CULTURAL PRAGMATICS AND THE RE-FUSING OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY

A STUDY OF TRADE UNION AND COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY REPRESENTATIVES' COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF NEOLIBERALISATION IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

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Abstract

That there has been sudden and significant social transformation resulting from neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand is clear. Few Western liberal democracies experienced the impacts of neoliberalisation to the extent and with the speed New Zealand did beginning in 1984. Owing to the speed and scale of reform, coupled with its implementation by a traditionally social democratic Labour Government, 1984 is itself collectively remembered by many communities within New Zealand as being symbolic of a significant rupture within New Zealand history, as a *breach* within the Labour Party, as a break from the values and principles of the labour movement, and as heralding a period of monumental social, cultural, economic, and political change.

Through interviews with twenty-one representatives of the trade union and community and voluntary sectors, my research presents a collective memory of neoliberal structural reform in Aotearoa New Zealand. In doing so, I argue a case for the application of cultural sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural pragmatics in the analysis of collective memory, in which social performance is collectively and mnemonically dramatised and analysed as analogous to theatrical performance.

I utilise analysis of collective memory of this period in order to delve deeper into what these memories can tell us about the narrativisation of social memory and change, the continued impacts of neoliberalisation, and the present social, cultural, political, and economic conjuncture. By examining communities' narrativisation of the past through collective memory, and the work of sense-making on the part of those who remember, the theoretical framework adopted in this study can aid the researcher in bringing to light the enduring meaning of events in a shared past, and the continued construction of this meaning through the present and future. In doing so, the applicability of Alexander's theory of cultural performance, in exploring the narrativisation of drama in social and political life, is shown to aid in mnemonic re-fusion—or the memory and meaning-work of amalgamating component parts of cultural performance for the purpose of constructing a collective narrativisation of the past.

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Introduction

Aotearoa New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government of 1984–1990 was responsible for the development and implementation of a dramatic shift in the shape and form of New Zealand society. Viewed as a departure from both a long history of socially progressive policies in Aotearoa New Zealand, and as a retreat from the Labour Party's traditional stance on social and economic matters, this shift saw the country transition from the Keynesian, social democratic economy of the four decades following the Second World War, to the neoliberal society it is today.

There are many changes associated with the neoliberalisation of New Zealand. The Keynesian welfare state provided an emphasis on 'full' employment, while maintaining a commitment to social democracy and the provision of welfare through an active state. The neoliberal reforms spearheaded by the Fourth Labour Government, with its focus on the primacy of the free-market and the promotion of individual self-interest, saw an increase in unemployment in the ensuing years, and opened the door to welfare cuts and radical labour market de-regulation implemented by the Fourth National Government 1990–1999.

In recent years, concerns over increasing poverty, wealth and income inequality, homelessness, and housing affordability, climate change, environmental degradation, stagnant wages and rising costs of living, have become central features of public and political discourse in New Zealand. However, the persistence and worsening of these issues in New Zealand and neoliberal economies the world over, and successive governments' unwillingness to address the root causes of systemic issues, signals such symptoms as, at best, wicked problems within the current structural setting, or at worst, defining and fundamental features of the neoliberal paradigm.

While the year 1984 is typically understood as heralding the beginning of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, and in this sense is remembered as a symbolic point of rupture, the process of neoliberalisation continued at pace well into the 1990s, only abating somewhat with the introduction of Third Way policies in 1999. Today, the

process continues, yet following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, and now in the midst of a global pandemic, recent years have seen a surge in attention being paid to growing global social and economic disparities, and a proliferation of calls from across the political spectrum for a re-evaluation of the current model.

Popular critiques of neoliberalism can be found in many scholarly works and opinion pieces, and both explicitly and as sub-text in the discursive strategies of politicians. Terms describing the current historical conjuncture and neoliberal hegemony as reaching a 'turning point' or 'inflection', as being in a state of 'crisis', or as in a stage of 'interregnum', are increasingly invoked to describe not merely the risks and weaknesses of the market-driven global system, austerity programmes, and proliferation of wealth in the hands of the few, but also of the sense in which neoliberalism is increasingly understood as incapable of addressing the core social, economic, environmental, and health-based issues of our times. While the explicit and public disavowal of neoliberalism by politicians and those who were most adamantly in favour of the early implementation of laissez-faire economics and cuts to social spending remains relatively rare, there are some who have dared speak its name, and question its very foundations.

The International Monetary Fund, no less, in a 2016 paper (Ostry et al., 2016), argued that neoliberalism had increased inequality and not delivered the growth it had promised, while also arguing for the 'reintroduction of some capital controls... and abandoning fiscal austerity policies' (Srivastava, 2016). In New Zealand, former National Prime Minister Jim Bolger, under whom neoliberalisation entered a new stage of intensification through the 1990s, stated in a 2016 interview with Radio New Zealand that neoliberal economic policies 'have failed to produce economic growth and what growth there has been has gone to the few at the top', and concluded, 'that model needs to change' (in Espiner, 2017). More recently, during the 2017 General Election campaign in which a coalition government was formed by the Labour, Green, and New Zealand First Parties, each would run on a platform which, in part, implicitly and explicitly challenged many of the assumptions of neoliberalism, while highlighting its varied negative impacts.

Prior to the 2017 election, then Labour Party and Opposition Leader—and Prime Minister at the time of writing—Jacinda Ardern, raised concerns about the impact of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, stating, 'New Zealand has been served well by interventionist governments… it's about making sure that your market serves your people

—[the market is] a poor master but a good servant'. Ardern added, 'Any expectation that we just simply allow the market to dictate our outcomes for people is where I would want to make sure that we (are) more interventionist' (in Cooke, 2017). In choosing to enter a coalition with Labour over the centre-right National Party, New Zealand First leader Winston Peters stated, 'Far too many New Zealanders have come to view today's capitalism, not as their friend, but as their foe…' (in Daly, 2017). This, following a speech earlier in the year in which he stated, 'The truth is that after 32 years of the neoliberal experiment the character and the quality of our country has changed dramatically, and much of it for the worse' (in Cooke, 2017).

Views such as those expressed by Ardern, Bolger, and Peters, draw from and invoke collective memory of the past by appealing to a shared understanding of the radical changes which occurred in New Zealand through the 1980s and 1990s, and their impacts. In this research, I seek to utilise analysis of collective memory of this period in order to delve deeper into what these memories can tell us about the narrativisation of social memory and change, the continued impacts of neoliberalisation, and the present social, cultural, political, and economic conjuncture.

That there has been sudden and significant social transformation resulting from neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand is clear. Few Western liberal democracies experienced the impacts of neoliberalisation to the extent and with the speed New Zealand did beginning in 1984. Further still, in a country which once prided itself on leading the world in the development of policies in pursuit of social and economic progress, and with a guiding grand narrative of egalitarianism, neoliberal structural reform first implemented by a traditionally social democratic Labour Party was perceived by many as a betrayal of both the Party's history and principles, and the supposed values of the nation itself. Of the neoliberal structural adjustments beginning in 1984, O'Brien and Wilkes (1993) write,

> It is a *tragedy* [emphasis added] for New Zealand society because of how it transformed the way in which we think of ourselves as a nation and of our relationships with one another. It is a tragedy because of the way in which it failed to take an opportunity to transform New Zealand and build on our history. It is a tragedy because of the way in which the changes flew in the face of both the

country's history and the origins of the Labour Party. It is a tragedy because of the ways in which large numbers of New Zealanders were shunted into the sidings and left while the rest of the society travelled past (pp. 7–8).

Owing to the speed and scale of reform, coupled with its implementation by a traditionally social democratic Labour Government, 1984 is itself collectively remembered by many communities within New Zealand as being symbolic of a significant rupture in New Zealand history, as a *breach* within the Labour Party, a break from the values and principles of the labour movement, and as heralding a period of significant social, cultural, economic, and political change. This drastic programme of economic reform was later referred to as 'Rogernomics', and led to market deregulation and tax reform, large-scale redundancies, increased unemployment and income inequality, and an adverse impact on communities across the country. For a sense of the scale of reforms beginning in 1984, Reardon and Gray (2013) list the measures taken by the Fourth Labour Government as including:

> ... deregulation of financial markets; removal of exchange rate regulations; floating of the NZ dollar; abolition of price controls and interest rate controls; relaxation of overseas borrowing; abolition of import licensing; reduction of trade barriers; abolition of industrial production controls; removal of agricultural subsidies; a general sales tax to move the burden from direct to indirect taxation; privatisation of state assets, including NZ Steel, Telecom, and the national rail network; restrictions on trade unions; public sector reform, including short term contracts, performance management, and private sector consultants in the civil service; and removal of consultative organisations from economic policy-making (p. 1).

While a quantitative and historical analysis can, among other things, indicate the causes and impact of structural economic, and social reforms on, for example, employment and the numbers affected by welfare cuts, perhaps more difficult to grasp are those 'tragic' aspects mentioned above—those sudden and irreversible changes—to the social, cultural, political, and economic fabric of New Zealand society. For this, a qualitative approach must be utilised, one which explores meaning in past events, and which is able to situate that meaning in its present context. To this end, the present study borrows from both cultural sociology and social memory studies in the analysis of qualitative data in the form of narrative elicited through interviews.

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The following research proceeds under the premise that New Zealand's trade union movement and community and voluntary sector, represent two overlapping *mnemonic communities* (Zerubavel, 1996) of certain shared interests and understanding, and that participants in this study constitute a cohort of *observers/audience* in the drama of neoliberalisation. In their roles as advocates for marginalised communities and working people, spanning a broad range of issues and interests from welfare, housing and health, social and economic justice, to industrial and employment relations, the community and voluntary sector and the trade union movement, and those they represent, have been impacted by a post-1984 laissez-faire approach to social, economic, and industrial policy and de-regulation that represents a significant breach in the collective's sense of identity and orientation relative to society and the state. While each group is distinct—each providing a unique *social framework of memory* (Halbwachs, 1992)—and autobiographical memory necessarily differs between participants, the collective memory presented here is nevertheless the result of striking commonalities of experience, interests, and expression.

Through interviews with a total of twenty-one representatives of the trade union, and community and voluntary sectors, this research presents a collective memory of neoliberal structural reform in Aotearoa New Zealand. In doing so, I present a case for the application of cultural sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of *cultural pragmatics* in the analysis of collective memory, in which memory of social performance and the narrativisation of collective memory is collectively and mnemonically dramatised, and analysed, as analogous to theatrical performance. In doing so, the applicability of Alexander's theory of *cultural performance* in exploring the narrativisation of drama in social and political life, is shown to aid in *mnemonic re-fusion*—or the memory, meaning, and sense-making work of amalgamating component parts of cultural performance for the purposes of constructing a collective narrativisation of the past.

Cultural sociology provides a lens through which the interpretation of collective memory, and meaning, can be understood. Through this lens, how a collective interprets and comes to understand social issues and processes, results from the cultural construction and reflection of social reality and memory. In this sense, social life and its articulation through memory is understood as the result of a process of representation

and the interpretation of meaning. A core relation identified by cultural sociologists and social memory theorists alike is that between socially consequential events and cultural codes. It is from here, at the interstices of code and event, continuity and breach, culture and the economic, the grand and the mundane, that this research is situated, through an exploration of the collective memory of the impact of drastic social, political, cultural, and economic change in New Zealand.

Within the 'strong program' of cultural sociology, studies of the past often draw from theories of *cultural trauma*, as opposed to more explicit explorations of the nature of social memory. As such, theorists within the strong program have focussed on such consequential and collectively traumatic events and phenomena as the Holocaust (Alexander, 2004; Giesen, 2004), war (Eyerman, 2019), slavery (Eyerman, 2004), and disaster (Dinitto, 2014). Ron Eyerman (2019) more explicitly incorporates collective memory into his study of the Vietnam War and identity formation, while Piotr Sztompka (2000) explores the collective impacts of social change in post-communist societies, but again, the authors' primary focus is on the *traumatic* nature of war, and epochal change. Eschewing in large part notions of cultural or collective *trauma* on the part of participants in this study, this research instead examines a *collective memory* of structural transformation in New Zealand as a monumental and impactful event in New Zealand history, as *social drama*[1], and as a significant *breach* within trade union and community and voluntary representatives' understanding of the social, cultural, political, economic, and *moral* traditions of the nation.

Together with the development of a 'strong program' understanding of cultural trauma, the concepts of *cultural pragmatics* and *social/cultural performance* represent a significant innovation within cultural sociology. Studies incorporating theories of cultural performance have included struggles for democratic power (Alexander, 2010; 2011a; Alexander & Jaworsky, 2014; Mast & Alexander, 2019); social and civil rights movements (Alexander, 2011a; Eyerman, 2006); terror (Alexander, 2006a; 2011a); war (Alexander, 2011a); and scandals (Mast, 2006). Cultural pragmatics and a 'strong program' understanding and application of theories of performance, while necessarily reflecting on the past, therefore tend to focus on the 'causality of proximate actors'

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[1] Here, this work distinguishes between and draws from both generalised and lay theories of social drama, or the dramatic and dramaturgical nature and conceptualisation of social life, and the more formal, processual work of Victor Turner (1974) (see Chapter 9).

(Alexander & Smith, 2003) within the performance itself. That is, studies applying the strong program's theory of cultural performance, treat the actors within the performance as the primary object of analysis, and the performance's reception by their audience as contemporaries occupying the same temporality, with less focus on the indelible impact of drama and performance on collective memory.

Taking a social memory approach to the analysis of an event of deep historical significance in New Zealand society, and of personal and community-specific significance to participants in this study, this research incorporates strong program theories and frameworks of cultural performance, memory *of* cultural performance, and memory *as* cultural performance, in the re-construction of a collective memory of neoliberalisation and structural transformation.

Interest in collective memory in the last 40 years has been significantly influenced by the work of Maurice Halbwachs, who coined the term *memoire collective* in his 1925 work *Les Cadres Sociaux de la Memoire* (*The Social Frameworks of Memory*) (1952). Halbwachs' most important contribution to the field of sociology came in his work *La Mémoire Collective* (*The Collective Memory*) (1992) in which he puts forward the thesis that groups hold a 'collective memory' and that this memory is dependent upon the framework within which the group is positioned in society. Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins (1998) construct a tradition of 'social memory studies', referring to the field of inquiry as a 'nonparadigmatic, transdisciplinary, centreless exercise' (p. 105). In doing so, the authors suggest both a move toward more 'processual' or 'narrative' approaches to social processes so as to not reify process in temporality, and the incorporation of social memory into macrosociological theories. Through the application of theories of *cultural performance* (Alexander, 2006b), *social drama* (Turner, 1974), and a collective structural narrative approach, this study presents both a processual and narratological approach to collective memory, while incorporating macrosociological theories concerning the nature of social, cultural, political, and economic transformation.

Following the transition to neoliberalism as the hegemonic cultural and economic paradigm of the majority of Western liberal democracies, a preponderance of academic works have incorporated theories of neoliberalism in the analysis of all manner of subjects, and within a range of disciplines, from economics and social policy, to cultural practice and discourse analysis. Several New Zealand studies have explored, through

interviews, oral histories, and historical analysis the impacts of neoliberalisation and structural change on specific communities, for example, farmers (Wallace, 2014; Hunt et al., 2013), union members, 'working people on the margins', and beneficiaries (Locke, 2012), and 'voluntary organisations' (Tennant, 2007). However, scholarly works from within Aotearoa New Zealand on *neoliberalisation* and structural reform beginning in 1984 generally focus on either the *history* and *causes* of reforms, their *substance*, the continued *influence* of neoliberalism and neoliberal policies on subjectivities, and their social, economic and, increasingly, environmental *impacts*. Bruce Jesson (1989), for example, examines the neoliberal turn within New Zealand's Labour Party, and what he deemed the 'reversal of traditional Labour policies' and resulting 'economic and social disintegration'. Brian Easton has written extensively on neoliberalisation in New Zealand, including works examining the pre-1984 debates within the Labour Party, out of which plans for structural reform emerged (1989), and later the theory and history behind the *commercialisation* of New Zealand beginning in 1984 (1997). Jane Kelsey's *The New Zealand Experiment* (1995) examines the rise of neoliberal economic theory in New Zealand and the social, democratic, cultural, and economic effects, or 'deficits' caused by neoliberal reform, while Humphries (1996) asks how it was that New Zealand, a society which prided itself on an ethos of collective responsibility for social wellbeing, allowed for economic reformation that seemed to contradict the nation's historic commitments.

The current study is indebted to the works of Easton, Kelsey, Jesson, and many others, in their collective efforts in tracing a history of neoliberalisation and its impacts in New Zealand, and draws heavily from their historical analyses in providing context and background to participants' accounts. However, with the history of structural reform in New Zealand well traversed, this study centres the voices of participants and community – specifically, trade union and community and voluntary representatives – in the reconstruction of a *collective memory* of the *drama* of neoliberalisation.

In Chapter 1, I first outline the *theoretical and methodological orientation* through which my research is presented. Chapter 2 then introduces the first of Alexander's six elements of cultural performance—*background symbols and foreground scripts*—and further lays out an analytical framework for the recounting and interpretation of collective memory and cultural performance.

Chapter 3 presents the element of *social power*, providing a brief history of earlier periods of structural transformation in New Zealand. Here, I examine the manner in which a collective memory of the *dynamics of social power* is couched by participants in a collective understanding of a shared past, both in terms of the period of neoliberal structural reform in question, and a past that is both mythologised and officially recounted.

Chapter 4 presents a case for the consideration of the trade union movement, and community and voluntary sector, as constituting an *overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion*, and the participants as *observers/audience* to the drama of neoliberalisation.

In Chapter 5, key *actors* within the drama of neoliberalisation and the construction and significance of their respective *character* are introduced. Next, in Chapter 6, participants recall the centrality and roles of *key actors* in the drama, the construction of their *character*, and the ways in which key actors have taken on metonymic representation within collective memory.

Chapter 7 reveals how, within the collective memory of participants, the element of *mise-en-scène*—or the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions that created the atmosphere in which the drama of neoliberalisation was enacted—is shown to have been a period of relative *historical* and *mnemonic density* (Zerubavel, 1996).

In Chapter 8, I examine the ways in which participants recall the various *means of symbolic production*—the final element of cultural performance—utilised by actors within the drama of neoliberalisation, while also adopting a range of *mnemonic means of symbolic production* in conveying and evaluating a collective memory of the unfolding drama and its impacts.

Departing from the theory of cultural performance, Chapter 9 then incorporates Victor Turner's theory of *social drama* (1974)—presented as *climax* within participants' *collective arc of narrative*—in the analysis of participants' memory of the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, and the perceived betrayal of the Labour Party's—and the nation's—traditionally social democratic principles.

Chapter 10 sees participants provide *denouement*, or the final act, in which research subjects collectively reflect on the impact of neoliberalisation, and operationalise their collective memory in evaluating the present conjuncture and their hopes for the future.

Finally, having provided *denouement*, concluding statements reflect on the utility of applying theories of cultural pragmatics and performance to social memory studies, and indicate possible paths forward for future analysis.

Acquiring information about an event second hand, through oral and written histories or informally within an organisation or community, will never match the verisimilitude of having experienced those events directly. However, through ongoing memory-work, within the communities of which we are a part, memories are transferred, and new meanings may be attributed, or old traditions of meaning reaffirmed. Furthermore, communities tend to draw from events of significance which together mark periods of greater *historical density* in constructing meaningfulness and significance in past events, but also in the projection of current needs and desires onto the future. The significant event or events are played over in our minds, reconstructed internally and through interactions over time, but always socially and within the social frameworks provided by the multiple mnemonic communities to which we belong. Once the event takes on symbolic significance, it becomes a marker for whole societies: there is 'before the event' and 'after the event'. Interpretations and meanings may differ between communities, but the event is widely held as pivotal. For participants in this study, the year 1984 has become a symbolic marker of drastic social, cultural, political, and economic change in Aotearoa New Zealand, and therefore acts as a symbolic and mnemonic anchor or reference point around which participants organise a collective memory of structural transformation and the drama of neoliberalisation.

1

Theoretical and methodological orientation

This chapter presents the core theoretical elements and orientation utilised in this study: cultural sociolology and the 'strong progam', social memory studies, and neoliberalisation. Situated within these paradigmatic fields of enquiry, and discussed in detail below, are the various tools and frameworks utilised in a cultural sociological and social memory analysis of the drama of neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Following an outline of the theories of *cultural performance*, *collective memory*, and *assemblage theory*, the present chapter then sets out the methodological considerations informing this work, in which narrative derived from individual interviews is demonstrated as being collective in nature.

Cultural sociology and the 'strong program'

The cultural turn has had a profound impact on the social sciences, and over the last 30 years, the 'new American cultural sociology' has emerged as an influential movement, with theorist Jeffrey C. Alexander and the 'strong program' at the centre of this development. Situated within the field of cultural sociology, outlined below are the interpretive tools, methods, and frameworks developed and utilised by scholars within the strong program, and adopted within this research in the reconstruction and interpretation of collective memory.

Jeffrey C. Alexander, together with fellow cultural sociologist Philip Smith present their vision for the 'strong program' within cultural sociology in *The Meaning of Social Life* (2003). The authors write,

> To believe in the possibility of a cultural sociology is to subscribe to the idea that every action, no matter how instrumental, reflexive, or coerced vis-a-vis its external environments (Alexander, 1988), is embedded to some extent in a horizon of affect and meaning... Similarly, a belief in the possibility of a cultural sociology

implies that institutions, no matter how impersonal or technocratic, have an ideal foundation that fundamentally shapes their organization and goals and provides the structured context for debates over their legitimation (p. 12).

Alexander and Smith (2003, pp. 13–14) identify three core characteristics that define the strong program: cultural autonomy, a rich and persuasive hermeneutic restructuring of social texts, and an anchoring of causality in proximate actors and agencies that exposes the very real impacts and affects of culture. Together, these core characterstics provide the foundational qualities of a programme of cultural sociology which champions an understanding of social life and action as rooted within a sphere of meaning and affect, and representation and interpretation.

Alexander's strong program within cultural sociology presents a vision for the study of social life in which there is an active analytical and conceptual decoupling of culture from social structure, or what theorists of the program refer to as *cultural autonomy*. It is this cultural autonomy and the analytical separation of culture from social structure that distinguishes the strong program from the relatively 'weak' programmes of the sociology of culture and cultural studies, in which culture is conceived of as a dependent variable, and a product of more 'hard' domains within 'traditional, institutionally oriented social science' (Alexander & Smith, 2003, p. 13). From those schools in which culture is the object of interest or analysis, including cultural sociology, the sociology of culture and cultural studies, there are of course, as Alexander concedes, key similarities in tools and terminology, and in views of the importance of culture itself and the 'cultural turn' in the humanities and social sciences. However it is on the issue of cultural autonomy, and the independent role culture plays in social explanation, where there is a sharp and fundamental divergence between these schools of thought.

In asserting the autonomy of culture, the strong program sees culture as an element within the social sciences with every bit as much power to shape and inform social actions and institutions as those material objects of inquiry more traditionally given primacy. Alexander and proponents of the strong program therefore contend culture is not a 'thing' to be explained by another 'thing' outside the domain of meaning, but an autonomous dimension in itself (Alexander & Smith, 2003). Culture and meaning-making, Alexander and colleagues contend, should therefore be situated at the centre of sociological understanding and analysed on its own terms.

Gregor McLennan (1998; 2004) argues that the strong program's focus on the autonomy of culture creates a primarily idealist conceptualisation of social life, and elevates 'something called Culture to a near-sacred interpretative status' (2004, p. 80). In acknowledgement of such concerns, this research moves further toward an understanding of material and cultural formations as concomitant, and in a manner in which cultural construction aids and abets the material and visa versa. With material institutions and fields of enquiry established and taken for granted as autonomous, in this sense, and with culture as an autonomous equal, neither is the result of the other, and neither enjoys 'near-sacred' status. Rather, each is posited as autonomous and in its own right as a co-functional, yet independent structural variable that aids in the analysis of the other. As such, asserting cultural autonomy in the analysis of material and economic relations allows this study to consider further the embeddedness of neoliberal hegemony as not merely the result of dominant, concrete assertions of policy and its economic basis and impacts, but of the continued performative and commemorative function of ideology. Furthermore, aided by the tools, interpretive methods, and analytical frameworks of the strong program, most notably a structural hermeneutic reading of performance and memory *as text*, and memory as a form of performance to be read as text, the following study provides a means of illuminating past and present historical conjunctures, in the materialist sense, and their varied meaning, affect, impacts.

Structural hermeneutics

In asserting the autonomy of culture, the strong program within cultural sociology utilises mixed methods of interpretation and *thick description*, and adopts a *structural hermeneutic* reading of social life as text. As Alexander and Smith (2003) write,

> structuralism and hermeneutics can be made into fine bedfellows. The former offers possibilities for general theory construction, prediction, and assertions of the autonomy of culture. The latter allows analysis to capture the texture and temper of social life. When complemented by attention to institutions and actors as causal intermediaries, we have the foundations of a robust cultural sociology (p. 26).

In developing structural hermeneutics, cultural sociology borrows from Clifford Geertz (1973) the notion of 'thick description' in reconstructing social actions. Geertz considered description as 'thick' when it is not merely thoroughly informed through in-

depth observation, but culturally placed in context. Thick description in this sense is, therefore, a potent reconstruction of social actions and processes resulting from a circularity of evaluation and description, construction and meaning, rather than merely a comprehensive observation (Alexander, 2003). Understanding action and meaning as text allows for the incorporation of literary theory and method in the analysis of social phenomena, and the utilisation of literary tools traditionally used to examine art and language.

From an analytic perspective, the strong program's turn toward literary theory, particularly the use of performance and drama, also allows the researcher to include emotion in the analysis of culture and social life. Emotion becomes central to cultural sociological analysis as it serves to convey and explain the patterns of impact and recognition of performance and symbolism which are central to a strong program reading of social life and collective memory. The centrality of emotion, affect and meaning, and the adoption of literary tools in cultural sociological analysis is best illustrated in the use of binary codes, metaphor, theories of framing, and the narratives by way of which these elements are conveyed (see Chapter 2).

Advancing the notion of *maximal interpretation*, or interpretations 'that go beyond what can minimally be agreed upon about the matter at hand' (Reed, 2008, p. 190), historical and cultural sociologist Isaac Reed argues all explanations in the social sciences involve to some degree the interpretation of meaning, and urges researchers within the strong program of cultural sociology to consider economics, politics, and power from an 'interpretive perspective' (2008, p. 189). The meaning-making involved in the expression and interpretation of collective memory through thick description, that is, an interpretation which moves beyond the mere documenting or reporting of aggregated or collected memories, requires, by necessity, a form of maximal interpretation, as individual and autobiographical memory is analysed and interpreted as contributing to a greater narrative which exists beyond individual accounts. In developing an understanding of meaning and significance through structural hermeneutics in the analysis of collective memory, this study moves from a *minimal* form of interpretation, one which merely establishes social actions in our past, toward a *maximal interpretation* which situates the interpretation of meaning as central.

