

Making climate action meaningful

Communication practices in the New Zealand climate movement

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Abstract

The climate crisis requires urgent action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; however, 'business as usual' continues to fuel further increases. Instead of the social change needed to safeguard the wellbeing of people and the planet, there has been an unpromising mix of active resistance, lukewarm concern, lack of engagement, and lack of hope. In the face of this, climate communicators seek to make climate action relevant and meaningful to people, thereby mobilising them to create a social consensus on climate action and the political will for change.

A core dynamic in climate communication is the balance between, on the one hand, speaking to the facts of the climate crisis and to what makes climate action meaningful to climate communicators themselves, and on the other, speaking in a way that is meaningful to those being communicated with. If the balance is right, climate communication will empower people, thereby helping translate belief in, and concern about, the climate crisis into behavioural change and political engagement, cumulatively creating social change. If the balance is wrong, however, communication efforts risk not connecting with people, emotionally overwhelming them with the weight of the climate crisis, or overly diluting the message, leading to no effect, or to a negative effect.

An important way in which this dynamic manifests is in the balance between moral and economic framing. Morality and economics are two fundamental elements of what gives a sense of meaningfulness to climate action, and therefore underlie decision-making around both climate action and climate communication. Combinations of moral and economic framing are of particular interest in the way they call for radical action while speaking to people's desires for security and prosperity.

The climate movement is at the heart of efforts towards social change and the creation of a social consensus on climate action. It is therefore to the experiences of climate movement participants that I turn to explore these issues. I take a movement-centred activist scholarship approach to research on climate communication decision-making via interviews with fourteen members of the New Zealand climate movement. Highlighting the importance of knowledge development within social movements, I seek to contribute to activist and academic understanding of effective climate communication.

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Preface

“Today, our Mother Earth is wounded and the future of humanity is in danger.”

- World Peoples’ Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth (WPCCC 2010).

It was early in 2004 when I first began engaging seriously with the climate crisis. In April of that year, I helped start the Save Happy Valley campaign against a (then) proposed opencast coal mine on the West Coast of the South Island (Aotearoa New Zealand). While I was already concerned about climate change, the research that I undertook as part of this campaign helped me understand the very real threat of triggering catastrophic climate impacts, and the urgency of radical climate action and systemic change.

Following my participation in the Save Happy Valley campaign, I was involved for a number of years with the permaculture-inspired Grey Lynn Community Gardens in Auckland. During this time, I began to appreciate the importance of organic gardening in responding to the climate crisis. It shaped my sense that we need practical alternatives to the status quo, and that we can create and embody these alternatives through our everyday actions.

Clearly, though, we have a long way to go in creating such alternatives on a societal level. During the Save Happy Valley campaign, I travelled around the country, giving a number of public meetings, and speaking with members of the public and the media. While those who turned up to the public meetings expressed very real concern about climate change, on a broader level I developed a strong sense of the chasm that existed between where our society was, and where it needed to be to adequately respond to the climate crisis. More than ten years later, this gap still exists.

It is difficult to talk about the climate crisis and all that it evokes, and I believe that learning to have these conversations is an important element of responding to the crisis. This thesis is an expression of my desire to contribute to these conversations, paying respect to those who are working on this edge, and building on what is being discussed in both the climate movement and in the academic world.

“[C]hange – on an almost unimaginable scale – is coming whether we want it or not.”

- Rob Hopkins (2008)

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PART ONE
Groundwork

1. Introduction

Climate change is already causing widespread suffering, and currently projected greenhouse gas emissions signal the risk of far greater suffering in the coming decades. In order to safeguard the wellbeing of people and the planet, therefore, significant social change is essential. While the basic direction that needs to be taken is clear enough, powerful vested interests oppose this, and ‘business as usual’ continues to fuel further increases in greenhouse gas emissions. It is therefore up to civil society to take action. As Hoffman & Jennings (2012:59) state, the “generation of a *social* consensus is an important follow-up to the generation of a *scientific* consensus” on climate change. In the words of the climate protest slogan: “To change everything, we need everyone”.

Instead of a social consensus, however, we have “climate silence” (Rowson & Corner 2015:4). Talking about climate change goes against cultural norms of conversation: “people literally don’t like to think or talk about the subject” (Immerwahr 1999:13; cf. Rowson 2013:8). While a significant portion of the public expresses concern about the climate crisis (see, e.g., Motu 2015), serious engagement has largely been lacking. As Rowson & Corner (2015:6) put it: “We are changing the climate, but it’s not yet changing us.”

The climate crisis may also engender feelings of hopelessness. Many people have no confidence that humanity will successfully respond to it, and “activism is currently constrained by public beliefs that political activism is ineffective” (Roser-Renouf et al. 2014:2). While the consumption habits of ‘the 1%’ and the global middle class have acted as a major cause of the climate crisis, it is clear that the habit of political non-engagement is equally important (cf. Ockwell, Whitmarsh & O’Neill 2009:318; Cross et al. 2015:18-19). Interlinked with the *climate* crisis, we face a crisis of political and cultural disempowerment.

This, then, is what the climate movement confronts: an increasingly urgent problem, combined with an unpromising mix of active resistance, lukewarm concern, lack of engagement, and lack of hope. In the face of this, climate movement participants seek to bring about a “social consensus” on climate action by engaging with people and communicating their understanding, or ‘framing’, of the issue, and undertaking actions that draw attention to this framing. If successful in their framing efforts, they influence the public’s own ways of framing the issue, with the resulting change in framing manifesting in new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting (cf.

Benford 1997:410). However, there is a large gap between movement framing and public framing, and this gap is difficult to bridge. Rowson & Corner (2015:28) state:

[T]here is no shortage of bright ideas for climate policies that would keep us within a safe carbon budget... The bigger challenge is how do ‘we’ (i.e., anyone who wants to stay within that carbon budget) go about persuading people [so] that policies like these happen.

This thesis explores how New Zealand climate movement participants respond to this challenge, and the framing and communication practices they adopt in their attempts to bridge the gap between themselves and the public. This is the first extended piece of academic research on New Zealand climate movement communication which draws on perspectives from across the movement. I focus on the climate movement, and thereby consider ideas in action, in the belief that while ideas (about both the climate crisis and necessary responses) are important, ultimately, “it comes down to movements, and struggle” (Cox 2015; cf. Brulle 2010:84; Caniglia, Brulle & Szasz 2015:236-7). In developing our efforts to respond to the climate crisis, the experiences of those involved in the climate movement are fundamentally important. This thesis is therefore grounded in the importance of recognising movement-based knowledge development. I assume that climate movement participants are active creators of knowledge, and address myself to “the voices, ideas, perspectives and theories produced by those engaged with social struggles” (Choudry & Kapoor 2010:2).

In this thesis, I take a movement-centred activist scholarship approach to research on climate communication decision-making via interviews with fourteen members of the New Zealand climate movement, supporting this with insights from a range of academic literature. I consider how the climate movement seeks to engage with the New Zealand public, describing and discussing the decisions that movement participants make in their efforts to make climate action meaningful to people, and shining light on how they understand their own practices and the challenges they are facing in their work.

This *Introduction* is followed by a discussion, in *Chapter 2*, of my *Research approach*, providing the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of the research. These chapters make up *Part One* of the thesis, developing the *Groundwork* for the presentation and discussion of the material shared by research participants, which I have brought together under two broad themes, and which I present in *Part Two* and *Part Three*.

In *Part Two*, I discuss the first of these themes. A core dynamic of climate communication is the balance communicators strike between ‘speaking their own truth’ and

‘meeting people where they are at’. This balance is central to the task of *Making climate action meaningful* – it is the balance between, on the one hand, speaking to the facts of the climate crisis and to what makes climate action meaningful to climate communicators themselves, and on the other, speaking in a way that is meaningful to those being communicated with.

Part Two begins in *Chapter 3*, where I discuss elements of the context of climate communication, along with a range of approaches adopted by movement participants in order to ‘meet people where they are at’: dialogue, ongoing engagement, addressing both the climate crisis and a range of solutions, linking the local and the global, and addressing climate ‘co-risks’ and ‘co-benefits’.

In *Chapter 4*, I elaborate on the *Risks and challenges* involved in the balance between ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’, affirming the central importance of considering such risks in climate communication. If the balance is right, climate communication will empower people, thereby helping translate belief in, and concern about, the climate crisis into behavioural change and political engagement, cumulatively creating social change. If the balance is wrong, however, communication efforts risk not connecting with people, or overly diluting the message, leading to no effect, or to a negative effect.

In *Chapter 5*, I discuss how the attempt to ‘make climate action meaningful’ requires consideration of *Emotions and empowerment*. This chapter includes discussion of the balance climate communicators strike between eliciting fear and promoting hope, and between the need to make an emotional impact and the need to avoid overwhelming people with the emotional weight of the climate crisis. In connection with this, this chapter also includes further consideration of the importance of communicating climate solutions, in order to engage and empower people.

The challenge of balancing ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’, described in *Part Two* of the thesis, can particularly be seen in the way communicators balance and blend *Moral and economic framing*, which I turn to in *Part Three*. Morality and economics are two fundamental elements of what gives a sense of meaningfulness to climate action, and therefore underlie decision-making around both climate action and climate communication.

Part Three begins in *Chapter 6*, where I discuss *Moral and cultural framing* – the ways climate movement participants seek to ‘reach people’s hearts’ by speaking to their values and morals. As part of this, I consider morality towards both people and the environment, and discuss appeals to moral values, calls for moral transformation, and the use of moral framing in a Māori cultural context.

In *Chapter 7*, I introduce *Economic framing*. This is important because of the significance of the economic drivers of the climate crisis, because of the way economics speaks to people’s

desires for security and prosperity, and because economic framing is the primary form of ‘counter-framing’ in opposition to climate action. In this chapter, I also discuss how research participants spoke about balancing moral and economic framing in their communication efforts.

In *Chapter 8*, I consider combinations of moral and economic framing that are directed towards a moral critique of status quo economics. As part of this, I consider how the need for systemic change is communicated in a politically hostile environment.

In *Chapter 9*, I turn to the positive, moral conceptions of economics that are present in the communication of New Zealand climate movement participants. I also provide specific “examples of ‘what is already being done’” (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2009:331) to emphasise already-existing *Moral economic solutions* to the climate crisis and the communication practices that accompany them.

Finally, *Part Four* concludes the thesis, recapitulating the core elements of the research and reaffirming the importance of climate communication.

Communication practices will have a vital role to play as the climate crisis continues to deepen in the coming decades. This thesis is dedicated towards the development of a detailed and nuanced understanding of current approaches to climate communication, based in the conviction that such an understanding is essential for ensuring that our communication practices play this vital role.

2. Research approach

Discussion of the communication practices of the New Zealand climate movement in this thesis is grounded in in-depth semi-structured interviews with fourteen members of the New Zealand climate movement. In undertaking the research, I have been guided by an activist scholarship approach, with some influence from constructivist grounded theory and hermeneutic phenomenology, and I have built on this with an analytical approach that blends thematic and framing analysis. The research sets the interviews in the context of New Zealand and international climate movement and communication research from both activists and academics.

In designing and undertaking this research, I have been guided by principles of political engagement, reflexivity, and flexibility (cf. Charmaz 2008:403). At the heart of my approach is an activist scholarship embodied in a “people-centred research methodology” (Saltmarsh 2010; cf. Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011:3) that is committed to reflexive engagement with “human experience as it is lived” (Dowling 2005:133). I assume that “research always reflects value positions” and is therefore “inherently political” (Sanford, quoted in Juris & Khasnabish 2013:25). Furthermore, I assume that an embodied and engaged attunement to interviewees and to the research material allows the development of knowledge more fully than a pose of detached neutrality (cf. Kafle 2011:188).

Lastly, in this research I seek to bridge the “realist-constructivist split” (Antonio & Clark 2015:348), such that, while I am influenced by constructivist work in a number of ways, as Charmaz (2008:409) states, “My use of constructivism assumes the existence of an obdurate, real world that may be interpreted in multiple ways.” I recognize the reality of climate change as a physical phenomenon, but assume that the meaning of it will be a matter of perspective and therefore contested.

Activist scholarship

“I care too much about the issues... to assume a polite, reasonable distance, and instead embrace a politics of engagement that recognizes my own immersions in the worlds I study.”

- Monica Casper (quoted in Charmaz 2008:407)

In the words of Laura Bisailon (2012:610), an activist scholar is “[a] person who foregrounds the political aims of the research she or he carries out”. Work in the area of activist scholarship is growing quickly, with some speaking of an ‘activist turn’ in research (see, e.g., Sutherland 2012; Tarlau 2014:65; Bradford 2014; Came, MacDonald & Humphries 2015). A number of writers in this field suggest that “the knowledge created by social movement theory is often of little use to activists inside social movements” (Frampton et al. 2006:11; see also Barker & Cox 2002; Graeber 2002; Sutherland 2012). Thus, Frampton and colleagues (2006:11) make it clear that activist research shouldn’t start within the existing academic discourses, and Fuster Morell (2009:41) makes the case that activist research should not be “about” social movements but rather “from and for” them (see also Casas-Cortés, Osterweil & Powell 2008:27). At the core of such research, therefore, is the importance of building relationships with movement participants.

As stated in the *Introduction*, this research is grounded in the importance of movement-based knowledge development. I adopt a healthy suspicion of premature theorising, seeking to shift the ground of knowledge and “start from the actual lives of people” (Smith 1990:44), “grounding research in the experiences of activists and their organisations” (Bradford 2014:50). Thus, Kinsman speaks of beginning “from where movement activists are with their practices, insights and questions, with what they are confronting, with what they are learning and with what their knowledge is” (quoted in Hussey 2012:12-13). Such a style of approach is particularly appropriate for this research, given that it is the first sizeable research project on communication practices in the New Zealand climate movement.

In this thesis, I assume that activists are already researchers, theorists and strategists, generating knowledge “through direct engagement with practical problems and efforts to create a better world” (Saltmarsh 2010; see also Barker & Cox 2002; Juris 2007; Casas-Cortés, Osterweil & Powell 2008:21; Kapoor & Choudry 2010). As Bevington & Dixon (2005:194) suggest, “Social movement scholars do not have a monopoly on theory about movements. Movement participants produce theory as well, although much of it may not be recognizable to conventional social movement studies.” It is such “socially lived theorizing” (MacKinnon,

quoted in Casas-Cortés, Osterweil & Powell 2008:47) that I am seeking to engage with in this thesis.

Writing “for” social movements means giving attention to how academic work can be made relevant and useful to movement participants (Fuster Morell 2009; see also Bevington & Dixon 2005). As an activist quoted by Jeffrey Juris (2007:171) states: “You go back to the university and use collectively produced knowledge to earn your degrees and gain academic prestige. What’s in it for the rest of us?” Such statements provide a strong impetus for self-reflection. I suggest that just as we should be opposed to climate-changing ‘extractivism’, so too should we be opposed to extractivist forms of research (cf. Scialom 2014:11). While I will benefit most from this research project (cf. Willoughby-Martin 2012:29), I do not take this as a reason not to do the work; however, caution and appreciation are clearly necessary.

Instead of solely providing intellectual critique, I assume that an important goal of activist scholarship is to support activist potential. One way of doing this, building on the work already taking place within movements, is through offering space for reflection (cf. Haiven & Khasnabish 2013:492; Derickson & Routledge 2015:6). In addition, some activist scholars speak of the need to move beyond analysis to, in some sense, inform concrete strategies and decision-making (Juris 2007; Bradford 2014:50). Various perspectives are offered on this point, however. Juris (2007:165, 172) is against “generating sweeping strategic... directives” “about what activists should or should not do”, seeking instead to “provide tools for ongoing activist (self-)reflection and decision-making”. Following Juris (2007:173), I therefore offer back the analysis I develop throughout this thesis “to activists, scholars and others for further reflection and debate”.

Interviews

Through grounding my work in in-depth interviews, I “focus on depth of understandings, as opposed to breadth of data” (Moon 2013:74). I made an active decision to interview members of a range of groups (cf. Moon 2013:135), rather than focus on one group (or type of group), as has been the tendency in previous work on the New Zealand climate movement. Furthermore, the choice of participants in this research reflects my broad conception of the climate movement (cf. North 2011:16-17; Garrelts & Dietz 2014). Participants come from a range of backgrounds and adopt a variety of approaches to tackling the climate crisis. They include campaigners, educators, permaculturalists, community project co-ordinators, protesters, and politicians. (See next page for details.)

Research participants

Steve Abel is Senior Climate Campaigner with Greenpeace New Zealand. He is a long-time environmental activist and has worked on a wide range of campaigns with Greenpeace. He was also previously involved in Native Forest Action.

Catherine Cheung is a member of Climate Justice Taranaki, which has recently had a particular focus on issues around fracking. She has acted as both researcher and spokesperson for the group, and she has previously worked as a marine scientist.

Gary Cranston manages the Climate Justice Aotearoa website. He currently works for Unite Union, and has previously worked for Greenpeace. He was involved in the 2009 Camp for Climate Action Aotearoa, and was an International Trade Union Confederation delegate at COP21 in 2015.

Jeanette Fitzsimons is currently involved in Coal Action Network Aotearoa and Auckland Coal Action, and was previously co-leader of the Green Party. She is a co-author of Coal Action Network's *Jobs after coal* report.

Gareth Hughes is a Member of Parliament for the Green Party, co-ordinates the Green Party climate campaign, and is the Green Party spokesperson for Energy and Resources. He previously worked for Greenpeace New Zealand, and was also involved in the Save Happy Valley Coalition.

Nicole Masters is an agroecologist and the director of Integrity Soils. She works as a farmer educator, consulting with farmers and advising them on soil health. She was a founder of the Association of Biological Farmers New Zealand and previously acted as spokesperson for the Association.

Robina McCurdy is a sustainability educator and community development facilitator, and founder of the Institute of Earthcare Education Aotearoa. She has recently been working on a series of documentary films as part of the Localising Food Project, which she co-ordinates. She is also a member of Permaculture Institute NZ.

Matt Morris is the co-ordinator of Edible Canterbury and works as a sustainability advocate at the University of Canterbury. He is the deputy co-chair of the Soil & Health Association of New Zealand, and has written a PhD dissertation on home gardening in Christchurch.

Niamh O'Flynn is the National Co-ordinator of 350 Aotearoa, which is currently focused on its divestment campaign. She previously worked with Greenpeace New Zealand, and she founded Oil Free Otago.

John Peet is the chair of Sustainable Aotearoa New Zealand (SANZ), and a member of Engineers for Social Responsibility and Sustainable Ōtautahi Christchurch. He is the co-author of the SANZ report *Strong sustainability for New Zealand*.

Katherine Peet is an adult educator who has run Treaty of Waitangi workshops for over thirty years, and who integrates sustainability issues into her work. She is the co-chair of One Voice Te Reo Kotahi, an organiser for Network Waitangi Ōtautahi, and an executive member of Sustainable Ōtautahi Christchurch.

Mike Smith (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu) is a Climate Campaigner with Greenpeace New Zealand. He has a long history of working on environmental and Māori issues. He also co-directed the New Zealand climate documentary *He ao wera*.

Dayle Takitimu (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou, Norfolk Island) is a lawyer, and acts as the lead counsel and co-lead negotiator for Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, holding portfolios on Treaty of Waitangi, indigenous rights, and environmental issues.

Paul Young is co-founder and Policy Director of Generation Zero, within which he has taken on research and analysis, and media and communications, roles. He is the lead author of Generation Zero's report *A challenge to our leaders* and a contributing author to *The big ask*.

I considered a number of criteria for invitation to participate in the project: playing a significant role in a group working on climate issues, the ability to speak to an important sectoral issue (e.g. transport, mining, food/farming), and/or having communication as a major part of their role. I also actively sought a diversity of participants in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, and geographic location. Research participants included seven women and seven men, varying in age from their 20s through to their 70s (median: 40-49 year old bracket). Of the fourteen participants, eleven identified as Pākehā or (New Zealand) European, with two of these participants being of Irish origin. Two participants identified as Māori (one of whom also has Norfolk Island heritage), and one participant identified as Chinese. Ideally, to better approximate the ethnic mix of the New Zealand population as a whole, I would have liked to have had a Pasifika participant, and a further participant of Asian heritage. Unfortunately, due to the other considerations for participant choice, this was not possible. Geographic distribution was as follows: Northland (1), Auckland (4), Coromandel (1), Taranaki (1), Hawke's Bay (1), Wellington (2), Golden Bay (1), Christchurch (3). Ethical approval for the research was granted by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee.

Research participants were offered the choice of having their identity (and their organisational affiliation) remain confidential; however, none chose to take up this option. All participants spoke in an individual capacity in the interviews. Each participant was interviewed twice between June and September, 2015. Twelve research participants were interviewed individually, while two participants (Katherine Peet and John Peet) were interviewed together. Interviews were undertaken face-to-face, except for two interviews in the second series which took place by Skype. Interviews were undertaken conversationally. I used active listening to facilitate processes of reflection, and to continually deepen the focus of the discussion. Occasionally, I offered personal opinions where this seemed relevant and natural. Interviews were audio recorded, and ranged from 45 minutes to 2 hours 10 minutes. Recorded interviews totalled 36½ hours, and this large quantity of interview material significantly shaped both the research process and the structure of the thesis.

In congruence with Gadamerian hermeneutic phenomenology, I have assumed that it is important to “ensure that feedback and further discussion takes place with study participants” (Dowling 2005:131). Interviews were transcribed, and I provided interview summaries to research participants following each interview, allowing them the opportunity to withdraw, change, or offer further comments on this material. Because of my dialogical approach, the interview process and the thematic analysis I undertook were strongly interconnected, with my thematic analysis developing in an organic manner throughout the interviews. I brought this

analysis together more systematically following the first interview series and shared this with research participants in written form prior to the second interviews.

The desire for “feedback and further discussion” was a central reason for choosing to undertake two interviews with each research participant (cf. Moon 2013:135). In each of the second interviews, I briefly spoke an overview of the preliminary thematic analysis and a summary of the participant’s first interview, allowing space for feedback (cf. Fleming, Gaidys & Robb 2003:118). The second interviews were therefore an opportunity to deepen this analysis with the direct participation of climate movement activists (cf. Fuster Morell 2009), also allowing them to respond to how they were being represented (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011:31). Space was also given for participants to speak about their experience of the interviews.

I have taken care to consider any potential unintended effects of publishing the material that I gathered (cf. Fuster Morell 2009:21; Juris & Khasnabish 2013:33). In addition, in the second series of interviews, I provided space for participants to offer comments about any possible risks (in all except the first two of these interviews). I have not written about any specific movement plans, and participants agreed that climate movement strategy is discussed openly online. In regard to any risks to movement relationships, participants appreciated the importance of recognising differences within the movement, and of sustained dialogue around these differences.

Thematic analysis

Following the second series of interviews and their transcription, I used nVivo qualitative data analysis computer software to aid in the coding of the material from both interview series, using the themes from the initial thematic analysis of the first interviews as a starting point for this. Following Braun & Clarke (2006:82-3), I selected themes based on their “prevalence” and perceived “keyness”, aware that there is a significant subjective element in such a process (cf. Bourk, Rock & Davis 2015:4). In my work, the sense of “keyness” largely developed throughout the interviews and the process of analysis rather than being defined in my research questions or in a hypothesis (cf. Hanson-Easey et al. 2015:7-8).

Ultimately, I approached the research as a process of the “coproduction of knowledge” (Derickson & Routledge 2015:1; cf. Dowling 2005; Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011). While my own past experience with climate activism informed my original conception of the research and my questions in the first interviews (rather than prior consultation with climate movement

participants, for example), this offered “sensitizing concepts”, suggesting directions along which to look rather than determining the content of my work (Hammersley 2006; see also Braun & Clarke 2006:85; Charmaz 2008:407). My dialogical approach allowed me to get feedback on the relevance and relative importance of particular themes. As I began perceiving particular themes as important in both the interviews and in the academic literature, I introduced them more actively into later interviews.

In the first interviews, I asked about the groups that the interviewee was a member of, the roles they played in these groups, the focus of their work, and what their work practically consisted of, including who they commonly communicated with. Following this, I asked research participants to share experiences of both successful and unsuccessful communication around economic aspects of the climate crisis. I enquired as to interviewees’ assessment of the current state of the New Zealand climate movement, what they perceived as the current challenges for the movement, and therefore also their sense of where the ‘learning edge’ of the climate movement was at that point in time – what they felt the climate movement was currently learning, or needed to learn.

In my desire to give attention to the ‘learning edge’ of the climate movement, I had originally intended to particularly focus on occasions when participants’ strategic communication efforts ‘broke down’. I chose to alter this focus somewhat through the experience of the interviews. This was partly due to the sense that a longer period of building trust would be necessary in order to explore this directly, and partly due to finding that similar material could be given attention in a less direct manner through discussion of climate communication experiences and opinions more broadly.

My original conception of the research included a strong focus on the challenges of communicating about economic aspects of the climate crisis, and this is evident in my questions about successful and unsuccessful communication experiences on this topic. However, I deliberately framed this in an open way, enquiring as to when interviewees both did and didn’t focus on economics in their communication. Some interviewees stated that they rarely spoke about economic matters and this became a topic for further discussion. Having said this, in terms of the material gathered, my intended focus on the communication of economic aspects of the climate crisis proved to be a good choice in terms of the richness of the material shared.

Moral framing quickly emerged as an important element in participants’ communication, both in contrast with and in combination with economic framing. An unexpected additional focus was ‘co-risk’ and ‘co-benefit’ framing (see *Chapters 3 and 4* for discussion). I chose to include this in the research due to the fact that it was discussed by almost all participants, and a

number suggested that this was currently a topic of regular discussion in their respective groups. I was also influenced by the fact that I had not seen this issue discussed in the academic literature in a way that matched participants' comments (however, see Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016).

The themes that I identified in my preliminary thematic analysis have all remained in the final analysis. The relative importance of these themes, and my sense of how they interrelate, altered somewhat before emerging in the structure I ultimately chose, however. The final step in the development of my analysis brought the material together in relation to the two core themes I described in the *Introduction*, which I began to see as underlying the various (sub)themes in the research. The development of *Part Two* of the thesis in relation to 'making climate action meaningful' involved a further broadening of my original focus – a shift which I saw as appropriate, both in terms of what appeared of most interest and use to participants, and in relation to the lack of previous work done in the area.

In this thesis, I present research participants' analyses of the climate crisis (in terms of both problems and solutions) along with their ideas about, and experience of, climate communication. I intend the emphasis to particularly lie on the experience of communication, and the meeting of people that occurs in such communication; however, this is inevitably bound up with movement participants' ideas about communication. Furthermore, their analyses of the climate crisis provide detail that aids comprehension of their experiences of communication.

In addition, while this work is grounded in the experiences and thoughts shared by climate movement participants in the research interviews, I also assume that my own "prior knowledge and theoretical preconceptions" (Charmaz 2008:402) have influenced the ways I have perceived and presented this material. I therefore present the interview material as shaped by my own active choices of description and interpretation (cf. Braun & Clarke 2006:80; Kafle 2011:187).

I also assume, as Fougère (2012:12-13) writes, that "[b]eing aware of the potential for my bias creates a transparency in the research process, aiding me to conduct fair and thorough research." Two particularly relevant elements of my positionality are, firstly, my personal experience of climate activism, as briefly described in the *Preface*, and secondly, my own ideological standpoint and analysis of the climate crisis. These influenced both my choice of participants and my choice of focus. Firstly, other researchers may not have chosen to include those working on food- and farming-related projects in work on the climate movement. This is clearly a choice based on my analysis of the climate crisis, and of what counts as important forms of climate activism. My broad conception of the climate movement is aligned with a belief in the value of a range of types of climate action, and this affected the course of the research.

Additionally, I believe that systemic change is necessary to adequately respond to the climate crisis, and I self-identify as an ecosocialist. However, while this influenced my inclusion of, and approach to presenting, systemic critique (in *Chapter 8*), I did not foreground my own beliefs in this area during the interviews. Lastly, my own experience of various extremes of both ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’ (and the risks and limitations of these approaches) led me to want to explore the nuances of this, and provided motivation for me in this research.

Framing analysis and climate communication

“Public support is one of the most important resources social movements mobilize in their efforts to overcome cultural inertia and the interests of powerful actors”.

