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 7). In this way, belonging is also an important part of the theory of action competence.

There are four components of the action competence framework (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). The first component is knowledge and insight about what the problems are, how they arose and what possibilities exist for solving them. The second component is a commitment to resolve the issue under investigation, which requires motivation and drive. The third component involves positive visions for the future of society, as 'having visions about the good life and future worlds is an important part of being action competent' (Jensen & Schnack, 1997, p. 174). The final component, action experiences, stresses the benefits of taking concrete action. In this way, action competence connects 'emotions, values, knowledge and action' (Jensen & Schnack, 1997, p. 174). Using action competence as a guiding framework, the next section examines the literature pertaining to human rights activism and active citizenship.

2.8.1 Knowledge and insights into the problem

According to Jensen and Schnack (1997), 'knowledge can be transferred to a person without it being possible to say that the person acts in relation to this knowledge to any appreciable extent' (p. 166). Therefore, having knowledge is not enough to constitute action competence. For human rights activists, gaining knowledge about the issues and the protections provided under international human rights law is important, but changes in attitudes and behaviours are also required. Article 2(1) of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011) defines human rights education as:

> …all educational, training, information, awareness-raising and learning activities aimed at promoting universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and thus contributing, inter alia, to the prevention of human rights violations and abuses by providing persons with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviours, to empower them to contribute to the building and promotion of a universal culture of human rights.

As in human rights education, the action competence framework sees knowledge as only a part of the process that also must also include commitment, intention and action. My research examines the extent to which the participants demonstrate knowledge about human rights as part of being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist.

2.8.2 Commitment to resolving the issue

Jensen and Schnack (1997) argue that in order to learn how to be active citizens in a democratic society, young people have to 'acquire the courage, commitment and desire to get involved in the social interests concerning these subjects' (p. 164). Human rights activists are often motivated by a strong emotional commitment to fight injustice. Mihr (2007) argues that the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can serve as a link between knowledge and emotional reaction, which can change people's attitudes and behaviours if it elicits a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses. Similarly, the use of direct testimony (through words or images) by victims or witnesses to outrageous violations of human rights, acts as:

> … a powerful lever in their efforts to mobilise governments and international actors to take action to address crimes against humanity or other rights violations. The core assumption here is that testimony is particularly effective in arousing emotional and empathetic responses in those who indirectly witness (via testimony) the suffering of others. (Kelly, 2008, p. 8)

According to Kelly (2008), testimony assumed a new significance during the 1990s as a way of undertaking human rights activism. It mobilised political interventions to end or prevent human rights violations, it provided redress for victims and survivors of abuses through documentation and acknowledgement, it challenged the silencing of histories through the recovery of lost voices and it promoted new forms of citizenship and identity through human rights education (p. 8). One example of this is in Australia is the *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (1997) which contains stories of the experiences of Australian Aboriginal people who were forcibly removed when they were children from their families under Australian government policy. Chapter 1 of this report states:

> The past is very much with us today, in the continuing devastation of the lives of Indigenous Australians. That devastation cannot be addressed unless the whole community listens with an open heart and mind to the stories of what has happened in the past and, having listened and understood, commits itself to reconciliation. (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997)

However, the use of emotion as a way to encourage a commitment to redress human rights abuses such as extreme poverty can be problematic. In 1985 the Live Aid concerts in the United Kingdom and the United States raised money for those suffering during a widespread famine in Ethiopia by using shocking images of severely malnourished children. This led to a huge outpouring of financial support from individuals and governments. (The more recent outbreak of Ebola from 2013-2016 in West Africa and the famine in Yemen in 2017 led to the publication of similar images). However, Kelly (2008) questions whether it ethical to instrumentalise emotional testimony and images in the service of political causes in this way, and asks 'what evidence is there that stories and images attesting to suffering have the desired effect on public understanding or political decision-making?' (p. 9). It is also possible that the children in these images did not consent to their use in this way and may not have individually benefitted from their exposure. In the decades since Live Aid, many NGOs are

more cautious about the using images of children suffering as a way of eliciting an emotional response, and instead use positive images of children at school laughing and playing. They also ensure parental permission is gained and have protections in place to ensure the privacy of the child. According to Kelly (2008):

> There is no doubt that there is an important place for the careful documentation of human rights abuses, for uncovering basic facts about the identities of victims and perpetrators, times and dates, numbers of dead. There is also no question that a simple image or story can be very powerful and influential… Yet it is important to recognise that these forms of testimonial practice emphasise only particular aspects of experience, typically those associated with human suffering. (p. 13)

While outrage and emotion can be a powerful reason to want to commit to the cause of human rights activism, care has to be taken that it is not exploitative or misrepresentative of an experience in pursuit of the promotion of human rights. This links with the humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Tascon, 2015) discussed above which considers the power imbalance between activists and victims of human rights abuses, and the implications this has for active citizenship.

2.8.3   Critical intention to address the issue through future positive solutions

In the action competence framework, the 'development of responsible intentionality is critical at a time when dealing with complex issues that require long term solutions' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 12), such as environmental degradation and human rights. However, the helping intentionality that human rights activists often express can be problematic if it disempowers those whose rights are being advocated for, whilst the advocate themselves gains knowledge as 'a politically active subject' (Tascon, 2015, p. 38). Therefore, intentions need to be critically reflected on by human rights activists, as their commitment and intention to seek justice can have unintended negative consequences (Berlant, 2004).

Similar concerns about the good intention paradigm in human rights activism are reflected in the literature around voluntourism. Voluntourists are predominately young people from the Global North who travel to countries in the Global South to do voluntary work such as assisting in orphanages or building houses (such as the trip I accompanied my students on to Cambodia, and many of the participants in my study had also participated in voluntourism

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activities during their schooling or university studies.) In Mostafanezhad's (2014) research about volunteer tourists, many of her participants made comments such as 'I got more out of this than I gave' and 'I just feel like if I can make a difference to one kid I have been successful'. According to Mostafanezhad (2014):

> This discussion is at once a reflection of the power of the experience for personal growth and an articulation of the limits of individual contributions to the amelioration of poverty. This is not to say that those who participate have negative intentions. Rather, it is to draw attention to the cultural politics of the intention and its effects or to acknowledge that sometimes good intentions can have negative consequences. (p. 116)

In 2017, the Australian Senate Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade conducted an inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia. The Committee heard serious concerns about a specific type of child exploitation known as 'orphanage trafficking', involving children in overseas residential institutions in developing countries being supported by voluntourists from Australia and other countries. The Committee heard from Ms Sinet Chan, who was sent to live at an orphanage in Cambodia when she was nine years old, where she was forced to 'perform' for foreign tourists:

> The orphanage got its funding from the tourists and, when the tourists came, we needed to perform for them to make them happy, like singing a song, playing games with them and learning English... Sometimes they would buy us some clothes or food, but we were not allowed to keep them. The director of the orphanage would take them back to the market and sell everything ... We worked so hard to generate income for the orphanage. It was only later that I realised I was being exploited and used like a slave. (Australian Senate Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 2017)

The final report of this Committee has recently recommended that the Australian government should 'work with education providers, particularly high-schools and tertiary institutions, to provide guidance, advice and further information in relation to volunteering overseas on the exploitation of children in residential institutions' (Recommendation 35, Australian Senate Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, 2017). This indicates the seriousness with which the Australian government takes this issue.

In light of these concerns, my study examines the critical intentionality of human rights activists and how a good intentions/negative consequences paradigm impacts on how they become human rights activists.

2.8.4   Concrete action experiences

A crucial element of the action competence framework is taking concrete action (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). There are many different actions that human rights activists undertake, such as lobbying governments, organising petitions, conducting awareness raising campaigns, participating in ethical consumerism and online campaigning.

One particular action that human rights activists engage in is ethical consumerism. This practice involves consumption of fair trade products which have been certified as not breaching human rights or environmental standards in their production. According to Jacobsen and Dulsrud (2007):

> Consumption, and in particular the act of shopping, have been politicized and made into the subject of individual moral judgment. As a result, the focus of public discourse and consumer studies has shifted from … seeing consumers as weak, manipulated marionettes of capitalism, to seeing them as potentially sovereign, morally responsible political actors. (p. 469)

Mostafanezhad (2014) argues that the notion of saving the world through ethical consumption began in the nineteenth century but has grown considerably in the past few decades. Similarly, Igoe (2013) describes ethical consumerism as an 'economy of repair' (p. 25), where redemption for chronic poverty is now possible through consumption. Mostafanezhad (2014) links the ideas of ethical consumption with that of the humanitarian gaze by arguing that:

> … ethical consumption has become an assemblage component of the popular humanitarian gaze that is mediated by geopolitical discourses of North-South relations which overshadow even as they commodify and naturalize structural inequality. The making of the empathetic consumer-cum-cosmopolitan can be observed at the grocery while purchasing a bar of ethical chocolate, drinking fair trade coffee and placing it in an eco-friendly burlap shopping bag. (p. 113)

Ethical consumerism positions human rights activists to be neoliberal citizen actors who employ 'cosmopolitan empathy as an appropriate solution to broader structural violence'

(Mostafanezhad, 2014, p. 117). In their article *Politics in the Supermarket: Political Consumerism as a Form of Political Participation*, Stolle, Hooghe and Micheletti (2005) argue that:

> Political consumers choose particular producers or products because they want to change institutional or market practices. They make their choices based on considerations of justice or fairness, or on an assessment of business and government practices. Regardless of whether political consumers act individually or collectively, their market choices reflect an understanding of material products as embedded in a complex social and normative context, which can be called the politics behind products. (p. 246)

In the Australian context, Lewis and Huber (2015) discuss the move in Australia away from major supermarket chains selling eggs from caged chickens to only stocking free-range eggs, which was led by consumer demand. This example demonstrates that ethical consumerism can lead to large-scale systemic change. Although ethical consumerism is not the main focus of my study, the campaigns organised by some of the organisations in my study about ethical consumerism about the issue of child labour are analysed as examples of human rights activists taking concrete action.

Another action that human rights activists engage in is digital activism. NGOs are increasingly relying on the internet as a new space for their members to more easily create social action about human rights issues (Winford, 2005). Many human rights organisations have features such as online petitions or pledges, 'offering visitors the chance to "click here" to make a difference' (Kelly, 2008, p. 20). However, Kelly (2008) argues that such activism requires:

> … no real insight or reflection. It is an undemanding and ultimately reassuring transaction, hardly commensurate with the ethical claims that testimony might make upon us. Encouraging us to believe we have been 'witnesses' (by becoming 'informed' and then taking 'action'), it allows a deceptive claim to understanding and/or political agency. (p. 20)

Such criticisms have led to the coining of the terms clicktivism or slacktivism to denote the simplification of activist processes through online petitions, content sharing and tools such as Facebook's 'Like' button. Slacktivism/clicktivism is the idea that online participation is an overly convenient alternative to the effort and legitimacy of traditional engagement and political participation such as protests. By contrast, Halupka (2014) argues that:

As technology develops, and once complex actions are simplified and universalized, it is likely that clicktivist-like actions will increase in both prominence and popularity. To disregard such emerging forms of participation because they are at odds with long-held notions of what constitutes meaningful engagement is a dangerous road to travel. Here, it is important that we acknowledge that a political act, even if it requires limited effort, has relevance for the individual, and, as such, carries worth. (p. 117)

This argument is supported by studies that have found considerable spill-over between online activist activities and offline engagement, particularly amongst young people (Chapman & Coffe, 2016). This suggests that online participatory actions are but one method of activism amongst others, and that engagement online with activist issues may provide the spark to participate further and in more traditional face to face ways such as joining street rallies and lobbying politicians. However, one of the problems with digital activism is that it can take the form of preaching to the converted in an echo chamber. One recent example of this phenomenon occurred during the 2016 United States Presidential election, when Facebook algorithms suggested sites to users based upon what they have previously clicked on, which made it increasingly difficult to be exposed to alternative points of view (Madrigal, 2017). The extent to which digital activism was undertaken by human rights activists is analysed in the case studies, as a form of active citizenship.

2.9   Conclusion

In this review I have canvassed the theoretical literature that is pertinent to examining how young adults be, become and belong as human rights activists. Figure 1 (page 56) summarises the relationship between the five theoretical frameworks that have been discussed in this chapter. As can be seen, the being-becoming-belonging framework (Kidd, 1973) involves the elements of self-discovery, affect and cognition, social, political and spiritual goals and action. These elements intersect with those in Yuval-Davis' (2011) belonging framework, which prioritises the importance of values, emotions and social and geographical locations as sites of belonging. An application of Mostafanezhad's (2014) theory of the humanitarian gaze to human rights activism includes the elements of good intentions (Berlant, 2006), social capital (Putnam, 1995) and gender (Gordon, 2008). The critical intentionality of the action competence framework (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) intersects with the good intentions paradigm of the humanitarian gaze. In addition, the action component of the action

competence framework, the being-becoming-belonging framework and the justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) also overlap. As this figure demonstrates, the literature about being, becoming and belonging a human rights activism is a complex picture with many intersecting elements.
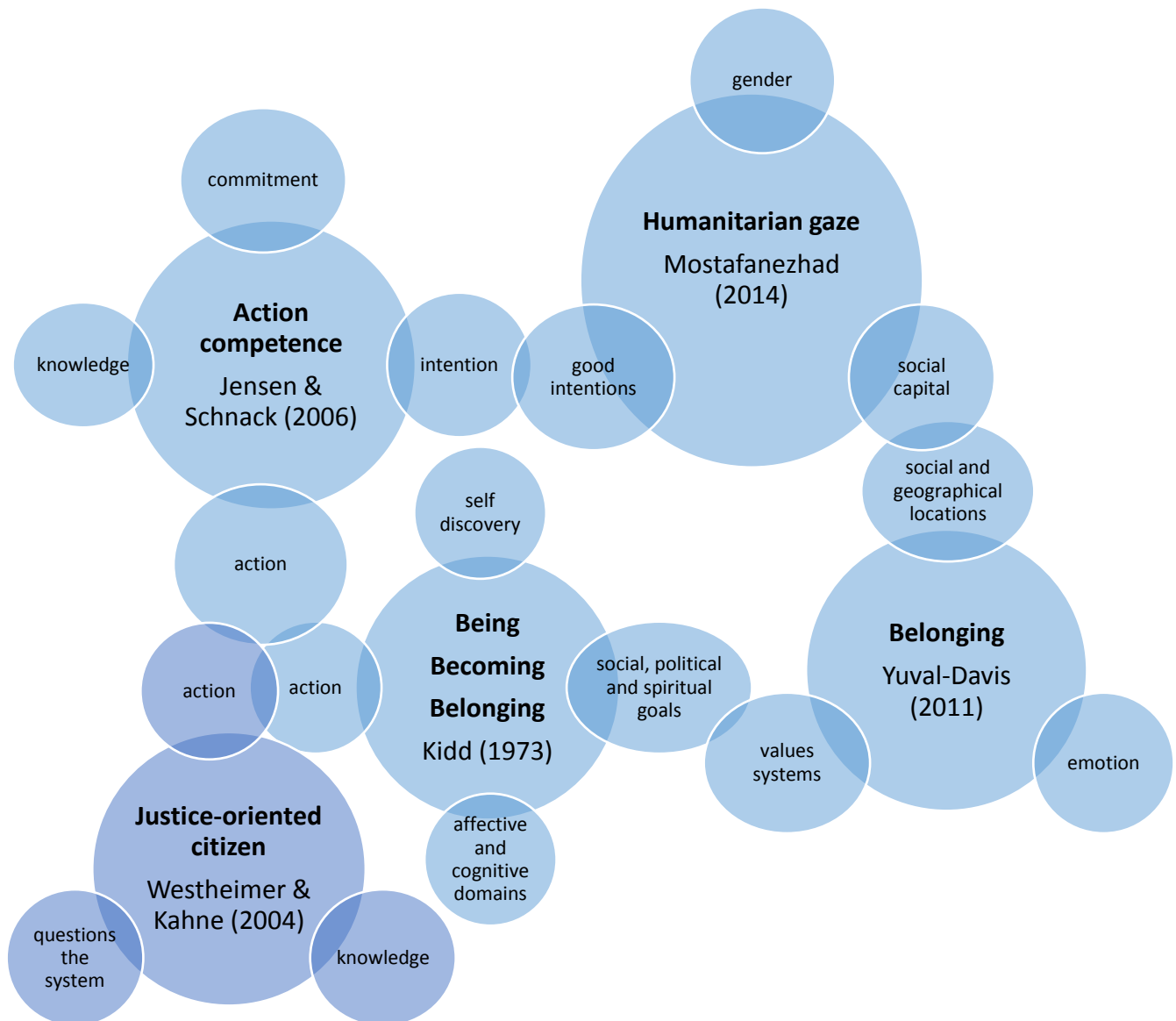
Figure 1: Relationship between the theoretical frameworks of Human Rights Activism

Chapter Three: Methodology

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the methodological approach used in this qualitative study in order to address the following research questions:

1.   What factors influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists?

2.   How significant is belonging to a group for human rights activists?

3.   How do human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia?

The theoretical paradigm for this research is situated within the worldview of critical theory, in that it is oriented around power and justice and concerned with change (Giroux, 1988). The research design uses a case study approach and the methods of data collection included interviews, observations and documents to capture a complex description of the real-life phenomenon observed. In the case study chapters, the data has been analysed and interpreted with reference to the relevant conceptual frames of being-becoming-belonging (Kidd, 1973), the justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2006), the humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014), belonging (Yuval-Davis, (2011) and action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). This chapter concludes with a discussion about the impact of my reflexive identity as a researcher, the limitations of the research and the ethical issues raised by my study.

3.2   Theoretical paradigm

My study uses the interpretative lens of critical theory, which involves researchers acknowledging their own power, engaging in dialogues and using theory to interpret or illuminate social action (Giroux, 1988). Critical theorists analyse the social conditions that underlie, accompany, and result from forms of hegemonic domination such as class, race and gender. I have chosen to use critical theory because my study considers human rights activists as transformative, justice-oriented social actors, and critical theory is similarly concerned with the 'desire to comprehend and… transform … the underlying orders of social life - those social and systemic relations that constitute society' (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 211).

Critical theory is concerned with empowering people to transcend the constraints placed upon them by society (Habermas, 1979). Critical theory therefore provides a framework to examine the power relationships that exist in a real-life context, by focusing on questions of agency and structure in order to understand social and cultural reproduction (Habermas, 1979). Levinson, Foley and Holland (1996) argue that agency is 'given expression through subjectivities that both fashion and are fashioned by the structures they encounter' (p. 116).

A critical consciousness, which is part of Freire's (1970) notion of praxis, involves cycles of action and reflection, and allows recognition and understanding of one's circumstances in light of the power and social structures that constrain them (Freire, 1970). It also enables justification of forms of critique that have a universal dimension while also acknowledging local contexts (Kushner & Morrow, 2003). My study is concerned with the broader implications of human rights activism as well as the local actions and intentions of particular individuals who belong to human rights activist groups. It does this through questioning whether the social and cultural structures they inhabit influence their capacity and agency to be human rights activists.

In order to do this, critical theory is used as a tool of analysis as a way of addressing the research questions and examining my own reflexivity as a researcher. Critical theory involves researchers acknowledging their own power, engaging in dialogues and using theory to interpret or illuminate social action (Giroux, 1988). Critical theorists therefore analyse the social conditions that underlie, accompany and result from forms of hegemonic domination, such as the humanitarian gaze discussed in the literature review.

3.3   Multiple case study design

The use of case studies is appropriate for this qualitative research, which is explanatory and strives to answer how and why type questions about contemporary events (Yin, 2009). A case study methodology involves the collection of exploratory and descriptive qualitative data from one or more cases within a bounded system (Yin, 2009). The qualitative data which is collected in a case study involves perceiving what is happening in key episodes or testimonies, and then representing happenings with direct interpretations and narratives, which are then used to optimise understanding of the particular case (Stake, 1995). Case studies therefore enable the words and actions of people to be observed in a naturalistic setting which allows

the researcher to build up a complex and layered picture of meaning based on an interaction of factors (Creswell, 2007). The use of a case study methodology also allows for the writing to follow a rhetorical narrative using the first-person pronoun, usually in the form of stories, as illustrative examples of the themes explored.

My study involves multiple case studies about human rights activism. A multiple case study design based on participants in four different groups was chosen in order to develop different perspectives on this topic, as well as enabling the analysis of common themes across the case studies (Creswell, 2007). The use of a multiple case study design can mean that the findings in one case study can corroborate or refute the findings in the other; however, the different contexts of the case studies need to be considered when drawing parallels.

It is important to justify why the four particular cases, namely Global Justice, Hope International, Youth against Poverty and Refugee Aid have been chosen. All of these organisations are committed to activism in this sphere, yet each has a different focus. They each provided the opportunity for an interesting in-depth analysis and comparison about how young adults be, become and belong as human rights activists. Global Justice is focused on international legal human rights obligations, Hope International is a youth Christian organisation based on social justice principles, Youth against Poverty is a youth organisation focused on poverty reduction and Refugee Aid provides advocacy and aid for refugees. This purposeful sampling strategy allows for the representation of diverse cases on the topic and allowed me as the researcher to choose case studies that were illuminating (Creswell, 2007).

A rich, thick description of each case study, using multiple sources of information such as interviews, observations and document analysis, is provided in the case study chapters, and comparisons between the case studies are also made.

3.4   Methods of data collection

In order to complete this research, the scope of the study had to be feasible in the time available, and the size of the study was ultimately dependent on the access that I had to participants. To some extent these pragmatic factors influenced the choice of four case studies, as it proved easier to recruit a few participants from many organisations rather than many participants from fewer organisations.

In order to recruit participants, I emailed the contact I found through the website of each organisation. In this email, I outlined the aim of the study, why that organisation had been chosen, what the interview and observation process would involve and how long it would take, as well proof that I had gained approval from the Ethics Committee of the university prior to undertaking my research. Over a period of a few weeks, each organisation replied to my email and gave me permission to advertise to potential participants within each organisation, provided the conditions set out in the ethics certificate were met, such as the use of pseudonyms for both the participants and the organisations. In each case, the convenor of the group forwarded my email to the members of the group, asking if any of them would be interested in participating. In this way, this contact acted as a gatekeeper of my access to the participants. Participants who were interested in being involved in the study then emailed me. In this way, the participants opted-in to being involved and I only obtained their email addresses once they had contacted me. This step proved more difficult and required the gatekeeper to send multiple reminders to members of the group to advertise the opportunity to participate. One of the organisations, Refugee Aid, also required me to complete a working with children police check before the interviews took place, as the place where I conducted some of the interviews was a centre for refugees and their families. In total I interviewed twelve participants. Of these, three were men and nine were women, and their ages ranged from 18 to 26 years old.

I also gained permission to observe a number of activities organised by each of the organisations. The interviews and observations took place over a three-month period in 2015. A three-month time period was chosen because it provided some limits to the project. This was important because the organisations operate on-going programs, therefore some boundaries needed to be imposed in order to make the data collection process manageable. This time frame also allowed me to gain a snapshot of each group at a particular moment in time.

The interviews were semi-structured, and participants were emailed the list of potential questions prior to the interviews so they could reflect upon their experiences prior to the interview (see Table 2). Each participant was interviewed once for about 90 minutes. The interview was audio-recorded, and I also took handwritten notes during the course of the interview. Prior to the interview, the participants were given a copy of the explanatory

statement that had been approved by the ethics committee, and participants also signed the consent form (see Appendix A). In doing so they agreed to participate in the interview which was audio-recorded. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The interviews took place at a time and place that was convenient to the participants. For some, this involved meeting at the offices of the organisation where they worked and for others it involved meeting at coffee shops or libraries. Interestingly, many of the participants who requested to meet at coffee shops chose a place (that they frequented often) which was committed to sustainable and fair-trade practices in terms of coffee and chocolate production, and this topic is further discussed in the case studies when discussing ethical consumerism. Meeting in an environment of the participant's choosing was designed to assist the participants to be relaxed and comfortable with the interview process and to develop rapport between us in a casual setting. However, one problem that resulted from this was there was often a lot of background noise at the venues, which occasionally affected the quality of the audio-recording.

The questions asked of participants were divided into three sections: personal background and motivation, being a human rights activist and belonging to a group within a particular organisation. Table 2 gives a summary of the questions that were asked.

Table 2: Summary of Interview Questions

Motivation and influences on being a human rights activist	- What is it about you that makes you want to be involved in this work? - What is your family and educational background? - What role did your family play in influencing your interest in human rights activism? - Did you learn about human rights at school in your classes? - Were you engaged in human rights activism at school? - How would you define a human rights activist? - Would you define yourself as a human rights activist? Why or why not? - Why are you interested in human rights activism? - Do you think that it is necessary to have a personal experience of injustice in order to be an advocate for others who have been treated unjustly? - What was it that made you become involved when most people don't?

	- Do you try and 'convert' other people to become involved? If so how? - What benefits have you gained through your activism? - In what ways has this changed you? - What role do you think gender plays in being a human rights activist? - Do you perceive your activism as altruism? Why or why not? - Why do you think other people you know become involved in human rights activism?
Being and becoming a human rights activist	- What is an example of the work you do as a human rights activist? - How many hours a week are you engaged in this work? - What supports do you have which allows you to make this significant commitment to this cause? - What are the opportunity costs involved in committing this much time to your role? - Why don't you think more people volunteer to the same extent that you do? - What particular cases or causes are you most interested in and why? - Do you see your work as being situated within a moral/ethical /legal/religious framework? - Who are you advocating *for* and who are you advocating *to*? - Does activism necessarily involve upsetting the status quo? - What are some of the knowledge, skills and emotions you need to be a human rights activist? - How did you learn these traits? - How do you cope with the difficulty of getting your message heard and acted upon? - Do you think that human rights activists can 'make a difference'? Can you give an example? - Can you give an example a 'good news story' about human rights activism? - Do you reflect upon your work as a human rights activist and change your future actions as a result of your past experiences? - What is the role of testimony/storytelling for human rights activists? - How important is social media in your work as an activist? - What relationships have you made as a result of your work as a human rights activist? - Do you think human rights activists share certain characteristics?
Belonging as a human rights activist	- How and why did you become involved in this particular organisation rather than another organisation? - How long have you been involved with this organisation? - Was religion a factor in motivating you to be involved with this organisation?

	- Do you conceptualise the work you do with this organisation within a human rights framework?
	- How important is it for you to belong to a group of like-minded people?
	- What other organisations have you been involved in?
	- How would you describe the aims of the organisation? How successfully do you think those aims are achieved?
	- What support does the organisation give to the sub-group that you are involved in?
	- How would you describe the standing of this group in the community?
	- How does your organisation cope with hopelessness/exhaustion in human rights activists?
	- In your experience do many people drop out and pursue other things or is human rights activism a lifelong commitment? What factors cause this?
	- How do you think that human rights activism compares with other types of activism such as environmental?
	- Do you reflect upon your work as a human rights activist in terms of being an active citizen in a democratic society?
	- Have you considered the work done by human rights activists in other countries who are oppressed by their governments?

I began each semi-structured interview with a general preliminary conversation to help the participants feel relaxed and to develop rapport between us. The participants talked enthusiastically about their experiences as human rights activists from the very beginning of the interviews. This meant that the conversation could be more free-slowing than strictly adhering to my pre-prepared questions, as many of the participants' answers naturally ranged across the issues I was interested in them discussing. In this way, it was easy to have a conversation with the participants about their experiences, with only occasional reminders to return to the question posed if their answers went off topic too significantly. Over the course of the interviews, I noticed that it became less necessary for me to rely as strictly on the interview questions outlined in Table 2 in order to elicit relevant responses.

The observation sessions were chosen in conjunction with the gatekeeper of each organisation, who suggested events that I might be interested in observing. The observation of each group activity usually took place over the course of one day. At the beginning of the sessions, the participants were informed by the organiser of the event why I was there and that I would be observing and taking notes. For each session, I sat at the back of the room

rather than with the participants, as this delineated my role as an observer. While observing these sessions, I took extensive field notes which were divided into two sections, descriptive and reflective. This allowed me to record what I was observing whilst at the same time include my thoughts about particularly interesting statements and behaviours, as well as links to relevant literature and themes. I also recorded my thoughts about the interactions between the participants and my own reactions to their discussions. At the conclusion of each session, I thanked the participants and the organiser for allowing me to observe them and informed them of their accessibility to the study upon completion if they wished. It was impossible for me to judge whether things were left unsaid or altered knowing there was an observer in the room, the so-called Hawthorne effect (Adair, 1984).

Documents were also collected as part of this process. For each organisation this included the websites of each organisation, mission statements, annual reports, training materials, images, newspaper articles and social media posts. Most of these documents were publicly available.

3.5   Data analysis

A limitation of collecting case study data through interviews, observations and document analysis is that it can lead to a vast array of unwieldy data. In order to cut through the data, the information needs to converge in a triangulating fashion as a way of providing corroborating evidence and therefore enabling weight to be given to the findings (Yin, 2009; Patton, 2002).   The analytic technique that was utilised in this study was to build an explanation about the particular case (Yin, 2009).   Interviews, field notes and document summaries were transcribed and categorised according to the themes that arose from the literature review and a rich description was then constructed.

Prior to conducting the interviews and observations, I had a general sense of the types of issues that I was interested in exploring; however, during the course of the interviews the direction of my research changed somewhat as different themes started to emerge. By way of example, before I conducted the data collection, my research questions were as follows:

1. How and why do young people learn to be human rights activists?

2. What is the role and impact of communication technology and social media on human rights activism?

3. To what extent does learning to be a human rights activist lead to transformative learning?

As can be seen, the data collection process changed the direction of my research. I moved my focus away from focusing on learning and digital activism towards what motivated and influenced human right activists and how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens. As a result, I was still able to discuss some of literature about human rights education and digital activism, but as part of a larger focus. Such a process is typical of qualitative research, which often takes on an emergent design as the research progresses (Creswell, 2008). In this way, the real-life situation dictates the direction of the research, rather than it being handed down solely through the literature. As a result, the emphasis on particular themes in the case study chapters varies somewhat depending on where the data led me to the richest analysis. This approach demonstrates a commitment to being sensitive to the data and is guided by questions and emerging findings throughout the data collection process.

When I was devising the title for this study I used the term 'human rights activist' as I thought it encompassed the concepts that I wished to examine, and it was a term that I personally identified with. However, as part of the emergent design process it became evident that many of the participants were uncomfortable with the nomenclature of activist. I therefore faced a dilemma: should I abandon the term as a theoretical construct in favour of another such as advocate, or was it still useful to use the term activism as a way of categorizing what it is in opposition to? Upon reflection I decided to keep the concept in my title, as the reluctance exhibited by many of my participants about the term does in fact reflect the wider debate within the literature (Bobel, 2007). According to Hall (1996):

> … it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed. (pp. 4–5)

I therefore decided to keep the term activist in my title, as the contrasting identity constructions (activists or not activist) revealed how the participants positioned themselves compared to what they were not.

In conclusion, the themes I identified which emerged through the data collection process were: the influence of family and schooling on the motivation of human rights activists, the self-identification of participants as either activists or advocates, their ambivalent relationship to the concept of human rights, the use of emotion as a tool in human rights activism, the participants perception of themselves as active citizens and the importance to human rights activists of belonging to a group. The thematic coding was done in a fairly loose way by reading and re-reading through the transcripts, and highlighting where participants had particularly insightful, interesting or reflective thoughts about their experiences. These then formed the basis of the categories, rather than counting the frequency of words to create codes from which themes could be developed (Creswell, 2007). It could be argued that such an approach is too subjective as it allows the researcher to preference data which provides evidence for their pre-determined research outcomes. On the other hand, a more scientific approach to analysing qualitative data can create a false sense of objectivity, when in fact the same pre-conceptions and biases can exist with a more positivist approach but can stay hidden and unacknowledged (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

3.6   Reflexivity as a researcher

As a researcher, my own worldview and beliefs necessarily inform why and how this study is being conducted and the knowledge claims that are being interpreted. It is therefore crucial that I reflexively identify my self-location and standpoint positioning with regards to this topic (Haraway, 1988). This enables identification of my pre-conceived notions and acknowledges the problematic nature of the research process. This is particularly applicable in this study because a critical theory perspective accepts that all knowledge is value-laden and emphasises the importance of making explicit the assumptions that influence the research (Giroux 1988). In discussing the being, becoming and belonging of the participants as human rights activists, I needed to acknowledge that an individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end 'being' but as one whose 'becoming' is constructed through the discursive practices in which they participate (Davies & Harre, 2001).

