

Victim Hierarchy and Processing a Disaster in Volendam

AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THE CAFÉ FIRE OF 2001

Sander Koks

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Author

Sander Koks

Master Crisis & Security Management

Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs

Leiden University

Supervisor

Dr. P.G.M. Aarten

Second reader

Dr. A.V. van der Vlies

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List of Abbreviations

APS	Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum <i>General Pedagogical Study Center</i>
AIC Het Anker	Advies en Informatie Centrum Het Anker <i>Advice and Information Center Het Anker</i>
BSNV	Belangenvereniging Slachtoffers Nieuwjaarsbrand Volendam <i>Interest group Victims of the New year's eve fire Volendam</i>
CRN	Centrum voor Re-integratie en Nazorg <i>Centre for Reintegration and Aftercare</i>
EMDR	<i>Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing</i>
IAC	Informatie en Advies Centrum <i>Information and Advice Center</i>
LOVE	Lokale Omroep Volendam Edam <i>Local Broadcasting Volendam Edam</i>
NiVo	Nieuw Volendam <i>New Volendam, local newspaper</i>
NNV	Nazorgstichting Nieuwjaarsbrand Volendam <i>Aftercare Foundation New Year's Fire Volendam</i>
SSNV	Stichting Slachtoffers Nieuwjaarsbrand Volendam <i>Foundation for Victims of the New Year's Fire Volendam</i>
WMO	Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning <i>Social Support Act</i>

Table of Content

Acknowledgements	2
List of Abbreviations.....	3
Table of Content.....	4
1. Introduction	6
1.1 Motivation	6
1.2 Problem Definition.....	7
1.3 Research Question.....	8
1.4 Relevance	9
1.5 Reading Guide.....	9
2 Theoretical Framework	10
2.1 Victim Hierarchy.....	10
2.1.1 Processing a Disaster.....	11
2.2 Aftercare.....	12
2.3 Community Resilience	14
2.4 Previous Research	15
2.4.1 Volendam	15
2.4.2 Processing a Disaster.....	16
2.4.3 Aftercare	16
3. Methodology	17
3.1 Narrative Research	17
3.2 Operationalization	19
3.3 Respondents	20
3.4 Data Analysis	22
4. Analysis	24
4.1 Introduction	24
4.2 The Respondents Narratives.....	24
4.2.1 Andre	24
4.2.2 Bart	26
4.2.3 Chris	27
4.2.4 Dylan	29
4.2.5 Ewout	30
4.2.6 Frits.....	31
4.2.7 Guusje.....	33
4.2.8 Hanna	35

4.2.9 Ivo.....	38
4.2.10 Julia	40
4.2.11 Koen	42
4.2.12 Lisa	44
5. Analysis of Narratives	49
5.1 Victim Hierarchy.....	49
5.1.1 Victim Hierarchy Analysis of Narratives	49
5.2 Aftercare.....	51
5.2.1 Aftercare Analysis of Narratives	52
6 Conclusion.....	56
6.1 Conclusion.....	56
6.2 Strength and Limitations	58
6.3 Future Research.....	60
7.References	62
7.1 Literature	62
7.2 Electronic Sources.....	64
7.3 Newspapers	64
8. Appendices	65
8.1 Appendix A: Interview Questions.....	65
8.2 Appendix B: Consent Form.....	67

1. Introduction

1.1 Motivation

A disaster that everyone in the Netherlands still remembers is the disaster that occurred on New Year's Eve in 2000. A small café in Volendam, the Hemel, caught fire because a sparkler hit the Christmas decorations that hung from the ceiling (Van den Eerenbeemt & de Visser, 2001). The cafe was decorated with Christmas branches, Christmas bells and Christmas lights. The Christmas decorations consist of nylon nets with dried pine branches and paper Christmas bells (Muller, 2011: 215). The visitors of the café were mainly young people between the ages of 13 and 25. Just after midnight, on January 1, 2001, more than 300 visitors were present in the cafe (Muller, 2011: 215). Around 00.30 a visitor lit a sparkler and the Christmas decorations caught fire. At first people tried to extinguish the fire with water, but in less than a minute there was a full fire. The temperature in the cafe rose to 800 degrees. The fire itself lasted for a short time, but very intense and was accompanied by great smoke and heat. Burning Christmas branches fell down on visitors, clothing caught fire, many visitors suffered serious burns and fourteen young persons deceased (Muller, 2011: 215). Today, 20 years later, the community of Volendam is still facing the consequences of the disaster and dealing with the aftermath (Muller, 2011: 221).

Events such as fires, hurricanes and other disasters threaten people individually and the community to which they belong. Often disasters are accompanied by uncertainty, fear, anger and even serious health effects such as a post-traumatic stress syndrome, short-term as well as long-term (Dückers, Van Hoof, Jacobs & Holsappel, 2017: 12). Some people develop disorders, but most are capable of overcoming the incident on their own (Dückers et al., 2017: 13). If people are not capable of overcoming on their own, the resilience of the community could step in. Against this background, citizens communities must work together to help each other and the community on top. Instead of only looking at individual resilience, there also should be looked at community resilience. People involved within a community, know what is going on, feel involved, feel heard and together ensure that available means and methods are used to solve and overcome problems (Dückers et al., 2017: 13). The ability to do this effectively is the essence of community resilience (Dückers et al., 2017: 12).

1.2 Problem Definition

It is of great importance to draw lessons from the aftermath of the Volendam disaster. Various studies have been conducted but little is known about victim hierarchy and the (psychological) long-term consequences for both direct and indirect victims of this disaster. Mainly this stems from the fact that the focus for long-term studies is on large-scale disasters such as the attack on the twin towers (Bromet, Hobbs, Clouston, Gonzalez, Kotov & Luft, 2016).

Prior research on a similar disaster, the fire at a discotheque in Gothenburg in 1998 in which 63 young people died, has focused primarily on the short term. In doing so, lessons were drawn from the disaster such as improvement points at the time of fighting the disaster (Cassutto & Tarnow, 2003: 414). It did not look at victim hierarchy and (psychological) consequences for both direct and indirect victims in the long term.

A similar disaster in which research was carried out that did focus on the long term is the fireworks disaster in 2000 in Enschede. In this disaster there was a fire in a fireworks storage facility which resulted in an explosion that destroyed an entire residential area and took the lives of 23 people. This study looked at direct victims and what the effects of the disaster were on mental and physical health (Van der Velden, Grievink, Dorresteyn, Van Kamp, Drogendijk, Christiaanse, Roskam, Marcelissen, Olf, Meewisse, Gersons & Kleber, 2005). This showed that direct victims were more likely to have strong anxiety and depression feelings (Van der Velden et. al, 2005: 575). In addition, the strong anxiety and depressive feelings were still present 18 months after the disaster (Van der Velden et. al, 2005: 578).

In addition, studies have also been done about the disaster in Volendam. These studies mainly focus on drawing lessons to prevent operational shortcomings of disaster management in the future and on the mental consequences of direct victims. Janssen, Velden and Kleber (2002) collected stories and compiled them in a book. They state that people are still recovering a year after the disaster and this could also take some time as they have been through a traumatic experience. This can have far-reaching consequences in the future such as psychological and physical damage (Janssen, Velden & Kleber, 2002).

As the previously mentioned study by Van der Velden et. al (2005) in Enschede already indicated, Reijneveld, Crone, Schuller, Verhulst and Verloove-Vanhorick (2004) show that in Volendam there is also an increase in anxiety and depression feelings among direct victims five months after the disaster. In addition, in 2003 the Health Care Inspectorate published a report in which it emerged that years after the disaster psychological complaints arose among both

direct and indirect victims. They also stated that both direct and indirect victims may still suffer or develop psychological problems in the future (Inspectie van Gezondheidszorg, 2003). Previous research by Stevens, Dunsmore, Agho, Taylor, Jones, Van Ritten & Raphael (2013) shows that a long-term disaster affects the individual level. The story of the community is often composed of the stories of individuals. The impact of the Volendam disaster is severe and has not only shown to have short-term negative effects on the victim's mental health and their social life, but also on the community as a whole (Nuijen, 2006: 54). The impact on a community is of great value because adequate management in a crisis situation depends largely on the social network of the community. According to Pfefferbaum Van Horn and Pfefferbaum (2017) these networks link and help those affected in a community and connect them to the system of care after a disaster.

The previously mentioned studies in Gothenburg and Enschede have similarities with the Volendam disaster as they happened within a few years of each other, there were young victims and the disaster took place within a relatively small community. Nevertheless, no research has taken place that looked at victim hierarchy, the impact on indirect victims and the consequences for the aftercare. This study provides insight into the presence of victim hierarchy and its impact on aftercare. The results of this thesis on the effects of victim hierarchy may be important to better understand how to provide the best aftercare after a disaster.

1.3 Research Question

This research uses the narrative research method to gain knowledge about individual and community narratives. This method makes it possible to place one's story within a larger framework, for example the culture of a community. Essential to this method is that events and stories are a form for people to assign relevance to their lives (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

The stories of the respondents are outlined in a core story (Emden 1998). Hereafter, these narratives are analyzed, the results and the impact of the disaster on the respondents are presented. By using this method the existence of a victim hierarchy can be demonstrated and the impact of the disaster on the aftercare can be presented. The impact of the Volendam disaster is severe and has not only shown to have short-term negative effects on the victim's mental health and their social life, but also on the community as a whole (Nuijen, 2006: 54). Since disasters clearly leaves a mark on society, this raises the question;

To what extent has victim hierarchy affected the aftercare of forgotten groups twenty years after the disaster of Volendam in 2001?

1.4 Relevance

Up to now the scientific community knows little about the influence of victim hierarchy on post-disaster processing and aftercare. Jankowitz (2018) uses the concept of hierarchy in various fields to describe the order and degree of importance of values, ideas, and individuals (Jankowitz, 2018: 233). However, no further research has been conducted on the concept of victim hierarchy. There is a gap in the literature, this research aims to contribute to the aftercare of victims and contribute to the scientific body of knowledge and thus reduce the gap in knowledge. While disasters have primarily led to a review of policies and safety measures to prevent recurrence (Cassutto & Tarnow, 2003: 414), very little attention has been paid to the long-term effects on victims and others affected by the disaster. While much attention has been paid to the individual level (Stevens et. al, 2013), the impact of a disaster on a community as a whole is often neglected.

As mentioned earlier, research has provided insight into the short-term consequences of the fire (Reijneveld et al., 2004). Despite this, little attention has been paid in the scientific community to the long-term effects on the community and the individual following a disaster. The story of the community is often composed of the stories of individuals (Stevens et. al, 2013). The impact of the Volendam disaster is severe and has not only shown to have short-term negative effects on the victim's mental health and their social life, but also on the community as a whole (Nuijen, 2006: 54).

Due to neglecting the long-term impact of a disaster and the little attention paid to victim hierarchy, there is no scientific model that can explain how and if victim hierarchy exists and how a community can be affected by a disaster in the long term. This research provides insight into the presence of victim hierarchy and its influence on aftercare. The results of this research on victim hierarchy may be important to better understand how to provide the best aftercare following a disaster that takes both the individual and the community into account.

1.5 Reading Guide

This thesis consists of several chapters. First, the theoretical framework will be outlined and previous research applicable to this case will be reviewed. Next, the method and operationalization of this study will be discussed. Furthermore, a narrative of each respondent will be presented. Chapter 5 will analyze these narratives. Finally, the conclusion will follow in chapter 6. The research question will be answered in this chapter, the limitations of the study will be outlined and finally recommendations and suggestions for future research will be made.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will outline the theoretical framework. The following concepts will be discussed: First, victim hierarchy which consists out of pragmatic hierarchy, hierarchy of the innocence and processing a disaster. Second, the concept of aftercare in Volendam will be discussed which consist out of medical aftercare and social aftercare. Third, community resilience will be discussed and finally previous research of the Volendam fire will be outlined.

2.1 Victim Hierarchy

The concept of hierarchy is used in different areas, such as within a large corporation, to describe the order and degree of importance of values, ideas and individuals (Jankowitz, 2018: 233). Hierarchy is a classification in order of importance. According to Maslow (1971) hierarchy is there to theorize why people are motivated to achieve certain needs. When looking at victimization, there is the connection between hierarchy and the construction of victims who deserve certain resources. These resources are, for example, support and sympathy to recover from their suffering (Jankowitz, 2018: 233).

There are competitive claims to victimization. After a disaster there are all kinds of grounds, such as moral, practical and political, to distinguish between experiences of harm (Jankowitz, 2018: 224). Furthermore, loss and pain are not evenly distributed. This means that there is a hierarchy in the amount of pain and suffering with the result that society must provide resources for those in greatest need (Jankowitz, 2018: 224).

According to Jankowitz (2018) the pragmatic hierarchy is the most appropriate way to operationalize a victims hierarchy in policy and practice (Jankowitz, 2018: 230). The pragmatic hierarchy tends to objectivize the severity of victimization. This hierarchy focusses on the impact of a disaster on someone's physical and psychological health (Jankowitz, 2018: 230). Within this hierarchy there is the need to prioritize, for instance, services to help those who are in greatest need health (Jankowitz, 2018: 230). Furthermore, Jankowitz (2018) states that some victims forgot about their own claims as being a victim, because their situation was better than that of other victims. They feel uncomfortable for falling under the same category, victims, while their injuries differ significantly. This shows how a pragmatic hierarchy can prioritize victims (Jankowitz, 2018: 231). Despite this prioritization of victims there are differences that cannot be seen at glance for instance psychological trauma. Those problems also needs to be addressed (Jankowitz, 2018: 232).

Another way to define hierarchy is done by Bouris (2007). She describes the hierarchy of innocence. Within the hierarchy of innocence "children are at the top and all others recognized in varying degrees based on their conformity to the image of innocent victim" (Bouris, 2007: 38). The distinction in hierarchy is determined on the basis of those who have suffered damage, but who are considered less innocent or less vulnerable and are therefore lower in the hierarchy (Jankowitz, 2018: 233). For instance someone with burns is, in the victim hierarchy, more important than someone who has 'only' seen everything and has no physical injuries himself. The person then eliminates himself, because it is not the person who needs help, there are people who have suffered worse. This while suffering is a subjective concept and therefore cannot be measured (Nuijen, 2006: 54).

The definition that will be used for the concept of victim hierarchy is based on Jankowitz' (2018) *The Hierarchy of Victims in Northern Ireland*. No further research has been conducted on the concept of victim hierarchy, that is the reason why Jankowitz'(2018) definition is used. The definition that will be used for the concept of victim hierarchy is "*the human tendency to compare the suffering of a group of those affected with that of another, creating the impression that certain forms of suffering are at a higher level than other forms*" (Jankowitz, 2018).

2.1.1 Processing a Disaster

Being lower in the hierarchy can affect the way one copes with a disaster. For example, if one is not seen as the person who needs help, there are people who have suffered worse, then one may not receive help and one's coping process could proceed differently.

There are four tasks that are important to process loss or a dramatic event for young adults. Firstly, the acceptance of the loss or dramatic event. This is the most important task to begin processing the loss (Spuij, 2017: 34) Accepting reality is not obvious, the person often cannot imagine life without the deceased person. The reality of the loss or event must be acknowledged, only then grieving process can really start. The awareness of irreversibility is central here (Spuij, 2017: 34).

The second task is to get through the pain and sorrow. It is very normal to feel intense sadness and pain and one should not avoid this. After a while this pain will subside and you get the space to put it into words and to talk about it (Spuij, 2017: 35). The third task is to adapt to the new situation. Living with the awareness that you have to go on without the other ensures a complete adjustment (Spuij, 2017: 36). The young person will probably have to adjust his own self-image, due to the possible damage to self-esteem, identity or confidence (Spuij, 2017: 36).

The final task is to give the deceased or event an emotional place. The young adult has been able to give the pain a place in the heart and in the mind, the pain is less sharp and less present. They can enjoy the little things of life again. That way you notice that life goes on (Spuij, 2017: 38).

In this research the definition that will be used for the concept of processing a disaster is *accepting the loss or the event, overcoming the pain and sorrow, adapting to the new situation and finally being able to give the loss or the event a place in the heart and mind, making the pain less acute and less present* (Spuij, 2017: 42).

2.2 Aftercare

Aftercare is all that is needed to be able to live a normal life again, both physically and materially (Nuijen, 2006: 48). In the case of Volendam, the aftercare has extended itself over a longer period of time. Although the young people affected have shown strength, it cannot be ruled out that young people will sooner or later encounter obstacles, restrictions or are confronted with the fact that they want something that they cannot do anymore (Nuijen, 2006: 38). It can make those people vulnerable, certainly in Volendam, where there is a work ethic of everyone having to work hard for their money. Hardly any unemployment can be found. It is a community in which there is a taboo on unemployment (Nuijen, 2006: 48).