- Hiromitsu Araki (2007:18)

In Bradford’s (2014) work on the New Zealand left, she notes that “In the activist circles in which I moved, there was a keen awareness that we were constantly on the losing side in the battle place of ideas”, being outdone by the “neoliberal right” (2014:2, 130). Such concerns underpin my research here, and my attention to communication and framing practices.

In this thesis, I use a broad conception of framing, consistent with Lakoff’s (2014:xi-xii) description of frames as “mental structures that shape the way we see the world”. In addition to receiving academic attention, framing is regularly discussed within activist groups (Snow et al. 2014; Barker & Cox 2002; cf. Bevington & Dixon 2005:194). While framing includes both verbal and visual elements (see, e.g., O’Brien 2013b:222), this thesis is focused on verbal elements of framing.

I assume here that it is impossible to avoid framing (Lakoff 2014; Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:415). Furthermore, as Crompton (2010:9) writes: “It is inescapably the case that any communication or campaign will inevitably serve to convey particular values, intentionally or otherwise. Moreover, in conveying these values, the communication or campaign will help to further strengthen those values culturally” (see also Lakoff 2009, 2014). Following Fairclough (quoted in Kidner 2015:26), I therefore also assume that “discourse cumulatively contributes to the reproduction of macro structures”, based on these values. Language both affects and is shaped by social structures. Framing is therefore both expressive and strategic; it articulates a worldview or ideology, and may also act to convince and inspire (cf. Goodwin & Jasper 1999:49;

Westby 2002; Jasper 2004:4; Casas-Cortés, Osterweil & Powell 2008:24-5; Moore & Russell 2011:51; Kruse 2014:281).

While framing involves consideration of how language is used, “It is not a matter of finding some magic words” (Lakoff 2014:xiii), but rather involves attention to the ideas and assumptions behind language. Corner and colleagues (2010:10) state that “At a deeper level, framing refers to forging the connections between a debate or public policy and a set of deeper values or principles” (cf. Lakoff 2014:xiii). Expanding on this, Brulle (2010:84) writes of how “social movements can expand the range of ideas we can consider”:

[S]ocial movements seek to spread familiarity and acceptance of the alternative discursive frame, and to generate political pressure to implement institutional change based on this new worldview. Thus, the key to the realization of power in society is through the ability to define what constitutes the common sense reality that applies to a field of practice. (2010:86)

Through exploring communication decision-making, therefore, we can see how strategies for social change manifest in communication and framing practices.

In considering the framing of the climate crisis and of climate action in this thesis, I particularly draw on the literature on climate communication. While climate communication is still “a relatively young research field” (Wibeck 2014:389), it is of growing interest in the world of academia (see, e.g., Thompson & Schweizer 2008; Moser 2010, 2016; Wibeck 2014; Ballantyne 2016). The size of the field precludes exhaustive coverage of it (with over 250 publications in 2014 alone – Moser 2016:348); however, I will briefly discuss several elements of the literature here, as an introduction to my broader usage of it throughout the thesis, and to describe the relationship of my own work to this literature.

Thompson & Schweizer (2008:8) note that “Similar to the previous decade, recent research on communicating climate change has predominantly focused on media representations of climate change” (see also Zehr 2015:136; Hanson-Easey et al. 2015:3; Moser forthcoming:5; cf. Moser 2016:350). A smaller stream of this literature, more directly relevant to the focus of this thesis, orients itself towards communication strategy and considers communicative efforts to promote climate action. It should be noted, though, that a significant portion of the climate communication literature is based on laboratory studies and limited surveys, which “cannot supply definitive evidence about climate change communication strategies” (Pearce et al. 2015:618). With this in mind, however, some value may still be seen in such research. Thompson

& Schweizer (2008:14) describe ten “strategies for communicating about climate change” drawn from their survey of climate communication literature:

1. Know your audience and select a credible messenger for that audience.
2. Know what type of claim, argument you are asserting and why it is appropriate for your audience.
3. Connect your message to cultural values and beliefs; people react to traditions, experiences and shared values—not abstract concepts and scientific data.
4. Make the message meaningful; appeal to values that are meaningful for your audience. For example, speak in spiritual language and parables when targeting a conservative Christian audience.
5. Lead with your strongest argument or your most confident point.
6. Make the message empowering; tell your audience what specific actions they can take to make a difference.
7. Link to global patterns and collective action; promote a ‘systems’ perspective of the problem and of potential solutions.
8. Partner with other organizations, key players, leaders, employees, rock bands, and neighbors.
9. Start from the inside—get your organization’s top leaders involved, inspire action internally first, then communicate about it.
10. Communicate about actions and remember that actions and events are an effective mode of communication.

My work in this thesis builds on several of these points.

The climate communication literature also offers a range of ways of framing the climate challenge. In addition to “the traditional framing of climate change as an environmental problem”, Wibeck (2014:400-1) describes a security framing, a religious or moral framing, an economic framing, and a health framing. Nisbet (2009:18) similarly suggests a number of frames: “Social progress”, “Economic development and competitiveness”, “Morality and ethics”, “Scientific and technical uncertainty”, “Pandora’s box/Frankenstein’s monster/runaway science”, “Public accountability and governance”, “Middle way/alternative path”, and “Conflict and strategy”.

Among these forms of framing, I focus in this thesis on moral and economic framing (in *Part Three*), because of the greater emphasis on these forms of framing by research participants, and because they act as forms of ‘meta-framing’, brought into play by most of the other types of framing listed here. Throughout the thesis, I use the term ‘moral framing’ rather than ‘ethical framing’, as ‘moral framing’ is most commonly used in the literature. I do not intend the term ‘moral’ to imply any particular religious connotations.

A second body of literature I draw on in this thesis is work on the climate movement. As with work on climate communication, this is a young but growing area of research (Garrelts &

Dietz 2014:8). This literature touches on a wide range of issues relating to the climate movement internationally and is relevant to my work here both because climate movement activity provides the context for climate communication and because a segment of the climate movement literature addresses the question of framing. Here, I address this latter body of work, along with academic literature on the New Zealand climate movement.

Caniglia, Brulle & Szasz (2015:243) note that “The international climate change movement, like the environmental movement in general, is not a completely unified movement and, therefore, uses an array of discourses to frame the problems, perpetrators, and solutions to global climate change” (see also Wahlström, Wennerhag & Rootes 2013:105). Numerous writers draw attention to two broad streams of, and forms of framing in, the climate movement. The more radical stream is usually labelled the ‘climate justice’ stream, and the other stream is variously referred to in terms of ‘climate change’, ‘climate science’ or ‘climate action’ (see, e.g., della Porta & Parks 2014; Garrelts & Dietz 2014:2-3; Dietz 2014a:301; Baer 2014; Hadden 2015a; cf. Nisbet 2014; Caniglia et al. 2015:243-7; for contrasting approaches, see North 2011:21; Wahlström, Wennerhag & Rootes 2013; Kidner 2015).

Willoughby-Martin (2012:3) calls climate justice “a fluid and diverse umbrella”: “groups and individuals may utilize direct action tactics or may not; some may state an opposition to capitalism, others may state an opposition to neoliberalism” (cf. Moore & Russell 2011:18). “[M]ore moderate groups” tend to “focus on achieving technical goals (such as certain percentages of carbon emissions cuts or limitations to a certain number of degrees warming of the global climate)” (della Porta & Parks 2014:25-6). Ultimately, della Porta & Parks (2014:24) observe that “it seems that the master frame of climate change has shifted to climate justice for a considerable period to come” (cf. Dietz 2014b:349; for a contrasting opinion, see Wahlström, Wennerhag and Rootes 2013:120). Hadden (2015a:143) makes the case that “media, states, and other civil society groups have adopted the language of climate justice” and concludes: “This [climate justice] frame has spread to a variety of actors, suggesting that framing power is an effective tool wielded by this movement” (2015a:163).

Academic literature on the New Zealand climate movement literature is still relatively limited.¹ Of interest to the focus of this thesis are Moon’s (2013) analysis of youth climate group Generation Zero’s “mainstreaming” approach to climate activism; Kidner’s (2015) discussion of climate discourses; and Diprose, Thomas & Bond’s recent (2016) work on deep sea oil

¹ This literature is as follows: Rudningen (2009); Hamed (2009); Gaisford (2010); Craig (2010); Te (2010); Andrews (2011); Willoughby-Martin (2012); Noronha (2013); Moon (2013); Fougère (2013); O’Brien (2013a, 2013b, 2016); Kidner (2015); Crawley (2015); Cretney, Thomas & Bond (2016); Diprose, Thomas & Bond (2016); Oosterman (2016); see also Seaman (2016).

campaigning, which includes discussion of ‘co-risk framing’ (see *Chapters 3 and 4*), and is noteworthy in drawing on perspectives from several different climate groups.

While there is no necessary division between what I term climate communication literature and climate movement literature, my survey of these bodies of literature suggests that there is a lack of communication between those working on the climate movement and those working on climate communication, and a lack of detailed work on climate communication which takes a movement-centred perspective. Moser (2016:351) supports such a perspective:

The role of communication specifically in mass mobilization and the climate movement has remained relatively neglected over the past 5 years. Of course, communication research into motivation of individuals or groups of individuals has progressed... as has a separate body of work on the strengthening climate movement, but the link between these two has been weak.

On the one hand, the climate communication literature is very focused on the media, and on the rare occasion when there is attention to movement voices, it is usually only as these are represented in the media. On the other hand, the climate movement literature exhibits an interest in considering movement approaches, manifested in framing, that are distinguished in terms of particular ideological characteristics; however, there appears to be little interest in other framing analytics or dynamics.

In addition, Moser (2016:356) speaks of the “science-practice gap in climate communication”, noting that there has been a “lack of exchange among those *doing* the communicating and those *researching* it” (2010:33). Cox (2010:122-3) notes the “sharp differences among practitioners and scholars” over various approaches, while Moser (2016: 357, 360) observes that when advice is given by academic climate communication researchers, it is “often too general for application in specific contexts”, and she speaks of the need to “help researchers realize just how large the distance is between their findings and real-world application”. A number of groups have been seeking to remedy these problems, however, combining academic work with practitioner knowledge (e.g. Climate Change Communication Advisory Group, Climate Outreach), and my work here can broadly be considered to follow in this line of research.

This thesis is intended to complement previous framing work by adopting an alternative approach to both the climate movement and climate communication work I have briefly discussed here. I take the strength of the (strategy- and framing-focused) climate communication literature to be, quite simply, the sustained attention to the question of communication. As

described above, the major weakness I see in this literature is its abstraction and distance from the practice of climate communication within the movement. In contrast, the strength of the climate movement literature is its sustained attention to the movement itself. I therefore seek to combine what I see as the strengths of each of these bodies of literature. Thus, I build my work from the movement, but address framing dynamics related directly to issues around communication rather than foregrounding ideology (in a narrow sense), and, through this, I address a gap in the literature.

A further difference in my approach as compared to much climate communication literature is my choice not to focus primarily on mediated communication. While acknowledging the importance of the media as a source of knowledge about the climate crisis and in terms of its influence on public opinion (see, e.g., Kenix 2008; Brulle, Carmichael & Jenkins 2012), I have chosen in this research to place the focus on more direct communication with the public at large, via public meetings, interactive workshops, stalls, door-knocking campaigns, protests and demonstrations, as well as other one-on-one communication activities (cf. Moser forthcoming:5). I have chosen such a focus because of an interest in the possibilities of face-to-face communication, and because of the lack of research in this area. Offering some support for this focus, Delina & Diesendorf (2016:132) report from their survey of contemporary social action groups that “the majority of the respondents tend to agree on the effectiveness of face-to-face conversations”. With such a focus in mind, however, the material I discuss is also relevant to communication more generally.

The approach to framing analysis I adopt in this thesis also differs from many approaches used in both the climate communication and climate movement literature. Above all, I seek to give attention to “the multilayered complexities of frames and framing activities” (Benford 1997:422). I therefore present a number of intersecting framing elements that participants combine with different results, and I discuss a range of details within these framing elements, seeking to avoid characterising frames as “monolithic, static entities” (Snow et al. 2014:36). In my attention to framing decisions, I also give attention to the process of framing, which has previously been underexplored (Benford 1997:415; Snow et al. 2014:37). While I consider a number of “substantive frames” – “frames bearing on more or less specific issues raised in political contention” (Giugni, Bandler & Eggert 2006:14) – I seek to draw attention to the decisions behind such choices of framing, approaching framing as an active process undertaken by movement participants. To support such an approach, I specifically directed interview discussion towards experiences of climate communication decision-making.

Hewitt & Fitzgerald (in Snow et al. 2014:38) write that “Perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the framing perspective is the degree to which scholars are able to utilize its tools toward movement-relevant research, or research that directly supports movements and their goals” (cf. Moser 2016:351-2). As with the study of climate communication, however, this is by no means automatic, as Ryan (quoted in Snow et al. 2014:37) comments:

As currently organized, academic-based framing theory focuses on frames as fossils—the products or remnants of political discourse. Framing theorists rarely involve themselves in a sustained fashion with working framers, the processes framers employ, or the audiences they mobilize. As activists and their constituencies perceive framing theorists’ disinterest, the activist-theory gap grows.

Such an analysis reinforces the approach I have taken here, grounding my framing analysis in in-depth interviews with “working framers” in the New Zealand climate movement.

Theory

My chosen research approach has shaped the way I have balanced different voices in the writing of this thesis, along with the way I have approached the development of theory. As described earlier, I have consciously made this research ‘movement-centred’, grounding my work in interviews with climate movement participants, and orienting myself towards activists’ “socially lived theorizing”. I take this to be congruent with Charmaz’s (2008:402) constructivist grounded theory approach: “As opposed to giving priority to the researcher’s views, constructionists see participants’ views and voices as integral to the analysis—and its presentation” (see also Dowling 2005:131).

There is a wide variation of opinion within the literature as to what constitutes effective climate communication. In most cases in this research, I was able to find examples in the literature which were congruent with the experience and opinions described by participants. However, in line with the broader critique offered by activist scholars, and as described earlier (see Moser 2016:356-360), it was also clear that a significant segment of the literature voices perspectives detached from the experience and practical concerns of climate communicators. The academic literature therefore risks being one-dimensional, offering advice and ideas that movement participants are well aware of, and have integrated into a more nuanced picture and/or do not have the resources to apply (cf. Nulman 2013:1; Bevington & Dixon 2005). Thus, while I reference the climate communication and climate movement literature throughout this

thesis, I have made an explicit choice, in line with my activist scholarship approach, to focus on the material shared with me by research participants.

In terms of the development of theory, I have been very aware of the high degree of abstraction in much work on the climate crisis. This has reinforced my choice to give attention to the *practice* of climate communication, both through the research interviews and through the literature I have drawn on. I analyse the communication practices of New Zealand climate movement participants, and while this analysis is inevitably informed and influenced by my analysis of the climate crisis and the climate movement, I do not foreground these. Overall, therefore, I have directed the development of my analysis towards a form of ‘applied theory’. Sandelowski & Barroso (quoted in Starks & Trinidad 2007:1376) note that “The products of qualitative analysis can range from thematic surveys (relatively close to the data) to interpretive explanatory theory (farthest from the data)”. Both phenomenological and grounded theory approaches, which have influenced my work in this thesis, tend towards the “thematic survey” end of this continuum. To paraphrase David Graeber (quoted in Gaisford 2010:30; cf. Sutherland 2012), rather than “High Theory”, what I believe climate activism² needs is “Low Theory”: “a way of grappling with those real, immediate questions that emerge from a transformative project”.

Limitations

It is also appropriate here to acknowledge the limitations of this research. Firstly, communication is only one important issue for the climate movement and I have been unable to discuss questions of organisation and campaign strategy (except for where I briefly touch on the ‘activist context’ in *Chapter 3*). While I have drawn on social scientific literature on the climate crisis beyond issues around communication, this has necessarily been limited. I chose to focus primarily on the climate communication literature; however, a full review of even this body of literature was beyond the scope of this research. Additionally, there is a wide range of other bodies of literature (and other social struggles, both present and historical) that the themes of this work resonate with, and which I have not had the space to discuss.

In this research, I also arguably replicate a “prevalent shortcoming” that Benford (1997:421) describes in work on framing, namely a focus on “movement elites to the neglect of rank-and-file participants, potential recruits, bystanders, and others”. Wahlström, Wennerhag &

² Originally said of anarchism.

Rootes (2013:104) comment: “Although movement leaders and intellectuals are principal disseminators of frames and interpreters of the meaning of collective actions, participants’ framings may be more or less complex or differ in other ways that may affect the development of the movement.” Ultimately, I felt that the relative lack of work on the New Zealand climate movement justified my focus on movement leaders; however, these considerations help frame my research here.

A further limitation is that, while based in a great deal of experience, the comments of research participants in this thesis can only be understood as being based in their own perceptions and opinions. In the words of Threadgold (2012:18), interviewees’ comments “need to be interpreted as a snapshot of their thoughts in a particular time and place”. While undertaking sustained observation of climate communication in practice may have provided extra insight in this regard, given time constraints, this would have meant significantly reducing the number of interviews. Furthermore, my previous experience of climate activism has provided me with similar knowledge to what would be provided through such observation, and I felt that interviews would provide the reflective depth that I was seeking in my research.

These considerations influence the question of the effectiveness of the communication approaches described in this thesis. This research cannot unequivocally claim the effectiveness of any of the approaches described here, or judge their relative effectiveness. Climate communication is challenging, and communicators are responding to this challenge in a range of different ways, in different contexts. While I would suggest that all of the approaches described in the thesis should be considered effective, as discussed further in *Chapter 3*, this effectiveness will be context-specific, and given my broad definition of the climate movement, this is a particularly important consideration.

I am interested in the effectiveness of framing efforts; however, the aim of this research has not been to define the ‘right way’ to communicate about the climate crisis. Similarly, my aim has not been to ‘critique’ the ways in which climate movement participants are currently going about communicating, but rather to understand them. In line with this, I believe there is some value in Haiven & Khasnabish’s (2013:481) suggestion of a shift in focus in social movement research from movement “success” and “failure” to a “focus on relationality, encounter, and dialogue”. I have sought to provide space for reflection, and to reflect back the perspectives and experiences of climate movement participants to both the movement and the academic community. Part of this is sharing the perspectives of people who have a lot of experience in climate communication. Additionally, in reflecting the material back, I have also aimed to synthesise the material in a way that brings clarity to it, and thereby provide tools for further

movement reflection on communication practices. Ultimately, my hope is that by supporting the reflective processes of movement participants, I can contribute to effective climate action in Aotearoa.

This concludes *Part One* of this thesis, in which I have laid the groundwork for my discussion of the challenge of climate communication, and have described the activist scholarship approach I am utilising in my efforts to explicate the dynamics of communication and framing, as practised by New Zealand climate movement participants. This approach, backed up by a combination of thematic and framing analysis, provides the theoretical underpinning of the research. In *Part Two*, I turn from this theoretical groundwork to the direct consideration of the material shared with me by research participants, building on this activist scholarship research approach to describe core elements of the balance that climate communicators strike in their efforts to ‘make climate action meaningful’ in communication with members of the public.

PART TWO
Making climate action meaningful

3. Making climate action meaningful

“You can tap into core meanings and values... and present them as what’s at stake... Essentially, the essence of framing around anything is you giving the meaning to the struggle... and your opponent disagrees with the meaning you’re giving to it, and they try and give another meaning to it, and it’s essentially about who wins the battle of meaning.”

– Steve Abel

As described in the *Introduction*, climate movement participants seek to create a ‘social consensus’ on climate action through engaging with the public, with the intent of creating new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. In *Parts Two* and *Three* of this thesis, I present and discuss the material shared by research participants in relation to this aim, in conjunction with selected academic material. In *Part Two*, starting with this chapter, I discuss the first broad theme of this thesis: how climate communicators balance speaking the facts of the climate crisis and ‘speaking their own truth’ with ‘meeting people where they are at’.

This chapter includes consideration of the context of communication, diagnostic and prognostic framing, and the communication ‘gap’, along with various aspects of ‘meeting people where they are at’, including the importance of the audience that is addressed, the depth of engagement and dialogue, and the use of co-risk/co-benefit framing in climate communication. Following this, *Chapter 4* highlights the *Risks and challenges* embedded in the attempt to balance ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’, while *Chapter 5* attends to the question of *Emotions and empowerment*, and how these interact with the balance and risks I describe.

A core element of climate communication is the desire to help people “see the world through a climate-changed lens” (Mike Smith). In these words, as well as in those of Steve Abel, quoted above, it can be seen how framing is directly considered by New Zealand climate movement participants, sometimes using that exact terminology. In Steve Abel’s quotation, you can also see how the question of meaning is evoked, and tied into the idea of framing, directly linking to the core idea of this chapter (and the thesis more generally): *Making climate action meaningful*.

Interviewees spoke about a desire to “try and get the great New Zealand public on board” (Dayle Takitimu), bring about a “change in consciousness”, and “shift the public debate”. Niamh O’Flynn described the depth of changes needed:

We don't want changes that change every time there's a new government. It's got to be that institutional change that comes from the ground up, where even a National government that would like to see nuclear in the country can't, because it's so culturally rooted now.

As noted in the previous chapter, there is a wide range of different opinions present in the literature as to what constitutes effective climate communication. Reflecting this, Gareth Hughes stated: "I think my issue is that so much of the data and opinion is contradictory". Throughout the body of this thesis, I consider a number of these different opinions in relation to the question of balance in climate communication, and how this balance manifests in moral and economic framing.

The activist context

"What message should we give to people?" The first answer to these questions may seem rather unsatisfactory, namely, 'It depends!'"

- Susanne Moser (2010:39)

It is clear that the context of communication influences decisions that climate activists make around the content of communication. Research participants discussed a number of contextual influences on their framing decisions: the campaign focus, the type of activity during which the communication takes place, the degree of engagement and communication that the activity allows for, and the audience that is addressed (cf. Moser 2010:39-40). In addition to this, groups have different goals of communication, related to their theories of, and strategies for, change, which are themselves forms of climate framing.

In terms of campaign focus, the climate movement participants I interviewed were involved with campaigns and projects based around deep sea oil, fracking, coal, transport, food and farming, divestment, community-building, and broader sustainability issues. Participants spoke about a range of situations in which they might be communicating, including using mainstream and social media, making films, and writing reports. As described in *Chapter 2*, I have chosen in this research to place the primary focus on more direct communication with the public at large.

Among these situations, protests offer a specific context for communication, and often have multiple audiences, including both the targets and the general public. As Jeanette Fitzsimons put it, you can protest "in a way that brings support and 'Yes!' from the other people

around”. Fougère (2013:65; see also Ganesh & Zoller 2012) also asserts the importance of activism for democracy and relates this to communication:

Protests and other antagonistic activism can be a way for society to prepare for dialogue, and the antagonistic approaches create possibilities or imaginings for deliberation that might not have occurred otherwise.

Speaking ‘the facts’ and “speak[ing] to your own truth”

The first, and most basic, way that climate communicators make climate action meaningful is by providing information about the climate crisis. In addition to this need to speak about details of the climate crisis, Steve Abel suggested that “you will actually get much greater support” if you “speak to your own truth”. He explained: “Often it’s about remembering what at its core we’re actually here for”. Cognitive linguist George Lakoff is one of the most vocal proponents of such an approach. In his words: “Be sincere. Use frames you really believe in, based on values you really hold” (Lakoff 2014:160; cf. Goodwin & Jasper 1999:49; Crompton 2008:7; Shenker-Osorio 2012:183):

It is about bringing to consciousness the deepest of our beliefs and our modes of understanding. It is about learning to express what we really believe in a way that will allow those who share our beliefs to understand what they most deeply believe and to act on those beliefs. (Lakoff 2014:xiii)

Diagnostic and prognostic framing

Climate movement participants communicate both information about the climate crisis and ‘their own truth’ through diagnostic and prognostic framing. Diagnostic framing identifies problems and their causation, while prognostic framing suggests solutions, strategies, and tactics to respond to these problems, and thereby also speaks to the goals of communication. Research participants spoke about these framing decisions in terms of which aspects of the climate issue to “highlight”, “foreground”, or to run as their “primary” communication.

In terms of diagnostic framing, interviewees spoke of the climate crisis in terms of the drivers of the problem, the physical and social risks, and the creation of vulnerability to climate

impacts. As part of this, they consistently referred to the ways in which they communicate about social and political elements of the climate crisis, and linked the climate crisis with other environmental, social, and economic issues. In line with this, I do not limit the field of climate communication solely to the communication of the science of climate change (cf. Gunster 2011:1-2).

In terms of drivers, research participants frequently identified economics as being at the core of the climate issue. Thus, Katherine Peet spoke of the “crisis that we face, brought on by the economic system and manifesting itself in climate” (discussed further in *Part Three*). A number of interviewees also spoke about agricultural practices and the role of soil in the climate crisis. Nicole Masters commented that “a big part of what we’re looking at when we’re looking at the carbon loading in the atmosphere comes from soil... and people haven’t been hearing that part of the story” (cf. Schwartz 2014). She noted how having “degraded systems” with low soil carbon also creates a serious vulnerability to climate change: “Carbon really is our resilience”. Robina McCurdy referred to “conventional agriculture and the addition of pesticides and chemical fertilizers” as being “basically soil depletion methods”. In support of such a focus, Shrybman (quoted in Klein 2014a:68) observes that “the globalization of [industrial] agricultural systems over recent decades is likely to have been one of the most important causes of overall increases in greenhouse gas emissions” (cf. Schwartz 2014).

In addition, interviewees spoke of a range of issues which are linked with the climate crisis in various ways, often called co-impacts, co-risks, and co-benefits in the academic literature (Ürge-Vorsatz et al. 2014). The co-risks that participants spoke of can be categorised under four headings: those linked to fossil fuels, those linked to soil and food, those linked to renewable energy supply, and systemic issues. The most commonly mentioned non-systemic issue was the risk of oil spills. A range of works discuss co-impacts of climate change (see, e.g., Ürge-Vorsatz et al. 2014; Moser & Dilling 2004:42; Bain et al. 2015), and the inclusion of such issues in ‘climate’ campaigning is also common internationally (see, e.g., Klein 2014a, particularly Chs.9-10).

In terms of prognostic framing, participants spoke of mitigating the drivers of climate change, decreasing vulnerability to climate impacts, and co-benefits of climate action. In regard to reducing drivers of climate change, this included speaking of both radical reduction of emissions and carbon sequestration (via the soil and “our uncut native forests” – Robina McCurdy). Additionally, in terms of renewable energy, a number of participants stated their belief that the necessary renewable energy solutions already exist.

Several research participants highlighted the importance of food production in terms of climate solutions (see also *Chapter 9*). Both Nicole Masters and Robina McCurdy expressed the need for a “paradigm shift” in food production. Nicole Masters touched on all aspects of what Klein (2014a:117) calls the “triple climate benefit” of sustainable agriculture: reduced fossil fuel use and emissions, carbon sequestration, and resilience to climate impacts. In terms of mitigation through carbon sequestration in the soil, Nicole Masters stated:

If we looked at the agricultural area that’s currently being farmed [globally]... and if we sequestered only half a percent carbon into soils, that would take care of the entire loading of carbon in the atmosphere now, but also the legacy loading.

Interviewees spoke of building resilience, and reducing agricultural, social, political, and economic vulnerability. They spoke of community-building as a form of climate action, both in terms of community-based climate mitigation and as preparation for a difficult future:

I think community *will* give you the security, especially when the economy’s collapsed, and you do need people around you whom you can trust and share whatever you have with each other. (Catherine Cheung)

As expressed in this quotation, such a (systemic) framing may not necessarily include an overt climate focus:

Some of the people who will be working to prevent climate change don’t even have to use the word or the concept and think about it. As Naomi Klein says, everything that works for the public good – greater public space, less corporate power, more universal rights for everybody, more equality – it’s the same battle as climate change. (Jeanette Fitzsimons)

While the diagnostic and prognostic framing offered by interviewees was largely consistent, some differences emerged. Firstly, individuals and groups are clearly making choices of focus within the broader climate issue. For example, Paul Young said of Generation Zero: “We’ve devoutly steered clear of the agricultural debate”. Secondly, some interviewees mentioned a number of differences of opinion and “ideological tensions” within the movement. These are described in the social movement framing literature as “frame disputes” (Benford & Snow 2000:626). Catherine Cheung gave an example:

Natural gas as a transition fuel is a huge myth which we’re working quite hard on how to debunk, because that is a view taken by even some green campaigners. That’s quite a difficult one, when you’re trying to argue with your own people.