For Pillow (2003), reflexivity can take many forms, each of which is problematic if used as a way of providing validity in qualitative research. In order to apply the first of Pillow's (2003) reflexive strategies, namely recognition of self, I needed to recognise that I am an Anglo-Australian, middle class, well-educated female. I was brought up as a Catholic and I attended an all-girls Catholic school that had a strong social justice program, and I also volunteered with an NGO as a human rights activist while I was studying at university. In this way, I am very similar to many of the participants in my study and this enabled me to strongly identify with them and their motivations and influences, which can be problematic as a researcher. Therefore, to some extent my research became a study of myself and my own background and experiences. While I should not hide from my own subjectivity, it needs to be foregrounded and examined in terms of how it impacted on my thinking about these issues. In thinking about this, I found the words of Dierker (2016) useful:

> Overwhelmed by the way in which my whiteness lent only guilt, privilege, and doubt about my role in social justice work, I began a cultural self-study alongside a mentor of mine to re-examine my cultural identity. In sharing this process in conversations with young adults, I received affirmation of my role in a collective struggle around 'human rights'. (p. 35)

Pillow (2003) acknowledges that the reflexive approach of recognising self is predicated upon the assumption that the researcher is a unified self who can be objectively known. According to Gur-Ze'ev (2002):

> … the human comes upon her relation to the Other, to the world, and to herself while imprisoned in the framework of never-fully-deciphered representation apparatuses… since 'reality' and her own self are constructed by the manipulations, traditions, structures and powers that she can reflect on or challenge only though the ways, tools, and manner imposed on her by the very system whose logic and 'vocabulary' are to be questioned, resisted and overcome. (p. 66)

As the researcher, I played an active role in how I recorded the narratives of my participants. One example is the neat categorisation of family, schooling and gender that I use in the case study chapters which reflects the choices I made about the way I questioned the participants. These categories are based on an assumption that these factors were important to my identity as a human rights activist, so they would also be relevant to others who identified similarly. According to Noddings (1998):

> … even if thinkers strive for neutrality- a sort of position less position -they cannot bring it off. We are all, inevitably, immersed in the tasks and values of our historical situation. (p. 50)

In this way, my questioning and categorisation are not value-free judgments about how others 'be'; rather, they arise from my own positioning which I cannot escape, but do acknowledge (Pillow, 2003). Even the ordering of the case studies reflects a deliberate choice made by me in order to present the most convincing case to the reader.

The second reflexive strategy identified by Pillow (2003) is recognition of the other, where good researchers know and understand not only themselves but also the subjects of their research. My close identification with the backgrounds of the participants allowed me to understand their motivations. Implicit in my research is my position that human rights activism is a positive pursuit which should be encouraged in young people. However, this position is open to criticism through the problematising of good intentions (Berlant, 2004). Through the research process, I became aware of the dangers of presuming that my background and motivation was the same as my participants, and I tried to listen carefully to their stories and be careful of the power I had to include and exclude information from their narratives to suit my own ends or meet my own pre-conceptions.

The third strategy identified by Pillow (2003) is reflexivity as truth, where researchers believe they are right because of the degree of reflexivity they have employed, such as triangulating the methods of data collection in order to provide collaboration of the results (Yin, 2009; Patton, 2002). This strategy is also problematic because even though as a researcher I triangulated the observational data, interviews and documentary evidence, contradictory data could still have been conveniently ignored in order to provide stronger evidence to support my conclusions.

The final strategy discussed by Pillow (2003) is reflexivity as transcendence, which requires researchers to consider their knowledge of themselves, the Other and truth, and then transcend them all. This allows the researcher to be released from their own subjectivity. While Pillow (2003) acknowledges that this is impossible, she also argues that researchers should not be satisfied with just ticking off that they have 'been reflexive' (under a heading such as 'my reflexivity as a researcher'!) as a way of reaching a valid or true conclusion, without critically analysing how that reflexivity has taken place. In the case study chapters, I

attempt to reflect upon my own positioning and world-views as a researcher and the impact this may have had on my analysis of the data.

3.7   Limitations of the research

There were a number of limitations identified in this research. Firstly, the research was conducted across four different case studies. It could be argued that this is too many in a research project of this size, as the more case studies there are the less detail can be provided about each one (Creswell, 2007). Secondly, the study was short term, so only provided an instance of practice at a particular point in time and place. Finally, due to time restraints and the nature of the participants who volunteered to be interviewed, the experiences captured may not be representative of others involved in the organisations.

3.8   Ethical issues

All research has to consider the ethical implications of conducting the study. The participants in my research consisted of adults who were invited to volunteer to be involved in the study, after it had been explained to them what it was about, what it involved as well as the time it would take to participate. There was no coercion by me to be involved nor were incentives offered in exchange for their participation, and there was no prior relationship between the participants and myself which may have impacted on the data collection process or analysis. As a way of guarding the confidentiality of responses, I chose to interview participants individually rather than as a group. Participants were assured that pseudonyms would be used to obscure their identity (of both their names and the organisations they belonged to) once the research was completed to try and ensure confidentiality. The website addresses of the organisations have also been de-identified, place names have been obscured and the titles of some documents, newspaper articles and campaigns have been changed.

Additionally, the transcripts from this data collection will be stored securely for five years. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any time, and to be given access to the research report once it was completed. This research was considered low risk by the ethics committee as it involved interviewing people about their experiences as human rights activists, rather than interviewing victims of human rights

abuses. Participants potentially benefitted from being involved in this study because it allowed them to reflect upon their identity, experiences and future plans.

3.9   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the framework which guided my analysis and discussion in the following chapters. In particular, it identified the importance of being a reflexive researcher in a study that is concerned with power, relationships and identity. The analysis of human rights activism through multiple cases allows me as a researcher to develop a deep understanding of the complexity of the case, while at the same time recognising that the different contexts make generalising about common themes problematic. As a researcher, I wanted to avoid just 'banging in the nails' (like the students I accompanied to build houses in Cambodia) without critically reflecting on my own power and positioning in conducting this study.

Chapter Four: Case Study of Global Justice

4.1   Introduction

This case study examines in detail what factors influenced and motivated the participants to be and become human rights activists, how significant it is for human rights activists to belong to a group and how the human rights activists at Global Justice be, belong and become as active citizens in Australia. This has been done by drawing on the interview transcripts, observations and documentation collected and then discussing the patterns and themes that emerge in relation to the theoretical frameworks. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications of the findings for Global Justice and educators interested in human rights activism in Australia.

4.2   The context of Global Justice

This section provides an overview of the context of the first case study group, Global Justice. In order to understand why the participants joined this group, it is necessary to briefly explore the history, culture and mission of this organisation.

Global Justice is an international organisation that campaigns to protect human rights. According to its mission statement, it strives for a world in which every person enjoys all of the rights stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. When human rights are violated, Global Justice researches the facts about the situation, exposes what is taking place and then mobilises people all over the world to pressure governments and others to stop the violations. The mission statement of the organisation describes how Global Justice is outraged by human rights abuses and seeks to create change by inspiring people around the world to take action.

Global Justice is one of the largest human rights organisations in the world. In Australia, Global Justice has about 500,000 supporters. The organisation prides itself on being a democratic, impartial and independent organisation. The mission statement of Global Justice states that:

Global Justice's independence is a vital part of our effectiveness. We do not accept any money from governments or political parties, allowing us to maintain full independence from any governments, political ideologies, economic interests or religions.

Global Justice is primarily funded through the donations of members and supporters, with some donations from corporations. The Australian section of Global Justice is divided into seven state offices, where paid workers and volunteers work together under the direction of a voluntary board. Under the direction of the state-based head offices, groups meet together in their local communities to write letters, sign petitions, attend protest rallies and plan other actions for campaigns. There are also university and school action groups of Global Justice, as well as action groups focused on issues such as the rights of women, refugee rights and lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, queer and inter-sex rights. Overall there are more than 400 action groups across Australia, which are focused on activism rather than fundraising. Global Justice adopts a community organising model as a way of structuring the organisation. A community organising model uses a grassroots rather than a top-down approach, which allows each group to have some autonomy for the direction it takes based on the wishes of the community in which it operates.

When it was first founded, Global Justice focused primarily on the violation of civil and political rights under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, 1966), such as prisoners of conscience. However, in 2001 this focus changed to include advocacy on behalf of economic, social and cultural rights under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966). This means that Global Justice now campaigns on issues such as the right to an education and the cultural rights of indigenous peoples all over the world. This means the mandate of Global Justice has widened from focusing on particular individual cases of prisoners of conscience, as it did when it was founded, to campaigning about broader social issues. Overall, Global Justice is an organisation that is dedicated to the protection of human rights and is structured around enabling its activists to be involved in the organisation in various ways about multiple human rights issues.

Global Justice has a very comprehensive website, with separate sections about current campaigns, successful past campaigns, ways to sign petitions online, information about how to join groups, the facility to donate money and an activist portal. The activist portal includes information such as upcoming events in each state, materials about how to host an event,

materials about how to lobby politicians, policies regarding the use of social media, templates for writing letters to newspapers, information about how to successfully structure and facilitate groups and application forms for activists to apply for financial support from the organisation in order to run upcoming events. It also provides a discussion space for members to reflect on their activism. It is evident from the website that the term activist is widely used by Global Justice in their official documentation.

In 2015, Global Justice Australia focused on several campaigns, including the rights of women, refugees and Aboriginal peoples. One particular campaign focused on Aboriginal juvenile justice in Australia:

> This campaign is about getting Federal and State Governments to reduce the numbers of young Aboriginal people incarcerated across the country. We will campaign to have governments implement practical recommendations which give better support to Aboriginal led community solutions and comply with international legal obligations to ensure Aboriginal kids get a childhood and can stay connected to their communities.

In particular, Global Justice protested against the Western Australian government passing a law which extended mandatory sentencing for 16 and 17-year-olds. It also campaigned against the Northern Territory's paperless arrest laws, where police could arrest and detain people for minor crimes for up to four hours. These laws disproportionally affect Aboriginal young people and have led to deaths in custody, despite the 1991 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody which recommended sweeping changes to policing and courts (National Archives of Australia, 2018).

It is significant to note that all of Global Justice Australia's campaigns have a direct connection to Australia, which would not have been the case in the past. Global Justice used to follow an 'own country' rule where members could not campaign about issues in their own nation, as a way of protecting them from potential mistreatment by their own government. However, this policy changed in 2001 and the Australian division of Global Justice now actively campaigns on issues such as asylum seekers and Aboriginal rights in Australia. The extent to which an interest in local human rights issues in Australia was a motivating factor in young adults joining Global Justice is discussed in this case study (Kushner & Morrow, 2003).

4.3   Collection and analysis of the data

Three participants from this group were interviewed as part of this case study between July and November 2015. As discussed in the methodology, the participants agreed to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them and that the interviews would be audio-taped. Two of the participants were male and one was female, and their ages ranged between 24 - 26 years old. The participants were recruited by emailing the State branch office of Global Justice, who then emailed the request to their members. Anyone who was interested then contacted me if they wanted to participate. The three participants all belonged to different local groups of Global Justice. The participants were forwarded the questions prior to their interview to enable them to consider their answers beforehand.

Documents were obtained about the organisation through the website and from the sessions I observed, and this data also formed part of the triangulated analysis (Yin, 2009). This assisted my collection of comprehensive, relevant information and also allowed me to cross-check their consistency in order to enhance the robustness of my findings (Patton, 2002). The themes which emerged through the data collection process in this case study were the influence of family on the motivation to be a human rights activist, their use of the term activist as part of their identity, the centrality of human rights to their activist work, the agency they felt as active citizens and the importance of belonging to a group with a common cause. In the remainder of this chapter, the research questions are analysed through discussing these themes in light of the literature and the data.

4.3.1   Observations and documentation

As part of this research, I observed three events organized by Global Justice. The first event was an introduction to activism workshop. The meeting was run by two leaders and attended by about ten people who were new to the organisation. It was held in a room at an inner suburban town hall and was attended by two men and eight women, who ranged in age from about 20 to 60 years old.

The first part of the workshop outlined the ways that Global Justice tries to influence people to support their campaigns. This model of communication is called outrage-hope-action. Interestingly, this model incorporates some of the terms from the eminent sociologist Manuel

Castells (2012) latest book, entitled *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*. This similarity could indicate that research has been conducted in this field by Global Justice as part of developing its model. The training materials provided at the meeting described outrage-hope-action as follows:

> Outrage: a motivator and a way to overcome fear

> Hope: a reason to come on board and a way to overcome apathy

> Action: a step in the right direction, no matter how small

The training materials also provided an example of a structured conversation that activists could use when trying to motivate other people to act to protect human rights:

> Outrage: Did you know that the rights of women in Afghanistan are being abused?

> Hope: Did you know that Australia is committing over $1 billion in aid money to Afghanistan and Global Justice is lobbying the government to ensure that that it is spent improving the rights of Afghani women?

> Action: Would you like to sign the petition, come to a film night or join our Global Justice group?

The explicit use of outrage in order to elicit an emotional response ('overcome fear') and gain a commitment to the cause through action is somewhat problematic. Kelly (2008) argues that these forms of testimonial practice emphasise only particular aspects of experience, 'typically those associated with human suffering' (p. 13). This in turn establishes a victim paradigm which can be paternalistic and disempowering (Tascon, 2015) for those who are being 'helped'.

The attendees at the meeting then had to role-play an outrage-hope-action scenario with a partner, imagining that they were running a stall for Global Justice at a local community festival and had to engage members of the public in a structured conversation like the one described above. As part of this role-play, the attendees were also given further information about how to have a successful structured conversation, such as building rapport, connecting with the other person's values and gaining a future commitment from them. The training materials stated that:

Some may feel that this approach is pushy, but what counts is how the potential supporter feels and you have to get past how you feel. It is often how you feel that stops you using some of these techniques. Good luck. We hope the techniques help you in your activism!

It was my observation that the attendees (none of whom knew each other before hand) seemed to find this role-play exercise rather awkward and were fairly reluctant to reflect on it in much detail when prompted afterwards. I also felt uncomfortable with this marketing approach that is often employed by 'chuggers' (charity muggers), who are paid to fundraise for the not for-profit sector through making emotional appeals to shoppers to encourage them to donate to causes (Hyndman, 2017).

The second part of the meeting focused on how to lobby governments about human rights issues. The organiser said:

> We're most effective in engaging politicians from all sides when there is a broad community understanding of human rights… We need to build the visibility of Global Justice's groups all over Australia and create a groundswell of people who are committed to human rights which will then lead to political support of these issues. Members of Parliament listen to the voices in their community who are their constituents, so local groups can often be more influential than the national organisation having high level talks in Canberra, where we are seen as just another lobby group. Members of Parliament also like going to events where they can be seen by people and get media coverage which raises their profile, so organise an event and invite your local politician along. It's a win-win situation.

The leader went on to discuss how to have a strategic meeting with politicians in order to connect their interests, either political or personal, with the values of Global Justice. The leader also described how influence can be direct, such as through meeting with a member of parliament, or indirect, such as getting media coverage of an event in a local newspaper that the politician will read. He gave an example that included both direct and indirect influence. An event was staged outside a member of parliament's office and was called Operation Teddy Bear. It was organised to protest the detention of refugee children in off-shore facilities. The event involved piling up hundreds of teddy bears outside the politician's office to represent the lost childhoods of those in detention. This event received wide media coverage, which led to a meeting being held between the local Global Justice group and the politician. This in turn led to the local member of Parliament writing a letter about this issue

to the Immigration Minister, requesting that refugee children be released from offshore detention centres. This is an interesting example of human rights activism operating at a local, national and international level. The local community group conveyed a message to its national political representative, who then tried to influence the Federal government to uphold its obligations under international law (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)). It also demonstrated that as a democracy, Australia allows its citizens to have the opportunity to openly question government policy, which is not the case in every country (Ribeiro et al, 2012).

The third part of the meeting focused on the success stories that Global Justice has achieved in the past few years. The organisers of the meeting emphasised the importance of celebrating successes. This not only enabled activists to understand the effectiveness of the organisation, but also emphasising such stories helped to counter feelings of disillusionment about the difficulty of trying to create change about human rights issues. This reflects the findings of Youniss et al (2002), who suggest that the social bonds, affiliation and emotional support gained through belonging to a community with shared commitments can sustain civic involvement despite intimidating challenges, frustrating experiences and a sense of hopelessness at ever being able to create effective change. The meeting concluded with an invitation to join the local group of Global Justice which was meeting the following week. I noticed that the attendees did not ask many questions of the leaders during the presentation and did not make much conversation with each other, even during the tea break. In terms of belonging, perhaps the attendees at this event did not yet have a sense of connecting to a place that was 'safe' and 'home-like' (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10) as they had not participated in enough repetition of the social and cultural practices of the organisation.

The second event I attended was an activist training day, which was held at a hotel on a weekend. The participants at this event were the leaders of community groups from all over the state. There were about 60 people at the lunch, 45 women and 15 men. The participants were predominately either young people in their 20s or older people in their 60s. Perhaps these demographic groups have the capacity to commit to volunteering to these degree, compared who those in their 30s, 40s and 50s who may be busy with families and careers which limits the time that can commit to unpaid work (Bussell & Forbes, 2006).

The day began with the participants reflecting on their motivations for being a volunteer activist, which included comments such as 'I believe in access to justice', 'there are terrible things happening in the world and I want to make some small difference to try and influence change' and 'working together means that my small effort can actually add up to make a real difference'. These comments can be described as examples of justice-oriented citizenship under Westheimer and Kahne's definition (2004), as they recognise the need for systemic change to address the causes of injustice through belonging to a social movement. These comments also indicate a recognition by Global Justice that 'the collaborative, distributive nature of work in an activist group enables participants to accomplish goals they would be hard-pressed to accomplish on their own' (Kirshner, 2007, p. 369).

The first speaker at the lunch was an Aboriginal rights campaigner who was working with Global Justice on their Aboriginal juvenile justice campaign. As part of this, the participants discussed the success of an event some of them had been involved with outside the office of a state politician. The event involved a giant snakes and ladders game, with the snakes representing legislation that results in Aboriginal youth being incarcerated and the ladders being diversionary programs that keep Aboriginal people out of jail. Like Operation Teddy Bear discussed above, these events are innovative examples of how to draw attention to an issue through providing a visual hook. This means that such events are more likely to receive media attention in print and television, thus reaching a wider community audience than just the politician themselves.

The second speaker discussed some research that Global Justice completed about ways to frame communication with people in order to influence them to support the cause of human rights. This research showed that appealing to people's internal values such as compassion was more effective than appealing to external values such as societal traditions, and that activists should keep this research in mind when talking to members of the public. This reflects Mihr's (2007) view that the indirect experience of stories of injustice can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction. In this way, people can change their attitudes and behaviours and be inspired to learn more about human rights abuses and act to stop it happening to others. This also links to the importance of sharing values systems such as compassion and altruism as part of the theory of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

The members then brainstormed why Global Justice was having trouble retaining members within local groups. They discussed how meetings which mainly consisted of 'administrivia' tended to turn people away compared with meetings that focused on the particular human rights abuse cases or issues. The age disparity between older established members and new young members was also discussed as a factor that could impact on the cohesiveness of the group, as well as the fact that letters and petitions can be completed online so members no longer need to physically attend meetings in order to sign them. Suggestions for encouraging retention included giving members of the group concrete and discrete tasks to complete after each meeting, increasing the emphasis on celebrating good news stories about successful campaigns, and organising social activities after each meeting in order to create a greater personal connection between members of the group. As one participant noted, 'just because we campaign for human rights doesn't mean we can't also have fun!' These sentiments are reflected in the literature about belonging, which emphasises that it involves both a physical and an emotional experience (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

Finally, the participants discussed future strategic directions for how to engage the wider community in their activism, rather than just appealing to people who are already sympathetic to the cause, which was a common concern. One idea discussed was having stalls and petitions at outer-suburban local sports grounds on weekends, in order to reach a broader demographic. Another suggestion was developing more strategic partnerships with other similar NGOs in order to pool resources and reach a wider audience with planned events and activities. It was discussed how each organisation had finite resources and volunteers and fragmentation and competition between them meant that each organisation on their own had limited effectiveness in trying to create systemic change.

The third event I observed was a Global Justice stall at a local community festival for children to celebrate multiculturalism. The festival was held in a park and included many product stalls and food vans as well as entertainment for children. The festival also had many stalls from other community groups such as the Lions, Rotary and progressive political parties (Labor and the Greens). Global Justice had a stall with badges, balloons and pens to give away that was staffed by three volunteers from the local group. These Global Justice members encouraged passers-by to sign one of two Global Justice petitions.

The first petition was for the Aboriginal juvenile justice campaign. It described the stance of Global Justice on this issue:

> We'll work to make sure the government addresses the faulty parts of our justice system and creates practical circuit breakers that stop Indigenous kids ending up in detention, such as:
>
> - setting justice targets to close the gap in detention rates
> - better collection and use of data on how many Indigenous kids are being locked up
> - changing laws that have unintended and negative consequences for Indigenous kids and prevent judges from properly doing their job
> - ending inhumane treatment of kids in detention
> - making sure our laws comply with international legal obligations such as the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the rights of the Child

The second petition was for the release of human rights activists who had been detained in Saudi Arabia. The petition described the situation in that country:

> The authorities severely curtailed the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, detaining and imprisoning critics, human rights defenders and minority rights activists on vaguely worded charges. Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees remained common, particularly during interrogation, and courts continued to accept torture-tainted 'confessions' to convict defendants in unfair trials.

Over the afternoon that I observed this stall, I noticed that many passing members of the public stopped of their own accord to sign the petition and discuss the campaigns displayed on the table. I observed that Global Justice seemed to have a high brand recognition among members of the public; most of them had heard of the organisation beforehand and had a reasonable understanding of what they did. It was interesting to note that the passers-by were most interested in the Aboriginal juvenile justice campaign based in Australia, which received 55 signatures (45 from women and 10 from men) compared with the other petition about Saudi Arabia which gained only five signatures. This finding reflects Walsh and Black's (2018) position that the local realm remains important for enacting daily citizenship, as 'despite the almost ubiquitous impact of global factors and forces, the global remains distant and abstract as a site of influence' (p. 109).

The people who signed the Aboriginal juvenile justice petition were mainly families with young children or elderly people. Some of the people who signed the petition were keen to find out more information about how to get further involved in Global Justice and were given a pamphlet with some information. I also observed one of the members of Global Justice employing the outrage-hope-action model of communication as the basis of her dialogue. She said:

> Hello there, did you know that Victoria Aboriginal young people are thirteen times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Aboriginal youth?
>
> Global Justice are presenting this petition to the state Premier to encourage him to change the bail laws which have led to an increase in Aboriginal young people being held on remand in juvenile detention centres.
>
> Would you like to sign it?

Some of the questions and comments asked by members of the public in response to this included 'what can this petition actually do to help with this issue?', 'what are we supposed to do with young people who steal if we don't put them in prison?' and 'Aboriginal justice is a very complex issue that this petition doesn't take into account'. In reflecting on these observations, it was my impression that the strong focus on universal human rights standards under international law allowed the Global Justice human rights activists to mount a persuasive rational argument to convince others about why they should be protected. However, the use of the outrage-hope-action model to make an emotional connection seemed to be somewhat less effective, and it was my observation that the Global Justice participants were rather awkward about manipulating an emotional response about the suffering of others in order to elicit action (Kelly, 2008).

4.4   Identifying as a human rights activist

The next section examines the data which was collected through interviews with three participants from Global Justice: Aryan, Sophia and Robert.

Aryan was the leader of a Global Justice local group in an outer suburb. At the time of the interview he was 24 years old and studying a degree in community development at a university in Melbourne. He is an Indian citizen who had been studying in Australia on a

student visa for the past three years and was in the process of applying for an Australian permanent residency visa. In addition to his work with Global Justice, he worked in a paid part-time role at a help desk for a technology company. In his role as community organiser he recruited and supported the members of his local group through providing training, resources and support, planning future events and liaising between the local group and the branch office. Aryan spent one day a week in this role and had been involved in Global Justice for one year.

Sophia was the leader of an inner suburban local group. Sophia is from an Italian-Australian family. At the time of the interview Sophia was 25 years old and was studying full time for a Master's degree in international development at a university in Melbourne. She also worked part-time doing administrative work for a development NGO. Her unpaid role with Global Justice involved similar tasks to those performed by Aryan. Sophia spent one day a week in this role and had been involved in Global Justice for 18 months.

Robert was in a volunteer leadership position with Global Justice. At the time of the interview, Robert was 26 years old and had previously lived in Singapore. Robert was studying full time for a Master's degree in human rights law at a university in Melbourne. He spent about two days a week in this unpaid role, and had been involved in the organisation for a number of years.

The Global Justice participants I interviewed were comfortable being labelled as activists. This finding can be triangulated using the documentary evidence provided on the Global Justice website that also uses the term as discussed above (Yin, 2009). Aryan said:

> I see myself as an activist. I'm very proud to be called an activist for Global Justice. It is something I have wanted to do for a long time, I don't see it as work and I'm very happy to be doing it.

Similarly, Sophia said:

> I'm an activist. I like that it means you are active, like you are getting out there, like you are part of a club. I'm very happy with this term. Through my involvement in Global Justice I have really learned that the most important thing about being an activist is to engage with the community you are trying to help and ask them what they think would work to make things better. So Global Justice has a lot of Aboriginal elders who advise them about the juvenile

justice campaign, they run all the training and write the materials. You have to consult with the local community about their needs, rather than 'we know what's best for you'.

From these comments it can be inferred that Global Justice has encouraged its members to recognise that those who are most directly affected by the issues should be the drivers of activism (Spivak, 2004). Rather than having well-meaning others act on behalf of Aboriginal people, it needs to be a collaborative partnership, which lessens the power differential and ensures that all parties gain knowledge for how to be politically active subjects (Tascon, 2015).

Robert was also comfortable with the label of activist:

> I fail to see the negative connotations with the term activism. I know it can be used in a pejorative way to denote a certain section of society who are troublemakers, but that is not how I see the term.

Therefore, the interviews and documentation for Global Justice do not support Bobel's (2007) argument that there is a 'resistance … to self-identify as "activist'" (p. 148) and that an activist is perceived as someone 'out of the ordinary' (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 282) by the participants in this group. Rather, for Global Justice group members, such a term is embraced by the organisation and not seen in a negative light. Sophia's comments also show that there is an awareness across the organisation that human rights activism involves partnering *with* the people whose rights are being breached (in this case, Aboriginal Australians as advisors on a campaign), so that they are not disempowered from advocating for the protection of their *own* rights (Stoecker, 2003). In this way, the participants in this case study could be described as justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) as they seek to improve society by critically analysing and addressing social issues and injustices rather than paternalistically emphasising the need for charity and volunteerism as ends in themselves.

The participants in this case study conceptualise the work they do with Global Justice within a human rights framework, which is not surprising considering that the organisation's mission is to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The participants could all articulate specific issues of human rights abuses that they were interested in campaigning about. Aryan was interested in the rights of gay and transgender people, commenting that:

These people are really seen as comedy in India, they have a really hard life and are constantly attacked, so I'm also interested in how I can help defend their rights. I know there are UN documents specifically about the protection of the rights of queer and trans people.

Sophia was interested in the rights of Aboriginal peoples:

Through my involvement with Global Justice I have really learned that human rights are the basis of everything, and that you can't look at issues like poverty and development without thinking about human rights. Lately I've become more interested in Aboriginal rights. I met some Aboriginal activists through Global Justice and they have really inspired me to get involved in this cause. Although I have found that some old-school members of Global Justice still don't like working on own-country issues [such as the rights of Aboriginal Australians], even though the organisation changed its policy on this more than a decade ago.

And Robert was interested in the rights of migrant workers:

I used to live in Singapore and while I was there I became very interested in the rights of migrant workers who work there as maids and drivers. They are mainly poor Indonesian women who are heavily exploited, sometimes abused and have very few rights. Recently the Singaporean government passed an Act mandating that domestic workers have one day off a week. Before that most of them worked every day. I think the rights of domestic workers is a huge issue, as they are very powerless in the countries they work in and they rely on organisations like Global Justice to advocate for their rights.

Significantly, not only could each participant identify a specific human rights issue that interested them, they could also reference which international human rights convention was being breached in each case. This demonstrates their high levels of knowledge about and engagement with the issue, which links with the importance of knowledge in the justice-oriented citizen framework (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) as well as in the action competence framework (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

However, there was some recognition by the participants that operating within a human rights paradigm is not always the most effective way of persuading others. Sophia said:

I think it's really important to have a human rights framework because the government has agreed to uphold a certain standard to human rights under international law, so we want to hold them to account for this. We can talk them at that high level, in the language of international law, about their obligations that they have agreed to. It might not be as effective

if we just said 'be nice because people should be nice to each other'. But then in terms of refugee rights, I don't think referring to the Refugee Convention is really cutting through to people about why it is wrong to lock up people indefinitely in detention. In fact, I heard that Global Justice is actually looking at changing its strategy around refugee rights because of their research shows that no one is really listening to this type of human rights talk, so they are trying to find a different way to approach this issue.

These comments about refugees are interesting as they support Agamben's (1995) view that 'precisely the figure that should have incarnated the rights of man par excellence, the refugee constitutes instead the radical crisis of the concept' (p. 3). Despite these concerns, it was evident that these participants valued conceptualising their voluntary work with Global Justice within a human rights framework. This is compared with participants in the other cases studies in subsequent chapters.

4.5   Influences and motivations to be and become a human rights activist

The next section discusses how the participants were influenced and motivated to be and become a human rights activist through their families, schooling and gender.

4.5.1   Family and schooling

As part of my research, I was interested to determine what factors influenced and motivated young adults to be human rights activists. In describing his motivation to become involved in Global Justice, Aryan said:

> Initially I was looking for some voluntary work to help with my resume to build up some work experience here in Australia which I thought would help me to find a job in the future. At university I saw an ad on an online job board for a volunteer community organiser at Global Justice, so I applied, had a phone interview and got the position. My job has been to start the group and then help them to be self-sufficient. Then I can move on to helping establish another local group.

At first it would seem that Aryan has a pragmatic, rather than idealistic, reason for wanting to join this group, namely to help build up his experiences for his resume. However, he went on to explain why Global Justice appealed to him in particular:

> The reason I wanted to join Global Justice was because of their success. About six out of ten campaigns they run are successful. The research they put in to find out what is happening in

human rights abuse cases really impressed me, and they have had such a positive impact in so many cases. It's a high level international human rights organisation, it's a real privilege for me to be involved with them.

Aryan further explained how his family and background had influenced his interest in human rights:

I'm from India and I've grown up seeing a lot of stuff that is not right. Twenty years of seeing human rights violations every day. There are some really bad things in the culture in some Indian communities, especially around domestic violence against women which is seen as totally acceptable. In my own family I have witnessed this. Over here in Australia you can choose to divorce someone, but in India it is different. In my community the woman is seen as very lowly and she has to put up with whatever is done to her by her husband, even torture, because that is the role of a wife. So that is something I always noticed, and I never understood why it was considered normal.

Aryan's views were influenced by other experiences in his family, as he explained:

My grandmother experienced human rights violations herself. Her family had to flee Bangladesh for India because of their religion, and many of them were left behind and disappeared. A lot of the people from her village also fled to India, and she really helped to look after them as they had nothing. This story is always told in my family.

Aryan's comments are enlightening because his motivation to become a human rights activist is situated in a narrative about the human rights violations that members of his family experienced. It is significant to note that Aryan was the only participant I interviewed over the four case studies who admitted that part of his motivation for being involved in this group was to contribute to his resume. Perhaps being from a country in the Global South allowed him to be more forthcoming than the other participants that one of his motivations was to further his career.