Taking a structural hermeneutic approach in the analysis of both performance, and social memory as a *form* of performance to be read as text, and applying a maximal interpretation of individual and collective narrative, this research utilises the literary tools espoused by the strong program in the analysis of social life in re-constructing and interpreting collective memory. Adopting this approach, this study presents collective memory of *cultural performance* as the *assemblage* of memory-forms (see below), in which the elements of cultural performance aid in the re-fusion of memory assemblage as collective memory.

Cultural pragmatics

In further developing the strong program within cultural sociology, Alexander holds it is through social performance that the autonomy of culture is best illustrated, and it is also through such performance that social cohesion and consensus is sought and attained by way of 're-fusion' within the collective, and with the *elements of cultural performance*.

Building upon the work of Emile Durkheim and his study of religious life, Alexander argues that the creation and maintenance of *fusion* in less socially complex societies with strong social ties and shared values, beliefs, and meaning, is achieved by way of ritual which provides an intimate and immediate space for the solidifying of social bonds, shared understandings, and ways of being. Inherent in this typification is an understanding of less complex societies being 'fused' *inter alia* (Ringmar, 2020). As Alexander (2011a) writes,

> The more simple the collective organisation, the less its social cultural parts are segmented and differentiated, the more the elements of social performances are *fused.* The more complex, segmented, and differentiated the collectivity, the more these elements of social performance become *de-fused.* To be effective in a society of increasing complexity, social performances must engage in a project of *re-fusion.* To the degree they achieve re-fusion, social performances become convincing and effective—more ritual-like. To the degree that social performances remain de-fused, they seem artifical and contrived, less like rituals than like performances in the perjorative sense (p. 27).

Asserting such a distinction highlights the relative complexity of, for instance, Western liberal democracies of the 21st century in which heterogeneity, diversity, and hyper-individualism have become defining attributes. Conceived as such, and owing to these characteristics, more 'complex' societies can be thought of as being 'de-fused' in nature, making the pursuit of *re-fusion* a central feature and objective of performance by social actors.

In seeking to bridge structuralist theories which treat and read meaning as text, and pragmatist theories that treat meaning as resulting from action, Alexander proposes a theory of *cultural pragmatics* in which a society's culture—its shared systems of meaning, semiotic codes, narratives, and collective representations—is performed by social *actors*, received and interpreted by observers as *audience* to the performance, and read as text by both the audience in their reception, and the researcher in their analysis. In this sense, performance provides a pragmatics for the presentation and articulation of culture—or culture in action—through which a society's shared understanding of itself, and its context, is reflected through performance. For Alexander (2011a), performances are therefore a process of 'cultural extension' (p. 58) in which meaning and the imagined values of the collective are either successfully or unsuccessfully performed by actors to their audience. In this sense, a successful performance is one in which the audience, as observers, are persuaded by the actor's performance via 'psychological identification' (Alexander, 2011a, p. 30) with actors and the performed text, and through the integration of the elements of cultural performance.

Building upon Alexander's theory of cultural pragmatics, this research assumes an inherent pragmatics of collective memory—or memory and culture in action—presenting it as a shared narratological understanding of the past, and as the *performance* and *expression* of social memory. Understood as such, and rooted primarily in a collective memory of social performance, the present study extends the application of Alexander's framework outlining the elements of cultural performance, to the analysis of collective memory. Through the application of the elements of cultural performance as a framework for the analysis of shared narrative, assembled, seemingly disparate or individualistic memory (de-fused) is re-constructed, re-fused, and revealed as collective in nature.

Cultural performance

Alexander (2006b) develops a 'systematic, macro-sociological model of social action as cultural performance' (p. 31) that deconstructs performance in terms of its component parts. In doing so, Alexander (2006b) defines social/cultural performance as 'the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation', and states, 'This meaning may or may not be one to which they themselves subjectively adhere; it is the meaning that they, as social actors, consciously or unconsciously wish to have others believe' (p. 32). In developing a theory of cultural pragmatics, Alexander (2006b) identifies six component elements of cultural performance that must be integrated by actors in their performance, and which are adopted within this research in the reconstruction and re-fusion of collective memory: *background symbols and foreground scripts*, *actors*, *observers/audience*, *means of symbolic production*, *mise-en-scène*, and *social power*.

> ***Background symbols and foreground scripts*** are the systems of collective representation and patterns of signifiers utilised by actors in their performance. Where *background symbols* represents the deep systems of meaning and collective representations present within a given society, for example, the foundational myths of the collective, *foreground scripts* refers to the performance's 'immediate referent for action' (Alexander, 2006b, p. 33), informed by the context, needs, and social and material world of the time in which the performance is set.

> ***Actors****,* put simply, refers to those agents who perform and enact the *background symbols and foreground scripts* in practice. *Actors* project meaning through their peformance to their desired *audience*, successfully or unsuccessfully, through the integration of the components of cultural performance and in pursuit of 'fusion'.

> ***Observers/audience***. Every dramatic process must have its observers as the metaphorical and literal *audience* to the performance. Where *actors* seek to embody and articulate the pragmatics of culture through performance, and gain a positive reception by way of cultural extension and psychological identification, the successful performance and desired fusion also relies on the *observers/audience* and their seamless reception and decoding of the *background symbols and foreground scripts* embodied and performed by the actors.

Means of symbolic production. Encompassing those 'mundane material things that allow symbolic projections to be made' (Alexander, 2006b, p. 35), the *actors* must choose felicitously from the dramatic props on offer, while engaging with modern social and communicative platforms of meaning transferral and persuasion. Selecting the physical stage for performance, creating photo and televised opportunities, engaging in town hall meetings, or other settings, and establishing and maintaining authenticity throughout, are crucial to the performance of meaning and subsequent identification and reception.

Mise-en-scène. Having identified and navigated the *means of the symbolic production*, and with script in hand (both figuratively and literally), the *actor* must perform through 'dramatic social action' (Alexander, 2006b, p. 36). Translated as 'putting into the scene', *mise-en-scène* brings together the various signifying systems, means of symbolic production, and space, to be performed through a merging or re-fusing of language and action in real time and place.

Social power. If *mise-en-scène* sees the bringing together of the components of cultural performance into the very act of performance, the relative *social power* enjoyed by *actors* can either aid or inhibit access by actors and their opponents to the *means of symbolic production* and distribution. Social power is therefore understood as the distribution of power in a society, and the nature, formulation, and dynamics of its structure and hierarchies. Relative to the nature of the performance, and the status of its actors, whether that be a politician in the struggle for power, or the leader of a social movement, the performance may rely on technological symbolic production and distribution, such as television or social media, to a greater of lesser degree. In this sense, the role of social power is relative to the actor and their performance, but nevertheless plays a vital role in whether dramatic action is capable of progressing to the stage of *mise-en-scène*.

Considered within the theory of cultural pragmatics and social performance, Alexander argues that just as complex societies have become de-fused, so too have the elements of cultural performance outlined above. Performances are therefore only effective in so far as the actor is successful in re-fusing these core components, creating psychological identification between actor and audience, and gaining a level of verisimilitude,

authenticity, and resonance via cultural extension and the invoking and performing of shared symbols, narratives, and collective representations.

This research presents a case for the consideration of assembled memory-forms as being analogous to the elements of cultural performance. That is, the component forms memory assumes within a narratological reconstruction of the past may be thought of as representative of the elements of cultural performance outlined above. Within the framework of cultural performance, the assemblage of memory-forms as elements of cultural performance aids in both a greater understanding of memory of social drama, and of the manner in which seemingly heterogenous memory-forms are in fact co-functioning elements within collective memory.

Social memory studies and collective memory

Just as social and political actors seek re-fusion in society through cultural performance, collective memory and commemorative acts provide a powerful means of strengthening social bonds, and developing and maintaining a sense of collective identity and social solidarity, while serving as a script to which actors and audiences can refer in motivating social action.

As Christina Simko (2016) notes, 'an understanding of memory as integral to the heart and soul of collective life' (p. 457) has been central to the sociological tradition from its foundation. As previously discussed, Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* ([1912] 2001) explored the ways in which ritual sustains a shared sense of the collective and of social solidarity. Although not explicitly invoking or developing the notion of collective memory, per se, Durkheim's work nevertheless relied on an implicit understanding of not merely social memory and shared socio-historical continuity, but of the need for the collective to continually revisit and 'revive the most essential elements of the collective consciousness' (Durkheim [1912] 2001, p. 279). Following in this tradition, which sees society requiring a shared sense of continuity with the past, Maurice Halbwachs—a student of Durkheim's—would further develop the notion of social remembering, or *collective memory*, in exploring the ways in which social groups retain, maintain, reconstruct, pass on, and inherit social memory.

In the early memory work of Maurice Halbwachs, memory is a matter of the interplay of minds; not simply the dynamics of minds in constant metaphorical and literal conversation, but of how the minds' operations are structured by certain group-specific social arrangements (Olick & Robbins, 1998). As Halbwachs writes, 'It is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognise and localise their memories' ([1925] 1992, p. 38). According to Halbwachs, it is therefore impossible for the individual to recall events or emotions outside the context of their group. These group contexts are what Halbwachs famously referred to as *les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, or the 'social frameworks of memory'. Taking a cultural sociological approach, it is within these social frameworks, and with the social and cultural materials they provide—through collective narratives, symbols, and systems of meaning—that memory takes place.

The social organisation created by memory frameworks provides a persistent yet malleable structure in which memories are shaped, maintained, and constrained. Within this understanding of memory, even the most subjective of memories, those memories laden with the most personal meaning and emotion for the individual, are constructed within the frameworks of the multiple social groups to which the individual belongs. Symbols and representations, including narrative as a representation of the past, act as cultural tools utilised in the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of meaningful events. Memory, far from being static, is therefore in a constant state of flux. As lesser memories slip from the group 'consciousness', memories of greater significance are rehearsed and reinforced within the group, given new meaning, or represented in a new or altered light. For Halbwachs, this process situates memory firmly in the present, even as it inherently reflects on the past, and it is therefore susceptible to the needs, assumptions, and concerns of the present.

While memories are supported by a given community, individuals experience memory as being a highly personal, subjective experience, and therefore may experience the memory of an event with greater or lesser intensity, with perhaps emphasis placed on one matter or another to varying degrees. Similarly, each individual's personal account of an event may take on an autobiographical shape if the individual were present at the moment, or during the time of the event itself, and therefore may differ from other group members along generational or autobiographical lines. Halbwachs himself suggests

perhaps 'each memory is a view point on the collective memory, that this viewpoint changes as my position changes, [and] that this position itself changes as my relationships to other milieus change' ([1925] 1992, p. 142). However, this subjectivity nevertheless remains reliant on the social frameworks provided by the group, with the individual's experience of memory supported by their changing relationships to other groups. An example of this can be found in the overlapping of the social frameworks of memory created by the individual's membership of a given nation, ethnicity, political leaning, organisation, or family, and the dynamics of these overlapping frameworks of memory and understanding in informing collective memory.

Broadly speaking, there are two theoretical approaches illustrative of late 20th-century studies of collective memory, with Schwartz (1991; 2000) providing a distinction between 'presentist' and 'traditionalist' models. While the presentist approach focusses on *discontinuities* in evaluation, representation, and perceptions of the past, within the traditionalist conceptualisation of collective memory, the theoretical focus falls on the *continuities* of a given group's collective memory (Schwartz, 1991). Where *traditionalist* models of collective memory view memory as being in a constant state of maintenance, akin to traditions of heritage and national identity which are traditionally maintained over time, *presentist* models see the past as an entirely flexible construct, as a prisoner to the wants, needs, and concerns of the present. Memory in this latter sense can be considered as open to active manipulation, or, taking a more sympathetic stance, constantly shaped and reimagined through interactions within a given group or 'mnemonic community' (Zerubavel, 1996). In outlining further distinction between two forms of presentist memory, Olick and Robbins (1998) provide the following summary:

> Within presentism… it is possible to emphasise either *instrumental* or *meaning* [emphasis added] dimensions of memory: The former see memory entrepreneurship as a manipulation of the past for particular purposes where the latter see selective memory as an inevitable consequence of the fact that we interpret the world—including the past—on the basis of our own experience and within cultural frameworks (p. 128).

Here, Olick and Robbins outline a distinction between *instrumentalist* and *culturalist* traditions of presentism. Within the culturalist conception, the authors write,

cultural *persistence* or *change* [emphasis added] is not merely a matter of fit or lack of fit with context, nor of whether a particular memory is defensible as accurate or authentic: Memories form genres that unfold over time by referring not only to their contexts and to the "original" event, but to their own histories and *memories as texts* [emphasis added] (p. 130).

In his promotion of a 'non-reificatory approach to collective memory', Jeffrey K. Olick (2006, p. 13) asserts, 'neither of these views [presentist and traditionalist], however, is a particularly insightful way to understand the complexities of remembering, which is always a fluid negotiation between the desires of the present and the legacies of the past'. In agreement with Olick, and in acknowledgement of a more recent shift away from the presentist/traditionalist distinction, this research takes a pragmatic, non-reificatory approach to social memory studies and collective memory, by understanding the process of remembering as a fluid negotiation between traditionalist and presentist tendencies. This research is therefore not situated firmly within either of the two traditions. The concepts of presentist and traditionalist memory are, however, utilised to describe the manner in which participants explicitly situate their memory with reference to the present, while at the same time advancing a more traditionalist memory typifying historical accounts of the period in question. Furthermore, and informed by both Olick and Robbins' conceptualisation of *culturalist presentism*, and cultural sociologist Eric Taylor Woods' (2021) application of literary formalism to the study of social memory, this research develops an understanding of the collective memory of neoliberalisation presented by participants as reflective of the genre of *tragedy* (see *Collective arc of narrative*, below).

A *collective* memory, as opposed to a *collected* or aggregated memory (Olick, 1999), must integrate personal pasts and individual interpretations into a shared interpretation of the past. Commonly shared memories need not, however, be tested for their veracity, nor their conformity with those held by fellow group members. Rather, as the current study demonstrates, memory-forms and detail may vary, but it is the *meaning* and significance of individual forms, and the narrative as a whole, that share commonalities when considered collectively. Situated within the fields of cultural sociology and social memory studies, this study therefore adopts the term 'collective memory' in not merely an acknowledgment of and indebtedness to the traditions and legacy of Durkheim and

Halbwachs, and the strong program within cultural sociology, but in clearly demarcating the theoretical and methodological orientation of the present research as a *collective* as opposed to a *collected* or more broadly social understanding of memory. In doing so, my research acknowledges the manner in which previous conceptualisations, definitions, and nomenclature have greatly contributed to the field of social memory studies, and may at times better describe the often discrete, particularistic, and group-specific nature of social remembering. However *collective memory* is here preferred as the term which best encapsulates the manner in which certain structural qualities and tendencies toward shared meta-narratives and archetypal forms of representation transcend group affiliation and perspective through the incorporation, integration, and re-fusion of memory assemblage.

Collective memory is expressed in many forms, including oral and written narratives, physical monuments and locations, commemorative rituals, symbols, and material and psychic objects of shared significance. With the primary focus of this study on a collective oral narrative elicited through interviews with individual research participants, the present study adopts the term 'memory-forms' as a concept, wide in scope, which describes the various means of memory production and expression. Whether the remembrance of place, of specific people and institutions, of a time or moment in history, an imagined future, as aside or anecdote, memory-forms understood as being constitutive of a collective memory are imbued with and interpreted as being rich in collective and symbolic meaning and significance.

Considered in the terms discussed here, the collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives presented in this study can be understood as conveying a constant negotiation on the part of participants between presentist and traditionalist memory-forms, whereby participants' traditionalist memory, broadly speaking, follows a collective dramatic trajectory—a *collective arc of narrative*—that parallels that of 'official' (Schudson, 1993) and historical memory and knowledge. Where traditionalist memory provides a collective account by participants that effectively dramatises the memory of performance through collective narrative, presentist and participant evaluation of autobiographical and collective memory provides both colour and contour to the drama as *tragedy*, through evaluatory statements rooted in the present, and through group-specific social frameworks.

Recalling Halbwachs' ([1925] 1992) speculation that perhaps 'each memory is a viewpoint on the collective memory, that this viewpoint changes as my position changes, [and] that this position itself changes as my relationships to other milieus change' (p. 142), this research and the frameworks adopted in the organisation, analysis, and interpretation of narrative, provides a means of considering each view point as a component of memory assemblage, of assemblage as an element of performance and storytelling, and the re-construction and re-fusion of accounts as collective memory.

Freytag's Pyramid and the collective arc of narrative

In developing a reconstructed collective memory as a 'fluid negotiation between the desires of the present and the legacies of the past', this research identifies three distinct yet interrelated threads of collective memory illustrative of both traditionalist and presentist forms—*historical*, *instrumentalist*, and *culturalist*. Acknowledging that collective memory is rooted firmly in the present, even as it draws from a very real past, this study identifies both 'official' and 'vernacular' voices (Schudson, 1993) in reconstructing a narrative of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand. Here, a resonant 'official' voice is identified and understood as reflecting prevailing historical memory and knowledge, and represented, conceptualised, and reconstructed as social drama conforming to a *collective arc of narrative*.

While theories of structural narrative analysis (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) inform the identification, isolation, and analysis of discrete forms of story-telling by individual research participants, most notably in the analysis of *anecdote* and what this study refers to as *mnemonic postcards* (Chapter 8), a more expansive and collectivist approach is needed in the study of social memory. As Woods (2021) writes,

> the first step to uncovering the meanings that inhere in the form of collective memory is to recognize that it is a type of storytelling. If narratives of collective memory are a type of storytelling, then it follows that they also must conform to basic conventions of plot that are found in all stories (p. 324).

According to social memory theorist Eviatar Zerubavel (2004), 'Our tendency to better remember facts that fit certain (unmistakably) cultural mental schemata is quite evident in the highly formulaic plot structures we often use for narrating the past' (p. 4). Through

the adoption of Freytag's Pyramid, a re-construction of participants' recollections by way of a *collective arc of narrative*, and the application of theories of cultural performance, this research seeks to shift analysis away from a 'collected' or aggregate approach, and distinguishes the research approach from methodological individualism, toward a genuinely collective approach to social memory studies.

First theorised by 19th century German playwright Gustav Freytag, *Freytag's Pyramid* presents a dramatic structure consisting of seven components that dramatic storytelling follows in an arc from *exposition* to *catastrophe*. Having been first developed in his *Die Technik des Dramas* ([1863] 1905), what has since become known as 'Freytag's Pyramid' has been shown to be a highly influential means of conceptualising the structure of a five act play (Võsu, 2010). Freytag (1900) describes his pyramidal structure as, '[rising] from the introduction with the entrance of the exciting forces to the climax, and falls from here to catastrophe. Between these three parts lie (the parts of) the rise and fall' (pp. 114–115). Within this basic five part structure, three component crises or 'scenic effects' appear:

> one, which indicates the beginning of the stirring action, stands between the introduction and the rise; the second, the beginning of the counteraction, between the climax and the return; the third, which must rise once more before the catastrophe, between the return and the catastrophe (Freytag, 1900, p. 115).

Freytag's Pyramid provides a framework for understanding participants' collective memory as following a collective arc of narrative. Analysed as a collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives participating in this study, the collective narrative presented by interviewees is typical of a prevailing 'official memory' —from the traditionalist conception of collective memory—of the period in question, albeit coloured—or *mnemonically framed* within the tragedy genre—by the perceived impact of neoliberalisation on the participants and mnemonic communities they represent.

Cultural sociologist Eric Taylor Woods (2021) draws from the four literary archetypes proposed by literary critic Northrop Frye—*comedy*, *romance*, *tragedy* and *satire*—in arguing for a new approach in understanding the 'meaning of memory politics' and a heuristic device for interpreting the contested nature of historical narratives. Woods

builds upon the work of cultural sociologists who have applied this structural, archetypal approach to the study of social life, and further develops this approach in the study of memory politics. The application of Frye's literary formalist schema, Woods (2021) argues, acknowledges the contested nature of collective memory, while providing a renewed focus on the relevance of memory *form* over content. Beyond identifying the underlying forms of narratives which constitute collective memory, Woods concludes that the application of literary formalism in the study of collective memory provides a means of understanding the affective and emotional impact of certain narratives of the past, while creating space for normative discussions of both present and future.

Outside of normative statements and moral articulations on the part of participants, and commentary by scholars such as O'Brien and Wilkes (1993) who have asserted the 'tragic' nature of neoliberal reform in New Zealand, the adoption of Freytag's Pyramid provides a formulaic and processual structure to aid in the analysis of genre. Plotting a path from *exposition*, in which participants collectively provide necessary background and context to the drama, through *climax*, and eventual *denouement*, in which research subjects root their evaluation of the drama firmly in the present, the collective memory presented by participants in this study is shown to be rooted unequivocally within the tragedy genre.

Drawing from the work of Freytag, the collective arc of narrative is defined here as consisting of seven sequential phases. First, the *exposition* provides background and setting. Second, *inciting incident* denotes a series of events that complicate matters and create rising suspense and tension in the storyline. Concurrent with the inciting incident, *rising action* refers to a series of events which exacerbate tensions caused by the inciting incident. The *climax* sees the point of greatest tension in the narrative and signals a turn to falling action. The *falling action* phase in the arc of narrative sees the unfolding of events in the plot line and precedes *resolution*, which resolves problems that are presented over the course of the narrative arc. Finally, *denouement* signals the conclusion of the drama in which the various preceding components are brought together and reflected upon. Understood in these terms, the collective arc of narrative presented by participants is as follows:

> ***Exposition.*** Participants situate the drama of neoliberalisation in its socio-historical
> context through a discussion of the dynamics of *social power* as they relate to the

post-war social democratic consenus, and a residual-dominant 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1977). These structures of feeling are described by participants as the once dominant, now residual characteristics of the pre-neoliberal period, its affective elements and power dynamics, and the affective and experiential tension this residual structure creates against those qualities of the now dominant neoliberalism.

Inciting Incident. Participants describe the New Zealand social and economic *mise-en-scène* as being in a state of 'crisis', while the power of Prime Minister Muldoon, as *actor*, is increasingly challenged.

Rising action. Participants describe the *mise-en-scene* as being a period of relative historical and mnemonic density (Zerubavel, 2003), or pronounced eventfulness (both historically and as remembered), amidst increasing calls for social and economic change in New Zealand. The *actor* David Lange is introduced and becomes Leader of the Opposition and challenges Muldoon in the 1984 General Election.

Climax. Participants recall Prime Minister David Lange and the Fourth Labour Government gaining power and New Zealand enters a period of drastic neoliberal structural reform.

Falling action. Participants recall the realisation of the implications of 'Rogernmomics', the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, and describe a significant shift away from the supposedly core tenets of the New Zealand Labour Party.

Resolution. Schism or reintegration? Participants recall a resulting breach within the Labour Party and its traditions, and the beginnings of a culture shift within New Zealand society more broadly, as neoliberalisation intensifies under the Fourth National Government.

Denouement. Participants return to the present with evaluation of the impact of neoliberalisation and its *structure of feeling* while providing insight into the production and management of significant structural reform.

The brief structural outline presented above as a collective arc of narrative will serve for the reader as a broad outline of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand as recalled by participants. The collective arc of narrative is reflective of a prevailing official or historical memory, and of the drama's resonance, impact, and effect on the overlapping mnemonic communities in question. Furthermore, conceived structurally as following a dramatic arc, and through a close reading of narrative on both the individual and collective level, a maximal interpretation of shared memories, experiences, and evaluations identifies the genre of the collective memory of neoliberalisation presented here as conforming to that of *tragedy*.

This research does not, however, set about systematically de-constructing participants' collective narrative and re-constructing the collective account in pyramidal form. The course of the collective arc of narrative, and its genre, are indicative and reflective of a well established official memory of the period in question, and have been maintained over time across academic, historical, and media circles in line with the traditionalist form (see Easton, 1989 & 1998; Kelsey, 1995; Jesson, 1989). Rather, the collective arc of narrative, and genre, serve as a meta-narrative, and orienting structure in which participants in this study develop a more refined and nuanced collective memory reflective primarily of culturalist presentism. The present study therefore concerns itself with a more granular and novel approach which centres the social frameworks of memory, and illuminates the construction and maintenance of collective memory through its reconstruction by way of the elements of cultural performance. In this sense *memory of cultural performance*, and *memory as a form of cultural performance,* see collective memory as the re-fusion of elements within an assemblage of memory and its many forms.

Memory assemblage and re-fusion of collective memory

An understanding of the collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation as following a collective arc of narrative, and reflective of the tragedy genre, provide a cultural-structural and non-reificatory merging of traditionalist and presentist threads at the macro-narratological level. Understood as such, data attained through interviews with participants, and analysed at both the individual and collective levels, provides a means of re-constructing, analysing, interpreting, and re-presenting participants' collective narrative as not merely conforming to certain conventions and structural forms indicative

of story-telling, but also as a means of developing a greater understanding of shared meaning through the identification of genre.

Having identified the social drama as within the genre of tragedy, and progressing with an understanding of memory of cultural performance as the re-production of cultural performance, a close reading of collective memory as text further reveals the various memory-forms within collective narrative at a more granular and nuanced level. With memory-forms identified and interpreted for their collective significance, what remains is to order such forms in terms of their significance and co-functionality in relation to accompanying forms, and to the whole. To this end, the present study turns to a theory of *memory assemblage* in the arrangement of memory-forms as elements of cultural performance.

Niziolek (2021) draws from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theory of *assemblage* and later developments proposed by artist and philosopher Manuel DeLanda in advancing an exploration of memory structure and dynamics for the theatre-based study of social and collective memory. Where 'assemblage' in art refers to a three dimensional form of mixed-media representation, the aesthetics and desired meaning of which are dependent on its structure, composition, and component parts, *assemblage theory* in philosophy and social theory refers to an arrangement of a multiplicity of heterogenous yet co-functioning elements that can illuminate the analysis of social relations. Elaborating upon definitions of assemblage theorised by Deleuze and Guattari, Niziolek (2021) writes,

> an assemblage, by definition, comprises multiple different elements—bodies or terms, to use Deleuze's terminology—and has the capability of establishing sort of co-operative relations between these elements, so that they can function together, as an interdependent and coherent whole... The concept of assemblage cuts across the nature-culture divide, includes both human and non-human agents, combines material and immaterial elements, brings together the individual and the collective (p. 276).

Deleuze and Guattari (2019) provide further distinction between what they conceptualise as 'machinic assemblage' and the 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. As Niziolek (2021) explains,

The first corresponds with the bodily aspect of the arrangement, the content in a given assemblage, whether it is material (e.g. people, objects, places), or immaterial (ideas, emotions, social rules, aesthetic forms); the second with the symbolic aspect of the arrangement, the linguistic expression of a given assemblage (p. 277).