Gary Cranston spoke of a similar challenge in relation to electric cars:

When you're saying we need more public transport, and someone else is saying we need more electric cars, and everyone goes 'Ooh, electric cars, that's fancy, I like that!'

He expressed the opinion that making a strong push for electric cars is not complementary to public transport campaigning but rather that "sometimes ideas are competing, and things get in the way of real change".

The goals of communication

An important element of prognostic framing is the highlighting of behavioural change as being at the core of a climate 'solution'. Changed behaviour includes both reduced carbon footprints and increased political participation, building public capacity to engage with climate issues as well as building public demand for adequate climate policy (see, e.g., Stern 2000; Torgerson 2000; Ehrhardt-Martinez et al. 2015:202; Ballantyne 2016:1). Such behaviour change will cumulatively create social change, via changed social norms and mass mobilisation (see, e.g., Moser 2010:38, 43; Brulle 2010).

In practice, climate movement participants may take one or more forms of behaviour change as the goal of communication. While a significant stream within the climate literature focuses on individual (or family) carbon footprint reduction (Ehrhardt-Martinez et al. 2015:204), a more political focus can also be seen. Corner et al. (2010:11) state that "Climate change communications... should work to normalise public displays of frustration with the slow pace of political change [and] to encourage people to demonstrate [publicly]" (see also Ockwell, Whitmarsh & O'Neill 2009). Cross and colleagues (2015:7) explicitly make a case for a political framing of the climate crisis, stating that "Effective communication about climate politics, rather than climate science or lifestyle change, is the key to public political mobilization around climate change." Interviewees were clearly making efforts in this area.

A range of participants spoke about seeking to influence corporations and institutions, including Petrobras, Statoil, Fonterra, banks, and a number of councils and universities. The divestment campaign (advocating the removal of investments from companies involved in fossil fuel extraction) is a clear example of "using collective power to make... institutional level change" (Niamh O'Flynn). Other participants spoke about seeking change at a governmental

level. Thus, Paul Young spoke of Generation Zero's communication efforts as being oriented to promoting people's support for adequate climate policies (see also Moon 2013:61).

Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, an iwi located in the eastern Bay of Plenty/East Cape region of Aotearoa, offers a good example of multiple goals of activism and communication. In June 2010, the Brazilian energy corporation Petrobras was granted exploratory oil and gas drilling licences for the Raukumara Basin, which was actively opposed by Te Whānau-ā-Apanui and a number of other groups (see, e.g., O'Brien 2013b). Dayle Takitimu described how the risk of Petrobras initiating drilling was a "catalyst" for action by the iwi, "but it's not our endgame just getting rid of Petrobras". (Petrobras did in fact ultimately return their drilling licences, with various interpretations of this decision being put forward – see, e.g., *NZ Herald* 2012.) As well as a flotilla protest and other activities taken in opposition to Petrobras, Dayle Takitimu spoke in terms of a "culture shift" beyond fossil fuels, and said that "we see it as such a long-term intergenerational campaign". This "culture shift" has included direct carbon footprint reductions, such as through the installation of solar panels, making "three of our marae... completely self-sufficient in terms of energy".

The communication gap

"There are lots of parts of being a good campaigner and one of these is talking to people, and actually getting your ideas heard, not just having your ideas [dismissed] out of hand."

– Gareth Hughes

In addition to speaking 'the facts' and 'speaking their own truth', another core way in which climate communicators seek to make climate action meaningful is by seeking to bridge the gap between themselves and the public, and thereby 'meet people where they are at'. Here, I firstly address the gap between the climate movement and the public, important elements of which are the widespread misunderstandings about, and disconnection from, the climate crisis, and vested interests leading to active opposition to climate action.

Academic work suggests that it can be challenging to move beyond the dominant framing used in the discussion of issues (see, e.g., Lakoff 2014:34; Gurney 2013), and this was confirmed in participants' experience. Benford & Snow (2000:626) note that "The very existence of a social movement indicates differences within a society regarding the meaning of some aspect

of reality” (cf. Bedall & Görg 2014:48). Similarly, Rosewarne, Goodman & Pearse (2014:100) observe the “gulf between climate activists and the rest of society”, particularly noting the difference in the emotional experience of the climate crisis. In their words, “many interviewees found themselves in a world apart” (2014:99; cf. Cretney, Thomas & Bond 2016:7).

Interviewees referred to ways in which the current political economy shapes our lives, influences people’s framing of the climate crisis, and thereby constrains climate action. Mike Smith spoke of being up against “the habits of a lifetime”, while Gareth Hughes referred to the ways that fossil fuel companies are part of people’s lives:

Although people understand there’s something wrong with Big Oil globally... [Big Oil] spend[s] a lot on PR... and maybe BP isn’t seen as so bad if you visit them twice a week and you buy your pie from them.

As noted above, a major challenge is that people often have a sense of “confusion and disconnection” around climate change. Niamh O’Flynn stated:

I don’t think it has really hit home that it’s a serious concern for now and it’s inevitable and we have the power to make the changes that need to happen now.

Illustrating the sense of disconnection, Gareth Hughes added:

I think it’s fair to say you still get a few odd looks when you talk about climate change. You wonder if you are talking about something a little tangential to their everyday lives.

Participants suggested that while people may believe that they understand the issue, this understanding may be fairly shallow: “I don’t think most people understand the scale of the crisis” (Matt Morris; cf. Rayner & Minns 2015:3; Moser 2010:32).

A range of works discuss cognitive and behavioural challenges in responding to climate change (Norgaard 2009; Moser 2009; Crompton & Kasser 2009; Leining 2015:5-6). This material supports the sense of disconnection noted by interviewees (see also Ballantyne 2016:2). A number of articles note that there is “widespread misunderstanding” of climate change even among highly educated adults (Norgaard 2009:18). Harré (2016) comments: “When information on a scientific issue is presented in such a way that it echoes our pre-existing worldview, we endorse it. When it counters this we are much less likely to do so.” Several terms are used to address these issues: “bounded rationality”, “motivated reasoning”, and “cultural cognition” (Weber 2015:1; Schwom et al. 2015:282; Menzies 2015:71). In relation to this, Jeanette Fitzsimons adds: “Maybe ‘not very interested’ is the hardest category [of people to reach]” (cf.

Futerra 2010:4). Lakoff (2010:73) suggests that the “system of frames” needed to understand the climate crisis has to be “built up over a period of time” and “This has not been done”.

Discussion of the limitations of the ‘information deficit model’ is extensive in the climate communication literature (see, e.g., Wibeck 2014; Pearce et al. 2015; Ballantyne 2016). Norgaard (2009:6, 13) notes, however, that while “Accurate and complete understanding of information is not a pre-requisite for concern”, “if the public lacks complete information, neither concern nor action is likely”. While information alone is not enough, both policy-makers and the wider public need “a much clearer picture of the urgency of the situation” (Moser 2010:36).

There is also difficulty with the translation of understanding and concern into action (McCarthy et al. 2014:672). Commentators have variously described this as “socially organized denial”, “implicatory denial”, and “stealth denial” (Norgaard 2006a, 2006b, 2009:15, 2011; Rowson 2013; see also Cohen 2001). Such denial, in which belief and care are expressed, but no action is taken, is important both at the level of parliamentary politics and at the individual level. People have a “finite pool of worry” (Weber 2015:2), and climate concerns are eclipsed by other issues (cf. Roy Morgan 2014). In an Australian study, Leahy, Bowden & Threadgold (2010:858) note that “Most people interviewed had a strong view that environmental apocalypse was just around the corner, combined with an unwillingness to do anything to change that scenario by political action”. They considered this “further evidence of the likelihood of collapse” (2010:864).

Opposition to climate action

“I don't understand how a government can say ‘Climate is not an issue for us’.”

- Matt Morris, referring to a statement by the Finance Minister, Bill English (July 2015)

In addition to misunderstandings and a sense of disconnection from the climate crisis, the work of climate communication is made difficult by the fact that both ‘the 1%’ and the global middle class (cf. Klein 2014a:99) benefit from the current political economy, and largely resist the call for social change. Interviewees described the manner in which major financial interests support the status quo and Paul Young spoke about the challenge of “overcoming the vested interests, and the sort of excessive power that they have in the political system”. Beyond the fossil fuel companies often mentioned, Nicole Masters also spoke of the vested interests of agrochemical companies.

Jeanette Fitzsimons described how communication efforts must be made “against the clamour” from business, politicians, the media, and mainstream society (cf. Lewandowsky 2015):

We can flog ourselves about ‘Our communication isn’t good enough’, and sometimes it isn’t, but sometimes it’s just that the noise coming in the other direction is huge, you know, you’re fighting into a hundred-miles-an-hour gale going the other way.

Dayle Takitimu spoke of the sense of being “outgunned and out-resourced” and “punching a lot above our weight”, saying that Te Whānau-ā-Apanui was:

up against the New Zealand government and Petrobras, who were owned by the Brazilian government and funded for that exploration by the Obama administration... and then we had most of the oil, petroleum industry gunning for that as well.

The resources of “Big Oil” can be contrasted with the “zero budget” of several climate groups (cf. Fougère 2013:77).

Interviewees spoke about the current ascendancy of the National Party, in terms of the actions of the party itself, but also in terms of the extensive public support for a party that opposes adequate climate action:

There’s concern out there [and yet] they vote the National Government in... What the hell? It doesn’t make any sense at all... I think what people are looking for is more action to be taken on climate change that enables our status quo to remain in place. (Matt Morris)

John Peet also discussed his previous experience communicating with the Labour Party, observing that a core barrier was the question: “How do I get re-elected if I promote those ideas?”, with “a local Labour MP” saying: “If Labour took it on, we’d just take a nosedive. The country isn’t ready for it” (cf. Ockwell, Whitmarsh & O’Neill 2009:313).

Brulle & Jenkins (2006:84) note that the “social power” of the “powerful vested interests in the existing carbon-based economy ... will continue to define values” that also mobilise public attitudes. Barriers to change exist both at the level of political economy and at a cultural and psychological level, and these are intimately related. Giving attention to how “public nonresponse to global warming [is] produced through practices of everyday life” (2006b:365), Norgaard (2006b:366) observes that:

Citizens of wealthy nations who fail to respond to the issue of climate change benefit from their denial in economic terms. They also benefit by avoiding the emotional and psychological entanglement and identity conflicts that may arise from knowing that one is doing ‘the wrong thing’[.] (cf. Moser 2010:36)

Consistent with this, Schwom and colleagues (2015:272) note that “public concern for climate change is negatively related to national levels of GDP per capita and CO₂ production per capita.”

Meeting people where they are at

“One of the challenges that faces climate activism... is about speaking to values that the people you’re trying to convince have, not just your own values.”

- Paul Young

Having described the gap between climate communicators and the public, I begin here to describe how communicators go about bridging this gap. Through ‘meeting people where they are at’, climate movement framing efforts weave in people’s experiences, emotions, values, and their sense of identity and morality, making the climate crisis feel tangible and real, and speaking about climate action in a way “that people can relate to” (Steve Abel). A number of elements of this are evident in the comments of research participants: making communication accessible, speaking to values, dilution of the message, making communication practical, and linking the local and the global.

Interviewees spoke in a variety of ways about the basic importance of making communication accessible. To achieve this, they spoke of offering a mixture of solid evidence and stories, avoiding jargon, and speaking in clear “mental images” and metaphors.

Interviewees also spoke of trying to “reach people on the level of their values” (Jeanette Fitzsimons). This has two senses: firstly, speaking to people in such a way as to actually connect with who they are, but secondly, speaking to ‘positive’ or ‘moral’ values. I discuss the latter in *Chapter 6*. In the first, more general, sense, Nicole Masters spoke of how “You’ve got to find what people care about”. Recognising that people are motivated by different things, she spoke about how she takes a “broad” approach, telling “the same story... in four or five different ways... and hop[ing] that one of these things is what makes the difference”. Gareth Hughes spoke of a Green Party leaflet, illustrating the ways in which the climate crisis will impact the everyday life of New Zealanders:

It's explicit on the cover: ‘Why it matters to us’. And then we’ve got a whole bunch of people talking: from an outdoors perspective, from a Pasifika perspective, from a farming perspective. And it talks about how climate change impacts a lot of things people care about, so coffee, alcohol, wildlife, chocolate, farmers, our endangered animals like the Maui’s dolphin, the kiwi bach. So instead of just talking about ‘What

does sea level mean?', we're talking about 'Well it could risk your bach, the beach that you love'... Climate change is huge, and affects all of us. Everyone has a reason to care about this issue.

Wibeck (2014:400) observes "the importance of framing climate change in ways that make sense to lay audiences", and of using "Cultural narratives, or stories, which render climate change meaningful" (2014:398; see also Moser 2010:36). A range of authors speak of the need to make a "human connection" (Moser, quoted in Rayner & Minns 2015:23) and, as quoted earlier, to "appeal to values that are meaningful for your audience" (Thompson & Schweizer 2008:14; cf. Lakoff 2014:164). Much of the material shared by research participants was in line with such a values-centred approach to climate communication (see also Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016:166).

Meeting people where they are at always needs to be grounded in, and in balance with, speaking the facts and 'speaking your own truth' (cf. Brown & Riedy 2006:6 on "transformative communications and translative communications"). Jeanette Fitzsimons suggested that "sometimes you do have to dilute the message", but said that you can do this without "accept[ing] their prejudices", and without going against your core beliefs and values. In terms of such 'dilution' of the message, several interviewees made it clear that with certain audiences, and in certain situations, they will make strategic decisions to hold back on expressing certain things, out of a desire to connect with that audience:

I think if somebody is so far from being in our court, and from understanding our message, you don't throw the whole thing at them, that would be crazy, and it would just scare them off... You're just choosing the parts of the message they're capable of responding to and understanding, and letting the rest go until they're in a space where they can receive it. (Jeanette Fitzsimons)

[If] you say 'No no no, you can't use any of those kind of products' or 'You can't do this and that', you just meet a wall. I've got to kind of meet them halfway and then take them on a journey to somewhere they weren't expecting to go. (Nicole Masters)

Speaking in relation to centre-right audiences, but in a manner that is more generally applicable to the 'gap' faced in climate communication, Corner (2012:2) similarly suggests that climate communication "should begin with the values and concerns that this audience holds, and build a bridge between these and the values of a sustainable society".

Matt Morris also spoke of the importance of work "actually entering into people's lives", and Nicole Masters spoke of the need for solutions to be "digestible":

The things that we're trying to put in place have got to be simple and have got to fit into what they are already doing... Once they see it's possible, they can invest more time, because they do have that commitment.

A number of participants suggested that linking the global and the local was a way to connect with people. Paul Young described using “local scale campaigning” such as supporting the Auckland city rail link to show “what tackling climate change looks like” (cf. Segnit & Ereaut 2007:32). Further, Steve Abel spoke of the 2015 floods in Whanganui:

We gave people the image of people shovelling silt out of their living rooms, and said ‘That’s a consequence of climate change, that’s a consequence of the government’s inaction on climate change, and we’re going to see more of that’.

Diverse publics

The choice of the public to be addressed plays an important role in framing decisions. Jeanette Fitzsimons suggested that “there is no such thing as the general public” (cf. Wibeck 2014:401), and spoke of the need to tailor your message to specific audiences (cf. Benford & Snow 2000:630). As Hine and colleagues (2014:441) comment: “Certain types of messages may be enthusiastically embraced by some members of the general public, but elicit indifference or outrage from others.” Given the gap between climate communicators and members of the public, a number of participants suggested that there are people you will never reach, while others suggested that the goals and expectations of communication are reduced with such audiences.

The advice to “know your audience” has been called “the first lesson of communications” (Futerra 2006), and various writers speak of the need to understand different “interpretive communities” (Wibeck 2014:401) – groups of people who “share similar perceptions, understandings, concerns, and emotional responses to global warming” (Moser, quoted in Wibeck 2014:401). Interviewees spoke about the choices they have made in working with particular audiences. Nicole Masters stated: “If I want to change agriculture, I have to be working with mainstream farmers”. And Mike Smith spoke of how he largely works with Māori, but noted the diversity within Māori communities: “You’ll have the economic warriors who are all going ‘Let’s invest in dairy farming’, right through to the ones saying... ‘Let’s just invest in kūmara’.” He spoke of centring his film, *He ao wera* (translation: *Global warming*), on Māori communities “so that Māori people can associate more with these problems”.

Jasper (2004:10) notes that “Participants may disagree permanently... over the relative importance of different audiences”, as demonstrated, for example, in interviewees’ relative interest (or complete lack of interest) in reaching out to business audiences. Phadke, Manning & Burlager (2015) suggest that one goal of communication might be to specifically promote communication with those who are most affected by climate impacts, a suggestion also proposed by participant Gary Cranston (and a number of climate justice commentators). Finally, some writers suggest climate communicators should specifically seek to activate those who have some “latent interest and concern for climate change, rather than rallying the disinterested” (Rowson 2013:4; see also Cross et al. 2015:7), while others suggest that it is important to reach out to even those groups where the communication gap is greatest, such as right-wing audiences (see *Chapter 6*).

Depth of engagement and dialogue

“One-on-one conversations are the way to go, and one-on-one conversations that take the trouble to find out where the other person’s coming from have far more chance of connecting.”

– Jeanette Fitzsimons

In addition to the choice of public, the question of the depth of engagement also affects efforts to ‘make climate action meaningful’, and several research participants spoke about in-depth dialogue offering a greater opportunity to learn who people are, so as to be able to communicate more effectively with them (cf. CRED 2009:4; Menzies 2015). Thus, Nicole Masters spoke of how she undertakes a questionnaire and interview process with clients, in order to “find what people care about”.

However, people’s roles and projects permit different levels of opportunity for such engagement. John Peet suggested that you “seldom have enough time”. Furthermore, activists face choices between the mainstream media reaching many people in a shallow manner and one-on-one work not reaching as many people, but doing so in a deeper fashion (cf. Moser & Dilling 2011). Paul Young suggested that Generation Zero had “gone down more the mainstream media route”, as opposed to “having community meetings all round the country” or “having a more direct conversation with people”, because of perceiving the media as a better avenue through which to influence politicians; however, he suggested that, while challenging, “more of that face-to-face, in-depth kind of engagement is important and needed”.

Interviewees also spoke of participatory events and workshops as opportunities for in-depth communication. Nicole Masters spoke of making her workshops “a safe space to be able to ask those challenging questions”. Robina McCurdy, discussing her permaculture workshops, spoke of an emphasis on “whole-body experience” and “learning by doing”.

Participants described change as a long process, and spoke of the value of engaging over time. Nicole Masters spoke about how ongoing support aided people’s sense of efficacy, both via direct support from her and through “mentor groups”. Other interviewees, however, suggested that given time and energy constraints, and the type of work they are doing, there is seldom the opportunity for ongoing engagement. Catherine Cheung commented: “We should have a person who just does [follow-ups], to maintain that relationship, but we just haven’t got enough people”.

Participants also shared a number of examples of in-depth dialogue from other groups and movements that might act as inspiration. Steve Abel spoke about the “cottage evenings” held by Native Forest Action, where a slide presentation was shown to around 8 to 15 interested people, with a submission being signed at the end. He suggested that going over things in such depth, in 1 or 1½ hours, “you’ve got somebody who’s heard all the arguments, the stories, the images, they’ve got it in their hearts, and they will be somebody who opposes native logging until the grave”. He spoke of how this “really builds the substance of your movement for good” and suggested that “maybe not enough of that” is happening in the New Zealand climate movement. Katherine Peet spoke of similar experiences with her Treaty of Waitangi workshops and ‘What really matters’ exercises. Gary Cranston said that to “build real power among constituencies” requires “organising in a long-term face-to-face kind of a way”. He suggested that this was an approach that unions had a great deal of experience with, and that the climate movement could learn from this form of organising, and thereby potentially also reach communities that aren’t currently being reached.

Te Whānau-ā-Apanui and the tribal kura

Earlier, I discussed Te Whānau-ā-Apanui and its opposition to Petrobras’s oil and gas drilling, as well as broader efforts within the iwi towards a “culture shift” beyond fossil fuels. This experience of effective change in a group of approximately 14,000 people³ (although no doubt varying in their depth of commitment) offers hope around the climate movement’s aims of engaging the public in climate action and evokes questions around what has made this

³ Population figure supplied by Dayle Takitimu in mid-2015 (cf. Paora 2015).

possible. As described by Dayle Takitimu, one element of this is the cultural grounding of the iwi in a non-consumerist lifestyle. A further important element is the ongoing in-depth communication within the iwi.

Following the announcement of Petrobras's exploratory drilling permits in June 2010, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui met in "a massive meeting of our tribe", where all of the hapū came together in "overwhelming support for the position that we would take in opposition." Dayle Takitimu spoke of how "we decided... that we would try and empower everybody in the iwi to take a role". This meeting was followed by a taumata kōrero (summit) with other iwi in August 2010.

While the tribal meeting provided a staging point for the Petrobras campaign, Dayle Takitimu made it clear that "there was years of background to that" in the form of the "tribal kura". She described this tribal kura as "a two-day wānanga at the marae", approximately once every two months. She said this was often focused on law or politics, including discussions about indigenous rights and the Treaty of Waitangi, "and naturally the environmental stuff started being pulled into it because it was such a big part of it". Dayle Takitimu spoke of how the tribal kura "gives people a space to ask questions and have big... ethical debates". At these meetings, they watched the films *He ao wera* and *An inconvenient truth*, using these as springboards for discussion.

Dayle Takitimu spoke about the role of the tribal kura in "getting people decision-ready", thereby "provid[ing] the foundation for the Petrobras campaign". She also suggested that the sense of engagement around the climate issue developed through the tribal kura:

I think that's partly the learning out of the tribal kura, just this constant kind of talking and the showing of these images and stories from around the world, but also I think a lot of it's come through Mike [Smith]... and what him and Hinekaa [Mako] have captured in terms of people's experience [in *He ao wera*], and being able to say '*That's* a climate change issue, *that's* a climate issue'.

Illustrating the change in framing that has taken place, Dayle Takitimu said: "And a lot of those things are now just part of the iwi vocabulary too, which is kind of cool".

Furthermore, adding to the work of the tribal kura in terms of continuing tribal education and inspiration, Dayle Takitimu also spoke about how "we've really used the marae as models within the community", making three marae energy self-sufficient through the use of solar panels, with this helping "get the iwi behind that philosophically". Overall, she spoke of the "positive change" for the iwi: "You can just see there's sort of a bubbling passion within the iwi for a better tomorrow. For our kids and stuff."

Torgerson (quoted in Hay 2002:317; see also Torgerson 2000) notes the contribution of the environmental movement to the creation of “a manner of speaking about the environment that was not previously possible... that allows environmental problems to be recognized, defined and discussed in meaningful ways”. It is clear that Te Whānau-ā-Apanui’s tribal kura has played precisely this sort of role, whereby dialogue and engagement successfully helped ‘make climate action meaningful’ and thereby promote positive change.

Dialogue and ‘one-way’ communication

Dialogue is a major topic of discussion within the climate communication literature (Pearce et al. 2015; Ballantyne 2016:2-4). There is a general agreement that dialogue, participation, and ongoing engagement can improve social change efforts (cf. Wibeck 2014; Rudningen 2009:26, 93). Numerous writers specifically link the value of dialogue with ideas around (deliberative) democracy, seeing the public “as having a vital role in debating, deliberating, and shaping issues” (Nerlich, Koteyko & Brown 2010:98; cf. Moser 2009, 2010:44).

Some authors extend the promotion of dialogue into a stronger critique of “one-way” communication (see, e.g., Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:417). Thus, Brulle (2010:82) contends that “one way communications [fail] to allow for any form of civic engagement and public dialogue”, and are therefore “most likely incapable of developing the large-scale mobilization necessary to enact the massive social and economic changes necessary to address global warming” (2010:83). Brulle (2010:84) writes:

Thus, a participatory structure is a key component in large-scale social change efforts. Through participation in collective decision-making processes, citizens acquire the necessary technical and cultural knowledge to make a meaningful contribution.

Public deliberation may, in fact, be more important than a particular policy win (cf. Phadke, Manning & Burlager 2015:5).

There is clearly some concern within the international movement around the lack of dialogue, with Mazur (2010:14) quoting a US workshop participant as saying: “The environmental movement keeps asking people to do things; we’re not building relationships and helping people”. Such concerns can be seen in Matt Morris’s comment about the need for climate action to enter into people’s lives.

As also noted by some interviewees, however, Rayner & Minns (2015:22) observe that there are time and energy considerations with dialogue-based approaches. Mazur (2010:13) notes “The challenge of recruiting busy activists – much less the general public – to participate in self-

reflection”. There is a strong tendency to use mass media and one-way communication because of its apparent effectiveness given the time and energy invested in it, rather than a lack of appreciation of the importance of dialogue for social change.

Co-risk/co-benefit framing

A further important aspect of participants’ efforts to connect with diverse publics is the choice to communicate about climate co-risks and co-benefits, introduced earlier. Steve Abel said that “the risk of oil washing on our beaches” is a potentially powerful “battleground”, because it is an “immediate threat” of loss that people strongly respond to (see also Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016:166-7). He similarly spoke of the “destruction of ground water, or toxic chemicals or fire coming out of your tap” as “emotive” issues that can be used to oppose fracking. He commented: “What’s going to make this community of people care about fracking? It’s their water.” Catherine Cheung indicated that, in her experience of working on fracking, this was true, with people connecting more with water issues than with the climate crisis. Supporting this, Klein (2014a:297) writes:

So often these battles seem to come to this stark choice: water vs. gas. Water vs. oil. Water vs. coal. In fact, what has emerged in the movement against extreme extraction is less an anti-fossil fuels movement than a pro-water movement.

She adds: “The fight against pollution and climate change can seem abstract at times; but wherever they live, people will fight for their water. Even die for it” (Klein 2014a:300; cf. Schwom et al. 2015:271).

Also of interest here is the use of a deep sea oil framing by Te Whānau-ā-Apanui in opposing Petrobras’s drilling. Dayle Takitimu spoke of how previous engagement with George Lakoff’s work around framing influenced the iwi’s decision not to focus on “Treaty rights and customary rights... because we just felt that we’d alienate most of New Zealand straight away”, but instead to adopt an environmental framing “that everyone should be concerned about”. She spoke of “trying to get as broad support as possible” “while still remaining true to ourselves”.

The emotive impact of co-risks was contrasted with the intangibility of climate change (cf. Moser 2010:33). Gareth Hughes suggested:

I just think in terms of persuading people, they actually need a concrete visual idea of what the thing they’re talking about is, and carbon dioxide is hard, because it’s an

invisible gas... so an oil spill is something icky and yucky and identified as polluting and toxic, so it's a way to immediately grab a physical image in your head.

He cited the 2011 *Rena* oil spill in relation to this (see also Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016:166-7). While, strictly speaking, oil spills are not climate change as such, this illustrates how they can act as a way for people to connect with it.

Interviewees also spoke about other ways of using a focus on co-risks and co-benefits as a bridge to concern about the climate crisis. Paul Young said that a central aspect of Generation Zero's Auckland transport campaign has been "tapping into everyday frustrations" around traffic congestion and the "broad public support for public transport in Auckland": "There's a view that we're more effective on this issue talking about it that way rather than saying 'climate change climate change climate change'." However, he suggested that, by speaking with people about reducing traffic congestion and saying "This is what carbon action looks like", it is possible to "bring[] them along with the idea that... tackling climate is a good thing".

The sense that people respond to such co-risks can also be seen in terms of effectiveness. Interviewees suggested that you can campaign in a way that will reduce emissions without focusing on the climate crisis. Steve Abel gave the example of China: "What is killing coal in China is air pollution, not climate change... not climate change campaigning, air pollution campaigning." Similarly, Nicole Masters spoke about the effectiveness of focusing on soil health. Giving the example of a young farmer who "doesn't care about anything except money... he doesn't care about climate change", she spoke of how, by focusing on soil health, which influences this farmer financially, she is able to get wins for the climate.