Sophia was also asked about her motivation to be involved the Global Justice group. She said:

Well, it was a long journey. When I was a child I was very sick for a long time, and when I got out of it I thought, right, I'm going to change the world! At first it wasn't really human rights, I was more interested in charity work like helping orphans in Africa. My family has always been interested in social issues, so I've always grown up with the idea of helping other people.

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> My grandmother always tried to help people in other countries through donating money and goods, and I think that got me interested too.

The narrative that Sophia presents is one in which her personal experiences of illness and her family traditions and culture have influenced her decision to undertake voluntary work with Global Justice. It is significant to note the references by both Aryan and Sophia to their grandmothers who inspired their grandchildren to become involved in this area, providing further evidence of the gendered nature of altruism (Gilligan, 1977).

When asked about his motivation for being involved in this type of volunteer work, Robert said:

> My family had strong political views, so I had that influence from early on. Then I spent a year in China teaching English and while I was there I saw first-hand the lack of freedom of expression that my students had. My students had a list of topics that we were not allowed to discuss. I think that increased my interest in human rights issues. I joined Global Justice because it has a high profile as a human rights organisation. I have this intrinsic need to do something. I would be very bothered if I wasn't involved in this cause in some way.

Robert's comments provide support for Atkeson and Rapoport's (2003) findings that activists often possess a strong helping intentionality which compels them to do the work that they do as part of self-discovery about their 'being' and which changes over time as part of their 'becoming' (Kidd, 1973). His comments also support Hyman's (1959) argument that the political understanding of young people is influenced by the modelling they experience through their families.

Robert further explained why he thought other people were motivated to join the organisation:

> For some people who are involved in Global Justice, their own personal experience of injustice drives their activism, and that gives people a credibility that allows you to be a spokesperson about that issue, like Rosie Batty the domestic violence campaigner. The other group of people who tend to get involved are those who are aware of their own privilege and who want to contribute to making the world a better place for others, so that becomes the driver of their activism. It's not about guilt. These people feel empowered that they have a voice and they want to use it. It's more of a 'we can change it so let's do it!' sort of attitude.

Sophia was also asked why she thought people were motivated to join Global Justice, and she said:

> In the past, an organisation like Global Justice has tended to attract well-educated people of a higher socio-economic background who had the time and the money to volunteer. But I do think that's changing.

Aryan provided some additional evidence about motivation. He said:

> The members in my local group are very diverse. One lady in our group is from South America and she experienced domestic violence, and that's why she wanted to become involved in Global Justice's anti-domestic violence campaign. And we have two guys from Somalia who were former child soldiers who want to work on Global Justice's campaign against the use of child soldiers.

These findings suggest that there are two types of people who become human rights activists at Global Justice; those who are aware of their own privileged class and circumstances and who have a strong intrinsic desire to fight injustice, and those who themselves have experienced an injustice or human rights abuse. It is worth considering whether there is a hierarchy of legitimacy about the motivation of these two groups. Article 12 of the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1998) states that 'everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms'. Therefore, it can be argued that all people have the right to be human rights activists, not just those who have experienced abuses. At the same time, those who are privileged to some degree need to be cautious that their good intentions of helping others does not disempower those who they are trying to assist (Spivak, 2004).

The participants from the Global Justice group were all tertiary educated. Tsutsui and Wotipka's (2004) argue that:

> … citizens who are better educated may possess the cultural capital needed to be aware of their rights, to recognise when those rights have not been met, and to possess the tools needed to articulate the demands and to organise for change' (p. 597).

However, it is significant to note that despite this, these participants did not perceive their formal schooling experiences and classroom curriculum to have played a role in their motivation to join Global Justice. (Only Sophia was schooled in Australia). Rather, it was the formative influences provided by their families while they were growing up that was the major factor in their being and becoming a human rights activist. For Robert this occurred through being politically socialised by his family (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010), and for Aryan and Sophia it occurred through the informal learning experiences transmitted through their families and communities (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004).

4.5.2 Gender

From my observations of events organised by Global Justice, the majority of the participants were women. When asked about why he thought more women than men are involved in Global Justice, Aryan commented:

> I go to Global Justice events all the time where I am the only man there! We need to change this as the perpetrators of human rights abuses are mainly men. Women just seem to be more aware of issues of injustice.

Sophia was also asked about the gender balance of the Global Justice group that she led, and she noted that:

> It is mainly women who volunteer at Global Justice, but that's right across this whole sector, except for the male leaders who are paid to run the organisation! I think it's about gender norms, being a carer, a giver, being there for other people. That is something women are trained in from the get go.

When asked to reflect on the gender of volunteers at Global Justice, Robert said:

> There are definitely more women than men involved. The imbalance at Global Justice is striking, it's very noticeable.

These triangulated observations about gender support the findings in the literature that females demonstrate higher engagement with human rights activities than males (Saha, 2004). What is less clear is the reason why this is so. Theorists such as Gilligan (1977) argue that it is the gendered nature of the socialisation of women to care, which could lead to an altruistic desire to be a human rights activist. However, there were some men involved in

Global Justice, as evidenced by the two male participants in this case study (the most out of any of the case studies). Perhaps Global Justice appeals to men because the organisation emphasises the legal protection of human rights under international law, rather than situating the work they do within a social justice framework. This is in line with Saha's (2004) findings that boys in Australia have a stronger commitment to civic freedoms than girls, whereas Atkeson and Rapoport (2003) and Haste and Hogan (2006) report that girls are more likely than boys to subscribe to attitudes concerned with social justice.

4.6   Belonging

This section addresses the significance of belonging to a group for the members of Global Justice. This links with Kidd's (1973) being-becoming-belonging model, where being-becoming can only occur when the self is seen in community with others. According to Yuval-Davis (2011), belonging has three elements: social and geographical locations, attachment to cultural and symbolic practices of social group and the value systems that individuals and groups use to make judgments about their own and others' belonging. All of these elements were demonstrated when I asked Sophia about the importance to her of belonging to a group. She said:

> I like being involved in the local community [social location]. It is not just being involved in the big international issues, it is having a connection with people who care about the same things [value systems] that you do who live close by [geographical location]. Belonging is a huge part of the Global Justice experience- all the community organisers meet together once a year and last time we met we talked about how we had all been bitten by the Global Justice bug [cultural and symbolic practices]. I really like that idea- that you are in, you are part of the team supporting each other, we are one big family [value systems, social location]. I know it is not by chance that I feel this way, the organisation has been set up that way so that people feel a strong sense of connection.

It is significant to note that Sophia is able to reflect upon the deliberate strategies that Global Justice has put in place to ensure that group members develop a strong sense of belonging, which is remarkably consistent with Yuval-Davis' (2011) views.

One of the reasons that belonging to a group is so important is so that members can support each other in the difficult and slow work of creating change about human rights issues (Youniss et al, 2002). Aryan described the significance to him of belonging to a group:

> You need the support of the group to do this work together as a team. This work can be pretty depressing otherwise. I do make myself read about the cases of human rights abuses to remind me about the importance of what I'm doing.

I asked Sophia about how she coped with disillusionment when change can be so difficult to achieve, and she said:

> I felt really terrible about a recent case Global Justice was involved with. I had worked so intensely, written so many letters, been to so many rallies… but it was all in vain. But I had to remember that it was always a high-risk crisis campaign. But the silver lining was the number of new supporters that Global Justice got as a result. Global Justice is always good at pointing out the small wins.

Robert also talked about the importance to him of belonging to a group. He commented that:

> Being involved in a community of people who think alike and who are trying to solve the same problems is an important part of the experience, and it definitely makes it more enjoyable. You need the support of other people, engage with other people who have different skills than you do, so you can all work together to achieve something you couldn't do on your own. For many people being involved is very social activity and that is a real driver for doing it and staying in it.

These comments demonstrate that the social connections and the infrastructure provided by the organisation help these volunteer human rights activists to stay committed to the organisation despite the difficulties encountered. In this case study, the participants emphasised the importance of belonging to the organisation of Global Justice as well as the larger cause of the human rights movement, rather than emphasising belonging to a particular friendship group they had developed through their involvement with a sub-group within the organisation. In this way, the collective identity of belonging to and identifying with the organisation Global Justice was an important factor in the agency the participants displayed as active citizens, as the organisation provided them with the structures, support, training and recognition necessary to commit to human rights activism to this extent. This reflects DeJaeghere et al's (2016) findings that agency is 'more socially than individually constructed' (p. 4).

4.7   Action competence

Rather than analysing the effectiveness of activist actions in creating systemic change about human rights issues, my study aims to contribute to the literature about how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. It does this by using the theory of action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) to analyse the data collected for each case study.

There are four competencies involved in the action competence framework: knowledge and insight about what the problems are and how they arose; commitment to resolve the issue under investigation; intention to address the issue through future positive solutions; and concrete action experiences (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). The next section discusses the actions performed by the participants by analysing their knowledge, intention, commitment and action through belonging to a group.

4.7.1 Knowledge and critical intentionality

According to the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, there are clear links between human rights activism and belonging to a democracy that allows such activism to take place (Schultz et al, 2010). Braungart and Braungart (1997) define democracy as a form of political power and governance in which its members must be knowledgeable, participative and active citizens. In a democracy, citizens are able to disagree with the decisions or attitudes of the prevailing government, without fear that such views will lead to limits on their freedoms. This is acknowledged by Global Justice in the change the organisation made in 2001 to the 'own country' rule, which means that members are now allowed to campaign about human rights issues in Australia such as the rights of Aboriginal people.

The participants were asked in the interviews to reflect about how their human rights activism work had informed their knowledge as an active citizen. Aryan said:

> We are lucky because many people already know about Global Justice and what is does. So that helps when meeting with politicians because it increases our status and influence. But you need strong numbers at the grassroots level, otherwise politicians aren't going to listen to you. It also helps that we are not political and don't accept funding from governments, so our impartiality is a real strength when we are lobbying as it gives us freedom to be honest without fear.

I asked Aryan to give a particular example of lobbying he had undertaken with the intention to create change about a particular issue, and he explained:

> I recently met with my local member of parliament to discuss the campaign about Aboriginal youth justice. As a result, she gave a speech about the campaign in Parliament where she talked about the efforts of our local group, so that was a massive win for us. That really made me think how we can have some influence.

This example demonstrates that Aryan has demonstrated the competencies of knowledge (about the number of young Aboriginal people who are incarcerated in Australia), intention (the numbers need to be reduced) and action (lobbying the local Member of Parliament to raise this issue and try and create change) (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

Sophia also discussed her experiences of lobbying politicians, noting that:

> One thing we do is lobby politicians about international issues, such as asking the Foreign Minister to raise the abuse of human rights activists in China when she meets with her Chinese counterpart. But Global Justice also has a very grassroots approach, such as having a stall at a local festival, talking to people one on one about an issue, connecting with people by saying 'I'm just a local like you who is interested in these issues'. And then we can take that groundswell of support back to the local Member of Parliament and say 'look at all these people in your electorate who also feel strongly about this issue'.

These examples demonstrate that both Aryan and Sophia recognise the power of performing common actions that become part of a collective experience (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). In this way, 'responsible intentionality' can be seen to align 'with the aims … of democratic and participatory citizenship' and to develop 'hope and optimism through practical experiences in working collaboratively' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 7). Without the local support and brand recognition of Global Justice it would not be possible to have this influence with government decision makers.

Robert was also asked about the experience of lobbying politicians on behalf of Global Justice in order to create change about human rights issues. He said:

> It has to be both top down and bottom up. Top level conversations are meaningless unless Global Justice is able to say we have 500,000 members in Australia. Therefore, the power of the movement is in the grassroots, people who are part of their local community. Australia

has recently agreed to take 15,000 Syrian refugees whereas before the government was adamant that they wouldn't take any more. So that wouldn't have happened if it wasn't for lots of lobbying by groups like Global Justice.

I asked Robert whether he felt a responsibility to speak out about human rights abuses, as activists in many other countries do not have that ability, and he responded:

I definitely feel that. And Global Justice in Australia takes a strong stance on regional issues in the Asia-Pacific as we are one of the few functioning democracies in that area, so we try and have an influence over matters of human rights abuses. We are taken seriously because we are apolitical and therefore we can criticise and offer solutions to all sides of politics without being accused of bias or having an agenda.

These comments reflect the view in the literature that NGOs are often silenced by authoritarian regimes (Ribeiro et al, 2012), which means that NGOs in democracies such as Australia have a role to play in drawing global attention to human rights abuses which occur in other countries.

It is significant for my research to note that all the participants acknowledge that Global Justice can only have the influence they do with politicians because they know they have the support of their large membership in Australia. This helps their case to be given more weight by politicians, as they are seen as representative of the views of a significant number of constituents. The knowledge and intention competencies displayed by the participants in this case study can be described as examples of active citizenship in practice 'in which each individual can participate, in working alongside others to make a difference… in the immediate locality… but also at other scales, including national and global' (Osler & Starkey, 2010, p. 114-115). The participants in this case study do this by highlighting international human rights issues through lobbying their local federal member of parliament (as constituents of his or her electorate), who can then bring it to the attention of all Ministers, who can in turn lobby the politicians in other countries about human rights abuses. This tactic involves having knowledge about the way the democratic system in Australia works and an intention to create systemic change to address injustice (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). The intentionality of action competence is informed by critical theory (Habermas, 1979), because the intentions, motives and reasons ('stop human rights abuses in China') have an intrinsic relation to the actions ('lobby the Australian government to raise the abuse of human rights

in China during diplomatic talks'). In this way, these participants demonstrate both knowledge and critical intentionality.

4.7.2 Commitment to resolving the issue

Human rights activists are often motivated by a strong emotional commitment to the cause of ending injustice. Mihr (2007) argues that the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction. As discussed above, Global Justice uses a model called outrage-hope-action to elicit a response in people so that they will commit to acting to try and stop human rights abuses. In some ways the outrage-hope-action model mirrors the action competence model, which involves motivation for and commitment to the issue (through an emotional reaction such as outrage), visions about future positive solutions (hope) and concrete action experiences (action) (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

I asked Aryan about the role of outrage in provoking a reaction in people about particular campaigns. He explained that:

> We deliberately try and outrage people. We follow the outrage, hope, action formula. I've really seen it work. You can't just create outrage though and then have no follow up, you have to give people some action to take. I know it can be a bit confronting, but you know what? People need to be confronted with the reality of this stuff! The world is not all rosy, really bad stuff is happening to people right now and people need to know the shocking facts, like asylum seekers are being raped on Nauru or drowning at sea. It is not nice, but it is important that people know and then we can all try and do something about it, the more people the better. You can't start with hope and just make people feel good by sugar coating these issues.

Robert had a more critical reflection on the use of the outrage/hope/action framework. He said:

> This is a powerful framework and it's very useful to help people on the journey to take action. But I do understand that some people might find it manipulative, and it shouldn't be the only way that is used to try and influence people. Another powerful framework we use is matching the values in the campaign with the values of an individual. With campaign for Aboriginal youth justice, instead of provoking outrage by saying 'isn't it unbelievable that children as young as 10 are dying in prisons in Australia?' you might start with a conversation about the

importance of young people growing up in a community that they know, in a culture they know.

These comments from Robert are significant as he is in a leadership position with the organisation, and so is involved in setting the strategic policy direction of the organisation. In these comments, he acknowledges the complexity and potential problems with using the outrage-hope-action model that the other participants perhaps do not recognise. I asked Robert whether he thought using the language of human rights, or using emotional storytelling about individuals suffering from human rights abuses, was more influential on decision makers, and he replied:

> I think you need to refer to both international Conventions as well as stories about particular cases to have that personal connection. The recent case of the picture of the drowned Syrian boy on the beach in the Mediterranean shows that just one case, one image, can really sway people's opinions in a way that all the formal UN documents in the world never can. But of course, that is problematic too. I think it needs to be a mix of individual stories and an overview using statistics about what is happening to a larger group of people, otherwise it is very overwhelming, and people just disconnect and give up. There is probably a threshold of tolerance that people have to the scale of human rights abuses and when it tips over people say stop, this is too much!

I asked Sophia to reflect on the experience of using the outrage-hope-action framework, and she thought that:

> … people have compassion fatigue. They are pretty tired of being bailed up by chuggers [charity muggers] to sign a petition or buy a ribbon or badge about an issue out of the blue. That's why sometimes it is better to organise a positive event and invite people to get involved rather than just hijacking people as they walk along the street. We recently organised a sports day at a local oval to celebrate the indigenous juvenile justice campaign. It was just having a barbeque and throwing a Frisbee and other games, but we tried to connect the sense of being part of a local community with idea that young Aboriginal people have the right to experience this too. We got quite a lot of signatures on the petition as I think people really connected with it rather than just being asked randomly about the issue. There is not just one way to do activism for Global Justice.

Triangulating the data from the interviews, observations and documentation (Yin, 2009) led me to conclude that that Global Justice is changing the way that it tries to influence others in

the crowded marketplace of charitable causes, through connecting with local communities and focusing on good news stories of hope rather than distant stories of mass suffering (Kelly, 2008; Hoijer, 2004). This is particularly important for encouraging other young people in Australia to belong to groups such as Global Justice as 'the local remains important – particularly in relation to where they identify possibilities for enacting their daily citizenship' (Walsh & Black, 2018, p. 109). This approach also reflects Henderson and Tudball's (2016) focus on developing 'hope and optimism through practical experiences in working collaboratively' (p. 7).

Aryan discussed a successful campaign that he had been involved in that involved personal storytelling. He noted that:

> A recent action that we did at a stall at a community festival was as part of the indigenous juvenile justice campaign. We got people to write down their best childhood memories on a postcard petition, and then sent that to politicians to say 'shouldn't Aboriginal children be entitled to happy childhood memories too?' Getting people to tell their own childhood stories went really well, it really helped to connect people with the campaign.

It is therefore clear that emotional responses are important, as having empathy for the suffering of others and imagining what their lives are like in comparison with yours is an important way that young people to become human rights activists (Mihr, 2007). However, as Robert acknowledges above, while images such as the drowned Syrian boy on the beach are very powerful, care has to be taken that they are not exploitative or misrepresentative of an experience in pursuit of a political agenda (Kelly, 2008). By comparison, getting people to record their own positive experiences of their childhood is an effective way of connecting people with the issue without exploiting the suffering of powerless and distant 'others' (Hoijer, 2004).

Another technique adopted by Global Justice to maintain the commitment of its volunteers to the cause of human rights activism is the use of good news stories. These act as a way of generating hope and positive emotions, rather than focusing on negative emotions such as outrage. When asked about the importance of good news stories for human rights activists, Aryan thought that:

They are really important, not just for telling new people but for all Global Justice members as it really reminds you why you are there. You need to have success to motivate you to keep going. If 5000 people write a letter to a government about a case, change really can happen. That's the power of Global Justice and it's great to be a part of that.

Robert also discussed the usefulness of good news stories. He said:

Good news stories about successful campaigns are really important and help people to understand the power they can have. They can be told through other positive stories like this how much refugees can contribute to their new society, and how many influential people came to Australia as refugees. That can be a powerful way of changing people's mindset about refugees.

Aryan also discussed how Global Justice deliberately chooses campaigns which are likely to be successful, which in turn generates more good news stories. He explained:

Global Justice does a lot of research about the campaigns that is chooses to be involved with and focuses on those where it thinks it is most likely to have success. There is no point getting millions of people to support a campaign that is hopeless.

This is an interesting tactic as it demonstrates that Global Justice makes pragmatic decisions about which causes and campaigns to support, which helps their reputation in being successful advocates for human rights, which in turn encourages more activists to belong to the organisation, which then makes the organisation more influential.

In conclusion, the evidence from this case study demonstrates that the emotional commitment that human rights activists have towards creating change involves a complex balancing act. It requires having an emotional connection with the suffering of others, but not in a way that is manipulative or too over-whelming. It includes appealing to reason through the use of statistics about the big picture, but also allowing an empathetic connection with individual stories. It also requires a realist portrayal about the human rights situation but at the same time celebrating good news stories about the successful upholding of human rights need in order to keep activists committed to the cause.

4.7.3 Concrete action experiences

Digital activism is one example of action undertaken by the members of Global Justice. However, the participants in this case study were somewhat ambivalent about the benefits

of digital activism (Halupka, 2014). When asked about the use of social media in human rights activism, Aryan said:

> It can be superficial engagement. But on the other hand, you can reach a lot of people all over the world very quickly. Global Justice members made a video about shutting down Nauru [Australia's off-shore refugee detention centre] that went viral all over the world, so that platform can be really powerful. Also, a lot of people come to events like refugee rallies because they see it advertised on social media.

Sophia also reflected about the use of different types of social media in campaigning. She said:

> Social media can be a bridge to further involvement, but not always. Also I think Twitter and Facebook are different, you can't really talk about them together. Twitter is more active, Facebook is more passive. Twitter can really create its own momentum with a particular campaign if it goes viral. Whereas Facebook is more about 'liking' what your friends put up, which doesn't really achieve anything much.

Robert reflected on the use of social media to engage in activism, and described how:

> … technology has really changed the way that activism takes place, in both good and bad ways. It has allowed people to connect like never before and to research and find information very quickly, and it has also allowed people who might have been voiceless victims before to tell their story online. In terms of activism, things like online petitions can have some influence, but are probably not going to lead to long term positive change. For that, you need a depth of engagement with people and that can't happen online.

For these participants, digital activism was a useful but limited way of enacting their active citizenship. Rather, they emphasised the importance of having deeper interactions and engagement with other activists and with those who they were trying to influence. This section has demonstrated how the human rights activists at Global Justice have become active citizens though their knowledge, intentions, commitment and action.

4.8   Implications of the findings

There are a number of implications from the findings of the Global Justice case study for organisations and educators interested in human rights activism in Australia.

For Global Justice, these findings emphasise the importance of collaborative partnerships being developed between human rights activists and those on whose behalf they advocate, as occurred in the example of the Aboriginal juvenile justice campaign (Spivak, 2004). This is an important way to counter the potentially patronising dichotomy of helpers and victims which can develop in the human rights activist space (Mostafanezhad, 2014). In terms of belonging, the findings indicated that the participants had a strong sense of belonging to Global Justice and to the framework of human rights (Yuval-Davis, 2011). However, further links could be fostered between the members of the particular sub-groups to develop their sense of personal belonging and thus sustain their commitment despite the difficulties of achieving change (Youniss et al, 2002). The findings also demonstrate that the organisation has tried to address the problematic use of stories of human suffering as a way of motivating others to join the organisation (Hoijer,2004) by focusing instead on successful cases. However, Global Justice still uses outrage about human rights abuses as a technique to motivate people to join the organisation.

These findings also demonstrate the significance of the role of families in influencing and motivating young adults to be human rights activists (McIntosh & Youniss, 2010). For educators, these findings raise questions about the lack of impact that schooling had on the motivation of these participants to be human rights activists. This is significant because schooling can play a crucial role in equitably enabling all young people to be involved in the protection their own and other people's human rights, rather than human rights activism being solely the domain of those young people who belong to families that promote and foster an interest in it.

Chapter Five: Case Study of Hope International

5.1   Introduction

This case study examines in detail what influences and motivates the participants to be and become human rights activists with Hope International. It also examines the significance to human rights activists of belonging to this group, and how they be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. The chapter concludes with a discussion about the implications of the findings for Hope International and for educators involved in human rights activism in Australia.

5.2   The context of Hope International

This section provides an overview of the context of the Hopesters, which is the youth division of the NGO Hope International.   In order to understand what factors influenced and motivated the participants in this group, it is necessary to briefly explore the culture and mission of Hope International.

Hope International is a global community development organisation that provides short and long-term assistance to people who live in poverty all over the world, especially children. According to documentation from Hope International, poverty means that children 'don't enjoy their basic human rights to adequate food and shelter, to grow up healthy and to go to school'. Although this organisation is primarily established in a development rather than a human rights framework, the mission statement does refer to human rights as part of the work the organisation does in advocating for victims of injustice. For this reason, Hope International is a relevant organisation for me to examine as part of my research about human rights activists.

The primary aim of Hope International is to work towards eliminating poverty and its causes. The organisation does this primarily through child sponsorship. This involves people in one country sponsoring a child and their community in another country through a regular donation, and in return the sponsor receives photos, videos, news, letters and information about that child. Hope International then uses the money donated through child sponsorship towards improved health care, education, sanitation and food in the child's community. This

is done in consultation with local communities and organisations about how the money can be focused on areas of greatest need.

About 70% of funds for Hope International come from donations given by the Australian community, 12% from the Australian Federal government's foreign aid budget and 17% from other sources. The major fundraiser each year is a simulated famine, where Australian school students and other interested participants obtain financial sponsorship from others while they fast for two days. The idea behind this fundraiser is that it gives the participants some insight into what it is like to experience hunger.

The focus of my research is on the activities of the Hopesters in Australia, which is the youth advocacy arm of Hope International. According to documentation from the organisation, the Hopesters enable hundreds of young people aged 15 to 25 years around Australia to be empowered to undertake action on issues of global poverty and injustice. The organisation also aims to influence Australian culture, government and business to do their share to end extreme poverty and injustice. The mission statement of the Hopesters describes how being part of this organisation involves:

> … joining together with a network of young people across Australia, we speak out with one voice to advocate for those living in poverty… Young people are powerful agents for change. When we speak with one voice, people listen… We influence our world through grassroots campaigning- one classroom, campus or community at a time.

The Hopesters have a local, national and global focus for their activities, which includes organising activities through school and university groups, organising national conferences, campaigning on issues like reducing child labour and increasing foreign aid, as well as giving its members the opportunity to experience overseas development work. The Hopester group is not focused on fundraising activities, but rather on raising awareness and educating about human rights issues that occur due to poverty. Most members of the Hopesters initially become involved in the group either through a school or university group or by approaching the organisation through their website.

The focus of my research is on the advocacy work done by the Hopesters, and on two campaigns in particular: the End Child Labour campaign and the Campaign for Australian Aid. Regarding the child labour campaign, documentation from Hope International stated that:

We know change is possible, and it starts with us as consumers. If we demand to know where our products are made and ensure we only buy goods made under fair conditions, businesses will have no choice but to change their practices around child labour. We believe that Australian youth have the power to change the systems that fuel child labour by influencing individuals, businesses and government to buy more ethically sourced products. In doing so, the campaign aims to drive down the demand for goods made using exploitative labour practices that are harmful to children.

The Campaign for Australian Aid involves the organisation (and other organisations such as Youth against Poverty) lobbying the Australian government to increase the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product dedicated to foreign aid, which supports poverty eradication and the promotion of human rights in the Asia-Pacific region. These campaigns were chosen for my research because they were the activities undertaken by the group that could be categorised as human rights activism.

5.3   Collection and analysis of the data

Four participants who belonged to the Hopester group were interviewed and observed as part of this case study between July and November 2015. As discussed in the methodology, the participants agreed to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them and that the interviews would be audio-taped. The participants were all female and aged between 20 and 23 years old. The participants were interviewed separately, and some of them were also observed in a group setting during a training day. Documents were obtained from the organisation and through the website and this data also formed part of the triangulated analysis (Yin, 2009; Patton, 2002).

5.3.1   Observations and documentation

As part of the data collection, I observed a day long training session that was organised for the Executive Team of the Hopesters. This is the governing body of the Hopester group. The event was conducted in a room that had been hired at a university where some of the participants were students. The participants were seven women aged in their early twenties, three of whom were also interviewed as part of my research. Permission was gained from the participants for me to observe and make notes about the proceedings of the day. The group seemed slightly unsure of my presence and did not involve me in their conversations. During the day I remained at the back of the room as an observer and did not participate in

their discussions. It was impossible for me to tell whether my presence had any observer effect, and whether what they discussed was altered because they knew I was there and taking notes (Adair, 1984).

The day started with each individual reflecting upon why they were involved in the group. The responses ranged from 'I just am', 'it was the way I was brought up', 'we can all make a difference and that sort of soppy stuff- now it is my life' to 'I've been so lucky and privileged, and I want to give back' and 'it is because I love being involved with this amazing group of people'. These comments neatly encapsulate many of the themes discussed in the literature review, such as the influence of family (Hyman, 1959), having a helping intentionality (Mostafanezhad, 2014) and belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). It was my observation that the group were from a similar demographic, as they often discussed their shared experiences at urban, private, religious high schools throughout the day. They were also all completing a tertiary degree. It was my observation that they had formed very strong friendships with each other through their membership of this group. This was evidenced through their very friendly interactions with each other, and lots of laughter and in-jokes occurred throughout the day.

The first topic that was discussed was a reflection about the successful event that had occurred in the previous year, where the Hopesters contributed to Hope International's campaign against child labour. This campaign initially involved lobbying the G20 (Group of 20), an international forum of the twenty leading industrialised and emerging economies in the world, to commit to having child labour on the agenda when they met in Brisbane in November 2014. The campaign by Hope International was based on a policy report prepared by the organisation which stated that the G20 needed to ensure that human rights, including the rights of children, are protected from economic exploitation. This document clearly placed this campaign within a human rights-based framework. However, it did not specifically refer to United Nations treaties such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (where Article 32 states that the government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education and Article 31 states that every child has the right to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities). Therefore, it could be argued that the lack of acknowledgement by Hope International of such international treaties signals that the organisation perceives a legalistic human rights framework as an unhelpful construct when lobbying governments (Hathaway, 2002).

The campaign by Hope International during the G20 meeting involved writing letters, meeting with Members of Parliament and conducting Twitter and Facebook campaigns with politicians to ensure that child labour was included in the Communique agreed to by the members after the meeting. The social media campaign on Facebook was as follows:

Hopesters, we need your help!

Thanks to your hard work, the campaign has been hugely successful in influencing the G20 Employment Minister's meeting to take a strong stand against forced and child labour. As the G20 meets on 15th-16th November in Brisbane, we want to raise the profile of this commitment and ensure that children and front and centre in the minds of G20 leaders.

So starting on Thursday, here's how you can get involved on social media, using the hashtags #G20Leaders and #endchildlabour:

- Share a photo of yourself as a child playing

- Contact the MPs and Senators you met with this year to encourage them to do the same

- Post messages to the G20 Leaders on social media asking them to remember the world's 168 million child labourers

With your help, we can really get our voices heard and make sure that the G20 Leaders don't back down on this issue!

However, despite such lobbying the issue was not included in the official Communique after the meeting (although the G20 did commit to forming a committee to develop an action plan to look at ways of eradicating child labour). The reasons why this part of the campaign was not as successful as the organisation had hoped were not reflected on during the training day, which I thought was an interesting omission. While it is important to celebrate good news stories, it is surely also instructive to balance this with an analysis of the reasons why campaigns might not be successful, and whether lessons can be learned for future campaigns and why change is so difficult to achieve (Youniss et al, 2002).

It is significant to note that this campaign used the device of connecting the personal stories of Hopesters (by including a photo of themselves playing as a child) to the larger issue of child labourers. In this way, the campaign drew parallels between the disparate groups (namely privileged young people in Australia and child labourers in the developing world), who all have

the right to be 'free to play, learn and grow'. Connecting with personal stories is a common technique used to encourage empathy by activists with those on whose behalf they are acting (Mihr, 2007). This example is similar technique to that used by Global Justice (as discussed in Chapter 4), where people were asked to write down a positive memory of their childhood on a postcard in their campaign about the rights of refugee children. Both of these examples are focused on positive stories rather than the more problematic use of exploitative images or testimony about suffering in order to elicit a reaction. This indicates a shift from previous campaigns by non-governmental organisations which focused on distant suffering, such as the Live Aid campaign in 1985 (Kelly, 2008).

However, it can also be asked whether focusing on images of privileged children from the Global North takes away agency from the child labourers themselves and camouflages the harshness of their lived experience (Mostafanezhad, 2014). The Hopesters seemed to approach the child labour debate from a Western perspective that all child labour was negative. They did not discuss how many parents in developing countries need their children to work as an additional source of income for the family, so to ban all child labour could actually lead to increased levels of poverty. Indeed, some theorists argue that child labour should not be banned but rather the working conditions for children should be safer and education should also be provided through employer funded night schools (Basu & Tzannatos, 2003). In this way, these participants and their organisation do not seem to exhibit a 'desire to comprehend and… transform… the underlying orders of social life- those social and systemic relations that constitute society' (Morrow & Brown, 1994, p. 211) or seek to question and change the established structures which cause social problems (Westheimer & Kane, 2004).