Adopting assemblage theory in conceptualising the structure, dynamics, expression, and meaning of collective memory therefore provides a means of considering those *who* remember, *what* is remembered and what *form* memories take, the *arrangement* and *composition* of memory, and its structure, colour, and illumination as consistent with 'machinic assemblage', while the collective memory as a 'whole' and its *symbolic meaning* as text can be read as the 'collective assemblage of enunciation'. In this sense, agents of memory select from an array of *memory-forms* and means of expression—the elements of assemblage—and draw them together in creating a whole of heterogenous yet interrelated pieces. Here, as Niziolek (2021, p. 277) writes, 'affect' best describes the binding together as a whole, and serves as that which 'connects and coheres the different elements of the assemblage bringing it to existence, the driving force behind the action or process of assembling, the performative and creative power of the assemblage'. The meaning drawn from the assemblage of memory can therefore be deconstructed and compartmentalised, with meaning analysed by way of its individual components, yet reading the whole as text, as a 'collective assemblage of enunciation' provides for a greater and richer understanding and reading of each.

For Manuel DeLanda (2019), as Niziolek explains, assemblages in social life comprise the various social groups to which we belong, bridging the micro- and macro-structure of society. In this conceptualisation, 'Assemblages are neither defined by the functions of their separate parts, as required by the whole, nor by the necessary characteristics of those parts, as discrete entities, but by the active connections or interactions between them' (Niziolek, 2021, p. 278). Of DeLanda's further advancement of assemblage theory, Niziolek (2021) notes,

[DeLanda takes] his readers on a journey from the micro- to the macro-level of the social realm, from the individual agent and interpersonal interactions, through the multiple intermediate structures and practices, to the social reality at large, which

might also tell us something about the relationship between the individual and collective "stages" of memory (p. 275).

Anastasio and colleagues (2012) propose that the construction of individual and collective memory formation are analogous processes, and that each is influenced by our social grouping or 'entity' and formed through a process of *consolidation* in which there is a 'conversion of more immediate and fleeting bits of information into a stable and accessible representation of facts and events, including a representation of the world and the entity's place in it' (p. 2). While the authors concede that collective and individual memory structures differ, they hold that memory formation and consolidation in each create structures by way of which remembering at the individual or collective level can occur. This research argues that the application of the theory of cultural pragmatics and performance provides a schema and framework for the organisation of collective memory as expressive narrative and an object of analysis which provides further *form* and *consolidation* to memory assemblage.

In conceptualising, reconstructing and analysing collective memory in terms of the elements of cultural performance, this study demonstrates the manner in which cultural and mnemonic assemblage, conceived of and framed as components of cultural performance, consolidate and re-fuse the expression and reception of collective memory. As memory of cultural performance, and memory as a form of cultural performance *occupies* a common temporality in the act of remembrance, yet *reflects* upon distinct temporalities of past and present, the assemblage of memory-forms conceptualised as elements of cultural performance allows for a closer reading of social drama and performance as a whole, as text, and as the collective assemblage of enunciation, or collective memory.

Neoliberalisation and structural transformation

In developing a case for the applicability of Alexander's theory of cultural performance in the study of collective memory, this research identifies the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, periodised as beginning in 1984 following the securing of power by the Fourth Labour Government, as symbolic of a significant *breach* in New Zealand's social, cultural, economic, and political history.

Neoliberalism can be understood broadly as both an approach to government, and a defining political movement of the last 40 years. Neoliberalism, David Harvey (2005) writes, is,

> in the first instance a theory of political and economic practices that proposes that human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual and entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterised by strong property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices… (p. 2).

Davies (2014) provides a bibliographic review of texts which recognise the complexity of neoliberalism. The author cites the 'crisis of Keynesian macroeconomics' in the early 1970s as setting the scene for a widespread paradigmatic shift which initially began in the United States and United Kingdom, but was soon exported internationally. Since the 1970s, the neoliberal doctrine, grounded in the assumption that private companies, individuals and free-market principles can best foster economic growth and the provision of social welfare, has shaped policies at international, national, and local levels. The term 'neoliberalism' is therefore often used pejoratively to describe the perceived threat of global capitalism, consumerism, and a disdain for the dismantling of the welfare state (Bourdieu 1998; Chomsky 1999; Touraine 2001; Plehwe et al., 2006). The widespread use of the term 'neoliberalism' has therefore led some to address its ambiguity and tighten existing definitions (Dean, 2012; Flew, 2014). Lawn and Prentice (2015: p. 1) note that 'neoliberalism is a term used to explain a wide range of contemporary cultural phenomena' and argue that 'it maintains enough coherence as a project to act as an influential force on material life, even if it operates in some spheres more as a 'structure of feeling' than an explicit platform'. This study embraces more expansive definitions and understandings of neoliberalism within the New Zealand context, drawing from definitions which see neoliberalism as an 'economic policy, a modality of governance, and an order of reason', yet with 'temporal and geographical variety in its discursive formulations, policy entailments, and material practices' (Brown, 2015, p. 20).

This research combines the political, economic, social, and cultural implications of neoliberal reform in New Zealand by uniting collective memory theory, and a cultural sociological analysis of the collective narratives of mnemonic communities. For the purpose of this study, *neoliberalisation* is understood as the ongoing and hegemonic

process of neoliberal policy reformation, governance, and social and cultural transformation in New Zealand. *Structural adjustment* and *structural reform* are also used interchangeably to denote neoliberal policies introduced in New Zealand by the Fourth Labour Government (1984–1990) and continued by the Fourth National Government (1990–1999). 'Rogernomics', in the tradition of 'Reaganomics' (US) and 'Thatcherism' (UK), denotes the New Zealand-specific experience of neoliberal economic policies introduced by the Fourth Labour Government's Minister of Finance (1984–1988) Roger Douglas.

Through interviews with participating representatives of New Zealand's community and voluntary sector, and trade union movement, respectively, this research explores a collective memory of neoliberalisation, and explores the indelible marks left in its wake during a period of mounting calls for social and economic transformation.

Methodology

There has been a considerable volume of academic works within Aotearoa New Zealand covering the social, political, economic, and cultural impacts of structural adjustment and the kind of economic fundamentalism indicative of neoliberalism which gained pace in New Zealand in 1984. Much of this work pays particular attention to the effects of corporatisation, privatisation, deregulation, increased unemployment, welfare cuts, and accompanying social transformation. This transformation can be understood as heralding an apparent shift in values alongside the more material transformation of a collective coming to grips with sudden and drastic social and economic change.

History books teach us much about this period in Aotearoa New Zealand history, while largely excluding the lived experience of those who were there. By way of a narratological and structural hermeneutic analysis of interview data elicited from community and voluntary sector, and trade union representatives, stock can be taken of this period of radical change. Through an understanding of the deeply entrenched meaning-making evident within each group's collective memory, the collective arc of narrative created in interpreting, explaining, and evaluating this period, and the application of Alexander's theories of cultural pragmatics and performance, we can begin to better understand the deeply felt and ongoing impact of neoliberalisation in New Zealand as it is expressed through collective memory.

This research utilises an open-ended, pragmatic approach to interviewing, where the aim is to elicit data pertaining to shared representations, cultural ideals, and emotional states and processes of meaning-making; occasionally asking for specific examples when participants offered generalised views, but otherwise keeping the general line of questioning broad, and the resulting narrative of individual participants largely uninterrupted. As such, the form of open-ended interviewing adopted for this study began, routinely and for each participant, with the opening question:

> *What has been your lasting impression of the election of New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government and the structural changes which followed?*

Open-ended interviewing followed by structural hermeneutic analysis allows the practitioner to observe the freely developed formation of memory, and later probe the inherent and interpreted meaning of both over-arching and more particularistic memory-forms. As Freeman (2014) notes, on the *hermeneutical aesthetics of thick description*,

> Hermeneutics helps us to understand that the value of a certain line of questioning can only be assessed in regard to where it leads or does not lead. Reminding ourselves that the hermeneutic task is to help the topic of our interest say something new, the process needs to be one where we are flexible and able to switch approaches when needed (p. 829).

This form of interviewing also allows the dialogue to be led by the individual participants, and for a general flow of recollection on the part of the research subject, while encouraging the researcher to remain conscious of the dynamic between participant, researcher, and the larger social context in which the interview is taking place. In this sense, a structural hermeneutic and maximal interpretation of narrative and collective memory as text, develops as individual interviews progress, and as each interview informs the analysis of the next.

Having transcribed each individual interview, the corpus of interview data was then considered collectively and 'story-boarded' thematically and temporally in terms of Freytag's seven-part dramatic structure, providing a collective arc of narrative. This process provides an overrarching framework for a shared narratological consideration of participant interviews as constituting a collective memory, while aiding in the identification of common themes, sub-text, genre, and moments of shared significance.

Moments and memories of both individual and collective significance were identified as those which resonate as meaningful to both the individual and researcher, and which attain further resonance and significance when considered as a component of the overall experience, evaluation, narrative, and memory of the collective. A structural hermeneutic reading of memory as performance, and memory of performance, then aids in the identification of memory-forms which are illustrative of Alexander's respective elements of cultural performance, bringing further form to memory assemblage, and further illuminating the drama of neoliberalisation.

This research builds upon and advances structural theories, and utilises data included and developed in the author's thesis submitted to Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, titled *The Ground Shifting Beneath Us: Collective Memory of New Zealand's Neoliberal Revolution* (2016). With human ethics approval granted by Victoria University of Wellington (Ethics Approval: 0000026246), the narrative presented here contains interview material recorded and transcribed from conversations with twenty-one individuals, conducted in 2016 and 2019: eight community and voluntary representatives (CVR), and thirteen trade union representatives (TUR), with one participant identifying as representative of both groups.

Speeches and press releases reproduced in Chapter 5 were retrieved through New Zealand's Parliamentary Library archives in Wellington. The initial search for archived material was achieved with assistance from the Parliamentary Information Service and librarians, and included material ranging from 1981–1989, with the subsequent focus of analysis centring on speeches and press releases of then National Prime Minister Robert Muldoon and Labour Party Leader David Lange, from 1983–1984.

Research subjects were recruited to participate via an email invitation, with participants identified via a mixed-method approach of convenience and snow-ball sampling, with ten participants interviewed in 2016, and eleven interviewed in 2019. Here, convenience sampling refers to the manner in which participants were contacted through both formal and informal networks established as the result of organisations' membership of peak-body trade union and community and voluntary groups. Owing to this approach, and with invitations addressing the organisations in question, as opposed to individual representatives, participants self-selected, shared the invitation with colleagues, and in

some instances were able to provide an introduction or contact details for further potential participants. Invitations were extended to potential participants in the four major New Zealand urban centres, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin; however all who accepted the intital email invitation were living in the greater Wellington region at the time of being interviewed.

Of the community and voluntary representatives, three participants were women, and five were men. Of the trade union representatives participating in this research, six were women and seven were men. Participants ranged in age from between 50 and 80 years of age. Each interview ran for approximately 90 minutes.

Trade union and community and voluntary representatives were selected as communities for analysis for both their historical and ongoing importance in civil society, and for the continued impact both have experienced as a result of neoliberalisation (see Chapter 4).

While thick description used in ethnography often seeks to describe in rich detail the participants of the study in question, this research, for ethical reasons, maintains the confidentiality of participants and therefore does not attempt to detail individual attributes or circumstances which may be used to identify any one individual. Accordingly, participants were assigned pseudonyms which appear in this study alongside excerpts of narrative.

In keeping with the collective nature of interpretation and analysis adopted for this research, excerpts of narrative were chosen to appear in this study that were identified as bearing the most collective significance to participants, and to illustrate shared or supporting themes and sentiments. Excerpts of narrative that carried the most collective significance where identified as such by the manner in which they explicitly or implicitly conveyed shared meaning, themes, sentiment, and evaluation related to participants' collective memory of the period in question. The contribution of each interviewee was invaluable to establishing a collective arc of narrative, developing the applicability of cultural performance to social memory, and in the reconstruction and analysis of collective memory. Where participants have not been quoted, their voice nonetheless resides in the collective significance of those excerpts chosen to appear in text.

While the personal details and life-histories of participants undoubtedly shape the recollections of each participant, this study focusses on the *collective* memory of

participants, as opposed to the groups' *collected* memory. Where general personal details of individual participants offer context to a given theme or excerpt of narrative, without jeopardising the confidentiality of the individual, they are included. However, in keeping with the collective nature of this study, the following work adopts a level of generality that lends itself well to collective and social memory studies. The result is a collective narrative which transcends the individual and treats highly personal emotions and experiences as a part of a broader arc of narrative, and integral component of memory assemblage.

In order to analyse interview and archival data, analysis began with individual statements, topics, themes, and other areas of interest. Meaningful relationships were then made between these elements, and developed into structural theories. What is uncovered through this form of analysis is not the truth or validity of a system of meaning, but a maximal interpretation, or 'a series of interpretations that reach beyond both established theory and gathered fact' (Reed, 2008, p. 188), which provides a framework for the development of an understanding of how systems of meaning operate, and how this informs a collectivity in their memories, beliefs, and values. As Barbie Zelizer (1995) writes,

> In distancing themselves from personal recall, collective memories help us fabricate, rearrange, or omit details from the past as we thought we knew it. Issues of historical accuracy and authenticity are pushed aside to accommodate other issues, such as those surrounding the establishment of social identity, authority, solidarity and political affiliation (p. 217).

In accordance with this claim, the following research does not look to establish the validity of any claim or aspect of individual memory in terms of its 'truth' or general likelihood. The important issue for a community-specific study of collective memory is not how accurately a recollection fits within established traditionalist, official, or historical accounts, or the congruity of individual accounts within the group, but the meaning ascribed to given events and the interpretation of this meaning.

Considering the narrative of each participant as more than simply an autobiography, but rooted deeply in their mnemonic communities, moves this method of qualitative analysis away from what might be considered methodological individualism. As previously

discussed, collective memory is more than simply the sum of individual memories of any given group; it is an intersubjective and ongoing collective process of representation and interpretation. While individual accounts can be deeply personal, and subjective in their autobiographical or seemingly idiosyncratic nature, an understanding of the *mnemonic framing* of memory (Chapter 4) allows for generalisation that can identify and examine shared meaning far beyond the confines of that offered by the individual alone. The mobilisation of analytic tools used within cultural sociology, and utilised in this study, can therefore demonstrate a broad and more meaningful understanding of seemingly subjective views and personal memories.

Having outlined the theoretical and methodological orientation informing this study, the following chapter introduces *background symbols and foreground scripts*—the first of Alexander's six elements of cultural performance. As I will demonstrate, background symbols and foreground scripts provide a foundational means of interpreting and understanding the discursive and narratological strategies of both actors in their performance, and observers/audience in their recounting of collective memory. As such, an understanding of background symbols and foreground scripts provides a 'cultural toolkit' (Swidler, 1986) of sorts, for the reading of cultural performance, collective memory, and the present study as a whole.

2

Background symbols and foreground scripts

Alexander's theory of cultural performance reveals the ways in which social actors, 'embedded in collective representations and working through symbolic and material means, implicitly orient towards others as if they were actors on a stage seeking identification with their experiences and understandings from their audiences' (Alexander & Mast, 2006, p. 2). With the performance of meaning central, Alexander (2006b) outlines six elements of cultural performance—*background symbols and foreground scripts*; *actors*; *observers/audience*; *mise-en-scène*; *means of symbolic production;* and *social power*—which this research in turn examines as a structural and organisational feature of collective memory.

Within Alexander's six-component framework for the analysis of cultural performance, background symbols and foreground scripts represent the *systems of collective representation* (2006b, p. 33) that inform the performance of power and meaning. According to Alexander (2006b),

> one part of this symbolic reference provides the deep background of collective representations for social performance; another part composes the foreground, the scripts that are immediate referents for action. These latter can be understood as constituting the performance's immediate referential text. As constructed by the performative imagination, background and foreground symbols are structured by codes that provide analogies and antipathies and by narratives that provide chronologies (p. 33).

Building upon this definition, the current research presents an understanding of *background symbols and foreground scripts* that aids both in the analysis of cultural performance, but also in the reconstruction and analysis of collective memory of performance and social transformation. Adopting Alexander's theory of cultural performance, the strong program's foundational structural hermeneutics, a Geertzian

(1973) understanding of how culture reveals itself and is utilised in socially-situated discourses, and borrowing from the tradition of cultural discourse analysis, this study approaches the identification and analysis of background symbols and foreground scripts within performance and collective memory on three interrelated levels discussed in detail below.

At the *foundational level of meaning*, in keeping with the structural hermeneutics of the 'strong program' within cultural sociology, this research identifies the meaning of *binary cultural codes* articulated, enacted, and embodied by key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation, in participants' collective memory of the drama, and in a collective memory and narrativisation of social and structural transformation. These binary cultural codes represent a system of overarching background symbols and meaning, which key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation struggle over, vie for symbolic proximity to, and subsequently represent and translate this proximity for and to their observers/audience. This overarching system provides a structure of meaning for actors in their performance, for observers/audience in their reception of performance, and in the observer/audience's re-production of performance through collective memory.

Within the *secondary level of meaning*, an analysis of discourse reveals key articulations and representations of social reality by actors during the drama of neoliberalisation, and by participants in their narrativisation and evaluation of the drama and its impacts. These articulations and representations by both actors and observers/audience represent the foreground scripts, or *immediate referential text* for both actors in their performance, and observers/audience in their recounting of collective memory. Although providing an immediate referential text for the conveyance of meaning, these foreground scripts are similarly informed by the overarching binary structure typifying the primary, or foundational level of meaning.

Finally, this research acknowledges both the relative autonomy of culture espoused by the strong program in cultural sociology, but also the contingency or dependence of culture assumed by the relatively 'weak' programs of cultural studies and the sociology of culture. In doing so, and at the *tertiary level of meaning*, this research examines those culturally-idiosyncratic codes present in speech and embodied in cultural and material objects, present in the discursive practices of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, and also within participants' narrativisation of collective memory. Again, these

culturally-idiosyncratic codes, although providing an immediate referential text as a component of foreground scripts, are nevertheless informed by the overarching binary system of meaning, and are in turn utilised to convey additional meaning or explanatory power in the articulations and representations of the secondary level described above.

The foundational level of meaning: Binary codes as overarching background symbols

Building on the traditions of Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand de Saussure, Alexander and colleagues' 'strong program' within cultural sociology understands culture as an autonomous system, consisting of *binary oppositions* which structure the meaning and use of cultural codes in discourse and social life. For cultural sociologists of the strong program, these binary, oppositional codes, must be en-coded, articulated, narrated, and/or embodied and performed. For Alexander and Smith (2003), central or 'at the very heart' of any society are sets of binary codes that provide structure, coherence, and a framework of meaning for social reality. As such, an understanding of binary codes provides a key means of understanding those guiding narratives that inform a collective in their sense of identity. Alexander and Smith (2003) provide the example of the fundamental and opposing 'democratic code' and 'counterdemocratic code'—the former related to the discourse of liberty, and the latter to authoritarianism—which provides a structure and discourse for American social life. In the democratic/counterdemocratic example, the former is positioned and considered as *sacred*, and the latter as *profane*, and aligned with each are a number of related qualities, from *open* and *truthful* (sacred/democratic), to *secretive* and *deceitful* (profane/counterdemocratic).

Alexander and Smith (2003) note that the democratic/counterdemocratic binary codes and their associations are similarly central to social and civil life across societies and are informed by an 'evaluative dimension', yet often with marked differences in expression between nations and cultures. This evaluative dimension, and their often culturally-specific articulation makes the importance of their negotiation and embodiment a critical component of cultural performance, and the performance of power.

The attribution of moral qualities to concrete 'facts' (Alexander & Smith, 2003), and the identification of membership within moral communities via associations with symbolic elements, is not merely a feature of cultural performance and group membership, but is

also a feature of the construction and analysis of collective memory. Through shared narratives and systems of meaning, mnemonic communities construct their collective memory around not merely a shared past and present subjectivity, but within a moral and mnemonic framework informed and constructed in relation to shared binary codes.

Although Alexander's democratic/counterdemocratic binary distinctions will be shown to be both instructive and a feature within the analysis of cultural performance and collective memory presented here, this research does not attempt to assert or examine the foundational, binary building blocks of New Zealand society. It does, however, identify and isolate a binary semiotic structure present within the discourse and cultural performance of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand. This binary structure is also identified within a collective memory of key actors' successful/unsuccessful embodiment and articulation of proximity to sacred/profane ideals, and within their adoption and articulation by participants in this study as an explanatory and analytical feature of collective memory of structural transformation and the positionality of participants.

In describing his cultural sociological analysis of symbolic conflict within struggles for power, Alexander (2009) writes,

> Taking state power in a democratic society is a struggle for position vis-à-vis the binary discourse of civil society. The goal of those who struggle for political power is to identify themselves, their campaign 'issues', and their broader ideology with the sacred side of this binary and to project convincing accounts of their opponents as embodying anti-civil evil. Those who struggle for power seek to expand these cultural constructions beyond their immediate ideological and organisational groupings, to become iconic objects of emotive identification for populations far and wide (p. 68).

Chapter 5 introduces the key *actors* in the drama of neoliberalisation, the construction and perception of their respective *characters*, their *performance* in the drama of neoliberalisation, and a collective memory of their performance and character. Within this analysis of key actors, greater detail of the discursive practices adopted in their struggle to embody, represent, and gain proximity to certain *sacred* ideals, while casting their opponent and aspects of social and economic life in proximity to the *profane*, will

be made apparent. Through an analysis of campaign speeches and media releases on the campaign trail in the months prior to New Zealand's historic 1984 General Election, this study will reveal how Labour Party leader David Lange's successful ability to articulate and embody *sacred* ideals of democracy, change, openness, and progress, and to associate his opponent Prime Minister Robert Muldoon with *profane* qualities of authoritarianism, stagnation, closed-mindedness and conservatism, would ultimately aid Lange and the Labour Party in securing power, and transforming the very structure of New Zealand society. However, it will also be shown through analysis of participants' collective memory, that Labour's programme of *Rogernomics* (see below), and the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, ultimately came to represent a *profanation* and *polluting* of *sacred* and *pure* ideals of the traditionally social democratic Labour Party.

Within the collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives, and as observers/audience to the drama of neoliberalisation, participants collectively frame their memories and evaluation of both past and present in terms of a group-specific and overarching system of meaning typified by a semiotic structure of oppositional binary codes. This binary system of meaning is evident in the accounts provided by participants, and in their collective narrative presented here as collective memory. The evaluative dimension informing the binary codes in terms of their proximity to the sacred or profane becomes evident not merely through their explicit critiques of neoliberalism and its impacts, but also when we consider each group—trade union, and community and voluntary—as constituting an *overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion* (Chapter 4), with a shared history, similarities in mnemonic framing, and shared experiences of neoliberalisation and its impacts and affects.

The secondary level of meaning: Immediate referential texts

Representative of the secondary level of meaning, an analysis of discourse reveals key articulations and representations of social reality by political actors during the drama of neoliberalisation, and by participants in their narrativisation and evaluation of the drama and its impacts. These secondary level articulations and representations by both actors and observers/audience represent the foreground scripts, or the *immediate referential text* for both actors in their performance, and observers/audience in their recounting of collective memory.

Although providing an immediate referential text for the conveyance of meaning, these foreground scripts are similarly informed by the overarching binary structure. Expansive in their use by both actors in their performance, and observers/audience in their narrativisation of collective memory, this research identifies six core codes within the secondary level of meaning: *welfare*, *consensus*, *crisis*, *'There Is No Alternative'* (TINA), *Rogernomics*, and *neoliberal/structural discourse*. Although the core codes presented here by no means represent a detailed or exhaustive accounting of the many symbolic and discursive representations invoked by actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, nor observers/audience in their recounting of collective memory, the codes outlined below represent certain core ideas utilised as an immediate referential text by both actors and observers/audience.

Welfare

As will be discussed in Chapter 3, research participants invoke a collective memory that spans colonial and pre-colonial New Zealand, to the present, with a particular focus on the development of the welfare state, and the social and economic context in which it was created. In discussing the welfare state, participants provide a history of welfare and both social and economic support, and the development of the Labour Party and its social democratic traditions. For participants, 'welfare' and associated terms such as 'support', are *encoded* (Hall, 1980) as representative of the social and economic 'stability' of the pre-neoliberal, Keynesian social democratic era, and associated social and economic policies and public institutions.

An understanding of the expansive encoding of 'welfare' and related terms provides for a greater understanding of participants' collective narrative as collective memory. Where, for example, one participant recalls the importance of state housing, another free education, or another public works agencies, all provide a collective memory of the greater role of government in providing its citizens with a basic level of social and economic support indicative of a strong welfare state. Encoded as such, and encompassing a number of social and economic policies, 'welfare' in this sense is invoked in comparative work on the part of participants in describing what has been lost or greatly reduced as a result of neoliberalisation, and the social, economic, and cultural consequences of this loss. Furthermore, when considered with respect to the moral framework provided by the foundational level of meaning, in which collective memory is

presented in relation to binary codes as overarching background symbols, the loss of social and economic support afforded by the strong welfare state is positioned by participants as being a profanation of the sacred values of collectivism and egalitarianism.

Also evident within the collective memory of participants, and the discursive practices of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, are the ways in which ideas and associations related to 'welfare' were embodied, expressed, and performed by actors in the drama. During the campaign for the 1984 General Election, for example, leading actors David Lange and Robert Muldoon would each evoke collective memory of the social and economic stability of previous times for different purposes. Where Lange would invoke explicit and coded language and associations with 'welfare' to articulate the need for a modernisation of the economy and fulfilment of the sacred values of the Labour Party tradition, Muldoon would call upon collective memory of social and economic stability in articulating the need to continue a path of Keynesian economic interventionism.

Consensus

Related to the foreground script of 'welfare' and its associated codes is that of 'consensus'. 'Consensus' here is broadly understood as being coded by participants in their collective memory and by key actors in their cultural performance as functioning and encoded in four ways: as describing the post-WWII Keynesian social democratic 'consensus'; the stated desire by Lange to reach 'consensus' around the future of the New Zealand economy; the lack of social 'consensus' exemplified by increasing social division; the 'consensus' of neoliberal hegemony; and the hope for a new 'consensus' informed by a collective memory of the Keynesian social democratic era.

'Consensus' is coded by participants in this study in terms of structural and cultural hegemony, relative social solidarity, appeals for support by both social democratic and neoliberal actors in the performance of power, and the idea of a generally agreed upon vision or state of being. 'Consensus' as it is expressed by interviewees throughout the present study is therefore both implicitly and explicitly paired with the potential for realisation of disagreement and conflict. As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, the collapse of the post-WWII consensus, recalled by participants as being typified by economic stability and greater egalitarianism, yet also social exclusion and inequality,

was coupled with increasing social division and what Hagel (1998) cites as a shift from uni- to multi-dimensional politics in New Zealand. Owing to this inherent tension, within collective memory of consensus and stability, participants articulate associated contradictions of division and instability. For interviewees as observers/audience, and actors in the drama of neoliberalisation alike, the term 'consensus' was therefore encoded and utilised for expressive and evaluative purposes as an ideal yet seemingly unattainable quality within a socially-complex liberal democracy.