Klein (2014a:304) similarly speaks of the effectiveness of such a co-risk framing. Further, Ürge-Vorsatz and colleagues (2014:554) observe that, particularly given their immediacy, co-impacts "provide incentives for decision makers to engage in more resolute climate action" (cf. CRED 2009:10), and that "the majority of these nonclimate benefits are likely to be the primary reasons for pursuing interventions" (2014:551). Several writers suggest emphasizing the co-benefits of emission reductions (see, e.g., Bain et al. 2015). McDonald & Kerr (2011:15) write:

Focusing on responses that have positive complementary impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and also on issues that potentially resistant New Zealanders care about, such as water quality or on-farm efficiency, may be a productive way to make progress addressing agricultural emissions.

Similarly, Chapman (2015:65-6) states that "It is clear that New Zealanders place great weight on *health* services and health outcomes compared to many other priorities, including economic growth" and therefore suggests putting greater emphasis on the health co-benefits of policy

measures (cf. OraTaiao n.d.; Howden-Chapman & Chapman 2012). Chapman suggests that highlighting such issues “will undoubtedly help people see that tackling climate change is not necessarily a matter of cost and sacrifice – there are quality-of-life benefits from the lower-carbon lifestyles that can replace aspects of today’s carbon-intensive patterns of living”. Thus, we see how both research participants and the academic literature support the idea that co-risk and co-benefit framing may be successful in helping ‘make climate action meaningful’ for people.

In this chapter, I have introduced the balance between, on the one hand, speaking ‘the facts’ and “your own truth”, and, on the other hand, meeting people where they are at, describing a number of factors that influence how climate movement participants attempt to bridge the communication gap and connect with diverse publics. In the following chapter, I highlight the risks and challenges at play in this balance, evoking more clearly what is at stake in communication efforts, particularly in the light of the need for urgent and widespread social change.

4. Risks and challenges

“[T]here is a profound risk that many of today’s campaigns will actually prove counter-productive[.]”

- Adam Corner and colleagues (2010:2)

Communicating climate action, in opposition to dominant social, economic, and political discourses, is clearly challenging. Such a challenge also creates risks for climate communication. While ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’ can, in some ways, be complementary, there is also the risk that they will conflict. If movement participants don’t go far enough towards meeting people where they are at, there is the risk of having “no effect, or a negative effect on your listener” (Jeanette Fitzsimons); but if they go too far from ‘speaking their own truth’, the integrity of their message will be undermined, and once again nothing will be achieved, or the underlying drivers of the climate crisis may even be reinforced.

Such risks are recognised in the literature. Jasper (2004:13) discusses “The Dilemma of Cultural Innovation”: “To appeal to your various audiences you must use the meanings they already hold, and pushing too far may cause you to lose them” (cf. Brown & Riedy 2006:6; Lakoff 2014:34; Leining 2015:13). Crompton (2010:68-9) suggests that “At times... it will be necessary to accept practical trade-offs in pursuing change”; “This points to a key dilemma that should be put at the heart of debate about communication and campaigns strategies: how to manage these trade-offs, where they arise” (2010:69). This idea is central to my own analysis here, where I address such “trade-offs” in relation to what I term the ‘balance’ of climate communication, and the risks associated with this.

In addition to the “frame disputes” mentioned earlier, Benford & Snow (2000:626) speak of “frame resonance disputes” within a movement, which relate to disagreements regarding “how reality should be presented so as to maximize mobilization”. Thus, movement participants may choose a different balance in their communication depending on their assessment of the risks described here. The balance between ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’ can be considered both in terms of activist agency and in terms of an orientation towards politico-cultural opportunities. Crompton (2010:18) notes that “Civil society campaigners are themselves often cautious about the scale of change that they urge – aware of the need to retain public support, to demonstrate pertinence to political debate as this is

currently construed” (cf. Hadden 2015a:95; Moon 2013:98). Such decisions also relate to the publics one chooses to address. North (2011:22) suggests that movements must make

a decision either to focus on constructing arguments that will persuade large numbers of people of the validity of their case [or,] if their arguments are not persuasive, not changing them [and] accepting marginalisation as a positive development and focussing on constructing radical knowledges and technologies for change that are accepted by existing group members. (cf. Jasper 2004; Patrick 2013:45)

This second possibility might be seen in Climate Camp Aotearoa, as described by Gary Cranston (see also Gaisford 2010; Willoughby-Martin 2012).

Opinions suggestive of both styles of approach described by North can be seen in the New Zealand literature. Moon (2013) suggests that there are limitations to the “mainstreaming” approach, as practised by Generation Zero, while the importance of public support is highlighted in work by Hamed (2009). Pete Lusk, interviewed by Hamed (2009:26), suggests, in relation to the Save Happy Valley campaign, that “There was not a general understanding of the need to get the public on board in their hundreds and thousands”, citing this as one factor that “prevented the campaign from growing beyond a small circle of activists and of achieving mainstream public or political support” (2009:24; on the Save Happy Valley Coalition, see also Te 2010; Fougère 2013:30-32; O’Brien 2016).

The risk of not connecting with people

A number of interviewees spoke about not wanting to “alienate” people or to polarise the issue. Coming from a different angle, Gary Cranston cautioned about the lack of communication about “solutions that will be relevant to ordinary people”, while Matt Morris spoke about the risk of climate activism not “actually entering into people’s lives” (as quoted earlier).

Participants highlighted scientific framing as one form of framing that carries a risk of not reaching people (cf. Lakoff 2010:79-80); however, almost all participants drew on aspects of climate science to back up their comments, in combination with other forms of framing. Mike Smith spoke of drawing on scientific work on sea-level rise, but backing up his communication of this visually with a flood mapping programme, showing what sea level rise will actually look like for specific communities: “so all of a sudden it makes it real to them” (cf. Wibeck 2014:405). Two participants strongly cautioned about framing the climate issue in terms of emission

reduction targets. Niamh O'Flynn observed that this is “a language that people don't understand”, and suggested that “it takes the focus away from real action and real change”. Instead, she promoted a greater focus on keeping fossil fuels in the ground (cf. McKibben 2012).

Catherine Cheung suggested that climate change can itself be “a barrier” and can “turn people off”, however, she said that Climate Justice Taranaki had decided:

[W]e are not going to avoid the topic of climate change, just because some people don't believe in it, or don't want to know about it.

Matt Morris spoke of the “many motivations” for Edible Canterbury's work, developing a local food economy, observing that a focus on climate change can block off some of those who have other motivations. A further aspect of the “barrier” to connection is the issue of politicisation:

So every time you try and talk about anything to do with climate, sort of like the colour green appears and if [the audience isn't] culturally aligned to that programme, then [they] will just switch off. (Matt Morris)

Reflecting audience diversity, Matt Morris said that while he would talk about the climate crisis in his sustainability advocacy work at the University of Canterbury (where it is an accepted issue), in his Edible Canterbury work he would only speak about it “if I know that the specific audience that I'm talking to already has an understanding of climate change”. Mike Smith also spoke about “climate fatigue”, saying: “You could keep on educating [about climate change] until the cows come home... [but] you're only going to get so far with this particular activity”.

Further concerns are cited in the New Zealand literature about radical action “polarising and creating defensiveness” and therefore as being ineffective in “creating a widespread climate change movement” (Moon 2013:116-124; see also Crawley 2015).

A number of writers also suggest that an environmental framing may not resonate with the broader public (Rademaekers & Johnson-Sheehan 2014; cf. Corner 2012:2; Rowson & Corner 2015:7). Rowson (2013:3) makes the case that the communication challenge “is compounded by collectively mischaracterising the climate problem as an exclusively environmental issue, rather than a broader systemic threat to the global financial system, public health and national security” (see also CRED 2009:12; Lakoff 2010:76-7; Spratt 2012:15; Rowson & Corner 2015:8; Smith & Brecher n.d.). As noted earlier, a number of interviewees particularly drew attention to these broader issues.

The risk of losing the integrity of the message

“[I]t’s not useful to “meet people where they are” if that place is destructive.”

- Anat Shenker-Osorio (quoted in Gardner 2012)

While it may sometimes be necessary to “dilute” the climate message, at greater levels of dilution the integrity of the message will be lost, and this once again highlights the possibility of climate communication having “no effect, or a negative effect”. This issue is reflected in the aim expressed by Dayle Takitimu, quoted earlier, of “trying to get as broad support as possible” “while still remaining true to ourselves”.

Various writers illustrate different dimensions of this. Ytterstad (2015:14) suggests that “It is important to frame solutions to climate change, but this must be thought of in relation to the objective situation we are in, not primarily what we believe will resonate with public opinion”. Kössler (2014:128) comments: “[I]f a movement always wants to become broader, more inclusive, and more coherent... it will risk losing its individual profile and messages which are necessary to mobilize the public and to change discourses” (cf. Snow et al. 1986:472, 478, on “frame extension”). In terms of negative effects, several authors also describe the risk of “boomerang” responses, where people react against the attempt to tailor messages to them (Hine et al. 2014:447).

Many interviewees’ examples of the risk of losing the integrity of the message are included in later chapters, in relation to economic framing; however, interviewees also discussed the danger of being overly focused on climate co-risks:

We tried to make deep sea oil a battleground, but it hasn’t been clear it’s been a climate struggle... and that’s partly because of the way we’ve communicated it. We’ve done this co-risks/co-benefits thing of communicating about the things that people care about immediately, like oil washing on their beaches, and the climate got bumped down. (Steve Abel)

But yes, I do think it is a problem, in the sense that groups are consciously not talking about climate change because they feel it’s not going to get their message across, and when the whole movement does that it becomes a vicious circle. (Gareth Hughes)

In Paul Young’s words: “Are we shifting the wider debate if climate change is reduced to a ‘and it will reduce carbon emissions?’”

These concerns are reflected in the recent work of Diprose, Thomas & Bond (2016) on opposition to deep sea oil in Aotearoa New Zealand. They write:

Activists themselves were very aware of the limitations of the campaign message, particularly the somewhat narrow focus on threats to beaches from oil spills. Many interviewees expressed ambivalence about this focus; for while they saw it as a useful, tangible threat to mobilise public concern, they also felt that it limited the ability to talk about climate change more broadly. (2016:169)

Interviewees spoke of dealing with this risk in different ways. A number of participants spoke of prioritising a climate framing, with several describing a recent return to such an approach. Others spoke about focusing on other issues, but still keeping the climate in the picture: “So what we do is we try and come from different angles and then somehow come back to climate change as well” (Catherine Cheung). Robina McCurdy spoke of how she always mentions climate change in her work; however, this is done in particular ways: “We are teaching about soil quality, about real, long-term soil fertility, and in that we mention climate change, but that’s one of ‘carbon sequestration, let’s get on with it’.” Nicole Masters said: “Climate change is part of the story, climate change will always come up in a conversation, even if it’s just to suss where people are with the whole thing.” More generally, she stated that “carbon” is “a big part of the conversation I have with any farmer”.

In a piece entitled “Can you solve global warming without talking about global warming?”, Romm (2010a) suggests that, in fact, you can’t (cf. Bernauer & McGrath 2016). A number of writers describe the turn in the US to talking about “more popular policies” (Romm 2010a) focused on co-risks and co-benefits. Smith & Brecher (n.d.) make the case that “public concern about climate has plummeted [in the US] in direct correlation with the “stop talking about climate change” strategy”. Further, Rayner & Minns (2015:8) note that “While such an approach may indeed be effective [in the short term], it comes with a danger of ‘bright-siding’, which underestimates the extent of change needed” (see also Spratt 2012). And finally, Gunster (2011:8) suggests that:

[T]he failure and/or refusal to constellate the green economy together with climate change (out of a fear of rhetorically ‘contaminating’ the positive associations of the former with the negative associations of the latter) can accentuate the apocalyptic (and anti-political) framing of climate change as a problem without a solution.

Ultimately, Bain et al. (2015:4) suggest that “Communicating climate science and co-benefits of acting should be complementary, not competing, strategies”, and to a certain degree, this was the perspective taken by research participants. However, awareness of the potential for a co-risk/co-benefit framing to compete with and detract from a climate framing is also important (cf. Te 2010:168, 175).

Such concerns can also be seen more generally in the suggestion by a number of writers that climate communicators should use “ideologically friendly frames” (Nisbet, quoted in Ytterstad 2015:6; see also Schittecatte 2015). Moser & Dilling (2011:165) suggest that climate communication should not challenge “the sense of self and basic worldviews” of audiences. Certainly, the existence of the climate crisis could be taken to challenge the worldviews of many people, and furthermore, it could be reasoned that if such worldviews aren’t being ‘threatened’, at least in some sense, then the climate crisis is not being correctly understood. Thus, it can seem counter-intuitive for authors to speak of the need to resonate with people’s worldviews and values (particularly thinking here of ‘the 1%’ and the global middle class), when a clear case can be made that these worldviews and values are what have caused the climate crisis in the first place. Similar questions can be asked about the idea that “solutions should be broadly consistent with individuals’ personal aspirations, desired social identity, and cultural biases” (Moser & Dilling 2011:165; see also Moser 2010:40). How might this be applied to the culture of consumerism, and the “personal aspirations” and “desired social identity” that follow from this? As Klein (2014b) writes: “[T]elling people that they can’t shop as much as they want to... can be understood as a kind of attack, akin to telling them that they cannot truly be themselves”. While, of course, no individual’s identity is completely defined by consumerism, these are important issues to consider.

Following from this, I particularly consider right-wing publics here, both because reaching out to the broader populace necessitates communicating with right-wing audiences, and also because it further highlights the tensions in choosing to ‘meet people where they are at’. Klein (2014a:50) discusses the suggestion of various commentators (such as Dan Kahan) that, in order to appeal to right-wing audiences,

environmentalists should sell climate action by playing up concerns about national security and emphasizing responses such as nuclear power and “geoengineering”... Kahan reasons that since climate change is perceived by many on the right as a gateway to dreaded anti-industry policies, the solution is “to remove what makes it threatening.” (see also Pepermans & Maasele 2016:479)

In a manner that also connects with the discussion of co-risk/co-benefit framing, above, Klein (2014a:50) suggests that:

This kind of advice has been enormously influential... in the name of reaching across the aisle, green groups are constantly “reframing” climate action so that it is about pretty much anything other than preventing catastrophic warming to protect life on earth.

Klein (2014a:50) maintains that, in addition to promoting “reckless, short-term thinking”, “this strategy... doesn’t work”. She further contends that, instead of “twisting yourself in knots trying to appease a lethal worldview”, what is needed is movement-building and the strengthening of “those values (‘egalitarian’ and ‘communitarian’ as the cultural cognition studies... describe them) that are currently being vindicated, rather than refuted, by the laws of nature” (2014a:51-2). Discussion on this point is continued in later chapters.

In her work on Generation Zero, Moon (2013:214) contends that “the privileged objective [of the group] is to make climate change an issue that can be related to by those that benefit from the system’s status quo” (see also Klein 2014a:51). Moon (2013:96-7) notes how the focus on building legitimacy, gaining popular public support, and developing “political feasibility” shapes the way Generation Zero frames climate change as an issue, such that the organisation “deliberately cuts out” “polarising” elements of the issue (participant quoted in Moon 2013:98). Moon (2013:114) ultimately suggests that “framing climate change as an accessible issue may undermine the pursuit for systemic change in order to address justice issues and thus work to depoliticise the issue, counter to the broad intentions of many research participants” (cf. Pepermans & Maasele 2016:479). Despite this, however, she notes the role that Generation Zero has played in building awareness of climate change (2013:137).

Crompton (2010:69) discusses the spectrum of communication and campaign choices that groups face. At one end, he describes a narrow focus on achieving specific campaign objectives “even if the values that are activated (and therefore further strengthened) are likely to operate counterproductively at a more systemic level” (see also Crompton 2008:5; Corner et al. 2010:3; Brulle 2010:88-9; Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:416). He connects this with ‘social marketing’ approaches (see, e.g., Ereaut & Segnit 2006; cf. Pepermans & Maasele 2016:479). At the opposite extreme, he describes the adoption of “a thoroughgoing and consistent deployment of particular values, even if consistency in appeal to these values sometimes detracts from the effectiveness with which issue-specific campaign objectives are met.” Directly critiquing the former approach, Crompton (2008:5) suggests that the appeal to “immediate personal self-interest”, which “pervades many current pro-environment behaviour change strategies” is problematic. He therefore makes a case for working with ‘intrinsic’ values, while specifying that this should be done in different ways with different people, thereby still ‘speaking to their values’ and ‘meeting them where they are at’. Crompton (2008:6) also suggests that communication need not only work with “those motivations which currently dominate within a particular audience”, but may also “work to bring other, latent, motivations to the fore”. Similarly, Shenker-Ororio (quoted in Gardner 2012) suggests that “it is possible to see where people are capable of going

and leading them there”. Further aspects of these core ideas are discussed and elaborated upon in *Part Three* of the thesis, beginning in *Chapter 6*.

While there is a risk of polarisation, this must be balanced with the potential loss of integrity, and long-term effectiveness. Lewandowsky (2015) observes that “It is... difficult to conceive of a solution to the climate challenge that will sidestep polarization and – quite probably increasingly ugly – political and ideological battles”, and he adds that “Perhaps... we need to fear the fear of polarization more than polarization itself”. Building from this, he suggests, therefore, that rather than “nuanced cognition about whether polar bears are a good icon for climate ‘communication’”, what may be more needed in the “political and ideological battles” around climate change is, in his words, “deep courage”.

5. Emotions and empowerment

“You’ve got to have a balance between the fear element of it, and the hope for the future. So it’s important to raise the spectre, as a motivating [force], and as a reality check: You’ve got to get real about this, it’s serious, it’s imminent, and it’s almost guaranteed, so we’ve got to get our heads round that. But secondly we’ve got to have some hope for survival, otherwise people will just give up.”

- Mike Smith

Emotions play a central role in climate communication (see, e.g., Moser 2016:350). In their efforts to reach people and promote behavioural change, climate communicators must strike a balance between the need to make an emotional impact and the need to avoid emotionally overwhelming people with the weight of the climate crisis. As Nicole Masters put it: “It’s definitely an emotional dance”. Furthermore, it can be seen how this “emotional dance” interacts with the balance between ‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’, and the risks involved with this, discussed in the preceding chapters.

Roeser (2012:1033) writes that “Emotions are necessary for understanding the moral impact of the risks of climate change, and they also paradigmatically provide for motivation”. All participants in this study agreed that it is important to make an emotional connection (cf. Nerlich, Koteyko & Brown 2010:106; Lakoff 2010:79) and an emotional impact: “It’s that impact that will change their practices” (Nicole Masters). Paul Young asked:

How do we ignite the intensity of feeling around climate change? Because the numbers are on our side, the majority of people are concerned, but they’re not intensely concerned enough that they’ll put aside their plans and go to a march. (Paul Young)

Weber (2015:1) similarly speaks of people’s “insufficient visceral reaction to the risks of climate change”, while Roeser (2012:1033-4) notes that “Empirical studies show that people lack a sense of urgency”.

Interviewees also spoke of how the emotional weight of the climate crisis (cf. Corner et al. 2010; Moser & Pike 2015:113) may manifest as a threat to people’s identity, and may elicit feelings of hopelessness or despair, thereby impacting upon people’s sense of social and political efficacy: “I think the biggest reason why people turn off and don’t engage is that it’s just too big. Once you take it seriously, it’s overwhelming” (Jeanette Fitzsimons).

Several participants mentioned their own scepticism about an adequate response being made to the climate crisis: “I regret to say we probably need a collapse before action is taken”

(John Peet; cf. Taylor 2009:96). Some spoke in the interviews of their own personal sense of “desperation”, as well as their beliefs and fears about what an economic and social collapse would in fact entail (cf. Rosewarne, Goodman & Pearse 2014:100-1). However, many participants indicated that they felt the need to speak more positively with the general public (cf. Norgaard 2006a:380), not mentioning such issues because “it’s disabling” and “there’s no point to make people more depressed” (Catherine Cheung). Gary Cranston stated that “I know people who think we’re too late anyway and we’re all f***ed”. He suggested that “they’re just not saying that to the public, because they don’t think that’s good for getting people on board”. Jeanette Fitzsimons described how she might speak with someone who was “pretty indifferent”:

Well you’d have to talk about the nature of the problem, you’d have to talk about ‘Well warming is already starting to change rainfall patterns and wind patterns, and we are going to get more extreme storms and events and so forth, therefore we can’t afford to burn all the fuels that we’ve got’. I might not say to those people ‘80% of all fossil fuels has got to stay in the ground’... ‘We’re not going to have cars in the future’... ‘There are going to be tens of millions of climate refugees and New Zealand’s going to be overrun by them, because it’s one of the few safer places’... ‘Our farmland is going to be absolutely decimated by weather changes’... And I wouldn’t say ‘Oh things might get a little bit drier’ either. I’d say ‘We’re going to have some pretty severe droughts, and in a way they’ve already started’. But I wouldn’t lead them through to the frightening logical conclusion of all this, not just yet.

In contrast, interviewees offered a variety of strong statements about the climate crisis that they would make when communicating with people. Jeanette Fitzsimons commented: “I have said that... certain behaviours of certain corporations are destroying my grandchildren’s future, which is... a pretty big thing to say”. Mike Smith described how he will speak with audiences about a number of high-end climate impacts, including the potential consequences of a 3.3 metre sea level rise by 2050 (drawing on work by climate scientist James Hansen – Hansen et al. 2015), with multi-metre storm surges on top of that. Several interviewees spoke of the threat of increased conflict in a resource-scarce world. Catherine Cheung said that she will speak about climate effects being “irreversible”. Gary Cranston highlighted the importance of tipping points, and of communicating about these: “We’re either going to do something that makes a difference, in terms of avoiding tipping points, or we’re not. There’s no such thing as half doing it.” Finally, Steve Abel suggested that “We don’t often enough say, actually the choice we’re making is between dirty energy or the survival of humanity”.

In the academic literature, caution is offered on both sides of this balance. In regard to making the message too “comforting”, Rayner & Minns (2015:5) specifically critique the “2°C remains feasible” narrative:

[T]he likelihood of high levels of warming and greater extremes, potentially occurring sooner than previously thought – e.g. 3°C in the 2040s (Jackson et al. 2015), 4°C rise in 2060s (Betts et al. 2011) – may be higher than is generally appreciated. Yet arguably these risks are not being communicated adequately, either to political and economic decision makers or to wider publics... Such a comforting message neglects the extreme economic, political and social challenges associated with rapid decarbonisation[.] (cf. Brysse et al. 2013)

Brulle (2010:92) observes that “One of the most common assumptions in designing identity-based environmental communication campaigns is that fear appeals are counterproductive” (cf. Wibeck 2014:398-9); however, he notes that “the academic literature portrays a much more complex picture”:

A number of empirical studies show that individuals respond to threat appeals with an increased focus on collective action... While fear appeals can lead to maladaptive behaviors, fear combined with information about effective actions can also be strongly motivating[.] (cf. Moser & Dilling 2004:39; Corner et al. 2010:4; Romm 2010b, 2012)

In line with a number of writers, I therefore suggest that common criticisms of “alarmism” (see, e.g., Ereaut & Segnit 2006) hide the fact that an *alarmed* response to the scientific evidence is both understandable and appropriate. As Ytterstad (2015:15) contends: “Even apocalyptic narratives may be scientifically informed” (see also Gunster 2011:21). Rose (2012:119) comments that the communications experts who suggest avoiding ‘alarmism’, and downplaying the impacts of climate change, “often have no understanding of how dire the situation actually is”.

In addition, as may be inferred from the quotations from Brulle, above, critiques of the evocation of fear may present an overly simplistic picture of emotional experience, seeing fear and hope as mutually exclusive. In the quotation that opened this chapter, Mike Smith spoke of “a balance between the fear element of it, and the hope for the future”. It is important to note that, in these words, fear and hope are not presented as opposites, but rather as emotions that can be held and experienced together.

“Empower anybody and everybody”

“What do you do when you realise it’s too late? You don’t just give up, you make a difference for the here and now, for the future generations to come, which are inheriting a huge mess... to empower anybody and everybody, to wake them up, give them the tools to turn things round.”

- Robina McCurdy

The context for a discussion of the need for hope and empowerment is precisely the situation of widespread hopelessness and disempowerment in relation to the climate crisis (see, e.g., Moser 2010:35; Rosewarne, Goodman & Pearse 2014:133; Wibeck 2014:397; cf. Aitken, Chapman & McClure 2011). One aspect of this is a sense of cynicism about climate politics (Cross et al. 2015:35). As quoted earlier, Niamh O’Flynn spoke of her sense that people don’t recognise that “we have the power to make the changes that need to happen now”. Immerwahr (1999:25) states:

Our research suggests that what the public is most skeptical about is not the existence of problems but our ability to solve them. What will make the public invest energy in these issues is not the conviction that the problems are real, but that we can do something about them.

Being aware of the emotional impact of the climate crisis, participants therefore repeatedly spoke of the importance of empowering people, and helping them feel that they can make a difference, individually and collectively (cf. Nerlich, Koteyko & Brown 2010:105; Moser 2016:351). This influences the aspects of the crisis that they choose to emphasise, with many interviewees suggesting that at least some attention to solutions (prognostic framing) is necessary to empower people and create hope. Nicole Masters suggested that if you don’t “leave them with what’s possible, you’d just have some depressed people who’d continue doing what they’re doing.” Catherine Cheung noted that members of the public make comments about the climate crisis being too depressing or being unstoppable “quite a lot”. She indicated that she responds by affirming the importance of not underestimating what one person can do, and that, if everyone does something, “we can do a lot together”.

In line with comments from participants, Roeser (2012:1038) notes that “in addition to fear, hope is needed” (cf. Brulle 2010:93; Gunster 2011:10, 21; Delina & Diesendorf 2016:126; Seaman 2016:18). Similarly, Futerra (2005) suggests: “Don’t create fear without agency” (cf. Snow et al. 1986:470; Roser-Renouf et al. 2014:102). This can be seen in Ereaut & Segnit’s

(2006) promotion of an “ordinary heroism” framing. Furthermore, such ideas resonate with the ‘Anger-Hope-Action’ framework in union organising.

Solutions

One form of a focus on hope and empowerment is an orientation towards solutions, “opportunities”, and the “positive” aspects of climate action. Different forms of this relate to the different goals of communication, described in *Chapter 3*. I firstly describe such issues on a general level, before turning to how interviewees spoke of personal and community-level solutions, and about activism itself as a ‘solution’ to the climate crisis, illustrating how communication becomes powerful when it is tied to action.

Various participants spoke about highlighting economic opportunities of climate action (discussed further in *Chapter 7*), and Paul Young spoke of how Generation Zero has “always” had an “aspect of painting [a] positive vision of the future”, as a way of saying “Don’t believe the fear-mongering, it’s not that scary”. Although Catherine Cheung’s fracking presentations are largely focused on fracking itself, she said “I try to end with something positive” such as speaking about renewable energy, because “looking into the future is important”. A number of writers speak of the need to “emphasise the availability and feasibility of solutions” (Pralle 2009:793, cf. Moser and Dilling 2011:165; Rowson 2013:6; Wibeck 2014:398-9). More generally, Klein (2014a:357) notes that “the most powerful lever for change [is] the emergence of positive, practical, and concrete alternatives to dirty development”.

Interviewees also offered caution about an unbalanced focus on solutions and the ‘positive’. Gary Cranston maintained that the climate movement “should’ve been talking about tipping points a long time ago”, but that globally “the more conservative and Western elements of the movement” are “trying to get people on board with a positive thing”. In response to this, he stated: “It’s not positive, it’s pretty bad.” Steve Abel also spoke about what motivates people:

People are not motivated by positive visions of the future so much as they are motivated by temporal threats to things that they care about, so people are more motivated by fear of loss of something that they love than they are by ‘Hey, we could have wind turbines on the mountains and lots of jobs’.

Corner et al. (2010:5) give the following advice:

Be honest and forthright about the impacts of mitigating and adapting to climate change for current lifestyles, and the ‘loss’ - as well as the benefits - that these will entail. Narratives that focus exclusively on the ‘up-side’ of climate solutions are likely to be unconvincing.