Another event that was reflected upon during the training day was the Amazing Race to End Child Labour. This was an activity open to all Hopesters around Australia and involved 250 young people participating in an Amazing Race (like the reality TV show). In this activity, groups competed against each other to complete a list of challenges at various locations around the central business districts of capital cities about fair-trade products. Fair-trade products are defined as those which do not violate human rights labour standards in their production (Low, 2005), and are identifiable by a logo on the product. In the article *Fair Trade: A Cup at a Time?* (2003), Levi and Linton argue that although:

> … Fair Traders do offer a tangible market product, what they are essentially trying to sell is the norm that people in prosperous countries should factor global social justice into their buying decisions.

In the Amazing Race activity, teams had to complete activities including: finding ten fair-trade products in the supermarket and in clothes shops, photograph them and post them on Instagram; interview the manager of a store about the fair-trade products that they sell; eat or drink some fair-trade products such as chocolate and coffee; and interview people on the street about their purchase of fair trade products and whether they have made the link with stopping child labour. The event also raised money (through the registration fee for teams) for Hope International's child rescue program, which helps to protect children from experiencing exploitative child labour. The event was advertised on Facebook as follows:

Like a challenge? Love solving clues? Call yourself adventurous?

Grab a friend or three and join the Hopesters for their AMAZING RACE to END CHILD LABOUR.

Today 1 in 10 children worldwide over 5 years of age are child laborers. This equates to more than 150 million children working on farms, mines, in factories, construction sites, as domestic servants and even as child soldiers. Thanks to global pressure from people just like you the occurrence of child labour has decreased by over 30% in the past 15 years! Imagine what we can achieve in the next 15 as we come together as an ethical community?

In under 3 hours you will:

- Experience the global impact of a powerful conversation as you learn how to advocate for the world you want to see

- Get connected with key influencers in your community who are working for a more ethical tomorrow

- Get ethically active to spread your message of change through social media channels

- Leave feeling inspired, educated and empowered to help end child labour!

So what are you waiting for? Team up and let's tackle child labour together!

This event was clearly designed so that the participants benefitted by having a positive experience (fun and empowerment through eating chocolate, drinking coffee and buying clothes). It was very strategic of the organisers to focus particularly on products that all have direct personal appeal to the participants who were mainly young, affluent, university educated women who are probably regular purchases of these products anyway. Some of the comments about the day from the members of the Executive Team were:

It was such a fun way to get people to DO something about this issue rather than just lecturing them.

It tastes better to buy fair trade food, because then I don't feel so guilty.

You need to make these events fun, not totally depressing about how the world sucks.

However, Mostafanezhad (2014) argues that such ethical consumerism commodifies and naturalises structural inequality without creating any real change. In fact, this example closely echoes Mostafanezhad's (2014) writings on this topic which were discussed in the literature review:

The making of the empathetic consumer-cum-cosmopolitan can be observed at the grocery while purchasing a bar of ethical chocolate, drinking fair trade coffee and placing it in an eco-friendly burlap shopping bag. (p. 113)

The second topic that was discussed at the training day was political engagement. In particular, some members of the executive team of the Hopesters had recently met with three Members of Parliament to discuss the campaign to end child labour and to encourage them to purchase ethical fair-trade products for their own offices. The Hopesters discussed how they took along samples of fair trade food and drinks to the meeting with the politician in order to demonstrate that the products were not inferior in taste and that they were not substantially more expensive. Some of the comments about this experience included:

Even if they serve fair trade cups of tea to everyone they meet in their office, and that label is obvious on the tea bag, bit by bit that is helping to raise awareness of this issue.

We took a cake to take to the meeting and cut the politician a tiny slice that represented the percentage of the budget that goes to foreign aid. It was a great way to visually represent the argument we were making, and I think he really got it.

The Hopesters also discussed the importance of writing letters to Members of Parliament as part of campaigning, as every letter received by a politician's office is seen as representing the views of 200 people in the electorate. In this way, the number of letters received on each issue is used as a way to gauge public sentiment. I noted that the Hopesters were quite sophisticated in how they went about their letter writing. One of them said:

I got a letter published in the newspaper about the importance of increasing the foreign aid budget to help those living in extreme poverty in other countries. I used my parents' address in the country as I reckon they don't get many letters from regional communities on issues like that. I thought that might make it more likely that the paper would publish my letter than if I had of put the address of my share house in the inner suburbs.

In reflecting upon the training day, I observed that the participants were very enthusiastic about the causes they discussed. They were very proud of being called a Hopester and they all wore matching t-shirts that declared their membership of the group. However, belonging to a group of such similar people could potentially be exclusionary for others who did not share the same background or social and geographical locations (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In addition, I noted that the group did not seem to fully canvass the complexity of the issues they discussed, such as the problematic nature of banning child labour and the debates around the meaning and effectiveness of buying fair-trade products (Basu & Tzannatos, 2003. In addition, the conflict of interest inherent in the Hopester group campaigning for an increase to the foreign aid budget, when their parent organisation Hope International is partly funded from that same source, was not discussed.

5.4   Identifying as a human rights activist

The first participant was Anita, who was the State director of the Hopester group. At the time of the interview Anita was 23 years old and she had moved to Australia from the United Kingdom as a child. In addition to her unpaid work with the Hopesters, which took up about one day of her week, she worked in a paid part time job at a gym. She was also studying a Master's degree in international relations as a university in Melbourne, specifically focused on gender inequality and development. Anita initially became involved in social justice activities through her Catholic high school. As part of the social justice program at school, she volunteered at a charity that gives support for the education of young people who are experiencing disadvantage, through providing services such as school uniforms, breakfast clubs, stationary and books and mentoring.

In her leadership role with the Hopesters, Anita managed a group of thirty other young people aged between 18-25 years. She had been in this position for two years. Her role involved organising the campaigns, activities, training, resources, recruitment and administration of

the group, and liaising between the parent organisation of Hope International and the Hopesters. Anita became involved in the Hopesters after completing an internship at Hope International after she finished school, after which went on a Hope International service trip to India. This trip inspired her to increase her involvement in the organisation. She initially became the co-ordinator of the Hopester university groups and was subsequently offered the position of director.

The second participant was Carol, the leader of the Hopester school groups. At the time of the interview Carol was 20 years old and lived at home with her parents. She moved to Australia from China as a child. In addition to her unpaid work with the Hopesters, which she had been doing for 5 years and which took up about one day of her week, she worked in a paid part time job and was studying for a Commerce degree at a university in Melbourne. In her role with the Hopesters, she liaised with the schools in Victoria which had a Hopester group. These groups are student led and meet at lunchtime to organise activities and campaigning. Carol provided support to these groups through a newsletter and training materials and she met regularly with the school groups to mentor them. She was the first contact point for schools who were interested in starting a new Hopester group.

The third participant was Alex, who is from an Anglo-Australian family. At the time of the interview she was 20 years old and studying an International Business degree full-time at a university in Melbourne. Alex lived at home with her mother. She spent about one day a week in her role with the Hopester group as leader of a university group. Alex had been involved with the Hopesters for one year. In her unpaid role, she ensured that the Hopester group adhered to the requirements of the university for clubs to be affiliated. She was also involved in recruiting and maintaining group members and giving them roles, organising campaigns and planning events. In particular, Alex campaigned for the service providers within the university to purchase fair trade products, and she intended to create a fair-trade map to let people know which establishments at the university sold fair-trade products.

The fourth participant from the Hopester group was Tamara who is from an Anglo-Australian family. She was 23 years old at the time of the interviews and lived in a share-house with some friends. Tamara had been involved with the Hopesters for two years. As an undergraduate she studied International Development, and she then completed a Master's degree in rehabilitation counselling at a university in Melbourne. She worked in a paid part

time role in the fundraising division of Hope International. In Tamara's unpaid role with the Hopesters she was the leader of a university group, which she did for one day per week. As part of this unpaid role, Tamara was involved in recruiting and maintaining the membership of the group, and organising campaigns, actions and activities for the group to participate in. She also had another voluntary role with a different organisation, where she tutored refugee students living in public housing, and she also volunteered to attend holiday camps for children at risk who are wards of the state.

Unlike the participants in the Global Justice case study, the participants in this case study did not embrace being labelled as activists. I asked Anita how she would define herself, and she said:

> I would probably describe myself as an advocate, acting on behalf of others who don't have their own voice. However, I'm very conscious of the power imbalance of me acting on behalf of others, and I always say I'm working with people not for them. I can't represent the experiences of these people. I'm a white middle class Australian woman, how can I really know about the suffering of people in rural Ghana?

When describing whether she identified herself as activist or an advocate, Carol replied:

> I'd steer more towards advocate, because I think identifying yourself as an activist is off putting. I don't want to be too confrontational because I don't think it achieves much. Also, activist has very political connotations, whereas I think it is really important to engage with a broader group of people. So many of the groups like us appeal to left wing, Arts Law type students, but there is so much potential in other audiences who aren't being accessed.

Similarly, Alex described herself as:

> … an advocate not an activist. Activist makes you think of people protesting and being in your face. What I do is a lot more behind the scenes. I have friends who are environmental activists and they are more full-on, they are happy to get arrested, but I'm not like that. Activist makes it seem more about you, whereas advocate means you are acting on behalf of others, which is more what I want to do.

When asked to define her role, Tamara said:

> Hmm, I'm not too sure. I don't do protests. Activist seems a bit scary. Maybe I would say advocate, particularly for children's rights. When you want to resonate with young people

you don't want to scare them off by being too confrontational. Activism seems like something from the 70s.

Although these findings differ from those in the Global Justice case study, the reluctance of these participants to label themselves as activists does reflect the findings in the literature that there is a 'resistance of some social movement actors to self-identify as "activist"' (Bobel, 2007, p. 148). Similarly, Baumgardner and Richards (2000) argue that 'to most people, the image of an activist is someone who is out of the ordinary' and that 'it's easy to imagine that activists are "other" people' (p. 282). Bobel (2007) therefore argues that one can 'do activism' without 'being activist', and this discrepancy begs a more complicated account of identity (p. 149). Ferree and Mueller (2004) argue that there is also gender dimension to this resistance, as women see traditional forms of activism as interacting with male-dominated formal institutions. Support for this is provided by the participant's comments such as that activism seems scary and confrontational. As Bobel (2007) notes, the reluctance of female activists to name themselves as such also has echoes with the feminist social movement, and it is interesting to note Tamara's comparison that 'activism seems like something from the 70s' when feminism was also in its heyday as a movement. A more nuanced identification of an activist could envisage a continuum of participatory activities, that not only includes public street protests but also quieter forms of activism such as letter writing and behind the scenes lobbying.

The participants in this case study were much more comfortable with labelling themselves as advocates rather than activists. However, as Stoecker (2003) notes, advocacy can also be disempowering when a more powerful (although well-meaning) group acts on behalf of others, rather than the community themselves gaining the skills and experience to enable them to protest about breaches of their own human rights. Anita's comment 'I'm a white middle class Australian woman, how can I really know about the suffering of people in rural Ghana?' indicates her awareness of the inequitable social and cultural conditions that exist (between the groups (Habermas, 1979). However, this seems to be problematic whether or not the terminology of activist or advocate is used.

In designing my research project, I aimed to examine human rights activists. However, the data collection process in the Hope International case study indicated to me that not only did the participants not want to define themselves as activists, they were also unenthusiastic

about a human rights framework being applied to the campaigning work they did. Perhaps this can be explained because Hope International operates under a development framework, compared to Global Justice which situated itself within a human rights framework.

Whilst the participants acknowledged the importance of human rights being promoted and protected, there was a consensus between them that the language of rights was off putting as a way of encouraging other young people to become involved in campaigning. When discussing the End Child Labour campaign, I asked Anita why the campaign did not reference international human rights treaties in the documentation prepared by the organisation. She replied:

> Although it ties in very strongly to human rights, I think we operate more in a fairness and a moralistic framework. We take a 'we get access to a safe childhood so why shouldn't they' approach.

When describing the framework used by Hope International and adopted by the Hopester group, Anita explained further:

> It's more of a link to human values rather than human rights. If you said to someone 'you have the right to do this because it is under the UN Charter' or 'you have the right to do this because you are human' it has a very different outcome. People tend to buy into the emotional argument rather than the human rights argument, as they have a better understanding of what that means.

Similarly, when asked about the role of human rights in the campaigning work that the Hopesters do, Carol responded that:

> Most of our campaigns are human rights based, like ending child slavery. A lot of the campaign materials do refer to human rights in a general way, but not the specific Article of a particular Convention because I think that puts people off. I think people feel very disconnected from the rules set out by the United Nations, it just doesn't cut through, it doesn't resonate. I have noticed that other groups like Global Justice, that do have a very human rights focus, seem to be very top down, the UN dictating to us what our rights are, rather than making an emotional connection about how people should treat each other.

Carol went on to use the specific example of refugees to describe how using a human rights framework in activist work can be problematic. She said:

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I think people are confused about human rights. Organisations like Global Justice refer to Australia's legal obligations to accept asylum seekers under the Refugee Convention, but then international law is not enforceable. And the Australian domestic law says that refugees who come by boat are illegal, and law is enforceable. The 'rights' message gets confused. Sometimes it is more productive to move away from rights and just focus on the humanity of the situation.

When asked about the framework that Hopesters uses to situate the work that it does, Alex commented that:

I think it is about social justice rather than human rights, although human rights are kind of implied in it. But we don't tend to refer to the specific article within a particular Convention, even though I so know that stuff. I don't think people are that motivated by lots of rights talk, compared to having compassion. With asylum seekers, we know we are breaching their human rights, but that argument is not nearly as powerful as a photo of a person.

When asked about the role of human rights in the work that the Hopesters do, Tamara thought that:

It's much more valuable to try and get people to walk in another person's shoes.

It is instructive to consider these comments and the documentary evidence from the organisation in light of the debates around human rights discussed above in the literature review (Sen, 2004; Otto, 1999; Arendt, 1951). It can be argued that the participants in this case study have accepted the implied acknowledgement by the organisation that framing their advocacy work in a human rights paradigm is not a useful way of connecting people to the cause. This is despite the fact that it can be argued (and the participants themselves acknowledge) that they are advocating for the promotion and protection of the rights of others. Compared with the Global Justice case study, the participants in this case study focused on eliciting a humanistic empathetic response as a way of convincing others about the issues, rather than using a legalistic human rights framework.

5.5 Influences and motivations to be and become a human rights activist

The first research question explores what factors influence and motivate young adults to become human rights activists. This section discusses the data collected from the interviews, observations and documents about this question with regards to the Hopesters. In particular,

it examines the influence of family, schooling, gender and religion on the four participants Anita, Carol, Alex and Tamara.

5.5.1 Family

Being a human rights activist with the Hopesters involves making a substantial time commitment in order to advocate on behalf of other people who live in a different country and who the participants would almost definitely never meet or directly interact with. This section discusses how their families influenced and motivated the participants to be human rights activists with the Hopesters.

In describing her motivation to be involved with the Hopesters, Anita said:

> Since I was a child I have been involved in issues of poverty andecu injustice. When I was 11 years old my parents took us to South Africa and we went to Soweto, and this was my first experience of poverty. That was the moment that I realised that the world wasn't fair. So I thought, cool, I've got the power to do something about this, and that's what I want to spend the rest of my life doing.

When asked about the influence of her family and upbringing on that decision, she explained:

> My parents have both been involved in charity work, so I was raised with the idea of giving back. I know that I am part of a global community that I can make a positive contribution to.

These comments are enlightening because they demonstrate that Anita has been influenced by the experiences that her family have given her, which has helped her to develop a mindset that although 'the world isn't fair', she has the 'power to do something' about it through belonging to a 'global community'. This is an example of her being changing over time as part of her becoming a human rights activist (Kidd, 1973).

Anita described why she moved from volunteering with the charity group at school to becoming involved in Hope International as an advocate:

> It wasn't a conscious decision to join an advocacy organisation instead of a service providing one. It was more that the opportunity was presented to me at the time. But working at Hopesters with a movement of other young people committed to a greater aim than just one bowl of soup at a time really appealed to me.

The distinction that Anita draws between advocacy/activism and service work is one that is also reflected in the literature, as discussed in the Introduction (Stoecker, 2003; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The second participant, Carol, was also asked to reflect upon her motivations for being involved in the Hopesters. She responded:

> You have to be passionate about these issues. That's what keeps you going at the end of the day. You have to have that special twinkle in your eye. I don't think it can be taught, you either have it or you don't. It is very much part of who I am. I always support the underdog, even when I'm watching the footy!

She also reflected on the influence of her family:

> I've had some amazing people in my life who have really helped me. I know I am very lucky and that has given me a very strong sense of giving back. My parents came to Australia not knowing any English at all. My parents are both cleaners, and their client was the one who paid for me to go a private high school in Year 9. I've been incredibly lucky, and I think that has really nurtured my sense of giving. Whatever I end up doing in my life I know it will be about serving other people.

Carol also discussed some other experiences in her life that influenced her, by explaining how her:

> … grandmother has always encouraged my sister and I to think about those who are less fortunate. She has this awesome saying: 'you can't do everything, but everyone can do something'. I think that really influenced me from a young age.

Like Anita, Carol describes how her formative experiences with her family and community have nurtured in her the altruistic qualities of wanting to help others. It is also interesting to note that Carol's grandmother encouraged her altruism (Haste & Hogan, 2006), as was the case with two of the participants in the Global Justice case study. The pro-social behaviour that Carol exhibits reflects Saha's (2000) definition of voluntary behaviour intended to help others, including the 'intentions, goals, and predispositions to work towards the betterment of society such as the alleviation of poverty or suffering' (Saha, 2000. p. 10). Carol's comment that her sense of giving is an innate characteristic to her 'being' underlines the strong sense of social responsibility she has which compels her to do this unpaid work (Atkeson &

Rapoport, 2003) as part of her value system (Yuval-Davis, 2011). Both Anita and Carol also demonstrate that they feel they have the agency to be engaged in this type of work (for example 'I've got the power to do something about this' and 'everybody can do something'), which reflects Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) research that there is a strong relationship between young people's sense that they are competent civic actors as individuals and their desire to participate in social activism groups.

I asked the third participant, Alex, about the influence that her family had on motivating her to become involved in the Hopester group. She said:

> It's a bit weird but they aren't interested in this stuff at all. In fact, it is more that I have influenced them! They just see it as a distraction from studying. But I showed my mum, who normally isn't interested in politics or issues, a video about the negative effect that Australian foreign aid cuts are having on the poorest people in the world, and she said, 'I finally get it now, I get what you do and why you do it'. It really hit home for her that when you round the foreign aid budget in Australia to the nearest whole number it is zero. And that is really wrong.

In terms of political socialisation, Alex's comments reflect McDevitt and Chaffee's (2002) findings that young people who have had civic experiences outside of the home, through school and community-based activities, are often able to challenge the political views of their parents which in turn prompts parents to increase their own civic knowledge.

When asked to reflect personally on her motivation for being involved in a social justice group when she was at her religious private secondary school, Alex explained:

> I'm an only child and my parents got divorced and then my mum was diagnosed with breast cancer, so my home life was crazy. I think I really threw myself into the group as a way of coping.

Similarly, when asked about her motivation for being involved in the Hopesters, the fourth participant Tamara responded:

> I can pinpoint it exactly, there was some rough stuff going on in my family when I was a teenager, it wasn't the best of times. In Year 12 I got to go to the Hope International global leaders conference. It was mind blowing and I met such great people. It really cemented for me how lucky I was, despite the bad times I had gone through, and the lottery of life. I really feel that I have an amazing opportunity to make a difference to other people's lives.

This motivation differs from the other participants in this case study (Anita and Carol) who had a strong sense of altruism that had been instilled in them by their families and they then sought out a group of like-minded people to belong to. This can be described as an example of being-becoming-belonging (Kidd, 1973). By contrast, both Alex and Tamara describe how their motivation to become a human rights activist stemmed from escaping the personal crises they were experiencing and where they felt a deep sense of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011). This can be re-conceptualised as an example of belonging-being-becoming, as described in the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009), demonstrating the importance of belonging for adults as well as children.

Tamara also discussed another experience she had which influenced her to become a human rights activist with the Hopesters. She explained that:

> … when I was an undergraduate, I went on exchange to a university in Ecuador for a semester. And while I was there I also volunteered with a foundation that worked with street kids. These children had families, but they were too poor to look after them, so the foundation fed, clothed, housed and educated them. My role was to tutor an illiterate 9-year old girl in Spanish, ABCs and 123s and all that. My Spanish was pretty basic, but it was enough to get by and I learned it more as I went along. After a few weeks she could count to 100, it was amazing, and soon after she could read and do multiplication, which was enough to start school. Watching her progression really cemented to me why education is so important. My little bit of help gave her so many more opportunities for her future. When I came back to Australia I really wanted to do something meaningful like that again, I really needed to bring meaning into my life.

Tamara's comments about helping others raises some of the concerns in the literature about encouraging those who belong to the privileged South 'to think that he or she is there to help the rest of the world' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 630). In Mostafanezhad's (2014) research about voluntourism, many of her participants made similar comments to those made by Tamara such as 'I got more out of this than I gave' and 'I just feel like if I can make a difference to one kid I have been successful'. Mostafanezhad (2014) discusses the power of such experiences for personal growth ('I really needed to bring meaning into my life'), despite the limits that one individual or group can have on the actual amelioration of human rights abuses and

poverty. In this way, it can be argued that such comments are not reflective of justice-oriented citizens who want to change the system that reproduces inequalities but are instead focused on individual actions (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). However, despite such concerns, there is little advice in the literature about how well-intentioned human rights activists like Tamara participate in something she finds meaningful, without reinforcing a superiority dichotomy (Spivak, 1988).

It is significant for my research to note that Anita, Carol, Alex and Tamara all told stories about a childhood experience which motivated them to look outside of their own being, and to want to become involved in this organisation. For Anita it was the visit to Soweto, for Carol it was being grateful for the patronage of her parent's employer, for Alex it was her parent's divorce and for Tamara it was her difficult teenage home life. This finding raises the possibility that having these types of formative childhood experiences, such as witnessing injustice and wanting to belong to a cause beyond yourself, are pre-requisites for being, becoming belonging to these types of organisations.

5.5.2 Religion, schooling and gender

All of the participants in this case study attended private, religious secondary schools. As a Christian organisation, it could be assumed that religion would have played a role in motivating these participants to be involved in the Hopesters. However, interestingly none of the participants identified themselves as currently having strong religious beliefs. When asked whether religion influenced her to belong to the Hopester group, Anita said:

> I think a lot of people don't know what the Hopesters do. It wasn't religion that drew me to it, I'm not religious at all although I was raised as a Catholic and went to a Catholic school. It was more that it was welcoming and friendly and the people were so passionate and had such great energy that I thought I want to be a part of what they are part of!

Similarly, when asked why she chose to belong to the Hopesters, as opposed to another organisation, Carol replied:

> They were the first group I was exposed to through school, so it wasn't the religious thing as I'm not religious at all. But I've always been surrounded by Christian people and I have a lot of Christian friends. I do like being a part of something that is bigger than myself. Hmm, now I hear myself saying that, it sounds very religious, 'something bigger than myself', and I'm

trying to work out if that bothers me or not. Maybe belonging to the Hopester group is something that I need because I don't have religion to identify with and belong to in my life?

When asked about the role religion played in choosing to belong to the Hopester group, Alex explained that:

> … originally, I didn't want to join the Hopester group at uni because I saw it as too Christian. But then I realised that there were lots of non-Christians involved in it, so it was fine. I like that it is a values-based organisation, it's about being ethical. We do start and end each meeting with a prayer but that doesn't bother me. Sometimes people are a bit negative towards the organisation because they think we only help Christians, but I know that isn't true.

Tamara discussed why she wanted to belong to the Hopester group in particular, rather than other similar organisations:

> I've been brought up as a Catholic, so I have those values of giving back to the community. Religion is not a huge part of my life now, I see it more as just being a humanitarian, and recognising the needs of others who are not as fortunate as me. Regardless of religious motivation, people at Hopesters are here for the same reasons. But I do find it really lovely that people are faith driven and feel a responsibility to do something. I sometimes go to prayer time and devotions here at the Hope International office when I am here for my paid work.

Therefore, although none of the participants professed to being motivated by religion, it was evident that they were attracted to the values offered by a religious organisation and were supportive of others. Eisenberg (1996) and Kohlberg (1976) describe how the moral values of doing no harm to others, having empathy for the plight of others and actively trying to improve the life of others can be internalized through the influence of religion. Therefore, religious values may play a role in motivating the pro-social behaviour of the participants in this case study. In addition, Carol's comments raise the possibility that belonging to his organisation may act as a religion substitute for these participants, as it involves belonging to a group of people who have similar values and a common cause who undertake shared rituals.

Carol discussed how her experiences at school influenced her to become involved with the Hopester group:

In Year 9 I moved from a co-ed public school in the outer suburbs to an all-girls private inner-city school that prided itself on being worldly, and I got the opportunity there to study the International Baccalaureate where I really learned about international issues. I also joined the school Hopester group. My friends from the public school weren't very internationally minded, but then they didn't have the same opportunities that the private school students had to open up their world. Being a Hopesters was seen as a cool thing to be involved with at [the private] school, but I know that wasn't the case at my previous [public school], where posters advertising the group were torn down when they tried to get it going. It's all about creating a positive culture around these ideas.

It is significant to consider the implications about gender that are inherent in Carol's remarks. Carol's more positive experiences of being involved in a human rights group at the all-girls private school compared with the co-educational public school reflects the research which shows that girls are more likely than boys to subscribe to positive attitudes concerning social justice and activism (Atkeson & Rapoport, 2003). In addition, Carol's comments reflect the literature that human rights activists are often highly educated, economically advantaged and drawn from the same privileged social class (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). However, arguing from a post-colonial perspective, privileged people advocating of behalf of victims of human rights abuses in the Global South can be seen as the legacy of a 'gendered, sentimental colonial encounter where the cultural politics of race, class and gender are strategically obscured' (Mostafanezhad, 2013, p.486) in the service of creating politically active subjects (Tascon, 2015).

When I asked Alex about her early experiences with social justice at school, she explained:

I went to a private school for 13 years, where you were just spoon fed everything. But one of the great things I was exposed to at school was the social justice program they had, which was led by the school chaplain who has been a huge influence on my life. Everyone wanted to be involved.

When asked to reflect further upon how these school experiences influenced her decision to join Hopesters once she left school, Alex replied:

Every week the social justice group organised speakers who came to talk to us about human rights issues, poverty and injustice. We also did the simulated famine every year. One year when I was leading the social justice group we were the top fundraising school in Australia.

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> After I left school I went to a Hopesters conference and that's how I got involved. I didn't look at joining any other organisations.

When she was involved with the Hopesters at school, Alex had the opportunity to go to Canberra to meet with some politicians about the proposed foreign aid budget. She explained how during this experience:

> … some of the politicians said, 'you are amazing for doing this work', but I don't think it is that remarkable. Actually, it is quite insulting to young people, as if they expect so little of us.

These comments reflect Gordon and Taft's (2011) research about how youth activists are often described using a discourse of specialness or exceptionalism, which can be disempowering for young people.

Alex was asked about the motivation for her post-school involvement in the Hopester group, and commented that:

> You've caught me at a good time to be asking me these questions, as I have been reflecting on my motivation a lot lately. I did so much on this stuff while I was at school that I just couldn't walk away and do nothing once I went to university… I felt like I was just getting started and had just had a taste of what was possible, so I couldn't just leave the job half done. I had so much more to give.

It is also significant to note that both Alex and Carol comment that being involved in human rights activism at school was a popular thing to do. This reflects the work of Torney-Purta (2004) who suggests that many young people construct political knowledge and agency through their peer groups; that is, when something is perceived as desirable by some young people it encourages others to also get involved and view it positively as well.

In terms of schooling, it is also significant that similarly to the Global Justice case study, none of the Hopester participants mentioned that learning about human rights issues in the formal school curriculum influenced them to join the organisation. Rather, it was through their informal learning of social justice groups, guest speakers, attending conferences and lobbying politicians in Canberra that their interest developed. It is worth noting that these participants were at high school in Australia in the years in between the Discovering Democracy program and the implementation of the civics and citizenship strand of the Australian Curriculum,

which may account for their lack of exposure to human rights education in their formal schooling.

It can also be argued that the financial, social and cultural capital (Putnam, 1995; Bourdieu, 1986) provided to the participants by their families allowed them to access these experiences provided by their private schooling. According to DeJaeghere (2016), 'agency is embedded in social relations with deep inequalities' (p. 7) and Black (2017b) argues that low socio-economic status affects a range of attitudes to and capacities for civic participation by young people. This raises questions about whether all young Australians can access the opportunities that these participants had to be, become and belong as human rights activists through belonging to NGO groups such as Hope International.

5.6   Belonging

This section examines the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group. In her influential book *The Politics of Belonging,* Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that belonging is structured around social and geographical locations, attachment to cultural and symbolic practices of social groups and the value systems that individuals and groups use to make judgments about their own and others' belonging. These facets are political because they construct boundaries that define who is excluded and included and who belongs and does not belong. An important part of self-identity therefore lies in the collective identity that people gain through belonging to groups of others. The data revealed that belonging and was a very significant element for the identity of the participants involved in the Hopesters. Anita spoke about how important the sense of belonging to a group was in order to maintain her motivation. She said:

> Whenever I'm feeling overwhelmed, I just go to a Hopesters meeting and instantly I feel inspired again. You could never do this work on your own, being in a group is essential.

Carol expressed a similar sentiment when I asked her how important it was to her do this work as part of a group. She explained:

> … I came for the cause, but I'm staying in it for the group. The benefits to me personally of belonging to the Hopesters have been huge. I'm a bit of an introverted person so I really feed off the energy of other people and need that to stay inspired and develop my confidence.

Tamara emphasized the importance of the group to her as a way of coping with the difficulties of creating meaningful change about the issue of poverty:

> You just couldn't do this stuff by yourself, it's too depressing. It is really important to have other like-minded people around you who care about the same issues and you can feel like you are in it together, otherwise you would just give up as it is too hard. Some of the issues we campaign about are pretty terrible, so it's important to have a laugh together sometimes.

These comments reflect Kirshner's (2007) research which found that 'the collaborative, distributive nature of work in an activist group enables participants to accomplish goals they would be hard-pressed to accomplish on their own' (p. 369). The participants clearly valued the support of having other like-minded people around them to help them stay motivated. Understandably, such a committed group of similar people formed strong friendships as a result of belonging to this group. Anita said:

> We're a real community. The people in Hopesters are some of my best friends. We all have a strong sense of compassion and we really look after each other.

Similarly, Alex commented that:

> I've made some amazing friends, the Hopesters are so friendly and welcoming. They are my main friends at uni. Mum is finally going to meet the 'Hopester girls' this weekend. She's heard so much about them. She gets how they are a real support network for me, everyone helps each other through their life problems. Being part of a group is so motivating. But at the same time the Hopesters really understands that you have a life beyond the organisation, it only forms a part of my 'life pie'.

These comments reflect Youniss et al's (2002) research which suggests that the social bonds, affiliation and emotional support gained through belonging to a community with shared commitments can sustain civic involvement despite intimidating challenges, frustrating experiences and a sense of hopelessness at ever being able to create effective change. Watson (2006) argues that individual identities require people to being engaged in a relationship, 'not simply positioned as performers or spectators' (p. 511). Similarly, Probyn (1996) argues that identity is always in transition and is produced through the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong. In this way, the process through which the participants construct their being and becoming is contingent on their

reflective positioning in relation to other people, rather than just their internal perception of themselves. The comment 'I came for the cause, but I'm staying in it for the group' is particularly illuminating. It demonstrates that for Carol, her 'being' attracted her to join the group in the first place, but the process of belonging to the group changed why she stayed and 'became' a human rights activist.