The day after the fire the municipality of Edam-Volendam and the regional Municipal or Common Health Service (GGD) founded an Advice and Information Centre (AIC), called ‘Het Anker’. People could go there for information and for an aftercare process. Experience with large-scale accidents, such as the fireworks disaster in Enschede, had taught that aftercare had to be organized professionally as fast as possible (Nuijen, 2006: 46). Furthermore, an Information and Advice center (IAC) was established at a national level. Experts from similar centers were consulted here, for example the AIC of the fireworks disaster in Enschede (Nuijen, 2006: 46). The IAC Volendam was separated from the municipality of Volendam. It was separated because, first of all, the municipality as the responsible government was one of the parties to the blame for the fire. Secondly, people wanted a center that was separate from the municipality to prevent residents from fearing to go there and be able to speak out freely (Nuijen, 2006: 46). Nevertheless, it soon became clear that copying experience data from other AICs did not work for the Volendam situation, since this was a unique event in which mainly young people between the ages of 13 and 23 were affected (Nuijen, 2006: 47).

The National Fund for Assistance to Victims of the New Year's Fire in Volendam (SSNV) was established nine days after the disaster on January 10, 2001. The objective for SSNV was to offer those affected the widest possible assistance in the short, but especially in the long term in order to help the victims take the first steps towards a valuable future perspective (Nuijen, 2006: 91). In addition to the SSNV, the Association of Victims New Year's Fire Volendam (BSNV) was established. The board consists out of representatives of victims and those affected (Nuijen, 2006: 94).

The first days and weeks after a disaster people tend to visit the general practitioner. The use of the general practitioner seems to indicate that those affected mainly seek help from care giving persons or organizations that people know well (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 660). The emphasis within the first weeks after the disaster was on pastoral aftercare. From there the reference to psychosocial aftercare was arranged. As a consequence, Het Anker remained somewhat out of the picture (Nuijen, 2006: 54). Father Berkhout in particular played an important role in supporting the relatives. Berkhout held regular coffee meetings for this group and, if necessary, arranged referral to Het Anker (Nuijen, 2006: 54). Nevertheless, also in Volendam the general practitioner was visited more often immediately after the disaster (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 660). Partly because many children with burns and their parents were staying outside the village for specialist care. The general practitioner was mainly visited by children who were present during the disaster, but who were not physically injured (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 660). In addition, the decrease in visits by unaffected persons seems to indicate a certain solidarity; unaffected persons waited for help. Probably because they thought that those affected at the time needed this help more (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 660).

The first year of AIC Het Anker was very chaotic. The management of Het Anker tried to set up a professional organization, which was against the informal control culture in Volendam (Nuijen, 2006: 48). It often happened that Volendam residents gave orders to Anker employees, because they had a private relationship. This led to loyalty conflicts more than once. Some people from Volendam even went so far as to seek out the media when they did not get what they want from Het Anker, which in turn had a counterproductive effect on the employees. In 2003 AIC Het Anker was transformed into the Center for reintegration and aftercare (CRN) Het Anker. Those affected could turn to the CRN with all their questions. Furthermore, they could also get a permanent care counselor who showed them the facilities and regulations they could use (Nuijen, 2006: 50).

The CRN was established for the period from 1 January 2003 to 1 January 2007. In 2006 KPMG issued an opinion on the CRN. The advice was to shut down the CRN and to transfer the remaining tasks to the municipality (Nuijen, 2006: 51). Following the final report of KPMG in July 2006, it was decided to stop with Het Anker as such on 1 January 2007 and to continue the aftercare in Volendam in a greatly reduced form under the Social Support Act (WMO) (Nuijen, 2006: 50). The KPMG evaluation showed that those affected by the Volendam café fire were very satisfied with the assistance provided by CRN Het Anker. According to the report, its objective of informing and advising properly was achieved (Nuijen, 2006: 51). Nevertheless, CRN Het Anker would not have sufficiently taken on the directing role in the psychosocial aftercare (Nuijen, 2006: 51).

There is medical aftercare and social aftercare. Medical aftercare includes both physical and psychological care. Social aftercare can consist of care or assistance on the psychosocial, administrative-legal or financial-economic level. Aftercare also includes monitoring its quality (Nuijen, 2006: 48). In this research the definition that will be used for the concept of aftercare is *the prevention or elimination of permanent problems or damage on a physical, mental and or social level during and after a disaster* (Nuijen, 2006: 48). Aftercare is all that is needed to be able to live a normal life again, both physically and materially (Nuijen, 2006: 48).

2.3 Community Resilience

Community resilience will be defined by means of Norris et al. (2008). The definition by Norris et al. (2008) is used, because they focus on the community as a whole instead of the characteristics of individuals with the community. Norris et al. (2008) defines community resilience as *“a process linking a set of networked adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation in constituent populations after a disturbance”*, whereby the adaptive capacity is defined as the capacity of a system to adapt to changes (Norris et al., 2008: 131). In short, resilience refers to overcoming a disruption or successfully adapting to the new situation (Norris et al., 2008: 131). The greater the resilience, the faster one returns to everyday life as it was before the disruption occurred. Volendam is a strong community that has been resilient after the café fire (Nuijen, 2006: 90), but is there space for people to talk about the disaster despite the fact that they were not injured at the time? According to the Volendam narrative, people just went on with life, quickly picked up the thread again, this doesn't leave a lot of space for people to deal with their problems (Nuijen, 2006: 90).

2.4 Previous Research

2.4.1 Volendam

After the fire there have been several studies that have examined the Volendam fire. The very first research was commissioned by the Dutch government in 2001. A committee was set up and were given the task to investigate how the emergency services functioned. It also focused on the functioning of the municipality of Edam-Volendam. The investigation into the functioning produced a number of conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations are mainly aimed at improving policy and the management of the emergency services (Commissie Onderzoek Cafébrand Nieuwjaarsnacht, 2001). The conclusions were that the municipality had been negligent regarding disaster preparedness and they had been negligent regarding policy on fire safety and licensing (Commissie Onderzoek Cafébrand Nieuwjaarsnacht, 2001).

One year later Janssen, Velden and Kleber (2002) collected stories from direct victims, but also from indirect victims such as relatives. They spoke to these people about their experiences during the fire. The aim of this research was to stimulate people to speak about their feelings. The research showed that people are still recovering a year after the disaster and this could also take some time as they have been through a traumatic experience. This can have far-reaching consequences in the future such as psychological and physical damage (Janssen, Velden & Kleber, 2002).

In 2003 the Health Care Inspectorate published a report in which it emerged that years after the disaster psychological complaints arose among both direct and indirect victims. They also stated that both direct and indirect victims may still suffer or develop psychological problems in the future (Health Care Inspectorate, 2003).

In addition, the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport commissioned Dorn, Kersens, Ten Veen and Ijzermans (2003) to conduct a study on health problems among direct and indirect victims and closely involved people, such as the board of the SSNV . The outcome of this research was that there was an increase in the use of care to reduce health problems. There was an increase in health problems among young people who were present in Heaven. The health problems that showed an increase included depression and insomnia (Dorn et. al, 2003). The research showed that after the disaster psychological problems arose among both victims and their relatives (Dorn et. al, 2003). Reijneveld et. al (2004) show that in Volendam there is also an increase in anxiety and depression feelings among direct victims five months after the disaster. The impact

of the Volendam disaster is severe and has not only shown to have short-term negative effects on the victim's mental health and their social life, but also on the community as a whole (Nuijen, 2006: 54).

2.4.2 Processing a Disaster

After a disaster there can be consequences for those involved in terms of health and processing. Various studies show that during the first days, weeks, months or even years, strong feelings of anxiety and depression, physical complaints, fatigue, irritations, sleep problems, avoidance reactions and mourning may occur (Van der Velden, van Loon, Ijzermans & Kleber, 2006: 658). Nevertheless, some of those affected do not or hardly ever develop the mentioned symptoms (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 658). In addition, the majority of those affected recover after a short or longer period of time (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 658). Finally, there is a group in which these complaints do not decrease or hardly decrease after a period of months or years. It is estimated that on average between twenty and forty percent of those affected develop a mental disorder such as a post-traumatic stress disorder (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 658). The exact relationships between groups differ per disaster and certainly per affected group. These complaints appear to occur systematically less frequently among rescue workers, for example the police, than among civilians affected by the same disaster (Van der Velden et al., 2006: 658).

2.4.3 Aftercare

Several studies have shown that those affected by a disaster, with a different cultural or ethnic background, form a risk group that deserves extra attention when providing care and offering psychosocial aftercare (Netten, 2006: 1). Volendam is a community with its own language and culture. The residents of Volendam are described as independent people and in Volendam there is a work ethic of everyone having to work hard for their money (Nuijen, 2006: 48). Hardly any unemployment can be found. It is a community in which there is a taboo on unemployment (Nuijen, 2006: 48). Cultural aspects seems to play a role in the experience and expression of the psychological consequences of a disaster. Furthermore, these cultural aspects seem to have an effect on help seeking behavior. The help seeking behavior is the request for help and the effectiveness of psychosocial aftercare for those affected by a disaster. Psychosocial aftercare, in particular in the event of disasters, is a complex and lengthy process (Netten, 2006: 1). Many aspects can play a role in the success or failure of the aftercare offered. For example the level of education of the victims, the social economic position or the mental resilience and vitality of available cultural and religious frameworks (Netten, 2006: 1).

3. Methodology

In this chapter the research method will be described. This thesis is an exploratory research. The research focuses on victim hierarchy after a disaster and aftercare of forgotten groups in Volendam. First, the narrative research will be discussed. Second, the operationalization will be presented. Third, the respondents will be discussed and finally the data analysis will be discussed.

3.1 Narrative Research

This research uses the narrative research method to gain knowledge about individual and community narratives. This method contrasts and compares texts on the internal structure and on the content. In addition, this method makes it possible to place one's story within a larger framework, for example the culture of a community. Essential to this method is that events and stories are a form for people to assign relevance to their lives (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). This is also called a narrative identity (Taylor, 1989). This revolves around in which ways one's life story is displayed and in what ways one maintains a sense of self-esteem within a particular framework (Taylor, 1989).

Polkinghorne (1995) states that the narrative research method is part of the qualitative research designs. A narrative research focuses on the actions of people. These actions are recorded in stories, for example writing down stories based on an interview. A story often consists of several parts and layers. For example, it often consists of a framework in which characters are situated. In addition, there may be significant incident or crisis (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). A crisis can create a disruptive situation in a person's life story. If such a situation emerges then the continuation of one's story is interrupted (Crossley, 2000). According to the narrative method, the significant event and its possible consequences can become part of the life story regardless of whether one recovers from the event or not (McAdams, 1993).

Using a narrative approach is useful for understanding occurrences and events longitudinally (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). In addition, the narrative approach provides a context. This context helps to understand why occurrences and experiences develop in a certain way. Also, it clarifies what an experience means to a respondent (Rappaport, 1995).

There are various sources of narratives, for example newspaper articles or spoken statements. Primarily interviews are used in narrative research. Through the use of interviews stories are collected. The essential question in an interview is the 'how' question (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Narrative interviews revolve around the story and point of view of the respondent. The respondent has an important role in directing the interview (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000).

Through storytelling, one can communicate about incidents in one's life. In addition, telling allows one to better understand the incident. These told stories are transcribed by the interviewer. The interviewer writes down the story word by word and uses this text for his analysis (Van Maanen, 1988).

An advantage of the narrative method is that data can be easily collected compared to researcher driven techniques where data are collected by using questionnaires for example (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Narratives of experiences and occurrences are difficult to capture in certain features (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Through the narrative method, stories can come closer to accurately reflecting the context and integrity of the respondent's life (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016).

As mentioned before, during the narrative interview the respondent is in control (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). My role as an interviewer was limited. I listened carefully to the respondents during the interview, showed compassion and asked follow-up questions when necessary. It was difficult to estimate in advance how long an interview was going to take since this depended on the respondent themselves. Prior to the interview, the respondent was contacted by email and told that the interview would take about an hour. However, it was mentioned that it could take longer depending on the respondent since they were in charge of the interview. Before the interview took place, the respondent received a consent form from me, asking if they would agree to sign it. The consent form contained the rights and obligations of the respondent and the purpose of the research.¹

By means of Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016) the interviews with the respondents were conducted. Anderson and Kirkpatrick (2016) divide the interview into four parts. During the first part, I introduce myself to the respondent and go over practical matters with the respondent such as the consent form, permission to record the interview and asking if they have any questions for me before we start. In addition, I prepared an introduction and an interview structure.² Next, I emphasize again that the respondent's story is the focus and that there are no wrong answers.

¹ See Appendix B

² See Appendix A

The interview begins, where I first try to put the respondent at ease by asking if he or she can tell something about him or herself. This way the respondent can introduce itself. Nevertheless, most respondents often started telling about the Volendam fire right away. After the introduction of the respondent I asked if he or she could tell something about their experience with the Volendam fire, starting on the evening itself. During the respondents' narration, I did not interrupt the story, but there was nonverbal communication through yes nodding or showing a smile (Anderson and Kirkpatrick, 2016).

When it was clear that the respondent had finished his or her story, it was time for the phase where questions were asked. These questions were asked by me to go deeper into certain details, fill in certain gaps or ask for clarification.

Finally, the ending of the interview. After the interview, I asked the respondents if they wanted to ask something, discuss any other topic or add anything else. After this, I let the respondent know that if anything came to mind in the coming days they were always welcome to contact me. Then I asked the respondent if they wanted to receive the transcript and check it for any errors. Finally, I thanked the respondents for participating in the study and gave them a box of chocolates as a token of appreciation.

The objective of my research is not to find what actually happened during and after the disaster. The aim is not at finding out the factual truth. According to Aarten and Ceulen (2019) there is, within the narrative method, no such thing as an objective static truth. The narrative method looks at life on three levels. First, the lived life, second the experienced life, and finally the narrative life (Bruner, 1987). The lived life includes what has actually happened in life. The experienced life includes having feelings, having desires, feeling emotions and making meaning of life (Aarten & Ceulen, 2019). Finally, the narrative life is a person's life story. This life story takes place within the context of the culture, interactions between individuals take place and there is a listener to the story. Therefore, whether something is actually the factual truth is irrelevant (Aarten & Ceulen, 2019). This research focuses on the effects of victim hierarchy on processing after a disaster and aftercare of forgotten groups within the cultural context of Volendam. In addition, this research looks at how respondents describe this and how they give meaning to it within their own story.

3.2 Operationalization

During this research I am part of a research group consisting of two professors from Leiden University and 4 Master students Crisis and Security Management, of which I am one. The

municipality of Edam-Volendam was closely involved in our research as well. The municipality helped us to contact respondents through a page about our research on their website.³ They created this website to spread information about the Volendam fire, the commemoration and other activities. On this page the purpose of our research is explained and a video is used in which we introduce ourselves and call on respondents to come forward.

My research took place in collaboration with my fellow students Anouk and Maike. I conducted several interviews together with Anouk as our subjects have common ground which meant that the same respondents were sometimes relevant to both of us. In addition, by conducting these interviews together we were able to conduct more interviews and process and transcribe them faster. Together with Maike I conducted one interview in Volendam. Afterwards our transcribed interviews were shared in a Google Drive. This allowed us to share our interview with our professors and we could use each other's interviews. In consultation with the respondents, the interviews were conducted in a location where they felt most comfortable. This was usually in their own homes. Furthermore, the day and time of the interview was chosen by what was most convenient for the respondent. My interviews were conducted during the period of April through September 2020. A total of 12 interviews were used for my research on victim hierarchy.

3.3 Respondents

The first acquaintance with the first five respondents that Anouk and I spoke to was arranged by our professors. They, as part of the research group, maintained contact with the municipality and are members of a working group concerning the commemoration. Through this working group our professors were contacted by people who were open to have an interview with Anouk and I. After planning and making appointments with those respondents COVID-19 caused a lockdown in the Netherlands and these interviews could not proceed. In the end, we were able to solve this by doing five interviews online via FaceTime, Zoom and Skype. When the measures regarding COVID-19 were eased, we were able to conduct the interviews face to face.