Personal and community-level solutions

Robina McCurdy, Nicole Masters and Matt Morris, the three research participants working on food-related issues, all in various ways spoke of taking a “solutions-oriented” approach. Nicole Masters stated: “That’s why I try and give people tools, so that it is a constructive positive step forward instead of focusing on what went before” (cf. Rudningen 2009:69). Matt Morris spoke about the approach of Edible Canterbury:

The approach is very much about empowering people to live in a thriving local economy, and we... generally speaking, don’t really overtly pit that against the industrial global agribusiness <laughs> agrimilitary complex, but I suppose that’s always there in the background. What we try and do is to create an alternative... we pitch it mostly in the positive.

Robina McCurdy outlined the importance of building alternatives:

creating a new paradigm to step into, not just in theory but in practice, being tried and tested and experimented with as the old paradigm crumbles.

In terms of her own primary focus in her work, she stated:

There are other people who are more effective than myself with holding the ‘no’ and sustaining the ‘no’... It’s really important... but alongside the ‘no’ is like ‘Okay, if not that, then what? What’s the... other way forward?’ And for me again it comes through in my family lineage of working with earth and building community.

Other participants also spoke of a similar approach. Catherine Cheung described a number of projects in which fellow Climate Justice Taranaki members were involved, including a range of projects “without all the confrontation and scary negative stuff”, but which achieved things directly. This included community gardening, monitoring of stream health, and zero waste initiatives.

Robina McCurdy spoke of the empowerment of taking action at the local level. She also spoke about permaculture workshops where people “actually plant the seeds and seedlings that they’ve chosen... They’ll actually plant out their whole garden, and there’s a tremendous pride in that.” She said: “I aim to be an inspiring educator, [so that people are] not just inspired, but

inspired to do *this*: ‘I can do *this*, and *this*.’”

A number of participants made the point that giving voice to real solutions is itself part of the solution, and can be empowering and encouraging for people. Thus, Robina McCurdy spoke about her work with the Localising Food Project:

seeing in this country how many amazing little grassroots initiatives there are, that are unique to an area... and I wanted to make these initiatives known from one area to another... so these ideas could be picked up on, so people could know... what’s possible.

The approach described in this section aligns with a “prefigurative strategy”, where the focus is on people “embodying the changes they seek in wider society” (Scialom 2014:5):

There is a strategy that transforms existing power relations not by pointing out what is wrong with the existing structures and demanding that these be changed, nor by verbally convincing others that alternatives are possible, but by actively setting up alternative structures so that people can experience for themselves what is possible. (Maeckelbergh, quoted in Scialom 2014:32; see also Maeckelbergh 2011; cf. Cretney, Thomas & Bond 2016:9)

In Norgaard’s (2009:29) description of implicatory denial, she states: “What I observed in my work has not been a rejection of information per se, but the failure to integrate this knowledge into everyday life or transform it into social action” (cf. Rowson & Corner 2015:4). This suggests the need to actively promote this integration, as evident in such a prefigurative strategy, and apparent in comments by participants.

In relation to such a focus, however, one aspect of concern is that of “blaming climate change on individuals”, and thereby eliciting potentially unhelpful guilt and shame responses. Katherine Peet observed: “I just find it much more encouraging to try and think collectively about these things”. While to various degrees focused on individual behaviour change, Nicole Masters, Robina McCurdy, and Matt Morris have clearly integrated concerns about ‘blaming’ into their work. Nicole Masters described the importance of “help[ing] people change behaviour without banging them over the head, or without making them feel really guilty”, and she spoke of “trying to work with people to not live in the space of regret”. These participants also described ways in which they combine individual and collective change, for example, through a community development approach, and through the promotion of “mentor groups” (cf. Segnit & Ereaut 2007:7, 33; Corner et al. 2010:8).

Lastly here, Corner et al. (2010:6) suggest that the “emphasis upon simple and painless steps”:

suppresses debate about those necessary responses that are less palatable – that will cost people money, or that will infringe on cherished freedoms (such as to fly)... Better is to emphasise that ‘every little helps a little’ – but that these changes are only the beginning of a process that must also incorporate more ambitious private-sphere change and significant collective action at a political level.

Several participants alluded to how they take such issues into consideration in their work.

Political engagement and protest

The aim of promoting political or civic action was touched on explicitly by several participants and was implicit in the comments of others. In their research in Canada, Cross et al. (2015:24) note a lack of basic understanding of how activism works, and suggest that “Information about how to engage politically, and the effects of political engagement, is just as important as information about climate change science” (2015:5; cf. Ockwell, Whitmarsh & O’Neill 2009:321; Gunster 2011). In line with the comments of a number of participants, Corner et al. (2010:4) maintain that, overall, the message needs to be: “We know this is scary and overwhelming, but many of us feel this way and we are doing something about it”. Demonstrating the power of this, Dayle Takitimu spoke of the inspiration that members of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui gained from watching material online showing “other indigenous people fronting up to multinational corporations and governments”:

Because sometimes we felt really small, and being able to see other indigenous people in their traditional dress, on YouTube, and sort of beam it into the middle of a wharenuui on the East cape, and like ‘Look at them!’, and people would be like ‘That’s what’s happening to us’. (cf. Willoughby-Martin 2012:60)

Gary Cranston also illustrated some of the challenges around empowerment, in relation to how people want “good news”, but may “put their hope in the wrong places”. He said that people can get “a bit pissed off” if that “good news” is deconstructed as being not as good as it may have seemed (and he mentioned that he has had people crying in workshops). With this in mind, in addition to critiquing the “good news stories” which people are told, he specifically tries to “tell them the good news stories that they don’t hear”, giving “as many examples as I can when real change happens [through grassroots mobilisation]”. As examples of this, he spoke of:

[The] 190 or so coal fired power stations [that] have been stopped [in the US] through community-level campaigning, including direct action campaigning... I give examples like La Via Campesina – 200 million organised anti-capitalist small-scale farmers, whose very lives are the answer to climate change, in everything they do.

Particularly noteworthy in respect to making solutions visible in Aotearoa is Climate Justice Aotearoa's recent Beautiful Solutions Aotearoa (n.d.) project, which is compiling climate solutions from around Aotearoa New Zealand.

Supporting the approach described by Gary Cranston, and by Robina McCurdy, further above, Moore & Russell (2011:13) note: "There are lots of community solutions everywhere you look, but often people don't see them". Cross et al. (2015:30) write: "As one's awareness and understanding of examples and forms of political success grow, so too does one's capacity not only to resist cynicism in oneself but also to intervene and disrupt its hegemonic presence in everyday political discourse".

Lastly, Brulle's (2010:87) focus on "enhanc[ing] citizen participation" (2010:87) clearly links with ideas around efficacy and empowerment. For Brulle (2010:90), a primary goal for communication is "increasing citizens' sense that they can collectively change things", rather than trying to "tap an emotional hot button and trigger the desired response" (which he calls "Framing Without Mobilization"). Ultimately, he says, "any rhetorical strategy that promises to be effective must link its rhetoric to a broader political strategy that includes grassroots organizing at its base" (2010:90).

This concludes *Part Two* of this thesis, in which I have described central elements of the balance that climate communicators strike in their work. At the heart of this has been the balance between, on the one hand, speaking the facts and 'speaking your own truth', and, on the other, meeting people where they are at. Drawing on the interviews with research participants, I showed how this is influenced by the particular public that is addressed and whether the context allows for in-depth engagement and dialogue, and how this also manifests in the communication of co-risks and co-benefits. Furthermore, I particularly highlighted the risks of not connecting with people and of overly diluting the climate message, as illustrated in both interviewee comments and the communications literature. As discussed in this final chapter, the necessary balance in climate communication also has important emotional elements. Research participants spoke of the different ways in which they balance fear and hope, seeking to make an emotional impact while avoiding overwhelming people with the emotional weight of the climate crisis. These different aspects of balance in climate communication provide the framework for the consideration of moral and economic framing in *Part Three* of the thesis.

PART THREE
Moral and economic framing

6. Moral and cultural framing

Morality and economics lie at the heart of social and political decision-making, and the climate crisis makes this particularly apparent. For this reason, the second broad theme of this research is the place of *Moral and economic framing* in climate communication, which I address here in *Part Three* of the thesis. I begin in this chapter with a discussion of *Moral and cultural framing*. *Chapter 7* turns to *Economic framing*, along with the ways in which research participants spoke of balancing economic and moral framing. *Chapters 8* and *9* build on these preceding chapters to discuss combinations of economic and moral framing, beginning with *Moral economic critique* and systemic framing, and then discussing the communication of what I term *Moral economic solutions*.

Schittecatte (2015:22-3) states that moral framing focuses “on harm, responsibility, prosocial behaviour and justice”, and “often discusses harms to people, either across space or time, harm to the environment, as well as our duty as responsible stewards of the Earth”. In line with such a conception, in this chapter I discuss morality towards both people and the environment. I consider appeals to moral values, calls for moral transformation, and discuss the use of Māori cultural framing in relation to the climate crisis and morality.

Many interviewees spoke of the importance of framing the climate crisis morally, often relating this to the importance of “talk[ing] about what people care about” and reaching “people’s hearts”. Dayle Takitimu evoked a moral framing when she spoke of how the Te Whānau-ā-Apanui tribal kura “gives people a space to ask questions and have big... ethical debates” (as quoted earlier). A number of participants made a direct connection between morality and values:

In history, all successful campaigns have appealed to people’s hearts, have been morally based, and have really played on values. With climate change, we’re not speaking to specific values, but universal values: the planet we live on, which is a universal experience... it’s future generations... It’s not hard to speak to a values-based framework when it comes to climate change. (Gareth Hughes)

This linking of morality and values supports the manner in which I have connected a moral framing with ‘intrinsic’ values:

So we are almost all, at times, concerned about what psychologists call extrinsic values – concern about money; social status and image; authority. At other times almost everyone prioritises what psychologists call intrinsic values. These are values associated with

greater concern about social and environmental problems. They include values of connection to family, friends and community; appreciation of beauty; broadmindedness; social justice; environmental protection; equality; helpfulness. In motivating expressions of concern about social and environmental issues, the balance that we strike between these two sets of values (both individually and collectively) is of crucial importance. (Crompton 2013; cf. Delina & Diesendorf 2016:124)

Crompton & Kasser (2009:56) therefore speak of the need to “Frame environmental messages to connect with intrinsic values, rather than extrinsic or materialistic values” (cf. Bowles 2008:1609; Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:418).

Despite the historical tendency towards the use of moral framing that Gareth Hughes notes, Pica (cited in Mazur 2010:4) suggests that the environmental movement *hasn't* been “engaging ‘hearts and minds’ in a morals- and values-based discussion of the sweeping, long-term changes we must make”. Additionally, Kenix (2008:126) notes only “a small use of morality framing” in *New Zealand Herald* and *Scoop* articles on climate issues. Nevertheless, numerous writers speak of the importance of using a moral framing, and of making the values behind societal choices transparent (see, e.g., Lakoff 2009, 2010:79-80, 2014:28; Romm 2013; Klein 2014a:399; Pope Francis 2015; Delina & Diesendorf 2016:123-6). Lakoff (2010:80) writes that “The social movement approach is idealistic of necessity. Idealism mobilizes. And it throws a light on, and presents a counterweight to, moral compromise”. Climate justice framing, discussed earlier, evokes moral issues through its attention to justice and democracy (cf. Parks & Roberts 2010:124; Gardiner 2011:310-311; Klein 2014a:255). Various writers also specifically suggest that a moral framing is effective (see, e.g., Hadden 2015a:175; ecoAmerica et al. 2015:8; Schittecatte 2015:24; Bain et al. 2015:1; Delina & Diesendorf 2016:124). In the New Zealand context, Diprose, Thomas & Bond (2016:168) describe the “ethic of care” articulated in opposition to deep sea oil.

Lastly here, I consider the use of moral framing in connecting with right-wing audiences. Paul Young spoke of his interest in the idea that “climate change needs to get out of the left-wing ghetto”, and in appealing to “conservative or centre-right values” such as “intergenerational duty, wanting to leave your children better off than you”. Somewhat in contrast with this, Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke of her agreement with Naomi Klein’s suggestion that “Right-wingers cannot believe in climate change, because dealing with it requires them to change their whole ideological perspective on the economy”; however, she also spoke of the diversity of right-wing perspectives, including “old-fashioned conservatives” who may wish to protect biodiversity, and “the electric car brigade”.

Corner (2012:2), writing for the British group Climate Outreach, makes the case that

“there is no necessary contradiction between the values of the centre-right and the challenge of responding to climate change”. He speaks against the widely-held assumption that “reaching centre-right audiences on climate means spelling out the economic advantages of low-carbon industry, or the value of renewable energy technologies for the economy” (Corner 2012:14). Paul Young specifically spoke of his familiarity with and interest in this work, also citing this point.

Moser (2016:352) contends that “it is far from impossible to connect across deep cultural and ideological differences”. It should be noted, though, that Corner’s work is specifically oriented towards conservative audiences and their values rather than neoliberal audiences (Corner 2012:12). Thus, Corner (2012:15) speaks of “an emphasis on community well-being, intergenerational duty and a representation of the environment not as a ‘service provider’ but as (for example) something that we have a duty to protect” (see also Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:417). In line with the work of Crompton, discussed above, this involves appealing to intrinsic rather than extrinsic values. Corner (2012:26) concludes:

An appreciation of the beauty of the British countryside, or a conception of the ‘good life’ that rests on more than just money, are surely principles on which both left and right would often agree. This holds out the possibility that even people with very different political orientations may find common ground in the issue of climate change – so long as it is framed and communicated in the right way. (cf. Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016:166)

Climate solutions and moral framing

In addition to appealing to people’s moral values, interviewees spoke of a change in morals as an important, or *essential*, element of an adequate response to the climate crisis (cf. Warley et al. 2010; Hadden 2015b). This links with the goal of changing social norms, mentioned in *Chapter 3*. Thus, Katherine Peet spoke of the importance of “exposing the limitations of the politics of self-interest”, and about how “we’ve really got to get people to consult their conscience, not their lawyers”. Reflecting on “the fundamental question about the climate crisis”, Steve Abel stated that “we have to...understand what the choice is we’re making here”:

It’s a choice between two versions of being human. One is that we are a locust that is overpopulating the earth and defiling our own nest... and we’re destined to cause our own extinction... The other version is that we are a self-reflective being capable of seeing the effects of our behaviour and changing our way of thinking... adapting the way that we behave and not destroying the planet and ourselves.

In line with the goal of changing social norms, Crompton & Kasser (2009:34) seek to legitimise and normalise the articulation of “intrinsic and self-transcendent values... in public discourse”, thereby promoting “more positive environmental attitudes and behaviours” (see also Crompton 2008:36, 2010). Lakoff (2013) advises: “The more we repeat the language of equality, freedom and social responsibility, the more those ideas come to dominate the public conversation” (cf. Monbiot 2010). Moreover, Klein (2014a:399) adds:

[A]n alternative worldview... is required not only to create a political context to dramatically lower emissions, but also to help us cope with the disasters we can no longer avoid. Because in the hot and stormy future we have already made inevitable through our past emissions, an unshakable belief in the equal rights of all people and a capacity for deep compassion will be the only things standing between civilization and barbarism.

Warley and colleagues (2010) observe that such change requires that “civil society organisations must champion some long-held (but insufficiently esteemed) values”, but also that they need “to diminish the primacy of many values which are now prominent – at least in Western industrialised society”. However, Crompton (2008:5) suggests that “mainstream approaches to tackling environmental threats do not question the dominance of today’s individualistic and materialistic values”. I directly address the critique of “materialistic values” offered by interviewees in relation to status quo economics in *Chapter 8*. Here, I discuss people-directed and environment-directed forms of morality, which, while interwoven in some interviewees’ approaches, are described here separately for the sake of clarity.

Morality towards people

Participants spoke about the importance of “the common good” (John Peet), and they related climate solutions to a range of positive values, such as “co-operation”, “solidarity”, “sharing”, and “people caring about one another”. Paul Young spoke about how Generation Zero has attempted to speak in terms of people’s wellbeing, while Gareth Hughes spoke of how he wants to:

spread a message of people working together, and more community collaboration, instead of an individualistic, atomised ‘nature red in tooth and claw’ style of country and economy. (cf. Crompton 2011:13 on ‘self-interest’ and ‘common-interest’ framing)

Participants also spoke about using people's concern for their own children or grandchildren as a bridge to a broader concern for future generations (cf. Weber 2015:6). Robina McCurdy spoke of "prompting people to think about the future they're leaving for their children in very specific terms".

Further important elements of people-oriented moral framing are, firstly, an emphasis on the climate change-caused suffering that is already occurring – studies suggest that 400,000 people are already dying each year because of climate change (DARA 2012) – and, secondly, a focus on international climate justice. Klein (2015) comments:

Climate change is a moral crisis because every time governments of wealthy nations fail to act, it sends a message that we in the global north are putting our immediate comfort and economic security ahead of the suffering and survival of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people on Earth. (cf. Moser 2010:36)

In her study of people's adoption of lower-carbon lifestyles, Howell (2013:281) notes that "Concern about 'the environment' per se is not the primary motivation for interviewees' action". Rather, the motivators were "social justice, community, frugality and personal integrity", and "the potential for human suffering" (2013:285; cf. Rosewarne, Goodman & Pearse 2014:90). She therefore suggests that framing climate change as an issue of social justice rather than of environmental protection may be more effective (2013:288; cf. Hackmann, Moser & St. Clair 2014:654).

Morality towards the environment

In this section, I review material that relates to people's relationship with nature, which I classify as moral; however, some participants' comments suggest ways in which this goes beyond morality. Robina McCurdy spoke of an "ethics of sustainability", and about giving people a "deep ecology experience" in workshops, "leading deep into the ecological self". She described the importance of a sense of connectedness with the earth, with both practical and "transcendent" elements: "Our own personal connection with the very source of our sustenance, which is Gaia, our Earth Mother, Papatūānuku".

Steve Abel similarly spoke about the importance of addressing "the root of the problem", calling the climate crisis "the latest, most obvious" example of the separation of humans from nature. Citing a well-known whakataukī (proverb), he stated:

Because if you actually come from a perspective of ‘Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au’, ‘I am the river and the river is me’, then you can’t any longer fundamentally defile that river.

He extended this sense to the climate and the environment more broadly, speaking of the need to “actually embody and live at the most profound level a belief that the fate of humanity and the fate of the earth are absolutely intertwined” (cf. Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016).

In 2010, opposition to mining on conservation land resulted in the largest protest in recent New Zealand history, with approximately 50,000 people involved around the country, including 40,000 people marching up Queen Street in Auckland (see, e.g., Bond, Diprose & McGregor 2015; Fougère 2013:28-9; Rudzitis & Bird 2011; O’Brien 2012). Steve Abel cited this march in terms of how it “tapped very heavily into a pre-existing cultural value around the protection of conservation”. Jeanette Fitzsimons (2011:7) similarly identifies this as an example of successful moral framing, writing of how it “achieved a policy change, but also motivated thousands of people to think about the love they had for special places in Aotearoa. The message was not ‘mining will damage our tourist industry’ but ‘Too precious to mine’” (cf. Bond, Diprose & McGregor 2015:1171-2). This suggests that, while social justice framing may be effective, so too may environmental framing.

Māori cultural framing

A number of participants spoke about drawing on Māori culture (and other indigenous cultures) for solutions to the climate crisis. In addition to comments by Dayle Takitimu (Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Porou) and Mike Smith (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Kahu), Robina McCurdy and Katherine Peet also spoke about drawing on tikanga Māori in their work. An in-depth discussion of academic literature relating to Māori culture, morality, and the environment is beyond the scope of this research; however, interviewees shared valuable material that illustrates and extends the core dynamics discussed in this chapter, relating to the use of moral framing to connect with diverse publics and thereby promote climate action. Given the diversity within Māori culture, material is presented here as illustrative rather than definitive.

In discussing Māori cultural framing, I also wish to acknowledge that such framing extends beyond morality. As Mike Smith stated:

So you talked before about there being a moral argument and an economic argument for action on climate change. For us there’s probably a third component, there’s a cultural

element of it as well, which is imbued in those other things I talked about, that that's the correct way to live on the earth.

He also referred to "our sense of morality":

It's getting back to the day-to-day practices of how we behave towards each other, and what our sense of morality is in the sense of how we view ourselves in our communities.

This sense of including, but reaching beyond morality, links with my earlier comments on people's relationship with the earth, and sense of identity with it. In Dayle Takitimu's words:

We don't live with the environment, we *are* the environment, we're part of that. And we would see climate change as part of that, that we would listen and feel and understand the way the environment is moving and evolving.

More generally, Dayle Takitimu stated: "I do think there's a lot of answers or solutions, in terms of an indigenous worldview, or an indigenous contribution to planetary politics."

Describing an aspect of this, she said: "We see it as part of our duties as good tribal citizens to live in harmony with our environment", "not in competition with it".

Mike Smith spoke about the Māori "matrix of laws" where "the highest form of law was the environment as personified by gods". Dayle Takitimu said:

I think probably the main thing for us is that we'd always anchor it in our worldview, so basically right from the beginning, our creation stories about Rangi and Papa are environmentalist, basically an environmental manual right there! You know, we sort of talk about being Tangaroa people, and Tangaroa is a son of Rangi and Papa, so basically we're connecting right through into the core of who we are.

She spoke of how, with the Petrobras permit for deep sea oil drilling,

I can't think of one single hui we had at home that didn't start with our discussions about Rangi and Papa and Pou⁴ and Tangaroa and our connection to the sea.

These comments strongly suggest that the Māori cultural context was an important element in Te Whānau-ā-Apanui's climate activism.

As illustrated in these comments from Dayle Takitimu, Mike Smith also spoke about how Māori can draw on their culture to support them in the "paradigm shift" needed to respond to the climate crisis. Furthermore, he spoke of being comfortable speaking of this need for a paradigm shift with Māori communities. However, he also spoke of some of the challenges

⁴ An ancestor of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui.

within this:

You've got to remember too that a lot of our people are suffering from what I'd call a kind of postcolonial stress disorder... the effect of that is still deep in the psyche of a lot of our folks... it's going to be very difficult.

Dayle Takitimu spoke of the ways in which a shift has been catalysed for Te Whānau-ā-Apanui by the threat of oil drilling, helping the iwi “to reclaim the legitimacy of having our worldview respected and to live in accordance with it”. This included bringing environmental issues to “the forefront of tribal decision-making and tribal investment and education”.

Katherine Peet also spoke about values embedded in a Māori worldview, speaking of manaakitanga, koha and tuku (forms of generosity). Robina McCurdy stated:

Permaculture has its basis, or its root, in the wisdom of indigenous people... We start with Māoritanga, we start with tikanga Māori, because it's such an embodiment of an eco-, not ego-, centric world view. So we have a Māori person come in who is really versed in kaitiakitanga... manaakitanga, the economic systems that underpin those kind of practices.

In terms of a Māori spiritual worldview, Dayle Takitimu described how “the spiritual and cultural is so intertwined that that's seen as part and parcel of our identity”. She voiced the importance of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui's “spiritual strategy” in their campaign against Petrobras, and beyond, calling it “the backbone of what we were doing”:

We look to spiritual ceremonies to validate or endorse or guide the actions we are taking, but also we look to spiritual ceremony to keep us safe, and in that sense... that is about [the] whole spectrum of our wellbeing.

Speaking of “our worldview of the sacred interconnection between all beings”, she commented that:

We basically just kept that at the forefront... to keep us safe throughout the campaign itself, but also to protect the livelihood of our future generations.

In the words of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, as described by Dayle Takitimu: “The mana of our mokopuna is not for sale”.

Dayle Takitimu and Mike Smith spoke in a similar manner to other participants about using moral framing that relates to both people and the environment; however, an additional element that magnifies this is the way in which using such framing is embedded in the Māori cultural context and thereby reflected in a strong sense of identity (“connecting right through

into the core of who we are”). This appears to more deeply enable both the use and active reception of such a framing, thereby potentially allowing it to more easily prompt action, once cultural values have been linked with the climate crisis.

Risks and challenges in moral framing

In my definition of moral framing, there is no risk of the loss of the integrity of the message, as discussed in other ways in earlier chapters, because such a framing effectively embodies integrity (particularly because moral framing can always be combined with other forms of framing, thus respecting other aspects of the climate crisis). Two risks related to moral framing are commonly stated, the first of these being the possibility that any effect it might have will be too slow to bring adequate social change in the limited time available. Crompton (2010:72) notes that this is a legitimate concern, but also points to the possibility that a contrary focus on “easy wins” may “help defer ambitious action until it becomes ‘too late’.”

Secondly, several writers suggest that many people will not connect with and respond positively to a moral framing. Crompton (2008:7) acknowledges that “Many will still see [such an] approach... as unrealistic”: “Campaigners in the environment movement are becoming increasingly cautious about insisting that people adopt behavioural changes ‘for the right reasons’ – something that is coming to be seen as an indulgence of old-school moralisers” (2008:8). Illustrating this point, Harrison (2009, quoting Rose et al.) suggests that Crompton’s approach will “appeal to the 10% of the population that are Concerned Ethicals, but in the process ‘particularly annoy or intimidate’ [other people]”. Pralle (2009:792) similarly notes that “moral arguments can be perceived by some as sanctimonious and may arouse a backlash”.

In response to these concerns, however, Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon (2014:417) note that “even individuals who score highly on measures of materialism have been shown to identify with and be receptive to messages framed using self-transcendent values (at least, under certain conditions)” (see also Chilton et al. 2012:49; Rowson 2013:27-8). Various writers also make clear that there are varieties of moral framing and that it is not “one-size-fits-all” (Chilton et al. 2012:35). Thus, while Crompton (2010) critiques social marketing, he still supports audience segmentation, to better understand which intrinsic values to use to reach people (see also Hine et al. 2014:450).

As a number of writers note, no person holds solely extrinsic values, and, by extension, no person holds solely values which, when acted upon, cause climate change. Nor is any individual's identity completely defined either by consumerism or by political doctrines based on economic growth or exclusive adherence to market economics. People have other, altruistic and biospheric values (see, e.g., Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:412) – concerns for the future, for their children, for the environment, or for humanity as a whole – and people may therefore come to learn over time how these values relate to the climate crisis. It is these values and concerns which many in the climate movement attempt to tap into in their efforts to make the climate crisis meaningful and relevant to people, and which provide opportunities for the growth of concern, and action, around the climate crisis. In addition to such moral framing, however, activists also make use of economic framing, consideration of which I turn to in the following chapters.

7. Economic framing

Changing the political economy requires climate movement participants to engage with economics as it is currently practised, and to speak in some manner to economic elements of the climate crisis. Furthermore, economic framing has a definite emotive power in capitalist societies. Concerns around economics are therefore embedded in climate communication in the balance between speaking the facts/‘speaking your own truth’ and ‘meeting people where they are at’.

All interviewees spoke of the importance of economic drivers of the climate crisis. Speaking of climate change and interrelated issues, John Peet maintained that “virtually all of it has to do with the way we do economics”. Gary Cranston stated:

You’re not going to change the emissions levels by just trying to change the emissions on their own. They’re going to be changed by other things, like changes in what, [and] how, economic decisions are made.

Beyond such concerns, however, participants varied widely in the degree to which they gave priority to economic framing.

Interviewees expressed views on the importance of ending fossil fuel subsidies and funding renewable energy, carbon sequestration in the soil, and adaptation. Paul Young also addressed the need to look at “tackling climate change... not... just as a cost, but as a long-term investment in a more stable and secure society.” Further, Robina McCurdy cited the need for “polluter pays” policies, and several participants spoke about the value of a carbon charge or tax (discussed further below).

A plethora of experts agree that the climate crisis is also an economic crisis⁵. It is being driven by the current organisation of the world’s economies, and, if not adequately responded to, the climate crisis will create serious economic challenges, leading to business closures, job losses, and unemployment, as well as growing poverty, inequality, and economic and financial instability. On this final point, a number of writers describe the ‘carbon bubble’ caused by over-valued fossil

⁵ There is a large field of ‘green’ and ‘ecological’ economics, both academic and non-academic, which deals either directly or indirectly with climate issues (see, e.g., Jackson 2009; Storm 2009; Spratt et al. 2009; Schor 2010; Scott Cato 2012; Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012). A substantial survey of this literature is beyond the scope of this thesis.

fuel investments, the ‘bursting’ of which could have greater financial and economic consequences than the global financial crisis (cf. McKibben 2012; CANA 2015:18-20).