It was my observation that the members the Hopester group were drawn from a similar class, having been educated at private religious secondary schools and were now all engaged in tertiary studies. I asked Tamara about the backgrounds of the other people in the group as a way of triangulating the evidence (Yin, 2009). She said:

> Organisations like Hope International have a real issue with diversity. It is basically all young middle-class females. This makes sense to me, it is about the way that women are socialised. Women are more likely to volunteer and work for free if it helps others. So yes, it's true that the Hopesters are very similar people. But the flip side is that we all have similar levels of compassion, altruism and empathy and we all get along really well.

These comments about gender are reflected in Gilligan's (1977) influential work about the ethics of care, where she argues that females are socialised to develop the characteristics of nurturance, care and protection. However, another explanation could be that such a tight knit group of 'best girl friends' make it intimidating for other people (such as young men or people from different cultural backgrounds) to join, and these factors might explain the lack of diversity in the group. In this way, a strong sense of belonging to an 'ingroup' can be exclusionary to those in 'outgroups' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Another issue associated with belonging to the Hopesters is the time commitment that is involved. Tamara commented on why she thought that similar sorts of people became involved in this group:

> It is a big commitment to do this type of work, and not everyone can do it. You need a lot of support to make it happen. You need to have a pretty ok life yourself in order to commit yourself to this amount of unpaid work in your spare time, and not everyone has that.

Therefore, there is a level of privilege that is inherent in belonging to this group. In most cases, the participants had strong family support (including accommodation and financial assistance) and they were all university students who did not have dependent children or full-

time jobs, which allowed them to commit to this unpaid role at least one day per week. DeJaeghere et al (2016) argues that 'agency is embedded in social relations with deep inequalities' (p. 7), so it is arguable that without these constraints, many other young people may also want to belong to this group or at least have the option of being able to join (Walsh & Black, 2018).

I was also interested to ask the participant their opinion about the other NGOs that operate in this space. When I asked Alex her opinion about Youth against Poverty, she responded:

> It can be really competitive between the two organisations [Hope International and Youth against Poverty]. On some level I know that's stupid as we are all campaigning for the same things and should really try and work together better. I think we need to be more professional and develop partnerships and relationships with other similar organisations.

These findings suggest that for these participants, their primary sense of belonging was to the sub-group rather than to the umbrella organisation of Hope International or to the cause of poverty reduction. These participants position themselves as belonging to their particular group, and in opposition to other groups, as part of formulating their own identity within social and institutional structures (Besley & Peters, 2007).

When I asked Anita whether she considered herself as belonging to the Hopester group or to the umbrella organisation of Hope International, she replied:

> To be honest I don't think the Hopesters are really valued enough by Hope International. We don't get a lot of recognition or thanks. I think it is because we don't really make them any money. We really have to be advocates for ourselves as well as for the people we are campaigning about! But we are the grassroots, we are the ones who are talking to people on the street, we are often many people's first introduction to Hope International.

This comment demonstrates that for this participant, belonging involves a relational quid pro quo ('recognition or thanks') between the members and the organisation; without it, the sub-group of the Hopesters has constructed its own sense of belonging in opposition to the parent organisation ('we really have to be advocates for ourselves'). These examples demonstrate that the participants sense of belonging is contingent on loyalty to a particular group (or sub-group) in opposition to an Other, rather than a wider feeling of solidarity to a cause.

5.7   Action competence

In the next section, the action competence framework is used to analyse how these human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. In particular, it discusses whether they are 'able, and willing, to be a qualified participant' (Jenson & Schnack, 1997, p. 165) who have undertaken actions which 'are characterised by the fact that they are done consciously and that they have been considered and are targeted' (Jenson & Schnack, 1997, p. 167).

5.7.1   Knowledge and commitment

Being involved in a non-governmental activist group in Australia requires people to be knowledgeable and committed to the causes they campaign about (Braungart & Braungart, 1997). As discussed above, the participants in this case study were often motivated by a strong emotional reaction to injustice which underpinned their commitment. Mihr (2007) argues that the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction. Therefore, the activists do not have to have experienced a human rights violation themselves, but rather they have an emotional reaction to the testimony of someone else who has experienced a human rights violation, which then inspired them to act to stop it happening to others.

The participants were asked in the interviews to reflect about how their human rights activism had informed their knowledge about being an active citizen. Carol said:

> Often you take for granted that you can speak out against government policy and there are no terrible consequences, which is not the case in every country. When I meet with politicians I remind them that they work for us. I'm also very aware that not everyone has this opportunity, so I feel like I have to make the most of it. It really makes me feel involved in the political system.

When asked to reflect upon whether living in a democracy means you have an obligation to speak up about the rights of others, Alex commented that:

> Democracy is about people having a voice, although sometimes it feels like a bunch of old white men doing what suits them. But then we still have the right to have an opinion, unlike in other countries like North Korea.

When asked about how the Hopester engages with the democratic process, Tamara said:

> We want people to have to take some personal responsibility and change their own behaviour, through things like buying fair-trade products, as well as doing things like lobbying the government.

Rather than just engaging in citizenship activities that are bestowed by nationalist status, such as voting, it can be argued that these participants are knowledgeable about how to engage in participatory citizenship activities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). This is because they know how government agencies work as well as knowing strategies for how to accomplish collective tasks. Thus, having knowledge is an important factor in being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist (Kidd, 1973), but action is also required. According to Jensen and Schnack (1997), 'knowledge can be transferred to a person without it being possible to say that the person acts in relation to this knowledge to any appreciable extent' (p. 475), so on its own it is not enough to constitute action competence.

5.7.2   Critical intentionality

Another important part of the action competency framework is having a critical intentionality to achieve an outcome through an action. Philosophically, the intentionality of action competence is informed by critical theory (Habermas, 1968), because not only are human actions intentional, but the intentions, motives and reasons need to have an intrinsic relation to the actions, meaning that a different intention will lead to a different action. Jensen and Schnack (1997) further explain that 'a critical perspective is necessary and must be related to a concrete action' (p. 173).

According to Henderson and Tudball (2016), the development of responsible intentionality is critical when dealing with complex issues that require long term solutions such as human rights. I asked Anita about her intention to inspire others to act, and she explained:

> We have a model for how to do this: Self-Us-Now. You start with a personal, relatable story, such as my experiences in South Africa as a child. And then you say how having that experience made me want to be involved in a larger movement to do something about it, and I had the power to do that. You then transition to telling the story and showing the photo of a particular child labourer; and then you give the statistics about what is happening now: 168 million children are waking up every day and being child labourers. You have to create a sense of urgency, and most importantly leave them with an action they can take to do something

with the knowledge they have just gained. The human experience of suffering is so powerful and those are the narratives we use.

The use of this model by the Hopesters to influence people's emotions is similar to the Outrage-Hope-Action model used by Global Justice. Self-Us-Now involves telling an emotional and relatable story (self), encouraging the listener to join in the group (us) and then giving them a concrete action to engage in (now). Similarly, the Outrage-Hope-Action model involves creating an emotional reaction to an injustice, giving people hope through joining a movement aimed at creating change and giving them a concrete action to undertake.

Whilst such a process may have the desired effect of encouraging more people to join the Hopesters, Kelly (2008) asks whether it ethical to instrumentalise testimony (such as the photo of the child labourer) in the service of political causes in this way, and 'what evidence is there that stories and images attesting to suffering have the desired effect on public understanding or political decision-making?' (p. 9). Therefore, intentions need to be critically reflected on by human rights activists as they can have unintended and negative consequences. Tamara reflected that:

> We tell stories about the lives of people who don't have the chance to tell their own story. I say to people 'If you were this child, I would tell your story too so that you could have justice as well'. Every victim can't be an advocate, most of the time these people don't even know that they are a victim as that is just their life and reality. But from my perspective, I can see that they have rights that are not being protected and I want to help where I can.

Whilst well intentioned, it is problematic for activists in Australia to decide whose stories to tell and who is classified as a victim in need of help in another country, particularly as such stories are often about a child who has little informed choice about how their story is used. It can be argued that while this participant is developing capacities for participation as an active citizen she not demonstrating a 'critical analysis of root causes of injustice' (Westheimer & Kahne, 2006, p. 6).

Carol was more reflective about the problematic arousal of emotional and empathetic responses in those who indirectly witness the suffering of others. She said:

> Delivering the stories of others can be a powerful way of tapping into people's emotion, but at the same time this can be a bit manipulative and clichéd, and people are increasingly

desensitised to some of these stories. I know that Hope International has really changed its approach in recent years. Rather than using negative pictures of a fly blown baby sitting in the dust, they use a positive picture of a happy well-dressed girl going to school. We don't do 'poverty porn' anymore.

In this example, Carol describes how the organisation has demonstrated a critical intentionality by no longer using images of distant suffering (Hoijer, 2004). However, it is also problematic if organisations only use positive images, if they do not accurately reflect the reality of the living conditions and human rights abuses experienced by the millions of children who live in extreme poverty.

5.7.3 Concrete action experiences

The activists in this case study engaged in a number of different actions as part of their role, including awareness raising, digital activism and ethical consumerism. Tamara discussed an example of an awareness raising action about child labour that she was involved in:

Our Hopester group at university organised a movie night, we showed *Amazing Grace* which is a film about the abolition of the slave trade. We provided food and asked for a $5 donation. The people who came got either a coloured or a white wrist band at the door. The coloured band entitled them to pizza, soft drink and a bean bag to sit on, whereas the white band entitled them to water and a plate of rice and they had to sit on the floor. After the movie, we had a great discussion about this activity. The people on the bean bags felt really guilty that the others were sitting on the floor, and that they were drinking soft drink, particularly as the movie depicted child slaves picking sugar cane! Just making that small association of ideas made this a powerful awareness raising activity. I think it was more effective than if we just had of hammered them over the head with a PowerPoint setting out all the facts about child slavery and why they should buy Fair Trade products.

This example encapsulates the action competence framework. It involves knowledge and insight about the issue (the historical conditions of child labourers), emotion (guilt), intention (raising awareness raising about the current situation of child labourers) and a concrete action experience (the two movie-watching conditions) and a vision about future positive solutions (don't buy products with sugar picked by child labourers).

Another action undertaken by the Hopester group is online campaigning about causes such as ending child labour and increasing the foreign aid budget. NGOs are increasingly relying

on the internet as a new space for their members to more easily create social action about human rights issues (Winford, 2005).   While such clicktivism can be perceived in negative terms, Halupka (2014) argues that online engagement has political worth, and Chapman and Coffe (2016) have found considerable spill-over between online activist activities and offline engagement, particularly amongst young people.

Significantly, most of the participants interviewed for this case study were not very engaged with digital activism. Anita's comments reflect Chapman and Coffe's (2016) findings:

> Slacktivism drives me insane. It is not enough to press 'like' on Facebook and think you are involved in the issues. But if it is a tool to getting further involved then that's a good thing.

Carol emphasized the importance of face-to-face contact between the members of the group rather than digital activism. She said:

> I'm not a fan of online campaigning. I think it is quite divisive and you don't really understand the real issues by just clicking yes on a petition. Maybe it works for some people just not the people I know. I've also noticed how important it is for Hopesters to meet together physically. It's all about the personal connection.

Tamara discussed some of the advantages and disadvantages of online campaigning:

> Social media does have a role to play in campaigning. But sometimes posting lots of activist stuff can really piss people off. I think it can be problematic for campaigns, like look at the ice bucket challenge. By the end no one knew what it was for. I definitely try not to take part in any slacktivist activities. Being online is an effective advertising forum for people to hear about what events happening in real life, but I don't think it is doing much in the way of really changing people's opinions. It more confirms what people already thought.

Alex also discussed some of the benefits of digital activism:

> The great thing about online campaigning is the speed with which things can take off. One example was the protest against the police checking the immigration status of people in the city. in about 4 hours it went from being announced, to online protests and calls for people to meet in the city, to a big protest, to being cancelled by the government. You just couldn't mobilise people like that without social media.

These comments suggest that online actions are predominately used by the participants in this case study as a notice board to advertise for upcoming events, rather than as form of

activism in itself such as collecting signatures for petitions. This was also reflected by what I observed at the training day (discussed above), where Facebook posts were used to encourage participation in real-life actions that the Hopesters had planned, rather than as a site of belonging.

Another action undertaken by the Hopesters group involved encouraging their members and others to engage in ethical consumerism through the purchase of fair trade goods. Alex said:

> It's about changing people's mindset. We want people to take responsibility for their own choices as consumers, which is one of the few ways that you can actually help. It is just a slight change in behaviour, within their comfort zones. I think it is more realistic to give people power over their consumer choices than saying, ok, pack your bags let's go and help poor people in a developing country! I mean look at Cadbury's change to fair trade chocolate which Hope International was involved with - consumers have real power. Your actions can have a good knock on effect, and ultimately might be more effective long term.

Tamara discussed some of the successes she had witnessed within the school groups around ethical consumerism:

> I've heard of lots of examples where school students have managed to influence their parents to change their buying habits to be ethical consumers, which is great. They send me photos of their mum at the supermarket with a trolley full of fair trade products!

As discussed in the literature review and previously in this case study, ethical consumerism is based on the idea that redemption for chronic poverty is now possible through consumption (Igoe, 2013). However, while undoubtedly the issue of child labor will not be resolved one chocolate bar at a time, it is easy to be cynical about everything that these groups try and do, when large consumer boycotts can be successful as a way of changing practices (Lewis & Huber, 2015). Perhaps the capitalist system of supply and demand which brings consumer pressure to bear on large international corporations who control the conditions of workers may ultimately be a more effective way of protecting their human rights, compared with the unwieldy mechanisms of international human rights law and geopolitical and diplomatic minefields (Stolle et al 2005). In this way, individual acts of ethical consumerism can be considered examples of action competence, as this common action becomes part of a collective experience as active citizens that can create change (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

In conclusion, the case study data about the Hopesters includes some examples of the way the participants demonstrate action competency as active citizens (Jensen & Schnack, 1997), by having knowledge and insight about what the problems are, motivation for and commitment to the issue, visions about future positive solutions and concrete action experiences. However, the participants could have been more critically reflective about their intentionality and the social and cultural capital they possessed which enabled them to have agency as active citizens (DeJaeghere et al, 2016).

5.8   Implications of the findings

There are a number of implications from these findings for organisations and educators interested in human rights activism in Australia.

For Hope International, these findings demonstrate that the organisation does not frame their advocacy work within a human rights paradigm, despite the fact that they are ostensibly advocating for the promotion and protection of the rights of others. Perhaps this reflects a view that human rights is an unhelpful, legalistic construct when lobbying governments (Hathaway, 2002). The findings also demonstrated that membership of Hope International provided the participants with many opportunities to engage in active citizenship such as lobbying politicians, ethical consumerism and awareness raising. However, because the participants were drawn from such a small sector of society (namely young, of a Christian-background, well-educated, high socio-economic status females), who have been positively influenced by their family and schooling experiences, this case study also demonstrates the social, cultural and economic barriers that exist for other people to be, become and belong as human rights activists (Walsh & Black, 2018). In addition, the findings raise questions about whether having formative childhood experiences such as witnessing injustice and wanting to belong to a cause beyond yourself are pre-requisites for engaging with these types of organisations.

For educators, it is also significant that similarly to the Global Justice case study, none of the Hopester participants mentioned that learning about human rights issues in the formal school curriculum influenced them to join the organisation. Rather, it was through their informal learning of social justice groups, guest speakers, attending conferences and lobbying politicians in Canberra that their interest developed. The findings also demonstrated fewer

examples of the participants engaging in justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2006) than in the Global Justice case study. More formal education about issues such as child labour could play a role in equipping these participants with further analytical insights about the complexity of human rights issues. Finally, the findings from this case study demonstrated that educators can facilitate young people's understanding that activism exists in a continuum of activities, which not only includes public street protests but also other forms of activism such as letter writing, consumer activism and behind the scenes lobbying.

Chapter Six: Case Study of Youth against Poverty

6.1   Introduction

This case study examines how the participants be, become and belong as human rights activists at the organisation Youth against Poverty. This organisation has much in common with the previous case study Hope International, as they are both youth focused and advocate for the reduction of extreme poverty in the world. The data collected in this case study through the interviews, observations and documentation is discussed in light of the relevant theoretical frameworks, which include the influence of family (Hyman, 1959), the self-identification of the participants as activists (Bobel, 2007) and the importance of belonging to a group (Yuval-Davis, 2011). The data was triangulated as part of the thematic analysis and comparisons made with the previous case studies, as part of building a rich, descriptive qualitative analysis (Yin, 2009) that addresses the research questions.

6.2   Context of Youth against Poverty

Youth against Poverty is an Australian NGO founded in 2003. The aim of the organisation is to enable young people (aged 18-26 years old) to advocate for the eradication of extreme poverty in the world. Youth against Poverty's mission statement describes the organisation as one of the largest youth-run organisations in Australia, with over 150,000 members. Youth against Poverty was founded as a Christian organisation; however, it is now a non-denominational NGO. Most members of Youth against Poverty become involved in the organisation through the website, social media or through joining a university club. Youth against Poverty has a central office that employs some paid staff to support the hundreds of volunteers who are involved in the organisation. The mission statement of the organisation says:

> We believe education is the most powerful tool we have to end global poverty… we lead a *growing grassroots movement for systemic change*. For us, change starts with a simple belief - that extreme poverty is unacceptable. Beliefs turn into action, and enough *informed action will build a powerful social movement.* Imagine this - a movement that looks outwards, not inwards. It spreads from person to person. It gets bigger, and more active, until we see the end of extreme poverty. [emphasis added]

In this way, the aims of the organisation could be described as echoing the characteristics of a justice-oriented citizen, who 'must question and change established systems and structures when they reproduce patterns of injustice over time' (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 2).

The founder of the organisation has described how the impetus for starting Youth against Poverty came from the influence of his family's involvement with an evangelical Baptist church. In documentation from the organisation, he describes how he was also inspired after completing Hope International's simulated famine while he was in high school:

> At that point I decided I really wanted to make a difference... A passionate belief in a fairer world and the power of young people is at the heart of why Youth against Poverty exists.

The Youth against Poverty mission statement describes how in the past 20 years, extreme poverty in the world has halved. Therefore, 'in our lifetime, we can end it... by building a social movement to advocate for the world's poor'. My study focuses on the advocacy work done by Youth against Poverty in Australia to promote the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). These goals are based on the promotion and protection of human rights and include: no poverty, affordable and clean energy, climate action, zero hunger, decent work, economic growth, quality education, reduced inequality, peace and justice, gender equality, sustainable communities and clean water.

As well as its advocacy work around the Sustainable Development Goals, Youth against Poverty has formed partnerships with education organisations in Cambodia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste to help provide scholarships for girls to go to school and university, renovate schools and train teachers. Members of Youth against Poverty in Australia can volunteer to work at these overseas facilities. According to documentation from the organisation, these programs have led to Youth against Poverty 'witnessing the power of education in helping young people to break the poverty cycle'. Youth against Poverty is funded through corporate donations as well as donations from individuals, and it does not receive any funding from the Australian government, unlike Hope International.

The first major campaign organised by Youth against Poverty was the Poverty No Way! concert organized in 2006 and timed to coincide with the G20 meeting in Melbourne, Australia. Over 15,000 people attended the concert to see famous rock bands play and over

3 million people watched it on television. As a result of this concert, over 50,000 Australians signed up to be Poverty No Way! supporters. Media coverage at the time compared this event to the Live Aid concerts which had taken place in 1985, which were discussed in the literature review.

Another campaign which the Youth against Poverty organisation is involved with is the Campaign for Australian Aid. Hope International is also a partner in this campaign as discussed in the previous chapter. In 2007, 2010 and 2013 Youth against Poverty organised a road trip to Canberra, which involved hundreds of members of the organisation from all over Australia travelling by bus to Australia's federal Parliament in Canberra to lobby politicians about this campaign prior to an election being held. These trips also involved stopping at small towns along the way to raise awareness about these issues, and to develop support in these communities for an increase in the foreign aid budget. The aim of the 2013 road trip was:

> … to bring attention to the plight of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty around the globe… [visit] local communities across every state of Australia, raising awareness and building public support for action on poverty… [and] meet with 105 federal Members of Parliament to discuss the vital policy changes that the End Poverty Campaign calls for.

In a newspaper article about the 2013 road trip, one participant commented:

> Even though it's just one week, it has the potential to be very significant and to really bring the issue of ending poverty back on to the agenda… [foreign aid] is part of the Australian ethos of giving people a fair go. Australians individually are historically very generous with their aid and donating to charity, and we really want to see the Australian government reflect that in their aid budgets. (Newspaper article, 2013)

None of the Youth against Poverty documentation about this campaign made any reference to some of the debates associated with the provision of foreign aid. These include countries becoming dependent on foreign aid to the detriment of creating their own industries (Moss, Pettersson & van de Walle, 2006) or the accountability of potentially corrupt governments who may spend this money inappropriately (Quibria, 2017). This is significant because it demonstrates a lack of knowledge about the complexity of these issues, and knowledge is a crucial competent of action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) and the justice-oriented model of citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In 2008, Youth against Poverty was also involved in the End Child Labour campaign. This involved lobbying companies like Cadbury to change their supply chain practices, so that their chocolate met the fair-trade standard which guaranteed that the cocoa in their products was not produced by child labourers. Youth against Poverty continued this work with a campaign about fair-trade chocolate for Easter celebrations. As part of this campaign, in 2015 Youth against Poverty presented a petition with 12,000 signatures to a major supermarket chain in Australia. As a result, this supermarket agreed to only stock certified fair-trade Easter chocolate. This example of a successful ethical consumerism campaign showcases how individuals can act (by signing a petition) which can influence decision makers (the supermarket) when collectively organized by a group (hundreds of Youth against Poverty members convinced supermarket shoppers to a sign the petition). However, as discussed in the Hope International case study, such a seemingly successful campaign has problematic implications: many child laborers contribute to the income of their families, so stopping them from working can cause further poverty and hardship. In addition, halting child labour in the production of one product does not necessarily ensure that those children have access to safe working conditions when producing other products or guarantee that they have access to schooling (Basu & Tzannatos, 2003). Neither the website nor other Youth against Poverty documentation provided any reflective analysis of the complexity surrounding the issue of child labour. However, despite these concerns, there have been examples where ethical consumerism has led to structural changes through collective action, such as banning the selling of caged eggs in Australian supermarkets (Lewis & Huber, 2015).

Another major fundraising and awareness raising campaign run by Youth against Poverty involves encouraging young Australians to survive on $2 a day for a week. The participants in this activity were sponsored by other people to raise money. In 2015, 50,000 donors raised 6 million dollars to support Youth against Poverty's work through this campaign. This campaign is very similar to Hope International's simulated famine, in that they both encourage young people to experience hunger or deprivation for a short period of time, and thus develop empathy for those who constantly experience such conditions because of poverty.

This campaign has been criticized by some commentators. One internet forum post from a previous participant said:

This campaign brands itself as raising awareness about extreme poverty and promoting empathy with people living below the $2-a-day line. But I'm questioning whether the campaign really reflects people's actual lives and experiences and makes a useful contribution to society… What makes me angry about this campaign is how it turns into privileged people acting at being poor and pretending that they can say that they know what it's like… Eating on $2 a day does not give you an idea of what it is like to live in poverty. It doesn't take into account the layers and layers of intersecting disadvantage that come with poverty. It doesn't take into account how poverty operates in a vicious cycle that often goes hand in hand with things like depression, violence and lack of access to education and resources… And you know what? Poverty is not *fun*. (Blog post entry, 2015)

These concerns echo those that I felt when I took students on a house-building trip to Cambodia. The literature also discusses such concerns about young people in the privileged North literally 'gazing' into the experience of those in the underprivileged South, all while having a fun bonding experience with their friends that can be shared and that makes them feel good that they are 'making a difference' (Tascon, 2015). Theorists such as Berlant (2004) also challenge the cultural politics of such supposedly good intentions, and Mostafanezhad (2014) questions the use of 'cosmopolitan empathy as an appropriate solution to broader structural violence' (p. 117). However, it is impossible to recreate extreme poverty in a truly representative way, and this experience at least gives participants a tiny empathetic window in to what such a life is like, which may inspire them to become further involved in this cause in a more meaningful way. It can also be argued that without the participants having this experience it would be difficult to raise the same amount of money, which goes towards Youth against Poverty's poverty reduction and education work in Asia and the Pacific.

In order to achieve their stated aim of being a 'grassroots movement for systemic change', Youth against Poverty needs to further acknowledge the complex and problematic nature of these issues and move beyond awareness-raising campaigns which can hide the structural power dynamics involved (Habermas, 1979).

6.3 The collection and analysis of the data

Three participants were interviewed and observed as part of the data collection for this case study. As indicated in the methodology, all the participants agreed to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them, and they agreed to volunteer

their time to be interviewed and audio-recorded. Like the Hope International case study, the participants in the Youth against poverty case study were all female and aged in their early 20s. The participants were interviewed individually and observed during a training day.

6.3.1 Observations and documentation about Youth against Poverty campaigns

As part of the data collection, I observed a day long training session organised by Youth against Poverty in July 2015 which they called a boot camp. This event was attended by 60 people aged between 18 and 26 years old, which consisted of 50 women and 10 men. The event was hosted in a hall at a Catholic girls secondary school which had been hired for the occasion. The aim of the training session was to bring together some of the key members of the organisation from all over Australia to provide training on campaigning and plan future strategies. The participants paid $200 to participate in the weekend, which included accommodation and some meals but not transport to the venue, so people needed to have financial capacity in order to attend as many had come from interstate. I noted that the group were very friendly towards each other and had clearly developed strong friendships through their membership of Youth against Poverty. Before each session there was a warm up activity that involved games, jokes, music and physical activities to get the participants out of their seats and interacting with each other, which they all contributed to enthusiastically. The participants were very welcoming and asked me lots of questions about my research project, which differed from my experience observing events run by Global Justice and Hope International.

The event began with a keynote speech from the 2014 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations. In her speech she made comments such as:

> Let's be the generation to change the world, and let's be that today… I believe in justice and the power of young people to create change.

She also included lessons for the campaigners at Youth against Poverty:

> Lesson 1: Find out who you are and love that person. Our most powerful asset is ourselves.

> Lesson 2: Get off your soap box. Empower people rather than guilt them into action.

> Lesson 3: Build your tribe. Find a professional and personal support network to help you on your journey.

Lesson 4: Build your resilience. People will tell you that you are too young and can't make a difference.

Lesson 5: Remember why you want to do this work in the first place. The world we want our children to inherit is a better world than the world today.

This keynote speech was very enthusiastically received by the audience, with a standing ovation given and many people asking questions of the speaker. I was interested in analysing the language used in this session, which seemed to draw on self-help motivational language and individualism (for example 'find out who you are and love that person', 'empower people', 'build your tribe') rather than the specific language of human rights or the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). This added to the picture I have been building over the course of the case studies that many of the participants engaged in activist activities for personal growth, rather than attempting to create meaningful and systemic change as justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The second session I observed at the training day was about influencing politicians. This session was facilitated by an external consultant specialising in political engagement by lobby groups with state and federal politicians. He led a brainstorming session to discuss the factors which cause people to change their mind about issues. The Youth against Poverty participants discussed how logic, analysis, time, education, reflection, personal experiences, identity and emotion were important factors in this process. The facilitator agreed with these, and also emphasised the importance of hope:

People think 'why should I care about this issue if nothing ever changes? Giving people a positive vision is really important.

He also emphasised the importance of celebrating positive stories of success:

Don't ask 'what is not working?' but rather 'what is working?' and then use that experience to drive change.

This example reflects Jensen and Schnack's (2006) model of action competence which emphasises the importance of addressing issues through future positive solutions. The facilitator then asked the group to reflect on an event that was successful. One member of the group described how she had been involved in organising a 5-year-old birthday party in

the town square, to celebrate that the number of children in the world who have died before their 5th birthday has halved over the past 20 years. She said:

> It was great to have a positive event instead of so much negativity about what is not being done. We also got lots of great local media coverage of the event.

This example could be described as a demonstration of action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997), as it helps to generate 'hope and optimism through practical experiences in working collaboratively' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 7). This emphasis on 'good news stories' is similar to the approach taken by Global Justice and the Hopesters as a way of generating hopefulness that change is possible, despite the serious challenges involved in resolving these issues. Unlike the advice of the training day facilitator, it can also be argued that asking 'what is not working' is an equally valid question to reflect upon when trying to create change. This may help activists to be prepared and realistic about the intimidating challenges and frustrating experiences of being able to create effective and long-term change in this area (Youniss et al, 2002).

The facilitator of this session also discussed some of the techniques that the Youth against Poverty participants can use when meeting with Members of Parliament:

> Make sure your asks are personal, concrete, specific and practical. If you meet opposition to your standpoint you can either confront, avoid or sidestep. Try and make your issue align with the values of the politician by researching their areas of interest beforehand. If the politician used to run a plumbing business, focus the conversation on the importance of water aid in developing countries.

I noted the corporate and marketing jargon used in this session, such as 'concrete asks' and 'make your issue align with their values', and the lack of reference to the language of human rights. Perhaps this reflected a recognition by Youth against Poverty that connecting the issues to the personal experiences of individuals had more impact than referencing human rights or international legal obligations.

The final session I observed on the training day involved campaign planning for the following year. The participants were divided into small groups and asked to brainstorm possible future events that could raise awareness about the issues as well as help recruit new Youth against Poverty members. The session began with an icebreaker game, before discussing the aims

for the coming year. The facilitator of the group was Melinda, who was also an interview participant in my study. I observed her saying:

> We need to organise events that combine action and recruitment. You have to get all the people that you know, from school, church, uni, wherever to come to our events. This is your group guys, it's what you want it to be, like a choose your own adventure book!

Another participant replied:

> How about a dancing flash mob in the city, like a pop-up Zumba dance event? Then once we get people's attention we can hand out flyers and petitions about increasing foreign aid when they stop to look. That could also help to raise awareness about the Youth against Poverty brand.

Again, I was interested to note the language used, which referenced snowball recruitment techniques favoured by pyramid schemes and corporate branding rather than using a human rights discourse. While it could be argued that the language used by Youth against Poverty indicates its professionalisation of activism using the techniques of corporate lobby groups, it was notable that the 'client' (namely the people that they were trying to advocate on behalf of) were mostly absent from these conversations. It is arguable that such activities are not necessarily benign or victimless, as the cultural politics of good intentions often fails to acknowledge that sometimes good intentions can have negative consequences, such as the further silencing and othering of vulnerable people (Berlant, 2004).

6.4 Identifying as a human rights activist

The participants in this case study were Emma, Melinda and Jane. They all seemed very willing to be interviewed by me and they spoke articulately and at length about their experiences in answer to my questions and required little prompting to expand on their answers. All the participants were forwarded the questions prior to their interview with me, which enabled them to consider their answers beforehand.

The first participant I interviewed for the Youth against Poverty case study was Emma. At the time of the interview, Emma was 20 years old and studying for a Visual Arts degree at a university in Melbourne. She was working part time and living with her parents. Emma was from an Anglo-Australian family and she attended an all-girls Catholic secondary school,

where she was heavily involved in their social justice program. She was a member of the National Executive team at Youth against Poverty, which is the senior decision-making body of the organisation. Emma's unpaid role at Youth against Poverty consisted of recruiting and supporting the other members of the group by providing induction training, resources and mentoring. Emma spent one day a week in this role and had been involved in Youth against Poverty for two years. She was required by Youth against Poverty to sign a contract specifying her time commitment of one day per week in this role. She became involved in Youth against Poverty via Facebook, and she went on the 2013 road trip to Canberra.

The second participant was Melinda, who was the Tasmanian director of Youth against Poverty, an unpaid role she had held for three years. At the time of the interview she was 26 years old. Melinda had moved to Australia from Malaysia with her parents when she was a child. Melinda spent about one day a week in this unpaid role for Youth against Poverty, which involved recruiting and training other members of the group as well as organising events, such as a community leader summit (a mini version of the boot camp that was held in Melbourne which I observed). In addition to her role with Youth against Poverty, Melinda was studying a degree in human resources part time, and she also worked in a paid part time role as a facilitator. At the time of the interview, Melinda was intending to leave Youth against Poverty because she had reached the allowed age limit for involvement in the organisation.