Crisis

Participants in their collective memory, and key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, each invoked the meaning-laden code of 'crisis' as an immediate referential text in describing both the social and economic context of neoliberal structural adjustment, and the perceived crisis of neoliberal hegemony in the present.

According to Gilbert (2019, p. 2), 'crisis' works as a 'semantic anchor around which a plurality of political narratives [competes] for space'. In this sense, the ability of actors to define and articulate 'the crisis' in cultural performance and discursive practice, or indeed, to deny or minimise its very existence, becomes a field of intense contestation for political actors. As Gilbert (2019) explains in relation to the Global Financial Crisis of 2008,

> the dramaturgy of "the crisis" further intensified this debate: The use of crisis to describe a situation suggests some sort of decisive and corrective response is urgently required. In such situations, political actors move to take advantage of a crisis; to try and monopolize its meaning and thereby validate their agendas and projects, lest their opponents do the same. In this way, the idea of crisis has the ability to define the contours of political discourse, to absorb rival positions in a struggle over its meaning and consequence. The concept of crisis thereby functions as a "legitimation device" (Maton, 2013, pp. 45–7); a discursive means by which symbolic control can be exercised over a domain of facts (p. 2).

Through an analysis of the scripted cultural performance of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, this research exposes the marked differences in emphasis and articulation of 'the crisis' employed by key political actors, and the ways in which the

crisis functioned as a 'legitimation device' for certain immediate post-election economic measures, and drastic structural reform that would follow. Gilbert continues,

> The stakes can be high because "crisis" is able to describe situations where decisions are needed, and the way a situation is described also prescribes how those decisions are to be both framed and settled. Because of this we could say "crisis" creates an "arena of struggle", whereby opposing parties attempt to gain a monopoly over the way it is defined. To gain such a monopoly allows the consolidation of legitimacy for prescriptive agendas that are implicitly embedded within a crisis description (2019, p. 2).

Following Gilbert's (2019) description of the role of 'crisis' as it applies to political performance, the 1984 General Election is shown in this research to have been the penultimate 'arena of struggle' for articulating and encoding the social and economic 'crisis' facing New Zealand, and the centrality of this articulation and encoding in Lange's expressing the need for urgent action and 'change'. In this sense, the explication of 'crisis' served for both Lange and Muldoon as a key immediate referential text or foreground script in their struggle for power and legitimacy in the eyes of the voting public. By coupling the twin crises of economic 'stagflation' and increasing social division, with appeals to 'progress' and 'modernisation', Lange, this research suggests, was able to position himself and the Labour Party, their values, traditions, and ultimately their answer to the 'crisis' as being closer in proximity to the sacred shared values of the collective when cast against a profanated Muldoon and Muldoonism. Use of the term 'crisis' throughout this research therefore reflects the term's adoption by key political actors in articulating and rhetorically positioning social and economic life prior to the implementation of neoliberal reforms, and by the participants as observers/audience as they recall this articulation, and their perception of the state of social and economic life at distinct periods in New Zealand history.

Collective memory of the 'crisis' and its encoding by key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation is also evident in participants' collective narrative. Fundamental to participants' collective memory of the crisis is Lange's success in attributing blame to Muldoon and the National Government's 'out-dated' economic policies, anti-democratic refusal to seek input or 'consensus' around the best path forward, and a social conservatism increasingly understood by much of the public as observers/audience as

being out-of-step with shifting social sensibilities. Where participants collectively remember significant social movements as indicative of the social crisis—notably the 1981 Springbok Tour (Chapter 7)—key events of economic crisis include the protracted wage and price freeze (Chapter 8), the post-election financial and constitutional crisis and devaluing of the dollar (Chapter 9), and the implicit articulation in the face of crisis that there was 'no alternative' to drastic structural change.

There Is No Alternative

Related to the explication and encoding of 'the crisis' of the economy by key actors, and how it features and is encoded in the collective memory of participants of this research, is the coded edict *there is no alternative.*

There is no alternative was the edict and slogan adopted by UK Conservative and 'New Right' Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in calling for and justifying UK neoliberal structural adjustments in response to the crisis of the post-WWII Keynesian social democratic consensus. Where neoliberal structural reform in other Western liberal democracies would be championed and implemented by explicitly 'New Right' political actors, and centre-right Parties, notably in the UK (Thatcherism) and the US (Reaganomics), the New Zealand experience provides a curious case of neoliberal, free-market economic reform, as it was a traditionally social democratic, centre-left Labour Party that led New Zealand's structural transformation. This central feature of the New Zealand experience undoubtedly provides some explanation as to why arguments for structural reform by Lange and the Labour Party were couched in the ability of economic success to contribute to the realisation of the promises of the Labour tradition, as opposed to appealing to purely economic reasoning.

Taking power six years following the beginning of Thatcherism, and three years into Reaganomics, the social impact of the worst excesses of an unfettered market-approach to economic recovery were, by the time of New Zealand's 1984 election campaign, evident to both Lange and Muldoon. With this in mind, an analysis of speeches made by Muldoon ahead of the 1984 election reveals his warnings of the likely impacts of market liberalisation, while Lange sought to reassure the New Zealand public that any pain would be temporary and that measures would be put in place to alleviate the impact on groups worst impacted by any drop in living standards. Nevertheless, while explicit use

of Thatcher's edict 'there is no alternative' is absent from Lange's discursive strategy, as will be shown in Chapter 5, the edict is implicitly coded in the rationalisation and articulation of the urgent need for 'change' in the face of the 'crisis'.

For research participants, a collective memory of the code and foreground script 'there is no alternative' is evident in participants' memory of the manner in which the need for change and 'modernisation' was articulated by Lange and Labour's Minister of Finance Roger Douglas. Furthermore, some 42 years after Thatcher first proclaimed 'there is no alternative', and 37 years after the beginning of Lange and the Fourth Labour Government's first term in power, the phrase and the acronym 'TINA' has been mnemonically appropriated and coded as symbolic of the argument for neoliberal structural change in New Zealand. Against collective memory of Lange's implicit adoption of TINA, participants collectively recall the lack of clearly articulated alternatives in response to the crisis, and collectively assert 'there are always alternatives'.

Rogernomics

As with 'Thatcherism' and 'Reaganomics', the portmanteau 'Rogernomics' denotes the neoliberal economic policies of Minister of Finance under the Fourth Labour Government, Roger Douglas. Within the collective memory of interviewees, Rogernomics as a feature of foreground script is a symbolically and historically loaded term, encoded with social, economic, cultural, and economic history, meaning, and moral and values-based associations.

In many respects, the current research is primarily focussed on the meaning of 'Rogernomics' in the collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives, respectively, and collectively. As will be discussed in greater detail elsewhere (Chapter 7), a study of this kind necessitates a level of 'periodisation' (Jameson, 1984) on the part of both participants and researcher, in setting the boundaries of collective memory for the purposes of narrative (re)construction. In this sense, and within this configuration, the year 1984 and 'Rogernomics' are symbolic markers, loaded with referential and symbolic power and meaning.

'Rogernomics' broadly describes the neoliberal economic policies developed by Douglas and his team, and implemented by the Fourth Labour Government, which, economically

speaking, sought to maximise the role of unconstrained markets (Easton, 2020), yet as this research explores, also had a fundamental impact on New Zealand culture. Collectively understood as signifying a betrayal of the Labour Party tradition, as heralding an attack on 'welfare' and its associations discussed above, for its impact on the participants personally and collectively, its perceived eroding of shared sacred ideals, and its fundamental centrality to the drama of neoliberalisation, 'Rogernomics' reads as a core foreground script and immediate referential text for participants in this study.

Neoliberal/structural discourse

Present within participants' collective memory, and as an 'emergent' discourse within the cultural performance of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, are features of a discourse reflective of neoliberal cultural and economic ideology.

Neoliberal discourse here refers to speech practices and symbolic associations which have become normalised as a result of neoliberal hegemony. Stemming from neoliberalism's core tenets of maximised free-market economics, and the state and its bureaucracy as a hindrance to free-market efficiency, neoliberal discourse that promotes individual choice and personal responsibility over government mandates and collectivism is increasingly embedded in what Antonio Gramsci referred to as our 'common sense' understanding of social life and order. Outside of the term's economic implications, neoliberalism can be understood as a 'process that circulates through the discourses it constructs, justifies, and defends' (Springer, 2012, p. 135). As an ideology that transcends the mere implementation of economic policy, Escobar (2010, p. 41) describes neoliberalism as the successful 'entrenchment of individualism and consumption as cultural norms'. The entrenchment of these values as cultural norms is in turn reflected in our speech patterns, where words can be considered as encoded with aspects of neoliberal ideology and practice.

Evident within the discourse of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation is the emergence of features of neoliberal discourse and an *emergent structure of feeling* (Williams, 1977, see Chapter 3). Within the analysis of the discourse of key actors' cultural performance (Chapter 5), this research reveals not merely an emergent neoliberal discourse, but the tempering and rearticulation of such discourse by Lange as he argued for not merely economic prosperity, but social progress and greater equality through

market liberalisation, diversification, and economic modernisation. Conversely, analysis of the discursive performance of Muldoon reveals the manner in which he attempted to frame the free-market approach as 'radical' and its proponents as 'economic purists', with his Keynesian economic interventionism favoured as a means of securing the social and economic welfare of the collective.

While this study acknowledges assertions of the critical importance of avoiding the reduction of 'all heterogeneities of neoliberalism… to just discursive ones (in the sense of language)… and the profusion and dissemination of language' (Springer, 2012, p. 141), the articulation of language, ideas, and representations associated with neoliberal practice and ideology are clearly expressed by participants in this study as a fundamental feature of neoliberalisation.

For participating research subjects, neoliberal discourse and its counter language of social democracy and collectivism is evident in the collective memory presented here. Participants recall Rogernomics and neoliberal structural reform in terms of the neoliberal discourse and promotion of individualism, efficiency, choice, personal responsibility, accountability, and consumerism, while navigating the complexity and often contradictory nature of situating these terms in proximity to a sacred/profane system of meaning shared by the cohort of interviewees.

The tertiary level of meaning: Culturally-idiosyncratic codes

At the tertiary level of meaning identified in both the discursive practices of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, and in the collective memory of participants as observers/audience, this research identifies a number of culturally-idiosyncratic codes adopted by both key actors and interviewees alike that take on both group and cultural-specific meaning in the performance of power, and the narrativisation of collective memory.

In defining the role of background symbols and foreground scripts in cultural performance, Alexander writes,

> In symbolizing actors' and audiences' worlds, these narratives and codes simultaneously condense and elaborate, and they employ a wide range of rhetorical devices, from metaphor to synecdoche, to configure social and emotional life in

compelling and coherent ways. Systems of collective representations range from 'time immemorial' myths to invented traditions created right on the spot, from oral traditions to scripts prepared by such specialists as playwrights, journalists, and speech writers (2006b, p. 33).

Yet, as Wherry and colleagues (2013) observe of Alexander's analysis of cultural performance, a lack of explanation by researchers around the cultural and historical significance of core symbols may render the full meaning of such representations inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with the societies and cultures discussed. As memory and conceptual history scholar Nicolas Russell (2006) writes, 'In order to understand how groups remember collectively, we need both cross-cultural and culturally specific concepts of collective memory' (p. 801). Here, a multi-faceted understanding of culture, cultural sociology, the sociology of culture, and a cultural understanding of discourse analysis in which the three layers of meaning presented in this chapter are taken into account can serve to strengthen Alexander's 'strong' understanding of the relative autonomy of culture in cultural performance. In order to do so, this research acknowledges the often culturally-idiosyncratic reading of codes, which are rooted in socio-historical context and are integral to collective memory, and provides additional background for a deep reading of memory through the explication of social, cultural, and historical context.

Culturally-idiosyncratic codes at the tertiary level of meaning, take a number of forms across the discursive practices of key actors, and within the collective memory of participants. As such, they become a form of cultural shorthand within a collective's shared understanding and system of meaning. Ranging from a sport, a town, a place name, a novel, a television show, to key actors in their symbolic and metonymic significance in New Zealand history and in the drama of neoliberalisation, key codes and scripts of culturally significant and idiosyncratic import are identified throughout this research, and examined for their function in narrative, and their collective significance.

Having demonstrated the manner in which symbolic representations included in this study operate on three levels, the discussion outlined in this chapter will serve for the reader as a means of better understanding the interpretive lens through which this research was undertaken. At the foundational level of meaning, binary codes serve as guiding and overarching background symbols that inform actors in their performance,

and observers/audience in their reception of the performance, and in their expression of collective memory. At the secondary level of meaning, the immediate referential texts provide for key articulations and representations of social reality, while the tertiary level of meaning sees the use of culturally-idiosyncratic codes rooted in the social, cultural, and historical specificities of the collective.

Taken together, the three levels of meaning presented here constitute the element of background symbols and foreground scripts which are core components of cultural performance, and a key means of interpreting participants' narratives and re-constructing a collective memory of neoliberalisation. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, through their use of background symbols and foreground scripts, participants as observers/audience began their collective account of the drama of neoliberalisation by way of *exposition* and through a detailed discussion of the socio-historical context of reform, and the dynamics of social power in New Zealand.

3

Exposition: Creating and shifting the dynamics of Social Power

Having presented the manner in which the use of *background symbols and foreground scripts* by actors within, and audience to the drama of neoliberalisation, is interpreted and conceptualised as operating on three interrelated levels in the collective memory presented by interviewees, we now turn to the creation of, and shift in, the *dynamics of social power* as an element of participants' shared narrative, and as exposition within a collective memory of neoliberalisation.

A key component of Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural performance is that of *social power.* According to Alexander (2006b), social power—as an element of cultural performance— refers to:

> The distribution of power in society—the nature of its political, economic, and status hierarchies, and the relation among its elites—profoundly affects the performance process. Power establishes an external boundary for cultural pragmatics that parallels the internal boundary established by a performance's background representations (p. 36).

As one of six interdependent elements providing 'a framework for the interpretive reconstruction of the meaning of performative action' (Alexander, 2006b, p. 36), Alexander's definition of *social power*—as it relates to cultural performance—provides an expansive means of examining the distribution and *dynamics* of power in the context in which the performance is set. Having explored the 'internal boundary established by a performance's background representations' in the preceding chapter, and with subsequent chapters exploring in greater detail the 'external boundary for cultural pragmatics' and the performance of power by actors in the drama of neoliberalisation,

the current chapter will explore a collective memory of the dynamics of *social power* from the subjectivity of *observers/audience* to the drama of neoliberalisation.

Within the collective memory of interviewees, the distribution of power in society— collectively remembered in relation to the drama of neoliberalisation—is couched in a collective understanding of a shared past, both in terms of the period of neoliberal structural reform in question, and a past that is both mythologised and offically recounted. Within this collective memory, social power is presented as a dynamic force, shifting through time, influencing new hierarchies and stratification, shaping culture, and informing new systems of meaning.

The acknowledgement of drastic change in New Zealand necessitates comparative work in both the personal narratives and collective memory of interviewees, and constant reference to the structural forms of social democracy and neoliberalism, respectively. Considered in binary terms along a temporal continuum of 'before' and 'after', *sacred* and *profane*, comparative work by research participants within and between the two structural systems is often presented as contradictory in nature, giving rise to culturally complex narratives, associations, and shared symbols of meaning.

While participants spoke of the comparative equality and relatively evenly distributed social power afforded by the strong, pre-1984 welfare state, exemplified by a shared sense of greater egalitarianism and access to public services and support, participants also acknowledged the inequalities of social conservatism and traditionalism under the Muldoon Government. Similarly, the relative economic equality of this time is often contradictorily situated by participants within a broader acknowledgement of New Zealand's social relations and economy as being in a state of 'crisis' through the 1970s and early 1980s. These culturally-complex negotiations of memory, in which the past is framed both positively and negatively around distinct issues, requires constant interpretative and comparative work by the participants as historical and autobiographical memories overlap to create collective meaning. Interviewees therefore grappled with often contradicatory or conflicting memories of social power as it relates to the dynamics and distribution of social and economic power, influence, class, and culture. In this sense, participants recall a more egalitarian and equal society, while also acknowledging the period as a time in which Māori, women, LGBTQ+ peoples, and racial and ethnic minorities, were often excluded from the mainstream of society, and

from a full realisation of the supposed egalitarianism purported by participants to have in part defined the pre-neoliberal era. Ultimately, however, it is against the current neoliberal period, in which the interviews were conducted, that collective memory of social power during New Zealand's social democratic era is comparatively cast. This comparative work is central to the collective memory of participants, and serves as a means of illustrating a perceived profanation of certain values held by the interviewees as sacred.

While participants repeatedly described a New Zealand idealised in its simplicity prior to the 1980s, in its coherence, the past is also described as socially conservative, traditionalist, and homogenous. While participants recalled favourably the social democratic principles, institutions, and a general sense, or *feeling* of stronger community, autobiographical and historical memory of the deep social conservatism of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s was evoked in setting the scene, through narrative, for socially progressive movements that would follow during a period of relative historical and mnemonic density (Chapter 7). Furthermore, without autobiographical memories to call upon to give salience and verisimilitude to assertions made regarding the distant past, participants utilised culturally-idiosyncratic codes and collective understanding of a grand narrative that allowed participants to generalise with regard to a mythologised past in New Zealand's history.

As stated, stark contradictions were often central to memories of participants both as a means of comparative and evaluatory work with regard to the shift from social democracy to neoliberalism, including comparative work *between* the two systems, but also memories situated *within* the two structural forms. Participants, for example, recalled greater stability and political consensus in relation to the pre-neoliberal structure of society, even as New Zealand's parliamentary system and rigid two-party system of politics at the time, with few contraints on executive powers, would later allow for unexpected and drastic neoliberal reform. Participants cite a greater sense of freedom owing to the strong welfare state, even as they recall an often stifling social conservatism and traditionalism so many were striving to break free from. A greater sense of community was recalled by participants, and greater social power in organising both in terms of labour and within developing social movements, even as Muldoon and the National Government in the years prior to their defeat in 1984 were recalled as

'authoritarian'. Finally, a greater 'sense' or 'feeling' of relative egalitarianism was recalled by participants, even as discursive caveats and equivocations were offered in acknowledgment of social inequalities which were recalled as, in part, typifying the period in question.

Much of the comparative work and memory of contradiction undertaken by participants over the course of this study centres on the dynamics of *social power*. Central to the collective memory of social power presented by interviewees are the dynamics of class, race, gender, and other forms of identity; the social power dynamics between the state and demos; between the state, its institutions, and civic organisations; within New Zealand's parliamentary system; the social power exerted by actors on the periphery of the public performance of neoliberalisation; and ultimately, the social power dynamics within the Labour Party during a subsequent period of organisational crisis.

Many of the dynamics of social power listed here will be addressed in subsequent chapters and throughout the entirety of this study. Although a number of these dynamics of social power as they relate to the neoliberalisation of New Zealand have been thorougly examined across many scholarly works over the past four decades, a full analysis of each of these dynamics as they relate to collective memory would make for rewarding future research. What follows in this chapter is instead an exploration of the dynamics of *social power* present in the collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives participating in this study as it relates to the myth of egalitarianism in New Zealand, and contradictions within and between social and economic reality, affect, and the *structure of feeling* (Williams, 1977) of transition from social democracy to neoliberalism. However, to place participants' collective memory in its social, cultural, and historical context, we must first explore the 'official memory' informing interviewees' collective appraisal of pre-neoliberal New Zealand.

Making 'New Zealand' and the egalitarian myth

A founding ideological myth of New Zealand's early national identity is that of egalitarianism. The egalitarian myth has its origin in the country's colonial past, formed at a time in which it was widely understood a working person could experience improved opportunities compared to those 'back home' in Britain. Wages and prospects were high owing to the abundance of 'cheap' land on offer, and differences between worker and

small business person were not as pronounced as in Britain (Willmott, 1989). New Zealand was, it seemed, a classless society.

The early achievement of a relatively high standard of living for many New Zealanders served to support the myth of egalitarianism, however, as Easton (2020) notes,

> ... the demand for social distinction endemic in Britain was never entirely abandoned... various features of class existed in New Zealand, but it was different from Britain. The settlers did not create a classless society but neither did they have a narrative to articulate the class structure of their new society (p. 337).

In the nation's early history, the promotion of equality and opportunity—and the gradual creation and articulation of a foundational nation-narrative—also served to attend political ends, as it encouraged further settlement from members of the British population, tired of their working and economic situation. This egalitarian myth, based partially on the material reality from which it was first developed, albeit experienced as such mostly for Pākehā (European) men, therefore became a powerful tool in promoting a sense of national identity within New Zealand, an identity which still informs collective memory today.

A nation can be conceptualised as a 'symbolic community constructed discursively' (De Cillia et al., 1999). The creation of a new narrative of egalitarianism was therefore crucial to the construction of New Zealand as an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) with some semblance of a shared identity outside of its status as a British colony, and as a community of British subjects. As Stuart Hall (1994) writes,

> A national culture is a discourse, a way to construct meanings which influence and organise both our actions and our perceptions of ourselves. National cultures construct identities by creating meanings of 'the nation', with which we can identify: these are contained in stories that are told about the nation, in memories which link its present to its past and in the perceptions of it that are constructed (p. 201, as cited in De Cillia et al., 1999).

Drawing from a grand narrative of egalitarianism, historical knowledge and official memory of New Zealand's welfare state, and a structure of feeling of Keynesian social democracy, research participants incorporate a collective memory of social power in the

pre-neoliberal era in establishing a shared sense of identity, experience, and in highlighting the drama—and ultimately the tragedy—of neoliberal structural transformation.

The creation and institutionalisation of the egalitarian myth

The formation of New Zealand's Liberal Party Government under John Ballance in January 1891 began a period of reform over twenty-one years in power—first through Ballance, then more notably under Premier Richard John Seddon—laying the foundation for New Zealand's welfare state. According to historian Michael King (2003), the Liberal Party's 'unifying belief was in a dominant role for central government in the nation's affairs, but on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds' (p. 260). Nevertheless, the Liberal Government set about improving social mobility by breaking up large estates to allow for an increase in smaller landholders to enter into the increasingly profitable primary sector, while strengthening the public sector by taking control of and extending New Zealand's communications and transport systems (King, 2003). Notable social and political reform was also passed under the Liberal Government, when in 1893, the Electoral Act was passed, granting women the vote and therefore extending suffrage to both Pākehā and Māori, men and women. Throughout these early years of the Party, the Liberals maintained close ties with the labour movement, and worked to improve conditions of work for shop and factory workers, while in 1894 the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act was passed which encouraged both registration with established unions, and arbitration over strike action (King, 2003).

Premier Seddon referred to New Zealand as 'God's Own Country', and Easton (2020, p. 202) estimates that at the turn of the 20th century, Pākehā New Zealanders 'were probably among the best-off people in the world' in terms of per capita Gross Domestic Income figures, the effective purchasing power of wages, high life-expectancy of non-Māori, physical health, and increased opportunity (Easton, 2020). In the first half of the 20th century, public health programmes and regulatory interventions geared toward improving socioeconomic conditions contributed to greater life-expectancy over this period, with New Zealand gaining a reputation as being a 'working man's paradise' (Easton, 2020: 207). In fact, over the 19th and early 20th centuries, New Zealand was described of being a 'country without strikes' (Lloyd, 1902), the 'birth place of the 20th

century' (Parsons, 1904, p. 715), and retrospectively, as the 'social and economic laboratory of the world' (Coleman, 1982, p. 373).

Accounts such as these at the turn of the 20th century would have largely gone unnoticed by the vast majority of New Zealanders, more interested and concerned with the on-the-ground, daily realities of life within a nation still in its infancy. However, as isolated as New Zealand may have been, it was not insulated from more global forces. As events of the first half of the century posed new challenges, new leaders would look to build upon the foundations set by the Liberal Party with more ideological vigor.

Following a World War, the influenza pandemic of 1918, and a long recession during the 1920s, the Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in mass unemployment and significant pressures on government relief, setting the realities of social and economic life and dynamics of social power in stark relief against New Zealand's myth of egalitarianism. The 'social levelling' (Easton, 2020, p. 258) resulting from mass unemployment, poverty, and deprivation was experienced on a collective level, with all New Zealanders impacted to some degree. Coming on the heels of the influenza pandemic and WWI—a similarly collective event in which the initial jingoism and trauma of war would ultimately lead to a greater shared sense of national identity—the Great Depression would further instill a sense of the collective, and the need for greater state support.

Trust in the state to protect its people and the economy from global economic events would transform New Zealand's egalitarian myth from not merely one of opportunity and relative 'classlessness', but to one in which the state could be relied upon to ensure a minimum standard of living, opportunity, and protection through the social democratic welfare state. The scene was therefore set for bold leadership from a Party representing an amalgamation of socialist and labour movement groups that could moderate the more radical and revolutionary aspects of its factions, and turn its focus instead to popular progressive reform.

The First Labour Government and creation of the welfare state

The New Zealand economy reached its lowest point during the Depression in 1933, but by 1935, the economy was expanding, with per capita GDP doubling over the next decade (Easton, 2020). The coupling in alliance between the political and industrial

components of the labour movement resulted in the formation of New Zealand's Labour Party in 1916, and what Bruce Jesson (1989) coined the 'historic compromise', between the labour movement, the working class, and capitalism. Of the new ministers appointed in the First Labour Government of 1935–1949, most had been trade unionists (Franks & McAloon, 2016), and the new Government would task itself with building upon the foundations laid by the Liberal Party, and undertake a number of measures to remedy the apparent economic imbalances intensified by the global depression.

Beginning in 1935, the First Labour Government implemented a number of initiatives and policies which built upon the foundations laid by the Liberal Government, in order to enact the Prime Minister's vision of social security as 'applied christianity'. The nationalisation of the Reserve Bank, introduction of old age pensions, free primary and secondary education, the restoration of industrial arbitration and introduction of compulsory unionism, the 40-hour work week, a minimum wage, and the development of state housing and public works schemes, were introduced in the hopes of amplifying 'the progressive genius that has been dormant in these past decades and [to] erect the new socialist state that will once again cause New Zealand to inspire the world...' (Lee, 1934, as cited in King, 2003, p. 356).

The greatest achievement and realisation of the First Labour Government's vision, however, came following Savage's announcement of social security 'from the cradle to the grave' and the passing of the Social Security Act on 14 September 1938. The Act provided free health care covering both hospital and primary health care (although doctors in general practice opposed the fixed rate, and could charge a fee above the payment made by the Government for each consultation), and a means-tested pension was introduced for older people at age 60, with universal superannuation for those 65 years and over. Explaining the public's reception to the Act, King (2003) writes, 'in the late 1930s social security was valued so highly because it helped erase recent memories of genuine hardship and it seemed a fulfilment of a social blueprint which the Labour movement had been developing for more than two decades' (p. 358).

From being the first country in the world to promise Universal Suffrage in 1893 and the introduction of aged pensions in 1898, free primary and secondary education, the establishment of social housing in 1937, and 'cradle to the grave' social security in 1938,

the egalitarian myth was given a modern edge through greater direct action by the state. As labour historian Melanie Nolan (2007) notes, for the generation following WWII,

> New Zealand was said to have 'full employment', the third highest standard of living in the world and an enviable record in the area of free education to university level. According to a popular self-image, and a central plank of New Zealand national identity, the country was egalitarian and universally prosperous (p. 113).

