Encouraging flourishing following tragedy:

The role of civic engagement in well-being and resilience

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The present study explores the potential of well-being and resilience benefits for people who are civically engaged in the context of the Christchurch terror attacks. Young people (n = 530, mean age = 20.9) completed one civic engagement, well-being, and resilience questionnaire. Results showed that people who were flourishing had significantly higher levels of civic engagement compared to those who were doing just ok. A hierarchical regression showed that civic engagement predicted 35% of the variance in well-being, controlling for age and SES. Civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, and helping a neighbour made unique contributions to well-being. A second hierarchical regression showed that civic engagement predicted 5% of the variance in resilience, controlling for well-being and age. Civic intentions, helping a neighbour, and volunteering made unique contributions to resilience. How civic engagement promotes well-being and resilience, and how to promote civic engagement following adversity, are discussed.

Keywords: Civic engagement; Well-being; Resilience

Introduction

Evidence of human excellence – generosity, love, community and flourishing - is perhaps most remarkable when evident in contexts of significant adversity and challenge (Ryff & Singer, 2003). In the aftermath of the Christchurch terror attacks on March 15th, people have reported they feel sad, angry, and fearful, but people have also reported they feel gratitude, love, respect, compassion, and belonging (Fouda, 2019; O'Connell Ripara, 2019).

While Aotearoa New Zealand continues to grieve for the 50 lives lost in the terror attack, there has also been an outpouring of support for the survivors and the Muslim community. Seventy thousand people signed a gun law reform petition, tens of thousands of New Zealanders have donated to survivor and families of victims support organisation, thousands of people have formed human chains of solidarity around mosques while people prayed, and tens of thousands have attended vigils, held in every centre around Aotearoa New Zealand (O'Connell Ripara, 2019). Directly following the attack, volunteers flocked to Christchurch to help (Martin, 2019), taxi drivers offered their services for free, (RNZ, 2019), people have brought food and flowers to mosques (Fouda, 2019), and organised donations of goods, vouchers, and care packages to survivors and the Muslim community

(Let's Collaborate, 2019). In the weeks following the attack people continue to offer their support to the Muslim community through donations and volunteering for organisations that support refugees and Muslims (Morris, 2019). The acts of compassion and contribution can be described as civic engagement – "individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern" (American Psychological Association n.d.). While the Muslim community have noted and given thanks to the people of New Zealand for their leadership, help, love and compassion (Fouda, 2019), civic engagement can also benefit the people who are participating – making not just our communities and nations better places, but improving individuals' well-being and resilience as well.

The present paper examines the types of civic engagement that can lead to higher well-being, resilience, and human flourishing. We argue that the acts of kindness and community participation shown by New Zealanders following the Christchurch terror attacks will not only "guide us to creating a more just and inclusive Aotearoa," (O'Connell Ripara, 2019) but also improve the well-being of the people who are being good citizens.

Civic Engagement

The term civic engagement describes a collection of values and behaviours that suggest that people believe their lives and

goals are connected to others, and they are committed to creating a better society (Flanagan & Christens, 2013; Sherrod & Lauckhardt, 2009). The importance of engagement to healthy societies and democracies cannot be understated - it is through civic engagement and the exercise of citizen rights and responsibilities that democracy is sustained (Hayhurst, 2017). In the present study the definition of civic engagement is left intentionally broad, as people from different groups, cultures, and countries have their own means of showing and understanding citizenship. For example, in some contexts voting is considered the highest expression of civic engagement (Vowles, 2004). In Aotearoa New Zealand, people under the age of 18 are not allowed to vote, so by some measures they would not be considered engaged. However, we know that New Zealand youth do contribute to their communities and work to address key challenges of their generation (Hayhurst, 2014). For example, on the same day as the Christchurch terror attacks, tens of thousands of young people in 40 centres around the country took to the streets demanding action on climate change – the largest youth protest in New Zealand history (Walls, 2019).