As many commentators have stated in various ways: “We do not face a choice between protecting our environment or protecting our economy. We face a choice between protecting our economy by protecting our environment – or allowing environmental havoc to create economic havoc” (Rubin, quoted in Chapman 2015:22). Other writers note that “the cost of reducing emissions would be far less than the cost of the damage they would eventually cause” (Weart 2011:76) – a clear case of ‘pay now or pay more later’ (see also IEA 2011) – and that economic calculations based on cost benefit analyses and questions of economic ‘discounting’ are “simply overwhelmed by the fact that the probability of global catastrophic change is non-zero” (Storm 2009:1015). A final reason to attend to economic aspects of the climate crisis is that the economic case for action does not deny that there are real economic costs to the transition needed, even if these are less than the costs of the climate impacts that are avoided through taking action. This represents a psychological and practical barrier to action.

Counter-framing

Benford & Snow (2000:626) discuss “framing contests” between movements and counter-movements:

The important point is that opposing framing activity can affect a movement’s framings, on the one hand, by putting movement activists on the defensive, at least temporarily, and, on the other hand, by frequently forcing it to develop and elaborate prognoses more clearly than otherwise might have been the case. (2000:617; see also Barker & Cox 2000)

For this reason, counter-framing is an important part of the analysis of climate movement communication.

Research participants discussed various forms of economic counter-framing to climate action to which they have been exposed, with a number of participants suggesting that most counter-framing is economic in nature. I present such counter-framing under several different headings: ‘benefits of the status quo’, ‘environment versus the economy’, and broad economic counter-framing.

‘Benefits of the status quo’ framing includes: comments around “how fossil fuels have enabled us this standard of living” (Catherine Cheung); presenting farming as the “backbone” of the country’s economy; highlighting how well-paid fossil fuel jobs are; and emphasizing the

economic benefits of fossil fuel industries for the areas where they are located – “You can be like Taranaki” (Dayle Takitimu). In terms of the fossil fuel industry and jobs, participants suggested that the claim that “We’re going to give you lots of jobs” was common; however, this can be contrasted with Petrobras telling Te Whānau-ā-Apanui “There’ll probably be no jobs for any New Zealanders” (Dayle Takitimu).

‘Environment versus the economy’ framing includes highlighting the costs of climate action (in terms of jobs, money and standard of living), and the risk of losing New Zealand’s ‘competitive advantage’. Common versions of this framing include the suggestion that climate action will be “a threat to schools and hospitals” (Steve Abel), and will mean “destroy[ing] the economy” (Paul Young), “living in caves with only candles for lighting”, and “killing all the cows” (Gareth Hughes). Steve Abel described how such framing seeks to evoke concerns for loss of the status quo and thereby “convince people to put up with something... that they don’t like.”

Further related economic counter-framing includes: the labelling of the currently governing National Party as ‘strong economic managers’, the contention that climate activists and the Green Party are “economically incompetent” and “would *sacrifice* the economy to deal with the climate crisis” (Gareth Hughes; cf. Campbell 2015), and the idea that economic growth and consumerism are the best path to happiness for all. Bourk, Rock & Davis (2015:9) discuss the “fast follower” framing used by the National Party:

The subsequent branding of New Zealand as a “fast follower” with a “balanced approach” by the Prime Minister signaled a strategic shift by the government to one of overt rejection of mitigation... [This framing] paints supporters as rational realists... and political detractors as extremists out of touch with economic and political reality.

Other broad economic counter-framing includes: opposition to anything that will “interfere with short-term economic growth” (Paul Young), neoliberal framing such as the ‘trickle down’ theory of economics and anti-tax framing (including the presentation of the so-called ‘fart tax’), assumptions of unending economic progress, the individualising of costs, and presenting finance as equivalent to the whole of economics. Further such counter-framing is seen in the “market approach to social planning”, which Katherine Peet said is used to “renam[e] our world for us”:

It has that basic assumption that underpins it that we only act in our own self-interest. And that’s not true, humans are very generous, especially in times of disaster. (cf. Crompton 2011:13)

An additional point on economic counter-framing is the sense given by a number of interviewees that those opposed to adequate climate action will use economic counter-framing even though the economic case *for* action is overwhelming: “I think a lot of people are willing to argue that economic argument to the death regardless of what’s factual and what’s not factual” (Niamh O’Flynn). A further version of this is how those in the financial sector may focus on the details of economics, or aspects of economic argumentation, without engaging with the big-picture economic critique made by the climate and divestment movements. Some interviewees therefore suggested that such approaches are not fundamentally based on economics at all, but in being “ideologically opposed”, and may be a form of “knee-jerk” “anti-green response”.

Finally, Steve Abel suggested that the government’s use of economic counter-framing around the costs of climate action is “part of the way we get caught into this conversation about the economics of it”. Clearly, the presence of these forms of counter-framing creates a tendency to use economic framing to respond to the issues raised.

The counter-framing described by participants, particularly the focus on the costs of climate action, reflects the international and New Zealand literature (see, e.g., Zehr 2015:140-1; Roper 2011; Bourk, Rock & Davis 2015:8). A number of works on the New Zealand climate movement discuss the dominance of neoliberal economic discourses, noting that this strongly influences communication practices (Te 2010; Fougère 2013; Moon 2013; Kidner 2015). Moon (2013:92) relates this to what solutions seem most “realistic”. Internationally, writers also note the wide-scale adoption of economic framing by environmental groups. Consistent with Steve Abel’s comments, this is often described as a response to economic counter-framing based around cost considerations (Zehr 2015:137; cf. Schittecatte 2015:24).

A number of writers consider broader economic framing around economic growth and GDP. Hamilton (2010:xiii) discusses “the enormous symbolic significance of GDP” and the way in which economic growth is attributed with “magical or supernatural powers” (2010:32). Shenker-Osorio (2012:xxiii) speaks of the idea that “we must sacrifice ourselves for our GDP”, while Hamilton (2010:38) references “wild but uncontested claims of economic ruin and collapse” if climate mitigation policies were implemented. These latter two comments can be tellingly compared to the common claims that climate activists are calling on people to sacrifice themselves for climate action, and that they are stirring up fears around *environmental* “ruin and collapse”. Furthermore, consistent with the more general comments by Niamh O’Flynn, noted above, Hamilton (2010:41) comments:

In the climate policy debate... studies [showing “the imposition of a carbon tax will actually increase GDP growth and employment”] ought to be the coup de grâce, but inexplicably they are ignored. This fact suggests that, beneath the surface, objections to emission-reduction measures may not be about growth after all[.]

Finally here, other (non-economic) forms of counter-framing include framing climate action as meaning a “nanny state” and a restriction of freedom (“Somehow the Greens are going to tell people how to live their lives” – Gareth Hughes). Kidner (2015) discusses a range of forms of counter-framing, including the use of regional identity in relation to the proposed expansion of a lignite mine in Southland, New Zealand, and the use of “Indigenous Discourses” in Alberta, Canada. In summary, she discusses the development of a “discursive arms race”: “industry actors *are forced to adopt wider arguments* to legitimise their industry’s expansion as major Discourses are exhausted and countered by the resistance” (2015:302).

Meeting people where they are at through economic framing

Interviewees described how economic framing can ‘meet people where they are at’ because of how economics relates to people’s wellbeing. Further, they discussed ways in which economics can be presented so as to help people connect with these ideas, an important example of which is speaking to the economic co-benefits of action.

In relation to how economics relates to people’s wellbeing, the question of jobs arose with a large number of participants. Steve Abel spoke of how “you have to” speak about jobs:

Livelihoods and jobs is a touchstone value for people, a touchstone concern, so... you’re on a hiding to nothing if you don’t address that question of ‘*but* we need jobs’... If you appear to be the person... who’s against jobs, you’ve lost the argument.

Speaking of fossil fuel company claims around jobs, Gary Cranston spoke of how:

The movement is doing a very good job... of communicating that [there aren’t many jobs in fossil fuel industries] and I think they’ve got the industry on the back foot in that sense.

Underpinning the strong resistance to climate action are people’s hopes and fears around being able to live satisfying, happy lives, with wellbeing and prosperity. These hopes and fears are tied into beliefs about economics, which are strongly influenced by the current political

economy. This relates to Katherine Peet's suggestion that "the fundamental thing that people are facing is fear". Similarly, Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke about the fear of losing jobs, and Robina McCurdy spoke about people's fear of "not having *your current lifestyle*". Clearly, such fears can manifest in economic counter-framing and opposition to climate action; however, if taken into consideration, they can be incorporated into pro-mitigation economic framing, as offered by research participants (cf. Nisbet 2009:18).

Gareth Hughes was one participant who spoke particularly strongly about the importance of economic framing. He suggested that "of anyone in the climate movement in New Zealand, the Greens have prioritised economics in terms of the analysis of climate change", because of the importance of economic issues to voters, and "the credibility that's given to a party because of their voice on economics." Gareth Hughes also spoke about two different senses of economics: a broad conception which relates to "everyday issues" and a "more narrow definition" related to "Budgets and the Treasury and economists", saying that it's important to speak to both. In regard to the latter, he said: "It's also important to talk about it in the way that people *expect* that an economist would talk about it."

Gurney (2012:7) suggests that using economic framing is a way "to gain public 'legitimacy' by appropriating the discourse of the market and to distance [oneself] from the 'anti-economy' perceptions associated with the Greens⁶". Campbell (2015) notes that New Zealand Green Party co-leader James Shaw "uses market language primarily for tactical reasons, in order to fight fire with fire". Shaw (in Campbell 2015) states: "Because over on the right, they don't give any credibility to left wing arguments. You can't use left wing arguments to reason with them. You've got to go into their territory, to engage with them".

A range of theoretical and speculative works support the use of economic framing (see, e.g., Moser & Dilling 2011:165; Rademaekers & Johnson-Sheehan 2014:10-11). In a manner relevant to the comments by Gareth Hughes and James Shaw, Pralle (2009:792) suggests that:

key individuals (within government, for example) and important interest groups may be more concerned with the economic costs associated with climate change... Messages to these groups should be tailored to tap into their particular concerns in order to increase the saliency of the problem.

A number of empirical studies also suggest that economic framing can increase support for climate policies (see, e.g., Bain et al. 2015:1; cf. Stern 2000:419). Klein (2014a:62) notes that "the promise of local job creation has been key to the political success of renewable energy programs." In terms of personal decisions around reducing emissions, Leining & White (2015:9)

⁶ Here referring to the Australian political party, The Greens, but more widely applicable.

note in a New Zealand study: “Cost (including cost savings) was the predominant factor, with about 15% of respondents citing cost as a trigger for action and about 21% citing cost as a barrier to action.” Those writing in this area also make a number of more specific observations related to economic framing. This includes Schittecatte’s (2015:21) discussion of how the idea of a ‘carbon budget’ may helpfully resonate with people’s more general understanding of budgets.

In terms of ways of presenting economics so as to connect with people, Dayle Takitimu said: “It’s kind of like getting economics to conceptually lock into our worldview, and if it doesn’t fit with the worldview we’re not going to buy it.” Gareth Hughes spoke about how, for many people, “the economy for them represents having a job, having personal security, children being able to go to camp or sports, real tangible and important things”. He also spoke about making talk about jobs specific:

I always try and visualise it. I don’t talk about solar jobs, I talk about people in your community installing panels... because we can get a bit cold and mechanistic if we just talk about numbers, or job sectors.

As noted above, one approach to economic framing is giving priority to ‘positive’ economic framing, such as through highlighting the economic co-benefits of climate action, consistent with the more general positive framing discussed in *Chapter 5* (cf. Nisbet 2009:20-21). In line with the academic work cited earlier, Gareth Hughes spoke about “reducing emissions” as “the most cost-effective way to proceed”, adding that: “Particularly in parliament, [I’m] always trying to talk up the opportunity of climate change, which is substantial, and there’s a wide body of evidence to back it up” (cf. Pralle 2009:794-5). Steve Abel made the case that “there are more jobs and prosperity in the clean economy than there is in the oil economy”, also stating that “New Zealand doesn’t belong as an overblown, over-producing mass-commodity producer. We should be producing *low volumes* of *high-quality* high-value [goods]”. Interviewees offered a range of experiences in terms of communicating these issues. Catherine Cheung spoke about using the “downturn” in dairy and fossil fuels to say: “This is the time to look for options”. Interviewees also spoke of the ways in which climate solutions can offer savings for people, primarily related to transport, electricity and farming. Nicole Masters and Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke about “win-win” solutions for farmers, which both save money and are good for the climate.

Risks and challenges in economic framing

As discussed earlier, a range of climate communications advice suggests not challenging people's basic worldviews (see, e.g., Moser & Dilling 2011:165), and such worldviews will involve economic elements, usually bound up with the status quo. This is a major challenge for the climate movement as it attempts to shift the public discourse around economics and the climate crisis. Additional factors affecting the use of economic framing include the perception of economics as confusing or boring, and the degree to which people are perceived as being motivated by economics. A number of participants spoke about economics as being "too complex", and about the risk of getting caught up in "detail" and sounding "like you're an academic". However, interviewees also said that there are simpler ways to communicate economic issues. As discussed in earlier chapters, different publics respond to different framing in different ways, and economic framing is a good example of this, with Gareth Hughes commenting that "rattling off numbers" "is something which resonates" with business audiences, but "with greenies... you see the eyes glazed over".

Differing perspectives were offered by interviewees on whether the public responds to approaches based on appealing to financial motivations. Nicole Masters suggested, from her reading of behaviour change literature, that "only 5% [of people] make decisions purely based on finances", however, even for these people, "it's not going to change the behaviour". Paul Young spoke of the use of economic framing in Generation Zero's Kāpiti expressway campaign and in related work around the Roads of National Significance:

It was quite hard to motivate the base around... Part of the feedback was that it felt too far removed from climate change... Talking too much about the benefit-cost ratio... didn't communicate enough about why it mattered.

He spoke about how:

A lot of people were outraged when they heard those numbers... So it did shock people... but the numbers alone... don't compel people to action, really. Maybe we just didn't push it hard enough.

This supports Nicole Masters' statements above, in the sense that it may get some people's attention, but that "it's not going to change the behaviour". His words are also congruent with comments by Niamh O'Flynn to the effect that, when you have "people not wanting to change", "facts about jobs and economics" aren't going to change them. However, participants also observed that the process of change may be slow, and, as Paul Young alludes to, the presence of

a strong, ongoing campaign is important above and beyond the content of communication.

Interviewees also spoke about the risk of not connecting with audiences in regard to specific economic considerations. One of these is the ‘pay now or pay more later’ framing (that it is more expensive not to act), on which various opinions were offered. Catherine Cheung found it “actually very difficult to get across... because most people don’t think in decades or further, they just think of their monthly bill, the mortgage and all that”. Despite this, however, she said that Climate Justice Taranaki continued to use this framing in the hope that people will eventually “get it”.

A further substantive economic issue is the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). While this was not an important subject for communication in many research participants’ work, it was discussed by several in a manner that suggested that it is emblematic of climate economics in the public mind. In practical terms, John Peet called the Emissions Trading Scheme “an abysmal failure”. Furthermore, Jeanette Fitzsimons stated:

[T]he ETS is widely mistrusted and disliked by the general public because nobody can figure out where the money goes and it’s obvious that some people are getting very rich on the ETS and they’re making money from polluting.

Dayle Takitimu expressed Te Whānau-ā-Apanui’s distrust of carbon credits:

We’ve basically said as an iwi, we’re not interested, because essentially that’s a legal right to pollute, and that right doesn’t exist in our legal system... it’s just a legal fiction someone’s created.

A further issue with the Emissions Trading Scheme is that, in Gareth Hughes’ words, “It’s bored the heck out of a whole bunch of people”. He spoke of how “climate change didn’t become this planetary issue, in terms of global survival, it became ‘What’s your rate of setting different credits?’”, leading to people feeling “disengaged and disenfranchised” (cf. Klein 2014a:172). Jeanette Fitzsimons (2016) writes of related concerns: “The emphasis on trading has created an even more damaging phenomenon - it has reinforced the mindset that speculation and trading will help protect the climate. They demonstrably haven’t, and can’t.”

Research participants also spoke more generally about the risk of losing the integrity of the climate message when using economic framing. Steve Abel stated:

If we ask ourselves as a climate movement whether our primary concern about climate change is that it’s going to harm the economy, or if we posit the suggestion that the most important reason for acting on climate change is that it will be good for the economy, for me it smacks of moral bankruptcy, that proposition. (cf. Klein 2014a:401)

Further, in relation to her divestment work, Niamh O’Flynn directly critiqued fossil fuel investments, and also expressed caution around a profit orientation more generally, calling for a paradigm shift in approaches to investment (cf. Jackson 2009; Dietz & O’Neill 2013). Mike Smith cautioned: “If things aren’t going to change until people think they can make a buck out of them, then we’re in trouble”, while Niamh O’Flynn suggested that people need to recognise that “regardless of the financial implications, we have to make the changes that are right for the environment and for a healthy climate” (cf. Klein 2014a:401). However, although some participants had stronger critiques of economic framing than others, all saw a place for at least some forms of economic framing.

A range of works suggest that economic framing may have the “perverse effect” of undermining both “moral sentiments” and efforts for broader change, by reinforcing individual self-interest (Bowles 2008; Hine et al. 2014:449; Clayton et al. 2015:8; Schittecatte 2015:24). This builds on the critique of social marketing approaches discussed in *Chapter 4*:

[F]raming messages about climate change according to the dominant values of the target audience... can lead to paradoxical situations whereby values known to be incongruent with engagement with climate change (e.g. materialism) are used as the basis of campaigns to engage the public. In particular, it has become very common for campaigns aimed at promoting climate-friendly behavior to emphasize the economic benefits of doing so, rather than the environmental ones. (Corner, Markowitz & Pidgeon 2014:416; see also Crompton 2010; Corner et al. 2010; Pepermans & Maasele 2016:479)

A number of other authors similarly critique the approach of “harnessing the profit motive to solve environmental ills” (Klein 2014a:180). Speaking of the need to move beyond the “business case for sustainability”, Eisenstein (2014) states: “Such arguments also have a... pernicious effect... By saying, ‘Go green because you’ll make more profit,’ they affirm that profit is the right motive.” Such concerns resonate with comments by a number of participants in this study, including those by Steve Abel and Niamh O’Flynn, above.

A core contention is that extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are not “additive” (Sandel, quoted in Crompton & Weinstein 2015:32), but rather that extrinsic motivations can ‘crowd out’ intrinsic motivations. Blackmore (2011b) discusses studies that support this contention:

These striking results led the researchers to conclude that thinking about civic responsibility alone was a stronger incentive than thinking about civic responsibility plus money: two motivations which appeared to compete, rather than complement. The intrinsic motivation was clearly present, but the extrinsic focus suppressed it[.] (cf. Crompton 2010:49)

Crompton & Weinstein (2015:32) therefore suggest that the “cover all bases” approach may not be most effective, and conclude: “The important thing, it seems, is to use language which invokes intrinsic values while avoiding using language which invokes [and therefore reinforces] extrinsic [materialistic] values” (as discussed earlier; see also Crompton & Kasser 2009:56; Thøgersen & Crompton 2009:155, 160). Similarly, Gowdy (2008:642) contends that behavioural science supports the idea that emphasizing cooperation and non-materialistic values is a more “realistic approach” to responding to the climate crisis than via “traditional economic analysis”.

In relation to making an appeal to financial motives, we can also consider how such a “frame extension” (Snow et al. 1986:478), possibly so as to reach business or governmental audiences, or those on the right politically, can lead to the loss of popular support if such a framing begins to feel too removed from the core concerns of the climate crisis itself. In regard to James Shaw’s comment, quoted earlier, that to engage with those “over on the right”, “You’ve got to go into their territory” and use “market language”, a number of different perspectives are worth considering. As discussed in the previous chapter, Corner (2012) similarly suggests ‘going into their territory’, but sees using specific intrinsic values as the appropriate way of doing this, as opposed to economic framing. Furthermore, as alluded to earlier, one might choose not to engage with such audiences at all (cf. Jasper 2004:10), and instead concentrate on those more likely to be mobilised (as implied by interviewee Gary Cranston; cf. Rowson 2013:4; Cross et al. 2015:7).

Helm (quoted in Gurney 2012:10) discusses further issues around economic framing:

[There is the] possibility... that the Stern Report analysis is flawed [and] that the costs are much higher than estimated... On this view, the easy compatibility between economic growth and [mitigating] climate change, which lies at the heart of the Stern Review, is an illusion. And, given higher costs and serious threats to economic growth, the fact that politicians have founded their arguments to the public on the basis of low costs is counterproductive[.]

In a related fashion, Russill (2008) discusses the New Zealand Labour government’s Emissions Trading Scheme, noting how the prioritising of an economic framing became a problem for the Labour government when it emerged that costs were going to be greater than expected.

In terms of economic co-benefits of climate action, Corner et al. (2010:6) suggest, as quoted earlier, that “Narratives that focus exclusively on the ‘up-side’ of climate solutions are likely to be unconvincing”. They add:

Avoid over-emphasis on the economic opportunities that mitigating, and adapting to, climate change may provide. There will, undoubtedly, be economic benefits to be accrued through investment in new technologies, but there will also be instances where

the economic imperative and the climate change adaptation or mitigation imperative diverge, and periods of economic uncertainty for many people as some sectors contract. (cf. Pralle 2009:795)

The above views can be formulated in relation to two strong claims. Firstly, there is Read's (2014) suggestion that speaking about "the economy" "mostly just feeds into people's pre-existing stereotypes of what an economy is". In a related manner, and in line with comments by a number of participants, Serpes (2015) notes that "The right wing frame of the economy is so common that it's hard not to use it even when you disagree with the premise", thereby "implying what we don't mean" (Shenker-Osorio 2012). Secondly, there is Hamilton's (2010:52-3) discussion of the *Stern Review*, where he suggests that it "further entrench[es] growth fetishism and the legitimacy of the conventional economic approach to climate change", and concludes that "at a deeper level, the economic way of thinking is the problem".

It should be noted, however, that both Read and Hamilton continue to discuss economics in their work. Blackmore (2011a), discussing the risks of economic framing, states:

This approach does not suggest that any and all talk of questions of cost (say) must be dispensed with. Rather, we must be careful not to allow these considerations to dominate our discussions of the advantages and disadvantages of different policies – as though investment opportunities or the loss to national GDP were the overriding concerns.

This is clearly a more nuanced position than the complete avoidance of economic framing, and is in line with the approach of several participants.

Carbon charge communication

I present here communication around a carbon charge or tax as an example of how participants make decisions, and manage risks and "trade-offs" (Crompton 2010) when using economic framing. All those who did mention such a carbon charge promoted a fiscally neutral version, through which "people get the money recycled back immediately" (Gareth Hughes). John Peet spoke of presenting the idea of a carbon tax to Rotary and Lions groups, "and they responded very well". He said that these opportunities were valuable because otherwise, people will respond to a soundbite on the news with "Not another bloody tax" and not listen to the rest.

Patrick (2013:71) describes the "revenue-neutrality" of the British Columbian carbon tax in terms of avoiding being seen as a "tax grab", "premised on the notion that 'nobody likes a

tax’” (2013:72):

Though a large part of environmentalist defense of revenue-neutrality was directed at obstinate public resistance to the policy, bolstered by [a New Democratic Party] countercampaign, it served contradictory discursive purposes within the environmental community itself. Endorsements of revenue-neutrality tended to reinforce the idea that “tax-and-spend” government was bad and should be avoided, which contributed to a problematic frame for those working to ensure enough funding was available for a wider societal transformation[.] (2013:73)

Patrick (2013:21) also suggests that the way the Liberal government “addressed audiences primarily as self-interested consumers, as opposed to engaged civic actors with a common interest at stake” may have “helped inspire public backlash” (cf. Rowson 2013:5).

Crompton (2010:44), drawing on Lakoff’s work, discusses the “tax burden frame”, suggesting that use of it “suppresses the tax as investment or tax as insurance frame”. During a discussion of the Green Party’s ‘carbon tax cut’ policy, I raised this subject with both Gareth Hughes and Jeanette Fitzsimons. Both spoke in favour of a “tax as investment” framing and described ways in which they had manifested this in their parliamentary work. In Jeanette Fitzsimons’ words, “Tax is what funds a civilised society”. In this specific case, however, she said that the decision had been made that, in terms of perceptions of taxation, “that battle was lost and would never be won”. Further, she noted that the “carbon tax cut” was “clever positioning”, particularly in relation to the Labour Party’s earlier non-revenue neutral carbon tax policy. Mirroring the situation described by Patrick (2013:73), above, Gareth Hughes also suggested that the context of a carbon charge not having much public support was also important in this decision, and noted the generally positive reception of the ‘carbon tax cut’ policy.

Balancing economic and moral framing

Throughout this thesis I have been discussing questions of balance in climate communication, and the balance between economic and moral framing is an important element of this, which many participants reflected on. Furthermore, the question of how economic and moral framing should be balanced is an ongoing debate within environmental and ecological economics (Gowdy 2008:637).

Steve Abel suggested that “there is a healthy tension” between a prioritisation of economic framing and a prioritisation of “more core values-based messages that are not just

economic... where economy falls a bit further down the hierarchy of core messages”. He personally opts for the latter. Interviewees also spoke of people responding emotionally to moral framing more than to economic framing. Catherine Cheung stated that economic aspects were only a minor part of the way she presents climate and fracking issues, and spoke about how, for her personally, “climate change is an ethical issue, climate justice is an ethical issue... money doesn’t even come into it”.

A number of interviewees described the dangers of foregrounding economic framing. Niamh O’Flynn spoke of “not letting economics play the central role in the discussion” (consistent with Blackmore (2011a), quoted earlier), and maintained that the movement needs to do more than “just win those economic arguments”:

One of the things that we could do as a movement that would make us more powerful is stop framing things in their terms... We’re not economists, no one’s going to listen to the green movement for economics... We need to change hearts and minds and that’s what we’re good at, and we need to stop framing things in a language that we don’t win in. (cf. Lakoff 2010:79)

Speaking in similar language, Crompton (quoted in Lee 2011) notes that Martin Luther King Jr didn’t start his famous speech by saying “I have a cost-benefit analysis”, and that he “did not seek to galvanize the American civil rights movement by appealing to individual self-interest or national competitiveness imperatives. Rather, he drew upon people’s sense of justice, equality, and empathy” (Crompton 2011; cf. Klein 2014a:401).

Lastly here, Gareth Hughes offers a different approach to economic and moral framing: “I always think it’s got to be a mix, and a balance. They’re not in opposition”. Interestingly, the material discussed earlier in the chapter suggests that economic and moral framing at least *can* be in opposition, insofar as extrinsic motivations may ‘crowd out’ intrinsic motivations. However, there are two nuances here. Firstly, the evidence in support of such a contention may not translate perfectly to real-world situations where many forms of framing are unavoidably, and simultaneously, present in the public sphere (see, e.g., Bernauer & McGrath 2016:3). And secondly, some forms of economic framing may not involve extrinsic motivations. Might there be a different way of both ‘doing’ and speaking about economics? And, to speak to Read’s (2014) concern, noted earlier, to avoid feeding into people’s pre-existing economic stereotypes? Clearly, there are many varieties of economic framing, and this strongly influences the choice of balance between economic and moral framing. As with Gareth Hughes’ comment above, many participants spoke about ways in which moral and economic framing can be blended (cf. Bond, Diprose & McGregor 2015:1171). Echoing the earlier quotation from Crompton, therefore, it is

to *combinations* of a sense of “justice, equality, and empathy” *with* economic framing that I turn to in the following chapters.

8. Moral economic critique

“When the accumulation of wealth is no longer of high social importance, there will be great changes in the code of morals. We shall be able to rid ourselves of many of the pseudo-moral principles... by which we have exalted some of the most distasteful of human qualities into the position of highest virtues.”