The third participant interviewed for this case study was Jane, who was from an Anglo-Australian family. Jane's role at Youth against Poverty was Director of Training. At the time of the interview, Jane was 22 years old and she had been involved in the organisation for five years. She spent three days a week in this unpaid role and two days a week working as a music teacher. Jane was the lead organiser of the boot camp weekend that I observed, and in previous years she has organised the road trip to Canberra. In her role as organiser of the boot camp, Jane planned the agenda, organised the speakers, registered the participants, booked the venue, organised the catering and mobilised the other members to assist in various roles throughout the weekend. Jane was also intending to leave Youth against Poverty, as she needed to spend more time earning money to support herself.

As was the case with Hope International, the data collection process for Youth against Poverty revealed that not only were the participants in this case study reluctant to use the

terminology of human rights, they were also unenthusiastic about being labelled as activists. When asked would describe herself as an activist or an advocate, Emma said:

> I don't feel comfortable with either label really.

Likewise, Jane said:

> I don't really think in these terms. I feel uncomfortable with the term activist, it's too political and confrontational. I'm not a very good public speaker and I like working in the background on the details of a campaign.

These comments reflect the findings of Bobel (2007) that there is a resistance of some social movement actors to identify as activists, and Jane's comments reflect Ferree and Mueller's (2004) findings that some women are reluctant to conceptualise what they do as activism.

The participants were also asked why they chose to join an advocacy organisation rather than a charitable service organisation. In addressing this question, Emma reflected on a recent experience she had when she spent time with the Aboriginal community that she had previously visited as a school student at her private Catholic high school. She said:

> In Year 10 I went on a trip to an Aboriginal community near Alice Springs in the Northern Territory that my school had a relationship with. It was a total eye opener, I'd never seen that level of poverty up close before. We were careful not to just be observing the people there but to really try and get involved. But last year I went back to visit the same community again on my own, but I actually found that visit quite difficult. I just felt like I went and hung around. Turns out they didn't need my help.

From these comments it can be gleaned that in the intervening years between these trips, Emma realised that the Aboriginal community was not dependent on outsiders for help as she had first thought on her 'eye-opening' trip. These reflections demonstrate Emma's reflexive understanding about her own being and motivation, and how her experiences over time impacted on the activist that she became. In this way, Emma's comments echo Mostafanezhad's (2014) argument about the 'the limits of individual contributions to the amelioration of poverty (p. 116).

Emma explained further whether she perceived Youth against Poverty to be operating within an activist or a charity model:

> The conversation used to be 'look at that poor child, let's donate money or give them food' but now the organisation is really shifting to empowerment. Things like consumer activism, the fair-trade chocolate stuff, that gives young Australians ways to do something by changing their own behaviour rather than just acting paternalistically towards other people who are 'poor'.

When asked whether she saw Youth against Poverty as an activist group or engaging in community service, Melinda explained that:

> I sort of feel that I do both at Youth against Poverty. We advocate for the people of the world who live in extreme poverty but importantly we also help to give the members of the Youth against Poverty group here in Tasmania something to be a part of. The level of empowerment they get from their involvement is amazing. The best achievement I've had at Youth against Poverty was with one young guy who belongs to our group. He's from a large, poor family in Tasmania and he was really lost, but now because of his involvement in Youth against Poverty he has really grown a lot and changed direction and has a real focus. He has so much more confidence and is now a mentor to others. I really feel that I helped him.

These differing approaches can be explained by referencing the contexts in which these two groups operate; Emma lives in inner suburban Melbourne, whereas Melinda lives in rural Tasmania which has a poverty rate of 15% and a youth unemployment rate of 13%, which is much higher than other states in Australia (Australian Council of Social Services, 2016). In this example, Melinda conceptualises Youth against Poverty as providing 'charity' to young Tasmanians. Therefore, membership of an activist group such as Youth against Poverty has itself become a form of service, which indicates a more complex conceptualisation of the binary distinction developed in the literature between service/charity and activism (Kahne & Westheimer, 1996; Stoecker, 2003).

This comment is also illuminating because it indicates that for Melinda, the cause of poverty reduction is not her sole motivation for wanting to be involved. Rather, she focused on the importance of belonging to a group, which created a sense of purpose, which in turn helped them deal with their own personal circumstances and think beyond their own world. This finding could be conceptualised as an example of belonging-being-becoming rather than

being-becoming-belonging (Kidd, 1973), as wanting to belong to a group was the crucial factor in being and becoming a human rights activist. Similarly to some of the Hopesters, this re-ordering reflects the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009) for pre-school children, which argues that children belong to families first before they develop a self-identity. This finding is also evidence of Besley and Peters (2007) argument that under a Foucauldian approach, 'we cannot approach the question of the self without locating it within the network of values and social practices that come to characterise the culture of a particular time' (p. 5).

Therefore, it can be argued that when Youth against Poverty groups are situated in high socio-economic communities such as inner suburban Melbourne, the focus is on fostering an altruistic desire to advocate about the issue of poverty reduction for others in far-away places. The high social and cultural capital (Putnam, 1995; Bourdieu, 1986) of the participants in this group has enabled them to have the capacity to engage in causes that they find personally meaningful (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). However, for the Youth against Poverty groups which operate in lower socio-economic communities, such as Tasmania, the focus is on giving young adults a sense of belonging to a community, as it can argued that for these young people, 'global concerns remain distant and abstract as a site of influence' (Walsh & Black, 2018, p. 109).

Like Hope International, the aim of Youth against Poverty is to eradicate extreme poverty, which is a clear breach of the human right to food, shelter and education as set out in multiple human rights treaties and conventions. However, an analysis of the interview and documentary evidence in this case study revealed that the language of human rights was not widely used by Youth against Poverty. When asked about the role of human rights in the work that Youth against Poverty does, Emma replied:

> I think we use more of a social justice framework than a human rights one. We don't really refer to human rights in the work we do, even though it's kind of implied. Rather than human rights documents we look at things like the Sustainable Development Goals.

According to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), 'human rights principles and standards are now strongly reflected in… [the] ambitious new global development framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development', meaning that the Sustainable Development Goals are conceptualized by the UN as operating in a human rights framework (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). However, the connection between human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals was not made by this participant.

Melinda situated the work of Youth against Poverty within a moral, rather than a human rights framework. She said:

> I see Youth against Poverty as having a moral basis that fits well with my own values, rather than a human rights approach.

Similarly, when asked how she conceptualised her work with Youth against Poverty, Jane commented that:

> I came into the organisation because of my broad interest in the power of education to create change in people's lives, particularly as my own education as afforded me lots of opportunities. But over time I have become more interested in issues like women's rights and gender equality, and the role that education plays in alleviating poverty. Things like helping a woman in a village with a microfinance loan so she can start a small business can have a huge impact on the whole community. So human rights are kind of there in the background. But we never really talk about legal human rights documents like 'according to this UN document in article x', because our young audience doesn't really connect with that.

This reluctance to use a human rights framework mirrors the reluctance expressed by the participants in the Hope International case study, who also perceived using the language of human rights as alienating to their audiences. This is in direct contrast to the participants in the Global Justice case study, who saw a human rights framework as being essential to codify and uphold standards of human interaction which can be internationally agreed upon and enforced. This tension about the usefulness of a human rights framework is reflected in the broader literature about the universality of human rights (Donnelly, 2003) and whether rights exist if they are not exercised (Arendt, 1951).

In conclusion, the Youth against Poverty participants were resistant to situating the work of the organization in a human rights framework, which was similar to the positioning of the Hope International participants.

6.5 Influences and motivations to be and become human rights activist

This section addresses the first research question, namely what influenced and motivated the participants at Youth against Poverty to be human rights activists.

6.5.1 Family, schooling and religion

As part of addressing the first research question, I asked the participants what factors influenced and motivated them to be and become human rights activists. In describing how her schooling and family influenced her involvement in Youth against Poverty, Emma said:

> My oldest sister is really into current issues and politics, so I think she influenced me. And I loved learning about issues of poverty and injustice when I was at school, and my teachers really encouraged my interest.

When asked about how she came to be involved in Youth against Poverty, Emma explained that:

> … after all my involvement in social justice activities at school, when I got to uni I was like 'where can I keep doing this stuff?' And then I read about Youth against Poverty on Facebook and went on the road trip to Canberra. That was a really unique experience, as I'm sure anyone would say who went on it. It had a real sense of community and I met so many great people from Youth against Poverty. Amazing leaders, really fun and down to earth. And now we're all really good friends.

These comments are enlightening because they indicate how Emma's sense of being ('a strong sense of the injustice that exists in the world') has influenced her becoming a human rights activist over time, through her family (her sister), her schooling (learning about poverty and injustice), her teachers (who really encouraged her) and her concrete experiences (visiting an Aboriginal community, as discussed in the previous section). This reflects Besley and Peters (2007) argument that the question of the self is located in a network of social values (derived from family, teachers and experiences) that 'characterise the culture of a particular time' (p. 5) such as her religious schooling which emphasised social justice. This example also indicates that for this participant, it was not enough to just participate in an action (travelling to a remote Aboriginal community); to have meaning for her she had to 'get involved' and not just be an 'observer'. Similarly, Watson (2006) argues that the identity of individuals often requires being engaged in a relationship, 'not simply positioned as

performers or spectators' (p. 511), which demonstrates how being and belonging are inextricably linked.

In terms of her schooling, it is interesting to note that although Emma discussed how she learned about issues of poverty and injustice at school, and that her teachers encouraged her interest in these issues, it was the opportunity provided to her by her school of visiting a remote Aboriginal community which had the most impact on her. This demonstrates that the extra-curricular learning opportunities provided through schooling, rather than the formal school curriculum, can be a powerful mechanism to motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists.

When asked about what influenced her involvement in Youth against Poverty, Melinda said:

> My family is a big part of why I got involved. My dad is my hero. At a young age in Malaysia he became an orphan. He was the youngest of nine children, he had to work really hard and even though he left school at 12 he eventually became an engineer. I am really conscious that if he hadn't worked that hard then my entire life would be different. I just can't think of a reason why I shouldn't be trying to make the world a better place for other people. It has also helped me to learn so much about myself.

When asked why she chose to become involved in Youth against Poverty in particular, she noted that:

> While I was in high school I was really involved with the Sunday school of my church which did lots of charity work. I really thought about volunteering for a religious organisation once I left high school. But in the state where I live there are not a lot of options for being involved in youth organisations that do this sort of work. Youth against Poverty was one of the only options I had.

From these comments it is evident that for Emma and Melinda, their families had a significant influence on them wanting to be and become a human rights activist. This is in line with Hyman's (1959) findings that the political understanding of young people is influenced by the modelling they experience through their families.

By contrast, when I asked Jane about her motivation for being involved with Youth against Poverty, she responded by saying:

It's a bit of a weird one, as it certainly wasn't my family. If anything, I'm the one who has influenced my parents about this stuff rather than the other way around. My mum especially has become a lot more progressive as I have become more vocal about these issues. I think the main thing was that like a lot of teenagers, I had a pretty tough time at my [public] high school. In Year 9 my teacher, who was the wellbeing coordinator, also ran the social justice group. She really got me interested in these issues as a way of getting me outside my own head, looking at the injustices other people suffer in the world rather than worrying about my own problems. I got into it from there. I still keep in touch with that teacher, she's been a great mentor to me.

It is significant for my research to note that these influences and motivators are very similar to those expressed by many of the participants in the Hope International case study. This provides triangulated evidence for these findings (Yin, 2009) about the factors that influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists, namely the role of their families and schooling which provided extra-curricular opportunities which fostered their interest in learning about these issues.

I asked Jane to explain how she became involved in the Youth against Poverty group. She explained that:

… when I was at high school I was the leader of the social justice group, organising things like the Hope International simulated famine. When I was in Year 12 I heard about the road trip through a speaker at school and my teacher really encouraged me to go on it. I didn't know much about Youth against Poverty before then. I had a really great time. And from that I got involved in a program run by Youth against Poverty where I went into the office for two hours a week and went to sessions to learn about how to get involved. It was good for me, I was only 17 years old and didn't know much. After that, I started volunteering with the group every week. I didn't really look into being involved in any other organisations, as I really connected with the people at Youth against Poverty.

It is clear from Jane's comments that her teachers and the opportunities given to her by her high school were important factors in motivating and influencing her to become involved in this type of activism. Jane's comments also support the findings of McDevitt and Chaffee (2002) who argue that young people who have had civic experiences outside of the home, through school and community-based activities, are often able to challenge the political views of their parents. This in turn prompts parents to increase their own civic knowledge, rather

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than being solely influenced by their families (Hyman, 1959). Like Emma, Jane referred to the influence of a significant teacher who facilitated their involvement in extra-curricular activities about social justice issues such as the simulated famine. The participants referenced these experiences as influencing them, rather than their formal school curriculum in subjects such as civics and citizenship as being a major motivator for her involvement.

As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Youth against Poverty was originally founded as a Christian organisation like Hope International, but it is now a non-denominational NGO. The participants were asked about whether religion was a factor that influenced them to become involved in with this organisation. Emma said:

> I personally am not that religious even though I grew up as a Catholic. But I've heard people say Youth against Poverty is a bit like a secular religion- doing good works and being part of a community. But I promise it's not a cult!

Melinda also reflected on the role of religion in her influencing her involvement. She reflected that:

> I think a large part of why I am involved in this sort of work comes down to faith. I'm a Christian and I just really believe that we should be doing all we can to help other people out. As corny as it sounds, it's about putting love out there in the world, because there are so many people that don't have other people to look after them.

Melinda also discussed the role of religion at Youth against Poverty. She said:

> Youth against Poverty was founded originally on Christian beliefs. A lot of the key leaders of Youth against Poverty are themselves very religious, so even though it is a secular organisation we always have really great conversations about what it means to be a young Christian involved in a social movement like Youth against Poverty. I think causes like poverty always draw a lot of religious people, who want to help make the world a better place.

Jane was also asked about the role of religion played in her involvement with this group. She explained that:

> I wasn't brought up with any religion, my family are not religious at all and I went to a public high school, so religion wasn't really a factor for me in joining Youth against Poverty. Doing this work is just very important to me and who I am as a person.

It is clear from these comments that although Youth against Poverty is not an overtly religious organisation, it still has elements of charitable zeal, or a 'secular religion' as Emma described it, which values pro-social altruistic behavior (Saroglou et al, 2005). It could be argued that the decline of Australians identifying with a formal religion (Australian Bureau of Statistics Census, 2016) has seen young people be drawn to NGOs such as Youth against Poverty instead, as a way of expressing their altruism through belonging to a community of people that have social and cultural rituals and a common cause (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In this way, rather than belonging facilitating activism, young adults may be drawn to activism for the purpose of belonging, and this is discussed further in the following section.

6.6   Belonging

This section addresses the second research question about the significance to participants of belonging to the group Youth against Poverty. Melinda was asked to reflect on how important belonging to a group has been for her:

> In Youth against Poverty, you aren't weird for wanting to be involved in this stuff, because everyone is the same and wants to become involved for the same reasons. It's just normal to us. I don't see my role here as 'work', I really enjoy it and have learned so much. It's very meaningful for me and it never seems like a waste of time. It's social and fun and I get a lot out of it. But people I know outside of Youth against Poverty always said to me 'I could never do that you do'. The barrier is that people don't realise just what they can achieve, they feel disempowered. There is no way I could do this work on my own if I wasn't part of the group.

These comments reflect Yuval-Davis's (2011) findings that belonging involves an emotional attachment, 'an on-going project entailing a sense of hope for the future' (p. 10), through the repetition of 'social and fun' cultural practices undertaken by the group.

Jane discussed the importance of being in a group when lobbying the government to increase the foreign aid budget:

> No matter what we do at Youth against Poverty, the level of foreign aid just goes down and down. Then you have to think this is a long-term issue, it's not my personal failure. And we all support each other in that.

These comments support the argument by Youniss et al (2002) that the social bonds and emotional support gained through belonging to a community with shared commitments can

sustain civic involvement despite the challenges, frustrations and sense of hopelessness at ever being able to create effective change about human rights issues

Emma also discussed some of the ways in which the organisation fostered a sense of belonging among its members:

> Everyone at Youth against Poverty has a mentor who they meet with every fortnight for a structured conversation. It is kind of like life coaching, checking in with everyone to see how they are going, their self-esteem and motivation. Youth against Poverty recognises that it is really easy for people to drop out, because it's stressful being a volunteer and studying and working and having lots of commitments. We have found that unless the members feel supported they tend to leave after about three months. We concentrate a lot on volunteer development and look at what other organisations do in this space too.

Melinda reflected on the support that Youth against Poverty provides to its members:

> We have started a program called the Youth against Poverty passport which means that members check in every fortnight with their manager and discuss their key performance indicators and how they could improve. We also do a lot of work on personality types, learning styles and constructive criticism, so there is a real personal and professional development aspect of being at Youth against Poverty. Our members also have access to mentoring from the Boston Consulting Group and things like facilitation master classes. It is not the main focus, but it's a big part of what we do, and I think it helps people to stay involved.

These comments are illuminating as they provide triangulated evidence of the picture I have been building of this organisation, namely the use of a corporate, self-help style approach that provides professional development opportunities for its members to develop transferable skills, rather than operating within a human rights activist framework (Yin, 2009). This finding was further confirmed by Jane's comments about why she thought many people joined Youth against Poverty:

> I do know some people who join the organisation as a bit of a resume builder.

Therefore, for some Youth against Poverty members, the altruistic motivation to want to be and become an activist for the cause of reducing poverty seems somewhat secondary to the motivation to want to belong to a group that provides individual benefits. In this way, the value systems used to make judgments about their own and others' belonging (Yuval-Davis,

2011) in this organisation differ from that of Hope International, which seems to have a greater focus on a helping intentionality.

I was interested to ask the participants what they thought about the other groups that operate in the same space. Regarding Hope International, Melinda said:

> The Hopesters- huh! We're better than them.

This comment is significant because it demonstrates that the sense of belonging that the Youth against Poverty members have is to the organisation itself, rather than having a broader sense of solidarity to the cause of reducing poverty, which the Hopesters share. It also illustrates the level of competition that exists between the groups, rather than a shared collaborative approach between groups to try and effect systemic change together about a common cause (as was suggested in the Global Justice case study).

As discussed in the literature review, an important part of self-identity lies in the collective identity that people gain through belonging to groups (Probyn, 1996). Melinda observed that:

> Nearly everyone in the group is a white, middle class, straight woman. If I could sum it up it would be private school girls who were exposed to social justice ideas at school who want to be lawyers.

Jane also commented on the similarity of the Youth against Poverty members, by explaining that:

> I was really reminded of this at boot camp. The people in the room were pretty similar, female and white, and have all been involved in Youth against Poverty for ages. It's really hard to get new people involved. Most new people who get involved are friends of friends who know each other through an Eastern suburbs private school, except for me that is! I don't even know how we could begin to reach out to different people.

Similarly, Emma said:

> The organisation does have a reputation for being a bit cliquey, a bunch of old school friends hanging out together who are often housemates. Youth against Poverty has now set up a diversity taskforce, because they recognise that it mainly consists of middle class white women. We do have strong relationships with lots of private schools in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne who go on to the big universities, as that is the background of the founders of

the organisation. It is definitely a problem. I think we need to move away from only appealing to university students, and hopefully our online presence can help with that.

In this way, the homogeneity of the group in terms of their location, education, background, socio-economic status and gender has added to the sense of belonging that the participants feel as an 'ingroup' (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, these characteristics would potentially increase the sense of exclusion that new members who were of a different background may feel as an 'outgroup'. Many young Australians do not have the same characteristics, background or level of social capital as those in the Youth against Poverty group, and these findings have implications for the connection between human rights activism and active citizenship. Walsh and Black (2018) argue that 'the theoretical link between citizenship and belonging is particularly useful for considering the experience of those who do not belong, or do not feel that they belong' (p. 42), and it can be argued there would be many young Australians who would not belong, or want to belong, to Youth against Poverty.

6.7   Action competence

In my study, the concept of action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) provides a useful framework to analyse the third research question, namely how young adults be, become and belong as active citizens. Being and becoming an informed, active and participatory citizen is complex work that requires opportunities for people to develop 'knowledge, skills and dispositions to be engaged, thoughtful, responsive and involved in matters of civic concern' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 14) such as human rights.

According to Jensen and Schnack (1997), action competence involves having a critical intentionality that leads to concrete, collective action aimed at creating change. The components of the action competence framework involve knowledge and insight about what the problems are, motivation for and commitment to the issue, visions about future positive solutions and concrete action experiences. These elements are explored in relation to the data collected in the Youth against Poverty case study.

6.7.1   Knowledge

A key part of being an activist in a democracy is having knowledge about the systems and processes that are involved (Braungart & Braungart, 1997). The participants were asked in the interviews about the knowledge they had gained about democracy through their work

with Youth against Poverty. I asked Emma to reflect upon having the freedom to lobby politicians about human rights issues, due to living in a democracy like Australia. She responded that:

> I hadn't really thought about this but then through Youth against Poverty I met a Cambodian student who was visiting Australia. And she told me how she could never meet politicians in her own country and rally together to protest against government policy. So now I really see it as a responsibility to speak out on these issues when I meet our politicians.

Melinda was also asked to reflect upon her knowledge about freedom of speech in Australia. She said:

> My extended family in Malaysia are not free at all to criticise decisions made by their government, so I do feel a sense of responsibility to lobby our governments on their behalf about issues such as poverty to try and create some change.

In terms of having the capacity to speak to politicians without fear of reprisals, Jane said:

> I have always thought that the system of democracy is deeply flawed. But then I found out that it's so much worse in other countries! Living in a democracy means you can vote every three years and for some people that is their whole contribution, or you can be a lot more involved which is what I try to do.

The International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (Schultz et al, 2010) found that NGO groups are increasingly serving as vehicles through which active citizenship can be exercised. Ribeiro et al (2012) argue that NGOs consider schools to be 'too focused on formal democracy and overemphasise respect for rules, values and responsibilities, rather than promoting critical, informed and active citizenship' (p. 32). In the comments by the participants above, it is clear that their involvement with the Youth against Poverty has given them knowledge, access and experience of active citizenship which they could not have had as individuals otherwise. Tascon's (2015) claim that 'knowledge production reproduces a particular form of power… knowledge for the creation of a politically active subject' (p. 38) seems very applicable to these participants.

Citizens in democratic countries who are well connected to civil society groups, such as those involved in Youth against Poverty, have more opportunities to become involved in the international human rights movement (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004). Ribeiro et al (2012) argues

that these people have the knowledge and the responsibility to speak out on behalf of the voiceless, who cannot protest against their own government policies for fear of reprisals. However, in doing so, activists also need to be aware of the social conditions and power imbalances that underlie, accompany and result from neo-colonial forms of Western hegemonic domination which can further disenfranchise vulnerable people (Mostafanezhad, 2014).

Melinda also discussed how Youth against Poverty attempts to create knowledge about issues such as poverty reduction in the broader community, as a way of building community support. She explained that:

> I think it starts with getting out there as much as possible and educating people about the issue. That influences how you lobby politicians, as you can build a groundswell of support behind you to present to the politicians. Youth against Poverty seems to have pretty good relationships with politicians and it doesn't seem that hard to get access to them. I think being a youth organisation helps with that, politicians like to meet young people sometimes instead of just Rotary clubs and business groups.

Jane also discussed her experiences in meeting politicians. She reflected that:

> … on my first road trip when I was just 17, I got to meet my local member of parliament. I thought this is just crazy, why are they letting me do this? But it was a great opportunity. But I also think that if Youth against Poverty engaged only through political channels, that would really alienate a lot of young people, who often care more about the issues than the political shenanigans of Canberra. I guess we want to do both- create a groundswell of support as well as trying to influence the decision makers.

I asked Jane about her experiences as a young person lobbying politicians when she was on the road trip. She explained that:

> I had a politician say to me 'when I was as young as you I was just as idealistic which is why I got into politics- but when you get into the nitty gritty you see that you have to compromise and get a sense of reality'. And at the time I thought that is quite offensive, to tell me that I don't have a grip on reality. But there are also other politicians who say 'people like you need to keep coming to talk to us so we can learn about these issues'. Maybe young people involved in social movements get more access to politicians than other lobby groups because it reminds them of when they were young and idealistic too? A politician did say to me that

it's not often that people come to Canberra to have meetings with them about a cause that is not directly related to them. Most of the time they meet with groups about a local issue that affects those people directly, like the building of a railway line.

These comments indicate that having the knowledge to be action competent as an active citizen involves not only understanding the issues associated with poverty reduction, but also how to present your argument in a sophisticated way so that it is more likely to be heard and acted upon. These participants are appealing to politicians' sense that young activists are remarkable for the work they do (Gordon & Taft, 2011) and remind of them of their own idealistic youth. In its lobbying work, Youth against Poverty also emphasises that they represent the views of many in the wider community. It was notable that the participants in this case study did not reflect on the high degree of social and cultural capital they possessed as individuals, which allowed them to have the agency and capacity to participate in these activities (DeJaeghere et al, 2016). As was discussed in the literature review, having knowledge about an issue is not enough to be classified as an action competent (Jensen & Schnack, 1997) or justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004); it also involves acting to change established systems, and the extent to which this occurred is discussed in the following sections.

6.7.2 Commitment and critical intentionality

Action competence involves being committed to an issue and having the intention to create change (Henderson & Tudball, 2016). Underpinning the commitment of human rights activists is often a strong emotional reaction to injustice (Mihr, 2007). By way of example, Emma said:

I really have a strong sense of the injustice that exists in the world. I really feel things, if I read a story in the newspaper about a human rights abuse while I'm on the train I will start crying!

By contrast, when Melinda reflected on the role emotion played in her commitment to Youth against Poverty she thought that:

… emotions work for some people, but others need to operate on evidence. Some of the people I work with cry all the time about stories of child poverty, but I just focus on the facts and get on with it.

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When asked about the role of emotions such as outrage in trying to influence other people to commit to the cause of reducing poverty, Melinda replied that:

> Young people have a very good bullshit detector. They will be on to you if you try and use emotions to manipulate them. People need to be able to create their own authentic emotional response to something, you can't manufacture it for them. We talk a lot about providing transformative experiences for our members by being involved in something like the road trip to Canberra. It's such an amazing experience, you can't help but have an emotional response to it.

These comments are illuminating for my research, as they distinguish between different types of emotional responses that underpin a commitment to the issue. On the one hand, there is the negative emotional response to testimony such as sadness or outrage over seeing or reading about the experiences of those who live in extreme poverty, which can inspire activism through witnessing the suffering of others (Kelly, 2008). On the other hand, there is the positive emotional response that is experienced when working together with other like-minded people committed to working on a common cause (Youniss et al, 2002). However, both emotional responses can be problematic: the negative emotions can be exploitative and misrepresentative (Hoijer, 2004), and the positive emotions can be paternalistic and disempowering (Tascon, 2015).

Another crucial element of action competence is having a critical intentionality to create change (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). Jane discussed how testimony had been used in previous campaigns by Youth against Poverty. She explained that:

> In our campaigns we have videos that show stories about the people involved in some of our programs in Cambodia and other places like that. I have to say that in the past some of them have been pretty dodgy, like they name the child and the province they live in. Now we make sure we don't use images like that, instead we use positive ones. The stories often have a sad element to them, like 'I used to be a street child', but then it's about the positive journey to where they are now, happy and at school. It's really important that the images and stories are empowering otherwise it can just develop into a passing parade of negativity, it is just overload and people switch off.

On the one hand, these comments reveal that Youth against Poverty, like the Hopesters, has recently applied a critical intentionality to how they try and influence others to support the

work of the organisation in a way that is not exploitative (Kelly, 2008). However, the comment that the images and stories need to be 'empowering' also begs the question about *who* is being empowered: it seems to be focused on the Youth against Poverty members rather than the child portrayed in the video. This example adds to the picture I have been building in this case study about the opportunities the organisation has provided for the personal growth of the participants, rather than attempting to explore 'why people are hungry' and acting to solve root causes (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 2).

6.7.3 Concrete action experiences

The activist actions undertaken by the Youth against Poverty participants which have already been discussed in this chapter include lobbying, petitions, awareness raising activities and ethical consumerism. Online campaigning is another action undertaken by Youth against Poverty as part of their activist work. However, similarly to the Hope International case study, there was a reluctance amongst the Youth against Poverty participants to rely solely on online campaigning as a form of action. Emma said:

> Online petitions are good, but they aren't enough. I wouldn't feel satisfied just clicking 'yes', I just feel you don't gain anything from that. People are so much more powerful than that, you can do so much more.

This example supports the view that slacktivism can be an overly convenient alternative to the effort and legitimacy of traditional engagement and political participation such as protests (Kelly, 2008). However, Melinda discussed the benefits of social media for mobilising people quickly:

> Because we are a youth movement and all our members are active online, we can mobilise an action really quickly. If the Treasurer or the Foreign Minister makes a comment about foreign aid, we can deluge them on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with hundreds of messages in a very short space of time, compared with maybe getting an article in the newspaper the next day with our response.

Jane also explained the benefits of digital activism:

> People seem to be to be overly critical about slacktivism. Surely it is worse to do nothing than to click yes on an online petition. It can be a way in to these issues for some people, like most people get involved in Youth against Poverty via online portals. We also use social media a lot

to advertise our campaigns and events which is really useful. Imagine if we had to stick posters on power poles like the old days!

These comments support the argument by Halupka (2014) that to disregard online forms of participation is a 'dangerous road to travel' (p. 117) because it can be a powerful way of mobilising large groups quickly and it can also act as a springboard to more active participation, especially among young people (Chapman & Coffe, 2016).

The participants also undertook more traditional forms of campaigning. Emma discussed the difficulties she experienced when asking people in the street to sign a petition to increase foreign aid funding when she was on the road trip to Canberra:

> We bailed people up in the street of country towns and asked them how much they thought out of $100 that Australia gave to foreign aid. Most of them thought it was a lot more than it actually is, so that was a good way of starting the conversation. But it was pretty hard doing this and lots of people were very resistant to signing our petition. I reckon it would be easier if we asked them about an environmental issue, because the environment affects everyone. But foreign aid only impacts people in another country that many people never get to see or experience, so it is harder for them to care about it. Many of them said 'we know there are problems in the world, but there are problems here too and what are you doing about that?' I was very challenged by that.

Jane also reflected on some of the difficulties of trying to influence other people to act:

> You can't bring everyone on board. All we can do is raise people's awareness if they don't know much about it, and then provide a space for them to act on it if they want to. Youth against Poverty uses the tipping point theory, the idea that you need 10% of a population to be on board a particular issue for action to happen. If we can get that many people to care about this issue, then we might see political change. Look at the Australian government, it was so anti-refugee and then all of a sudden it allowed in 15,000 Syrian refugees because it read the mood of the public that a significant amount of people thought we should be doing more to help out the refugee crisis in Europe.

Jane went on to discuss the importance of giving people concrete actions they can take:

> Simple things like encouraging people to make consumer choices about purchasing fair trade Easter eggs is a way of giving people some agency.

These comments are informative as they demonstrate the difficulty for groups such as Youth against Poverty when undertaking action as active citizens (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). Such actions need to be not too difficult or too simplistic but also have some impact. They need to raise awareness about the issues without the participants being perceived as well-meaning but naive do-gooders (Berlant, 2004). The need to recognize the responsibility of those who can advocate on behalf of others without disempowering those people (Mostafanezhad, 2014). In terms of my reflexivity as a researcher (Pillow, 2003), this tension reflects my own struggles as a human rights activist: how to do enough to make a difference, but not too much that it takes over my life; how to have a meaningful impact and yet not be patronizing; how to care but not be overwhelmed; and how to assuage my own 'middle-class Catholic guilt' for the plight of the less-fortunate, yet not make it all about me.