Kelsey (1995) notes the rapid shift in Pākehā New Zealanders' relationship with the state during the years of the First Labour Government, writing,

> The welfare state introduced from 1935 fostered a social democratic ideal of the harmonious classless society based on the conformist, upwardly mobile, two-parent, consumption-oriented family unit, cosseted by a benevolent government. Although this provided only a palliative to structural inequalities for Maori [sic], women, workers and poor, the ideals of welfarism became deeply embedded in the Pakeha [sic] self-image (p. 20).

Furthermore, as Easton (2020) explains, having lost power in 1949, by the time the Labour Party returned to Government in 1957, 'The greatest achievement of the First Labour Government in moving New Zealand from the stagnation and depression of the interwar era, while making it a kindlier and gentler society, was largely complete' (p. 271).

Following 1949, progressive social reforms and the structure of New Zealand's social democratic welfare state was maintained by successive governments from both sides of the political aisle. The Labour Government's welfare state policies were endorsed by a large swathe of the voting population in 1938, and by the next election in 1943, the opposition National Party had adopted the core principles behind the Government's welfarism, promising only to improve its administration, and with looser controls (Hagel, 1998). According to Colin James (1992), by the 1950s,

> The boundaries of political debate between the two main parties were tightly drawn. While there were important differences of perspective, both parties broadly subscribed to the liberal social democratic policy framework settled in the 1950s.

Arguments between them were about detail, often quite small detail, rather than fundamental policy issues (in Hagel, 1998, p. 232).

The 1950s–1970s were a time of relative prosperity in New Zealand. Incomes were comparatively high and the post-WWII boom saw a growth in spending on housing and education. Major innovations over this period saw the introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit in 1973, and ACC (Accident Compensation Corporation) in 1974. Owing in equal measures to both the political and economic stablility of the post-WWII years, Easton (2013) found that personal income was relatively stable in New Zealand between 1926 and the 1950s, and that equality improved through to the mid-1980s. However, by 1975, the collapse of the post-war boom saw an end to the relative 'golden age' of prosperity in New Zealand.

The era of leadership under Prime Minister Robert Muldoon and the Third National Government from 1975 to 1984 represents one of increasingly extreme interventionism, as Muldoon, who also held the portfolio of Finance, sought to stave off the impacts of mounting economic pressures through the 1970s. In answer to the collapse of the price of wool in 1966, the global economic crisis of the early 1970s, the end of New Zealand's favourable export terms with the United Kingdom following its entry into the European Economic Community (EEC), and the second oil shock of 1979, Muldoon set about creating an export-led recovery programme based on new primary processing industries and energy projects termed the 'Think Big' programme. It was hoped that these projects would earn international funds and create jobs, but by the early 1980s it was clear these hopes were misplaced. The predicted boom never eventuated and the various projects resulted in increasing international debt. Slow economic growth during this period, while clearly indicating a failure of Muldoon's stimulus projects, also seemed in contrast to the seemingly boundless resources the country had at its disposal (Quiggin, 1998). Blame quickly turned to Muldoon and the National Party, as this slow growth was understood by many to be a result of the failings of the national economy, rather than part of the wider economic crisis. As Bill, a trade union representative (TUR) explained,

> *Labour* [under Prime Minister Savage][2] *set up a very good system which wasn't modernised to the changing realities… Labour has done all the major national*

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[2] Square brackets within excerpts of participants' narrative indicate additional information provided by the author for clarity.

reforms, and all National has ever done has been to move things in the interests of
farmers and production, and big business. And in that period, with import
substitution… They looked after the economy in the interest of farmers and large
employers.

Failure to modernise and structurally reform the economy, to take into account the
economic development of that particular time and the forces that were there, and
the failure to manage change, led to it all being built-up and built-up until it all
exploded.

With New Zealand's era of relative stability now at an end, the scene was set once again for drastic structural reform, the speed and extent of which would dwarf those reforms implemented by the Liberal and First Labour Governments. It is therefore this period of relative stabililty of social power—this 'golden age' of relative prosperity in which the egalitarian myth was institutionalised—that participants in this study turn to in highlighting the instability that would follow, and the eventual neoliberalisation of New Zealand.

A collective memory of shifting social power

In recounting and narrativising a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation, participating trade union and community and voluntary respresentatives sought to situate the drama and the introduction of neoliberal economic reform beginning in 1984 in its social, economic, and cultural context. In discussing the 'is' of the neoliberal era, participants describe the 'was' of social democracy, and the 'becoming' of social and economic transformation. In doing so, they draw from a deep well of background symbols and foreground scripts—collective representations, shared narratives, and cultural codes—which together describe the shifting dynamics of social power in Aotearoa New Zealand throughout its history.

John, a community and voluntary representative (CVR), reaches deep into the past to memories imbued with both collective and personal significance in describing the experience shared by many in making the voyage to New Zealand in the 19th century:

… I mean, my great-great-grandfather came over from Belfast to Dunedin in the
late 1860s. They were all basically starving to death in Belfast at that time, and he

saw an ad in the Liverpool paper, saying that there were fantastic opportunities out there in Dunedin, so he jumped on a boat with six kids, two of them died on the way over. [He] *made it down to Dunedin, and was promised a 'land of milk and honey', and Dunedin wasn't like that all, it was really, really tough…*

John's inclusion of his family history serves as collective memory of the experiences of migrant communities who would voyage to New Zealand in search of a better life—experiences that continue to this day—only to find subjective realities in stark contrast to the developing myth of egalitarianism. Nevertheless, as stated previously, research shows outcomes did improve for most Pākehā and their families in the years that followed, even as social and economic justice for Māori, women, and non-Pākehā New Zealanders would only improve modestly over the next 100 years. Reference to New Zealand as the 'land of milk and honey', alludes to the biblical Promised Land (Exodus 3:8), and echoes Prime Minister Seddon's description of New Zealand as 'God's Own Country'. John's familial memory therefore takes on collective significance as it lays bare early contradictions inherent in the egalitarian myth, even as it serves to reinforce a collective narrative around early collectively-understood ideas of egalitarianism that have shaped a New Zealand identity since the early inception of New Zealand as a nation state. A statement by Adam (TUR) similarly expresses the widely understood belief in the egalitarian myth:

There was belief afoot that we cared. The idea that Europeans had come to this country to create a better society for themselves, a more egalitarian, caring society. Maybe that was a fiction in hindsight, maybe people didn't believe that as fundamentally as was thought…

For Adam, the past-tense 'was' serves two functions, in describing the nation's colonial past and the egalitarian myth as it was understood in the early years of the nation, and a more recent memory of the country's social democratic past, juxtaposed with neoliberal realities in the present. For John (CVR) memories of New Zealand's pre-neoliberal 'golden age' are of an agrarian, bucolic, and simplified social and economic life:

The things that I remember from back then, I mean, New Zealand was just one great big farm for most of its time, and that was pretty easy, because, I mean,

things just got chopped and cut-up and sent off and money came back, and New Zealand saw some really good times in the [19]*50s and '60s.*

Here, the simplicity of John's recollection of the period belies a complexity in his assessment of economic life. The exaggerated depiction of New Zealand as 'one great big farm' denotes the country's economic dependence on the primary sector, while the statement 'things just got chopped and cut-up and sent off and money came back' provides a crude summary of a system of production and exports prior to the diversification of trade markets and products. It has often been argued Britain's joining the EEC in 1973 hastened the diversification of New Zealand's export market, as New Zealand could no longer rely so heavily on its British trade partner for the export of dairy and lamb. As historians and academics now note (Easton, 2020; Carlyon & Morrow, 2013), the impact of Britain joining the EEC is often overstated, and by 1973 trade with Britain was already in decline, with greater diversification increasingly achieved through closer economic ties with Australia and the United States. However, with exports to Britain comprising 65.5 per cent of total exports in 1955 (Carlyon & Morrow, 2013, p. 67), and the collapse of the price of wool in 1966 cited as having a far greater impact on the New Zealand economy (Easton, 2020), participants' perception of the relative stability and simplicity of the exportation of farm products to a reliable partner taking a sizable share of net exports is understandable. While the New Zealand economy remains heavily reliant on the primary sector to this day, participants in this study centred images and recollections of farming, rurality, and provincialism as being uniquely representative of social and economic life in the post-WWII period and cast this rurality against a more 'modern' and diversified neoliberal economy.

The significance of references to New Zealand's economic dependence on farming and the primary sector spans economic, social, cultural, and political domains. Rural New Zealand would be severely impacted by the sudden end to price supports and production subsidies following 1984 during a period that would 'irreversibly alter farming, and the structure and attitudes of rural New Zealanders' (Wallace, 2014, p. 12). Again, Bill (TUR) associates the golden era of relative stability with a bucolic memory of the period:

Society had been very stable during the [19]*50s, 60's,* [and] *'70s. Very stable. Very comfortable. Very isolated. You could go swim in rivers, you could go camping.*

You didn't have to worry about giardia. You could drink the water. People don't have the amazing… you just didn't have that level of surveillance...

... it was very settling. Very based around the farm...

Here, in his statement describing New Zealand during the period from 1950–1980 as being 'Very stable. Very Comfortable. Very isolated', Bill encapsulates a collective memory of relative stability and prosperity, but also of geographic and cultural isolation. Sentiments and memories such as these, and shared by interviewees, echo a tradition within New Zealand's post-colonial literature in which authors foreground the *sublime*— the New Zealand landscape—and cast it against the *quotidian*, or the every-day cultural isolation and boredom of a society experienced as being removed from the emerging global community (Evans, 2007). Evident within Bill's assessment of the relative stability of social and economic life from 1950–1980 are contemporary concerns about the degradation of the New Zealand environment and freshwater sources as a result of modern intensive farming practices. Here, more literal binary codes of *pure* (sacred) and *polluted* (profane) are situated in terms of the relative simplicity and stability of the Keynesian social democratic period (pure), and the relative complexity of the current neoliberal era (polluted). Evident within Bill's assessment is also the association of neoliberalisation with globalisation and greater modernisation, as instability, globalisation, greater urbanisation, surveillance, and pollution, are implicitly juxtaposed with the stability, isolation, bucolic freedoms, and purity of the pre-neoliberal era.

Anna (TRU, CVR) also provides autobiographical memory of this 'golden age' in New Zealand's economic history. Where John and Adam recall the experience of early settlers, and John joins Bill in recalling social and economic life centred around the farm and provincial living, Anna's memory is that of her own more urban-centred childhood and of the support and security extended to families through New Zealand's social democratic welfare state. Again, evident within Anna's account is the juxtaposition of certain qualities of the post-WWII era, with the social and economic realities of neoliberal New Zealand:

… in the '60s, you know, people seemed to have… Mums didn't work and dads had jobs, and everyone went on a holiday. And this is a huge generalisation…

But you know, no one couldn't go on the school trip, or came to school without lunch or shoes. I lived in [a suburb of wider Wellington]*, which is now, you know, a ghetto of low-paid people… when I was growing up in* [suburb]*, there was generally a feeling that everyone was ok. And then, when I went to university in the '70s, you could always get a job. There was plenty of work. Everyone who I knew worked in the holidays, but no one worked much during term time. Education was free.*

And we lived in [another suburb of Wellington] *in a house that cost $13 a week rent, and there was about six or seven of us in the house. It was owned by the Public Trust, there was a lot of public ownership. And, to some degree expectations were a lot different too, actually. Expectations of lifestyle… and people had an expectation of going on to own a house, which I did. And you know, things falling into place and getting a job.*

While Anna's account conveys autobiographical memory of growing up in New Zealand, elsewhere the participant explicitly states it is one shared by others she encounters in her daily and working life, with themes and institutions imbued with a symbolic significance and shared by other participants in this study. Anna's memory is one of economic stability, of traditional gender roles in domestic settings—framed as a sign of economic security rather than patriarchy and limited opportunity. The participant directly contrasts the social and economic conditions of the area in which she was raised with the area's current state of relative deprivation. Reference to children attending school without 'lunch or shoes' is stated in direct contrast to her own experiences as a child, and reflects contemporary concerns around increased child poverty. Similarly, contemporary concerns can be found in relation to the participant's citing of the 'expectation' of homeownership, at a time when New Zealand is experiencing a crisis of affordable housing for both renters and prospective homeowners.

Anna, together with Gary (TUR), each cite publicly-owned housing as central to their own lived experience, memory, and understanding of pre-neoliberal New Zealand, with Gary equating state housing and mixed-income neighbourhoods with a greater sense of solidarity and egalitarianism:

> *But all of* [the houses in our neighbourhood] *were state houses, and they were owned by the state… they sold them off eventually. But you had that in a suburb—in a 'leafy' suburb—if you like. So that the rich people at the time would be living here as well as the ones who weren't so rich. And they would be going to the same school around the corner. It's that different kind of... and it wasn't an egalitarian society, but it was a much more egalitarian society than the one we live in now, that's for sure.*

Similarly, Matthew (CVR) frames his memory of this period in terms of the symbolic import of education as a public institution, and of 'full employment' and economic security:

> *So we went through uni' with no fees, no costs, no debt. There was plenty of work in the summer break and things like that. There was enough to… pretty much enough to live on over the summer holidays. So students had plenty of options for living. There was no unemployment—or very little—and relatively little debt…*
>
> *… People never used to be financially insecure... certainly in Muldoon's time and into the 1980s. You could live, you could afford a house, you had a garden to grow food in, most people. Simple things.*

Mention here of free public tertiary education and publicly-owned housing is tacit acknowledgment by participants of the benefits afforded by the strong social democratic welfare state, with education and housing just two examples of institutions cited by participants. Here then, the institutions of public education and housing serve as symbolic proxies for the welfare state and its social democratic institutions, including the nationalisation of key industries. The pre-neoliberal welfare state is positioned within the participant's narrative against the knowledge and memory of what has been lost through neoliberalisation. This loss, implicit in collective memory of social and institutional support, is exemplified by the introduction of university tuition fees for all students in 1989 under the Fourth Labour Government, the selling-off of state housing rapidly increasing through the 1990s with further neoliberalisation under the Fourth National Government, and unaffordable housing and student debt in the present.

Matthew's assertion that there was 'no unemployment' is a memory collectively shared by interviewees, as it is set against not merely the increasing unemployment through the

1970s and 1980s, but against unemployment reaching its peak (outside of the Great Depression) in the 1990s. Easton (2020, p. 357) notes there were just two people on the unemployment benefit in 1952, with the percentage of the working-age population on unemployment, sickness or invalids' benefits increasing after 1975. In March of 1981, unemployment was 4.5 per cent, with a further 1.7 per cent employed on special work programmes (Easton, 2020, p. 450). Unemployment continued to rise through the 1980s, and by 1990, 9 per cent of the working-age population were on a benefit (Easton, 2020, p. 416), with this number peaking at over 10 per cent in the early 1990s (Easton, 2020, p. 541). 'Full employment', and adequate support for those out of work or infirmed is therefore a central feature of the distribution and dynamics of social power within the collective memory of participants in this study, as is a shared memory of the structure of the workforce itself, and associated expectations of working people. As John (CVR) explains,

> *I'm of an age where I left university when life was kind of different in New Zealand. You sort of had three broad choices to make as you were leaving school. You could leave school and get a job, that could be a job in the railways. Some sort of manual labour, truck driving, whatever. That was there, you were absolutely guaranteed. You could go up to the next level in New Zealand, and work for a bank, or insurance company, or an oil company, there was that next level up—a white collar worker. You needed no formal qualifications, they'd take you on. And then there was of course the next level up, you'd go to university and that was back at a time when as long as you got a degree you were pretty much guaranteed a job. And I think that was pretty universal, apart from those big 'blip' periods.*

Again, John provides a collective memory of the pre-neoliberal, post-WWII period in terms of stability, security, and social power, in this case in terms of full-employment and the labour market more generally. Although the participant does not account for more limited opportunities afforded to working people along racial and gender lines, memory of class is evident in the participant's explicit stratification and categorisation of sectors of work. However, the significance of this memory, and its resonance as collective memory among the cohort of interviewees, is in the security and stability of

full employment, against the acceptance of unemployment as a desired feature of the labour market in neoliberal New Zealand.

Lisa (TUR), for whom memory of (un)employment takes a different form, again adopts the use of autobiographical memory to similarly contribute to a collective narrative around the welfare state by recounting in broader terms the systems in place to support struggling families:

> *… my father never worked for great periods of my life—he was unemployed—so I had a memory that… we would've… did better during that period than we would in this period… and you also had a sense that there were… social institutions that you could call on to get assistance…*

> *… like, if I look back now… I don't think we could survive, or have the lifestyle that we had, with the way we were brought up, with my father's situation, today. Like, I didn't feel that different—I mean you did get embarrassed about stuff—but it wasn't like a big ((exasperated))[3] deal. You weren't socially isolated, it was just a source of embarrassment, not a source of deprivation, if you like.*

Here, Lisa provides a more explicit articulation of social power within the strong welfare state. While Lisa's autobiographical memory is not one of full employment, it is nevertheless one of support afforded by social and public institutions. For Lisa, personal memories of social and financial 'embarrassment' were an unfortunate feature of circumstance and social expectation, rather than a source of social exclusion and result of acute deprivation. The participant contrasts social life for struggling families of the social democratic and neoliberal eras, respectively, and articulates the grim realities of many families today, cast against her own personal and familial memory of relative hardship.

In keeping with John's earlier memory of the subjective realities of the colonial experience, common across participants' memories of New Zealand's 'golden age' of economic prosperity, stability, and relative egalitarianism, are discursive caveats alluding to those New Zealanders for whom the myth of egalitarianism was never a reality. Such caveats allude to both a retrospective re-evaluation of the past, and to the emergence and amplification of 'counter-memories' (Foucault, 1977) from marginalised and critical

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[3] Double soft parentheses within excerpts of narrative indicate non-verbal or animated gestures on the part of participants, such as pronounced pauses or laughter.

perspectives. Just as Anna notes the 'huge generalisation' one must make in describing the lived experiences of New Zealanders, Matthew provides the caveat of 'most people' in describing financial security, while Gary opines 'it *wasn't* an egalitarian society, but it was a *much more* egalitarian society than the one we live in now'. Bill (TUR) articulates this inherent contradiction, complicating collective memory of the perceived net-negative impacts of neoliberalisation collectively expressed by participants:

> *So I think a lot of people found that really difficult to leave the comfort of what was a good education, health, all relative to its time. But there was also a lot of discrimination, a lot of quite reactionary things around. But in terms of just basic welfare, people were probably… had a much better standard of living… it was a much simpler life, without so much consumerism, but all that was shaken. Everything had a monetary value after that.*

For Bill, the benefits of the social democratic welfare state provided a level of 'comfort', 'basic welfare', and a 'better standard of living' within what the participant remembers as a 'simpler life'. However, acknowledgement of 'a lot of discrimination, a lot of quite reactionary things' within this simple life signals a break from the participant's assessment, indicating conflict and contradiction between memories of social and economic life in the pre-neoliberal era. As will be explored in later chapters, reactionary attitudes of the time would include opposition to progressive movements which centred on indigenous and women's rights movements, with Muldoon and the 1981 Springbok Tour embodying and symbolising a reactionary politics that led to increasing social division during a period of economic 'crisis' (Chapter 7).

Elsewhere, Gary (TUR) describes the 'flat' dynamics of social power in social democratic New Zealand, owing to the smaller wealth gap that existed prior to neoliberalisation, and a greater sense of community he assesses as being in part the result of less economic disparity:

> *… it was 'flatter' in the sense that you didn't have people that were extremely rich, within your working environment. I mean, you still had rich people, but they weren't extremely rich… Everyone was on about the same… well I mean, there were differences, of course, but you ended up with a society that was more cohesive, because they were… in the same boat. As opposed to having lots of little*

boats in which some people couldn't get off their boat, and that's how you saw it. Which made for a different society because if everyone is seen as being relatively the same… if something was happening in your street, you'd be there helping do whatever it was.

You know? I've ended up concreting people's pathways back then, and you wouldn't think of doing it now. Well, you might for a mate, but not just on your street…

… that society existed more than it does now, in my view. And also… you didn't have that feel of a gap…

When pressed to expound upon his statement 'you didn't have that *feel* of a gap', Gary's difficulties in defining said feeling becomes apparent:

Well, it's difficult to explain really… ((pronounced pause))… I mean… ((pause)) … um… Well, I mean… someone would go to work, for example… and they didn't feel any lesser than the person that you were going to work with. And that could have been the person running the outfit, or the person who was cleaning. I mean, you did have… I mean some people are always… no, I don't know… I don't know how to explain it….

Jane (TUR) similarly found difficulty in elaborating when asked to expand upon what she described as the 'old New Zealand':

Good question. I'm thinking of a New Zealand… I mean, part of it is mythical really. A New Zealand that is accepting of diversity, which probably is mythical because it's only certain types of diversity that were accepted in the past. It depends how far back you go. Perhaps if you were thinking back to the '70s, it was still a struggle, but at least there was a feeling you might win. But… one where equality… ((hesitates))… equity was important. Ahh… I don't know actually…

Expressions and memories of the 'feeling' of living in New Zealand prior to neoliberalisation take a number of forms within the collective memory of participants, some more elusive than others, and seldom without caveats. Mark (CVR) defines the 'feeling' as a 'greater sense of collectivity' that stemmed, once again, from the welfare

state, relatively 'flat' dynamics of social power, and strong systems in place to support individuals and their families:

> *I think there was a greater sense of collectivity, but I mean that was my sense of it. But I'm not certain how inclusive it was. I mean for me to say that I was part of the community is all very well, but as I say, I was sort of male and white, and on my way to becoming middle class. So for me to say that I felt supported and included is only my recollection. But, you know, the thing was… there was supports in place to help you to buy a house, and for you to go to uni', for you to look after your kids. All these supports in place. And sure, it meant we had a state that would… but it was still a place where people were supported, and that's not the case anymore.*

Here again, the contradictions and caveats are made clear. Mark's interrupted statement 'And sure it meant we had a state that would… but it was still a place where people were supported…' seems to suggest a conflict collectively expressed by participants between memories of the reach of the state, and restrictions posed by economic protectionism, and the support afforded by welfarism. Furthermore, in describing a 'greater sense of collectivity', Mark identifies his own subjectivity within his memory of the period—as an upwardly mobile Pākehā man—as a caveat to any notion of greater social inclusion during the same period. As an upwardly mobile Pākehā man who felt 'supported and included', Mark implies that this may not have been the experience of those outside this identity, and that there were perhaps more pronounced differences in experiences of social power between communities, identities, and social groups below the surface.

In recounting 'factors which always prevailed against the notion of social equality and inclusiveness', Nolan (2007, p. 113) cites the fact that Māori only began to enter paid employment in a systematic way following the so-called 'urban-drift' after WWII as demand grew for labour in New Zealand's towns and cities, and in the fact that in 1950, a majority of women were neither in education, employment, nor training. Cybele Locke (2012, p. 9) notes that historically speaking, New Zealand's 'workers in the margins', those situated on the bottom rung of the country's working class—the 'traditionally last hired in times of workplace plenty, first fired in times of economic recession'—consisted for much of the 20th century of Māori, Pasifika migrants, and non-union women. Locke (2012) writes, 'The boom times of the 1950s and 1960s in New Zealand not only ensured

full employment for the core labour force in New Zealand (primarily male breadwinners), but was the catalyst for the entry of "new workers"—Māori, women and Pacific Islanders—into the low-paid segments of the labour market' (p. 11), while for the most part, career prospects for women were limited to just a few occupations. In fact, Nolan (2007) concludes that Māori and women constituted an 'underclass' in New Zealand, first through the evolution of class hierarchies and significant division along racial and gender lines and limited job opportunities, and later by way of their exclusion from welfare support. Personal memories from women and Māori participants in this study offer insight into this core contradiction within the egalitarian myth. As Mary (CVR) explained,

> *If I go back to, sort of 1975, I was involved in a draw to get a section to build a house. I got the section, the whole lot, but then hit an absolute rock wall because I was on my own and a woman wasn't able to sign for a loan. But, by taking it to my father who had had several coronaries by that point, with his signature on it, that was fine. I was the working one, I was the one that was going to be paying...*

> *... So we were still getting over, or working through a lot of those things. There was also a fear that came with that—that if you let too many people know that you could achieve something like that, would it be taken away from you? Would it be denied? I was very dubious for a long time to tell other women that I had got that* [loan] *because I found that I was one of about twenty-five at the time that had all dug in our toes in trying to get loans, but we were all a bit apprehensive that if that got out... that they might do a clamp-down if they found out that some people had got through the system.*

Mary recalls here the ways in which women were excluded from the kinds of support extended to men through her memory of applying for a home loan, and subsequent feeling that her being granted approval could easily be taken away. Mary gives an approximation of 1975 for her memory of this autobiographical event, which takes on collective significance when considered in the context of the women's movement—taking on its more organised form in New Zealand in 1970—the first United Women's Convention in 1973, and the Women's Electoral Lobby and Women in Education in the mid-1970s. Taken together, memories such as Mary's, which recall deep inequities between men and women, against the backdrop of the emergence of women's rights

movements, pitch inequity and greater calls for social change against a collective memory of the egalitarian myth. Similarly, James (CVR), recalls his understanding of the articulation of structural reform in the lead-up to the 1984 General Election:

> *I was 27 years old, I'd been unemployed or working part-time for that long, it didn't impact me. I mean, what change did that have on me? I was still unemployed, or on work schemes. You know? For me that was the reality. And my way of looking at it, was that this was something about the 'fat-cats'… not a thing about me. So we weren't really politicised at all at that time. I was part of the generation of young people who didn't see politics as being part of their world…*

> *… much of the politics for us was around* [Te Tiriti o Waitangi][4] *issues, settlements, there was a lot of work that we were doing at that time and trying to bring an understanding of Treaty into peoples' consciousness. So our political stuff for us… if you look at the rhetoric in the paper or on the news at that stage, it was so incredibly racist and anti-Māori, it was shockingly bad, and if you saw it today, you would just go 'oh my god'. So that was the kind of world I was in…*

James, who states he and members of his community were not 'politicised' in their position for or against economic reform, provides an account indicating a deeper politicisation around the rights of Māori through his subjectivity as a Māori man. James' account, while autobiographical, takes on collective significance as he speaks in collective terms through possessive pronouns such as 'we' and 'our', while his memories of deep inequality and racism contribute to a broader collective memory of racism and social exclusion that once again contradicts the myth of egalitarianism. Where participants recall the years of New Zealand's 'full employment', James recalls the years of greater unemployment beginning in the 1970s in which Māori were disproportionately impacted. Furthermore, by invoking memories of his involvement in issues around Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the participant places his memory of the reforms against a backdrop of increased social change, and calls for racial equality during a period of increased economic 'crisis'.