To encourage the number of respondents and to make the people of Volendam aware of the research project, an appeal was made in cooperation with the municipality of Edam-Volendam. The municipality launched a website⁴ dedicated to the fire of 2001, as in 2021 it is twenty years ago since the disaster happened. On this website there is a special page about our research

³ <https://www.hemeltjevolendam.nl/onderzoek/>

⁴ <https://www.hemeltjevolendam.nl>

project which explains the purpose of the research, contains contact information and an appeal to sign up as a respondent. Next, the local newspaper (Nieuw Volendam, 2020) paid attention to the research project. In addition, we, 4 students and 2 professors, recorded a short video in which we told who we are, what we do and what kind of respondents we are looking for. Fellow student Maïke edited these short clips into one promotional video. At the end of this video our contact details were given. Subsequently, this video was placed on the website and broadcasted on local television (Lokale Omroep Volendam-Edam, 2020). After these two appeals, in the NiVo and on LOVE television, many respondents signed up. Anouk and I then immediately made appointments with these respondents for an interview.

The majority of interviews Anouk and I conducted together. We did all five online interviews together and also two face to face interviews. In total, I interviewed twelve different respondents. There are five selection criteria based on which we included the respondents in our research:

- 1. At the time of the fire the respondents were living in Volendam.⁵*
- 2. At the time of the fire the respondents were present in the Hemel and were direct victims, and, or*
- 3. At the time of the fire the respondents were present in the vicinity of the Hemel and became indirect victims of the fire and, or*
- 4. At the time of the fire the respondents became indirect victims through the loss or suffering of a family member and, or*
- 5. Respondents were involved in the aftermath of the disaster through volunteer work.*

This research not only considers the people who have been directly affected by fire, but also those who have been indirectly affected by this disaster. This could be because of the death of a family member, having a family member with serious burns or being present on the dike that night. For example Julia, she was not present in the Hemel on the night of the fire, but she did suffer psychological problems as a result of this disaster. Respondents who became involved in the aftermath of the disaster for example through volunteering were also included in this study.

⁵ Frits and Ewout are exceptions. First, frits did not live in Volendam, but as the principal of the Don Bosco College he was closely involved. Second, Ewout lived in the same municipality at the time, in the village of Edam, and was closely involved as a member of council in the municipality of Edam-Volendam and as a volunteer.

Table 1 provides an overview of the respondents, their relationship to the victims and their relationship to the community. A number of respondents indicated that they would prefer to remain anonymous. To safeguard their privacy all respondents were given fictitious names.

Table 1. Overview of the Respondents.

		Relation to victim	Relation to community	Narrative Summary
Andre	Relative	Father of victim	Volunteer	4.2.1
Bart	Relative	Father of victim	Volunteer	4.2.2
Chris	-	-	Journalist	4.2.3
Dylan	-	-	Volunteer	4.2.4
Ewout	-	-	Volunteer	4.2.5
Frits	-	-	Principal of the school	4.2.6
Guusje	Relative	Aunt of victim	Volunteer	4.2.7
Hanna	Victim & relative	Sister of victim		4.2.8
Ivo	Victim	-		4.2.9
Julia	Relative	Sister of victim		4.2.10
Koen	-	-	Volunteer	4.2.11
Lisa	Victim	-	Employee at Municipality of Edam-Volendam	4.2.12

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis of the interviews is conducted using Polkinghorne (1995) and Emden (1998). Emden (1998), drawing on Polkinghorne, describes the idea of summarizing an interview into a short version of the respondent's story, a core story. This core story is created to support the analysis process. When looking at data analysis, Polkinghorne (1995) defines two types of narrative research; the narrative analysis and the analysis of narratives.

First, narrative analysis. This analysis maneuvers from common elements to stories, focusing on themes within different stories. Through a storyline, descriptions of events are collected and

compiled into a story. Furthermore, through a storyline structure is given to a narrative. Using this structure, one can gain insight into the choices made and the relationship between events. The moment different events are composed into a story then these stories get a narrative meaning (Polkinghorne, 1995).

Second, the analysis of the narratives. According to Polkinghorne (1995), this is an inductive and pragmatic analysis. The result of this analysis is the emergence of overarching themes. These themes help to understand the narratives of the respondents (Aarten & Ceulen, 2019). When overarching themes emerge through this analysis then they can be analyzed. Through the analysis, a broader understanding of the narratives of the respondents is obtained.

The interviews conducted were coded into themes. This coding is done based on the content of the interviews and my research question. The themes that were coded are: victim hierarchy and aftercare. Victim hierarchy consists of pragmatic hierarchy, hierarchy of innocence and processing a disaster. Aftercare consists of medical aftercare and social aftercare.

Each of the interviews was filtered for relevant quotes and important information. These quotes and information were then placed under the corresponding theme. By the coding of the interviews first of all a core story could be created, the narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995). Second, by using these core stories overarching themes could be compared and analyzed, the analysis of narratives (Polkinghorne, 1995).

In the following chapter, the narrative analysis takes place. The core stories of the respondents are discussed first. The core stories contain the narrative of the respondents as well as the role of the fire in their narrative. Next, the analysis of the narratives takes place. Here the stories are analyzed and overarching themes are compared and analyzed. The focus here is not only on finding and describing these common themes, but also lies on the relationships between these themes.

4. Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the narratives of the respondents are described. In total 12 respondents were interviewed. They describe how they experienced the evening of the Volendam fire and its aftermath.

4.2 The Respondents Narratives

4.2.1 Andre

Andre is born and raised in Volendam. At new year's eve 2000 Andre and his wife were at their neighbors, celebrating New Year's Eve with several other neighbors. At the same time 2 of his sons were celebrating new year's eve at the dike. According to Andre the phone rang just after half past one, but he didn't immediately realize what was going on. *"The story as it came to us seemed that he was cramped and we were asked if we wanted to pick him up"*.⁶ His neighbor brought him to the dyke in order to pick his son up, but could not cross the dike. Andre got out of the car and *"ended up in the middle of the chaos because at that moment there were a lot of young people looking for help throughout the streets"*.⁷ He found out that his son was in a bar called Kaketoe. Andre happened to know that fireman who was standing there so he said that his son was there and he would like to go to him. At first this was not allowed, but later on he was allowed to go inside anyway. *"And so I ended up in a horror situation with 70 or more severely burned children including my own son. He sat on a stool and stared in front of him, he was in some kind of shock"*.⁸ He got a bucket of water from someone and the instruction was to keep his son as wet as possible. Eventually his son was transported to the Amsterdam Medical Centre.

The first five weeks were very critical for Andre his son. So he actually sat from Sunday evening until Friday evening at his bed at the IC. On the weekends they went home for one or two days. Andre also had a son of ten, which he placed him with friends of the family. Andre actually wanted to protect him. So he and his wife deliberately did not take them to the IC, where his brother was. That was also very difficult for Andre's ten year old son. He knew that his older

⁶ "Die eigenlijk, het verhaal zoals het naar ons toe kwam dat hij benauwd was en of we hem wilden komen ophalen."

⁷ "Ik kwam middenin de chaos terecht want op dat moment waren er heel veel jongeren die hulp zochten door de straten."

⁸ "En kwam ik dus eigenlijk in een horror situatie terecht met 70 ernstig verbrande kinderen. Waaronder mijn eigen zoon die op een kruk zat en eigenlijk in een soort shock toestand voor zich uit staarde."

brother had been seriously affected and could not visit him. *“But in the end, from day one onwards, it affects your whole family, of course”*.⁹ Eventually Andre’s son was moved to a burn center in Leuven. Andre stayed in Leuven with his wife and other parents who had children involved in the fire. Every day they went together to the hospital. After the visit they usually sat together in their shared apartment in the evening. Then they would have good conversations with each other. It started with sharing information about how their children are doing: *“It is sharing the pain with each other”*.

At a certain point Andre heard that the municipality had set up some rooms at the Don Bosco College for aftercare. Andre went there once, there were some people he did not know and afterwards it turned out they were volunteers. There was a very friendly gentleman who asked Andre some questions. But he didn't have the feeling that that really helped him a lot. At one point a kind of supporters' association was set up from Het Anker and those were actually volunteers who were recruited within the Volendam community itself, this idea was actually taken over from Gothenburg. Those supporters initiated contact sessions with fellow-sufferers. So, for example, drinking coffee with mothers and fellow-sufferers sessions with fathers and grandparents. Andre made use of those sessions. But in terms of aftercare, he firmly states that *“I actually did most of it myself”*.¹⁰ The focus of the offered aftercare from Het Anker in the beginning was very much focused on the young people. For example, there was still a lot of need for wound care for the young people. But that was very much focused on the young people and not on the parents according to Andre.

After this period in Leuven Andre was faced with a lot of questions such as what is the future of these young people? He decided to sign up to become a member of BSNV board. This eventually became a kind of full-time job, especially the first three to four years with often four evenings of meetings, and working during the weekend. Andre his fellow board members are all fathers of those affected. So there too he had contact with fellow sufferers. *“For me that was also a form of aftercare, to process things with each other”*.¹¹ Andre wants to continue with his work at the BSNV until next year in order to get a number of things, such as the opening up of the Hemel, well on track. On the one hand the BSNV just want to commemorate the building itself and on the other hand they also want to give the building the opportunity to be visited. But according to Andre the whole aftercare, remains the red thread. *“Of course we have a*

⁹ “Maar goed uiteindelijk vanaf dag 1 raakt het natuurlijk je hele gezin.”

¹⁰ “Qua nazorg durf ik te stellen dat ik het eigenlijk het meeste gewoon zelf gedaan heb.”

¹¹ “Dat was voor mij ook wel een vorm van nazorg, om met elkaar zaken te verwerken.”

number of aftercare organizations but for me it's just important in the broadest sense of the word to those affected".¹²

4.2.2 Bart

Bart is born and raised in Volendam. On new year's eve 2000 Bart, his wife, his sister and his brother-in-law were in the piano bar in Volendam. Around quarter past 12 someone entered the piano bar, which is within walking distance of the dike, and said: *'There are ghosts walking on the dike'*.¹³ Bart's children were at the dike, so he and his wife rushed to the dike. At a certain point the police arrived at the dike and told everyone to leave. *"But of course we hadn't heard anything from our children so we said: 'No, we have to find our children first'"*.¹⁴ Eventually they were sent away and went to their home. Bart remembers that his daughter arrived that night and she was completely panic-stricken. When the fire took place she stood at the beginning of the stairs leading to the Hemel, so everyone who fell down and on top of her.

Bart's son was at that time inside the Hemel and was severely burned. It was such a chaotic period that his daughter came in second place, while she needed attention too. According to Bart she later said: *"Yes, but... I had a hard time too, because I had to go to all those funerals and you weren't there"*.¹⁵ Bart states that *"our heads weren't thinking about that at all, she just had a very hard time psychologically and she did have her own problems, but at that moment you just had to choose and it was just worse for my son than it was for her, so to speak"*.¹⁶ Eventually Bart's son was lying on the IC until January 15.

According to Bart the people of Volendam moved on very quickly, there was *"no time to process it, there never really has been"*.¹⁷ But Bart states that you have to deal with this. *"You can do pathetic things, you can do anything, but in the end you have to solve it yourself"*.¹⁸ According to Bart it was very good that, in terms of support project, parent meetings, father meetings, and mother meetings were set up. *"In the beginning everybody was a bit hesitant and later on, say, if you asked certain questions, it turned out that most of them shared the same*

¹² "We hebben natuurlijk een aantal nazorgorganisaties en voor mij is het gewoon in de breedste zin des woords belangrijk richting de getroffen en."

¹³ "Jongens wat of er nu aan de hand is, er lopen allemaal spoken op de dijk."

¹⁴ "Maar wij hadden natuurlijk nog helemaal niks gehoord van onze kinderen dus wij zeiden: Nee, wij moeten eerst onze kinderen vinden."

¹⁵ "Ja, maar... Ik had het ook moeilijk, want ik moest naar al die begrafenissen en jullie waren d'r niet."

¹⁶ "Daar stond ons hoofd helemaal niet naar. Zij had psychisch het gewoon heel moeilijk en daar heeft ze d'r eigen wel, maar op dat moment moest je gewoon kiezen en was het gewoon voor mijn zoon erger als voor haar, bij wijze van spreken."

¹⁷ "Wat dat aangaat... En geen tijd om, om het eens te verwerken. Dat is er eigenlijk nooit geweest."

¹⁸ "Je kan zielig gaan doen, je kan alles doen... Maar uiteindelijk moet je het zelf oplossen."

things and had the same problems".¹⁹ To deal with what happened to his son and what he has seen with his own eyes Bart went to see a psychologist. That helped him to accept it. But according to Bart, you have to make those steps yourself. *"It is not the case that you are invited or offered the opportunity"*.²⁰ Fortunately, the aftercare for the burned youngsters was established for forty years. *"So that is a favorable thing, that they can fall back on at least until they are all 65"*.²¹

Bart joined the BSNV at the start in March 2001. Now, almost twenty years later, two of the severely affected play a part in the BSNV and have the lead in the run-up to the commemoration of 2021. According to Bart because: *"It happened to them after all and we are going to do it the way they want it to be. All these years we have done it the way we wanted, as parents, and now they are allowed to do it themselves"*.²² Bart believes that the strength of Volendam is that they can get it done, no matter what you come up with. Together with the people out there, the people they have around them. *"As far as that is concerned, an awful lot can be realized here. That's quite special"*.²³

4.2.3 Chris

Chris is born and raised in Volendam. Chris celebrated new year's eve 2000 at home. Chris intended to go to sleep, but heard sirens and then thought what is going on? Chris went outside and his neighbors were outside as well. They shouted there had been a fire and Jan, the neighbors son, was in it too. Chris immediately put on his clothes and wanted to grab his camera, because he was employed by the local newspaper, but decided not to take his camera. When he arrived at the dike he saw *"the Hemel, the famous images, the flapping curtains, the broken windows"*.²⁴ His sisters could be in the Hemel, there was a lot of uncertainty at that moment. For Chris it was two-folded because there could be family members inside but at the same time he was a reporter. On that night a lot has changed for Chris. He didn't see much that night and that has actually been his luck. A colleague of his from the Telegraaf saw a lot that

¹⁹ "In het begin was het een beetje heel terughoudend en later, zeg maar, als je bepaalde vragen stelden, dan bleek toch achteraf dat de meer en meesten dezelfde dingen deelden en zelfde problemen hebben."

²⁰ "Het is niet zo dat je uitgenodigd wordt of de mogelijkheid wordt geboden."

²¹ "Dus dat is een gunstig iets, dat ze in ieder geval daarop kunnen terugvallen totdat ze allemaal, zeg maar, 65 zijn."

²² "Het is natuurlijk tenslotte jullie overkomen en we gaan het zo doen zoals jullie het willen'. We hebben het al die jaren gedaan zoals wij het wilden, als ouders zeg maar en nu mogen ze het zelf doen."

²³ "Wat dat aangaat, kan hier, kan hier ontzettend veel gerealiseerd worden. Dat is best wel..., best wel bijzonder."

²⁴ "De hemel, de bekende beelden, de wapperende gordijnen, de kapot geslagen ruiten."

night and suffered “*a huge psychological hit afterwards*”.²⁵ His girlfriend called him to come home, so he did and just waited at home for a call to see how their family members were doing.

The next day he went to his employer, the local newspaper, and asked: “*what can we do with a newspaper that comes once a week on Wednesday? What should we do with this?*”²⁶ At that moment he thought that the Volendammer is not someone that talks about his or her feelings and emotions. So he thought that it was going to be tricky, but contacted the secondary school anyways and asked if he could come over. On January 2nd the school opened to offer the youngsters a place to talk about the disaster. Chris went there, sat there with a notebook and a pen and started talking to young people. This is how he started writing stories about the disaster.

Since everyone in the village knew and trusted Chris, he had the opportunity to get close to the victims and record their personal stories and publish those stories in the local newspaper, the NiVo. In 2002 Chris climbed the Mont Blanc and the Kilimanjaro in 2010 with some of the burned youngsters. Furthermore, he went to Lourdes with them and their families. He was allowed to join them as a writer and as a friend. He often asks himself the same question as he did to them: what does it do to you? His answer: “*It is going well, but I have also dreamed about it, every once in a while, for sure*”.²⁷

A colleague of Chris, who came out of the Red Cross Hospital after a few months, because his son was heavily burned, said: “*What are they doing here, Het Anker? It only costs money*”.²⁸ That’s according to Chris how people looked at the aftercare provided by Het Anker. Chris told people to go and have a cup of coffee there, because then they could ask what they’re doing there. Chris told as many people “*Maybe it’s not necessary for you now, but you’ll need that safety net in a couple of years’ time if you might get psychological complaints*”.²⁹ But according to Chris Het Anker stopped with the aftercare in the beginning, because ‘we’ didn’t need it according to the people of Volendam. As a consequence, there was a Volendam boy who ended up in a depression in 2017, he was also burned. He thought it was because of something else. At one point specialists started asking questions and then it turned out that he never talked about the fire. He thought he had processed it but that was not the case. Furthermore, Chris states that the funeral directors of that time have been through a lot and that one of them now has PTSD,

²⁵ “Van die collega weet ik dat hij daarna psychisch een enorme klap heeft gekregen.”