Generally, researchers and practitioners use the term civic engagement to describe a collection of values and behaviours. For the purpose of

the present study, we have selected several civic engagement variables that are relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand following the Christchurch terror attack: civic participation, civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, and interpersonal generosity. Civic participation describes diverse acts such as protesting, but also volunteering at organisations, helping neighbours, and working to make communities better (Flanagan, Syvertsen, & Stout, 2007). Civic values include believing that people can make a difference and wanting to make a difference, as well as feeling that helping other people, equality, and making the world a better place are important (Hayhurst, 2017). Civic commitment describes intending to contribute in the future, such as voting in the next election or volunteering to help people (see Sherrod et al., 2010). Community belonging is considered a "seedbed for the development of active citizenry," as it predicts civic intentions, helping, and involvement in groups (Duke et al., 2009, p. 167). Social trust is vital to democracy, and means that people have "a positive view of humanity… the belief that most people are fair, helpful and trustworthy," (Flanagan, 2003, p. 165). Finally, although there is a dearth of research linking interpersonal generosity to civic engagement, it does describe many of the acts of contribution and helping shown by people following the terror attacks, and is therefore included as a potential predictor of well-being and resilience.

Civic engagement & well-being

Beyond the importance of civic engagement to democracy, healthy communities, and addressing social and environmental challenges, it is also linked to individual well-being. The research on why this is remains unclear for several reasons. First, as mentioned, there are many definitions of civic engagement, making it hard to compare findings across groups, studies, and disciplines. Second, as there are diverse forms of civic expression and participation, it is likely that not all civic engagement is beneficial to well-being. People's motivations for engagement, the sense of belonging to the group they are working with, positive emotions, as well as the success of the civic acts, may all impact the personal outcomes for people who are contributing (Stukas, Hoye, Nicholson, Brown & Aisbett, 2016; Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1997). Third, predictors of civic engagement are

strongly linked to predictors of well-being such as SES and education levels (McCollum, 2016). People who are civically engaged are likely already on a path towards health and well-being (Ballard, Hoyt & Pachucki, 2018), and the relationship between the two is likely bi-directional (Lerner, Dowling & Anderson, 2003).

Despite these complications, there is still considerable evidence that civic engagement promotes well-being (Pancer, 2015). Civic engagement contributes to identity, sense of belonging in communities and society, purpose, positive relations to others, feelings of mastery, and personal growth– all of which are related to well-being outcomes (Duke, Skay, Pettingell, & Borowsky, 2009; Flanagan et al., 2007; Keyes, 2012; Putnam, 2001; Wilson, 2012). In this paper we look at more direct evidence that civic engagement can predict well-being, controlling for factors that often predict both, such as socio-economic status (SES). Moreover, we explore the high end of well-being – flourishing, and how it relates to civic engagement.

Civic engagement & flourishing

Flourishing describes people living within the optimal range of human functioning (Fredrickson, 2006). Individuals who are flourishing "like most parts of themselves, have warm and trusting relationships, see themselves as developing into better people, have direction in life, are able to shape their environments to satisfy their need, and have a degree of self-determination," (Keyes, 2002, p. 208).

While there are many predictors of flourishing, including positive emotions and strong support networks, contribution and civic engagement are especially relevant to the present context. Keyes (2006) has found that while youth who are languishing (with poor mental health) help people a couple times a month, youth who are flourishing help others at least once a week. Further, eudaimonia (i.e. striving toward excellence based on one's unique potential; see Ryff & Singer, 2008) is enhanced when people work to create positive change and their behaviours are congruent with their values (Waterman, 1993), strengths (Seligman, 2002), and prosocial selves (Steger, Kashdan, & Oishi, 2008). A large research programme run by Lerner and colleagues has shown that positive youth development is both a predictor and an

outcome of contribution (Lerner et al., 2005). Keyes (2012) recommends that we don't just need to shift our attentions away from mental illness to mental health, but also away from focusing on the individual to focusing on others and communities.