- John Maynard Keynes (quoted in Eisenstein 2001:517)

“So what, this is a choice between the functional viability of life on earth, *and what?! Some sort of abstract conception of the economy?*”

- Steve Abel

Particularly in capitalist societies, the social (and emotive) power of moral framing must be understood in relation to the social power of economic framing – and the climate crisis evokes both economic and moral issues in a powerful way. For this reason, the combination of these framing elements demands attention. In the next two chapters I therefore discuss forms of moral economic and systemic framing, beginning in this chapter with the moral economic critique of the status quo, and following with the communication of moral economic solutions.

Interviewees recognised economics as both a language of political power and a tool for exerting dominance, and as a way of speaking to real needs: the ‘economics of greed’ and the ‘economics of need’. As with Steve Abel’s quotation above, a number of participants alluded to the use of empty or misleading economic rhetoric: “If you can’t sustain your economic development, is it really economic development, or is it [that] you’re just fudging the books, really?” (Dayle Takitimu).

Participants spoke of moral aspects of diagnostic framing, with a large number speaking about the values underpinning status quo economics, which drive the climate crisis. Katherine Peet referenced the “ideological onslaught, which Ruth Richardson named as being a battle for the hearts and minds of New Zealanders”. This can be directly connected to Margaret Thatcher’s famous declaration: “Economics are the method; the object is to change the heart and soul”⁷ (Butt 1981). Thus, John Peet suggested that:

With current mainstream economics, the ethics have already been decided: individualistic, property-owning, utility-maximising. And that is an ethical decision, even though most [economists] don’t know it.

⁷ Moreover, Klein (2014a:52) reports evidence to suggest that this “was a mission largely accomplished”.

Similarly, Crompton (2010:48, see also 2011:13) notes that “Economic discourse and policy is one area where the self-interest frame is often explicitly promulgated”.

The core idea critically evoked by interviewees was ‘profit over people and the planet’: “profit at all costs” and “investors wanting more more more” (Robina McCurdy; cf. Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016:167-8). In line with this, John Peet critiqued “the idea that productivity needs, or efficiency needs, or market needs take precedence over the common good”. Katherine Peet also asked: “Does everybody matter, or are there some people who are dispensable? Because in the trickle down theory, some people are dispensable.” Finally, Dayle Takitimu spoke of fossil fuel companies “deal[ing] with us like we’re inconvenient” and said: “We kind of felt this was an industry which was essentially the prostitution of our marine environment.”

Interviewees described how such an ideology has permeated society. John Peet asked: “Are we becoming a completely individualistic selfish community?” and linked this to neoliberalism. Katherine Peet spoke of the 2015 Whanganui floods, indicating that the “economic system has... undermined the sense that ‘We’re all in this together, mate’” (cf. Klein 2014a:52). Expanding on this, she explicitly stated that “the climate crisis is a function of greed”. A number of interviewees made it clear that this isn’t isolated instances of greed, but systemic greed, promoted by the basic organisation of our economic system.

Several interviewees also expressed the importance of directly highlighting the values and morals behind the actions of businesses, institutions and governments, often via “public shaming”. Niamh O’Flynn spoke of this as “a real kind of stigmatisation of the fossil fuel industry”. This connects with Steve Abel’s discussion of framing:

Successful movements [are] ultimately a presentation of a core value that is held by a given society, and the creation of a dissonance between that value and an activity that’s occurring.

This also aligns with the sense of a shift in morality as being a ‘solution’ to the climate crisis, discussed earlier:

So I see it as changing the culture around fossil fuels, changing what’s okay and what’s not okay and getting fossil fuels to a point where we see them... on a par with weapons and bombs. (Niamh O’Flynn; see also Hadden 2015a:175)

Interviewees also connected their economic critique with people’s relationship with the environment. Dayle Takitimu spoke about her frustration with the “divide between the environment and the economy”, asking: “Where are you going to practice your economy, where are you going to house that if you don’t have an environment?” Robina McCurdy maintained

that people's disconnection from the earth creates a "rape and pillage" mentality, in which the natural world is seen "as something to be used, a resource". Participants also spoke of "false solutions", naming the Emissions Trading Scheme as one of these. Thus, Gary Cranston described "a whole suite of policies" that are based on "the commodification of the atmosphere as a dumping ground", with 'solutions' "more based around business opportunities and ways of making profit than ways to meet basic needs for people".

In a manner consistent with these comments by interviewees, Wainwright (2014:1) offers a critique of status quo economics that is simultaneously political and socio-cultural:

This acquiescence to the relentless pursuit of profit, against their own long term interests along with those of the local community and the national economy, can only be explained by understanding the popular consciousness shaped by the decades-long experience of the denigration of values of solidarity and the reinforcement of the 'naturalness' of the market and the hopelessness of refusing its dictates. These processes are an aspect of power that we cannot afford to neglect.

She expands on these points, describing how values are embedded in economics and underpin "material alternatives" (2014:7-8). In Paul Verhaeghe's (2014) words, "a changed economy reflects changed ethics and brings about changed identity", to which he adds: "The current economy is bringing out the worst in us." Thus, Cross et al.'s (2015:23) Canadian research participants highlighted "the insidious dominance of 'money' (and associated values of materialism) in all aspects of our lives" as a major cause of "public apathy, indifference and hostility to climate action". Warley et al. (2010) observe that the values needed to create positive social change "are values that have been weakened – and often even derided – in modern culture. They are not, for example, values that are fostered by treating people as if they are, above all else, consumers" (cf. Klein 2014a:399)

In arguing for transparency around values, various writers suggest directly communicating about the values present in the status quo, which underlie opposition to climate action: "If our values mandate action on climate change, then we must also recognise that the political and economic forces that are arrayed against such action are violating those values" (Lewandowsky 2015). Similarly, Solnit (2014) writes: "Climate change is global-scale violence, against places and species as well as against human beings. Once we call it by name, we can start having a real conversation about our priorities and values."

Systemic framing

“I really do feel like our economy has to change drastically, or come crashing down and then change drastically, to truly fix the climate crisis.”

- Niamh O’Flynn

Many participants spoke of the need for systemic change, a “paradigm shift” in society, and “major structural changes to the economy” (Paul Young). This was conceived of, and communicated, in a variety of ways, including both economic and moral, and diagnostic and prognostic, elements. In line with such a systemic critique, Niamh O’Flynn described how she sometimes talks to audiences:

about climate change not being the problem and climate change being the symptom of a society that’s really dysfunctional... that we have a pretty sick society and a pretty sick way of living and dealing with economics that has to change... and I think slowly... we need to be pushing people to say this... And obviously [climate change is] happening fast so we do need to stop the carbon emissions first and foremost, but [we do] have to eventually change the whole system.

Speaking of how this is labelled “unrealistic” by some, she turned the tables and said that, given the realities of the climate crisis, it was unrealistic to think things could continue as they have been.

There is widespread agreement in the literature “that capitalism *as we know it* is thoroughly inept when it comes to addressing climate change” (Storm 2009:1017), with a range of calls being made for societies to become “less capitalistic” (Jackson 2009:200). However, vast disagreements exist as to what this might mean in practice, with writers variously suggesting market mechanisms, global carbon taxes, degrowth, and post-capitalist responses (cf. Storm 2009). Many interviewees stated views in line with a political economy perspective, where the climate crisis is seen as:

emerging directly from the specific social structures and priorities of a capitalist society, including the need for ever-expanding economic growth, the cultivation of infinite consumer demand, relentless technological change, and stark inequality in the distribution of the costs and benefits associated with economic growth and environmental change alike (McCarthy et al. 2014:669; cf. Bedall & Görg 2014:54)

In terms of communication, the simple fact that structural economic change is needed is an impetus towards the use of economic framing. Given the strength of the current political economy, however, it is difficult to challenge it. Gary Cranston suggested that “Conservative

neoliberally thinking people think they have the monopoly on what the economy means because it's been so deeply re-imagined over the last couple of decades". Sandra Grey (quoted in Bradford 2014:129) notes that the media "often stick left wing commentary" "in the too hard, loony, crazy bin", disparaging it and not taking it seriously. Lakoff (2010:77) speaks of the challenges of questioning the status quo in relation to framing:

Here's a deep truth that is also hard to discuss because there is no established frame for it in public discourse. The economic and ecological meltdowns have the same cause, namely, the unregulated free market with the idea that greed is good and that the natural world is a resource for short-term private enrichment. (cf. Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012:173)

Throughout the following discussion, it can be seen how the communication of climate radicalism and systemic change comes up against the embeddedness of status quo economics particularly strongly, and thereby magnifies the challenge of finding a balance between reaching people and speaking to the full scale of the climate crisis.

Rosewarne, Goodman & Pearse (2014:133) highlight a central difficulty in relation to systemic framing. They suggest that directly stating the need for the level of changes required to face up to the climate crisis may stop mass mobilisation, but not stating this might lead to a "meaningless" movement. In relation to this, Gary Cranston described occasions when people would initially be resistant when he critiqued various "green capitalist" "false solutions" to the climate crisis:

When you get easy answers thrown at you all the time, people become less open to hearing that structural change is necessary... they've already been told something that sounds easier to them, and they prefer that.

A further demonstration of such risks is the dilution of systemic critiques. de Lucia (2014:66) observes that the climate justice approach has to some extent gone mainstream, and Dietz (2014b:350) suggests that "there has been not only a reframing of the problem of climate change, but also a reframing of climate justice. This new and moderate interpretation of climate justice... results in a loss of the counter-hegemonic character of the concept" (see also Hadden 2015a:162).

Many of the participants in this research occupied what might be considered an ambiguous space in relation to the need for systemic change. A version of this ambiguity can also be seen in Moon's (2013:97) work on Generation Zero, where she suggests that a systemic critique may not be accompanied by a focus on solutions consistent with systemic change:

Despite some of the previously mentioned views of participants that lean towards the recognition of the need for systemic change, concern for building public support, political feasibility and a focus on addressing quantitative emissions has resulted in the intentional use of neoliberal discourse within the vision and focus of Generation Zero.

Finally, Hadden (2015a:21) speaks to the benefits and challenges of a systemic critique in relation to a climate justice framing. She suggests that “connecting individual issues to larger structural critiques” can help grow the movement; however, she notes that “other research suggests that it may not help the movement achieve engagement with individuals outside the [broader] activist community” (2015b). The challenge may be, therefore, to “be simultaneously threatening to elites and persuasive to the public” (Amenta et al. 2010:295).

Building on this general discussion of systemic framing, I now address various interconnected aspects of a systemic critique: neoliberalism, consumerism, economic growth and capitalism.

Neoliberalism

“I don’t believe that a neoliberal framework is capable of addressing [climate change].”

- Paul Young

John Peet observed that “The neoliberal perspective, despite being demolished theoretically, is still alive and well and very powerful”. Consistent with this, the literature describes how neoliberal policies currently “dominate the policy agenda” around climate change (McCarthy et al. 2014:669; cf. Bourk, Rock & Davis 2015:15). Klein (2014a:17) suggests that the “stranglehold” of “market logic” has made “the most direct and obvious climate responses seem politically heretical”. Connected with this, and important because of the way that international trade rules and agreements restrict adequate climate action (see, e.g., Klein 2014a:63, 311; Freeman & Bennet 2016), Klein (2014a:75) also notes that “Challenging free trade orthodoxy is a heavy lift in our political culture”.

While economic counter-framing in opposition to climate action might be considered weak (in the light of a range of economic analyses), voting patterns suggest that it resonates with a significant portion of the public. This is also true of broader economic issues. Dryzek (1997:171, citing Lindblom) makes the case that the market doesn’t only “imprison[] government policy”:

the market also imprisons the way most people think: if there is a conflict between market imperatives and other values (including environmental ones), it is generally taken for granted that these other values must give way.

Moon (2013:3) suggests that young activists in Aotearoa are influenced by the “dominant neoliberal discourse”, with the responses of her Generation Zero research participants “indicat[ing] a belief that change in mindset and values can occur while maintaining most of the economic components of neoliberalism” (2013:97). In contrast, interviewees in this study consistently critiqued neoliberalism.

Consumerism

Mike Smith spoke of the need to change “the mainstream western consumer culture”, saying: “There’s only one solution and that’s we’ve got to do everything we can to transition away from the lifestyles we’re living now”. Jeanette Fitzsimons added that “climate change [is] a symptom of a very much bigger problem: that humanity has got too big for the ecological niche that it’s trying to occupy”. Catherine Cheung spoke about “not getting hooked onto the market spin” and being clear about the difference between needs and desires. She said that she will sometimes make comments in presentations about how “money doesn’t buy happiness”, adding that “There’s nothing new in these things, sometimes maybe people just need to be reminded”. Matt Morris stated:

Our consumption is very deeply engrained. What I would like to see happen is to encourage and find ways to celebrate voluntary simplicity. I just see that as the antidote.

Lastly here, however, further illustrating the challenge of offering a systemic critique, McIntosh (quoted in Klein 2014a:181) notes that “most international climate change agency personnel take the view that ‘we just can’t go there’ in terms of the politics of cutting consumerism.”

Economic growth

“We are stealing the future, selling it in the present, and calling it GDP.”

- Paul Hawken (quoted in Miller & Hopkins 2013:10)

A number of interviewees said that they regularly address economic growth with audiences. Robina McCurdy highlighted the “exponential curve of growth” of the current economic paradigm, leading to “overshoot and collapse”. In interviewee comments, what might be termed ‘relative’ and ‘absolute’ critiques of economic growth could be distinguished (with some interviewees expressing elements of both at different times).

In terms of a ‘relative’ critique, a number of participants cited the need to move beyond GDP as a measure of social success. Katherine Peet described an exercise that she uses, in which workshop participants identify what matters to them in life, after which she asks: “Can we just put a quick dollar value on these things? And of course they all laugh, because you can’t”. She spoke of this as a good way of evoking “how ‘silly’... GDP is as a value of measuring success”. Several participants made the point that talking about economics doesn’t have to mean affirming that “economic growth is the only thing that matters” (Paul Young), or, in fact, talking about economic growth and GDP at all. Paul Young spoke about using the term “economic development” rather than “economic growth”, and, as Jeanette Fitzsimons also mentioned, seeking to get beyond a “more is better” framing. In addition to this, however, he argued that “you can decouple economic growth from carbon emissions”, giving the example that “Denmark has reduced absolute emissions by quite a large percentage despite their economy continuing to grow.” Steve Abel expressed strong concerns about the current economic system, and spoke of the value of “finding opportunities and ways to question the growth model”. Clarifying this, however, he also stated: “I’m not opposed to economic growth, I’m opposed to growth that relies on increased consumption of resources”.

Expressing a critique of economic growth nearer the ‘absolute’ end of the spectrum, Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke of the limits to ‘win-win’ solutions: “Now some people take that to the point where I’m uncomfortable with it, when they start talking about green growth”. She stated:

In my view, green growth is an oxymoron, green growth is nonsense. There are of course some things that need to grow, that need very badly to grow, but overall economic growth cannot be green. We have to find a stable state.

Gary Cranston spoke of the strong link between GDP and carbon dioxide emissions:

There's only been a handful of times in the last forty years where greenhouse gas emissions have dropped in a really significant way on a national level, for any country, and all of them times have happened because there's been economic recessions, big crashes.

He also spoke about green growth approaches offering a risk of activism being directed towards business opportunities instead of real change.

Within the literature, a wide range of work critiques economic growth. As Dietz & O'Neill (2013:ix) state: "With each passing day, we are witnessing more and more *uneconomic* growth – growth that costs more than it is worth." Specifically in relation to the climate crisis, Anderson & Bows (2012) state:

Acknowledging the immediacy and rate of emission reductions necessary to meet international commitments on 2°C illustrates the scale of the discontinuity between the science (physical and social) underpinning climate change and the economic hegemony. Put bluntly, climate change commitments are incompatible with short- to medium-term economic growth (in other words, for 10 to 20 years) [in wealthy Annex 1 countries]. (See also Anderson 2013; Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012:174)

In practice, writers increasingly speak of the concept "Enough" as useful language for discussing alternatives to economic growth, including ideas around 'the economics of enough' (Fitzsimons 2013; Dietz & O'Neill 2013; Read 2014; cf. Alexander 2012 on the "sufficiency economy").

Several interviewees described the deep challenges of critiquing economic growth. Gareth Hughes stated: "Economic growth has been placed on the altar of the most important thing in politics... To talk about not having growth, it almost feels treasonous". For this reason, he said:

So I guess I avoid those exact words, but try to get around it by talking about other things that people will find important, which in some cases are analogous to economic growth. So jobs, prosperity, economic development in the regions, for example.

In line with the earlier reference to the use of metaphor to help make ideas more accessible, Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke of an occasion when, in response to Helen Clark's comment: "Economic growth... it's a tide that lifts all boats", she replied: "No it doesn't, not when some of them are chained to the bottom, they just get swamped." In addition, although Jeanette Fitzsimons said she believes that moving past economic growth is necessary to respond adequately to the climate crisis, she suggested that questioning economic growth may be useful with some audiences but not with others. Lastly, Gareth Hughes also suggested that "There are legitimate questions... How do you manage an economy that isn't growing anymore? ... How do

you keep providing jobs or education for your kids if growth stopped?” (See Jackson 2009; Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012; Dietz & O’Neill 2013).

Critiques of economic growth at the more absolute end of the spectrum relate to ideas around degrowth and a ‘steady-state economy’ (see, e.g., Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012). Gary Cranston suggested that “We need to widen the debate as well so we can talk about things like degrowth”; however, once again, it was clear that this was often challenging to do. Jeanette Fitzsimons said that moving past economic growth:

has been the hardest political message I have ever had to sell in my whole life, and it still is, and it’s the one I feel I’ve made very little progress with.

In line with Gary Cranston’s comment, quoted earlier, that, historically, significant emission reductions have only come from “economic recessions, big crashes”, several participants suggested that an economic crash, in addition to being an economic problem, could also be part of a climate solution. Gary Cranston added, though, that people “don’t always like the idea” of “embrac[ing]” an economic crash:

You either have some faith in some sort of global response to climate change... or you think something else is going to have to come along and make that happen, like another global financial crisis.

In relation to this, he spoke of the need to have a “managed crash”, which would require strong democratic processes.

Antonio & Clark (2015:335) comment on the difficulty of challenging economic growth, noting that this “leads in politically ‘unrealistic’ or ‘divisive’ directions, especially to the question of the sustainability of capitalism as we have known it”. Miller & Hopkins (2013:20) make the case that it is important to “Name the elephant in the room” that is economic growth, and they make an interesting suggestion in relation to this:

Perhaps it seems too radical to publicly challenge the economic growth paradigm. It may be that many environmental organizations understandably make the strategic decision not to do so. But we believe that the environmental community must at least *internally* name the elephant in the room and adjust its strategies and programs based on an understanding [of this].

This aligns with the suggestion by Patrick (2013:45) that “green discourse might, in part, be nurtured in various “enclaves” of deliberative communication... prior to exploiting the various openings presented by larger mainstream outlets.”

Capitalism

“It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism”

- Fredric Jameson (quoted in Brulle & Dunlap 2015:14)

As with economic growth, relative and absolute critiques of capitalism can be seen in interviewee comments. Without using these terms, Gary Cranston implied that Naomi Klein combines both of these, observing that an aspect of this is the idea that “It’s not like everyone’s going to overthrow capitalism this year, but let’s say some bad things about it anyway.” Critiques of capitalism at the ‘relative’ end of the spectrum include the critique of neoliberalism offered by a number of interviewees, discussed above. Additionally, John Peet said that he will “on occasion” speak about capitalism; however, he added: “when I do, I mention that communism as it was actually practised, and still is being practised, does the same thing”.

A number of participants spoke about the need to move beyond the profit motive, an important element of capitalism:

We need to move away from all of this system, where profit is the most important part of this... When you’re investing money, profit may not be more important than investing in armaments or fossil fuels, but it’s still an important part of what’s causing the problem. (Niamh O’Flynn)

Renewables can be co-operatively owned and run, it’s not the technology... it’s who owns them and who manages them... If we leave it up to companies they’ll maximise profit on every single decision. (Gary Cranston)

Gary Cranston was the sole interviewee to explicitly identify as anti-capitalist, and he spoke of how most of the climate movement internationally critiques capitalism (cf. Caniglia, Brulle & Szasz 2015:255; Segebart & König 2014:168). He suggested that “The green capitalist approach has demonstrably stopped us from dealing with climate change”. Further, he added:

Do we really want capitalism to get back up on its feet? ... Are we trying to save capitalism from another inevitable crisis of growth, or are we trying to stop climate change? And if we said capitalism, does that fly in the face of trying to stop climate change? I think it does.

Gary Cranston indicated that after conversations on these topics with climate activists, they “change the work that they do in a really good way”, giving Climate Camp as an example of

where he was able to have a large number of conversations such as these. Work by Gaisford (2010) and Willoughby-Martin (2012) on Climate Camp Aotearoa affirms Gary Cranston's comments in relation to the Camp offering both a systemic critique and a space for politicisation. More generally, Brulle & Dunlap (2015:23) note the "intense" sociological debate "on the dynamics of capitalism and the possibility of reforming it to create a sustainable economy and society – a debate that obviously has major implications for assessing the likelihood of effective societal responses to climate change."

Several participants also offered comments about capitalism that relate to the challenges of climate communication. While Paul Young spoke of the need for "major structural changes to the economy", he suggested that "smash capitalism" approaches that seek to "tear down the system and... replace it with something new" are "a barrier to engagement". Ultimately, he argued for a "regulated capitalism" (giving Denmark as an example of this). Steve Abel suggested that there are ways to express anti-capitalist or similar ideas that will connect more strongly with people than speaking directly about capitalism:

I just think that if you talk about what people care about, and what we're really talking about in a different way, you can actually cut through all that resistance, and you can actually win the fight more effectively.

In congruence with the need to connect with people, but offering a contrasting opinion on communicating about capitalism, Gary Cranston suggested that this need not be complicated: "I've never read... *Das Kapital*... You don't need to. There are very simple things about capitalism... that everyone can understand... without having to talk about economic equations or anything like that". He spoke of capitalism as "this living eating thing", "spreading around the world... looking for the cheapest wages", and said that in his experience, describing it this way makes sense to people.

Shear (2014:200) discusses how people can be dismissed if they say they are against capitalism: "The desires for another economy besides capitalism... can be made to seem laughable and unimaginable by capitalism's symbolic authority" (2014:201). Nevertheless, anti-capitalist climate activists such as Gary Cranston see this as a necessary challenge, seeing moving beyond capitalism as a crucial element of responding to the climate crisis.

9. Moral economic solutions

Participants made clear their belief that economics should connect strongly with the wellbeing of people and nature, and spoke of a sense of “prosperity” beyond the conceptions of mainstream economics. All participants, therefore, implicitly spoke in support of combinations of moral and economic framing. A number of participants also made this explicit: “I think that’s good, you know, that’s a really good thing, start bringing them things together” (Gary Cranston). As Gareth Hughes notes: “Economics isn’t a dirty word, it is something that always has happened and always will happen, as long as humans are here.” In addition to the moral economic critique described in the previous chapter, therefore, participants used their own positive forms of moral economic framing, communicating about a broadened view of economics and about various forms of climate solutions, thereby appealing to people’s sense of the world they wish to live in. Klein (2014a:398) speaks of the need for “a full-throated debate about values”, including about “what it is that we collectively value more than economic growth and corporate profits”, and it is clear that research participants are actively engaged in this.

Several participants spoke directly of the importance of broadening our sense of economics. Paul Young suggested that this is “essential”, “because I ultimately think we can’t get where we need to if all we’re concerned about is money.” For this reason, he spoke about how “you can talk... [about] the economy a bit more holistically... [about] the outcomes that matter in society”, such as jobs, healthcare, and education (cf. Read 2014). Katherine Peet also spoke of the need to “keep tabling the reality that there is more to economics than just market economics”, and to keep generosity in the picture. In line with related comments by Katherine Peet, Rowson & Corner (2015:17-18) speak of the importance of “properly valuing ‘the core economy’ which represents the ‘hidden wealth’ in the economy that we currently undervalue, including time and care based exchanges.”

Most participants suggested that economics should be about meeting people’s needs. Thus, Niamh O’Flynn spoke of economics “allowing everyone access to what they need to live a happy, healthy life.” John Peet spoke of political economy and its intrinsic connection to people’s “hopes and aspirations”. Additionally, Catherine Cheung noted the importance of “nobody exploiting anybody else”. She also spoke about how, in terms of the opportunities of climate action, “It’s more about jobs and fairness than about making a lot of money. It’s about more people making enough money rather than a few people making a lot of money.” And lastly

here, Paul Young and I discussed how the use of economic statistics can sometimes elicit consideration of the value of fairness.

Jeanette Fitzsimons offered a further example of such a blending of moral and economic framing when she spoke about how she paints a picture of a future that will be less well off, when speaking with Grey Power audiences:

I say: 'You've had reasonably good lives on the whole. We've lived in a time when there's been abundance, when there's been jobs, when there's been food, when there's been housing... and how do you feel about your grandchildren not having any of that?'

Additionally, in a manner that once again speaks to both moral and economic issues, Steve Abel suggested that his preference was to use economic framing mainly as a "counter-argument":

I think it's best made in response to the government saying, 'Climate action's going to cost us. How much are we willing to pay for climate action?' At that point you go, 'Well, we should be prepared to pay whatever it takes, because what we're talking about is, you know, the viability of life on earth.'

Participants also spoke of environmental wellbeing, in a manner that was often consistent with the concept of 'strong sustainability' (see, e.g., SANZ 2009). Matt Morris suggested that one of people's needs "is to live in a healthy environment", and that the economy "rest[s] upon the wellbeing of the [environment]". Robina McCurdy made the case that "Economics should enable ecological balance, in every culture on this planet."

Many writers suggest that if fundamental considerations around wellbeing are brought to the fore of discussions around the nature of progress, it will allow a clearer basis for action (see, e.g., Dietz & O'Neill 2013:110). If we assume here that the general aim of life is something like well-being, quality of life, prosperity, and living well (as in the concept of 'buen vivir' – see, e.g., Balch 2013), it can also be argued that the role of politics and economics (particularly macro-economic policy) is to best support people in the achievement of these goals (see, e.g., Jackson 2009:169). Such a view is articulated in the New Economics Foundation slogan: "economics as if people and the planet mattered" (cf. Jackson 2009:16). In line with this, Mazur (2010:4) speaks of climate change being "fundamentally about achieving a just allocation of resources, today and into the future". Interestingly, Bradford (2014:116) reports her research participants' "enthusiasm for the [New Zealand Green Party] billboard slogan which used the word 'prosperity' in the 2011 election campaign", which she indicated was "a controversial issue within the party at the time".

Lastly, Klein (2014a:332) speaks of "The Moral Imperative of Economic Alternatives", and of "actively building an alternative economy based on very different principles and values"

(2014:350). Moreover, as noted earlier, she maintains that “there is no more potent weapon in the battle against fossil fuels than the creation of real alternatives. Just the glimpse of another kind of economy can be enough to energize the fight against the old one” (2014:343). In what follows, I therefore describe the economic alternatives communicated by research participants.

Framing moral economic solutions

Participants discussed a number of moral approaches to economic issues: divestment, voluntary simplicity, social entrepreneurship, stewardship of the land, permaculture and organics, co-ops and co-operative solutions, local (food) economies, and a just transition. These approaches are strongly interconnected; however, I address them separately here for the sake of clarity. Giugni, Bandler & Eggert (2006:15) describe the struggle against neoliberalism as a master frame, and speak of the need for ‘mid-range frames’ that link the critique of neoliberalism to more specific issues. The moral economic solutions discussed here can be seen to play such a role.

Like Gibson-Graham & Roelvink (2009:331), I have chosen in this chapter to “marshal examples of ‘what is already being done’, thereby contributing to the credibility and strengthening of alternative economies”, and helping “to increase their legibility as economic projects”. Somewhat distinct from such an approach, however, I particularly seek to address how communication is occurring in relation to “what is already being done”.

Divestment

While the divestment campaign clearly offers a moral economic critique, I include it here with moral economic responses, insofar as it is directly linked to actions that one can take, both in the sense of political action to promote divestment, and in terms of personal divestment from fossil fuels. This section draws predominantly on the comments of Niamh O’Flynn in relation to the work of 350 Aotearoa; however, a number of other participants also mentioned the divestment campaign. A core element of the way in which Niamh O’Flynn frames the work of divestment is in foregrounding its moral or ethical element (cf. Hadden 2015a:175):

Divestment on the surface seems like it’s about money and I’d argue that it’s not, but on the surface it is that, and we often have to have a bit of a veneer of economic argument there.