²⁶ “Wat kunnen we doen met een krant die 1 keer in de week komt op woensdag? Wat moeten we hiermee?”

²⁷ “Het gaat goed. En ik heb er ook wel eens over gedroomd, zeker.”

²⁸ “Wat doen ze daar nou eigenlijk bij Het Anker? Want het kost allemaal geld.”

²⁹ “Misschien is het voor jou nu niet nodig, maar heb je dat vangnet over een aantal jaar wel nodig als je misschien psychische klachten krijgt.”

almost 20 years later. That makes Chris think, he keeps an eye on himself, the Volendammers all keep an eye on each other.

Chris hopes that with the upcoming commemoration and the opening up the Hemel, people will talk about the disaster again. *“People will discuss this at the table and that some will say: jeez, that's it, the jar is just closed, the lid is on and now we're going to talk about the New Year's fire again? Or others say yes, wait a minute: it's actually bothering me a lot more lately”*.³⁰ According to Chris, one of the most sensitive things is the opening of the Hemel. *“The redevelopment is important, the commemoration of it is important, but the opening, they want to give everyone the opportunity to open up. And fortunately the new generation is becoming a little more open, but that doesn't apply to everyone”*.³¹

4.2.4 Dylan

Dylan is born and raised in Volendam. Dylan celebrated new year's eve 2000 at home because he had to take care of his cat. At some point Dylan's daughter came home. She was upset and was coming off the dike, because she had been there. She told Dylan that the cousin of his wife was in a fire. Dylan's wife immediately went up to the dike and went looking everywhere. Dylan and his daughter went to his sister-in-law. A niece of Dylan was present in the Hemel the night of the disaster. She was actually on her way upstairs when the fire started. In the chaos she fell and injured her hand. She had seen what happened in the Hemel, but claimed that she was all right and no victim. The next day Dylan's niece was tracked in the Amsterdam Medical Center and unfortunately she died, she suffocated due to smoke inhalation.

A few days later the local newspaper and the local television station asked for any kind of help. Dylan thought this was something for him. He ended up on the helpdesk of the SSNV. According to Dylan the people who were affected are the people with the real resilience. *“We only sat behind the monitor, behind the PC and behind the phone. But I don't think that's real resilience”*.³² The first location of the helpdesk was on the route to the church, so that's where all those funeral processions came by and made a huge impression on Dylan. Furthermore,

³⁰ “En ik hoop dat mensen dan gaan discussiëren aan tafel en dat ze zeggen: jeez moet dat nou, potje zit nu net dicht, dekseltje erop en gaan we nou weer over de nieuwjaarsbrand hebben of dat sommige zeggen ja wacht even: ik heb er de laatste tijd eigenlijk veel meer last van.

³¹ “Weet je natuurlijk, de herinrichting van is belangrijk, de herdenking ervan is belangrijk, maar het openstellen, dat ze iedereen de gelegenheid willen geven om open te stellen. En gelukkig wordt de nieuwe generatie iets opener, maar dat geldt niet voor iedereen.”

³² “Wij hebben alleen maar achter de monitor gezeten, achter de pc en achter de telefoon. Maar dat is niet echte veerkracht vind ik hoor.”

because they spoke to so many people on the phone, they heard what was actually going on after the disaster, all the suffering. Dylan dealt with this by trying to mean something for those people. The victims they talked to, they just gave them a boost, *“because helping them so they can pick up life again makes it worth it”*.³³ According to Dylan he didn't provide aftercare. He recommended people to go and see a psychologist. He redirected them to professionals who could help them. According to Dylan it wasn't their job, *“we could listen, you can only do it with a smile, if you see that it's going well, then you can do something with it”*.³⁴

Regarding the upcoming commemoration Dylan states that *“there are several people who say: 'I don't need it anymore'. There are a lot of them”*.³⁵ According to Dylan you see the effects of the fire in everyday life in Volendam. You meet those affected in the village every day and you can see that they deal with it very well. Dylan sees that *“There are actually a lot of them who have settled down, do not walk with their hands open, begging, they are just firmly at work. That's really Volendam too, because that's what a Volendammer usually does, and that's the beauty of it”*.³⁶

4.2.5 Ewout

Ewout isn't a resident of the Volendam, but of Edam. Ewout celebrated new year's eve with friends in Rotterdam and was completely in shock with what happened. According to Ewout the real experience of seriousness was only the day after that when he came back to the village. Even though Ewout wasn't a Volendammer, he did a lot in and for the community. He was in the local council for almost 12 years and worked for the local broadcasting station. Because of this he was *“more accepted by the community than someone who tries to be in it forcibly”*.³⁷

Very quickly after the disaster Ewout got involved by the local broadcaster. They brought information of what's going on every day. Furthermore, Ewout and a female colleague started to guide a group of youngsters who were affected by the disaster. Eventually at the end of the year a psychologist was attached to this group, but that wasn't really such a big success, it didn't

³³ “Die slachtoffers die je spreekt, die geven je gewoon een boost, want die kunnen het, die zijn er echt in geweest, die kunnen toch het leven weer oppakken.”

³⁴ “We konden wel luisteren, maar het, je kan daar alleen met een glimlach, als je ziet dat het goed gaat, en dan kan je er nog wat mee... Maar dat is ja...”

³⁵ “Nou, er zijn diverse mensen die zeggen: ‘Het hoeft van mij niet meer’. Dat zijn er erg veel.”

³⁶ “Nou, wat ik zie, is dat er gewoon, er zijn eigenlijk heel veel zijn er erg goed terecht gekomen, hebben gesetteld, lopen niet met hun handen open, voor te bedelen, ze zijn gewoon stevig aan het werk. Dat is echt ook Volendam zijnde, want dat doet een Volendammer ook meestal, maar dat is het mooie.”

³⁷ “Op die manier ben je ook meer geaccepteerd door de gemeenschap dan als iemand die daar zich geforceerd in probeert te werken.”

add anything according to Ewout. Ewout did not tell why it was not a success. Especially in the beginning, the aftercare was not yet formally organized by the government and then you had people from the community with experience who started initiatives according to Ewout. The municipality and the community that helped started very quickly with calling the victims ‘affected persons’ instead of victims. They thought this was very important, because then you don't put someone in an underdog position.

Ewout experienced a pyramid of grief in Volendam. In the form of who has the right to the most grief. Ewout states that in hindsight it *“is quite painful, because the parents of children with burns didn't felt seen, not heard and that sort of thing”*.³⁸ The pyramid of grief is something that arose in Volendam, but wasn't pronounced, not in the newspapers or other media, but if you use this term in Volendam all people will understand it according to Ewout. *“The pyramid is the fact that someone with a dead child would have more right to grief than someone with a child with only burns, that's actually the underlying thought”*.³⁹ Ewout states that there shouldn't really be any discussion about what's heavier, but it certainly seeped in the groups around it and was certainly one thing where people felt that some groups received too little attention or were forgotten. The next of kin had that feeling above all.

Ewout thinks that a friend of his, who has recently become a father, is married and has his life well organized, got into a burn-out and that it has a lot to do with the disaster. Ewout would never say that directly to his friend, but this kind of thing has an impact on people's lives. The fact that what he is doing now is still the process of processing. That cannot but be the case for others. This is of such mega-impact according to Ewout. What frustrates Ewout is the fact that there were 106 different emergency services involved in the process, *“a lot of money was burned there”*.⁴⁰

4.2.6 Frits

Frits is not a Volendammer and did not live in Volendam at the time of the disaster. Frits celebrated new year's eve with his neighbors. Everyone left already and Frits was still chatting with his neighbor until his phone rang. *“I think it was about 2 o'clock when I first thought: gosh someone who is going to wish me New Year”*.⁴¹ It turned out to be a teacher of his who told him

³⁸ “Want die ouders voelden zich ook niet gezien, niet gehoord en dat soort zaken.”

³⁹ “De piramide gaat erover dat iemand met een dood kind meer recht zou hebben op verdriet dan iemand met een kind met alleen maar brandwonden. Dat is eigenlijk de onderliggende gedachte die hieronder zit.”

⁴⁰ “Daar is een hoop geld verbrand.”

⁴¹ “Ik denk dat het een uur of 2 is geweest waarop ik eerst nog dacht: goh iemand die mij nog nieuwjaar gaat wensen of weet ik veel.”

what was going on in Volendam. In the meantime his neighbor already left, but because Frits felt he was stuck with this story, he brought the neighbor back as he had to share it with someone. That night he slept badly and briefly because every minute he felt that he had to go to Volendam the next day, or maybe the same day. And that's what he did.

Frits and his team of teachers proposed that the Don Bosco College would become the reception center. They made sure that the school would be open seven days a week, from eight in the morning till eleven in the evening. Frits hired assistance, expertise from the APS (General Pedagogical Study Centre). They gave the school a lot of guidance on how to deal with traumatized children and psychological effects. Furthermore, they arranged all kinds of adjustments for their students. Students were allowed to do Havo 5 in two years and were also allowed to do their exams in two years. Their students got unlimited extra time, all the students because all the children are indirectly also a victim according to Frits. Frits always said that *“everyone is a victim in fact”*.⁴² His school was no longer the same school. It was a school and a shelter at the same time. Furthermore, it also became a care center. He thinks that they, as a school, gave as much help as possible to young people who were not direct victims. According to Frits there is not just one victim that needs extra attention. According to him it is quite the opposite and gives an example of the rest of the class that sits around a child who was burned and sees that the child is damaged and that is quite confronting as well. According to Frits you have to take that into account as well.

For the teachers of the school it has always been quite difficult because they were continuously confronted with burned and damaged faces. It was terrible to look at them and very confronting according to Frits. Frits and his team provided aftercare for their teachers. His school conducted research for over 3 years about the self-reliance of the teachers and how they fit together. The outcome was incredibly positive. According to Frits because there was a lot of guidance for the teachers and the possibility to talk about the disaster.

Frits felt that far too little attention has been paid and certainly at the beginning of the disaster to the parents of the deceased students. He stated *“there was a lot of zooming in on all those damaged youngsters and what happened at home”*.⁴³ He thinks that in the long run far too little has been done about the care of those people, now and then they just felt like a forgotten group. For parents of pupils who were damaged and just victims, a lot of things were organized.

⁴² “Ik heb altijd gezegd iedereen is slachtoffer feitelijk.”

⁴³ “Er werd heel erg ingezoomd op al die beschadigde jongeren en wat er allemaal thuis gebeurde.”

According to Frits at a certain moment a student went to school by a car that was paid for by the SSNV, a student of 18. People thought is it really necessary that a kid needs a car and spoke about it. While that boy was very much helped with that car according to Frits. Frits states that this situation is quite difficult in a village like Volendam, that made it quite difficult to deal with and had a lot of impact. On the other hand the family ties, those bonds of friendship are also a strength in Volendam, which probably meant that a lot of help was not needed because the community provided according to Frits.

Frits dealt with the disaster by talking to the director of the APS from time to time in order to keep himself on the run. Afterwards Frits asked himself many times how do you keep up with this situation? six out of seven days he was at the school and he went home. He liked the fact that he did not lived in Volendam, because he could really drive away from there. Nowadays Frits can live with it, he can give it a place to rest, but according to him he *“has not really processed it”*.⁴⁴ He notices a lot of emotion at a moment that he, with emphasis on suddenly, is confronted with images or for example a quiz question about the fire in a television program. It touches him immediately and he gets emotional. It's still pretty much on the surface somewhere and that will probably never go away, he thinks.

4.2.7 Guusje

Guusje is born and raised in Volendam. On new year's day Guusje and her husband visited her brother, a family tradition. They sat there with all their children together. A few of them were going to the dike, her own children as well. Around six o'clock Guusje and her husband went home and the youth went to the dike. Just before midnight she and her husband went to bed. Guusje almost fell asleep, but then she heard an ambulance and at one point, and then another and another. When she opened the shutters and looked out the window she saw a very big red car of the fire department drove by. Pretty soon people were screaming in the street and parents ran to the dike. Guusje turned on the TV and saw that there was a fire in the Hemel. *“All hell broke loose, it really was hell that broke loose. And then I thought my children where will they be?”*⁴⁵ Guusje started handing out coats on the street in front of her house. She saw young people who ran home barefoot. At a certain point a friend of her daughter arrived and told Guusje that both her daughters were safe. An hour later her daughter came home and she said that her boyfriend was dead, she was completely in shock.

⁴⁴ “Maar ik heb het niet echt verwerkt nee.”

⁴⁵ “De hel brak toen los, het was echt een hel die losbrak. En toen dacht ik jeetje mijn kinderen waar zullen ze zijn?”

The next morning Guusje was called by someone she knew from the church. He told her “*something has to be done, there has to be order in a big chaos and we from the church want to set up a helpdesk. Do you want to participate?*”⁴⁶ She immediately said yes and an hour later she was at the first meeting. Eventually Guusje was offered a contract for 6 years at the helpdesk because the aftercare would last for 6 years. The helpdesk helped with practical matters because the mental and the medical help took place in the hospitals. The helpdesk made a list of 68 victims with the most serious injuries.⁴⁷ They all received an email with the offer that they can use an air conditioner for free arranged by the helpdesk. They received an air conditioner because of the burns, the regulation to be able to cool down their own body was gone. According to Guusje the helpdesk functioned very well because they offered practical support, but also established short lines of communication that are needed for that. For example the short line between Guusje and the touring car operator that drove the parents of the burned youngsters to the hospital. Despite the well-functioning of the helpdesk there was some tension during the collaboration with the GGD. At a certain point Guusje needed the folder with the 68 victims with the most serious injuries that she had put together. The folder was in a cupboard at the GGD. So she asked for the keys in order to get the folder, but access was denied because, according to the GGD she didn’t have the authority even though it was her own information. With this example, what could have been better according to Guusje is that more attention could have been paid to intertwining interests. “*The entanglement of interests*”⁴⁸ a friend of one, a niece of the other, a brother-in-law of that, a good acquaintance, those were the people that were brought in according to Guusje. As a consequence a conflict of loyalty arises. That could have been different, “*I don't care about the quality of people, but became too much an us knows us situation*”.⁴⁹

Because of her work at the helpdesk, Guusje was not much home in the days after the disaster. But her family gave her full freedom and space and they already knew that “*if I had agreed I would be home at 7 o'clock it could easily be 11 o'clock*”.⁵⁰ At the same time her daughter lost her boyfriend and needed her at that moment. According to Guusje her relation with her

⁴⁶ “Er moet wat gebeuren, er moet orde geschept worden in een grote chaos en wij vanuit de kerk willen een helpdesk gaan opzetten. Wil jij meedoen?”

⁴⁷ The helpdesk made the list by visiting the youngsters and/or their parents and asking them how many percent of their body was burnt.

⁴⁸ “Het verstrengelen van belangen.”

⁴⁹ “En ik tor niet aan de kwaliteit van mensen, maar het ging te veel over in een ons kent ons.”

⁵⁰ “Als ik had afgesproken ik ben om 7 uur thuis dan kon het ook zomaar 11 uur worden.”

daughter escalated because of this. But according to Guusje it was a good thing, it made her realize in which she fell short so she could avoid this in the future.

Guusje states that in the first period after the fire the population was very critical. That had to do with the allowances paid by the Ministry, 26 million, and distributed in a fair way by the personal injury specialists. When Guusje went on a birthday visit or visited a friend she first asked *"do you want to know about the fire or do you want to talk about that money for another ten minutes? That's possible for 10 minutes now because I'm also here for fun"*.⁵¹

Guusje shared her feelings and thoughts with pastor Berkhout and the same way around. This helped her to deal with the whole situation. Every Monday morning at 9 o'clock she went to the presbytery and had a conversation with pastor Berkhout until half past 10. Then she cycled to the municipality office and at 11 o'clock she had an appointment with the mayor. There she sat almost every Monday. She could talk really well with the pastor and with the mayor she discussed some more practical and business matters. The fact that the people of Volendam were very happy with the people of the helpdesk because they talked and listened to them made sure all the hard work was worth it. Once a week, in the morning the helpdesk staff held a little briefing with each other about how everyone is doing and if they had anything to say. *"We looked out for each other"*.⁵²

4.2.8 Hanna

Hanna is born and raised in Volendam. She was 19 at the time and celebrated new year's eve with seven girlfriends in bar Josef. Midnight was the starting signal to go to the Hemel. At quarter past twelve they were inside. Hanna noticed that it was very busy, *"it was often busy there, but now it was super busy"*⁵³ and so she said to her friends: *"guys, it is too busy, I'm leaving soon"*.⁵⁴ Hanna walked around the bar and wished everyone a happy new year. Her brother walked past me, but he didn't notice her. *"I was actually standing there looking at my brother, when the Christmas decorations ignited in their neighborhood. They were playing with sparklers."*⁵⁵ From that moment on chaos arose because everyone realized that there was a fire. Hanna tries to get out of the Hemel, but got stuck halfway. *"There I turned around, and there*

⁵¹ "Willen jullie nog wat weten van de brand of willen jullie het nog tien minuten hebben over dat geld, dan kan dat nu want ik zit hier ook voor de gezelligheid."