Civic Engagement & Resilience

Generally, resilience is defined as the ability to react to adversity and challenge in an adaptive and productive way, and is therefore considered crucial to healthy development (Hayhurst et al., 2015; Rutter, 1987). While there is a dearth of research specifically exploring the role of civic engagement in resilience, drawing from related areas of research, we can expect that civic engagement may contribute to resilience for several reasons. For example, belonging and social support both predict resilience (Hayhurst et al., 2015) and civic engagement (Duke et al., 2009; Youniss et al., 1998). Likewise, positive emotions, such as kindness, joy and love, both motivate generosity towards others (Hayhurst, 2010), and predict resilience (Fredrickson, 1998).

Of particular relevance to the present study, Frederickson and colleagues did an in-depth study of a small group of people following the 9/11 terror attacks in the United States (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, & Larkin, 2003). They found that following the attack, positive emotions such as gratitude, interest, and love, protected resilient people from depression and promoted positive mental health.

Amidst the grief and anger following the Christchurch terror attacks, talking about the benefits of civic engagement may seem incongruous or inappropriate. However, it is when individuals and communities are tested that we learn about human strength – how it is nourished and how it is undermined (Ryff & Singer, 2003). People in Aotearoa New Zealand report feeling grateful and interested in the country's unfolding political, social and spiritual response. But are civic responses to tragedy tokenistic or fleeting? We argue they are not. Instead, we argue that civic engagement is an active ingredient in promoting well-being and coping following adversity.

The present paper explores this possibility with a group of young people who completed one civic engagement and well-being questionnaire at the start of a tertiary class or a youth event. We predict that not only will levels of civic

engagement distinguish those who are flourishing from those who are doing just ok or languishing, but also that civic engagement will predict well-being and resilience. We hope to show that civic engagement is salutary and important following tragedies such as the Christchurch terror attack, not just to show support and love for survivors and their community, but also as an effective coping mechanism and to promote well-being and heal a nation.

Thus, we have three main research questions:

1. Do people who are flourishing have stronger civic engagement?
2. Can civic engagement predict well-being?
3. Can civic engagement predict resilience?

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 530 young people (192 males, range: 16-32 years, M= 20.9 years, SD = 2.76) taking part in a youth event or a tertiary class (psychology, physical education, or surveying). The present participants are a convenience sample selected from a larger parent study on civic engagement in Aotearoa because they had completed a wide range of well-being and civic engagement measures.

Three hundred and sixty-seven identified as New Zealand European/Pākeha and 151 as Māori, Pasifika, Asian, or another ethnic group. For the purpose of the present analysis, people who identified as Pākehā/ New Zealand European were categorised as the majority group, and people who identified as Māori, Pasifika, Asian, 'Other', or with more than one ethnic group were categorised as a minority ethnic group. The present method of categorisation is far from perfect as Aotearoa New Zealand is a bicultural nation that recognises Māori as the tangata whenua (first people, people of the land). Also, there are likely considerable differences in cultural conceptualisations and relationships to civic engagement between different minority ethnic groups (Jagers et al., 2017; Raihania & Walker, 2007). However, substantial civic engagement research has highlighted different levels of participation between majority and minority ethnic groups (Foster-Bey, 2008), and because of the sample size of

the present study, majority/minority was the most appropriate group distinction.

One hundred and eleven participants were taking part in a youth event that focused on supporting young people to make positive change in their communities. They completed the questionnaires on the first day of their event. Four hundred and nineteen participants were tertiary students (psychology, physical education, or surveying), who completed the questionnaire on the first day of class. Only a portion of the participants (n = 147) completed the resilience scale alongside the well-being scales. They were psychology students who completed the questionnaire for course credit.

Measures
Well-being

Well-being was measured using Keyes' (2009) 14-item Mental Health Continuum Short Form (MHC-SF, see also Keyes, 2006). This scale is designed to measure three facets of well-being: emotional (e.g., "How often do you feel happy?"), social (e.g., "How often do you feel that you had something important to contribute to society?"), and psychological (e.g., "How often do you feel that you liked most parts of your personality?"). Participants responded to items on a 1 (never) to 6 (every day) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α = .87.

