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## **VOLUNTEERS DURING A CRISIS IN ISRAEL: A CASE STUDY OF SPONTANEOUS SELF-ORGANIZED VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY**

### **WOLONTARIUSZE PODCZAS KRYZYSU W IZRAELU: STUDIUM PRZYPADKU SPONTANICZNIE SAMOORGANIZUJĄCEJ SIĘ DZIAŁALNOŚCI WOLONTARIACKIEJ**

In Israel, a large number and a wide range of non-governmental volunteering organizations exist in various fields. At the same time, due to the multiplicity of security incidents and other national crises, there are also numerous independent volunteer initiatives emerging within specific communities, small communities, or cities. Private initiatives that started as small volunteer aid have grown mainly thanks to the technological possibilities that enable the transfer of information about a crisis and the needs associated with it. This study examines the volunteers' perception of effectiveness in a self-organized spontaneous setting, and their sense of belonging to the community and the State of Israel. This article presents a case study of unorganized, spontaneous volunteer activity in Israel in situations of stress and crisis. The study is based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews with those who engaged in spontaneous self-organized volunteer activity. The study findings show that mobilizing volunteers through WhatsApp messages strengthened the sense of effectiveness in performing the task, fostered the volunteers' sense of belonging to their community, and contributed to the rapid achievement of the task. The study also highlights the socio-moral dimensions that intensify in such a volunteering process and the individual's feelings about his place in society and his observation of society's behaviour in general.

Keywords: sociology of voluntary work; self-organized volunteering; spontaneous volunteering; crisis; messaging app; WhatsApp

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W Izraelu istnieje duża liczba i szeroki zakres pozarządowych organizacji wolontariackich działających w różnych obszarach. Jednocześnie, ze względu na mnogość incydentów bezpieczeństwa i innych kryzysów wewnętrznych, istnieje również wiele niezależnych inicjatyw wolontariackich powstających w ramach konkretnych społeczności, małych społeczności lub miast. Prywatne inicjatywy, które zaczynały jako niewielka pomoc wolontariuszy, rozrosły się głównie dzięki możliwościom technologicznym, które umożliwiają przekazywanie informacji o kryzysie i potrzebach

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z nim związanych. Niniejsze opracowanie bada postrzeganie przez wolontariuszy skuteczności w samoorganizującym się spontanicznie otoczeniu oraz ich poczucie przynależności do społeczności i państwa Izrael. W artykule przedstawiono studium przypadku nieorganizowanej, spontanicznej aktywności wolontariuszy w Izraelu w sytuacjach stresu i kryzysu. Badanie oparte jest na obserwacji uczestniczącej i półstrukturalnych wywiadach z osobami, które zaangażowały się w spontaniczną, samoorganizującą się działalność wolontariacką. Wyniki badania pokazują, że mobilizowanie wolontariuszy poprzez wiadomości WhatsApp wzmacniało poczucie skuteczności w wykonywaniu zadania, wzmacniało poczucie przynależności wolontariuszy do ich społeczności i przyczyniało się do szybkiej realizacji zadania. Badanie podkreśla również wymiary społeczno-moralne, które intensyfikują się w takim procesie wolontariatu oraz odczucia jednostki dotyczącej jej miejsca w społeczeństwie i jej obserwacji zachowań społeczeństwa w ogóle.

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia wolontariatu; wolontariat samoorganizujący się; wolontariat spontaniczny; kryzys; komunikator internetowy; WhatsApp

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Volunteers play an important role in providing welfare services.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, due to the reduction in government support in welfare services and the need to replace professional workers, the demand for volunteers has increased.<sup>2</sup> Although the service provided by volunteers cannot completely replace the service provided by professionals, volunteers can still play an important role by helping with the provision of general services, and particularly by providing assistance during emergencies.<sup>3</sup>

Civilian volunteering during emergencies has been discussed in previous studies. Those studies addressed the act of spontaneous volunteering in disaster areas and at emergencies, focusing primarily on the way NGOs or other officials manage them.<sup>4</sup> In Israel, NGOs play an important role in the well-being and security of Israeli residents. However, very little is known about the volunteering patterns of people who choose to volunteer spontaneously and in a self-organized manner, or about private initiatives that are set up and run through social media and WhatsApp messages. Despite the above, it is evident that the number of volunteers measured in Israel by the Central Bureau of Statistics remains low when compared to the Western world (18%–20%). However, this is inconsistent with citizens' sense of continual volunteering and social involvement.