⁵² "Er werd op elkaar gelet."

⁵³ "Het was vaker erg druk, maar nu echt heel erg druk."

⁵⁴ "Jongens, het is me te druk, ik ga zo weg."

⁵⁵ "Ik stond eigenlijk een beetje naar mijn broer te kijken, toen daar dus in de buurt de kerstversiering in brand ging. Hun zaten te spelen met sterretjes."

I saw that my brother's coat was on fire. At that moment the exit door was opened".⁵⁶ Oxygen came into the building and there was a bang according to Hanna. Suddenly it was completely dark and quiet and Hanna and her friends fell over. She wasn't unconscious but it took a while to get up. Then she heard banging. It turned out that someone had climbed outside onto the roof and was busy smashing the windows. It took a while before she was breathing again. According to Hanna she stood up to walk to her brother but was caught by a firefighter who just arrived. He directed her out the window at the front of the bar. *"Then I lost my memory for fifteen or twenty minutes in which I walked around on the Dike, not really knowing where to go at that moment, an old school friend saw me and took care of me"*.⁵⁷ Hanna's hands and the top of her head, under her hair, was burned. Her friend brought her home and she was taken to the hospital to be treated. Hanna's family still didn't know where her brother was. There was a phone number on television, in case you missed someone. If you didn't know where your child was, you could call that number. Hanna's mother called and then it soon became clear that her brother was the only victim who had been brought to Blaricum. The doctors called Hanna's parents and said there was nothing they could do anymore. The doctors kept him alive so Hanna's parents could be with their son when he passed away. After three days the police visited the house of Hanna. The Commissioner of the Queen had just promised that within a week he would find the perpetrator of this disaster. *"And that had to be my brother, because those were Erik's sparklers"*.⁵⁸

According to Hanna they did not talk about the fire at home because there just wasn't much to talk about because there were also victims like her brother. Two of her other brothers-in-law did help out on the dike that night as firefighters, *"but nobody was really present at the bar and a real victim, so then the situation is really different"*.⁵⁹ After the disaster a silence center had been set up, a memorial center in the Don Bosco College. Hanna stopped talking after the disaster, she had not said anything for three days, so her parents were getting a bit nervous. So they send her to the silence center, maybe would be a good place to talk about it.

⁵⁶ "Daar heb ik mezelf omgedraaid, en daar zag ik dus dat mijn broer z'n jas inmiddels in brand stond. op dat moment toen is dus achteraf de dark room deur opengegaan. Die zit dan hier, die is opengegaan, waardoor er zuurstof in het pand kwam."

⁵⁷ "Toen ben ik dus een kwartier van de film kwijt inderdaad, dat ik dus op de Dijk heb rondgelopen, eigenlijk niet wetende waar je heen moet op dat moment ook en het was best wel koud. En dan heeft dus een oude schoolvriendin die heeft mij dus opgevangen en die zag mij lopen."

⁵⁸ "En dat moest mijn broer worden, want dat waren Erik z'n sterretjes."

⁵⁹ "Twee van mijn andere zwagers hebben die avond wel geholpen op de dijk, maar niemand was echt aanwezig en echt slachtoffer."

Hanna joined the first visit where you were allowed to go to the Hemel. That was under the guidance of psychologists. She was walking around there with friends, who also were present that night, and they reacted like oh look at this, this is completely burned and oh look at this it's still the same. According to Hanna they looked at it with very different eyes than the psychologist, who wanted to know what did they feel? They answered; *“that most of it is still in one piece”*.⁶⁰ When Hanna and her friends entered the Hemel, one year after the disaster, they immediately walked upstairs to the toilets to see if there was any damage. While they stood there they said; *“it is getting crowded here, get down quickly, because if there is fire again then we are trapped. So in the beginning we didn't really stood there as victims”*.⁶¹ Hanna states that she had to go to several psychologists at the time. Het Anker assigned her a psychologist. He was going to do EMDR training, but she wasn't suitable for that. She stopped quite quickly and then went to Spain to visit a psychologist. There was Geza, *“who was a psychologist, but he didn't behave like a psychologist. He didn't go along with heavy conversations”*.⁶² She learned there, things about herself, things she normally did wrong. The conclusion of that week was that she has difficulties asking for help.

Hanna didn't liked the first time in the dark, when her dad turned 50 in February, the year after the disaster, her family went to Centerparcs for a weekend. They walked through the forest and a few people had the fireplace on, that smell was the same as that night, she panicked and started to hyperventilate. Hanna's husband never really talked about the disaster, *“he'd tucked it away and never looked at it”*.⁶³ For him it helped to write about the disaster, to put his words onto paper. *“He's not that much of a talker, nor is he expressing emotions or crying”*.⁶⁴ So he just went to work after the fire and worked as much as he could. So he worked 100, 120 hours a week. He decided that he will never work so many hours again and started to put his words onto paper. Now, with the commemoration 20 years later, Hanna prefers not to be there. She notices that it bothers her more now that she is getting older than it did then. She doesn't really know why that is. *“Whether you think more about it now, or that you have more awareness of it maybe”*.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ “Dat het meeste nog wel heel is zeiden wij.”

⁶¹ “En dat we daar toen stonden en zeiden jeetje het wordt hier wel druk snel naar beneden, want als er weer brand komt dan ehh. Dat, ja weetje. Dus wij stonden er in het begin ook als slachtoffers niet heel erg in.”

⁶² “Dat was dan ook een psycholoog, maar die gedroeg zich niet als een psycholoog. Die ging geen zware gesprekken mee.”

⁶³ “Hij had dat mooi in een hoekje gestopt en had er nooit naar omgekeken, want dat is geweest.”

⁶⁴ “Dat is niet zo'n prater en ook niet zo van emoties en huilen is lastig.”

⁶⁵ “Of je er nu meer over nadenkt, dat je er meer besef van hebt.”

4.2.9 Ivo

Ivo is born and raised in Volendam. Ivo just turned 16 that year and on new year's eve he went to the bar with his friends, because he reached the legal drinking age. Ivo and his friends were in café the Blokhut, the bar beneath café the Hemel. At midnight he and two friends went outside to watch the fireworks. Ivo had forgotten his coat and quickly went back into the cafe. It was past twelve so Ivo wanted to go upstairs to the Hemel to wish people and "*especially the girls*"⁶⁶, a happy new year. "*All the girls were sitting upstairs in the Hemel, the boys were downstairs drinking until they had the courage to go upstairs*".⁶⁷ So Ivo was going to check out the Hemel, it was very crowded, because all those cafes opened and the Hemel was the most popular café. "*I found it too busy, I thought, I have to get out of here, because this doesn't make sense, it's not cozy, it's not fun. You couldn't talk to anyone, because you were pushed forward*".⁶⁸ Ivo was almost outside again, almost at the exit when the disaster happened. "*Panic of course, you don't know what's happening, and yes people are falling over you and at that moment I lost consciousness*".⁶⁹ Ivo regained consciousness when he was outside, but doesn't remember how he got outside. Eventually he ended up on the dike and that is where his father and mother found him. He remembered that he was put on a stretcher and taken to a tent. Medics gave Ivo an injection and transferred him to a hospital. Ivo was in a coma for three weeks and woke up again on January 21st. He couldn't walk anymore and lost a lot of weight. Ivo burned his face and his left hand and "*that was of course quite a thing especially when you are 16*"⁷⁰, according to Ivo.

Despite the disaster, Ivo decided pretty quickly "*to put an end to the situation and just accept it and move on as it should be*".⁷¹ Ivo went back to school as soon as possible and started working again as soon as possible. In spite of the rehabilitation he went through, he decided for himself that he was just going to live like a normal, sixteen year old boy again. Even though that wasn't the case "*because you just had an experience that made you realize that you are mortal and when you are 16, you think you are immortal*".⁷² He'd rather not be a victim and

⁶⁶ "En het was natuurlijk twaalf uur geweest en je wilt dan mensen zien en vooral meiden."

⁶⁷ "Alle meisjes die zaten boven in de Hemel. Altijd. Beneden zaten de jongens, moed indrinken."

⁶⁸ "Ik vond het veelste druk, ik dacht, ik moet hier weg, want dit heeft geen zin, weet je wel, het is niet gezellig, niet leuk. Je kon met niemand praten, want je werd hup vooruit geduwd."

⁶⁹ "Paniek natuurlijk, je weet niet wat er gebeurt, en ja de mensen vallen over je heen en op dat moment is bij mij, zeg maar, het licht uitgegaan."

⁷⁰ "Dat was natuurlijk wel een dingetje, vooral als je 16 bent."

⁷¹ "Ik besloot om wel vrij snel om..., om er verder een punt achter te zetten en het gewoon te accepteren en weer verder te gaan zoals het moest zijn."

⁷² "Want je hebt gewoon een ervaring meegemaakt waardoor je erachter bent gekomen dat je sterfelijk bent en als je 16 bent, dan denk je dat je onsterfelijk bent."

just continue his life. This went very well for Ivo, he passed his exams, finished his education, he just led a normal life like any other teenager.

Ivo didn't have any trust in the psychic health care after the disaster. *"The theory and all that, that didn't make any sense, apart from the fact that they just did their best. You know, you're sitting across from someone in the AMC, for example, someone who's younger than you and who's just out of school and learned from a book. That didn't work out"*.⁷³ At a certain moment Ivo just locked things up and as a consequence his environment thought Ivo must have given it a place, he didn't want to talk about it. When people asked him about the disaster he *"would talk about it, but not on such a level that it could solve something, but I didn't have the idea that there was something to solve either"*.⁷⁴

In hindsight Ivo thinks that the aftercare was and is really well organized. Everything that could be done was done in order to take care of the victims. For example, an air conditioning was set up at his house and at school he got more time to finish exams. *"We were given all kinds of stuff when we needed it"*.⁷⁵ Policies were set up everywhere, the victims were tested and everything was kept up to date. In addition, social matters were organized to get together, but that wasn't something for Ivo. That was purely because he had the feeling that he would be a disabled person if he went along and he didn't want that. So he never obeyed all those things that were organized. That went in his mental garbage can and was just fine for him. In 2017 it went completely wrong, he collapsed. In the beginning he was convinced that he had something physical, because he thought that he had dealt with that fire a long time ago. It turned out that he was physically completely healthy, so it must have been something mental. It couldn't be the fire because, *"that is from the past, that's already twenty years ago, I've already lost that, I don't suffer from that anymore"*.⁷⁶

Nowadays, Ivo is part of a project called Volendam Spreekt. It is an opportunity for victims, aid workers and others involved to tell their story about that night in front of an audience. According to Ivo there is a certain goal behind this, because now he notices, while working on his storytelling, that the fire is still alive and that people feel the need to tell their story. Even

⁷³ "De theorie en zo, dat had allemaal geen zin. Los gezien van het feit dat ze, dat hun gewoon hun best deden. Weet je, dan zit je tegenover iemand, in het AMC bijvoorbeeld die jonger is dan jij en die net uit de schoolbanken vandaan komt en uit een boek geleerd heeft, weet je... Dat schoot niet op."

⁷⁴ "Dan ging ik er wel over praten, maar niet op een dusdanig niveau dat het wat zou kunnen oplossen, maar ik had ook niet het idee dat er wat op te lossen viel hè."

⁷⁵ "We kregen van allerlei spullen aangereikt als het nodig was, je werd er bijna mee doodgegooid."

⁷⁶ "Dat is van vroeger, dat is nou al twintig jaar geleden, dat ben ik allang al kwijt, daar heb ik geen last meer van."

after 20 years. Ivo hopes, by talking about it, that he can achieve something that might make other people think: *“wait a minute, I’m also walking around with things that might have to do with that, so that they don’t continue until they collapse”*.⁷⁷ He doesn’t know if it’s exemplary for Volendam, but according to Ivo most people want to avoid pain and at a certain point you don’t want to talk about that anymore to avoid that pain. *“But the strange thing is that you have to go through that pain to move on in your life”*.⁷⁸ Ivo is a member of multiple workgroups concerning the aftermath of the fire and throughout those workgroups he is getting in touch with other victims. Before he never did. *“I do know them and you can see them, but I have always avoided them. Afterwards not the right way, of course, but that was my way”*.⁷⁹

According to Ivo, nowadays with the upcoming commemoration, there will always be people who have something like why do we have to talk about this again because it’s been 20 years ago now. Ivo understands when you’re like that, because he has been like that for years. The commemoration of ten years ago, for example, he didn’t know anything about it, completely overlooked it. *“You have the choice to think about it or not. But if you can’t think about it, what can you think about?”*⁸⁰

4.2.10 Julia

Julia is born and raised in Volendam. At the time of the disaster Julia was 21 years old. Julia celebrated new year’s eve with her friends and her sister in café the Josef. Julia’s husband was somewhere on the dike and came to the cafe Josef just before twelve o’clock. After midnight she walked to the dike to see her brother, who was fourteen at the time and went to the bar for the first time. It was a tradition to go to the Hemel after twelve, because everyone always came together on new year’s eve at that bar. But Julia and her husband changed their minds. *“Oh, never mind, it’s always so crowded there. You didn’t even have the space to dance there, let’s go and see my aunt”*.⁸¹ When they arrived at her aunts, they received a phone call that there was a fire in the Hemel. Julia’s parents and her husband went to the dike. They went to find her brother because he was in the Hemel for the first time and they hadn’t heard anything yet. Julia

⁷⁷ “Wacht effe, ik loop ook nog met dingen rond, die daar misschien mee te maken kunnen hebben, zodat ze niet doorgaan totdat ze instortte.”

⁷⁸ “Maar het vreemde is eigenlijk dat je door die pijn heen moet om verder te komen in je leven.”

⁷⁹ “Ik ken ze wel en je ziet ze wel, maar ik heb dat altijd ontweken. Achteraf natuurlijk niet de juiste manier, maar dat was mijn manier.”

⁸⁰ “Je hebt zelf de keuze om er bij stil te staan of niet. Maar als je hier niet bij stil mag staan waar mag je dan wel bij stil staan?”

⁸¹ “Ach laat maar zitten het is daar altijd zo druk. Je had daar niet eens de ruimte om te dansen, laten we maar even langs mijn tante gaan.”

can vaguely remember the moment she was at the dike. She looked for her brother, but didn't see him anywhere. From that moment on she doesn't really remember anything of that night. She does remember that she went home that night. The next morning she found out that her brother was in the Amsterdam Medical Center. Her family went to the hospital and found him. *"At that time I remember the hair sticking out of the bandage, we didn't see what was going on. I think his face was wrapped as well".*⁸² The same day her brother was transferred to Antwerp and spent two months in that hospital.

After the disaster Julia didn't feel well at her work and developed a depression. She went to Het Anker for the supporters project. They assigned Julia a supporter and they clicked great together, she was very happy with her. But the thing she missed just after the disaster was a phone call from Het Anker. A call where they would say; hey you're the sister of, but how are you doing now? That at least she would know she could go somewhere, because she never had to deal with counseling and didn't know where to go. She had the feeling that she didn't belong anywhere. *"It's always how it is with your brother, with your father and mother, but never how are you doing?"*⁸³ There were evenings organized for parents and there were evenings for those affected and at one point Julia can still remember that others were allowed as well, but that was only a bit later in the process in her opinion.

According to Julia the bond between her brother and father is much stronger. *"But that's okay, I can accept that now. But not then, then I thought that stronger bond was real"*.⁸⁴ Julia states that she had the feeling that her life also mattered. Everything revolved around her brother, she thought that was logical too, but it was more that she didn't really had a place where she could go. Sometimes she had the feeling that she was on the sideline, *"but with your own sadness and that you wanted to be heard as well"*.⁸⁵ Never once someone asked how she was doing, it was always how her brother was doing and how her father and mother were doing. She could understand it, but *"you want to feel that you matter, or at least that you can tell your story, that would be nice. Because everything revolves around your brother and your parents"*.⁸⁶

⁸² "Toen weet ik nog wel dat dat haar er zo uitstak, toen zagen we nog niet wat er allemaal aan de hand was. Zijn gezicht was volgens mij ook ingepakt."