Resilience was measured using a 15-item (shortened) version of Wagnild and Young's (1993), modified by Neill and Dias (2001) to measure levels of resilience in young people. Participants responded to items such as, "(w)hen I make plans I follow through with them," on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α = .91.

Mother's education

Level of mother's education was measured as a proxy for socio-economic status (SES). Asking for mother's education is standard practice in research with young people, as they are much more likely to respond, and respond accurately, than when asked about parental income (Entwisle & Astone, 1994). Furthermore, many participants were tertiary students, meaning that their current income may not reflect their background or living conditions as well as level of mother's education.

Civic values. Civic values were measured using a nine-item shortened version of Zaff and colleagues' (2010) civic duty scale, part of the Active Engaged Citizenship (AEC) measure. The scale asks participants to responds to questions such as, "I believe I can make a difference in my community," on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α = .87.

Civic intentions

Civic intentions were measured using three items taken from the CIRCLE (Centre for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement) expectations for engagement in community issues scales (Flanagan et al., 2007). The scale included questions such as, "(w)hen you think of the next few years, how likely are you to do volunteer work to help needy people?" Answers were scored on a 1 (not at all likely) to 5 (extremely likely) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α = .79.

Civic participation

For the purpose of the present study, civic participation was measured using three items drawn from CIRCLE's civic behaviour scale (Flanagan et al., 2007). The items are relevant to the present exploration of the types of behaviours New Zealanders have been doing following the terror attacks. Participants responded to the question, "during the last 12 months, how many times have you: 1) helped make your city or town a better place for people to live? 2) helped a neighbour? and, 3) volunteered your time (at a hospital, day care centre, food bank, youth program, community service agency)?" on a 0 (never) to 4 (5 or more times) Likert scale.

Community belonging

Participants' sense of community belonging was measured using a slightly modified version of Sheldon and Bettencourt's (2002) three-item group inclusion scale. The participant responded to three statements such as, "I feel included in my community", on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α = .89.

Social trust

Social trust was measured using two items from the CIRCLE civic measures paper (Flanagan et al., 2007). Participants responded to items such as, "(in) general,

most people can be trusted," on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α =.83.

Interpersonal generosity

RESULTS

Correlations

In order to assess the relationships between well-being, resilience and civic engagement, we performed a series of Pearson product-moment correlations

Interpersonal generosity (hereafter referred to as generosity) was measured using Smith and Hill's (2009) generosity scale. Participants responded to items such as, "(w)hen one of my loved ones needs my attention, I really try to slow

(see Table 1). Well-being was positively correlated to all civic engagement measures collected in this study. Well-being was also positively correlated to age and SES (measured by level of mother's education). Resilience was positively correlated to age, as well as civic values, civic intentions, sense of

down and give them the time and help they need", on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) Likert scale. The present findings supported the scale's reliability, Cronbach's α =.83.

community belonging, social trust, interpersonal generosity, or helping to make the city a better place, helping a neighbour, and volunteering in the past year. Resilience was not correlated to SES.

Table 1. Correlations between Demographic, Well-being, Resilience, and Civic Engagement Variables

	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. SES	.11*										
2. Well-being	.15**	.16**									
3. Resilience	.24**	.11	.71***								
4. Values	.14**	.16**	.36***	.23**							
5. Intent	.14**	.13**	.36***	.31***	.59***						
6. Belong	.00	.09	.37***	.30***	.20***	.18***					
7. Trust	.12*	.01	.39***	.27**	.25***	.11*	.14**				
8. Generosity	.09	.07	.36***	.27**	.51***	.40***	.16**	.11*			
9. City Better	.10*	.10*	.30***	.15*	.33***	.44***	.21***	.15**	.18***		
10. Neighbour	-.04	.01	.23***	.23**	.14**	.10*	.16**	.04	.17***	.28***	
11. Volunteer	.08	.10*	.28***	.10*	.35***	.45***	.17**	.15**	.25***	.50***	.23***

Note. $^*p < .05$, $^{**}p < .01$, $^{***}p < .001$. SES = levels of mother's education; WB = well-being; Values = civic values; Intent = civic intentions; Belong = community belonging; Trust = social trust; City/City Better = helped make the city a better place in past year; Neighbour = helped a neighbour in past year; Volunteer = volunteered in past year.