This article will present a case study as part of broader research that triangularly investigates forms of social help and ways of volunteering spontaneously in Israeli society. This case study illustrates how a successful spontaneous volunteer effort utilized the WhatsApp messaging platform as a tool for dealing with an emergency situation. This review is intended to illustrate

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<sup>1</sup> Haski-Leventhal, Cnaan (2009).

<sup>2</sup> Cnaan, Cascio (1998).

<sup>3</sup> Stallings, Quarantelli (1985).

<sup>4</sup> Quarantelli (1997).

the self-organized spontaneous activity using WhatsApp as a tool for disseminating information and forming an active group to organize volunteering. The focus is on spontaneous self-organization for a social cause rather than social media. Activation of the volunteers is achieved by sending a WhatsApp message to a large group of members, usually by residential area. In Israel, several spontaneous volunteer groups devoted to various topics were formed using WhatsApp. A few groups have greatly expanded and lately gained special recognition and fame for being able to recruit and activate a large number of volunteers over time.

Various titles were attached to define this kind of volunteer activity: 'emergent group'<sup>5</sup> 'unaffiliated responders', 'unofficial volunteers',<sup>6</sup> 'spontaneous volunteers'<sup>7</sup> and 'unorganized volunteers', 'responders'.<sup>8</sup> In this article will use the term 'spontaneous self-organized volunteers' (SSV).

This article addresses the gap in the literature on spontaneous self-organized volunteers in Israel (henceforth I will use the acronym: SSV). Moreover, it aims to explore how SSVs using WhatsApp perceive their sense of belonging and effectiveness, and to propose a new understanding of the topic, while expanding the body of research, with an additional unique country descriptive – Israel. For this purpose, the main questions are:

(Q1) How do SSVs perceive their effectiveness in the task?

(Q2) How do SSVs perceive their sense of belonging to their community and to (Q3) Israeli society?

(Q4) How do SSVs perceive their social responsibility?

(Q5) How do SSVs perceive the Israeli public sense of social responsibility?

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The basic definition of volunteering is an act done of one's own free will. The volunteer donates his time, service, expertise, or knowledge, directly or indirectly, without receiving monetary or other rewards. The solid and familiar foundation of volunteering is based on traditional volunteering. However, with the social and technological changes, more forms of volunteering are being created, which are less traditional and more contemporary.

The basic traditional volunteer activities are carried out through organizations that are engaged in various fields: such as welfare, security, education, and helping the elderly. Such organizations employ an array of volunteers who are not necessarily professionals in the field of volunteering; however, they are very keen to contribute. Traditional volunteering is usually stable and coherent, and is done on a regular and defined basis, at a certain time and place. It is based on identity with and belonging to the organization, with

<sup>5</sup> Stallings, Quarantelli (1985).

<sup>6</sup> Barsky et al. (2007).

<sup>7</sup> Clizbe (2004).

<sup>8</sup> Johansson (2013).

volunteers demonstrating great loyalty. The organization encourages identification with traditional cultural norms based on traditional cultural identities.

Contemporary volunteer activities are carried out through funds, and private initiatives. The worldview encompasses not just the provision of services but also the activation of initiatives that increase social values. The activity is engaged in various fields; however, it emphasizes the community. Contemporary volunteering is usually done ad hoc, it relates to the cause and not to the activity operator. It balances personal ability and will with social needs

When it comes to volunteering and researching the subject, regardless of how volunteering is done, many key theories and sociological concepts related to human-social conflict come into play. Social capital, the morality of human beings, and solidarity all tie together and cannot be separated. Volunteering represents a distinct set of social ties and form of solidarity. It is seen as an important and unique social solidarity that brings society together. Altruism, kindness, generosity, social obligation and community spirit are all exemplified through volunteering.<sup>9</sup> It is a fundamental emblem of collective belonging and group identity that aids in social integration<sup>10</sup>. Showing solidarity is considered to be an act that promotes social actions through shared goals. Solidarity unites people from various categories, such as common identity, common interests, moral beliefs, or other beliefs, with a common commitment to a cause, especially in response to societal hardship. Solidarity is based on rationality and interests but also on emotions such as hope, identification, empathy and friendship. Solidarity serves to defend human and civil rights, as well as the public's well-being and personal security. Societies are often created through a shared sense of identity or identification. Identity is a complex and controversial term relating to how we understand who we are. The identity of the citizens of the State of Israel rests on three components: the National component, the Civic component, and the Religious component. The identity of every citizen includes all of the components but in different intensities, depending on the way each individual chooses to define himself.<sup>11</sup> Jewish national identity is the common identity of the majority of Israeli citizens. It emphasizes the tradition, history and culture of the Jewish people, along with a strong sense of solidarity towards all members of the Jewish people in Israel and around the world. Others identify with their civic-Israeli identity more. An element in the self-definition of the individual emphasizes the affinity between the individual and the state. Civic identity is the most common broad identity of all the citizens of the country. Expressions of civic identity are found in the citizen's contribution to his country, in obedience to its laws, by accepting the institutions of the State of Israel, by exercising the right to vote, and by participating in military or civilian service and social involvement. The State of Israel defines itself as a Jewish and democratic state. However, not all citizens equally identify with this complex identity since not all citizens of