⁸³ "Het was altijd hoe gaat het met je broer en hoe gaat het met je vader en je moeder, maar nooit eens hoe gaat het met jou."

⁸⁴ "Maar dat is oké, dat kan ik nu wel accepteren. Maar toen niet, toen vond ik dat echt."

⁸⁵ "Met je eigen verdriet en dat je er ook meer bij wilde zijn."

⁸⁶ "En dat snap ik dan nog wel, maar als er dan wel iets is waar je dan wel het gevoel hebt dat je ook meetelt, of in ieder geval ook je verhaal kwijt kan, dat zal wel prettig zijn."

The thing she missed most was the opportunity to talk to someone, she thinks that is what she needed most of all. That she could tell her story, from her point of view. Her parents had a hard time and her brother had a hard time, but the sister who hangs around only a little. She was part of the family, but still always had the feeling of being apart and that she couldn't tell her story. She never felt that she had also the right to express her emotions. *"I didn't have that feeling, not within the family because my parents were already struggling enough so you don't have to express your emotions again"*.⁸⁷ She didn't feel anything for years, she thinks that was self-protection. She just switched off her feelings of not wanting to feel misery anymore, but as a consequence did not feel the nice things anymore. *"That was easy sometimes, but also weird"*.⁸⁸ Julia states that she processed the disaster and never has a bad feeling on new year's eve anymore. She doesn't celebrate it exuberantly, but keeps it quiet. Not because it still has an impact, but out of respect.

4.2.11 Koen

Koen is born and raised in Volendam. Koen celebrated new year's eve at home with his wife. They were supposed to go to friends but because his wife was feeling sick and the weather was very bad that night they stayed at home. They heard some sirens around a quarter to one, but had no idea what was going on in the village. At half past three Koen's sister in law called him because his niece wasn't home yet and visited the Hemel that night. Just a few minutes after the call it went wrong with the telephone traffic. The whole telephone traffic fell out. *"Then finally around 6 o'clock we got back in touch with each other and my niece was at home and the story gradually became clear"*.⁸⁹ Thereafter, more and more information reached Koen and the scale of the disaster got bigger and bigger. A lot of people went to the dike, but Koen decided not to go, but just to wait and see. *"Because in a situation of panic you shouldn't mess things up"*.⁹⁰ According to Koen you shouldn't get in the way and let the aid workers do their job. Early in the morning Koen went to his sister-in-law. He took care of his niece for a while and when he was there it turned out that one of her girlfriends had passed away that night. According to Koen everyone was searching around, trying to find information and trace who is where and who it concerns. *"Volendam is naturally also very curious about each other and that gave a lot*

⁸⁷ "Niet binnen het gezin want mijn ouders hadden het al zwaar genoeg dus daar gaan je niet je emoties nog eens, die kunnen niet mijn ellende er nog bij hebben hoe verdrietig ik was, voor mijn gevoel."

⁸⁸ "En dat was wel makkelijk soms, maar ook wel raar."

⁸⁹ "Toen uiteindelijk rond de klok van 6 uur kregen we weer contact met elkaar en toen was zij wel thuis en werd het verhaal wel langzamerhand duidelijk."

⁹⁰ "Want in een situatie van paniek moet je niet de zaak bevuilen."

of ambiguity".⁹¹ The number of deaths were increasing and it became clear that people also stayed abroad in hospitals. "*It was a depressing situation*".⁹²

On the third day after the disaster it was clear that aftercare would arise, also from private initiatives. During that day Koen was approached to be in the SSNV and on the fourth day he sat for the first time at the table where SSNV was formed. "*From that day onwards I hardly came home*".⁹³ The SSNV searched for people who were involved within the community, but did not have strong (familial) ties to serious victims. According to Koen because they quickly realized that later on all kinds of financial aspects would come into play and there shouldn't be too many interests. So people with some distance to the disaster was necessary but expertise was also needed. During those first days their goal was to orientate themselves mainly in the area of burn injuries. What was lying ahead of them? Furthermore, very practical matters like what can they offer from private initiative to support the parents, the environment, the families of those affected? On the tenth day the SSNV was officially founded, with a focus on the various disciplines they thought they needed, such as legal and financial experts. As a result they formed a helpdesk with their own people. Starting from the second week the SSNV had about 150 volunteers that they could use, day and night. Who were available 24/7 and relieved each other and wrote down all the practical questions. They organized this in such a way that everything was noted and then, based on the disciplines on the board, the board member with the expertise looked at how he should answer the question. Then the person at the helpdesk who received the question, provided feedback to the questioner. A lot of practical things came up according to Koen, such as transport to hospitals, which they arranged for family members

Koen states that legally the actual legal damage of a parent of a deceased child is only very small, except for funeral costs. "*So the question is what can you legally compensate?*".⁹⁴ Those were rather complicated discussions. He and the SSNV tried to fill in the maximum, "*but of course the maximum is never enough*".⁹⁵ Certainly not when those parents hear that others, who are still alive, receive higher reimbursements. According to Koen, money doesn't make people happy and certainly doesn't bring the deceased youngsters back, "*but it's one thing that people*

⁹¹ "Nu is Volendam van nature ook wel erg nieuwsgierig naar elkaar en dat gaf veel onduidelijkheid."

⁹² "Het was een terneergeslagen situatie."

⁹³ "En vanaf die dag ben ik vanaf de eerste dagen bijna niet thuis geweest."

⁹⁴ "Dus wat kun je juridisch dan ook vergoeden?"

⁹⁵ "Maar het maximale is natuurlijk nooit voldoende."

who have serious injuries receive considerable amounts of money and you've lost your child. You get the costs of the funeral back and that's it".⁹⁶

Koen was dealing with the aftermath of the fire almost every day. He remembered that at some point in the summer everyone said that he should go on a vacation so he could forget about it for a moment and could clear his mind. He went to the south of France. At the same time he arrived in France, the report of the Alders commission was published. A box with a lot of paper was delivered at his vacation address. So it became *"quite a bit of reading on vacation, but that was also part of it".⁹⁷* That also gave him energy to continue because he was busy with helping people. *"If you see that it really helps people, if you can tackle problems, if you can intervene when certain bureaucratic systems don't work properly, that gives you the energy to continue".⁹⁸*

Nowadays, in the NNV⁹⁹ there is a safety net. According to Koen this means that specific things that are not reimbursed by insurers are reimbursed by the NNV in order to make a difference. The NNV already arranged a lot of things by the means of a safety net arrangement that they have. For example, they have an expense scheme per day spent in the hospital so the affected can get compensation, they have an arrangement for the employees of those affected, that if they left with costs they can call the NNV and they will cover those costs. The NNV has arrangements for transport to the hospitals because they are often not or insufficiently reimbursed by the insurers. They have a safety net for things that the insurers don't arrange. Furthermore, some parts of cosmetic surgeries are not or almost not reimbursed by the insurance and then those affected can rely on the NNV.

4.2.12 Lisa

Lisa wasn't born and raised in Volendam but moved to Volendam during her childhood. She went to school in Volendam, but doesn't speak the local language. After she finished high school she moved to Amsterdam for a while and since four years she's back in Volendam. *"I grew up in Volendam as a non-Volendam child, so I am used to all the customs and traditions, but always a bit from the sideline because my parents are not Volendam*

⁹⁶ "Maar het is wel een ding dat mensen die ernstigs letsel hebben aanzienlijke bedragen krijgen en jij bent je kind kwijt. Je krijgt de kosten van de begrafenis terug en that's it."

⁹⁷ "Nou aardig wat leeswerk op vakantie haha. Dat hoorde er ook bij."

⁹⁸ "Als je ziet dat mensen er echt door geholpen worden, als je problemen kan tackelen, als je kan ingrijpen als bepaalde bureaucratische systemen niet goed werken, dat geeft je dan ook wel weer energie."

⁹⁹ The successor of the SSNV

people“.¹⁰⁰ Lisa was 17 years old at the time of the disaster. She celebrated new year’s eve at her home with a friend. The idea was that Lisa and her friend would first drink something at her house and then later would go to the Hemel. Lisa remembers doing her best to persuade all her girlfriends to come over. but in the end most of them went straight to the Hemel. *“I don't know if it's that stubbornness inside me, but I said no I just want to drink at home first and in the end I stayed at home with one friend”*.¹⁰¹ At half past eleven Lisa wanted to go to the Hemel, but her friend insisted on waiting on her boyfriend so they could go all together. It took a long time before her boyfriend came, it was just after 12 o'clock. At that moment they walked towards the Hemel. *“In the end that was my luck as well because we arrived and it had just happened, I think. Eventually I entered the Hemel and then suddenly I saw all those people who wanted to get out and chaos and I have to say that I don't remember everything about that night”*.¹⁰² Lisa doesn’t remember exactly what she did, but does remember that she stood on the dike and *“it looked a bit like a horror movie”*.¹⁰³ She saw a lot that night, images that she will never forget. Eventually she met her mother on the dike and she took Lisa away from the scene as fast as possible.

On the one hand Lisa felt very lucky that her friends boyfriend showed up very late otherwise *“I would have been in the Hemel at the time of the fire, 100 percent sure”*.¹⁰⁴ At the same time she felt very guilty. *“I'm just very lucky and at the same time I felt very guilty. Everyone had something, give me something too. Because, this may sound very strange, the feeling that some people were so badly affected, give me something too. Why was I so lucky?”*.¹⁰⁵ Pretty soon after the disaster she heard that she shouldn't complain because she was very lucky. *“Pretty soon after that I went into another mode. Okay you're not a victim, nothing wrong, you have been very lucky that nothing happened and all attention needs to go to all those people who are victims”*.¹⁰⁶ At the time of the disaster Lisa was in a long time relationship with a Volendammer.

¹⁰⁰ “Als niet Volendamse wel in Volendam opgegroeid en in zoverre dus wel gewend met alle gewoontes, tradities, maar toch altijd wel een beetje vanaf de zijlijn omdat mijn ouders geen Volendammers zijn.”

¹⁰¹ “ ik weet niet of het dat eigenwijze is wat ik al eerder zei, maar ik zei nee ik wil gewoon thuis eerst punt. Uiteindelijk bleef ik thuis met één, een vriendin.”

¹⁰² “Uiteindelijk is dat ook wel mijn geluk geweest want wij kwamen aan en het was toen net gebeurd geloof ik. Uiteindelijk ben ik tot de achterkant van de hemel gekomen en toen zag ik opeens allemaal mensen die eruit wilde en chaos en ik moet zeggen dat ik ook niet alles meer precies weet van die avond.”

¹⁰³ “Het zag er een beetje uit als een horror film.”

¹⁰⁴ “Als mijn vriendin er niet was geweest dan was ik in de Hemel, 100 procent zeker.”

¹⁰⁵ “Naja gewoon heel veel geluk gehad. En tegelijkertijd heel erg schuldgevoel gehad. Iedereen had wat, geef mij ook wat. Want, dit klinkt misschien heel raar, het gevoel dat sommige mensen zo heftig getroffen waren, van geef mij ook wat. Waarom heb ik zoveel geluk gehad?”

¹⁰⁶ “En vrij snel daarna in een andere modus gegaan. Van oké jij bent geen slachtoffer, niets aan de hand, jij hebt veel geluk gehad dat er niets gebeurd is en alle aandacht gaat natuurlijk volledig naar al die mensen die wel slachtoffers zijn.”

He was present at the Hemel during the fire. He was on a victim list but immediately signed out as a victim because he also thought that the money and help was all meant for others, the victims. He said: *“I am not a victim because I have nothing”*¹⁰⁷, while he was in the Hemel during the fire.

After the disaster Lisa developed some complaints. At her secondary school, the Don Bosco College, there was a place where you could talk and discuss your feelings with a social worker. Lisa had had quite a few nightmares, so she visited the social worker. One week later she came back to the social worker, and she had that conversation and said exactly what the social worker wanted to hear. The conclusion of the social worker was that there was nothing wrong with Lisa, everything is fine with her.

According to Lisa even the severely burned victims were always very positive towards, for example, the newspaper. They survived and looked positively towards the future. That doesn't let any room open, that's the interpretation Lisa gave to it, for others. According to Lisa there was no room for her grief, because there is nothing wrong, she isn't hurt. You have been lucky people told her. At that time *“there was a general tendency that it was not intended, that you..., yes... You couldn't be weak, because nothing happened to you”*.¹⁰⁸ All the attention went to those who needed it. Lisa didn't feel that there was room for people like her at that moment. According to Lisa the mode in Volendam was actually *“we're going for the positive and we're not going to talk about the past. Above all, we're going to show that we're a powerful community that is going to make something out of life again”*.¹⁰⁹ This is actually how Lisa experienced how people dealt with it. In hindsight she doesn't think that was a good thing. In hindsight she thinks that a lot has been overlooked by a lot of people. On the one hand it belongs to the community narrative of Volendam, that is how Volendammers are. But it also ensures that she didn't feel safe to talk about it openly.

According to Lisa there always was a small group of people who were labeled as a victim and now, at least something she is very happy with, it has become a bit more open and more and more people are seen as victims. Lisa states that *“in fact everyone is a victim in one way or*

¹⁰⁷ “Ik had een hele tijd een relatie met een Volendammer die toen ook in de hemel zat, maar zich meteen heeft uitgeschreven als slachtoffer omdat hij ook vond dat het geld en alles was allemaal voor anderen bedoeld. Ik ben geen slachtoffer want ik heb niets.”

¹⁰⁸ “Want er was een algemene tendens dat het niet de bedoeling was, dat je..., ja... Je moest niet zwak zijn, want er was niks.”

¹⁰⁹ “Want de modus was eigenlijk oké we gaan voor het positieve en we gaan het niet over het verleden hebben. We gaan vooral laten zien dat we een krachtige gemeenschap zijn die de schouders eronder zetten en die er weer wat van gaan maken.”

another".¹¹⁰ For example, what happened at those schools, how weird it is when half of your class isn't there? It's a closed community, but even though Lisa wasn't born there, she knew everyone, so she knew exactly what was happening and that was very strange for her when something so big happens. It has such an impact on whole generations of which she knows that a lot of people, like herself for example, haven't talked about it that much. *"If you do talk to them, it hits them right away and it apparently never got a place or is processed"*.¹¹¹

Lisa's grief came out later. The moment when she noticed that it came out was actually ten years after the disaster. In Amsterdam a number of victims had a photo exhibition with their story and that was in the Melkweg. She lived in Amsterdam at that time and wanted to go and have a look there. She visited that exhibition and *"at that moment it hit me so much, it shocked me so much, because only after ten years it hits me. So I've been off the map for a couple of weeks"*.¹¹²

The Volendam Spreekt evenings will certainly stir up a lot according to Lisa and she hopes that people will talk to each other, that there is a space for it, that they can tell their story. *"There are so many, like me, who were there, who were in the cafe downstairs, who saw the most terrible things and also afterwards in their lives, but that they never talk about it"*.¹¹³ According to Lisa the commemoration itself is mainly for the parents of deceased victims. Lisa sometimes finds it difficult because the disaster is something that has happened to all of them, but still it seems as if it's only for a small group. The same applies for the opening-up of the Hemel. *It's just, the feeling that only the people who are directly damaged, on the outside, are allowed to decide while I'm actually like, it's actually from all of us, it's also my piece of the story, the story of brothers or sisters. They may as well decide about it because it belongs to all of us"*.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ "Eigenlijk is iedereen op een of andere manier slachtoffer, is dus slachtoffer."

¹¹¹ "Als je wel met ze in gesprek gaat, dat het meteen raakt en dat het blijkbaar nooit een plekje heeft mogen krijgen."

¹¹² "En heel erg raar, maar op dat moment heeft het mij zo geraakt, ben ik er zo van slag van geweest, waar ik ook heel erg van geschrokken was, omdat er pas na tien jaar, bij mij iets van een klap kwam. Dus ik ben daar wel een paar weken van, ja van..., van de kaart geweest, laat ik het zo zeggen."

¹¹³ "Er zijn zoveel, zoals mij, die daar waren, die in het café beneden waren, die de meest verschrikkelijke dingen hebben gezien en ook daarna in hun leven..., maar dat er nooit over gesproken wordt."

¹¹⁴ "Het gevoel is dat alleen maar de mensen die direct beschadigd zijn, aan de buitenkant, dat die mogen beslissen hoe of wat, terwijl... Ik heb eigenlijk zoiets van, het is eigenlijk van ons allemaal, het is ook mijn stukje van het verhaal, het verhaal van broers of zussen. Die mogen daar net zo goed over meebeslissen want het is van ons allemaal."