6.8   Implications of the findings

There are several implications of the findings from this case study for the organisation Youth against Poverty. The interview, documentary and observational data demonstrated little use of the language of human rights. This could indicate an understanding by the organisation that focusing on international legal obligations is not effective in encouraging young people to connect with the cause of eradicating extreme poverty. Unlike Hope International, which sometimes referenced the 'victims' of poverty in a somewhat paternalistic way, it was my observation of Youth against Poverty that those who were being advocated for were barely referenced at all, except in abstract ways such as 'the issue' or 'foreign aid'. Instead, the focus was on empowering young, well-educated people to gain advocacy skills and have a positive experience with other like-minded individuals. This may have arisen from the uncertainty of the aims of the organisation: whilst ostensibly not religious, it was clearly influenced by Christian values; the broadness of the aim to 'reduce extreme poverty'; and the similarity of its members which encouraged a humanitarian gaze of the privileged helping the under-privileged (Tascon, 2015).

In order to achieve its stated aim of being a 'grassroots movement for systemic change', Youth against Poverty needs to further acknowledge the complex and problematic nature of issues such as child labour and foreign aid, and move beyond simplistic awareness-raising campaigns which can hide the structural power dynamics involved (Mostafanezhad, 2014). In addition, many of the participants engaged in activist activities for personal growth rather than

attempting to create meaningful and systemic change as justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

This case study also demonstrated that the members of Youth against Poverty felt a strong sense of belonging to the organisation itself, rather than having a broader sense of solidarity to the cause of reducing poverty. In this way, young people can be motivated to be and become human rights activists because of the sense of belonging that such a group provides. This can be conceptualised as belonging-being-becoming rather than being-becoming-belonging. This has implications for educators who want to encourage more young people to be involved in active citizenship activities, as it shows the crucial importance of fostering both a collective and an individual identity.

Chapter Seven: Case Study of Refugee Aid

7.1   Introduction

This case study chapter examines the data collected through interviews, documents and observations with Refugee Aid to address the research questions. This data is also examined in light of the theoretical frameworks discussed in the literature review, including the humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014), human rights activism as a form of active citizenship in a democracy (Schultz et al, 2010) and belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011).

7.2   Context of Refugee Aid

Refugee Aid is an asylum seeker advocacy and aid organisation which aims to promote and protect the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Article 2 of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951) defines a refugee as a person who has a:

> … well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

Once these criteria have been met, a person can be classified as a refugee and re-settled in another country which has ratified this Convention. Therefore, to meet the definition of refugee under the Convention, it is not enough to be an economic refugee seeking a better life without poverty. Refugees are those people who have been accepted as meeting the definition as set out in the Convention, whereas asylum seekers are those who have not yet had their application for refugee status determined.

The Australian government issues about 13,000 humanitarian visas to asylum seekers who arrive by air each year (Department of Home Affairs, 2018). These people have been referred to Australia by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and have often been living in refugee camps in other countries for many years (Department of Foreign Affairs and

Trade, 2018).   In 2015, the Australian Government agreed to resettle an additional 12,000 Syrian asylum seekers who were fleeing the conflict in that country (Hirst & Medhora, 2015).

Despite being a signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), Australia has adopted a very different approach to asylum seekers who arrive by boat compared with those who arrive by air. The Immigration Minister, Peter Dutton, stated in 2016 that no asylum seeker who arrived by boat would be granted permanent residency in Australia, to act as a deterrence to people smugglers (Medhora, 2016).   In 2016, the Australian Migration Act (1958) was changed so that all unlawful non-citizens are detained regardless of circumstances. Since 2001, the Australian government has engaged in the offshore processing of asylum seekers who arrive by boat in detention centres on Manus Island (Papua New Guinean territory) and the Republic of Nauru under agreements made between Australia and those countries (Karlsen, 2016). Since 2013, both the Labor and Coalition governments have adopted a policy of not resettling in Australia asylum seekers who come to Australia by boat, even if they are found to be a genuine refugee after off-shore processing. The Australian government has resettled these people in a third country like Papua New Guinea, Cambodia or the United States (Karlsen, 2016).   Under Operation Sovereign Borders, Australian Border Force turned back asylum seeker boats heading towards Australian shores, and as a result there were no recorded boat arrivals on the Australian mainland between 2015 and 2017 (Phillips, 2017).

Refugee Aid was founded in 2001. According to the mission statement of the organisation, it aims to:

1. Protect asylum seekers from persecution and destitution

2. Support their well-being and dignity

3. Empower people and enable the self-determination of asylum seekers

Refugee Aid also operates under a set of organisational values which are independence, human rights, empowerment, innovation, integrity, a holistic approach and the strength of the community. The mission statement of the organisation states that:

> We protect and advance the human rights of people seeking asylum. We work from a human
> rights framework and we speak up against injustice… we leverage the strengths, knowledge

and wisdom of our community, we share our challenges and celebrate our successes together and we will win the fight by working together as a team.

Like Global Justice, and unlike Hope International and Youth against Poverty, Refugee Aid situates the work it does within a human rights framework. It is interesting to note the importance the organisation places on community and belonging, concepts which are examined closely in this chapter.

The organisation has a dual function, as both a service provider to assist the needs of asylum seekers living in Australia, as well as an advocacy organisation to promote and protect the human rights of asylum seekers. Since it began, Refugee Aid has assisted over 10,000 asylum seekers and has provided in excess of 2.5 million hours of free assistance worth more than $A200 million. The organisation is independent of government funding and instead relies upon philanthropic and individual donations to operate. Documentation from the organisation explains how the organisation also plays a role in advocating for change to government policy regarding asylum seekers:

> As an independent, community-led organisation, Refugee Aid is in a unique position to advocate for the human rights of people seeking asylum exempt from the pressures of Government or the private sector. For this reason, Refugee Aid has been able to take a leading position in the opposition of current asylum seeker policy, while offering alternatives to the asylum seeker issue... we remind the government that under the Refugee Convention seeking asylum is a human right no matter how you arrive.

Although the advocacy work of Refugee Aid is the focus of my study, the other services provided by the organisation are also discussed where relevant. Asylum seekers in Australia receive limited financial support from the government while they are waiting for their refugee status to be determined, and many are also restricted by the conditions of their bridging visa in their ability to work and access healthcare. As a result, many asylum seekers in Australia live in abject poverty while they wait for their visa applications to be processed. The circumstances of one family are described in documentation from the organisation:

> When the family turned to Refugee Aid they were homeless. Their two children had been denied access to the local school. They were also expecting another child. Refugee Aid found the family housing, provided medical care to the mum, organised a hospital for the mother to

have their baby in and forced the school to stop discriminating against the children and let them into the school.

The services provided by Refugee Aid are therefore crucial to the wellbeing of asylum seekers. These services include case management to ensure that each asylum seeker receives all the support they need, including legal advice to assist them with their visa applications (which can be very complex, especially for people for whom English is not their first language). The Refugee Aid centre also provides asylum seekers with access to a community meals program that operates daily; a foodbank supermarket at the centre; health, dental and psychological services; employment, training and skills development programs; English language and computer training programs; and a social enterprise program providing work for asylum seekers in cleaning and catering. Refugee Aid also operates a mobile fresh food van that travels around the suburbs offering locally sourced fresh produce to all purchasers, and gives a 75% discount to asylum seekers purchasing food from the van. All labour is donated, as is much of the produce, and the profits are re-invested into providing affordable nutritious food for asylum seekers.

Documentation from the organisation included a story about an asylum seeker in Australia who was also an activist. The article told the story about a mother who could not afford the cost of her 7-year-old son attending a school excursion. In trying to access funds to pay for this, she came across a newspaper article in which the Premier of Victoria announced the launch of the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund of $148.3 million to ensure that every student regardless of background had the chance enjoy such experiences. However, the fund was only accessible to those holding a Health Care Card, Foster Carers Card or Pension Card as issued by Centrelink. Asylum seekers are not eligible for these concession cards, which meant that this mother could not access the fund. According to the article, she asked:

> … if every child deserves to take part in these activities, why not her child? 'I don't know what happened to me,' she said. 'You know what I did? I called up the Premier and he agreed my son could access the fund!' Following the Education Minister's direction, the mother attended her son's school and handed the Minister's direct number to the principal with instructions to call, and money from the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund was assigned to the school in her son's name. He now has access to $225 a year worth of school excursions [which has subsequently been made available to all asylum seeker children in the state as a result of this

campaign]. 'Nothing is impossible. Everything is possible,' she says, knowing that in this she has been triumphant. All people seeking asylum need help, but as this mother shows, they are not helpless.

This story illustrates one of the values of the organisation stated above, which is to 'empower people and enable self-determination', rather than asylum seekers being the passive recipients of aid. This story is important for my study because rather than applying a humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014, p. 111), where a well-meaning person from the organisation acted on this mother's behalf to correct the injustice done to her family, this asylum seeker had the skills and ability to advocate for herself, partly because of the support she had received through Refugee Aid (such as assistance with her English language skills). It is also possible that her personal story carried more weight with the Premier than if an activist from Refugee Aid had rung the Premier on her behalf. Like Rosie Batty's campaign to stop domestic violence (which was discussed in the Introduction), this mother could be described as a human rights activist as she is campaigning for systemic change to the current status quo about this issue, as well as acting on her own behalf.

Refugee Aid has 60 paid staff and about 1200 volunteers. The organisation operates out of an office building where the asylum seekers, paid staff and volunteers interact. Volunteers are required to commit to one day a week at the centre over a 12-month period. In order to become a volunteer, interested people are required to attend an information evening, apply for a particular role, attend an interview with a program manager, complete induction training, undergo a police check and complete program specific training before their unpaid role can commence. Unlike Hope International and Youth against Poverty, the age range of the volunteers at Refugee Aid range from 18 years of age to 80 years of age. Volunteers are required to sign a document in which they agree to respect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all the personal information of clients, comply with Refugee Aid's policies and procedures and adhere to the behavioural code of conduct. Volunteers attend a morning briefing each day that they are at the centre, where the Chief Executive Officer outlines the recent conferences he has presented at, the media interviews and fundraising he has done and the lobbying of governments that has been undertaken by the organisation about the issue of asylum seekers.

The focus of my research is on the community speaker program. This program involves activists from Refugee Aid giving talks to school and community groups, which provides them with information about asylum seekers and gives suggestions for how others can act to protect the human rights of asylum seekers. There are about twenty people in the community speaker group, and two of them were interviewed as part of my research. Some of the members of the community speaker group were themselves asylum seekers, however the participants that I interviewed were not. Documentation from the organisation describes the role of the community speaker group as follows:

> Raising awareness in the community about issues facing asylum seekers is an important part of Refugee Aid's work. Whether it's information about the Australian refugee determination process, the work of the Refugee Aid or the experiences that force people to leave their homes, better awareness and understanding within the community is crucial to achieving the goal of a fairer system.

Documentation from Refugee Aid also quotes from members from the community speaker group. One said:

> To me, anything that takes the work of the Refugee Aid and extends it beyond its four walls is really important. If people understood better what asylum seekers were going through, then hopefully we wouldn't see some of the attitudes we currently see.

Another member of the community speaker group, who was himself an asylum seeker, said:

> To provide information sessions to students and teachers about asylum seekers' lives and the problems which they have faced through their journey of asylum is very important. The feedback was very positive and some of them said they had never heard such information before.

Refugee Aid provided the members of the community speaker group with the information and training they needed to present talks at schools and community forums. They were also given additional training and mentors about how to present the information in an engaging way and how to answer questions from the audience.

7.3 Collection and analysis of the data

Two members from the Refugee Aid community speaker group were interviewed as part of my research. The interviews took place between July and November 2015. The participants

agreed to be involved after the purpose and scope of the research had been explained to them and they agreed that the interviews be audio-taped. One of the participants was male and one was female. I was required by Refugee Aid to complete a police check before I began the interview process as I was on the premises with asylum seekers. The participants were recruited by emailing the leader of the community speaker program, who then emailed the request to all the members of that group. Two members then contacted me to indicate their interest in participating in my study, so there was no coercion to be involved. All participants were forwarded the questions prior to their interview with me, which enabled them to consider their answers beforehand. While some of the members of the speaker program were themselves asylum seekers, the participants involved in my study were not asylum seekers, as specified in the ethics approval for my research.

Documents were obtained from the organisation and through the website and this data also formed part of the triangulated analysis (Yin, 2009). The themes which emerged through the data collection process in this case study were the self-identification of the participants as activists (Bobel, 2007), the importance of having a personal connection with the people on whose behalf the activists were campaigning (Mihr, 2007), the extent to which action competence was demonstrated (Jensen & Schnack, 2006) and the importance of belonging to a group (Yuval-Davis, 2011). In the remainder of this chapter, the research questions are analysed through discussing these themes in light of the literature and the data.

7.3.1   Observations and documentation

As part of my research, I observed an Induction Training session in August 2015. The session went for four hours and was conducted in a meeting room at a town hall near the office of Refugee Aid. The session was attended by 50 people, about 30 women and 20 men. They seemed to be from a diverse range of backgrounds and were predominately young people in their twenties or older people in their 60s. The training was divided into three sessions.

The first session was an overview of the asylum seeker situation in Australia. The speaker asked members of the audience to stand up if their grandparents or parents were not born in Australia, and about three quarters of the audience stood up. The speaker said:

> This exercise shows that very many of us have come from somewhere else, often migrants
> who chose to seek a better life. But asylum seekers are fleeing because they are not safe in

their own countries, they have no choice. It takes a lot of suffering and trauma for people to take the step to seek asylum in another country.

In this way, the organisation is encouraging its members to be empathetic to the plight of refugees. According to Mihr (2007), the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction, which can change people's attitudes and behaviours if it elicits a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses.

The speaker explained that volunteers at Refugee Aid had an obligation to keep up to date with current government policies about this issue, so that they could be informed advocates when talking about the issue with members of the public:

> You might be asked 'why don't asylum seekers from the Middle East stop in Indonesia and apply for asylum there?'. However, Indonesia is not a signatory to the Refugee Convention, so they have no obligation to take them. If people say that asylum seekers are 'queue jumpers' you can tell them that there is no orderly process for seeking asylum. Globally there are 19 million people seeking asylum, so if they all waited in the 'queue' it would take 200 years to gain asylum. If people say to you that Australia can't afford to take any more refugees, you can tell them that it costs $524,000 per year to keep one person in offshore detention, compared with $30,000 to settle them in a community in Australia. You can also remind them that many countries in the world, often quite poor countries, take millions of refugees compared with the tens of thousands that Australia takes. Having this information means that you can be a more powerful advocate in trying to change the conversation and the mindset that many people have gained from media scare campaigns.

These comments are significant for my research because they demonstrate that the organisation perceives all of its volunteers, regardless of their role, to be activists about this issue. As a result, the members of Refugee Aid could be defined as campaigners for change through collective participation in a social movement (Bobel, 2007). As part of supporting its activists, the organisation provided its members with up to date information about the issues surrounding refugees, as a way of trying to counter the negative arguments that were being expressed in the media.

The second session that I observed was an overview of the human rights law that applies to asylum seekers in Australia. This speaker, a volunteer on the legal aid team at Refugee Aid, said:

> One of the problems in this area is that there are no sanctions if Australia breaches international law by not upholding the Refugee Convention, and Australia hasn't embedded the Convention into domestic law, which means it in unenforceable in Australian courts. The only sanctions that Australia would face is if another country takes us to the International Court of Justice, which is highly unlikely for diplomatic reasons.

She also discussed one of the cases she had worked on which was successful:

> I helped a Pakistani woman who had married a man in a lower caste which meant her own family wanted to carry out an honour killing on her because of the disgrace this brought on them. After a lot of research, we were able to show she had a well-founded fear of persecution if she returned home and she was granted a temporary protection visa in Australia.

She also discussed some of the difficulties in assisting asylum seekers:

> Sometimes people have used a false passport to escape from their country to avoid being detected by the people who want to hurt them. But once the Australia government discovers this they are seen as not being of good character and this goes against their visa claim. I mean what are they supposed to do?

She also talked about how in 2015, the increasingly complex legal requirements and a reduction in government funded legal aid for asylum seekers meant that Refugee Aid had the highest ever number of requests for legal assistance. These comments about the promotion and protection of the legal human rights obligations of Australia make it evident that Refugee Aid, like Global Justice, overtly places the work it does within a human rights framework. Unlike the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies, Refugee Aid also enables its members to interact with those whose rights they are advocating for. This interaction required careful consideration to ensure that the rights of all were upheld.

The final session was an overview of the responsibilities of the volunteers and the organisation. The leader of the session described the considerations that go into the choice of volunteers:

We take the selection of volunteers seriously for two reasons: to make sure that you get to use your skills and experience while learning new things, and to make sure that your experience is satisfying and positive. We also want to make sure we provide the best services and support to asylum seekers that we can, which is ultimately why we are all here.

She also explained the responsibilities of volunteers, which included being on time and giving advance notice for absences. She explained why this was important:

Our members need consistency in the volunteers they interact with. They also need consideration, so you need to think about dressing in an appropriate and modest way that won't offend anyone. What some of you are wearing today would not be appropriate.

The leader also discussed the responsibilities of the organisation towards volunteers:

Working with asylum seekers can be very stressful and distressing. If you need help we encourage you to talk about how you are coping with your manager and we will support you.

The leader discussed the limits of the relationships that could be developed between the Refugee Aid volunteers and the asylum seekers:

We provide a respectful and professional service, however, we are not here to be friends with the asylum seekers. As volunteers you are not allowed to offer accommodation or money to asylum seekers or have personal romantic relationships with them. You are not to share personal details like mobile phone numbers and you are not to be Facebook friends with them. Your loyalty needs to be to the Refugee Aid organisation, not to one individual. Imagine what would happen if some volunteers started lending money to particular asylum seekers, it would be very problematic for everyone.

In light of this, an audience member asked:

Is it ok to talk about my grandchildren with the asylum seekers and show them their photos?

To which the leader replied:

You have to decide for yourself about what boundaries you are comfortable with, and that might be appropriate in terms of building rapport. But remember you are there to help them not to have them support you. Good topics to talk about are things like food, music and sport. We need to have a protective professional barrier to keep everyone safe. We also aren't helping asylum seekers if we make them too dependent on particular volunteers.

The leader then talked about the importance of volunteers maintaining the role they have been assigned:

> If you are working in the kitchen and an asylum seeker starts to talk to you about their experiences with torture, you need to acknowledge that what they are saying is important but then tell them that you are not skilled in assisting them with this and refer them to the counselling section for support.

The session concluded with scenarios about appropriate and inappropriate interactions between the volunteers and the asylum seekers. Each group had to brainstorm the best way to deal with each situation, keeping in mind the considerations that had been discussed above and then these discussions were shared with the whole group.

From observing this session, it seemed that Refugee Aid has a very professional attitude towards its activists and required them take their roles seriously and conscientiously. As a result of the personal interaction that they had with asylum seekers, the organisation needed to exert a degree of control over what volunteers did and how they behaved, especially as it has so many volunteers and the stakes are high in terms of dealing with traumatised people who are very vulnerable. The examples given in this section demonstrate that Refugee Aid has gone to great lengths to ensure that the asylum seekers are not disempowered by the well-intentioned interactions they have with the volunteer activists who work at the organisation (Mostafanezhad, 2014).

7.4   Identifying as a human rights activist

The first participant interviewed for this case study was Jeremy, who is from an Anglo-Australian family. At the time of the interview, Jeremy was 19 years old and was having a gap year before starting a university degree in education. He also worked part time running holiday programs for school students. He found out about Refugee Aid through a friend, and then contacted the organisation through their website. Jeremy was a member of the community speaker group at Refugee Aid. In this role, he has spoken with many school and community groups about the issue of asylum seekers. He also volunteered in the material aid section of the organisation, which involves providing asylum seekers with items such as clothes, blankets, nappies and public transport tickets. He volunteered with Refugee Aid for two days a week (one day in each role) and had been doing so for the past year.

The second participant in this case study was Annabel, who was 20 years old at the time of the interview. Annabel is from an Anglo-Australian family. In 2015 she was studying full time for a degree in Global Studies and working in a paid part time role for another non-governmental organisation. She became involved in Refugee Aid through a friend who is also a volunteer with the organisation. Annabel is a member of the community speaker group at Refugee Aid, which she did for one day a week, mostly with school groups. Annabel had been involved with the organisation for the past six months.

From the observations that I made at the Induction Training Session and the documentation available from Refugee Aid, it seemed clear that the organisation situates the work that it does within a human rights framework and that it is overt about its activism function. I was therefore interested to see whether these findings could be triangulated in the interviews (Yin, 2009) by the participants willingly defining themselves as being a human rights activist, unlike the participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies. When asked about the role of human rights in the activist work that he does with Refugee Aid, Jeremy said:

> We do mention the Refugee Convention, but we don't go on about it, we think it is more powerful to refer to human dignity and equality in general terms rather than that other stuff. In terms of activism, I like being actively engaged in things, I don't like being passive with anything in my life. I'm happy to say that I am an activist, because that is how I feel within myself.

When asked about whether she would define herself as an activist or an advocate, Annabel said:

> I see the distinction between these two things. An activist involves taking a story and speaking about it, using your own passion to drive it. An advocate is a softer form of activism, less political. I'm happy to be called an activist.

Annabel was also asked about whether she would describe herself as working within a human rights framework:

> The conversation is a lot easier if you don't get bogged down in human rights. It's much more agreeable to talk about the humanity that all people share. Whichever way you go it is about making people's lives better, it's just deciding how you go about it in the most effective way.

A human rights framework can be powerful, but it can also be alienating. I've found that appeals to uphold the Refugee Convention are just not working. In the talks I give I tend to talk about human rights a little bit but not heaps.

It is instructive for my research to note that both Jeremy and Annabel were happy to define themselves as activists, similarly to the participants in the Global Justice case study. However unlike in the Global Justice case study (but like the participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies), the Refugee Aid participants were warier about using human rights language to frame what they do, even though the organisation itself emphasises the importance of a human rights framework. In the literature review I discussed the debates about whether rights exist if they are not able to be exercised, particularly with regards to refugees (Arendt, 1951). Likewise, if no one is listening to the language of human rights, is there any point in having it, or does it just mean that people need to be further educated about human rights which set codified minimum international standards of behavior?

A major distinction between this case study and the other three case studies is that the members of Refugee Aid had direct contact with the people for whom they were advocating. In the literature, Stoecker (2003) argues that service involves 'feeding the poor' whereas activism is about 'social change - asking why the poor have no food and then acting on the answers' (Stoecker, 2003, p. 37). Similarly, Westheimer & Kahne (2004) distinguish between the participatory citizen who 'helps to organize a food drive' (p. 2) and the justice-oriented citizen who 'explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes' (p. 2). However, Refugee Aid does both; it provides services to asylum seekers as well as advocating to governments and the Australian public for systemic change about the issue.

I asked Jeremy about the role of service and activism in his role with Refugee Aid, and he replied:

I think my passion really lies with the advocacy work, as I feel like that is the path that is going to cause things to really change long term. My other voluntary role in material aid is also very valuable for those people but it doesn't necessarily engage the wider community in the issue. I see my role with material aid as being reactive, responding to an immediate problem, whereas my role with the speaker program is proactive, trying to prevent the problem happening in the first place. But I find it really important for my role in the community speaker group that I'm also involved with material aid. I'm on the ground with the actual people who

are experiencing this stuff, so it is not just dealing in abstractions. I have heard first-hand about the experiences of asylum seekers. All the staff, volunteers and asylum seekers sit down to eat lunch together from the community kitchen, so I really get to know them. It makes it so much more real.

Annabel was also asked to reflect on the distinction between service and advocacy as a human rights activist:

I strongly doubt that any of us will experience anything like the injustice that asylum seekers have gone through. All we can try and do is be a messenger for their story rather than telling their story on their behalf. And it really helps that I have heard people's stories from their own mouths, not just from some You Tube clip. I feel like that has really given me a better understanding of the issues.

These comments indicate that having a personal relationship with the people for whom they are advocating helps activists to avoid the distancing humanitarian gaze, where powerful people here advocate for powerless people experiencing 'distant suffering' (Hoijer, 2004). Potentially the us/them dichotomy in which we 'aid/develop/civilise/empower them' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 629) has been somewhat overcome in this case, because both groups are in the same space and time, which helps to avoid the 'othering' process. Therefore, this case study demonstrates the importance of human rights activists being influenced by both the local and the global context of issues in order to be justice-oriented citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). These examples have implications for the binary distinction that has been developed in the literature between service and advocacy (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Stoecker, 2003). My study demonstrates that combining both of these actions can inform the process of being, belonging and becoming a human rights activist in both a local and global context.

7.5   Influences and motivations to be and become a human rights activist

The first research question asks what factors influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists. This section discusses the findings of the interviews with the participants as a way of addressing this question.

7.5.1 Family, gender and schooling

According to Saha (2000), human rights activists often possess a strong sense of social responsibility which compels them to do the work they do. I asked Jeremy about his motivation for being involved with the Refugee Aid organisation, and he responded:

> I just hate that it is happening! I learned about the issue of asylum seekers when I was studying Year 12 Politics, and since then I have really wanted to get involved. I mean it's just crazy, crazy! I didn't really analyse my motivation that much at the time, but now I think about it, I'm a very social person, I love meeting people, and I love learning things from other cultures, countries, languages and ways of looking at the world. And I think that is really valuable. Diversity is such a beautiful thing, and I want it in my country. And the fact that Australia is basically saying no we don't want that, it makes me feel gross. I don't like it. Once I learned about the issue, I just couldn't not be involved. It makes me happy to think that in some little way, I'm chipping away at the problem. My experiences here have really cemented my interest in this issue.

Jeremy's explanation of his motivation echoes Kovan and Dirkx's (2003) theory about activism. This was evident when he discussed his self-location ('I love learning things from other cultures… I want it in my country'); his relationships with other people ('I'm a very social person'); his understanding of relations of power ('It makes me feel gross…The fact Australia is basically saying no') and the sense of possibilities for social justice and peace and personal joy ('it makes me happy to that that in some little way, I'm chipping away at the problem'). Jeremy also discussed the influence of his family on being involved in this organisation, by explaining:

> My parents aren't that interested in the issue of asylum seekers. But my mum is a very compassionate person towards all sorts of people, so I've always had that influence in my life. My younger sister is really interested in this issue too now, she's learned about it through me.

When asked about the influence of her family on her motivation to be involved, Annabel said:

> To some extent they are interested in this issue, but not to the same extent as me. They are politically minded but not so much about human rights issues.

It is significant for my research to note that Jeremy's 'being' has been influenced by the pro-social behaviour modelled by his mother which has led to him 'becoming' a human rights

activist over time. While of course human rights activists are not only women, they are overrepresented in both this study and in the wider sector, and it is interesting to note how a number of participants in my study have ascribed their altruism to the influence of their sister, mother or grandmother (Atkeson & Rapoport, 2003). These comments also add to my findings from this interaction about the significant influence that family has had on the motivation of young adults to want to be human rights activists. This reflects Hyman's (1959) findings that that the political understanding of young people is influenced by the modelling they experienced through their families, rather than Torney-Purta's (2004) finding that young people primarily experience political socialisation through their peers.

I asked Annabel about the role her schooling played in influencing her to be involved with Refugee Aid and she explained:

> I originally got involved in the refugee issue when I was learning about it in my final year of high school. I just found this issue fascinating. One day a friend of mine walked up to me with a Refugee Aid petition about asylum seekers and I helped him to get lots of signatures. But it was difficult to do much more than that when you are under 18, as the Refugee Aid only accepts volunteers who are over 18.

It is significant to note that both Jeremy and Annabel referred to the fact that learning about the issue of asylum seekers when they were in their last year of high school influenced their motivation to become involved with Refugee Aid. This is in contrast with most of the other participants in my study, who referred to being influenced by the extra-curricular opportunities that school provided, rather than the formal classroom curriculum. It is arguable that being a single issue organisation made it easier for these participants to connect their interest with a topic they had learned about at school, compared with the other case studies which advocate about multiple issues (like Global Justice) or broader issues (like poverty alleviation at Youth against Poverty and Hope International). This finding has implications for educators, as giving students access to specific curriculum about human rights issues can play a role in inspiring young adults to want to be and become human rights activists over time.

7.6   Belonging

The second research question examines the significance to the participants of belonging to Refugee Aid. Jeremy said:

> I feel very supported here. But I don't think that is by accident, there is a lot of strategic work behind the scenes that goes on so that the volunteers feel valued. Like they put on a big Christmas party every year to say thank you to us.

When I met with Jeremy for this interview, he firstly showed me around the Refugee Aid office. He reflected:

> This is such a great space to be in, I feel really connected to this place.   Look at those huge photographs on the walls of the faces of asylum seekers, the table tennis tables, the instruments set up for band practice. Do you notice how the walls to the offices are all glass? That is deliberate, asylum seekers have already faced so many blank walls and red tape and bureaucracy, so this is a physical way of making them feel welcome and included.

While the interview was being conducted at Refugee Aid main reception area, a small boy aged about four came up to Jeremy to say hello, to which he replied:

> Hi mate, how are you? Where did you get that instrument? I'm doing a super top-secret interview at the moment, so I can't talk to you now. But why don't you tell this lady your name? I'll come and play with you afterwards I promise.

From this interaction, it was evident that Jeremy had developed a very friendly rapport with some of the asylum seekers. His comments above also reflect the effort made by the organisation to provide a sense of belonging to a welcoming place. It is instructive to compare these comments with the work of Yuval-Davis (2011). In this case study, the activists and the asylum seekers share social and geographical locations as demonstrated by the example above of Jeremy and the boy. They also share an attachment to cultural and symbolic practices of social groups, through sharing meals and undertaking leisure activities such as playing music and table tennis together. The organisation has also implemented symbolic practices in the building, such as glass walls for the offices as a metaphor for transparency and inclusiveness. In addition, the activists and the asylum seekers share a common value system about the importance of protecting human rights. The fact that the activists physically go each week to a building where the people whom they are advocating for are also present

seems to have aided Jeremy's feeling of belonging to a community, a feeling of being 'at home' (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10). (As discussed previously, because I did not interview any asylum seekers as part of my study, it was beyond the scope of my study to ascertain the extent to which they also felt a sense of belonging to the organisation.)

What is significant about all of these comments from the participants in this case study is what is *not* said about belonging, when compared with what *was* said by the participants in the other case studies. In the other case studies, there was a big emphasis on the social connections made between the members, many of whom could be categorised as a group of 'best girl-friends'. This is not surprising, as Youniss et al (2002) argue that the social bonds, affiliation and emotional support gained through belonging to a community with shared commitments can sustain civic involvement despite intimidating challenges, frustrating experiences and a sense of hopelessness at ever being able to create effective change. However, for the participants in Refugee Aid case study there was much less emphasis on the importance of the friendships the participants made with the other activists or the potential for personal growth; rather, they spoke about belonging to a cause and the relationships they had developed with the asylum seekers themselves whose rights they were advocating for.

7.7   Action competence

The third research question examines how human rights activists be, become and belong as active citizens in Australia. The knowledge, intention, commitment and actions of the participants is examined in this section in order to determine whether the participants display action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997)

7.7.1   Knowledge

One of the requirements of being a human rights activist is having knowledge and understanding about how to engage as an active citizen within the political system. Schultz et al (2010) argue that:

> … citizens in those countries that are well connected to global civil society- where human rights activism has been intensifying- will become more aware of human rights issues and are more likely to get involved in the international human rights movement. (p. 609)

Australia is a democratic country with a sophisticated civil society, so it is not surprising that organisations such as Refugee Aid exist to promote the rights of people who have sought asylum in Australia after fleeing persecution in other countries. Although upholding the rights of asylum seekers is an unpopular cause with some members of the Australian public, mainstream media and both major political parties, there is also a strong dissenting voice (involving many other organisations besides Refugee Aid) who forcefully advocate for the protection of the rights of asylum seekers. Such dissenting opinions and criticisms of government policy are tolerated as part of Australia's democratic system (Braungart & Braungart, 1997), but would not be tolerated in all countries (Ribeiro et al, 2012).