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[4] The Treaty of Waitangi. Aotearoa New Zealand's foundational document signed between Māori as tangata whenua, or the orginal inhabitants of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the British Crown.

Tracing a history of social and economic progress in Aotearoa New Zealand through the 20th Century including memory of their experiences of the social democratic welfare state, evident within the collective memory of participants in this study are remnants of a once-dominant, and still *residual*, collective identity narrative—that of the New Zealand egalitarian myth. Considered collectively in the reconstruction of a shared narrative of the past, participants' memories and evaluation of the post-WWII Keynesian social democratic era, typified by a strong welfare state, simplicity of both internal and external economic relations, and economic stability, indicate parallel and contradictory dynamics of social power within New Zealand society. While the distribution of wealth and social support along economic lines can be considered as reflective of a more equal material distribution of social power, the exclusion of groups and pronounced discrimination they experienced during this period is indicative of a dynamic of social power which favoured some at the expense of others. As will be shown in later chapters, discriminated groups and their allies would coalesce in a rupture of social and cultural life, particularly through 1970s and 1980s (Chapter 7), yet the dynamics of social power were also shifting in a more material and ideological manner. As John (CVR) recalls,

> *… there was a perception that New Zealand as a country needed to do a whole lot more really, to kind of guarantee its future. And this bullshit that we had all grew up with, that New Zealand was the best country in the world and we had the best mountains and the best lakes, you know? I mean, we were taught that at school, we had… the nicest scenery. Well, you only have to travel to find there are lots of lakes, and lots of mountains* [elsewhere], *and we've got other things too. So I think as a nation we were starting to actually have to find our feet and move out of a comfort zone that we had for the best part of 150 years based on agriculture, and we were going to have to try harder. We were going to have to do more things, be more innovative.*

Just as New Zealand's sublimated and *sacred* natural world had obscured the quotidian and *profane* isolation, conservatism, and racial inequality, so too had the sacred and sublimated myth of egalitarianism obscured quotidian cultural and economic realities. As a new generation of New Zealanders were leaving the home shores to explore the world, bringing home with them new ideas and perspectives, so too were economists who insisted, *There Must be a Better Way* (see *Roger Douglas*, Chapter 5).

Affective shifts: Social power and structure of feeling

Stuart Hall (1979) wrote extensively about the period of neoliberalisation this study explores in his critique of what he termed 'Thatcherism'. Hall viewed Thatcherism as being both symptom and result of a political, cultural, and historical conjuncture within which structural transformation was set. Key to Hall's political theorising was the analysis of the various features of a given historical and political arrangement, and 'the economic, political, social and cultural conditions of their emergence and sustenance' (Featherstone, 2017: 38). Hall (1979) utilised this conjunctural analysis in his deconstructing of Thatcherism, and in doing so, analysed neoliberalisation as an ideological and cultural project, with lasting *affective* impacts. 'Affect', Anderson (2015,) writes,

> ... is an umbrella category that encompasses qualitatively distinct ways of organizing the 'feeling of existence'. Atmospheres, structures of feeling and other pragmatic-contextual translations of the term 'affect' are ways in which things become significant and relations are lived. This means that affects are always organized and becoming organized, in ways that likely differ from subjectifying-signifying systems of meaning (p. 735).

What participants in this study present through personal and collective narrative are social democratic and neoliberal *affects*, respectively, and a *structure of feeling* of transition. Irrespective of inherent contradictions, and discursive caveats, in describing a collective memory of social democratic affects of the *before*, participants juxtapose these affects with those of the *after*, of neoliberalism. The affects of the *becoming*, or of the drama of neoliberalisation, are therefore those of *social power and affect in transition*. Considered in these terms, with regard to their nature as constituting a collective memory, and their location in time during a period of drastic structural change, participants' recollections of *structural affect* and *structural and affective transition*, can be thought of as constituting a collective memory of what Raymond Williams (1977) termed a 'structure of feeling'.

Williams' conception of the 'structure of feeling' becomes evident in moments of transition and change, and can be adopted as an analytical tool in the examination of

art—particularly literature. The present study adopts the term for a hermeneutic reading of collective memory *as text.* Of the structure of feeling, Williams (1977) writes,

> We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships… we are also defining a social experience which is still in *process,* often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies. These are often more recognizable at a later stage, when they have been (as often happens) formalized, classified, and in many cases built into institutions and formations. By that time the case is different; a new structure of feeling will usually already have begun to form, in the true social present (p.132).

Williams specifies a number of components that encompass the social experience he termed a 'structure of feeling'. Peschel (2012, p. 161) notes in particular 'the spatial, temporal, and affective characteristics as well as a particular relationship to power'. Williams considered culture to be a constant state of negotiation between *residual*, *dominant* and *emergent* qualities, with the *residual* signifying the influence of previous societies on the present, and the *emergent* as those new ideas and practices at varying phases of formation. According to Williams (1977),

> The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present. Thus certain experiences, meanings, and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practiced on the basis of the residue— cultural as well as social—of some previous social and cultural institution or formation (p. 122).

Considered as collective memory of a 'structure of feeling', memory of contradictions and of an affective shift result from tensions between residual and emergent cultures. This formulation is reflected in participants' collective memory, and sees the affective qualities of the social democratic welfare state as first dominant, before shifting to residual, and making way for the emergent and then dominant neoliberalism. For

interviewees, difficulties in articulating this affective shift, particularly in light of collective memory of contradiction within the residual Keynesian social democratic structure, point to formations that Williams (1977, p. 134) describes as being at 'the very edge of semantic availability', from which an emergent structure is experienced as in 'pre-formation'.

Recall John's (CVR) explanation of the impact of the economic on the social and cultural, and the inherent weakness of the sacred and sublime façade, against the harsh realities of New Zealand's entry into a globalised cultural and economic community:

> *… there was a perception that New Zealand as a country needed to do a whole lot more really, to kind of guarantee its future. And this bullshit that we had all grew up with, that New Zealand was the best country in the world and we had the best mountains and the best lakes, you know?*

Statements such as that provided by John illustrate collective memory of an increasing awareness on the part of participants of New Zealand's place in the world, and an *emergent affective shift* which provided fertile ground for reform. The full excerpt of Adam's (TUR) account quoted earlier in this chapter serves to illustrate this affective shift that accompanied neoliberalisation and a shift in the dynamics of social power:

> *There was belief afoot that we cared. The idea that Europeans had come to this country to create a better society for themselves, a more egalitarian, caring society. Maybe that was a fiction in hindsight. Maybe people didn't believe that as fundamentally as was thought, because there was certainly a massive shift amongst working people for example… the elevation of the individual came through very quickly…*

Elsewhere, having described a collective memory of pre-neoliberal New Zealand in terms of autobiographical memory of her childhood, and the support extended to her family by the state, Lisa (TUR) continues, this time recalling the *affective* qualities of structural transition from social democracy to neoliberalism:

> *… there was this process that started in the mid-'80s, where… the consensus of 'everybody gets a fair deal', if you like, shifted. The balance shifted somewhat so that the national interest was much more blatantly talked about in the media and*

everywhere… 'New Zealand doing well' was equated with 'business doing well'. It shifted from the ordinary person doing well.

I mean, obviously I was too young in those days to know, but growing up you had a sense of what 'doing well' meant, you know? Everyone was on the same playing field. Of course, no one was ((laughs)), *but there was that sense of there being not so much of a gap… Then, in the '80s, it was like it shifted into, instead of 'you and me doing well', it was 'for New Zealand to do well, business has to do well'.*

Again, Lisa provides a caveat to her statement that 'everyone was on the same playing field', implying not only hyperbole for effect, but acknowledgement of the myth of egalitarianism. However, in describing how the 'balance shifted', the participant outlines a collective memory of cultural and structural transition. This shifting of balance, as Lisa describes it, from a focus on people and families, to business and the economy, together with memory of her childhood, serves as an example of a personal memory, and subjective evaluation, articulated collectively by participants.

Through the assemblage of memories of New Zealand's strong social democratic welfare state, economic stability, the myth of egalitarianism, and personal and autobiographical memories of relative prosperity and social security, participants provide a shared account of social power that contrasts the Keynesian social democratic welfare state with that of the post-1984 neoliberal era. For participating trade union and community and voluntary representatives, structural transition from social democracy to neoliberalism was not merely a series of reforms and their material impacts, but also an *affective* shift which accompanied the shifting dynamics of social power in New Zealand. Understood as a shared account of social power, memory of social and economic development, of a shared sense of identity, and the juxtaposition of two distinct eras in New Zealand history, provides both an expository and evaluative function in participants' collective narrative, in which collective memory casts neoliberalisation as a profanation of the sacred value of collectivism.

As I will demonstrate over the course of the following chapter, commonalities in substance and expression in relation to collective memory of social power, and in the narration of the drama more broadly, stem from both traditionalist and presentist conceptualisations of collective memory. While the former sees shared memory as

informed by official knowledge and history, the latter is shaped by the overlapping subjectivities of participants as representatives of their distinct yet overlapping mnemonic communities. To further demonstrate these commonalities, Chapter 4 now turns to an exploration of the role of participating interviewees as observers/audience to the drama and its tragic impacts.

4

Observers/audience as overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion

A core element in Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural performance, and central to a study of collective memory, is the role of research participants as *observers/audience* to the performance, and as those who articulate and narrativise memory. Put simply, Alexander (2011) states, 'Cultural texts are performed so that meanings can be displayed to others. "Others" constitutes the audience of observers for cultural performance' (p. 30). As an element of cultural performances, the role of observers/audience is explained by Alexander (2011) in the following terms:

> If cultural texts are to be communicated convincingly, there needs to be a process of cultural extension that expands from scripts and actor to audience. Cultural extension must be accompanied by a process of psychological identification, such that the members of the audience project themselves into the characters they see on stage (p. 30).

Within my adoption of Alexander's theory of cultural performance for the purposes of exploring a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, participants in their role as observers/audience play two key functions in incorporating memory that spans a temporality from a past dating back to a nation in its infancy, to the present day. Participants therefore function as:

1.   Observers/audience present during the drama of neoliberalisation, who understood the performance and drama of neoliberalisation during the period in question in its social, cultural, political, and economic context, and;

2.   As observers/audience present during the drama of neoliberalisation now tasked with *re-producing* through memory the performance and drama of neoliberalisation in the social, cultural, political, and economic context of the present.

Put another way, participants in this study witnessed both the performance and drama of neoliberalisation in its early stages firsthand, have memories of its production, reception, impact, and affect, and are now recounting both the performance and drama in the present day, following nearly 40 years of re-production, re-presentation, and continued narrativisation of the drama through both collective and historical memory. Presenting trade union and community and voluntary representatives as occupying an *overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion* in their role as observers/audience, and with an understanding of the history that informs and frames the participants' accounts, the assemblage of memory presented in this study is shown to be that of two distinct yet intersecting mnemonic communities.

Within subsequent chapters on the roles of *actors* (Chapter 5) and the construction and memory of *character* (Chapter 5 & 6) I discuss in greater detail the process of cultural extension and psychological identification between actor–character–audience. However, for the purposes of de/re-constructing a collective memory of neoliberalisation shared within and between the community and voluntary sector and trade union movement, the current chapter will first present a brief history of each sector and movement in arguing a case for each to be considered as separate, yet considerably overlapping, communities of shared history, interests, and memory. As communities of shared memory, I will then demonstrate the ways in which participants in this study convey a collective memory of neoliberalisation in New Zealand as observers/audience to the unfolding drama, displaying both *traditionalist* and *presentist* forms of collective memory.

For the purposes of this study, interview participants were sought who were actively involved in the community and voluntary and trade union sectors, respectively, at the time they were approached to participate. While affiliation with either sector varied in terms of participant subjectivity during the early stages of the process of neoliberalisation, all had some involvement in either the community and voluntary, trade union, or broader labour movement during this time in New Zealand history. Furthermore, all participants in this study were actively involved in one or more of the aforementioned groups at the time the interviews were conducted. While subjectivities at key times during the early course of neoliberalisation are integral to both the autobiographical and collective memory presented here, participant subjectivity as

community and voluntary and trade union representatives *today* is a core focus of this research.

Observers/audience and mnemonic community

The foundational premise of social memory studies is that our social environment informs what we remember about the past and how we remember it. As Eviatar Zerubavel (1996) writes,

> The first step to a sociology of the past is the realisation that our social environment affects the way we remember the past. Like the present, the past is also part of a social reality that, while far from being absolutely objective, nonetheless transcends our subjectivity and is commonly shared by others as well (p. 238).

Much of what we remember as individuals is filtered through a process of interpretation, and the ongoing interpretive work that occurs is continually shaped with reference to the present social environment the individual finds themselves in, whether that be at, for example, the familial, national, professional, or organisational level. This interpretive work also occurs with reference to events that reach back further in the collective memory of mnemonic communities, and perhaps even with reference to an imagined future. As such, the mnemonic communities to which we belong serve to frame our memories, and thereby couch our collective hopes and regrets, with respect to the past, present and future, in the ideologies, aims, and objectives of the given collectivity. Here, Zerubavel (1996), points to the 'mnemonic lens' through which the past is viewed and interpreted.

Theories of framing generally assert that frames confer perspective on events, issues and people, and in doing so, function as a means of making sense of social life (Edy, 2006). While narrative-based inquiries into past events are undoubtedly shaped by a given mnemonic lens, in the present case one constructed by either the community and voluntary sector, or the trade union movement, the past is also then actively *framed* by an individual with memories viewed in a certain light, or to a given end. This study therefore expands on Zerubavel's conception of the *mnemonic lens* in suggesting a

process of *mnemonic framing*, which implies the *active* organisational and ideological construction of memory.

Social memory studies teaches us that how we frame events, past and present, is socially informed through the 'mnemonic communities' (Zerubavel, 1996) of which we are a part. Shared suffering or achievement that result from social disruption defines the group as not only a mnemonic, but *moral community* of shared symbols, narratives, rituals, and meaning. When social disruption occurs, those shared explanatory features of the group may need to be re-examined or re-imagined in order to make sense of and address the event in question, if the event, by its negative implications, threatens the cohesion of the group. As often is the case, when the event threatens the collective on ideological grounds, and sense-making has been effectively transmitted and consensus is found within that community, the event itself may become a symbol of a greater threat, concern or adversary; a point to stand against in stark opposition, creating a greater sense of cohesion in group identity along ideological lines.

The following study proceeds under the premise that New Zealand's trade union movement and community and voluntary sector, respectively, represent two overlapping mnemonic communities of certain shared interests and understanding, and that participants in this study constitute a cohort of observers/audience in the drama of the neoliberalisation. In their roles as advocates for marginalised communities and working people, spanning a broad range of issues and interests from welfare, housing, health, social and economic justice, to industrial and employment relations, the community and voluntary sector and the trade union movement, and those they represent, have been impacted by a post-1984 laissez-faire approach to social, economic, and industrial policy and (de)regulation that represents a significant breach in the collective's sense of identity and orientation relative to society and the state. While each group is distinct—each providing a unique social framework of memory—and autobiographical memory necessarily differs between participants, the collective memory presented here is nevertheless the result of striking commonalities of experience, interests, and expression.

The following discussion on both New Zealand's community and voluntary sector and trade union movement provides a brief overview of the history of each group, outlining their role in New Zealand society, and their relationship to the drama of neoliberalisation as observers/audience. It does not attempt to provide a detailed history of each group,

their place in New Zealand society, their role in shaping social and economic policy, or of the complexities of their relationship with the state and the country's political parties. What the following discussion does provide is context from which participants in this study can be considered as representatives of mnemonic communities of overlapping experience and interest in recounting their role as observers/audience to the drama of neoliberalisation.

Community and voluntary organisations and sector as mnemonic community

This research adopts the expansive terms 'community and voluntary organisation' and 'community and voluntary sector' to refer to organisational and mnemonic communities undertaking work, advocacy, and the provision of services as voluntary welfare providers, non-profit entities (or not set-up primarliy for the purpose of profit), and community-based and mission-oriented communities of shared interest. Following from Sanders and colleagues (2008, p. 7), here, the community and voluntary sector is defined as comprising organisations that fulfil both *service* and/or *expressive* functions, and encompassing 'larger, nationally organised bodies, and those more informally organised, more dependent on volunteers, and grounded in local communities' (Tennant, 2007, p. 11). Importantly, organisations within this sector are self-governing, and distinct from government agencies, although they may receive funding from and at times work closely with such agencies in the provision of community and social services. Such organisations, and the sector itself, are loosely bound by relational attributes, either within a faith-based network, and/or by a shared community of practice related to service provision, objectives toward social and economic justice, a shared history, and common challenges and pressures imposed by the neoliberalisation of the economy, social policy, and the relationship between the state and the community and voluntary sector. As such, the term encompasses New Zealand's faith-based social service providers, smaller community-based advocacy groups and service providers, and associated umbrella groups, and constitutes a community of shared memory and interests—a mnemonic community—within what has been coined the 'third sector'.

While the origins of some organisations within the community and voluntary sector date back to a time before state provision of basic social welfare in New Zealand, others are

the product of and response to more recent developments within social and economic life and function to serve a smaller, more localised community of service recipients and their interests. Importantly, community and voluntary organisations—including the sector of which they comprise, and the communities they serve—have been at the forefront of responding to the impacts of structural change in New Zealand, and grappling with the continued impacts of neoliberalisation.

Margaret Tennant provides a history of New Zealand's 'voluntary organisations' from 1840–2005 in *The Fabric of Welfare* (2007). Of welfare in New Zealand, Tennant (2007) writes,

> Our welfare history is not simply about a heroic passage of parliamentary acts, grounded in moments of political choice, and their elaboration by government officials; it is also about localised, community-based initiatives, some of which took organisational form and expanded more widely... (p. 9).

Tennant traces the history of welfare in New Zealand from the mid-19th century, in which the state and voluntary organisations sought to 'marshall their resources' in providing recipients of support a means of basic relief or 'moral direction'; increasing complexity through greater institutionalisation of support through the welfare state; and finally to the present neoliberal era, typified by successive governments' focus on 'efficiency' of welfare spending, and the marketisation and contractualisation of welfare and social support.

Following their taking power in 1984—understood here as a central and symbolic year in the neoliberalisation of New Zealand—the Fourth Labour Government promised both 'a more democratic approach to economic management' (Kelsey, 1995, p. 32), and that social and economic objectives would be reached through greater consultation. Signalling what seemed to be a desire to honour this comittment, the new Government's first public economic initiative was to convene a multi-sector meeting of business, farming, trade union, and community groups for the 1984 Economic Summit Conference. Held in the midst of an economic 'crisis', the Summit was held implicitly for the purposes of creating consensus and buy-in from key sectors around the need for structural reform. Dalziel (1989) provides the following account of input by community and voluntary representatives in attendance at the Summit:

The community groups had very little to say about the traditional macroeconomic issues which underlay many of the disagreements among other sectors… Instead, they took the opportunity to describe the people who were suffering as a result of previous economic management policies, and to offer ways of alleviating their stress immediately and in the longer term. Two commonly used indicators of suffering were poverty and exclusion from full participation in society. Evidence of poverty was provided in the large numbers of individuals and families who could not obtain adequate housing or adequate health. Low-income wage earners and social welfare beneficiaries were particularly vulnerable, with speakers reminding the summit that Maori [sic], Pacific Islanders, women and young people were over-represented (p. 59).

For community and voluntary representatives participating in this study, the neoliberalisation of New Zealand and of the sector in which they operate has been two-pronged. Both in the short-term, and over the next 37 years, the community and voluntary sector would see neoliberal social and economic policies transform the sector, while also severely impacting the lives of the people and communities they support. At the level of New Zealand society more broadly, and in terms of the individuals, families, and organisations they serve, community and voluntary representatives participating in this study spoke of neoliberalisation in terms of increasing need, increasing inequality, and greater and increasing levels of complexity of need in the communities for whom they provide support.

As Kingfisher (2013) notes, the economic programme implemented by the Fourth Labour Government under Prime Minister David Lange and Minister of Finance Roger Douglas, largely 'delinked' the economic from social policy. Importantly, however, this uncoupling of the economic and social did not prevent the latter from being impacted. Kingfisher (2013) provides the example of the corporatisation and then privatisation of state-owned enterprises beginning in 1987, which had the consequence of increased unemployment among those previously employed by the state, radically altering the labour market, and drastically increasing pressures on welfare programmes. Later, as neoliberalisation reached what participants in this research regard as something of an inevitable conclusion, the Fourth National Government under Prime Minister Jim Bolger and Minister of Finance Ruth Richardson would implement sweeping reforms to social

policy. Where neoliberal economic reforms beginning in 1984 would come to be known as 'Rogernomics', neoliberal social reform undertaken by the National Government through the 'Mother of all Budgets' would be known as 'Ruthanasia'. These reforms would include a drastic cut in spending across benefits and welfare state institutions established by the First Labour Government in 1935, and would place significant pressures on individuals and families as unemployment reached its modern peak over the same period (see Chapter 9).

Of the impact of neoliberalisation on the community and voluntary sector at the organisational and professional levels, Tennant (2007) writes,

> Consultants and change managers, mission statements, brand identities and empowerment models, bicultural journeys, quality assurance and assertions of excellence: the mantras of the late 1980s and 1990s are striking... So too are references to pain and heartache, as organisations grappled with the internal culture shift—or appearance of a culture shift—required in a contracting environment (p. 193).

This sentiment shared by Tennant is reflected in collective memory of the period as interviewees articulate the impact of sweeping neoliberal reforms and a 'culture shift' within the sector, within individual organisations, and across society. Larner and Craig (2005) go further in their assessment of the impact of 'competitive contractualism' which now typifies the community and voluntary sector's relationship with the state and the private sector in the provision of services and support:

> For many community activists the impact of competitive contractualism on existing collaborative modes of working was devastating. Explicit competition undercut trust, and contractual obligations narrowed operational focus to individual clients and specific objectives. Community workers found themselves compelled to devote disproportionate time representing their work through reporting frameworks they found objectionable and alien. Client focus, teamed with a new emphasis on confidentiality, served to undermine day-to-day interagency practice. New providers entering the market profoundly and continually fractionated existing fields of working. Relationships with central government funding agencies were characterised by bruising and repetitive

negotiations, and the emphasis on narrowly specified outputs submerged issues widely understood as needing more broad-based and longer-term interventions' (p. 409).

The community and voluntary sector therefore experienced dual impacts in their role as community advocates and social service providers as a result of neoliberal social and economic policy. Where the role of the community and voluntary sector has historically seen such organisations 'plugging the gaps' within the welfare state, for participants in this study, neoliberalisation has increased these 'gaps' both in size and number, while the neoliberal focus on competitive contractualism, marketisation, efficiency, competition, and cumbersome accountability measures have created a considerably more constrained operating environment for organisations and representatives within the sector. An excerpt of narrative from Martha (CVR) is illustrative of participants' evaluation of this change in the relationship between the sector and government:

> *... there is just a relationship there that is very much an employer–employee, master–servant relationship. Notwithstanding occasions where we're consulted when we have some influence in terms of policy, and that wanes and waxes. We're never going to be the decision-makers when it comes to allocation of funding... That's always going to be sitting with government. So... they're kind of holding the power, and they can play nice with that and bring us in to work with* [them] *at times, or they can choose not to.*

> *But that's their choice, and we could choose to not engage with that, and to be independent of government, but then we wouldn't be able to be offering professional services where we employ social workers and counsellors, and case managers and researchers. You know? You can't operate that way. So, we're kind of trapped in... a market model, and the fact that people didn't necessarily see that coming is the kind of—the awful trick really—of neoliberalism, you know?*

Importantly, as we will see later in the current chapter, for participants in this study the culture shift and changing environment that accompanied neoliberalisation has been coupled with a greater level of need evident within families and communities, with full employment no longer a goal within a neoliberal model, and with government welfare

and benefits now viewed as largely ineffective in meeting the increasingly complex needs of those at the wrong end of our increasingly unequal society.

Trade union organisations and movement as mnemonic community

The origins and development of trade unionism in Aotearoa New Zealand in many ways follows the trajectory of the community and voluntary sector, with each beginning in the mid-19th century, and stemming from a desire for both social and economic justice, before being drastically impacted by neoliberal reforms beginning in the 1980s and culminating in further drastic reforms in the 1990s.

Herbert Roth in *Trade Unions in New Zealand* (1973) begins a history of trade unionism in 1840 with demands made for an eight hour work day and New Zealand's first recorded strike in 1841. The Liberal-Labour alliance saw improvements for organised labour and working people, and the formation of the Federation of Labour in 1909 ('Red Federation'), before the New Zealand Labour Party was formed in 1916. The First Labour Government restored industrial arbitration and introduced compulsory unionism in 1936, and the New Zealand Federation of Labour (the second iteration of the peak body) was formed the following year. As a result, New Zealand's Labour Party and trade unions have owed much to one another over the course of their history, and were traditionally viewed as constituting two wings—the industrial, and the political—of the labour movement (Roth, 1973).

According to Ellem and Franks (2008), at the end of the 19th century union density was relatively high with more than 20 per cent of New Zealand's workforce unionised in 1890, and throughout much of the 20th century, membership was characterised by both volatility, and periods of high density. Union membership reached 30 per cent of the workforce by 1920, falling to 21 per cent at the end of the Great Depression, before Compulsory Unionism saw a trebling of union density in the private sector (Ellem & Franks, 2008, p. 46–47). Roth (1973, p. 161) writes that in the period between the end of WWII and 1971, New Zealand's total number of unionists had increased 86 per cent, from 280,000 to 520,000, out of a population of just over 2.85 million and a labour force of just under 1.1 million people (Statistics New Zealand, 1971). Union membership peaked in 1945 at 59 per cent, but dropped sharply in the first decade of New Zealand's

neoliberal era from 53 per cent in 1985, to just 27 per cent in 1995 (Ellem & Franks, 2008, p. 48).

Following an economic downturn beginning in 1967, resulting in part from a collapse in wool prices, economic instability in New Zealand led to both high inflation and high unemployment throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. Franks and Nolan (2011, p. 146) note that government intervention throughout this period, including two wage freezes (1976 and 1982–1984) to address 'stagflation' saw the number of industrial disputes increasing throughout the 1970s and peaking in 1986. With New Zealand's centralised arbitration system under increasing pressure, and a more 'militant approach' adopted by the Federation of Labour in the early 1980s (Franks & Nolan, 2011), the union movement through their peak body continued to campaign and negotiate with the National Government around the importance of the centralised system restored by the First Labour Government, and in opposition to the wage freeze. Franks and Nolan (2011) posit that continued campaigning and rolling work-stoppages in response to the freeze contributed in part to the election of the Fourth Labour Government in 1984.

Of participation by the trade union movement at the 1984 Economic Summit Conference, Dalziel (1989) writes,

> The Federation of Labour and the Combined State Unions arrived at the Economic Summit Conference with a comprehensive joint 'Statement of Position', containing the core elements of an economic strategy. It took the objectives of economic management to be those listed by the Labour Party in its 1984 manifesto, with 'restoration of full employment as the top priority'. Other objectives then listed were 'an improvement in the rate of economic growth, the restoration of economic and social justice, securing the maximum degree of stability in the general level of prices, the introduction of a more democratic approach to the management of the economy and the introduction of greater control by New Zealanders over the future of their economy' (p. 55).