Lisa felt that she needed to do something with the Hemel, maybe out of guilt. She became the project leader of the entire renovation of the building. While she was project leader she also had to discuss with the interest groups such as the parents of the deceased. She thought that it was very difficult because they didn't know who she was. *"They thought oh Lisa, we don't know that surname"*¹¹⁵ They didn't know that she lived in Volendam". Even parents of deceased victims of which she knew their deceased daughter. That was difficult for her. Especially since she was confronted with the building. She never had been back, but then all of a sudden she had to be there and *"I hadn't prepared for that at all"*.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ze keken en dacht oh ..., die achternaam kennen we niet".

¹¹⁶ "En daar had ik me ook helemaal niet op voorbereid."

5. Analysis of Narratives

In this chapter the narratives of the respondents will be analyzed. It will be explained to what extent, according to the respondent, there is a victim hierarchy and whether this has had an influence on the requested or offered aftercare. The analysis takes place on the basis of the two themes; victim hierarchy and aftercare. These main topics will be divided into subtopics to be explained in more detail. With the help of the analysis an answer can be formulated to the research question: *To what extent has victim hierarchy affected the aftercare of forgotten groups twenty years after the disaster of Volendam in 2001?*

5.1 Victim Hierarchy

First, the subject victim hierarchy is analyzed for each respondent. Under the main code victim hierarchy are included the sub codes pragmatic hierarchy, hierarchy of innocence and processing a disaster. As indicated earlier in this thesis, the following definition of victim hierarchy is used: *the human tendency to compare the suffering of a group of those affected with that of another, creating the impression that certain forms of suffering are at a higher level than other forms* (Jankowitz, 2018). All interviews revealed that the interviewees are victims in one way or another or they indicated that there was a victim hierarchy among themselves or others. For example Frits and Lisa state that “*everyone is a victim in one way another*”.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Bart made it very clear there is a victim hierarchy by stating “*at that moment you just had to choose and it was just worse for my son than it was for her, so to speak*”.¹¹⁸ Jankowitz (2018) states that loss and pain are not evenly distributed. This means that there is a hierarchy in the amount of pain and suffering (Jankowitz, 2018: 224).

5.1.1 Victim Hierarchy Analysis of Narratives

Based on the analysis of the narratives there is a victim hierarchy in Volendam. One interviewee made it very clear there is a victim hierarchy by stating “*at that moment you just had to choose and it was just worse for my son than it was for her, so to speak*”.¹¹⁹ This corresponds to the definition of victim hierarchy used in this thesis; *the human tendency to compare the suffering of a group of those affected with that of another, creating the impression that certain forms of suffering are at a higher level than other forms* (Jankowitz, 2018). All interviews reveal that

¹¹⁷ “Eigenlijk is iedereen een slachtoffer op een of andere manier”.

¹¹⁸ “Maar op dat moment moest je gewoon kiezen en was het gewoon voor mijn zoon erger als voor haar, bij wijze van spreken”.

¹¹⁹ “Maar op dat moment moest je gewoon kiezen en was het gewoon voor mijn zoon erger als voor haar, bij wijze van spreken.”

the interviewees are victims in one way or another or they indicated that there was victim hierarchy among others.

For several reasons there is a victim hierarchy. First, the need to prioritize the victims in order to provide help to those who were in greatest need (Jankowitz, 2018: 230). For example the helpdesk, they made a distinction in prioritizing victims, they made a list of 68 victims with the most serious injuries. There was a need to prioritize the victims in order to provide help to those who were in greatest need. Furthermore, there were victims who rather not be a victim and just wanted to continue their lives. Some of them collapsed years later, sometimes even more than 15 years later. In addition, a journalist who suffered a psychological hit months afterwards most likely caused by what he has seen that night. Despite this prioritization of victims there are differences that cannot be seen at glance for instance psychological trauma (Jankowitz, 2018: 232). From a legal point of view the actual damage of a parent of a deceased child is not that big at all. In this case the victims who survived were in greater need, financially, then the parents of the deceased. They needed to prioritize the victims in order to provide help to those who were in greatest need.

Second, people objectivize the severity of victimization by focusing on the impact of a disaster on someone's health (Jankowitz, 2018: 230). Bart stated that the impact on his son was bigger than the impact on his daughter. This shows how a pragmatic hierarchy can prioritize victims (Jankowitz, 2018: 231). Furthermore, the pyramid of grief about who has the right to the most grief. If one objectivizes the severity of victimization by focusing on the impact of a disaster on someone's health, then someone with a dead child would have more right to grief than someone with a child with only burns. In addition, Hanna stated that they did not talk about the fire at home because there just wasn't much to talk about because there were also victims like her brother, who passed away. The impact of the disaster on Julia's physical and psychological health was less than the impact of the disaster on her brother and therefore she was not seen as a victim.

Third, victims forget about their own claims as being a victim, because their situation was better than that of other victims or they can feel uncomfortable for falling under the same category while their injuries differ significantly (Jankowitz, 2018: 231). Dylan's niece had seen what happened in the Hemel and in the chaos she felt and injured her hand. Afterwards she said she wasn't hurt and therefore claimed that she was no victim. She felt uncomfortable for falling under the same category, victims, while their injuries differ significantly. In addition, the pyramid of grief can assure that some victims forget about their own claim as being a victim,

because they survived and that makes their situation better than that of victims who passed away. Ivo decided to just accept it and move on. He'd rather not be a victim and just continue his life. He could forget about his own claims as being a victim, because his situation was better than that of other victims (Jankowitz, 2018: 231). Hanna was in the Hemel at the moment of the fire and saw that her brother was on fire. It could be that she forgot about her own claims as being a victim as well, because she made it out and here situation was better than that of her brother, who passed away. Lisa's boyfriend at the time was present at the Hemel during the fire. He immediately signed out as a victim because he also thought that the money and help was all meant for others, the victims. *"I am not a victim because I have nothing"*.¹²⁰ He felt uncomfortable for falling under the same category while his injuries differ significantly.

Finally, the distinction in hierarchy is determined on the basis of those who have suffered damage, but who are considered less innocent or less vulnerable and are therefore lower in the hierarchy (Jankowitz, 2018: 233). The children and parents who suffered damage, but survived are considered innocent. The children were seen as victims while the parents of the deceased were seen as less innocent or less vulnerable and are therefore lower in the hierarchy. You have been lucky, that is what people told Lisa. Lisa has seen a lot that night, but is considered less innocent or vulnerable because she has been lucky and made it out without any physical damage. Three respondents did not make a distinction in prioritizing victims, according to them *"everyone is a victim in one way or another"*.¹²¹

5.2 Aftercare

The theme aftercare is analyzed for each respondent. Within the main code aftercare, the sub codes medical aftercare and social aftercare are included. Medical aftercare includes both physical and psychological care. Social aftercare can consist of care or assistance on the psychosocial, administrative-legal or financial-economic level. As indicated earlier in this thesis, the following definition of aftercare is used: *the prevention or elimination of permanent problems or damage on a physical, mental and or social level during and after a disaster* (Nuijen, 2006: 48). Aftercare is all that is needed to be able to live a normal life again, both physically and materially (Nuijen, 2006: 48). Eight out of the twelve interviewees indicated that they or those closest to them did not have or sought help immediately after the disaster. Nine out of twelve of the interviewees reported having complaints, symptoms or having someone close to them who had complaints or symptoms that were probably related to the fire.

¹²⁰ "Ik ben geen slachtoffer want ik heb niets."

¹²¹ "Eigenlijk is iedereen op een of andere manier slachtoffer, is dus slachtoffer."

5.2.1 Aftercare Analysis of Narratives

The majority of the interviewees who did not qualify themselves as victims or were not qualified as victims did not look for help after the disaster and/or made use of aftercare. Only after they developed complaints at a later age, some started looking for help from the appropriate authorities. One interviewee made it very clear that people who did not qualify themselves as victims or were not qualified as victims did not look for help after the disaster and/or made use of aftercare because there was “no time to process it, there never really has been”.¹²²

For several reasons people did not look for help after the disaster and/or made use of aftercare. First, because they did not talk about the disaster or felt that they were not allowed to talk about it, so nobody knew that they needed help. For example Hanna’s husband, he never really talked about the disaster, “*he'd tucked it away and never looked at it*”.¹²³ The social environment of Ivo thought that he must have given it a place, because he doesn't want to talk about it. “*If people asked me about it, I would talk about it, but not on such a level that it could solve something, but I didn't have the idea that there was something to solve it, either*”.¹²⁴ Julia never felt that she had the right to express her emotions. “*I didn't have that feeling, not within the family because my parents were already struggling enough so you don't have to express your emotions again*”.¹²⁵ Julia missed the fact that no one asked how she was doing. As a consequence she felt that her grief didn’t count, “*it was just the feeling that I missed something in the feeling of being there with my grief*”.¹²⁶ As a consequence she didn’t feel anything for years, she thinks that was really self-protection. Lisa always felt excluded because she was not Volendams. According to Lisa the victims of the fire were always very positive towards the newspaper. They survived and saw it all positively. That doesn't let any space open for others. There was no room for her grief, because she wasn’t hurt. You have been lucky people told her. Lisa felt that there was no room to express her emotions because her situation was better than that of others. “*There are so many, like me, who were there, who were in the cafe downstairs,*

¹²² “Wat dat aangaat... En geen tijd om, om het eens te verwerken. Dat is er eigenlijk nooit geweest.”

¹²³ “Hij had dat mooi in een hoekje gestopt en had er nooit naar omgekeken, want dat is geweest.”

¹²⁴ “Dan ging ik er wel over praten, maar niet op een dusdanig niveau dat het wat zou kunnen oplossen, maar ik had ook niet het idee dat er wat op te lossen viel hè.”

¹²⁵ “Niet binnen het gezin want mijn ouders hadden het al zwaar genoeg dus daar gaan je niet je emoties nog eens, die kunnen niet mijn ellende er nog bij hebben hoe verdrietig ik was, voor mijn gevoel.”

¹²⁶ “Het was gewoon het gevoel dat ik iets miste, ik miste iets in het gevoel dat ik ook nog was met mijn verdriet”.

who saw the most terrible things and also afterwards in their lives, but that they never talk about it".¹²⁷

Second, cultural aspects seem to have an effect on help seeking behavior (Netten, 2006: 1). The help seeking behavior is the request for help and the effectiveness of psychosocial aftercare for those affected by a disaster (Netten, 2006: 1). There was no time to process the disaster within the community. According to Bart, the people of Volendam moved on very quickly, there was *"no time to process it, there never really has been"*.¹²⁸ A colleague of Chris, whose son was heavily burned, said: *"What are they doing here, Het Anker? It only costs money"*.¹²⁹ According to Chris this is how people looked at the aftercare provided by het Anker. Chris states that the aftercare stopped in the beginning, because "we" didn't need it according to the people of Volendam. Furthermore, according to Chris it is rooted in the community to not talk about your emotions. *"In short, pain is part of the disaster, but we don't talk about it as being an emotion and what lies behind it, that's pretty much rooted in this community. It's better not to talk about it"*.¹³⁰ In addition, for Lisa it was even more difficult because she was not Volendams and always felt excluded. The mode in the community was actually that they were going for the positive and were not going to talk about the past. In hindsight she thinks that a lot has been overlooked by a lot of people. On the one hand it belongs to the character, to the community of Volendam. *"But it also ensures that you don't feel safe to talk about it openly"*.¹³¹ Ivo doesn't know if it's exemplary for Volendam, but most people want to avoid pain and at a certain point they don't want to talk about the disaster anymore to avoid that pain. *"But the strange thing is that you have to go through that pain to move on in your life"*.¹³² Aftercare is all that is needed to be able to live a normal life again, both physically and materially (Nuijen, 2006: 48).

After they developed complaints at a later age, for example a depression, some victims started looking for help from the appropriate authorities (Nuijen, 2006: 38). Julia missed the fact that no one asked how she was doing at the time. As a consequence she felt that her grief didn't count. She didn't feel anything for years, she thought that was really self-protection. She just

¹²⁷ "Er zijn zoveel, zoals mij, die daar waren, die in het café beneden waren, die de meest verschrikkelijke dingen hebben gezien en ook daarna in hun leven..., maar dat er nooit over gesproken wordt."

¹²⁸ "Wat dat aangaat... En geen tijd om, om het eens te verwerken. Dat is er eigenlijk nooit geweest."

¹²⁹ "Wat doen ze daar nou eigenlijk bij Het Anker? Want het kost allemaal geld."

¹³⁰ "Kortom, pijn maakt deel uit van de ramp, maar we praten er niet over als een emotie en wat er achter zit, dat zit geworteld in deze gemeenschap. Het is beter om er niet over te praten"

¹³¹ "Maar het zorgt er ook voor dat je je niet veilig voelt om er openlijk over te praten."

¹³² "Maar het vreemde is eigenlijk dat je door die pijn heen moet om verder te komen in je leven."

switched off her feelings of not wanting to feel misery anymore, but as a consequence she also did not feel the nice things anymore. A few months after the disaster Julia didn't feel well at her work and developed a depression. It cannot be ruled out that young people will sooner or later encounter obstacles, restrictions or are confronted with the fact that they want something that they cannot do anymore (Nuijen, 2006: 38). During the first days, weeks, months or even years, strong feelings of anxiety, depression and physical complaints may occur (Van der Velden et. al, 2006: 658). She visited Het Anker and at Het Anker there was a supporters project. They assigned Julia a supporter and they clicked great together, she was very happy with this help. Furthermore she sought help with a psychologist. Nevertheless, she has processed the disaster and never has a bad feeling on new year's eve anymore. She has been able to give the event an emotional place and can enjoy the little things of life again. Also Lisa got hit afterwards. The moment when she noticed that it all came out was actually ten years after the fire (Nuijen, 2006: 38). There was an exhibition, where a number of victims had a kind of photo exhibition with their story. At that moment it hit her so hard that she has been off the map for a couple of weeks. Even years after a disaster strong feelings of anxiety, depression and physical complaints may occur (Van der Velden et. al, 2006: 658). By talking about it, seeking help and becoming the project leader of the entire renovation of the Hemel she was able to process the disaster. Hanna's husband never really talked about the disaster. But a few years after the disaster it all came back (Nuijen, 2006: 38). They went to the Hemel together, *"That is also quite heavy because he had not been back there at all."*¹³³ Her husband sought help and it turned out that it helped him to write about the disaster, to put his words onto paper. Ivo's social environment thought that he must have given it a place. In reality he hadn't given it an emotional place. It cannot be ruled out that young people will sooner or later encounter obstacles, restrictions or are confronted with the fact that they want something that they cannot do anymore (Nuijen, 2006: 38). In 2017 it went completely wrong for Ivo, he collapsed. Strong feelings of anxiety, depression and physical complaints may occur after a disaster, even years later (Van der Velden et. al, 2006: 658). In the beginning he was convinced that he had something physical, because he thought that he had dealt with that fire a long time ago. It turned out that he was physically completely healthy, so it must have been something mental. He sought help with a psychologist and nowadays he is part of the project Volendam Spreekt. It is an opportunity for Ivo to tell his story in front of an audience. Ivo hopes, by talking about it, that he can achieve something that might make other people think: *"wait a minute, I'm also*

¹³³ "Dat was ook enorm zwaar aangezien hij er niet nog naar terug was geweest"

*walking around with things that might have to do with that, so that they don't continue until they collapse”.*¹³⁴

Several respondents went looking for help and aftercare themselves. Andre dares to say that *“I actually did most of it myself”*.¹³⁵ He visited a psychologist to talk about what happened to his family and his son. Furthermore, he joined contact sessions with fellow-sufferers. For example, drinking coffee with fathers of victims. Psychosocial aftercare, in particular in the event of disasters, is a complex and lengthy process (Netten, 2006: 1). In order to deal with what happened to his son and what he has seen with his own eyes Bart went to see a psychologist. This helped him to accept it, but according to Bart, you have to make those steps yourself. *“It is not the case that you are invited or offered the opportunity (...) in the end you have to solve it yourself”*.¹³⁶

Guusje dealt with the disaster by talking to Father Berkhout and vice versa. Every Monday they had a conversation with each other about the disaster and shared their feelings. Father Berkhout played an important role in supporting the relatives. Berkhout held regular coffee meetings for this group (Nuijen, 2006: 54). Hanna joined the first visit where you were allowed to go to the Hemel, under the guidance of psychologists. According to Hanna, she went to several psychologists at the time. Psychosocial aftercare, in particular in the event of disasters, is a complex and lengthy process (Netten, 2006: 1).

¹³⁴ “Ja wacht even: ik heb er de laatste tijd eigenlijk veel meer last van. Zodat ze er niet mee blijven lopen totdat ze in elkaar storten.”