She emphasised that, fundamentally, “It’s not that money coming out that is the problem; it’s the social side of it that’s actually damaging”. She said that it was about institutions (and individuals) taking a public stance, and thereby, “ostracising the fossil fuel industry” (as discussed in the previous chapter; cf. Schittecatte 2015:28).

Niamh O’Flynn spoke of successes with communicating around fossil fuel divestment, indicating that people are:

seeing that it’s a campaign that can really change the way we deal with fossil fuels and with the climate crisis, whereas before it was just around mobilising people, but kind of around *what* was the issue.

Niamh O’Flynn suggested, though, that in New Zealand, “divestment isn’t really the language of the kitchen table here yet, whereas it is in other places”.

Work by Schittecatte (2015) on divestment campaigning is largely congruent with the views of Niamh O’Flynn. Schittecatte (2015:30) states that the divestment campaign uses two types of framing: “The first centers on a moral plea to halt destructive actions contributing to climate change. The second focuses on the argument that fossil fuels investments are economically unwise”, and she suggests that “The combination of these two types of framing, moral and economic, which are often viewed in tension in past climate change framing, is what makes the fossil fuel divestment case such an interesting one” (2015:31).

Concerns around extrinsic motivations ‘crowding out’ intrinsic motivations, discussed earlier, might offer a reason to question this combination. While no participant explicitly identified this as an issue, it was implicit in participants’ comments that, in discussions of divestment, coal, and deep sea oil, a dual focus on co-risks and the climate crisis itself may allow interlocutors to simply concentrate on the co-risk and thereby avoid the (stronger) climate framing. In Niamh O’Flynn’s work, she said: “I feel that it always come back to this, [people saying] ‘Yes, coal is plummeting, but it’s a bit silly to take a stand against the whole thing’.”

Two comments are relevant here. Firstly, that in communicating with people in the financial sector, speaking of economics is a way to create a common ground to work from: “When we’re campaigning, even on investment bankers... it comes down to the relationship you can have with the people who are key decision-makers” (Niamh O’Flynn). And clearly, if such individuals ask financial or economic questions, this will require some sort of economic framing in response, even if this is combined with moral framing. Secondly, in balance with what might be a necessary level of economic framing, Niamh O’Flynn spoke of overwhelmingly prioritising a moral framing.

Voluntary simplicity

Consumption and consumerism act as a hinge-point between economics and social life, and speak to the breadth of the challenge of economic change. As Jackson (2009:143) notes, we must not only decarbonise and “fix the economy”, but also address “the social logic of consumerism”. Voluntary simplicity seeks to do precisely this.

In his interviews, Matt Morris spoke about workshops he had facilitated on voluntary simplicity, along with a voluntary simplicity group he helped to initiate at the University of Canterbury. He spoke of voluntary simplicity as “a radical critique of consumer society” and “a very radical mode of being, of living” (cf. Trainer 2014; Alexander n.d.). In a sense, it can be seen as a ‘systemic’ version of the divestment campaign, supporting divestment not just from fossil fuel investments, but from consumerism more broadly.

Matt Morris spoke about “The revolution that’s needed... in our own homes” and about how “There’s a knowledge gap about how to live differently”. He commented that, when communicating about voluntary simplicity, “people need to go into this stuff quite deeply, it’s very personal”, and this needs to be sensitively responded to. However, Matt Morris also commented that “we don’t use voluntary simplicity in any of our [Edible Canterbury] comms work... where we’re trying to reach a broader public”. This implicitly references the difficulty of communicating radical ideas such as this, and therefore also the challenge of “Scaling up existing voluntary simplicity experiences to the societal level” (Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012:174).

Voluntary simplicity connects with the concept of “life politics”, with an orientation towards individual behaviour change including concern for “the everyday role of individuals in reproducing and/or counteracting structural injustices” (Wahlström, Wennerhag & Rootes 2013:108). Similarly, Jensen (2006) asks “What is a morally defensible level of consumption?”, comparing personal change within the environmental movement to personal change within the movement against racism. He asserts that anti-racist activists would never accept the idea that it would be acceptable for them to continue being racist until, for example, laws are changed, or the state stops being racist.

Social entrepreneurship

‘Social entrepreneurship’ can be defined in a variety of ways – here, I use the term to refer to private sector efforts to simultaneously work towards social and/or environmental goals and make a profit (see, e.g., Abu-Saifan 2012). While Gary Cranston expressed some cautions

about social entrepreneurship, particularly where it involves government subsidies, and a number of participants expressed concerns around the profit motive (cf. Klein 2014a:180), Nicole Masters spoke positively of the role of businesses in work that benefits the climate, and Matt Morris said that “what [social entrepreneurs] are doing is fantastic and should be celebrated”. He spoke of how Soil & Health’s magazine, *Organic NZ*, specifically aims to “tell that story”, and spread awareness of positive projects such as these:

I think that story connects really well with where New Zealanders are mostly pitched... people who are creating a business that also aligns with these values that New Zealanders have, about being environmentally friendly... nuclear free... and looking out for one another.

Stewardship of the land

The ideal of stewardship provides a basis of shared values to draw upon in communication with farmers. Nicole Masters spoke of how “most farmers see themselves as stewards” (although this does not guarantee that this sense of self-identification is, in fact, acted upon). She spoke of how stewardship can be manifested in a variety of ways, such as riparian planting or bush blocks. It can be seen as concern for the land, but also as concern for future generations: “I want my child to be looking after this piece of land.” Nicole Masters spoke about a number of projects which have demonstrated “how people can be stewards while still maintaining their bottom lines”: “I’ve got farms that I work with that are year seventeen with no external inputs apart from a bit of lime, [and] they don’t have any animal health issues”.

Permaculture and organics

In our interviews, approximately half of the research participants spoke of permaculture and/or organic food-growing and expressed a clear appreciation for the reduction of fossil fuel inputs and carbon sequestration associated with organic agriculture. Robina McCurdy also discussed the place of local economies within permaculture, and touched on other issues related to permaculture philosophy, such as the ethics of care of the earth, care of people, and “fair share”. In Gaisford’s (2010) work on Climate Camp Aotearoa in relation to permaculture and anarchism, she makes the case that permaculture is “fundamentally radical in challenging dominant economic systems” (Ball, quoted in Gaisford 2010:28). Furthermore, Gaisford (2010:26, 106) links this with “decentralisation of the means of production” and the importance

of “reduc[ing] reliance on the global economic industrial system”, emphasising the prefigurative politics of both permaculture and anarchism. Like Robina McCurdy, Gaisford also draws on permaculture’s ethical principles and notes how both anarchists and permaculturalists believe that “cooperative relationships are key to the sustainability and resilience of systems” (2010:88).

Co-ops and co-operative solutions

A number of participants spoke about various forms of climate solutions based around co-operation and sharing, including their own involvement with a range of co-operative projects. Gary Cranston also contrasted co-operative solutions with market-based and capitalist solutions (cf. Kallis, Kerschner & Martinez-Alier 2012:176; Oldham 2016). He spoke about how such co-operative solutions “can tie into... communicating positive values”, suggesting that values of “co-operation and solidarity” “will become increasingly relevant as capitalism becomes increasingly less attractive.” Further, Mike Smith spoke about how, in his past work with co-operatives, “the pay-off was each other, working together collectively”.

Discussing the coal industry on the West Coast of the South Island, Gary Cranston stated:

[Alternatives don’t] need to be the usual private capitalist plantation forestry model thing... [Alternatives can be] not just green jobs but green jobs controlled and designed for the benefit of the people themselves, so you’re looking in a more co-operative direction.

Gary Cranston also noted the challenges of communicating on this subject: “Ideologically it’s difficult to promote things like that to New Zealanders at the moment”, because it “runs up against the neoliberal individualist sort of narratives”. Although co-operative solutions may not appear attractive to people at this time, he made the case that activists could nonetheless put their energy into supporting such solutions so they are ready when people need them, such as “if we had another global financial crisis and people are struggling to survive”. In addition to this, though, he described the need “to make co-operative people’s solutions politically realistic”.

Lastly here, Shear (2014:202) suggests that, insofar as the term “jobs” “signals that someone else needs to provide employment for us”, the co-operative economy could be thought to move beyond the idea of “green jobs”, thereby aligning with Katherine Peet’s suggestion of moving from the language of jobs to the language of “sustainable livelihoods”.

Local (food) economies

Many participants spoke of local economies, and particularly local food economies, as an important response to the climate crisis, simultaneously reducing the drivers of climate change and decreasing people's vulnerability to it. Participants also mentioned Transition Towns and similar community groups, and described participation in local currency schemes and Time Banks.

Describing aspects of what a local food economy means in practice, Robina McCurdy spoke about her efforts focused on:

how to move towards 100% bioregional food resilience and reweave culture and bring together community... It's about fruit and nut trees everywhere, community food forests, heirloom varieties, schools as community food hubs.

More broadly, she spoke of the importance of "real things underpinning the economy", such as the growing of food. Further, Mike Smith said that "at its [most] basic level, economics for me is about the land", and Dayle Takitimu said of Te Whānau-ā-Apanui: "We live off the land, we live off the sea". Robina McCurdy spoke about how many Westerners are incapable of providing themselves with their own food, due to not having the skills: "People don't know where to start. Some people don't know how to dig with a spade." This can usefully be understood as an economic incapacity. In response to this situation, Mike Smith spoke positively of the "real resurgence going on" with home gardening in recent years. This was supported by Matt Morris, who also commented on the increasing numbers of community gardens in Christchurch.

Robina McCurdy described a recent permaculture workshop she had facilitated, in which she spoke with students about how to "redress" the "state of the planet". Having asked "What is the one pivotal thing?", she indicated that "every single response was about localisation, decentralisation, local food, local empowerment, education at the bioregional level." Similarly, Matt Morris spoke about how growing food in Christchurch's red zone "on a big scale" is "a pragmatic real solution to an issue of a revoltingly globalised food economy that's totally unsustainable". More generally, he added that local food economies are part of "the antidote to the TPPA or any of these programmes of activity, economically driven, that are driving the climate crisis".

Matt Morris spoke of the successes that he and Edible Canterbury have been experiencing in communicating about local food economies:

It's very easy for people to connect with food, because we all have it, quite frequently, and we by and large like it to be good, and we kind of instinctively get that, when it's

close by it's better.

Mike Smith spoke of his background in the “co-operative movement”, which he described as being “about living together as communities and having local economies”, and said that this was something that he discussed quite naturally in his climate work, especially as he saw it as part of the Māori “cultural construct” (cf. Oldham 2016:127-8).

In addition, the ‘politics of localism’ influences participants’ experiences of communicating around these issues. Matt Morris said that he very frequently speaks about “developing a local food economy... and I think that means a lot of different things to different people, which is probably why I feel comfortable to use that.” He spoke of it being “quite well received by people from various parts of the political spectrum”, and suggested that a range of people with right-wing political perspectives have concerns about “the TPPA and globalisation generally”. Ultimately, he said of his work with Edible Canterbury:

Our discourse totally accepts the status quo... there's nothing overtly controversial about a strong local economy, it's the kind of stuff that even our current government would support.

This clearly allows for broad outreach.

Robina McCurdy also spoke about some of the challenges of communicating around local food economies, when this becomes confronting for people in terms of their sense of identity. She described how, in her permaculture workshops, she speaks about the dominant economic paradigm to help people “grasp... the value of a different economic system”. But she said “It gets really challenging”, because people begin to ask “Am I going to lose my money?” or “Am I going to not use the bank?” She spoke of what goes through people's minds:

‘I want to have *my* bananas’... ‘I’m going to have my pawpaw or papaya coming in from Australia’... You know, ‘I want my chocolate, my coffee’... ‘I don’t want to deal with that!’

In her words, “It hits the personal”:

As we shift from that to a new paradigm, it's like that feeling of... fear... of not having *your current lifestyle*, which includes all of your addictions, and all of your fancy dresses, so that's where it's challenging.

She implied that she approaches this in a non-prescriptive manner (“No-one's asking you to do that at all”), and makes sure there is space for deep and open discussion about these issues.

A just transition

“There are no jobs on a dead planet.”

- Climate justice/just transition slogan

‘Just transition’ approaches bring together social and environmental justice in responding to the climate crisis and other sustainability issues. While a range of interpretations of the ‘just transition’ concept exist (Stavis & Felli 2015), a core element is the highlighting of questions around jobs and livelihoods in our efforts to create a sustainable society.

A core example of just transition work in New Zealand is Coal Action Network Aotearoa’s *Jobs after coal* report, which Jeanette Fitzsimons co-authored, and which a number of other interviewees spoke of positively. Gary Cranston also spoke of his recent involvement with the New Zealand Council of Trade Union’s “environmental union meetings”, an initiative which has been developing a “cross-union just transitions document”, and which he believes is “a really important part of coming up with a democratic or collective response to climate change”.

Jeanette Fitzsimons spoke of some of the challenges of climate work in coal communities such as the West Coast:

I think more people are now engaging with the idea that coal has got to be phased out because of climate change, but that’s not their primary focus on the Coast, it’s how they’re going to put food on their table for their kids tomorrow. That’s their primary focus: whether they can continue to pay their mortgage.

She also spoke about people’s fears around losing jobs through climate action, and that *Jobs after coal* was designed to speak to this fear. She described the role the report played in this context:

What that did was, it didn’t close any coal mines, or stop any opening, but it demonstrated to people that we actually are taking seriously the needs of the miners and the mining communities, that there are examples overseas of communities that have weaned themselves off coal and invented new economic communities for themselves, that there are other jobs that miners can do. And it opened doors to people... I went round the country and I talked to chambers of commerce, who would not normally have been that receptive to a straight climate change message but who listened when I talked about how you can reinvent communities to a different kind of an economy.

Ultimately, Jeanette Fitzsimons suggested that:

The public are mostly happy to back a phase-out of coal if they think the people affected are going to be taken care of, and that’s what we were about.

In relation to a just transition, the International Trade Union Confederation notes the

importance of “providing hope for the capacity of a green economy to sustain decent jobs and livelihoods for all” (quoted in Rosemberg 2010:141). A range of other writers speak of the importance of a just transition for ensuring that disadvantaged people are not further disadvantaged in the process of the transition to sustainability (see, e.g., Rosemberg 2010; cf. Chapman & Boston 2007:129). In terms of communication, the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers’ Union (quoted in Rosemberg 2010:142) suggests that, “with a Just Transition, we can build a public consensus to move towards more sustainable production”. Rosemberg (2010:144) highlights that “Vulnerability may be a source of reluctance to support change” (cf. Chapman & Boston 2007:129), and that promoting a just transition is therefore a way of bypassing or transforming this reluctance and resistance (and the framing of climate legislation as a “job killer” – Smith & Brecher n.d.).

Finally, participatory economic decision-making is an important element of some just transitions approaches (see, e.g., Newell & Mulvaney 2013:135). It also complements the discussion of dialogue in *Chapter 3*, and is important to democracy more generally. Gary Cranston stated:

Economics is something that should be done and practically managed by people... a participatory thing, not something that’s left to so-called experts, because when that happens, it’s easily captured.

Further, he spoke of how a just transition requires real engagement with people, saying that it needs to move beyond “prescriptive” approaches “where some environmentalists decide that they know what the answer is for that community and then they go in and sell it to them”. He therefore spoke about the importance of “the communities and the people that’ll be affected... leading the discussion”.

Living economics

I close this chapter, and the body of the thesis, with a broader discussion of what I here label ‘living economics’, which can be seen as underpinning a number of the solutions discussed above (cf. Living Economies n.d.). By a living economics, I mean an economics that is centred on people’s relationship with both the material world and with other people, rather than on the acquisition and use of money (cf. Ekins 1986). It relates to actions taken to provide people with a livelihood, and therefore includes both the ‘money’ and the ‘human economy’ (see, e.g., Barry

1999). I take such a living economics to include the daily economic decisions that individuals and families make, including the practice of sustaining oneself through the growing of food. This conception ties in neatly with the idea of prefigurative struggle, as well as the importance of ‘embodied knowledge’. Similarly, it is congruent with the importance of recognising how the economic realm is embedded in the social realm, a vital concept within ecological and feminist economics.

My conception of a living economics connects with, but is not restricted to discourses around: localisation (Scialom 2014; North & Scott Cato 2011; Gunster 2011:14-15); livelihoods (Fernandez, Mendez & Bacon 2013); “community economies” (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2009); the “core economy” (Stephens & Ryan-Collins 2008); the “social co-operative counter-economy” (Henderson, Lintott & Sparrow 1986:34); “grassroots economics” (Narotzky Molleda 2013; Narotzky 2012); and, finally, the “subsistence perspective”, which puts the focus on ‘life production’ rather than ‘commodity production’ (see, e.g., Bennholdt-Thomsen, Faraclas & Van Werlhof 2001). Scialom’s (2014:44) work on Transition Towns demonstrates such a form of living economics:

The Transition movement is increasingly articulating its environmentally motivated messages through calling for changes in dominant economic discourses... many are seeking to build the economy anew through daily embodied practice, guided by an environmentally informed localisation. [This] interpretation of the economy... actively counters the growth-focused and neoliberal interpretations, in which the economy is “conceived as an impersonal machine, remote from the everyday experience of most people”... Yet this discourse is mainly articulated through a reformulation of daily practices through a discourse of localisation, which encourages people to live in a more environmentally conscious and socially connected way.

The prefigurative strategy of a living economics can be seen in Hopkins’ (2008) call for a “Great Re-Skilling”, with people learning (or re-learning) “how to garden, repair things, look after small livestock, and generally make do with little” (Hopkins, quoted in Scialom 2014:20). However, it can be seen just as strongly in the importance placed on “building personal connections and relationships, and the placing of this more at the forefront of economic exchange” (Scialom 2014:20). This flows through into what might be framed as an insistence on democratic participation in the economic sphere, as discussed above: “[I]t is time for people to have their say in economic matters again” (participant quoted in Scialom 2014:7). Finally here, Scialom (2014:35) notes that Transition “attempt[s] to subvert and reclaim economics from mainstream neoliberal interpretations”; however, it does this “whilst still respecting the importance of a well-managed economy to meet people’s needs”.

The flip-side of Wainwright's (2014) moral economic critique, reviewed in the previous chapter, is her discussion of "the practicality of values of solidarity, equality and co-operation and harmony with the environment" (2014:8). She speaks of the ways in which:

the movements working for social transformation in the early 21st century – for example, for renewable energies under democratic control, for food security and sustainable organic agriculture, for free culture and open software – combine protest and political mobilisations with practical, productive alternatives. These are invariably organised on cooperative or commons principles. (2014:8; see also Shear 2014:195)

Thus, in connection with an orientation to community-building, we can see how Robina McCurdy's particular form of "solutions-oriented" approach can be considered one of community-level counter-power. She spoke of the importance of developing "strong models on the ground" and "plugging plugging at the grassroots":

Don't depend on the public authority... but at a certain point there'll be an ignition... from grassroots to council, then there's a chance for it to go up the ladder to our national governance, almost by embarrassment, almost by pressure, by shame... like what happened with Nuclear Free New Zealand.

In terms of the transformative power of the creation of "practical, productive alternatives", Wainwright (2014:8) comments:

These tendencies do not necessarily have an immediate, lasting impact on the dominant structure of political power, but they set the material foundations for the embedding of values of solidarity, social justice, co-operation and democracy, against those of possessive individualism. Our analysis of neoliberal power indicates that such foundations are a condition of an effective challenge to neoliberal dominance. (cf. Cretney, Thomas & Bond 2016:9)

In their combination of the creation of such material foundations with a systemic critique, backed up by mobilisation, the New Zealand climate movement is clearly working towards such an "effective challenge". As demonstrated in the comments of participants in this research, communicative efforts to promote both a systemic critique and "real alternatives" (Klein 2014a:343) are an integral aspect of these efforts.

PART FOUR

Conclusion

10. Conclusion

“We are already planning for a 4°C world because that is where we are heading. I do not know of any scientists who do not believe that.”

- Mark Maslin, professor of climatology, 2013 United Nations Climate Change Conference, Poland (quoted in Marshall 2014).

“[T]here is a widespread view that a 4°C future is incompatible with any reasonable characterisation of an organised, equitable and civilised global community. A 4°C future is also beyond what many people think we can reasonably adapt to... Beyond this, and perhaps even more alarmingly, there is a possibility that a 4°C world would not be stable, and that it might lead to a range of ‘natural’ feedbacks, pushing the temperatures still higher.”

- Kevin Anderson (2012:28-9)

The future we are currently heading towards offers the likelihood of suffering on a vast scale, and only far-reaching social, political, and economic changes will enable humanity to shift to an alternative path. In their work creating this shift, climate movement participants must combine a thorough understanding of the climate crisis, effective organisational strategies, and communication with a diverse range of publics. Focusing on the experience of climate communication, this thesis is the first extended piece of academic research that draws on perspectives from across the New Zealand climate movement (see also Diprose, Thomas & Bond 2016). In this research, I have sought to contribute to both academic and activist understanding of climate communication and the climate movement, and I detail this intended contribution here in relation to both my research approach and the analysis that developed through this.

Within this work, I adopted a number of distinctive approaches, with the aim of more thoroughly developing useful knowledge and thereby speaking to nuances of climate communication that are not always recognised in the literature. I have utilised an activist scholarship research approach that highlights the importance of knowledge development within social movements, adding to the small but growing body of work using such an approach in Aotearoa. By undertaking research ‘with’ the climate movement rather than ‘about’ it, I have been able to bring activist knowledge into the academic realm. This has demonstrated how important insights can be gained through putting the focus on the experiences and perspectives of climate communicators, reinforcing that it is not sufficient to simply look at movement

practices from a distance. Furthermore, by undertaking two sets of interviews with the research participants, I was able to confirm the findings of the first interviews, and further extend and deepen them with the direct involvement of the participants, thus engaging in the co-production of knowledge. I hope that this has shown that there is real value in academic researchers seeking to meet activists ‘where they are at’, and, through this, exploring academia’s own role in responding to the climate crisis.

In this work, I have also combined activist knowledge with multiple academic literatures, including material on climate communication, framing, the social science of the climate crisis, and the climate movement. Through this, I believe that I have been able to offer a more comprehensive picture of climate communication than is possible through concentrating on a narrower band of material.

Through my approach to framing analysis, I have contributed an alternative perspective to work on climate framing. Previous movement-centred framing work distinguished between a climate justice and a climate action/climate science framing, while non-movement-centred work has valuably offered a broad range of framing for consideration; however, both of these bodies of work also have limitations. This thesis has complemented these approaches by giving attention both to the choice of particular forms of framing and to the reasons behind these choices. In regards to the former, I have particularly given attention to “the multilayered complexities of frames and framing activities” (Benford 1997:422), highlighting the detail and subtleties of framing, rather than characterising frames as “monolithic, static entities” (Snow et al. 2014:36). Furthermore, giving attention to the process of framing, via a focus on communication decision-making, has allowed these nuances of framing to be evoked with greater clarity. Through focusing on the actual experience of climate communication in this fashion, I have more clearly been able to identify the significant challenges faced by “working framers” in the climate movement, and the choices that they make in response to these challenges.

There is a wide variation of opinion within the literature as to what constitutes effective climate communication. In most cases in this research, I was able to find examples in the literature which were congruent with the experience and opinions described by participants. However, in line with the broader critique offered by activist scholars, it was also clear that a significant segment of the literature voices perspectives detached from the experience and practical concerns of climate communicators. The academic literature therefore risks being one-dimensional, offering advice that movement participants are well aware of, and have integrated into a more nuanced picture and/or do not have the resources to apply. For example, while a

range of work constructively emphasises the value of dialogue, this may be done without recognising the time and resource-constraints of activists. Additionally, writers may overly condemn the use of fear appeals without adequately recognising the value of what might be termed ‘realistic’ fear, combined with hope and empowerment, as expressed by interviewees in a number of ways.

This research also indicates areas where further research could be valuable. Firstly, I particularly encourage further work with the New Zealand climate movement from an activist scholarship perspective. One regret in this research was not adequately reflecting the balance of ethnic groups in New Zealand in my selection of research participants. In particular, future research could valuably be informed by the distinct perspectives and experience of Pasifika climate movement participants. In terms of communication, some useful work could also be done through developing considerations of the ways in which an economic framing can be used without promoting extrinsic values. And finally, the material discussed in this thesis could valuably be connected with a number of bodies of literature that I have been unable to touch on here because of space constraints.

As noted above, in addition to contributing to the academic literature, my intention has also been to contribute directly to the New Zealand climate movement. I have sought to do this by supporting and upholding the reflective process of movement participants and thereby encouraging clarity in their communication efforts. Furthermore, this research project suggests that there is value in providing opportunities for further reflective processes in the movement. In line with this, participants also spoke of the potential for more communication throughout the full expanse of the movement and of the greater sense of cohesiveness this would provide.

My intention in this thesis has been to draw together and understand the experiences and views of movement participants. This process has highlighted that there are a number of themes that climate communicators could valuably reflect on. This research has been structured around these themes, along with the analysis that has both developed from these themes and has informed my presentation of them. In keeping with my earlier comments, I therefore offer back the analysis I have developed throughout this thesis “to activists, scholars and others for further reflection and debate” (Juris 2007:173).

Firstly, a core dynamic in climate communication is the balance between, on the one hand, speaking faithfully to the facts of the climate crisis and to what makes climate action meaningful to climate communicators personally, and on the other, speaking in a way that is meaningful to those being communicated with, and thereby ‘meeting them where they are at’. If climate communicators are able to achieve the right balance in this, they will empower people,

thereby inspiring behavioural change and political engagement. If the right balance is not struck, however, communication efforts risk not connecting with people, emotionally overwhelming them with the weight of the climate crisis, or overly diluting the message and losing its integrity. Balance is not a static state, however. It is an ongoing effort that requires both awareness of other people's values and the courage to 'speak your own truth'. Given the urgency of responding to the climate crisis, giving sustained attention to this balance is essential.

A fundamental way in which this balance manifests is through moral and economic framing. Morality and economics are pivotal in contributing a sense of meaningfulness to climate action, and they therefore play important roles in decision-making around climate communication. I have therefore discussed how climate communicators address the challenge of meeting people's needs for economic security and prosperity, while promoting positive values of solidarity and care for each other and the planet. Such combinations of moral and economic framing are of particular interest in the way they combine a call for radical action with speaking to people's livelihood needs, offering both a systemic critique and the real alternatives of a living economics. There is clearly a great need for climate communicators to continue to explore ways of communicating about systemic change with a diverse range of publics.

'Making climate action meaningful' involves offering concrete climate solutions, and helping people believe that such solutions are both necessary and possible. It also requires that the public is empowered to directly participate in these solutions. Through their work, climate communicators therefore promote behavioural change towards both reduced carbon footprints and increased political participation, building public capacity to engage with climate issues as well as building public demand for adequate climate policy. Such behavioural change will cumulatively create social and political transformation, via changed social norms and mass mobilisation, building "from the ground up" to make this transformation culturally and politically embedded. However, the window within which such mobilisation has a hope of making a significant enough change is a shrinking one.

Social movements are central to processes of societal learning. The communication experiences of climate movement participants described and analysed in this thesis therefore provide valuable insights that can help us understand the challenges we face in responding to the climate crisis. Understanding current approaches to climate communication is crucial for ensuring that our communication practices play the vital role they will need to as the climate crisis continues to deepen, informing our ongoing efforts both to promote just and compassionate responses to the climate disruption that we are already committed to, and, ultimately, to avoid triggering amplifying feedbacks and runaway climate chaos.

For the climate movement to be successful and sustainable, and to continue to mobilise people and grow the movement, we need to stay engaged and mindful in the work we do to create change, promoting healthy processes that combine action and reflection. It is this that will empower us and give us hope, keeping us on the path of effective climate action and transformative social change.

Climate movement participants have taken the first steps in responding to the climate crisis, but they cannot create the necessary social transformation on their own, and through their communicative efforts they have put out the call for help. For the sake of our common future, it is up to all of us to join with the climate movement in recognising the meaningfulness of climate action and embodying this sense of meaning in all of the decisions that we make in our lives.

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