Beginning in the mid-1980s, neoliberal economic reforms led to increased pressure for labour market deregulation, with New Zealand experiencing a significant departure from a traditional system of labour law based on both the setting of workers' employment conditions through an awards system, and compulsory conciliation and arbitration.

Following the introduction of New Zealand's Labour Relations Act in 1987—which ended compulsory arbitration while maintaining compulsory unionism—calls for greater deregulation and increased focus on the individual over the collective would culminate in the Employment Contracts Act 1991 (ECA), resulting in a hobbling of union power through individual employment contracts and a dismantling of state support for collective bargaining. Today, there are signs union membership may be slowly recovering, yet with membership prior to the introduction of the 1991 employment legislation at around 600,000 (Ellen & Franks, 2008, p. 49), and less than 375,000 in 2018 (Centre for Labour, Employment and Work, 2019), the drop in union power and membership during the neoliberal era has been acute. As Adam (TUR) recalls:

> *I remember it a year or two later* [following the introduction of the ECA] *going to Tasmania* [Australia] *and being invited to go and talk about labour reforms... in New Zealand, and I think Tasmania at this point had a population of around 300,000. So I was sort of able to say there that the number of unionists in New Zealand... people that were in or members of unions, used to be 8–900,000, and today, this was two years* [after the ECA]*, the number of people in unions was fewer than 300,000, which is less than the population of* [Tasmania]. *So the big powerful unions, the railway and post office union had virtually disappeared within a couple of years, with those reforms. And the starting of the dismantling of it had started with the* [State-Owned Enterprises][5] *legislation, the pay fixing, the State Sector Act[6] reforms years earlier, but the Employment Contract Act, that was it, you know.*

Parallels between the origins and development of trade unionism and that of the community and voluntary sector are evident in the formation of communities of shared interest in response to needs identified in the early history of New Zealand as a nation-state; the close, at times hospitable, but often conflicting relationship between each community and the state; and the impact of neoliberalisation on both the landscape in

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[5] Introduced by the Fourth Labour Government in 1986, the State-Owned Enterprises Act corporatised large public assets, including, but not limited to, rail, forestry, and telecommunications. Public sector employment was later reduced 15.3 per cent by 1988 (Carylon & Morrow, 2013).

[6] Introduced by the Fourth Labour Government, the State Sector Act 1988 saw chief executives replace heads of government departments, dismantled the security public servants had enjoyed through the abolishment of compulsory arbitration, and further impacted employment through a devolving of functions (Carylon & Morrow; Kelsey, 1995).

which they operate, and on the people and communities they serve. Dalziel's (1989) analysis of the 1984 Economic Summit Conference shows that although representatives in attendance all emphasised the need to address unemployment, there were also deep divisions between the various sectors:

> In particular, the trade union movement proposed greater government involvement in economic planning, with increased government investment and assistance to industry based on regional employment goals. The business sector proposed less involvement by the state, with far greater reliance on competitive markets for resource allocation. The agricultural and manufacturing sectors proposed a strategy of export-led growth, based on retaining the benefits of the 20 per cent devaluation [see Chapter 9] two months earlier. Community groups proposed policies aimed at greater social equity, requiring government initiatives for the immediate redistribution of wealth, income and opportunities (p. 63).

Accounts such as that of Dalziel (1989) depict discussions with key groups during a *liminal phase* prior to drastic neoliberal reform in New Zealand. What would follow the 1984 Economic Summit Conference was neither a return to full employment, increased government investment, nor a redistribution of wealth in the promotion of greater social equity, but the systematic and increasing retreat by government through a programme of trade liberalisation, de-regulation, privatisation, and tax cuts, culminating in the 1990s in a further retreat from the arbitration of industrial relations and from the provision of social support for struggling people, families, and communities.

Aotearoa New Zealand's community and voluntary sector and trade union movement can therefore be understood as occupying an *overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion*, whereby two seperate and unique mnemonic communities with similar histories, relations, experiences, and orientation to the state and/or external groups share a common narrative relating to a disruptive event in a shared past—in this case, the neoliberalisation of New Zealand. This broad, shared collective memory can be thought of as *traditionalist* in nature, in that the overall trajectory of narrative—*the collective arc of narrative*—appears as dominant across the corpus of interview data, is reinforced by historical and official memory of the general course of events, and has become a well established narrativisation of the drama of neoliberalisation.

Mnemonic framing: (un)employment, community, and state–sector dynamics

A thematic analysis of interviews with participants in this study indicates distinct yet overlapping ways in which New Zealand's structural reforms of the period from 1985–1993 are mnemonically framed. In the case of community and voluntary sector interviewees, the past is primarily framed with reference to the impact of neoliberalisation on families and communities, with secondary mnemonic framing by way of references to the impact of reforms on organisational and sector relationships with the state, and the impact of this changing relationship on operations. For trade union representatives, collective memory of neoliberalisation is primarily framed around employment and community, with a secondary mnemonic framing by way of references to the impact of reforms on the relationship between trade unions' relationship with the state and employers. 'Community' in this sense is coded by participants differently, in distinctly *presentist* and group-specific terms, and in keeping with the core social function of each mnemonic community. More broadly, however, there is considerable overlap in each group's coding of the term, with each citing the material and economic impacts of neoliberal reform on communities, and an accompanying loss of a *sense of community*, reciprocity, social support, and solidarity. Much of this overlap in mnemonic framing stems from collective memory of (un)employment in New Zealand at a time of increasing economic 'crisis', and following a prolonged period of 'full' employment and social support.

In terms of increased unemployment and its impact on families and community, community and voluntary representatives recalled the privatisation of state-owned assets in New Zealand as being a major disruptive force of the 1980s, as neoliberal reforms pushed for the rationalisation of industry and public services amidst calls for greater efficiency. By framing memory with reference to families and community, participants were able to create a causal and ideological link between events of the past, and their respective organisations' aims and objectives. James (CVR), for instance, recalls increasing levels of unemployment in his community prior to 1984, and the failings of Muldoon's 'Think Big' interventionist economic strategy in addressing the crisis of the Keynesian consensus:

... unemployment at the end of that Muldoon era was going up... this was the
period when we'd kind of run out of that Think Big project, and apprenticeship
schemes weren't working… so we were starting to get that ramp-up in
unemployment already. Job schemes were going, so there [formerly] *were quite a*
few of those on-the-go. In fact I ran a few of them over quite a number of years. So
unemployment had already started.

Here, James references unemployment in terms of both 'Think Big', and the National
Government's subsidised work schemes. Muldoon's 'Think Big' energy projects aimed
to reduce the country's reliance on oil imports following the energy crises of 1973 and
1979 and during a period of rampant inflation, with the Government promising a likely
450,000 new jobs would be created as a result of the schemes. However, these numbers
never eventuated, and the projects' costs saw government borrowing increase from $1
billion in 1976, to over $3 billion in 1984 (Carlyon & Morrow, 2012, p. 192).
Unemployment also began to rise over this period, and between 1976 and 1978 the
number out of work had increased from 10,617 to a high of 46,894 (Carylon & Morrow,
2012, p. 186), with this number increasing to 60,000 in 1981 (Easton, 2020, p. 453).
Over the decade 1974–1984 unemployment rose from 0.2 per cent in 1974, to 1.7 per
cent in 1982, and then to 4.9 per cent in June prior to the 1984 General Election (Evans
et al., 1996, p. 1860). James also references government-subsidised work and funding to
community and voluntary groups introduced by the Muldoon Government in the creation
of temporary jobs, which kept half the unemployed to some extent in work, while
obscuring real unemployment figures (Locke, 2007). Following the defeat of Muldoon
and the National Government in 1984, and with numbers participating in job creation
schemes peaking in 1985, such programmes were discontinued, severing an important
means of funding for community organisations and advocates for the unemployed
(Locke, 2007), and increasing the real number of those out of work.

With the Fourth Labour Government in power, in 1986 Prime Minister David Lange and
Minister of Finance Roger Douglas set about passing the State-Owned Enterprises Act
1986 which corporatised the country's large public utilities including postal services,
telecommunications, electricity, broadcasting, and railways, with the aim of running
them commercially, efficiently, and profitably. Over the following six years, the railways

workforce was cut from 21,000 to 5,000 (KiwiRail, n.d.). Later, in 1993 under the Fourth National Government, New Zealand Rail was sold to a foreign consortium.

For interviewees, the passing of the State-Owned Enterprises Act signalled a significant event within collective memory and in the history of New Zealand, with its impact signifying a legislative breach which would have ripple effects on employment, families, and communities, in both smaller rural towns, and larger urban centres. As Mark and Bill explain,

> *... I lived in South Auckland and we had already been hit by the job cuts at the freezing works and stuff. So the deindustrialisation had already started, but what of course the commercialisation, and eventually corporatisation and privatisation of the state sector meant, was that a lot of the jobs—and the ones most relevant to South Auckland was the railway workshop jobs—but also jobs in the post, were absolutely decimated. And that had a massive impact on smaller provincial towns, where the job base was cut to bits. And if you look at the poverty figures, we never really have recovered from those poverty rates that were brought about in the mid-'80s.*

> (Mark, CVR).

> *... like in those changes in the 1980s for instance, around forestry, when in fact some of it was corporatised and some of it was privatised. That just sort of destroyed whole communities in Kaingaroa and some of these forestry towns where everyone just lost their jobs.*

> (Bill, TUR).

James continues his account through the Fourth Labour Government's first term in power from 1984–1987, noting the beginnings of an entrenchment of unemployment in his community, and the strategies adopted as a community and voluntary representative in attempting to alleviate and mitigate the economic pressures of the period on members of his community:

> *By 1986, young people had been really impacted by changes in employment structures. What I noticed was that there was a huge number of young people,*

Māori and Pasifika, that had no jobs. Had no kind of future, and were more often than not getting into trouble, with different things going down...

... I felt sorry for these young fellas in the mid-'80s, because they just had no opportunity to go work. So they went from school to unemployment and there was kind of no future...

... What I noticed was that was sort of the start of what I would call a 'nihilistic' attitude toward life. There appeared to be no positive future. You left school, you had no qualifications, there were no jobs, and no future vision, no 'what am I going to do next?'. So that was '86–'87, working with younger people.

The participant continues this historical account with an autobiographical turn as he situates himself, and the collective of which he was a part, within the memory itself, before offering further evaluation of the impact of structural reform on families:

… [We were] *working in that whole area of creating employment and ensuring families had enough food and creating positive things for people to do, rather than locking themselves away in their flat. And what we found was that our families were under real pressure… the financial implications of our families meant that they were struggling with getting enough food, with paying rent, with paying the power and surviving. And that often led to real friction within those families and so a number of relationships and families broke up over that time, and it was obvious that part of the driver for that was the financial stress those families were under.*

For participating community and voluntary representatives, as observers/audience to the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, a mnemonic framing of collective memory of the impacts of increased unemployment, poverty, inequality, and the impact on individuals and communities, was accompanied by a presentist framing of the increasing challenges facing the sector as a whole. A key form this presentist mnemonic framing takes is in collective memory and evaluation of the shift in the dynamics of social power between the community and voluntary sector, and the state. As Martha (CVR) explains,

> ... [the Fourth National Government] *took what* [the Fourth Labour Government] *put in place and cranked it up with a whole heap of corporatisation and... the privatisation of a whole lot of government services....*

> *... during that period of the '90s, I think there's some awkward sort of challenges ... looking back and thinking to what extent the community sector, probably unwittingly, engaged in a privatisation agenda. You know, we had always been there, as organisations that were funded by government, but now taking on functions that had been the business of the government and delivering them under contract as a contractor of government, feels like a real shift, and I think that period of the '90s was when that big shift happened.*

Here, Martha summarises, in part, a sentiment, evaluation, and collective memory shared by participating community and voluntary representatives of intensified privatisation and neoliberalisation during the 1990s under the Fourth National Government, while directly linking this intensification with reforms and processes implemented following 1984 by the Labour Government. In outlining the intensification of neoliberalisation, the participant describes a shift in the dynamic of social power between community and voluntary organisations and government, and relates this directly to neoliberal contractualisation and privatisation.

For participating trade union representatives, mnemonic framing of collective memory of neoliberalisation was also evident in interviewees' collective memory of the impact of reforms, particularly the passing of the State-Owned Enterprises Act and its impact on employment and communities. This connection between employment and community was often called upon instrumentally to highlight the ongoing struggles of the trade union movement. While unemployment and changes made to employment relations were central to the recollections of this group of participants, and were therefore key to the framing of memory, the rise of individualism related to neoliberalism, and the subsequent loss of a sense of community and solidarity was understood as resulting from a shift in values which severely impacted communities across New Zealand, but also the union movement itself. Memory, in this sense, is therefore mnemonically framed in such a way that it is used instrumentally to highlight ongoing organisational concerns:

I think there were a lot of young people that came into the workforce in 1990–93 that have been effected by it, and who were probably quite disadvantaged by that period, and you know, were very much affected by that individualism... The union movement lost a whole generation…

(Adam, TUR).

It's all based on individualism. I think there was more of a community spirit [prior to neoliberal reform]. *Now it's all value: the value of money. Commoditised... and I think there's even less involvement in politics because they've been able to… There's such a mystification of society now, and it really operates in encouraging people to be individual and not stand up for themselves, and not think about life and what the real base of it is.*

(Bill, TUR).

Repeated use of the term 'individualism' and the implications of an increased focus on economic over social value is here positioned within the trade union mnemonic community as profane and in contrast to the group's sacred ideal of collectivism. This process of profanation is implicit in comparative and evaluative work by the collective cohort as memory of the past is repeatedly applied to the mnemonic communities' collective needs and concerns of the present.

Where the framing of memory by both community and voluntary, and trade union mnemonic communities meet is on the wider societal issue of *community* in New Zealand, and on a shift in the dynamics of social power. While both groups adopted organisational or group-specific mnemonic framing, with community and voluntary representatives focussing on the family, and trade unionists on employment, both groups shared a concern for a more widespread shift in values evident in post-1984 New Zealand, while also acknowledging that this shift began in the years preceding the election of the Fourth Labour Government. The following excerpt, framed around the issue of employment and the concerns of the trade union movement, is indicative of narrative shared within the collective memory of both mnemonic communities:

Looking back, I suppose, what has been destroyed, I think is that sort of, society caring for itself. That even under Muldoon there was quite a considerable

emphasis on the individual... and less emphasis on the collective. And that had been going on for some time, I think. I mean if you just look at the reforms and industrial relations, the beginning of the promotion of the individual I think started in the beginning of the mid-1970s... That cult of the individual gained strength to the point... where collectivism, per se, has been effectively destroyed, gradually, but eventually. But the Employment Contract Act [1991]*, or the undoing of* [collectivism], *had started in those '85–'86–'87 reforms.*

(Adam, TUR).

Repeated use of the word 'destroyed' in both introducing and concluding this excerpt of narrative is reflective of a shared sentiment evident within the shared memory of the collective cohort of participants. Again, a discourse was utilised which situates the profane individualism which developed in New Zealand against the sacred notion of collectivism. While Adam frames his memory and evaluation of this shift in values with reference to employment issues, a memory that is collective in nature as it relates to the concerns of the trade union movement itself, it is also collective in its evaluation of the impact on society:

And it's societal. I used to talk about the pay fixing rule, the industrial relations rules through the '70s and early '80s as a piece of social legislation, about modifying behaviours, it was about trying to share-out the gains of society in a fair way... But the new social agenda became about the social modification of society. So the notion of an industrial relations system being a mechanism for social distribution, ceased. By then, the cult of the individual, which I guess had been growing, sort of just swept ahead. And I've talked to my grandchildren about collectivism... and they sort of just don't get it. I sort of hope they might, but you know…

The framing of memory within both mnemonic communities, while group-specific in relation to the ongoing needs and concerns of each collectivity, therefore shares key evaluative features indicative of a shared mnemonic lens and framing. Common among participants is an overarching acknowledgement of a broad shift in values that has had an ongoing impact on both groups, but more importantly, the families, communities, and collectives they represent through the work in which they are involved. Commonalities

in collective memory between two distinct mnemonic communtities indicate not merely a shared re-telling of the past in the traditionalist sense, but shared perception of the past stemming from their role as observers/audience in the drama of neoliberalisation and a continued dialogue between past and present subjectivities.

Providing further form to the assemblage of memory, the conceptualisation of participating research subjects as observers/audience to the drama of neoliberalisation both at the time of structural reform, and in recounting the drama through collective memory, reveals further the interplay and dynamics of both traditionalist and presentist memory. Where historical and official memory and knowledge accumulated over the past 40 years has informed a shared, traditionalist narrative of structural transformation, presentist memory—both culturalist and instrumentalist—has shaped the shared account of participants as observers/audience. While instrumentalist presentism provides for a greater understanding of the manner in which interviewees actively frame and selectively recall key aspects and impacts of neoliberal reform as they relate to their distinct mnemonic communities, culturalist presentism more accurately describes the ways participants construct their narrative around the tragedy genre. Having introduced this study's participants as observers/audience, we now turn to the central role of key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation.

5

Actors: The leading roles of Muldoon, Lange, and Douglas

Having explored the role of trade union and community and voluntary representatives as *observers/audience* in the drama of neoliberalisation, and their narrative as illustrative of two distinct yet overlapping mnemonic communities, we now turn to collective memory of key *actors* and their role within cultural performance and the unfolding drama.

As in any dramatic performance, within the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand there were, and continue to be, a number of key figures—or *actors*—who are central to the implementation of neoliberalising processes, to conveying and translating the significance and meaning of such processes, and to perpetuating neoliberalism in its hegemonic form. For participants in this study, several leading actors loom large in recollections of this period, in terms of their historical significance, their place in participants' autobiographical memory, and their representative and symbolic function within collective memory.

Alexander (2006b) defines cultural performance as:

> the social process by which actors, individually or in concert, display for others the meaning of their social situation. This meaning may or may not be one to which they themselves subjectively adhere; it is the meaning that they, as social actors, consciously or unconsciously wish to have others believe. In order for their display to be effective, actors must offer a plausible performance, one that leads those to whom their actions and gestures are directed to accept their motives and explanations as a reasonable account (p. 32).

As Alexander explains, within his theory of cultural performance, the *background symbols and foreground scripts* that together form patterned systems of collective representation, and which are in turn observed and interpreted by the *audience*, are put

into practice by *actors* within the unfolding performance. For Alexander, cultural performance is central to political campaigns and the struggle for democratic power, as is the ability of political actors to not only identify themselves and their campaign with issues of national significance, and in a positive light, but to cast themselves and their opponents as collective representations. As Alexander (2011a) writes,

> As they strive to become protagonists in their chosen narrative, such social performers as politicians, activists, teachers, therapists, or ministers go over time and again the basic story line they wish to project. They provide not complex but stereotyped accounts of their positive qualities as heroes or victims, and they melodramatically exaggerate (Brooks, 1976) the malevolent motives of the actors they wish to identify as their antagonists, depicting them as evildoers or fools (p. 59).

Within cultural performance, we can therefore understand the political actor as seeking to embody a constructed and rehearsed *character*: a culmination of personal biography and lived experience, of personal and political ambition, of supposedly lived ideology, of fact, fiction, and cultural construction. Successful performance therefore relies in part on the blurring of this actor/character distinction or else dissonance between actor and audience is likely to render the performance unsuccessful.

Time can help or hinder the fusion of actor and character, as new social and political insights develop, details emerge, context shifts, and hindsight is all that remains. Memory of actors, characters, and events, far from being static, is therefore in a constant state of flux, and much has been written of the role of character and personality in the struggle for power in the years preceding and during New Zealand's 1984 General Election. Inevitably, much of this analysis centres on two key figures, National Prime Minister Robert Muldoon, and Leader of the Opposition Labour Party, David Lange, who would take power following the election. As political analyst Michael Pugh (1984: p. 308) foresaw shortly before the election, 'The New Zealand General Election on 14 July is likely to mark the end of an era in New Zealand's political history. The period since 1975 has been dominated by the personality and political intelligence of the National leader, Sir Robert Muldoon'. And so, the election did end an era, with David Lange's Fourth Labour Government taking power, and with the Labour Party and New Zealand society forever changed as the country shifted into its neoliberal transition.

Muldoon biographer Spiros Zavos would write of Muldoon's stubbornness being crucial to *Muldoonism*. In describing one of Muldoon's many public confrontations, Zavos (1978) writes,

> During the course of this public argument most of the elements of *Muldoonism* [emphasis added] emerged. There is the sheer persistence of Muldoon in pressing his case, once his mind is made up, until his opponents are bludgeoned into submission. Muldoon doesn't knock his opponents out with one blow—he wears them out. He hammers away until, out of weariness and frustration, the other party gives the argument away… He never lets an argument rest until he believes he has won it (p. 145).

While Muldoon's confrontational and often belligerent character as one of New Zealand's most polarising political figures is central to his legacy, he is also remembered as being the last Prime Minister of New Zealand's Keynesian social democratic era. As will be shown, in the collective memory of interviewees, Muldoon, and Muldoonism, are therefore complex metonymic representations, in one breath symbolising, for example, patriarchy, racism, authoritarianism, and social conservatism, and, in the next, greater equality and sense of community.

Much has also been made of Lange in the years following his being elected Prime Minister in 1984. Following Lange and the Labour Party's electoral win in 1984, Michael Pugh (1984, p. 395) would write of Lange, 'he promised consensus and conciliation, sensing the electorate's reaction against 10 years of 'naked nastiness' in the political atmosphere… He lacks administrative experience and has occasionally betrayed naivety, but proved to be a level-headed campaigner'. In his obituary in the New Zealand Herald following his death in 2005, Lange was described as having been a 'formidable presence in parliamentary debates, a man of quick wit with a gift for words' (Pickmere, 2005), and his 1985 televised Oxford Union debate has become almost a part of New Zealand folklore when he argued for the moral indefensibility of nuclear weapons.

David Lange, is collectively remembered as a 'strong rhetorical leader' (Nichols, 2004)—most notably in the popular imagination of those who pair his leadership with the Labour Party's stance on key matters of social and foreign policy—but who nevertheless ceded his strategic role of leadership to peripheral actors within his Cabinet,

notably Minister of Finance Roger Douglas, paving the way for social and economic reforms which continue to impact the country to this day.

To more fully understand the collective memory regarding these key actors in the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, a historical description is needed, one which places the actors in the social, cultural, and political context of 1984. For this, a *thick description* of background, character, and personality can provide a valuable means of better understanding the struggle for power that ultimately paved the way for structural reform, and which continues to shape both New Zealand society and collective memory to this day.

Thick description and actor–character development

This study's adoption of thick description in relation to actor/character development follows that of cultural sociologist Ron Eyerman and his studies on the cultural sociology of political assassination (2011; 2012). In doing so, the current chapter provides a *thick description* of key actors as a means of 'thick explanation' (Eyerman, 2011, p. 168), to fully appreciate the varied roles of key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, and both their place and resonance in the collective memory of participating trade union and community and voluntary representatives,

Collective memory is here defined as being 'thickly' described when the collective significance of memory is revealed through an exploration of the setting in which the memory was first formed, and with consideration of the context in which it is recalled. This context further builds upon an understanding of the social frameworks of memory that allow for a collective understanding of memory. Furthermore, a thick description of key actors' personal and autobiographical backgrounds provides for further elucidation of participants' emphasis on the personality and *character* traits collectively remembered as significant to the performance of power and the drama of neoliberalisation. Having first provided the context of observers/audience in the drama, through a thick description of key actors and the wider contexts in which actors developed their respective character and performance, a greater understanding can be reached of the discursive and symbolic forms and processes adopted by key actors within the drama, and the manner in which they are collectively remembered by the observers/audience.

As discussed in Chapter 1, in developing the tradition's 'structural hermeneutics', the strong program borrows from Clifford Geertz (1973) the notion of 'thick description' in the reconstruction of social actions. In discussing thick description and a semiotic conceptualisation of culture, Geertz (1973) writes, 'A good interpretation of anything—a poem, a person, a history, a ritual, an institution, a society—takes us into the heart of that of which it is the interpretation' (p. 317). Thick description, in the cultural sociological sense, therefore provides a potent reconstruction of social actions and processes and, in doing so, re-weds interpretation with 'the whole vast business of the world' (Geertz, 1973, p. 317), including socio-historical context, cultural codes, collective representations, and the manner in which these factors shape and inform collective memory.

Within history and historiography, practitioners have similarly borrowed from thick description in informing analysis through both interpretation and explanation. Historian Robert Berkhofer (1988) relates thick description to the emphasis by historians on understanding and capturing the past in all its fullness and complexity; Gertrude Himmelfarb (1987) defines 'thick description' as 'the technique of bringing to bear upon a single episode or situation a mass of facts of every kind and subjecting them to intensive analysis so as to elicit every possible cultural implication' (as cited in Clark, 2011, p. 107). In 1979, historian Lawrence Stone (1979, pp. 13–14) wrote of thick description and its contribution to the revival of narrative among historians, that it taught historians 'how a whole system and set of values can be brilliantly illuminated by the searchlight method of recording in elaborate detail a single event, provided that it is very carefully set out in its total context and very carefully analysed for its cultural meaning' (as cited in Clark, 2011, p. 113). Instructively, historian Henri Marrou (1966, p. 192) writes,

> explanation in history is the discovery, the comprehension, the analysis of a thousand ties, which, in a possibly inextricable fashion, unite the many faces of human reality one to another. These ties bind each phenomenon to neighboring phenomena, each state to previous ones, immediate or remote (and in like manner to their results) (as cited in Berkhofer, 1988, p. 438).

As with ethnography, history, and the strong program of cultural sociology, thick description within social memory studies can provide greater illumination of cultural

implications. The aim is not simply to more thoroughly inform the analysis, or the reader for that matter, but to provide a depth or 'thickness' to interpretation, and to more thoroughly ground the memories, interpretations, and evaluations of research participants in terms of their shared use of collective representations and systems of meaning. In this sense, a detailed description of actors and their character development prior to the drama of neoliberalisation can provide further depth to participant recollection and reveal the interpretive complexities found within interviewees' collective memory of this period.

Active work on the part of the researcher to thoroughly place shared memories in their socio-historical and symbolic context can further aid the researcher in reaching a greater understanding of the significance and symbolism of memories shared within a mnemonic community, and in the interpretation of shared meaning. To this end, a thick description of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation serves two key functions. First, a detailed description of actors' autobiographical history serves to create a greater sense of actors' motivations, the stylistic and pragmatic choices they made in informing their cultural performance, and the development and construction of their unique *characters*. Second, these elements—shown through thick description to be the result of deep wells of personal and autobiographical meaning, motivation, circumstance, and design—in turn provide greater salience and depth of meaning to the individual memories of participants, and their shared collective memory.