Jeremy discussed how he used his knowledge about the issue of refugees and the system of democracy to protest for the protection of their rights. He explained:

> I've been going to protests this year, like the one for the Rohingya refugees. There is a certain resistance from other people to get involved, they say 'I don't think that protests are my thing'. But I think it is not about you- do you care about this issue or not? I mean this is a right you have as a member of a democracy. I really feel a responsibility to do this. I mean why wouldn't you do it? The Palm Sunday protest for the rights of asylum seekers in Australia was great, there were all sorts of people there, not just religious groups there was also suburban families with their kids, grandmothers for refugees, my aunty came from the country and she is far from left wing. Protests are a thing for everyone to get involved in.

It is significant to note that Jeremy places his knowledge about the refugee issue in the context of his knowledge about democracy. Unlike many of the female participants in the other case studies who categorised street protests as being too confrontational (Bobel, 2007), he views street protests as an important part of his activism work about the rights of asylum seekers. Jeremy's comments provide support for Winford's (2005) findings, that 'Australian society has been shaped by protests, demonstrations and activism. Indeed, dissent, protest and social change are seen as essential to a healthy, robust, democratic society' (p. 47).

7.7.2 Commitment and intention

Another important part of the action competence framework is having a commitment to the cause, which can be demonstrated through having an emotional connection to the issue. According to Mihr (2007), the direct and indirect experience of injustice and other abuses can

serve as a link between cognitive knowledge and emotional reaction, which can change people's attitudes and behaviours if it elicits a personal and emotional reaction against human rights abuses. This is often achieved through storytelling, as such testimony can provoke both negative and positive emotions to try and elicit an empathetic reaction in others (Kelly, 2008). As the participants in this case study had personal relationships with the asylum seekers whose rights they were advocating for, they had an emotional connection with them which the human rights activists could then use as part of their advocacy work.

When asked about the role of emotion in influencing people to commit to the cause of asylum seekers, Jeremy said:

> Guilt doesn't work. You can't say 'you are lucky, so you should feel bad about people who aren't lucky like you'. You need them to feel some emotion, but not guilt. I think stories are really important. There is a video clip in the presentation we do for schools that is asylum seekers talking about their experiences so then I don't feel like I'm talking on their behalf. We also use good news stories about refugees who have contributed a lot to society. One of the major things I've learned though being a volunteer here is that asylum seekers are not one group but are incredibly different from each other. I think people forget that.

Annabel was also asked about the use of emotions to try and other influence people to commit to the issue. She reflected:

> ... it makes me a bit nervous to deliberately stir up negative emotions like outrage and anger in people about the issue of refugees. I mean outrage has often caused some of these problems in the first place! To paraphrase Star Wars- fear leads to outrage, outrage leads to hate. And there has been a lot of fear whipped up by people who are against refugees. I think it is also a short term emotional response that doesn't last and isn't effective in the long term. But in terms of emotions you do need to feel some level of empathy and compassion for refugees and for me that has been hugely helped by knowing asylum seekers.

These comments from the participants are another example of how the participants in this case study are aware of some of the problems arising from a humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014) because of the power differential that can arise between the activists and the asylum seekers. They also recognise the importance of allowing asylum seekers to speak in their own voice and be drivers of the advocacy about the issue (Spivak,2004). This approach alleviates some of the concerns raised by Mostafanezhad (2004) around

'cosmopolitan empathy as an appropriate solution to broader structural violence' (p. 117). These participants also focus on positive, local stories rather than tales of distant suffering (Hoijer, 2004). They also recognize that asylum seekers are not a homogeneous group, but rather people from many varied backgrounds who happen to find themselves in the same situation as they flee a well-founded fear of persecution.

7.7.3 Concrete action experiences

Action competence involves 'the appropriate use of knowledge and action to achieve an outcome' (Henderson & Tudball, 2016, p. 7). This links with Kidd's (1973) model of being-becoming-belonging, as it involves action that arises out of formal and informal activities which can be self-directed over time. Some of the actions undertaken by Refugee Aid participants as part of their work as human rights activists included protests and awareness raising education programs about the issue of asylum seekers, which have been discussed above.

Digital activism in another form of action undertaken by the participants in this case study, albeit in a limited way. When I observed the volunteer induction session, an audience member asked whether volunteers could use social media to discuss their experiences at Refugee Aid, as a way of helping to spread the message about what the organisation does. The leader said:

> You are not allowed to Tweet or Facebook about your experiences or those of people you have interacted with at Refugee Aid. The organisation uses social media in a strategic way so it's very important we have consistency in our messaging.

This comment illustrates the professional approach taken by this organisation regarding its digital campaigning as a form of action. As a result, it is not an action that can be taken by individual activists who belong to Refugee Aid. In terms of digital activism acting as a gateway for people to become involved in the organisation, Jeremy said:

> I've never heard of anyone getting involved in a cause just because they saw something on Twitter or Facebook.

This comment contrasts with the literature which argues that online campaigning can act as a springboard to more active participation, especially among young people (Chapman & Coffe, 2016).

Whilst this section has demonstrated the benefits of activists having a personal connection with the asylum seekers whose rights they are advocating for, care needs to be taken with this approach. Jeremy explained:

> You have to make sure you don't allow the asylum seekers to be too dependent on you. Otherwise you aren't empowering them to stand on their own, especially once they stop their connection with the centre and are on their own out in the community. Not everyone is going to be as good to them out there as we are here. A lot of the asylum seekers really want to be independent of the centre, they don't even want to be here. I mean some of them were neurosurgeons back in their own country! It must be totally demoralising, some doctor from Iraq relying on me to give his kid nappies. They just want opportunities to prove themselves, but without work rights they are forced to be dependent. We want asylum seekers to be empowered, but the reality is that sometimes because of their situation they just aren't able to empower themselves. It's difficult to tread that fine line.

At a meta-level, these comments indicate that Refugee Aid is trying to give the asylum seekers themselves the knowledge, skills and experience to become politically active subjects, not just the activists who advocate on their behalf (Tascon, 2015). This is especially difficult as the asylum seekers lack the citizenship rights necessary to be active citizens, so they must rely on those who do have these rights to some extent. Whilst asylum seekers are denied the participatory activities of voting and political office, they are able to engage with social movements and partner with community groups which are working to promote and protect the human rights of asylum seekers (Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009).

7.8   Implications of the findings

There are a number of implications of the findings from this case study for Refugee Aid. In this case study, the participants have direct contact with the people for whom they are advocating, and the actions of the activists were carried out in partnership with those whose rights were being infringed (Spivak, 2004). This personal connection meant that the participants seemed less focused on what they gained from the experience of helping others

and more focused on the needs and rights of those whom they were advocating for, compared with those participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies. One example of this involved an asylum seeker who successfully petitioned the Premier to allow her son to access the school excursion fund, partly through the support she had from Refugee Aid in developing her language skills. In this way, the organisation encourages and enables asylum seekers to be politically active subjects, not just the activists who advocate on their behalf (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

For educators interested in human rights activism, there are a number of implications from these findings. Unlike the participants from the other case studies, the Refugee Aid participants referred to the formal learning they had gained about refugees and human rights in their senior school politics subject at school as a motivating factor in wanting to be and become human rights activists. However, the politics class that the participants refer to is an optional subject in Victoria, so not all Australian school students would have access to this experience. Further research could be conducted about whether the Australian Curriculum for students in younger year levels provides students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to be human rights activists, or whether as Parker (2018) argues, curriculum for human rights education 'remains at best opaque and at worst so under-developed as to include only "mentions" of something called "human rights"' (p. 5).

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist.

- Archbishop Dom Helder Camara of Recife, Brazil (Stoecker, 2003, p. 35)

8.1   Introduction

This quote distils the tension inherent in human rights activism. On the one hand, having a local, tangible connection to the people whose rights they are advocating for helps activists to avoid having a charitable, humanitarian gaze on distant suffering (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Hoijer, 2004). On the other hand, activism involves more than 'feeding the poor', as it requires campaigning for systemic change through collective participation in a social movement (Bobel, 2007). Activists who are justice-oriented citizens need to explore both 'why people are hungry' as well as acting 'to solve root causes' (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 2). As the Archbishop's quote implies, questioning established systems and structures that reproduce injustice is a political act that can be perceived as threatening the status-quo (Ribeiro et al, 2012). By contrast, participating in the charitable act of providing food is more likely to be perceived by governments as an acceptable act of citizenship (Ross, 2012).

As part of unpacking this tension, my research has captured and analysed how and why young adults chose to be and become human rights activists through belonging to an NGO. In particular, my study investigated the factors which influence and motivate young adults to join such groups and the significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group. My research also analysed how human rights activists be, become and belong as human rights activists in Australia. My analysis of the interviews, observational and documentary data collected from the four case studies drew on a range of theoretical frameworks, including the concepts of being-becoming-belonging (Kidd, 1973), justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), the humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014), belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2011) and action competence (Jensen & Schnack, 1997). The relationship between these theories in terms of human rights activism is depicted in Figure 1 (p. 56). In this chapter, I provide final conclusions on the findings from the case studies in relation to the research questions posed.

The case studies focused on organisations which each had a different focus and purpose. This allowed me to gain multiples perspectives and insights into how NGOs are engaging in human rights activism, and the factors that influenced the participants' being, becoming and belonging as human rights activists. Global Justice is an international advocacy organisation that campaigns to protect human rights, Hope International is an international community development organisation that aids and advocates for millions of people who live in extreme poverty, Youth against Poverty is an Australian youth-run organisation where young people advocate to end poverty and Refugee Aid is an asylum seeker support and advocacy organisation in Australia. The different emphases of the organisations influenced the way that the participants in each case study perceived their capacity and agency to be change makers about human rights issues, and also impacted on how they experienced their sense of belonging.

Besley and Peters (2007) argue that in line with a Foucauldian approach, 'we cannot approach the question of the self without locating it within the network of values and social practices that come to characterise the culture of a particular time' (p. 5). This has been particularly relevant to my study, because a critical theory perspective accepts that all knowledge is value-laden. Such an approach emphasises the importance of making explicit the assumptions that influence the research, and I have attempted to do this in my study (Giroux 1988).

8.2   Identifying as a human rights activist

The findings indicated a multiplicity of ways that the participants constructed their identity as human rights activists, depending on which organisation they belonged to. The participants from Global Justice explicitly positioned themselves as belonging to a human rights movement and were outraged by breaches of human rights that occurred in Australia and internationally. Similarly, the participants from the Refugee Aid group were dedicated to the particular cause of protecting and promoting the human rights of refugees, because they perceived the Australian government as acting unjustly towards this group of people. Both of these groups embraced the term 'activist' as one that accurately described the work that they undertook. The participants in the Global Justice case study were particularly comfortable positioning their work within a human rights framework, which is not surprising considering that the aim of the organisation is to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights (1948). Significantly, not only could each participant from this group identify a particular human rights issue that interested them, but they could also reference the particular international human rights convention that was being breached. This demonstrated their high level of knowledge about and engagement with the issue, which is an important component of being a justice-oriented citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) who is action competent (Jensen & Schnack, 1997).

By contrast, the participants from Hope International and Youth against Poverty struggled with the label of activist being applied to them, and described the term as being scary and off-putting. This reluctance supports Bobel's (2007) findings that there is a 'resistance … to self-identify as "activist"' (p. 148) and Baumgardner and Richards (2000) findings that activists are perceived as being 'out of the ordinary' (p. 282). In addition, Bobel (2007) argues that one can 'do activism' without 'being activist' (p. 149), and this conceptualisation applied to the participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies.

There was some recognition by the participants across all the case studies that operating within a human rights paradigm which emphasised international legal obligations could be an ineffective way of influencing others, including governments (Hathaway, 2002). Whilst the participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies acknowledged the importance of human rights being promoted and protected, there was a consensus between them that the language of rights was not conducive to encouraging other young people to become involved in campaigning. One participant explained that 'people tend to buy into the emotional argument rather than the human rights argument, as they have a better understanding of what that means' and 'sometimes it is more productive to move away from rights and just focus on the humanity of the situation'. This reflects the importance of having an emotional connection, which is emphasised in the being-becoming-belonging model (Kidd, 1973) and Yuval-Davis's (2011) model of belonging. This finding has implications for these organisations, as appealing to people and governments on an emotional, empathetic level about human rights issues may be a more effective way of influencing them than focusing solely on upholding international human rights law treaties.

A major distinction between the Refugee Aid case study and the other three case studies was that the members of Refugee Aid had on-going contact with the people for whom they were advocating. In the literature, Stoecker (2003) argues that service involves 'feeding the poor'

whereas activism is about 'social change - asking why the poor have no food and then acting on the answers' (p. 37). Similarly, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) distinguish between the participatory citizen who 'helps to organize a food drive' (p. 2) and the justice-oriented citizen who 'explores why people are hungry and acts to solve root causes' (p. 2). This distinction is also implied by the former Archbishop of Brazil's comments, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. However, Refugee Aid does both; it provides services to asylum seekers such as food and goods, as well as advocating to governments and the Australian public for systemic change about the issue of refugees. In this study, I argue that having a personal relationship with the people for whom they are advocating helps activists to avoid the distancing humanitarian gaze (Mostafanezhad, 2014). In this way, the us/them dichotomy has been somewhat overcome by Refugee Aid, because both the refugees and the activists share the same geographical space and time. This helps to avoid the othering process and develops the sense of belonging they feel towards both the organisation and with the broader cause. In this way, the activist model adopted by Refugee Aid demonstrates the importance of engaging in actions at both local and the global levels, as the local remains important as a place for young people to enact their daily citizenship (Walsh & Black, 2018).

The findings from the Refugee Aid case study also has implications for the binary distinction between service and advocacy that is developed in the literature (Kahne & Westheimer, 2006; Stoecker, 2003). Eby (1998) argues that many service-learning programs implicitly individualise social problems which has the effect of diverting attention away from structural, systemic explanations. However, Refugee Aid has structured its approach so that charity and advocacy are intertwined, which enables activists to provide local services to asylum seekers, whilst at the same time using that experience and the relationships they have developed in their lobbying work to advocate for systemic change about the global issue of the rights of refugees.

8.3 Factors that influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists

The first research question investigated the factors which influence and motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists. The findings support the literature which identifies that being an activist involves both an intrinsic, deeply personal desire to create

change, as well as extrinsic factors that encourage and enable one to become an activist. These include connecting and communicating with other passionate and like-minded individuals about an issue (Kovan & Dirkx, 2003). For many of the participants across the four case studies, a major factor which influenced them to want to be and become a human rights activist was their family's interest in social justice issues. Some examples include 'I've always grown up with the idea of helping other people', 'since I was a child I have been involved in issues of poverty and injustice', 'my oldest sister is really into current issues and politics, so I think she influenced me' and 'my mum is a very compassionate person towards all sorts of people, so I've always had that influence in my life'. These findings also reflect Atkenson and Rapoport's (2003) views that altruism can motivate people to be engaged in this type of undertaking. Such prosocial behaviour includes 'intentions, goals, and predispositions to work towards the betterment of society such as the alleviation of poverty or suffering' (Saha, 2000. p. 10). For many of the participants in my study, their intrinsic helping intentionality was fostered and encouraged by their families.

These findings support Hyman's (1959) findings that the political socialisation young people experience is mainly influenced by the modelling they receive through their families. Gordon and Taft (2011) argue that much of the research about the political socialisation of young people has focused on the role of adults and families, rather than exploring the agency of young people themselves to form their own political identity. However, the findings from my study indicated that the participants did identify themselves as being primarily influenced by their families in wanting to be a human rights activist.

The encouragement given to the human rights activists in my study by their families helped them to understand that they had the agency to 'become' a human rights activist (DeJaeghere et al, 2016). Many of the participants from across the case studies were motivated to become human rights activists because they recognised their privileged positioning, which gave them to capacity to engage in this type of work. They made comments such as 'I know I am very lucky and that has given me a very strong sense of giving back' and 'the people who tend to get involved are those who are aware of their own privilege and who want to contribute to making the world a better place for others'. All of the participants across the case studies worked at least one day a week in their unpaid roles with the organisations. Committing a significant portion of their week to this pursuit meant that these participants had significant

social and financial assistance which allowed them to spend this significant amount of time in unpaid work, as there was an opportunity cost in volunteering to this extent. This indicates that most of the participants in my study not only had the intrinsic motivation to do this work, which was fostered by the attitudes of their families, but they also had the time, money and support to commit to being activists to this extent. This would not be the case for all young people in Australia.

According to Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004), human rights activists are often highly educated, economically advantaged and drawn from the same privileged social class, and many of the participants in my study could be categorised in this way. Tsutsui and Wotipka (2004) argue that populations which have more resources are more likely to engage in movements such as human rights. This is because citizens who are better educated are more likely to be 'aware of their rights, to recognise when those rights have not been met, and to possess the tools needed to articulate their demands and to organise for change' (Tsutsui & Wotipka, 2004, p. 596-7).

It is instructive to compare the findings from my study with that of Black's (2017a) work, as she examines the active citizenship practices of young people in low-socio-economic communities in Australia. As opposed to the mainly positive experiences of my participants, who were encouraged and commended for their active citizenship practices by their families, schools, communities and elected representatives, Black (2017a) found that 'young people in low socio-economic communities may lack [a] sense of belonging and recognition, finding themselves instead to be subjects of distrust or wariness' (p. 127) by their communities. For example, Black quotes one young person saying that 'a lot of people have the perception that teenagers are just making trouble and all of this' (p. 127). Black (2017a) argues that 'such observations reinforce the provisional or conditional experience of citizenship for many young people' (p. 127). That is, young people who have a high socio-economic status (such as most of the participants in my study) are seen as desirable active citizens, compared to those of a lower socio-economic status who are described as trouble-makers when participating in the same types of activist activities (Walsh & Black, 2018). This has repercussions for the influential idea that active citizens 'are not born; they are made' (Cruikshank, 1999, p. 3), if the circumstances into which young people are born influences how their active citizenship activities are perceived.

The concept of the humanitarian gaze questions the motivation of a privileged Western human rights activist 'to think that he or she is there to help the rest of the world' (Kapoor, 2004, p. 630). Alcoff (1991) writes that although a human rights activist may be trying to 'materially improve the situation of some lesser-privileged group, the effects of her discourse [could] further silence the lesser-privileged group's own ability to speak and be heard' (p. 632). In relation to human rights, Spivak (1994) argues that 'the idea of human rights ... may carry within itself the agenda of a kind of social Darwinism - the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit' (p. 524). The findings from my study indicate that the degree to which the participants were aware of the potential for their activism to be disempowering to those whose rights they were advocating for differed across the case studies. For example, one participant from Hope International said, 'I'm a white middle class Australian woman, how can I really know about the suffering of people in rural Ghana?' This indicates her awareness of the inequitable social and cultural conditions inherent in her activism (Habermas, 1979). On the other hand, a participant from Youth against Poverty became involved in the organisation because she needed to bring meaning into her life. These latter comments reflect Mostafanezhad's (2014) view that the experience of activism can be individualised and focused on personal growth, rather than recognising the limits that one individual or group can have on the amelioration of widespread human rights abuses and structural poverty. By contrast, the participants from Global Justice and Refugee Aid focused on partnering with the groups whose rights they were advocating for, which helped to avoid their voices being silenced. That is, rather than having well-meaning others act on behalf of Aboriginal people or refugees, a collaborative partnership approach lessened the power differential between them, which in turn allowed all parties to gain knowledge about how to be politically active subjects (Tascon, 2015).

Another factor which influenced some of my participants to be human rights activists was their schooling. Ginwrighta and Cammarota (2007) argue that young people need opportunities to engage in critical civic praxis, where young people have 'access to networks, ideas, and experiences that build individual and collective capacity to struggle for social justice' (p. 694), and schooling can provide a forum for this to occur. However, I was surprised at the extent to which the participants emphasised how opportunities to participate in social justice extra-curricular activities at school influenced them, rather than their formal

classroom curriculum study of subjects such as civics and citizenship. Many of the participants from Hope International and Youth against Poverty identified their experiences at their religious secondary schools as influencing them to become human rights activists. One participant said that 'one of the great things I was exposed to at school was the social justice program they had, which was led by the school chaplain who has been a huge influence on my life', and she also emphasised that being involved in such a program was a 'cool thing' to be involved in. These comments support the findings of Torney-Purta (2004), who suggests that many young people construct political knowledge and agency through their peer groups, so when something is perceived as desirable it encourages others to get involved and view it positively as well. This leads to a positive feedback cycle where young people such as those in my study are rewarded for their work they do in this area by their families, peers and schools, which then further encourages them to continue their involvement.

I found that the financial, social and cultural capital (Putnam, 1995; Bourdieu, 1986) provided to many of the participants by their families allowed them to access these extra-curricular experiences provided by their predominately private and faith-based schooling. These included lobbying trips to Canberra, attending conferences and going on service trips to Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, opportunities which may not be available to many students in Australia because of the financial costs involved. According to DeJaeghere (2016), 'agency is embedded in social relations with deep inequalities' (p. 7). Black (2017b) also argues that low socio-economic status affects a range of attitudes to and capacities for civic participation by young people. This raises questions about whether young Australians across all social classes can access the opportunities that the participants in my study had to be, become and belong as human rights activists, which is an area for future research.

It can be argued that the lack of reference to the formal school curriculum by most of the participants occurred because they attended high school in Australia during the years when civics and citizenship was not emphasised by the Australian or state-based curriculums. This finding also demonstrates the extent to which extra-curricular learning opportunities provided through schooling, can be a powerful mechanism to motivate young adults to be and become human rights activists. This finding is in line with Scheerens' (2009) study, which showed that the values and norms of school life provide an exercise ground for important

dimensions of civic behaviour that exist in wider society. The IEA International Civics and Citizenship Education Study (Schultz, et al., 2016) data also suggests that civic engagement at school and within the community provides the impetus for promoting civic and citizenship education, and helps young people become more conscious of the importance of being participating citizens. Therefore, more emphasis and recognition should be placed on these types of extra-curricular and community engagement activities at school as powerful opportunities to develop transformative social actors (Morrow & Brown, 1994).

The participants in the Refugee Aid case study were the only ones who were influenced to be human rights activists through formal classroom learning about the issue of asylum seekers when they were in high school. Being a single-issue organisation may have made it easier for these participants to connect their interest with the particular topic of asylum-seekers they had learned about through the curriculum, compared with the other organisations which advocate for multiple human rights issues (for example Global Justice) or broader issues (like poverty alleviation at Youth against Poverty and Hope International). Overall, for most participants, their formal schooling was not the trigger which developed the participants' commitment to social justice, nor did it play a vital role in demonstrating how to become a human rights activist. This finding has important implications for educators, since giving students exposure to targeted teaching and learning about human rights can foster the knowledge, dispositions and competencies required in all young people to be active and informed citizens, not just those who happen to have been born into a family that fosters an interest in these issues.

8.4   The significance to human rights activists of belonging to a group

The activists across the case studies recognised the importance of belonging to a group, because 'the collaborative, distributive nature of work in an activist group enables participants to accomplish goals they would be hard-pressed to accomplish on their own' (Kirshner, 2007, p. 369). For the participants in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty organisations, belonging to a group of like-minded people who all believed in the same cause and shared the same geographical spaces was also significant (Appadurai, 1996). Although most of these participants did not identify themselves as being motivated by their religious beliefs per se, many of them had come from a religious family or had religious

schooling experiences which influenced them to develop a strong sense of social justice. Many of the participants reflected that their families fostered their sense of obligation to help others who did not have the same privileges that they had. In addition, some of the participants reflected on the way that belonging to a group of like-minded activists acted as a de-facto religious experience, as it provided them with a sense of belonging, community and a common set of beliefs (Yuval-Davis, 2011). It could be argued that for some participants, belonging to a group became more important that the activist cause, and indeed one participant said, 'I came for the cause, but I'm staying in it for the group'. Therefore, not only does belonging to a group make it easier for activists to effect change about issues such as human rights, but a powerful motivation for becoming an activist is the sense of belonging that it provides. This can be conceptualised as belonging-being-becoming (like the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, Australian Government Department of Social Services, 2009) rather than being-becoming-belonging (Kidd, 1973), indicating that for these participants, belonging to a group was the crucial factor in being and becoming a human rights activist.

Through the evolving process of conducting this research, it became evident that the terms 'human rights activist' was perceived differently by the four organisations. In many ways it is not surprising that the participants in each group were similar to each other but different to those in other groups, since the participants chose to join an 'in-group' which confirmed their own pre-determined narrative of what a human rights activist should be (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, in the Hope International and Youth against Poverty case studies I was surprised at how strong the sense of belonging was between the members of the group, and at the extent of their loyalty to the particular sub-group of the organisation. I was also surprised by the competition that existed between these groups which shared a common cause. I thought there would have been a stronger collective narrative of solidarity with a cause, rather than individuals identifying so strongly as belonging to one group or another.

A further dimension of my study examined how digital activism impacted on the belonging experienced by human rights activists, including 'whether we are witnessing a new form of activism' (Davies, Evans and Peterson, 2014, p. 6). The speed and reach that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide as a way of connecting people and as a source of information about issues is remarkable compared with older forms of communication such as

posters, letters and opinion pieces in newspapers. However, despite the significant changes heralded by these platforms, the findings in my study indicates that there are limits to use of technology and the power of human rights activists to create change or achieve their aims if they are solely campaigning online. For the participants in my study, social media was used as a medium to spread a message quickly and to advertise upcoming events that were taking place, rather than being the main way they engaged as human rights activists. All of the participants felt that online campaigning such as clicking on petitions was not enough for them to feel like they were 'making a difference'; rather they emphasised the importance of meeting in person to plan and to participate in activist events and to feel a sense of belonging and a meaningful connection to the group (Halupka, 2014). They also valued the hierarchy, bureaucracy, transparency, accountability and sense of belonging that a 'bricks and mortar' NGO provided. This is in contrast to Martin's (2012) findings that for today's young Australians, 'political activity occurs in a much more fluid way than before through groups that appear and disappear rather than political activity occurring through well-institutionalised channels' (p. 222). My study therefore demonstrates that rather than participating solely as digital human rights activists, these participants utilised old forms of activism and adapted them to incorporate new technologies into their existing operations, such as lobbying politicians via Twitter rather than posting letters. For these young human rights activists, digital activism is part of a suite of activities they engage in as part of belonging to an NGO group, rather than being a radical new site of belonging for their activism.

8.5   Implications of the findings for organisations and educators in the field of active citizenship

The experience of being a human rights activist with an NGO group provided the participants with opportunities to engage in active citizenship in Australia. The data also demonstrated the wide range of activities that young adults can take part in as part of being a human rights activist, from behind the scenes organising and facilitating education program to street protests. An important part of Jensen and Schnack's (1997) action competency framework is having a critical intentionality to achieve an outcome through an action. The concrete actions that the participants in my case studies were involved with included educating others about human rights issues, mobilising others to support the cause, lobbying governments to change policy about the issues and encouraging communities in Australia to use their consumer

power to create change about child labour practices overseas. These experiences were examples of action performed by individuals acting in concert with others as part of a social movement in a democracy.

The findings from my research have implications for organisations and educators involved in active citizenship, as Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that 'those committed to educating social activists who practice justice-oriented citizenship would ideally want to couple critical analysis of root causes of injustice with opportunities to develop capacities for participation' (p. 6). Australian education policy makers cannot expect to achieve the goal of developing active and informed young citizens if human rights are not implemented in teaching and learning programs in schools, both in the formal curriculum, pedagogical approaches and through extra-curricular programs (Article 2(2) of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, 2011). This area requires further research, as part of examining the impact that the current Australian civics and citizenship curriculum is having on young people's engagement as active citizens in Australia.

It is interesting to note that nine out of the twelve participants interviewed for this research are female. Although this is a very small sample size which cannot be construed as significant in a statistical sense, the participants themselves all reflected on how skewed the gender divide was towards women within each organisation and the NGO sector as a whole. My observations of the organisations also provided triangulated support for this finding (Yin, 2009). The over-representation of women in human rights activism is also supported by research in many countries which shows that human rights as an issue appeals more to women than men (Saha, 2004). Feminist theorists have suggested that such a finding can be attributed to the socialisation of women towards an ethics of care (Gilligan, 1977; Noddings, 1992) which emphasises others over self. Similar to the way that socio-economic status can be a barrier to more young people to be involved in human rights activism, it can be argued that the feminisation of human rights activism is a barrier to more young men being involved. This is a finding that organisations and educators should recognise and try to address.

Most of the participants across the case study groups recognised that there was a power imbalance between themselves, as activists who lived in Australia who had not experienced human rights abuses, and those for whom they were advocating. However, the extent to which they viewed this as problematic differed, depended on the messaging they received

from the organisation they belonged to. For example, documentation from both Global Justice and Refugee Aid clearly recognised the importance of victims of human rights abuses having their voices and stories heard. This was less evident in the documentation of Hope International and Youth against Poverty, much of which could be described as having a problematic 'good intentions' approach (Berlant, 2004). Organisations which have a clearly defined mandate on particular issues (such as refugee rights) are able to adopt a collaborative partnership approach with those for whom they were advocating, compared with organisations concerned with the broader concept of being 'against poverty', where poor people were perceived as Other. In addition, both Global Justice and Refugee Aid encouraged their members to have solidarity with the cause, rather than mainly focusing on the friendship and belonging between the members of the group, as was the case for Hope International and Youth against Poverty.

8.6   Final thoughts

Human rights activists face a dilemma, namely how to advocate for those who are less powerful, without removing that group's agency in the process. It is possible that being a reflective human rights activist (as I try to be), can lead to paralysis about our privileged social and financial position (from which we cannot escape), so instead we choose to give up on the process rather than do the 'wrong thing'. However, my study has demonstrated that being and becoming a human rights activist who belongs to an NGO group can provide powerful opportunities for people to participate in local, national and global citizenship practices. These are a key tenet of democracy at a time when questions are being raised about the commitment of many such countries across the world to upholding and promoting international human rights conventions and standards. In particular, my research has found that experiences which involved a local interaction and partnerships between activists, and those whose rights are being infringed, provides a meaningful and inclusive way of being, becoming and belonging as a human rights activist. Such an approach enables the unequal power dynamic to be visible, rather than hidden under the cloak of good intentions.

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MONASH University

APPENDIX A

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Project Title: Learning to be a human rights activist through engagement with non-governmental organisations

Assoc. Prof. Libby Tudball	**Ms. Genevieve Hall**
Department of Education	**PhD candidate**
email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉	email: ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉▉

You are invited to join in this study. Please read this page before deciding whether or not you would like to be involved. If you have any questions about it remember to ask the researcher at any time on the email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

This research project will ask how and why people learn to be human rights activists. It will compare people who volunteer or work at organisations that promote the protection of human rights. It will include asking why people become involved in this type of work; how they learn to be effective activists; how technology effects how human rights activists work; and what people learn from being a human rights activist. As a participant you will be asked to be involved in one interview that will take about 1 ½ hours.

Why were you chosen for this research?

The reason that you have been chosen to be involved in this research is because of the volunteer work you have done with this NGO in advocating for the protection of human rights.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing from the research

If you agree to be involved in this research will need to sign the consent form. By signing the consent form you are agreeing that being in this study is your choice. You can change my mind and choose to not be part of this study at any time.

Possible benefits and risks to participants

The potential significance of this research is that it will help others to understand the role and importance of human rights activism in society.

As a participant your involvement will mean that you experience the inconvenience of the time taken to participate in the interviews. There are no risks to you being involved in this project.

Confidentiality

Your name and the organisation will be kept anonymous during this research and in subsequent publications. This will be undertaken by using pseudonyms which may require the changing of identifying details such as place names and regional location.   The research will be published as part of a PhD thesis.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Results

The results will be published as part of a PhD thesis and a copy will be provided to participants upon request.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
██████████████████
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +██████████   Email:████████████   Fax: ████████████

Thank you for your participation in this research,

Libby Tudball and Genevieve Hall

Consent Form

Title: **Learning to be a human rights activist through engagement with non-governmental organisations**

NOTE: **This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records**

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher	☐ Yes	☐ No
I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped	☐ Yes	☐ No
I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required	☐ Yes	☐ No

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

I understand that I can request a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

I understand that data from the interview will be kept in a secure storage facility and accessible to the research team only. I also understand that the data will be destroyed after a 5-year period unless I consent to it being used in future research.

Participant's name

Signature   **Date**