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<sup>9</sup> Hustinx, Cnaan, Handyj (2010).

<sup>10</sup> Hustinx et al. (2010).

<sup>11</sup> Alperson, Dobi, Starkman (2016).

the state are Jewish.<sup>12</sup> Lastly, religious identity is an element in the individual's self-definition, which concerns his attitude and the degree of his religiosity. Religious identity is manifested in the degree of observance of religious precepts and the performance of rituals typical of religion. Religious identity unites members of the same religious group living in the State of Israel and distinguishes them from other members of different religious groups. The majority in Israel identify with the Jewish religion, while the other religious identities – Muslim, Christian and Druze – are the identities of minorities in Israel.<sup>13</sup> In all three of these elements together and each of them separately lies the Israeli obligation to engage in mutual help.

According to Sorek,<sup>14</sup> an individual must have a sense of destiny, concern, and even love for others; otherwise, putting oneself in danger or paying another existential price for the well-being of others will be difficult. The roots of this commitment lie in the Jewish traditions and in the holy commandments of Halakhah, which include the idea of helping others, and the ordinance of all 'Israel guarantees each other'. However, the commitment to Jewish solidarity is a product of a long Jewish history that created the constant need for people to help each other, due to their nationalized ethnic and cultural affiliation. It relied on trust, care and brotherhood, and as Parsons mentioned, it was a collective consciousness within an individual consciousness.<sup>15</sup> This is where the concept of 'social capital' can be connected. It emphasizes the value of social ties and the role of cooperation and trust as a way of achieving shared social or economic results. This concept describes the level of connectivity within and on social networks. When people devote their time and energy to improving their communities' social capital, they enrich the social environment for everyone.<sup>16</sup> Putnam uses the concept of social capital to show its role in generating benefits at the neighbourhood and community levels. 'Social Capital refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions.'<sup>17</sup> Moreover, some scholars separate social capital into three main types: bonding, bridging, and linking. Each type identifies a particular difference in the relationship strength and the composition of the networks. This explains why the outcomes for individuals and communities are different.<sup>18</sup> The 'Bonding' is usually characterized by high levels of similarity in demographic characteristics, positions and attitudes. This type of social capital is good for providing social support and personal assistance, especially in times of need, like a disaster.<sup>19</sup> 'Bridging' demonstrates the relationship between people who are loosely connected, represent demographic diversity, and provide new in-

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<sup>12</sup> Alperson, Dobi, Starkman (2016).

<sup>13</sup> Alperson, Dobi, Starkman (2016).

<sup>14</sup> Sorek (2015).

<sup>15</sup> Parsons (2013).

<sup>16</sup> Naparstek, Dooley, Smith (1997).

<sup>17</sup> Putnam (1993): 167.

<sup>18</sup> Aldrich (2012).

<sup>19</sup> Aldrich, Meyer (2014).

formation and resources that can help people advance in society. Social capital bridging often comes from involvement in organizations, political institutions, parent-teacher associations, sports clubs, and education and religious groups.<sup>20</sup> In Israel, bridging social capital and the bonding social capital exist together since Israel is a multinational and multicultural immigrant country with many different groups.