¹³⁵ “Qua nazorg durf ik te stellen dat ik het eigenlijk het meeste gewoon zelf gedaan heb.”

¹³⁶ “Het is niet zo dat je uitgenodigd wordt of de mogelijkheid wordt geboden.”

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, on the basis of the analysis just described, an answer is given to the central research question: *To what extent has victim hierarchy affected the aftercare of forgotten groups twenty years after the disaster of Volendam in 2001?*

After answering the research question there will be reflected on the limitations and strengths of the research and finally suggestions for future research will be made.

6.1 Conclusion

This research focused on to what extent victim hierarchy has affected the aftercare of forgotten groups twenty years after the disaster of Volendam.

In order to find an answer to this question, 12 interviews were conducted. These interviews were held with both relatives and victims. In addition, volunteers, a journalist and a high school principal were also interviewed.

To what extent has victim hierarchy affected the aftercare of forgotten groups twenty years after the disaster of Volendam in 2001?

There is a victim hierarchy in Volendam. One interviewee made it very clear there is a victim hierarchy by stating “*at that moment you just had to choose and it was just worse for my son than it was for her, so to speak*”.¹³⁷ This corresponds to the definition of victim hierarchy used in this thesis; *the human tendency to compare the suffering of a group of those affected with that of another, creating the impression that certain forms of suffering are at a higher level than other forms* (Jankowitz, 2018).

There is a victim hierarchy in Volendam for several reasons. First, there is the existence of a victim hierarchy whereby victims are prioritized in order to provide help to those who were in greatest need. At the time of the disaster and its aftermath there was a need to prioritize the victims in order to provide help to those who were in greatest need. For example the helpdesk, they made a distinction in prioritizing victims, they made a list of victims with the 68 most serious injuries. They need to make sure who needs help as soon as possible and who would be most helped with having an air conditioning for example.

Second, people in Volendam objectivized the severity of victimization by focusing on the impact of a disaster on someone’s health. A respondent stated that the impact on his son was

¹³⁷ “Maar op dat moment moest je gewoon kiezen en was het gewoon voor mijn zoon erger als voor haar, bij wijze van spreken”.

bigger than the impact on his daughter. This shows how a pragmatic hierarchy can prioritize victims. Furthermore, the pyramid of grief about who has the right to the most grief. If one objectivize the severity of victimization by focusing on the impact of a disaster on someone's health, than someone with a dead child would have more right to grief than someone with a child with only burns

Third, victims forgot about their own claims as being a victim, because their situation was better than that of other victims or they can feel uncomfortable for falling under the same category while their injuries differ significantly. Those victims survived and that makes their situation better than that of victims who passed away. Ivo forgot about his own claims as being a victim, because his situation was better than that of other victims. Furthermore, Lisa's boyfriend who was present at the Hemel during the fire signed out as a victim because he thought that the help was all meant for others, the victims. *"I am not a victim because I have nothing"*.¹³⁸ He felt uncomfortable for falling under the same category while his injuries differ significantly.

Finally, the distinction in hierarchy is determined on the basis of those who have suffered damage, but who are considered less innocent or less vulnerable and are therefore lower in the hierarchy. The children and parents who suffered damage, but survived are considered innocent. The children were seen as victims while the parents of the deceased were seen as less innocent or less vulnerable and are therefore lower in the hierarchy. For example Lisa. You have been lucky, that is what people told Lisa. Lisa has seen a lot that night, but is considered less innocent or vulnerable because she has been lucky and made it out without any physical damage.

Victim hierarchy has affected the aftercare of the forgotten groups after the disaster of Volendam in 2001. The existence of a victim hierarchy has led to the fact that victims were forgotten or were not seen as victims. Victims did not talk about the disaster or felt that they were not allowed to talk about it, and so nobody knew that they needed help. People felt that their grief didn't count.

People did not feel heard or seen because they had the idea that their relatives were already struggling enough so they didn't want to bother them with their emotions. Furthermore, people missed the fact that nobody asked how they were doing, not even institutions as Het Anker. Furthermore, the victims of the fire were always very positive towards the media. They survived and saw it all positively. That doesn't let any space open for others to express their emotions.

¹³⁸ "Ik ben geen slachtoffer want ik heb niets."

The community resilience put pressure on the individual narratives. There was no time to process the disaster within the community. According to the Volendam narrative, the people of Volendam just went on with life, quickly picked up the thread again, this didn't leave a lot of space for people to deal with their problems and led to the feeling that there was no space for their grief.

Finally, the cultural aspects of the Volendam community such as it is better not to talk about your emotions and the past seems to have affected the help seeking behavior. The help seeking behavior is the request for help and the effectiveness of psychosocial aftercare for those affected by a disaster. As a consequence a lot of people did not look for aftercare or could not find help after the disaster because they were not seen as victims, felt they were not allowed to talk about it or felt uncomfortable for falling under the same category while their injuries differed significantly. Ivo doesn't know if it's exemplary for Volendam, but most people want to avoid pain and at a certain point they don't want to talk about the disaster anymore to avoid that pain. According to Chris it is rooted in the community to not talk about your emotions. The mode in the community was actually that they were going for the positive and they were not going to talk about the past.

As a consequence some respondents developed complaints at a later age, sometimes even decades later. Respondents collapsed or developed a depression for example. A few months after the disaster Julia didn't feel well at her work and developed a depression. Lisa got hit afterward, the moment when she noticed that it all came out was actually ten years after the fire. Hanna's husband never really talked about the disaster. But a few years after the disaster it all came back and hit him. In 2017 Ivo collapsed. In the beginning he was convinced that he had something physical, because he thought that he had dealt with that fire a long time ago. It turned out that he was physically completely healthy, so it must have been something mental.

Some respondents started looking for aftercare from the appropriate authorities on their own. Andre visited a psychologist to talk about what happened to his family and his son. Furthermore, he joined contact sessions with fellow-sufferers. Bart went to see a psychologist in order to deal with what happened to his son and what he has seen during the disaster. This helped him to accept it.

6.2 Strength and Limitations

There are a number of limitations regarding this research. First of all a narrative analysis is used in this research. Narrative interviews revolve around the story and point of view of the

respondent. The respondent has an important role in directing the interview (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). As a result, precise and accurate work must be done during analysis to filter the right information from the interview. Since this is my first narrative study, this might have resulted in inaccuracy.

Second, it is difficult to generalize narrative research. Narratives of experiences and occurrences are difficult to capture in certain features (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). As a result, different researchers may interpret answers differently. In addition, it is difficult to generalize this study because respondents in a similar study would presumably not answer in exactly the same way.

Third, it is a limitation that the respondents interviewed during this study reported themselves after our announcement in the newspaper and on television. One must consider that mainly people came forward who had no problem sharing their experiences during and after the disaster. For example, some respondents said that they know people who still do not want to talk about the disaster. As a result, the picture that emerges from the research may not be complete.

Finally, the first five interviews were conducted digitally. These interviews were conducted digitally because of COVID-19 and the lockdown. There are a number of limitations considering conducting online interviews. Firstly, the internet connection. When conducting a digital interview, the internet connection is crucial. During these interviews, it has happened that the internet connection went offline. As a result, the respondent's story was sometimes interrupted, which did not help the coherence. Furthermore, a digital environment is less personal than when you conduct the interview in a place where the respondent feels safe. This allows the respondent to elaborate less extensively compared to when the interview is conducted face to face in a place where the respondent feels at home. Finally, there is no or less non-verbal communication during an online interview. This makes it difficult for the interviewer to interpret answers correctly or to offer an interviewee some support during an emotional story.

Nevertheless, steps have been taken to minimize these limitations. An advantage of the narrative method is that data can be easily collected compared to researcher driven techniques where data are collected by using questionnaires for example (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000).

As mentioned before, narrative interviews revolve around the story and point of view of the respondent and the respondents have an important role in directing the interview (Mankowski

& Rappaport, 2000). This makes it more plausible that the respondents' answers are sincere and accurately represented (Anderson & Kirkpatrick, 2016). In addition, these answers were transcribed. Every word and sound has been extremely precisely processed into a transcript. By doing so it makes it possible to process this information through an in-depth analysis.

In addition, 12 interviews were conducted. The interviewees consisted of a diverse group. These interviews were conducted with both direct and indirect victims, family members, a journalist, a high school principal and several volunteers. These respondents were all involved in the fire and/or its aftermath in one way or another. The diversity of respondents allowed victim hierarchy and how it affected aftercare to be exposed from different viewpoints.

6.3 Future Research

The shortcomings in this research are a reason to stimulate future research. This research is an exploration of the research field. In recent years, apart from Jankowitz (2018), few articles have been written about victim hierarchy. A follow-up study could expand the knowledge about victim hierarchy and its influence on the use of aftercare in order to reduce the gap in the literature.

In order to do future research on victim hierarchy and its influence on aftercare on the long term it is necessary to expand the research. First, the interviews of this research can be extended. Although the number of interviewees in this study consists of a very diverse group, a study with a larger number of respondents would perhaps yield different results.

This can be done by increasing the number of respondents to one thousand, to guarantee a reliable sample, instead of twelve in order to exclude that the result of this thesis is a coincidence. However, this is not realistic with a qualitative study. When the number of respondents, the N, is increased to one thousand, then quantitative research is the obvious choice. By means of a quantitative research, large numbers can easily be investigated. A disadvantage however is that, in contrast to this qualitative research, it is not possible to go more into detail into the respondent's answers. Therefore it might be difficult to determine whether victim hierarchy affects aftercare.

Secondly, the research could be expanded by looking at the consequences of victim hierarchy and how this affects aftercare over a period of more than twenty years. Several respondents spoke about the influence that the parents themselves and the disaster have on young people today. A new study could be started in ten years' time to look at whether the victim hierarchy that applied to the parents also had an influence on their children.

Finally, a comparative study between the aforementioned disasters in Enschede, Gothenburg and Volendam could be carried out in order to compare the extent to which there is a victim hierarchy in Enschede and Gothenburg. This in order to check whether victim hierarchy is a phenomenon that only occurs in Volendam or that also occurs in similar disasters.

According to the Volendam narrative, the people of Volendam just went on with life, quickly picked up the thread again, this didn't leave a lot of space for people to deal with their problems and led to the feeling that there was no space for their grief. This research has shown that years after a disaster, psychological complaints can arise with direct victims such as Ivo and indirect victims such as Julia and Lisa. The existence of a victim hierarchy has led to the fact that victims were forgotten or were not seen as victims. Victims did not talk about the disaster or felt that they were not allowed to talk about it and so nobody knew that they needed help. This has important policy implications

Regarding victim hierarchy, many respondents feel that there should be more attention for indirect victims, such as family members and victims without physical damage. In addition, the community should open up to the grief of others than the direct victims. The cultural aspects of the Volendam community where it is better not to talk about your emotions and the past seems to have affected the help seeking behavior of indirect victims. As a consequence a lot of people did not look for aftercare or could not find help after the disaster because they were not seen as victims or felt they were not allowed to talk about it. Finally, most respondents felt that too little attention was paid to the parents of deceased victims.

Regarding aftercare, it is important to pay more attention to indirect victims in the future, even if it is only a phone call to ask how they are doing. In this way they also get the idea that they matter and they do not feel encumbered to ask for help. In addition, it is important to keep a close eye on both direct and indirect victims for years after a disaster even if they do not have any psychological problems. Strong feelings of anxiety, depression and physical complaints may occur after a disaster, even years later (Van der Velden et. al, 2006: 658) as we observed among several respondents.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview

U bent onlangs benaderd voor een interview, waarvoor wij nu hier zijn. Het interview maakt deel uit van een verkennend onderzoek naar de veerkracht van de Volendamse gemeenschap na de Nieuwjaarsbrand in 2001. Fijn dat wij u mogen interviewen!

Binnen dit onderzoek heeft ieder zijn eigen invalshoeken. Wij kijken allemaal naar de veerkracht van de Volendamse gemeenschap. Waarbij ik mij focus op de veerkracht en de verschillende ervaringen van de Volendamse bevolking na de Nieuwjaarsbrand.

In dit interview staan uw ervaringen centraal. Er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden. Het gaat om uw verhaal. Af en toe zullen wij een vraag stellen. Zoals aangegeven in het eerdere contact, zal het interview ongeveer een uur duren. Daarnaast zal het interview worden opgenomen en de data gedeeld worden met onze begeleiders. Geeft u hier toestemming toe?

Uiteraard gaan wij vertrouwelijk om met de data. Uw antwoorden zullen niet herleidbaar naar u in onze scripties voorkomen. Heeft u nog vragen voordat we aan het interview beginnen?

Avond van de brand

Zou u willen vertellen waar u op de avond van de brand was en wat er in uw ervaring allemaal gebeurd is die avond?

Impact

Kunt u vertellen welke impact de ramp heeft gehad op u en uw omgeving?

Kunt u vertellen welke impact de ramp heeft gehad op overlevenden?

Nazorg

Werd u er door de gemeente of Het Anker op gewezen dat er hulp beschikbaar was voor betrokkenen? Zo ja, wat heeft u daarmee vervolgens gedaan?

En heeft u zelf nog hulp gezocht, in de vorm van nazorg of iets anders? Heeft u daar gebruik van gemaakt?

In hoeverre heeft de nazorg, indien opgezocht/geaccepteerd uw geholpen bij het proces van verwerking van de ramp.

Als u terug kijkt op de geboden nazorg na de ramp, had er dan volgens u op een andere manier nog hulp/nazorg geboden kunnen worden. Zo ja, waar denkt u aan?

Narratief

Hoe ziet u het verhaal (narratief) van Volendam?.

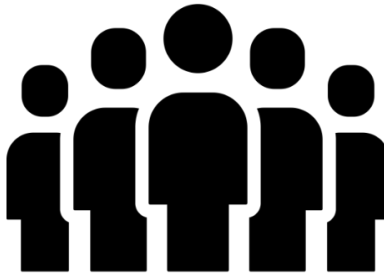
Hoe heeft het dorp (en wellicht de omgeving) gereageerd op de brand?

Hoe kijkt u naar de aankomende herdenking?

Hoe kijkt u naar de toekomst?

Slot

Wij willen u graag bedanken voor de deelname aan het onderzoek. Het interview zullen wij transcriberen (uittypen) en gebruiken voor onze analyse. Het transcript en de resultaten van de scriptie kunnen wij u uiteraard toesturen. Mocht u verder nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u ons per mail bereiken.



Na de nazorg: Het gemeenschapsnarratief van Volendam

Toestemmingsformulier

U bent gevraagd deel te nemen aan het onderzoek *Na de nazorg: Een onderzoek naar de lange termijn invloed van rampen op de nazorg van de individu en haar gemeenschap*. Deze wetenschappelijke studie wordt uitgevoerd door onderzoekers van Universiteit Leiden, onder leiding van Vincent van der Vlies (v.vandervlies@berenschot.nl) en Pauline Aarten (p.g.m.aarten@fgga.leidenuniv.nl).

Het doel van het onderzoek is drieledig:

- Ten eerste willen we inzicht krijgen in de individuele en gemeenschapsnarratieven van de betrokkenen bij de cafébrand in 2000/2001 en bij de gemeenschap als geheel.
- Ten tweede willen wij een eerste aanzet maken om te komen tot een theoretisch en conceptueel kader voor de effecten van rampen op het narratief van gemeenschappen.
- Tot slot willen we deze narratieven gebruiken om samen met de betrokkenen een plan van aanpak te formuleren ter verbetering van de (lokale) responsiviteit en interventies 20 jaar na de cafébrand. Alle narratieven, waaronder uw interview, worden verwerkt in een rapport, wetenschappelijke artikelen en presentaties.

In dit onderzoek worden uw gegevens vertrouwelijk behandeld en zullen nooit op een wijze gebruikt worden die tot u herleidbaar is. We zullen uw gegevens anoniem nog 10 jaar (de wettelijke termijn) na het einde van dit project bewaren.

Toestemming deelname onderzoek

Hierbij bevestig ik dat ik:

- Zowel mondeling als schriftelijk over het bovenvermelde onderzoek geïnformeerd ben
- De opzet van het onderzoek begrijp
- De gelegenheid heb gehad om aanvullende vragen te stellen over het onderzoek en dat deze vragen naar tevredenheid zijn beantwoord
- Toestemming geef voor deelname aan het onderzoek en voor verwerking van de te verzamelen gegevens in een rapport en voor wetenschappelijke artikelen en presentaties.

Ik behoud me daarbij het recht om op elk moment zonder opgave van redenen mijn deelname aan dit onderzoek te beëindigen.

(respondent)

(onderzoeker)

Naam: _____

Naam: _____

Datum: _____

Datum: _____

Handtekening: _____

Handtekening: _____