Comparing Groups

We performed a series of *t*-tests in order to explore whether there were differences between young men and young women, and people who identified with the majority or a minority ethnic group, and well-being and resilience. There were no differences between young men (*M* = 62.69, *SD* = 9.42) and young women (*M* = 63.71, *SD* = 9.00) in terms of well-being, *t*(441) = 1.14, *p* = .26. Young men scored significantly higher (*M* = 84.00, *SD* = 9.20) than young women (*M* = 79.66, *SD* = 13.34) on resilience, *t*(145) = 2.00, *p* < .05.

There were no differences between people who identified with a minority ethnic group (*M* = 63.06, *SD* = 9.14) and people who identified with the majority ethnic group (*M* = 63.42, *SD* = 9.18) in terms of well-being, *t*(440) = 0.39, *p* = .70. There were no differences between people who identified with a minority ethnic group (*M* = 78.18, *SD* = 12.39) and people who identified with the majority ethnic group (*M* = 82.00, *SD* = 12.21) in terms of resilience, *t*(145) = 1.66, *p* = .10.

Engagement & Flourishing

Based on Keyes' (2002) recommendations, we split the participants into three groups as a function of their scores on the well-being scale: Languishers, moderates and flourishers. There were only five participants who fit the languishing profile, who were excluded from the following analysis due to small numbers. We were left with two groups: those who Keyes and colleagues define as people who were doing moderately well at life (neither languishing nor flourishing, *n* = 180) and those who were flourishing (*n* = 244). We performed a series of *t*-tests in order to compared moderates and flourishers in terms of civic engagement (see Table 2).

As shown in Table 2, there were significant differences between moderates and flourishers on every civic engagement measure included in this study, as well as resilience. Even after controlling for multiple comparisons using the Holms Bonferroni correct factor, every comparison was

significantly different. Flourishers had significantly higher resilience, civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, and been more likely to have helped to make their city a better place, helped a neighbour, and volunteered in the past year. Flourishers also had significantly higher SES (measured by levels of mother's education) compared to moderates. Flourishing was not related to age.

Civic Engagement & Well-being

In order to assess whether civic engagement could predict well-being, controlling for common predictors of well-being such as age and SES, we performed a hierarchical regression. Mother's education (SES) and age were entered in the first step, and civic engagement variables were entered in the second (civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, making the city better, helping a neighbour, and volunteering).

Table 2. t-Test Results Comparing Differences between Flourishers and Moderates

	Moderate Mean/SD		Flourish Mean/SD		*t*	df
Age	20.68	2.70	21.03	3.14	1.18	422
SES	2.97	1.25	3.34	1.19	3.12**	414
Resilience	74.36	10.44	88.03	9.33	8.12***	136
Values	36.32	4.91	39.32	4.28	6.23***	363
Intent	12.80	4.24	15.23	4.39	5.27***	406
Belong	14.87	3.00	16.35	2.66	5.36***	421
Trust	6.15	1.86	7.32	1.57	6.53***	379
Generosity	39.19	5.00	40.95	4.91	3.61***	417
City	2.05	1.51	2.85	1.67	5.02***	408
Neighbour	2.46	1.55	2.82	1.51	2.44***	410
Volunteer	2.10	1.89	2.88	1.92	4.09***	411

Note. **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$. SES = levels of mother's education; Values = civic values; Intent = civic intentions; Belong = community belonging; Trust = social trust; City = helped make the city a better place in past year; Neighbour = helped a neighbour in past year; Volunteer = volunteered in past year.