According to the theory of collective social capital, social networks are a source of solidarity in voluntary organizations. In this view, social capital is the property of the social network and not of the individual, and it includes the ties between them. Presently, thanks to technological advances, social networks are embedded on top of social media, which encourages and develops social activism. There is no distinct social network utilized for social media activism. However, there are various social media platforms consisting of different applications and different websites. It is a virtual community created so that people can contact other people through web-based tools. Social media activism is an aspect of activism that uses the media as a tool for communication, on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and through newspaper ads, spreading the news of the social action needed to a mass audience.<sup>21</sup>

One of the first scholars to discuss social media as a brand-new social networking platform for coordinated effort was Clay Shirky in 2011.<sup>22</sup> He claims that over time the global communication system has become more dense, complicated and interactive. People have easier access to information and more possibilities to participate. People are able to develop a sense of community through social media, which served as a close predictor of solidarity.<sup>23</sup> Adger<sup>24</sup> found that social capital plays a significant role in how the state and its society respond to the situation and cope with a crisis. The importance of civic involvement and solidarity rests on a political approach which recognizes that the public should not assume that the government and its branches have the sole responsibility for meeting its needs. Hence, public mobilization is needed and crucial for democracies that strive to function properly. Governments have a significant impact on institutionalizing solidarity; however, solidarity demands an active approach from society, moving beyond the passive expectation that something will be done, and working towards a common goal and building social resilience.<sup>25</sup> The notion of group or community resilience is used in many academic disciplines, and the concept of resilience has several definitions that relate to various spheres of knowledge and different disciplines. Social resilience includes a component of consciousness, reflecting society's beliefs in its ability to overcome difficulty.<sup>26</sup> Although the issue of national re-

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<sup>20</sup> Small (2009).

<sup>21</sup> Manju (2019).

<sup>22</sup> Shirky (2011).

<sup>23</sup> Thomas (2018).

<sup>24</sup> Adger (2003).

<sup>25</sup> Gianni (2021).

<sup>26</sup> Eshet, Lev (2011).

silience is still being researched, the geopolitical reality of the State of Israel is characterized by significant instability and dynamism that require Israelis to find creative solutions for social activism, such as spontaneous self-organized volunteerism. On top of that, due to natural disasters, and by responding to those in need, Israelis constantly find themselves helping each other out of solidarity.

Spontaneous self-organized voluntary activity in Israel is active both in daily life and in emergencies. To understand volunteers' perception of social responsibility, this case study will describe and analyse their sense of belonging, and their perception of social responsibility in the Israeli public. These aspects can shed light on the success of spontaneous volunteer activity during the armed conflict with Gaza in 2018.

### III. CASE STUDY AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE

The case study is focused on the time of the clashes on the Gaza border that began in March 2018. Incendiary kites were launched from the Gaza Strip to Israel to set fire to the Israeli territories targeted in these incidents. As a result, hundreds of fires broke out in the Israeli cities near the Gaza Strip, and thousands of acres of fields and groves were burned. In addition, rockets were fired at settlements in Israel up to Tel Aviv, and the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) responded with tank fire and airstrikes on Gaza.

In such situations, the routine for families living in the area is broken. It is impossible to send the children to schools and kindergartens, there is no going to work, people panic-buy food, and sometimes new supplies do not arrive in the stores due to difficulty in shipping.

As the routine is violated, the Israeli public organizes spontaneously. A WhatsApp message is sent through different groups, in different cities. Sometimes it is run by one person or a group of friends who initiate voluntary activity for the sake of Gaza communities. The message includes the type of help required: starting with hosting families (to get them out of the 'fire zone'), collecting gear donations for those families, baby food, or medical first aid – all done spontaneously, not under any NGO.

At the same time, there is a concern for the soldiers serving in the areas under attack as well, and spontaneous volunteers organize packages of personal gear and sweets for the benefit of the soldiers. Concern for the families in the line of fire and the IDF soldiers is expressed in parallel. The spontaneous unorganized activity and the messages conveyed by WhatsApp relate to both groups and their different needs.

After the first messages are sent out, and before people respond, it is time to set up a meeting and collection point. Usually, someone volunteers his house as the 'Hub', however, sometimes the local municipalities also get involved and help provide a meeting and storage place, thus encouraging the public's spontaneous activity.

Once the first messages have been sent, and goods begin to arrive, there is a need for volunteer personnel to assist in packing and sorting the goods, lists of hosts, and transportation. Then a new WhatsApp message is sent, and a new group of volunteers arrives, willing to help as needed. It should be emphasized that the first initiator of spontaneous volunteering is what drives the continuity of volunteering, the sequence of messages, and conveys the requirements and needs. There is usually a group of friends or family around who help him, and as the activity expands, the spontaneous volunteers take turns, each according to his will and ability.

#### IV. METHODOLOGY

Case study research examines real-life phenomena in-depth and within the context of their surroundings. It investigates an event, group, individual, or problem.<sup>27</sup> The latter is picked because it is interesting for theoretical reasons, and because it is contrary to quantitative logic.<sup>28</sup> The contextual conditions of the case study are not controlled, as they are in experiments, for they are a component of the inquiry. Non-random sampling is common in case study research. For this article, a case study methodology was employed to identify the volunteer's perceptions of belonging, their perception of social responsibility, and their views on Israeli public social responsibility – while they were volunteering spontaneously during the 2018 Gaza armed conflict.