Table 3. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Contributing to Well-being

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*R*	*R²*	*ΔR²*	*F Change*
Step 1					.21	.04	.04	8.72***
Age	.45	.17	.14	2.66				
SES	1.08	.37	.15	2.90				
Step 2					.63	.39	.35	26.34***
Age	.22	.14	.07	1.59				
SES	.68	.31	.09	2.21*				
Values	-.02	.11	-.01	-.21				
Intent	.52	.19	.15	2.68**				
Belonging	.73	.13	.23	5.41***				
Trust	1.47	.21	.30	6.91***				
Generosity	.35	.09	.19	4.00***				
City better	.34	.29	.06	1.21				
Neighbour	.73	.26	.12	2.79**				
Volunteer	.05	.24	.01	.20				

Note. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$. SES = levels of mother's education; Values = civic values; Intent = civic intentions; Belonging = community belonging; Trust = social trust; City Better = helped make the city a better place in past year; Neighbour = helped a neighbour in past year; Volunteer = volunteered in past year.

Table 4. Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Contributing Resilience

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*t*	*R*	*R²*	*ΔR²*	*F Change*
Step 1					.72	.52	.52	72.94***
Age	.63	.27	.14	2.34*				
Well-being	.92	.08	.68	11.36***				
Step 2					.75	.57	.05	1.95
Age	.68	.37	.15	2.58*				
Well-being	.88	.10	.65	8.86***				
Values	-.26	.20	-.10	-1.28				
Intent	.89	.37	.19	2.40*				
Belonging	.28	.27	.07	1.05				
Trust	.13	.43	.02	.30				
Generosity	.04	.17	.02	.26				
City better	-.62	.55	-.08	-1.13				
Neighbour	1.05	.51	.13	2.07*				
Volunteer	-1.11	.46	-.17	-.24*				

Note. *$p < .05$, ***$p < .001$. Values = civic values; Intent = civic intentions; Belonging = community belonging; Trust = social trust; City better = helped make the city a better place in past year; Neighbour = helped a neighbour in past year; Volunteer = volunteered in past year.

Table 3 shows the unstandardised regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardised regression coefficients (β), the R, R^2, R^2 change and F change at Step 1 (age and SES entered into the prediction equation) and Step 2 (with civic engagement variables entered into the prediction equation) of the hierarchical regression. The regression revealed that the overall model at Step 1 was significant, $F(2,377) = 8.72$, $p < .001$. Together, age and SES accounted for 4.4% (adjusted $R^2 = .04$) of the variation in well-being. Inspection of the beta weights revealed significantly positive effects for age, $\beta = .14$, $p < .01$ and SES, $\beta = .15$, $p < .01$.

The overall model at Step 2 was significant, $F(10,369) = 23.75$, $p < .001$. Together, age, SES, civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, making the city better, helping neighbours and volunteering, accounted for 39.2% (adjusted $R^2 = .38$) of the variation in well-being. Civic engagement explained an additional 34.7% of the variance in well-being, after controlling for age and SES, R^2 change = .35, F change (8, 369) = 26.34, $p < .001$.

In the final model, inspection of the beta weights revealed significantly positive effects for SES, $\beta = +.09$, $p < .05$, community belonging, $\beta = +.23$, $p < .001$, generosity, $\beta = +.19$, $p < .001$, social

trust, $\beta = +.30$, $p < .001$, civic intentions, $\beta = +.15$, $p < .01$, and helping a neighbour, $\beta = +.12$, $p < .01$.

In contrast, age, $\beta = +.07$, $p = .11$, civic values, $\beta = -.01$, $p = .83$, making the city better, $\beta = +.06$, $p = .06$, and volunteering, $\beta = +.01$, $p = .20$, did not make unique contributions to the model.

Civic Engagement & Resilience

In order to assess whether civic engagement could predict resilience, controlling for age and well-being, we used hierarchical regression. Age and well-being were entered at the first step, and civic engagement variables that were correlated to resilience (civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, making the city better, helping a neighbour, and volunteering) were entered at the second step.

Table 4 shows the unstandardised regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardised regression coefficients (β), the R, R^2, R^2 change and F change at Step 1 (age and well-being entered into the prediction equation) and Step 2 (with civic engagement variables entered into the prediction equation) of the hierarchical regression.

The regression revealed that the overall model at Step 1 was significant, $F(2,137) = 72.94$, $p < .001$. Together, age and well-

being accounted for 51.6% (adjusted $R^2 = .51$) of the variation in resilience. Inspection of the beta weights revealed significantly positive effects for age, $\beta = .14$, $p < .05$ and well-being, $\beta = .68$, $p < .001$.

The overall model at Step 2 was significant, $F(10,129) = 16.96$, $p < .001$. Together, age, well-being, civic values, civic intentions, community belonging, social trust, generosity, making the city better, helping neighbours, and volunteering, accounted for 56.8% (adjusted $R^2 = .53$) of the variation in resilience. Civic engagement explained an additional 5.2% of the variance in resilience, after controlling for age and well-being, R^2 change = .35, F change (8, 129) = 1.95, $p = .05$.

In the final model, inspection of the beta weights revealed significantly positive effects for age, $\beta = +.15$, $p < .05$, well-being, $\beta = +.65$, $p < .001$, civic intentions, $\beta = +.19$, $p < .05$, helping neighbours, $\beta = +.13$, $p < .05$, and volunteering, $\beta = -.17$, $p < .05$. In contrast, civic values, $\beta = -.10$, $p = .21$, community belonging, $\beta = +.07$, $p = .30$, social trust, $\beta = +.02$, $p = .77$, generosity, $\beta = +.02$, $p = .80$, and making the city better, $\beta = -.08$, $p = .26$, did not make unique contributions to resilience.

DISCUSSION

When the Al Noor Mosque Imam, Gamal Fouda, spoke to a crowd of thousands at Hagley Park in Christchurch on March 22nd, he said:

"Last Friday I stood in this mosque and saw hatred and rage in the eyes of the terrorist who killed 50 people, wounded 48 and broke the hearts of millions around the world. Today, from the same place I look out and I see the love and compassion in the eyes of thousands of fellow New Zealanders and human beings from across the globe who fill the hearts of millions."

As Gamal Fouda (2009) described, people across New Zealand and worldwide have responded with love and compassion to the survivors and those affected by the attacks. We argue that these high levels of civic engagement will not just help those in need, but also help those who are contributing. We provided evidence for this argument in three ways. First, we showed that civic engagement predicted well-being, while controlling for age and SES. In particular, civic intentions (planning on

volunteering or helping others in the future), sense of community belonging, social trust, generosity, and helping a neighbour in the past year, made unique and significant positive contributions to well-being. Second, we showed that civic engagement predicted resilience, after controlling for age and well-being. In particular, civic intentions, helping a neighbour and volunteering in the past year uniquely and positively contributed to resilience. Third, we showed that people who were flourishing had significantly higher levels of civic engagement – across every variable we measured – compared to people who were just doing ok. Taken together these findings suggest that it is likely that the tens of thousands of people who contributed to help the survivors and families of victims following the Christchurch terror attacks will experience improved well-being and resilience, especially if they helped a neighbour, volunteered, showed generosity, social trust, or a sense of community belonging.

One strength of the present study is that we used measures that explored both past civic acts (e.g., helping to make the city a better place, helping a neighbour, or volunteering in the past year) as well as future civic intentions (e.g., planning to volunteer in the future). Both past engagement and future commitment predicted well-being and resilience. Civic intentions are linked to people's civic identity – their values and beliefs about themselves as citizens. While people may not have been able to contribute in the past year for any number of reasons, simply wanting to help can make a difference to people's well-being and resilience.