The researcher participated in – and conducted research during – six-hour daily volunteer activity in the collecting 'hub' over a period of four days. The volunteer activity was observed, and observation notes were taken. Twenty-seven adult participants, including both men and women, were observed and interviewed. The participants were present during the spontaneous volunteering, agreed to be interviewed, and agreed that the researcher could use their words for the study. The participating volunteers shared their thoughts and feelings in response to the researcher's semi-structured questions, while volunteering. Some of the statements were collected in 'small talk' during a break from the activity. The transcribed notes were analysed by coding, categorizing, and reflecting to find the proper essence of the themes using the Atlas.ti 8 program.

In the research, Stratified sampling was used, and availability sampling was also performed for this case study.

Sampling Error: although an availability sample cannot determine a margin of error or a confidence level, the non-random sample provides us with information about a population that has the same interests.

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<sup>27</sup> Yin (2014).

<sup>28</sup> Ridder (2017).



## V. FINDINGS

Participants: 27 adult participants were observed and interviewed, Women – 32%, Men – 68%. Age range: 35–55.

Analysis of the observation and interviews revealed two main points of view: personal and social-moral. The personal point of view addresses effectiveness, purposeful, and no need for commitment, while the social-moral point of view addresses social responsibility and the mutuality ethos in an emergency.

The personal point of view refers to effectiveness and purposeful (Question 1) with the addition of no need for commitment. Participants referred to the WhatsApp message as a trigger to those willing to volunteer, available to volunteer, and who want to volunteer. In addition to effectiveness, participants suggested that their preference for spontaneous volunteering due to the fact that they are not committed to the organization, which requires them to volunteer regularly and on a schedule. Many have taken the position that their lives are too busy to commit to an NGO. Hence, a response to social activity on the spot allows them to be socially involved but at the same time only committed to the task and not to an organization (Question 3). (The translation is provided as is without language adjustment).

*I am comfortable volunteering when needed and finish it. Come, do and go. Be efficient.... This is the opportunity to volunteer without being committed. I am not committed to the group, not to the people for whom I volunteer, just to the mission... no one checks if I arrived or not. You should be task-oriented and efficient.*

*This is a no-obligation volunteering, you are not measured, it is effective and very specific. The task is clear.... Volunteering that is not stiff, nor measured. It makes it possible to take part in social commitment but not to stick to an organization, and a fixed time.*

*It is convenient to me, it's effective immediately, in most cases it's on my way and that's the idea of the group. It does not interfere with the routine and gives me a good feeling that I did something good.*

*Volunteering is easy without the commitment and it's not complex.... I do not know the people I volunteer for and because I cannot commit to a fixed day and time, this immediate action and spontaneity helps me be a part in an effective and accurate social action...*

The question of belonging to their community and to Israeli society (Question 2) was also addressed. Participants note that being part of a WhatsApp group that occasionally engages in social issues brings them closer to the community in which they live, and it creates encounters with other community members who give their time. Volunteers stated that their volunteering act is intended for the benefit of society and their community in general, with reference to a personal point of view (which will be addressed later in this section). However, by responding to volunteering initiatives, the spontaneous volunteers consolidate a sense of belonging to the community. The answer to how spontaneous volunteers perceive their status in Israeli society is not unequivocal. The volunteers expressed contrasting opinions regarding their perception of their status in Israeli society.

*In my community everyone knows that I am a volunteer, and I know that there are positive opinions about it, and I feel close to my community ... I do my social part, regardless of status and opinions.... I am not sure that my value rises in the eyes of the Israeli public,*

*I know my community values me, but it has nothing to do with Israeli society's appreciation. Everyone in this nation is busy with himself and at the same time everyone helps and volunteers as much as he can.*

*I do not have a community to which I belong, I live in a big city, no one knows anyone, but in the street where I live, and in the children's schools, they know I volunteer and think positive things about me, in the poor of Israeli society ... I do not know if I can testify to a greater sense of closeness...*

The socio-moral point of view addressed social responsibility and mutual-ity ethos during times of emergency.