There are several reasons why civic engagement may contribute to well-being and resilience. We know that civic engagement can nurture feelings of effectiveness, an important part of well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and resilience (Hayhurst et al., 2015). This may be especially crucial to deal with feelings of hopelessness in the face of senseless tragedies such as the Christchurch terror attack. Further, civic engagement

encourages a sense of belonging (Duke et al., 2009), which is another key aspect of well-being and positive intergroup behaviour (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Hunter et al., 2017). In the present study, community belonging was a unique predictor of well-being. Finally, civic engagement is one way of showing a positive social identity (Sherrod et al., 2010; Hayhurst, 2017). A compelling and growing literature explores the many health and well-being benefits of social identity (see Haslam, Jetten & Haslam, 2012) including resilience (Scarf at al., 2016). Future research should explore the potential influence of community belonging and social identity on civic engagement in terms of well-being outcomes.

Limitations & Future Research

Despite the strengths of the study, there are several limitations. First, we do not have data from the people who are presently contributing to their communities and supporting survivors following the terror attack. Instead, the present participants are a convenience sample of young people that had completed questionnaires that included behaviours such as those shown by New Zealanders following the terror attacks (e.g., helping neighbours, volunteering). There will likely be several differences between the people in the present study and the people who are contributing as this paper is written. The most important difference is that following the terror attacks people may have lower levels of well-being, or higher levels of mental health issues. Research suggests that most people recover fully following terror attacks, however some may experience persistent mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, health issues, and behavioural changes (Braun-Lewensohn et al., 2009; DiMaggio & Galea, 2006). Importantly, this paper is not intended for people in crisis, or the survivors or families of victims of the Christchurch terror attack. Instead this paper describes one way that

we can heal as a community and a nation, and the likely outcomes people will experience when they show love and support for the survivors and their community. It is also important to note that the present study found that past civic behaviours contributed to well-being and resilience – meaning that helping a neighbour now can buffer people from challenges in the future.

A second limitation is that although we had an adequate sample size who completed civic engagement and well-being measures, only 147 people also completed the resilience scale. Therefore, while resilience and well-being were strongly correlated, we were unable to show whether resilience predicted well-being. Further, participants only completed the questionnaire at one time point. While hierarchical regressions can show whether a variable can predict another variable, a longitudinal design would provide more convincing evidence.

Therefore, future research exploring the links between levels of civic engagement, well-being and resilience of people following terrorist attacks is clearly warranted, and a longitudinal design is recommended.

Pursuing salutary well-being and resilience outcomes begs the questions of how to cultivate civic engagement following crises. There is mixed evidence concerning the psychological benefits of civic engagement programmes, such as community service through schools, or requests for donations following natural disasters (Hayhurst, 2010). As mentioned in the introduction, motivation may play an important role as to why some programmes are successful while others are not (Stukas et al., 2016). Other important features of successful civic engagement programmes are a sense of belonging, social identity, and positive emotions (Fredrickson et al., 2003; Hayhurst, 2017; Scarf et al., 2016), although further research is needed.

Conclusions

The present study explored the benefits of civic engagement to an individual's well-being and resilience. Results showed that something as simple as helping a neighbour can buffer people from adversity and promote well-being. While all civic engagement measures were positively correlated to well-being, and people who were flourishing showed significantly higher levels of civic engagement, our results suggest that specific acts made unique contributions to well-being. In particular, civic intentions (planning to volunteer and help the community in the future), community belonging, social trust, generosity, and helping a neighbour were especially important to well-being. Likewise, civic intentions, helping a neighbour, and volunteering in the past year were especially important to people's resilience. Future research should explore people's levels of civic engagement and well-being in response to terror attacks specifically, use a longitudinal design, and explore the roles that community belonging and social identity play in civic engagement outcomes.

In times of challenge and tragedy it can be easy to consider our own well-being as unimportant or trivial, especially compared to those who directly suffered from the terror attack. However, in order to effectively support other New Zealanders, make the appropriate changes to our communities, policy, and government, and make Aotearoa safer for everyone, we need to be well and we need to be resilient. We argue, based on the literature and the results from the present study, that contributing to society and supporting our own well-being are two sides of the same coin – by being engaged and contributing we bolster our well-being and become more resilient. In short, in so much that people who are flourishing are also highly engaged, it appears that we are designed to be good to each other and care for our communities.

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