One of the aims of the study was to find out how volunteers feel about the Israeli public's willingness to help in an emergency (Question 4). The way a person processes information about other people, the interpretation given, and how that interpretation influences a person's behaviour are all parts of personal perception.<sup>29</sup> In this case study, the volunteers perceive the Israeli public's sense of social responsibility as high. Most participants believe that people volunteer more in an emergency and crisis. However, they were unsure about the growth in the number of volunteers; on the contrary, many mentioned that they meet the same people at every spontaneous volunteering act and that they do not see the circle of volunteers expand.

*Volunteering is a social responsibility; it is the right thing to do as a personal example.... I volunteer because it's the right thing to do in the community I come from. This is how I was raised. This is how I want my kids to behave.*

*Volunteering is a social obligation, as our society cannot ignore the need for mutual help. Otherwise, we have no place in this world without a mutual guarantee.*

*Volunteering is a way to improve the living environment of my children and of their entire generation.*

*Volunteering is helping others, the Jews in need. As if I have responsibility for the others' situation...*

The ethos of mutuality was examined in the interviewee's responses as well. In this case, the volunteers perceive their social duty to take part in volunteer activities for the people, especially in case of emergency.

*In an emergency there is a sense of mutual help for society, you want to be part of those who help. In general, I think that time of distress promotes volunteering... When something happens there is a sense of duty to help each other, this is our duty as a society, and I'm part of it. Mutual help is a social obligation. I feel I can't ignore time of crisis, It's the rule we live upon, as benevolence... in an emergency sure (people) volunteer. There is solidarity, all of Israel is cooperating in emergencies. At these times there is no 'I' in time of crisis there is always 'us'.*

*People volunteer out of reciprocity and belonging to state. A sense of commitment to help. This is a social pattern. Ask anyone he will tell you that in an emergency there is a mutual duty to help. Help in times of need is a religious command. It is a moral judgment literally. I can't ignore it and nor can the Israeli people.*

*I volunteer in an emergency like now in Corona time. I must be involved. I feel it's a moral duty, kind of benevolence.*

*Emergency is the reason for volunteering – a guarantee for the people of Israel....*

<sup>29</sup> Aronson, Aronson (2012).

## VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Israel is a multinational and multicultural immigrant state. At the same time, its citizens share a common national identity. National identity is the element that determines an individual's sense of belonging in the ethnic-cultural sense. It is based on a common ethnic origin, traditions, culture, language, history, and territory as well as symbols, shared values and a sense of solidarity, and the mutual guarantee that exists between them. Life in the State of Israel is saturated with security tensions, occasional terrorism, and natural disasters, expanding the need for solidarity and mutual guarantee in the form of spontaneous self-organized volunteering. In this case study, it is evident that the volunteers have a high sense of effectiveness for volunteering in spontaneous manner. They further added that due to their busy lives, spontaneous volunteering allows them to commit to the task rather than to an organization, so it increases efficiency. The use of WhatsApp is a tool for conveying the message and coordinating the effort while developing a sense of community and solidarity, as is the case with activism on social networks. As for a sense of belonging to the community, participants made it clear that spontaneous volunteering brings them closer to the community in which they live. The respondents see the importance of cooperation to strengthen society's solidarity and resilience. Moreover, it confirms that people believe in volunteering and its benefit to the community. This finding confirms that social capital plays a role in the belief that the more we use this capital and its components, and the more we become part of it, the closer we get to the community and the more we unite with it. None of the respondents had an unequivocal perception of their status in Israeli society, leading the researcher to conclude that spontaneous volunteers' perception of their status in Israeli society is not distinct. Therefore, the view of the perception of status at the national level may be too broad. There is a need for a narrower view at the group or community level, as adopted in the previous question. The findings show that participants believe the Israeli public will volunteer more during an emergency. It reflects the Israeli people's resilience and assurance that they can count on one another. Community resilience, according to Pfefferbaum and co-authors,<sup>30</sup> is defined as the ability of the people of a community to take joint, deliberate, and purposeful action to increase the community's collective coping with extreme occurrences.

Thanks to the expanding access to information and communication provided by modern technologies, people in different areas can get information about the need to volunteer in times of crisis. For Israelis, volunteering is an act of mobilization rather than common practice. Its participants exemplify the Jewish/Israeli ethos of mutual responsibility (*Kol Israel Arevim Ze La Ze*). Ethos is a powerful motivator for fostering social identity and cohesiveness, solidarity, and a cooperative attitude in pursuing moral ideas. This reflects Israelis' sense of obligation to help in times of need and the fact that living in a state of continuous emergency motivates the general public to adopt the Israeli military ethos of 'one for all, all for one.'

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<sup>30</sup> Pfefferbaum et al. (2013).

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