In literary terms, *character* refers to figures within storytelling who assume certain roles within a narrative, fulfilling or aiding in the unfolding of the plotline, and are provided distinction by way of their function and a culmination of personal traits. *Character* is therefore a defining, central element of dramatic composition, and the description of the character of key actors within participants' collective memory is repeatedly recalled as interviewees evaluate the drama, events, and the period in question. However, far from being a culmination of static qualities, here, *character* refers to both those more inherent, on the one hand, and constructed, performed, and perceived qualities, on the other, which together comprise the characteristics actors present, and portray, by design or otherwise. In this sense, the presentation, performance, and perception of *character* in part stems from rich personal histories on the part of actors, their interactions, responses, and reception with and from surrounding actors and observers/audience, and their successful use and negotiation of the elements of cultural performance at their disposal.

According to Ciocan (2013, p. 181), most researchers in the field of contemporary drama analyse dramatic character from a 'double perspective'. Ciocan explains this duality as that between 'a creation of a playwright that endows it with language, gestures and an existence, and an actor that will embody all of these'. Ciocan describes the aspects of character identified by Ubersfeld (1999) as being:

> the quality of the character as *actant*, through the fact that it has an important role in the dramatic system. Moreover, it has the main role in the plot. It is the driving force, and therefore it is also an *actor* of the process that takes place in front of the receiver. The distinctive traits (physical, moral, psychological) contribute to the aspect of *individual*, leading to the idea that the relationship with reality is an essential one. Through his speech, the character also becomes the representative of an *idiolect*, with all the transformations and shadings it requires. Last but not least, the character is a part of a *combination of characters*, which illustrates its integration within a group (p. 62, as cited in Ciocan, 2013, p. 181).

Crucial to this description of the actor/character relationship, for the purposes of the analysis of cultural performance, is the representational nature of character. With an understanding of this duality of actor/character, we can then conceptualise the actor/character and double perspective within the cultural performance of political actors whereby 'actor', in this sense, refers to the individual in question—their role and personal autobiographical details—and 'character' is understood as the collective meaning and significance they seek to portray, how their portrayal is perceived, and the collective meaning the audience ascribes to them as an embodiment of meaning and as a collective representation. Furthermore, a thick description of actor/character incorporating biography, autobiography, discourse, and memory, can provide new insights into key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, and the crucial role the performance and reception of character played in the process.

Robert Muldoon

Robert David Muldoon (1921–1992) was born in Auckland on September 25, 1921. His father, along with almost half of New Zealand's male population, served in the armed forces during WWI (Zavos, 1978). His uncle served at Gallipoli, a campaign that would see 2,279, or nearly a sixth of New Zealanders who landed atthe peninsula killed

(Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2020), and that would leave indelible marks on the collective memory of New Zealanders.

Muldoon's father worked several jobs following the end of WWI. He started his own grain and seed business which was lost in a fire, and later worked as a meter reader and bookkeeper, but the family struggled financially. When Robert was eight, his father suffered a debilitating stroke and was permanently hospitalised. His mother was left to support the struggling family through work as a seamstress and maintaining a vegetable garden. Muldoon had a distinctive dimple-like scar on his cheek and lopsided smile from an accident at the family home. With money too tight, the injury went untreated (Zavos, 1978). Muldoon biographer Spiro Zavos (1978) writes,

> the family was poor and as a child Muldoon frequently had to eat slightly rotten fruit that was cheaper to buy. He wore hand-me-down clothes. He bought broken biscuits from the neighbourhood shop for a penny a handful. His best friends were a family with four boys that lived next door. Their father was more often out of work than in it (p. 59).

Muldoon would later express annoyance at this characterisation of his childhood (Gustafson, 2000), but there is no doubt that poverty, the Great Depression, WWI and his father's illness significantly impacted the Muldoon family. Muldoon (1977) himself wrote, 'I saw too much real poverty and degradation during the Depression to have anything but a burning compassion for those who have been deprived of the most important possession of all, their human dignity' (p. 5).

The young Muldoon's mother was a Labour Party supporter and member of Labour's Sandringham branch. His maternal grandmother was a socialist and staunch supporter of the 'Red' Federation of Labour during the 1913 strikes that closed all of New Zealand's ports along with many of the country's mines (Gustafson, 2000). In his later life, Muldoon would describe his grandparents as having come to New Zealand 'to get away from a class-conscious society' and who 'very quickly fashioned themselves an egalitarian tradition' (Gustafson, 2000, p. 20). He was close to his mother—it was with her that he queued at 4am at Eden Park for a spot to see the 1956 test match between the All Blacks and South Africa, and her passion for politics would rub off on her son (Zavos, 1978).

Zavos (1978) writes the details of Muldoon's 'undistinguished' time during WWII are something of a mystery. Muldoon was promoted to sergeant in 1942, served as a private six months later in New Caledonia, and was promoted again to lance corporal before returning to New Zealand. He was finally promoted once more to full corporal in Italy. Muldoon himself would admit that he 'refused the occasional opportunity to sit for a commission as I did not want the added responsibility' (Muldoon, 1974, pp. 14–15), but later, a civil servant who served with Muldoon would speculate, 'His social background was too lower class for him to be seriously considered for higher promotion' (Zavos, 1978, p. 63).

While enlisted, both in New Zealand and serving abroad, Muldoon studied accountancy, and later joined an accountancy firm following the end of the war. In 1949, he became chairman of the the Young Nationals—the youth wing of the New Zealand National Party—which was 'in those days a stepping stone for middle-class people with social ambitions' (Zavos, 1978, p. 68). Muldoon then married into a 'slightly more impressive and affluent family' (Zavos, 1978, p. 68) in 1951, and moved to Narrow Neck, a middle-class suburb of Auckland.

In 1954 Muldoon was nominated for the Mount Albert National Party seat. Zavos (1978) describes the photo of Muldoon and details accompanying his campaign brochure:

> [A Royal New Zealand Returned and Services Association] badge sits prominently on his coat lapel. He set out his credo in the document noting details of his personal background, his qualifications, his war service, his debating talents... [and] successful career. There were also encapsulated political beliefs: 'Human values are more important than material values'; 'The individual does not exist for the State—rather the State exists for the individual'; 'Class consciousness and the class war have no place in New Zealand' (p. 71).

Upon being elected to the House of Representatives for Tāmaki, Muldoon set about proving to 'the party managers that he was an unusually independent, yet loyal, member of the party caucus' regularly engaging in debate and crossing the floor on the conscience issue of capital punishment (Zavos, 1978, pp. 79–80). By 1961, Muldoon and several other new National MPs were regularly described as the 'Young Turks' for their views and energy within the Party.

In 1967, following several professional disppointments preventing his rise within the Party, Muldoon was promoted to Minister of Finance. By 1970, according to Zavos (1978), although developing a reputation as brash and confrontational, 'Muldoon had established a vivid public persona... He had taken the public into his confidence with his accessibility to the media and with his many public speeches' (p. 99), and rumours were circulating about his ambition to replace National Prime Minister Keith Holyoake.

Holyoake would lose the premiership in 1972, and with Labour's Norman Kirk as Prime Minister, it was in 1973 that Muldoon began working toward contesting the National Party leadership in earnest. By 1974, a consensus was reached, and Muldoon took hold of the National Party as Leader of the Opposition. The next year, as leader of the National Party, Muldoon's popularlity with the public increased, with large crowds gathering to hear him speak. For many journalists, Muldoon had 'emerged as New Zealand's most divisive political figure in living memory, polarising emotions for and against himself in a manner that brings out the worst in opponents and supporters' (Levin Weekly News, 11 June 1978, in Gustafson, 2000, p. 150)[7].

It was also during the mid-1970s that the newly appointed National Party leader began to attract a number of former Labour and non-traditional voters to the Party. When questioned about his appeal to new voting blocs, Muldoon was reported to have responded, 'I think there are some people who believe National should be the party of the "correct people". But there aren't enough people of that kind to win any election in this country. The election is won by the *ordinary bloke* [emphasis added]' (Gustafson, 2000, p. 151).

In regular public meetings throughout 1975 Muldoon criticised what he deemed to be economic mismanagement on the part of the Labour Government, 'creeping socialism', and a centralised state that was eroding freedom (Gustafson, 2000). According to Gustafson, 'he appealed particularly to the disaffected, the fearful and the angry in the New Zealand electorate with a mixture of nostalgia, belligerence, confidence in his ability and his clear grasp of the problems, even if he didn't have the solutions' (2000, p. 158). Muldoon himself would say in a famous interview that he had 'a tremendous feel

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[7] This quote from Muldoon is referenced, in text, and in the current study's bibliography, with the details as they appear in Gustafson (2000). However, an enquiry made to the National Library of New Zealand revealed there was was no 11 June 1978 edition of the *Levin Weekly News*—at the time known simply as *News*.

for the New Zealand way of life, which is a cliche, but is none the less real. A way of life where there is no inherited position, where you judge a man for what he is rather than where he comes from', and where people could 'take advantage of the country, the fresh air, the clean water, the beaches, the mountains, the forest'. When asked in the same interview, 'what's the one most important thing you'd like the people of this country to ascribe to the Muldoon leadership', Muldoon replied, simply, 'That when I go, I left the country at least as good as when I took it over' (Seven Days, 27 July 1975, in Gustafson, 2000, p. 159)[8].

In 1974, Muldoon was reported to have been involved in an altercation, and punched a demonstrator outside an Auckland cabaret, reportedly telling the crowd of demonstrators 'One at a time and you're welcome' (Zavos, 1978, p. 151). According to Zavos (1978),

> Muldoon clearly needed time to find his style. He had to match the abrasiveness that had made his reputation with some of the substance expected from a leader... Muldoon's search for a balance between the necessary opposition leader pugnaciousness and the need to suggest a capacity for statesmanship befitting a prime minister proved his hardest task in the run-up to the election (pp. 155–156).

During his time as Prime Minister, Muldoon faced a number of challenges centred around the economy; opposition from a burgeoning environmental movement to the raising of the water level at Lake Manapōuri; the anti-nuclear movement and opposition to visits by nuclear-powered US warships; the question of immigration and 'overstayers' particulary from Pacific Island nationals; and growing opposition to the South African Apartheid state and visits by the South African Springbok rugby team (see Chapter 7). During the 1970s and early 1980s, Muldoon—seemingly oblivious to the importance of the new emerging political consciousness—provoked a number of groups over his hard stance on the rights of Māori, the 'Dawn Raids'[9], the women's and feminist movements,

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[8] This often-cited quote from Muldoon is referenced, in text, and in the current study's bibliography, with the details as they appear in Gustafson (2000). However, an enquiry made to Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision, the New Zealand Archive of Film, Television and Sound, revealed there was was no 27 July 1975 episode of *Seven Days*.

[9] The 'Dawn Raids' of 1974–1976 represents a period of active discrimination against Pasifika peoples, first under Labour Prime Minister Kirk (although quickly abandoned following public outcry), then resumed by Muldoon. Often occurring in the early hours of the morning, the homes of Pasifika peoples suspected of overstaying their work visa were raided by special police squads. On 1 August 2021, the New Zealand Government officially apologised for the acts of state-sanctioned racism, but the period

his indifference over French nuclear testing in the Pacific, and, importantly, his support for the 1981 Springbok tour of New Zealand.

By 1984 the economy was increasingly described as being in a state of 'crisis' and Muldoon's management of New Zealand's social, political, and economic landscape had aroused considerable resentment within many groups. As both New Zealand's Prime Minister and Finance Minister, Muldoon relied on tariffs and price freezes to protect the country's economy from changes occurring on a global level, including the oil crisis and the United Kingdom's joining the EEC in 1973. The price and interest-rates freeze of 1982–1984 antagonised trade union groups as pay increases ceased, while the workers they represented and their families and communities became concerned with rising unemployment, overseas debt, and grew increasingly sceptical towards Muldoon's 'Think Big' projects, designed to stimulate the economy.

As conflict around wage demands reached boiling point, and with 'stagflation' crippling the domestic economy, the Muldoon Government's social and economic agenda was undermined. In 1984, following defections from National MPs, and fearing he could no longer maintain a majority, a visibly drunk Muldoon called a snap election on live National television. Muldoon would go on to lose the election to David Lange's Labour Party, signalling the end of an era, and the beginning of some of the most drastic social and economic reforms in New Zealand history.

Evident through a detailed description of Muldoon's personal and autobiographical history is both the construction and perception of character, and the early development of patterns of signifiers and background symbols Muldoon would repeatedly invoke during his performance as Prime Minister and in the struggle for power. With memory of his character and role within the drama informed as much by the economic, and his representing the final years of Keynesian social democracy in 'crisis', and the cultural, with his appeals to the WWII generation, social conservatism, and patriarchical values, for interviewees, Muldoon has become a complex metonymic representation. Muldoon as metonymic representation is dependent, however, as much on the metonymic representation of others, as it is on his own personal history. For a deeper understanding,

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nevertheless remains collectively remembered by New Zealand's Pasifika communities as one of the most painful and traumatic of the Pasifika experience in New Zealand.

the actor Muldoon, his character, and 'Muldoon' as metonymic representation, must be cast against that of his opponent David Lange.

David Lange

David Russell Lange (1942–2005) was born on 4 August 1942, in the town of Russell in New Zealand's Bay of Islands. His father was a doctor who served with the 3rd Auckland (Countess of Ranfurly's Own) Regiment stationed in the Bay of Islands during WWII. His mother was born in Australia but moved to New Zealand after qualifying as a nurse (Lange, 2005).

Lange (2005) writes of his father's ambition to set up as a general practitioner in Ōtāhuhu, South Auckland, which he did, in 1932, with his wife initially as the practice nurse. In describing 1930s Ōtāhuhu, Lange (2005) writes,

> It was never a town of architectural merit; its most distinctive form of building was the railway house. These houses were not designed for comfort. If you stood at the front door of a railway house you could see the back door and if you walked through, you would pass the kitchen. On the left was the coal range, on the mantelpiece was the Edmonds baking-powder tin with the money for the newspaper in it, and on the wall there was invariably a portrait of Michael Joseph Savage, patron saint of the working people of Otahuhu [sic] (p. 21).

Lange (2005) continues, describing the Ōtāhuhu of his early years:

> when I knew it, it had prospered… it was an orderly town where convention was respected: every man had a job and every woman stayed at home unless she was a school teacher or a nurse. The men were employed at the railway workshops or the brewery or the abattoir or one of the three freezing works (p. 21).

David was the first of four children and was raised in the tradition of the Methodist Church. While his mother was not a Labour supporter, his father was 'known to be sympathetic to the labour movement', due in part to the Labour Government of 1935–1949 and their transformation of New Zealand health system (Lange, 2005). According to Lange (2005), for these views, some of his father's professional colleagues labelled him a 'socialist'.

Lange (2005) describes the Ōtāhuhu of his youth as a 'tribal town, even in sporting interests' (2p. 45), with workplaces and neighbourhoods split between rugby union and rugby league supporters, and the 'working men' of Ōtāhuhu belonging to a trade union, and supporting the Labour Party (Lange, 2005, p. 46).

In 1960 Lange attended the University of Auckland where he studied toward an Bachelor of Laws degree. Over the next six years, he would work a number of jobs to pay his way through university, including at the Westfield freezing works (the workplace of generations of families before its closure in 1989 following neoliberal economic reforms which rendered it 'uncompetitive'). Of his time working at the freezing works, Lange (2005) would later write, 'It was impossible in the appalling conditions at the works not to identify with my fellow workers' (p. 63), and he purportedly resolved to become a union member six hours into his first day. He later left Westfield to work as a law clerk, working a range of tasks and cases, including office work on behalf of the Communist Party (Lange, 2005, p. 69).

Lange graduated from the University of Auckland in 1966, and in 1967 was admitted as a barrister and solicitor. In 1968 Lange married and took over a solicitor's office in Kaikohe, a 'predominantly Māori' (Lange, 2005, p. 84) district in the Far North of New Zealand, but left his practice to complete a Master of Law in 1970, where he graduated with first-class honours, before returning to practice law in 1971. According to Lange (2005), he 'wanted to be a criminal lawyer… because of the excitement and the cut-and-thrust of it, and because of the challenge of taking on the system on the side of the underdog' (p. 73).

Lange joined the Labour Party, and campaigned for Phil Amos in the General Election of 1963, before working for Norman Douglas (father of Minister of Finance under the Fourth Labour Government, Roger Douglas) in the Auckland Central electorate in 1966. In 1974, Lange was approached by Michael Bassett (also given ministerial duties under the Fourth Labour Government) and asked if he was interested in representing Labour on the Auckland City Council. Lange accepted, but was unsuccessful. He ran again to contest the Labour candidacy for the Hobson Electorate in 1975, but was again unsuccessful (Lange, 2005).

Lange became president of the Council of Civil Liberties in the mid-seventies, and in 1977, was named Labour Party candidate for Mangere, an electorate that at the time included Ōtāhuhu. Lange was elected following a speech to the selection panel of which Lange (2005) writes he 'talked about the electorate, about my hope for the people who lived in it, and about the capacity for the Labour party to revitalise itself' (p. 107). According to Lange (2005), 'I wanted to do something for the people of Mangere and I looked to the policies and programmes of the Labour Party to achieve that. I wanted to do something about the state of the law and stop the unnecessary harm being done to people by the legal process' (pp. 109–110).

Of his maiden speech to parliament in 1977—a speech 'full of reference to my electorate', Lange (2005) writes it was,

> the most important parliamentary speech I ever made and was widely counted as a success. It gave me a name as a parliamentary speaker and even led to my being talked about as a future Party leader. I benefited from it for the rest of my time in politics (p. 112).

According to Michael Bassett (2017), Lange's maiden speech was a 'mixture of humanity, sentimentality, compassion and an argument for greater self-responsibility' (p. 393). It was in his first year as an MP that he would meet two key figures in his political career, Richard Prebble, and Roger Douglas.

Lange held several positions of increasing responsibility within the Labour Party in the years that followed. Labour leader Bill Rowling made him the Party's justice spokesman in 1978, and in 1979 he was chosen to represent caucus at the Interparliamentary Union conference. Later in 1979, Lange replaced Bob Tizard as deputy leader of the Labour Party in an ousting that was, according to Lange, achieved in part through the 'scheming' of Michael Bassett and Roger Douglas (Lange, 2005, p. 129), and which would put him at odds with Party president Jim Anderton (Lange, 2005, p. 130). In 1980, according to Bassett (2017), he, Mike Moore, Roger Douglas and Richard Prebble initiated a narrowly-lost challenge to Prime Minister Rowling's leadership that if successful would have moved Lange into the leadership position.

In 1980, with the General Election just a year away, many in the Labour caucus began to question the leadership of Party leader Bill Rowling. Again, Lange (2005) describes

Bassett, Douglas, and Mike Moore as active in orchestrating a motion of no confidence in Rowling, but the ousting was quashed. When the motion of no confidence was lost, Lange retired to Douglas' office for a lunch of fish 'n' chips (Lange, 2005), in what would become a regular occurrence (see Image 4. Chapter 8).

Labour lost the 1981 General Election against a backdrop of social and economic unrest in New Zealand (see Chapter 7), and shifting dynamics of social power within the Labour Party. In 1982, Bill Rowling stepped down as Party leader with an election in less than two years' time, and in 1983 Lange was elected leader with 'a chance to make a different kind of country in New Zealand' (Lange, 2005, p. 151). Douglas was soon named the Labour Party's finance spokesperson.

The 1983 Labour Party conference was held in Auckland where Lange spoke of the Party's shared goals and his vision of a better New Zealand, but there was division in the Party over economic policy, and by the end of 1983 an economic policy package produced by Roger Douglas created further divisions (see Chapter 6). According to Lange (2005), by the time of the 1984 General Election, a paper written by Geoffrey Palmer on the Party's economic policy was presented as an attempt to reconcile the more radical economic policy proposals of Douglas with the 'mixed reception' the package had been met with between caucus and the policy council.

By 1984, the divisions within New Zealand which became evident in the 1970s and early 1980s had galvanised many groups around a number of social and economic issues, both foreign and domestic, culminating in the rise of a new political consciousness following the controversial 1981 Springbok Tour (Chapter 7). In June of 1984 a snap election was called by Prime Minister Robert Muldoon and the Labour Party began its election campaign in Christchurch in front of 3,000 people. In his campaign opening address, Lange spoke to the growing division in New Zealand writ-large, painted Muldoon's economic policies as a failure, and positioned himself as an antidote to Muldoon's negative, 'confrontational' and 'provocative' style.

On Saturday 14 July 1984, David Lange defeated Robert Muldoon in a landslide, and on 26 July 1984 was sworn in at age 41 as New Zealand's 32nd Prime Minister, then New Zealand's youngest Prime Minister of the 20th century. He served as Prime Minister from 1984–1989 during which time sweeping neoliberal social and economic reforms were

implemented which would be coined 'Rogernomics' after his Finance Minister Roger Douglas.

Evident in a detailed account of Lange's personal and autobiographical history, is, again, both the construction and perception of character, and the early development of patterns of signifiers and background symbols Lange would draw from during his performance as Oppositon Leader and in the struggle for power. Where Muldoon served in WWII and experienced the Great Depression and the impacts of poverty, Lange was of a different generation and enjoyed a relatively privileged upbringing during New Zealand's 'golden years' of full employment, relative economic prosperity, and a strong welfare state. His youth and purported 'mixture of humanity, sentimentality, [and] compassion' would place his character in stark opposition to that of Muldoon, while his early commitment to the principles of social and economic justice provided for the development of patterns of signifiers and background codes he would draw upon in situating himself firmly within the Labour tradition.

As with Muldoon, through the construction and perception of character, and his place within New Zealand history and the drama of neoliberalisation, Lange became a metonymic representation, cast against that of Muldoon. Where Muldoon represented the old, Lange represented the new, both generationally, and in terms of an increasing number of young professionals entering parliament as Labour Party representatives. As history would have it, however, Lange became representative of much more than his youthful charisma and leadership. In his role as Prime Minister beginning in 1984, Lange oversaw the beginning of a period of radical neoliberal reform, and a drastic divergence from both his and the Labour Party's purportedly core principles. Lange did not, however, achieve this feat alone. There is another key actor within the drama of neoliberalisation, who, as a metonymic representation, would perhaps overshadow both Lange and Muldoon.

Roger Douglas

Roger Owen Douglas was born on the 5 December 1937. Before migrating from Britain to New Zealand in 1921, Douglas' grandfather was a member of both the Socialist Party and the Independent Labour Party, and his grandmother was the daughter of a union organiser. Douglas' grandfather would join the Labour Party upon his arrival in

Christchurch and helped the First Labour Government under Michael Joseph Savage secure power in 1935 as a representative for the Labour Party in the Eden electorate (Collins, 1987).

Douglas' father Norman served as a secretary for various unions in New Zealand, was elected to the Auckland City Council in 1935, and became Secretary of the Auckland Trades Council in 1940. That same year, Douglas' father joined the executive of the Democratic Labour Party, and for the next nine years railed against the free market, attempts by government to balance the budget, corrupt union secretaries unwilling to help Labour implement their full agenda, and in favour of family benefits, free health clinics, and universal old age pensions (Collins, 1987). Norman Douglas rejoined the Labour Party in 1951, was elected MP for Auckland Central in 1960, President of the Labour Party in 1966, and shadow Minister of Labour in 1967 (Collins, 1987).

Roger Douglas had humble beginnings and grew up in social housing in the suburb of One Tree Hill in Auckland. He attended Auckland Grammar where he excelled at rugby union, cricket, and rugby league. In the school holidays, Douglas worked for an Auckland accounting firm. He accepted further work for the firm, studied part-time at Auckland University and received an accounting degree. He then worked as company secretary for a South Auckland business, and was married in 1961 before moving to Mangere East (Collins, 1987). Biographer Simon Collins (1987) writes that it was Douglas' time working in business—specifially in the carpet industry—that informed his view that import controls stifled economic growth, and his push for rapid industrialisation, economic diversification away from New Zealand's traditional reliance on the agricultural sector, and toward increased processing of primary products.

In Mangere, 1961, Douglas became President of the Manukau Labour Electorate Committee, and later in 1968, gained a seat in parliament as Labour representative for the Manukau electorate. According to Collins (1987, p. 6), 'The man who entered parliament in 1969 was an unusual product of a maverick, radical family, and conservative world of Auckland Grammar and business'. In his maiden speech to Parliament in 1970, Douglas made a case for encouraging New Zealand exporters to invest overseas, and the following year, began applying principles of efficiency he picked up in business to the public sector (Collins, 1987). To this end, Collins (1987, p. 7) writes, Douglas 'suggested that the state should abandon various activities, set up a

new office to audit the effectiveness of its programmes and establish a measure of efficiency similar to the profit yardstick in the private sector'.

Douglas was elected to cabinet following the Labour Party's 1972 victory under Norman Kirk. Collins (1987, p. 9) writes that 'Douglas' efforts in 1972–75 can be seen as a first attempt to apply many of the ideas he... [later] extended to the whole economy. The central theme was to treat government as a business, like carpets. The objective was to make it more efficient'.

The Third Labour Government lost office in 1975 and Douglas began working closely with likeminded business people, colleagues, economists, and academics on a new and comprehensive political programme. By 1980, Douglas' alternative budget contained much of the neoliberal faith-in-the-market thinking he would have a leading hand in implementing as the Fourth Labour Government came into power. In his *There's Got To Be A Better Way!* published in the same year, Douglas (1980) provides an A–Z in outlining both the need for reform, and his radical vision for New Zealand, stating:

> As at no other time in its history, New Zealand stands a divided, confused, dispirited Nation.
> It lacks a sense of clear direction for the future.
> Its loyalties are torn between conflicting interests, each determined to extract the maximum for itself with no regard for others.
> Its standard of living has dropped and continues to drop visibly.
> It stands on the brink of economic ruin,
> It has stifled innovation for mediocrity.
> Because of this it is losing thousands of New Zealanders, most of them young, each year.
> New Zealand is a nation that has lost its spirit, the fire in its belly!
> How much further will New Zealand sink before we start to fight back?
> How do we break out of our present economic and social morass? (p. 9).

Labour would win the 1984 election under David Lange. As Douglas' economic policies began to be implemented, there were objections from those within the Party who saw the shift in policy as a divergence away from Labour's—and the country's—traditionally Keynesian social democratic stance on social and economic matters. According to

Collins (1987, p. 15), at the annual Labour Party Conference of 1984, 'delegates overwhelmingly called on the government to reject any moves towards market-led policies and asked for a national economic plan and redistribution of wealth from rich to poor'. However, neoliberal economic reforms were to be implemented at pace.

Of Roger Douglas, Lange would write in his 2005 autobiography,

> He came early on under the influence of the market liberals, although he was a long way from the zealot he later became; around 1980 his thinking was eclectic and drew on Labour tradition as much as on those who questioned the traditional model. What I liked in him was his readiness to break with the past; he was not afraid to tackle the issues which had bedevilled the Labour Party in its recent history and kept it on the backbenches... I believed that Douglas alone of the caucus would enable Labour to reshape itself as a modernising party which could actually do something for the country. We needed fire and he provided it (p. 142).

The Labour Party, led by David Lange, defeated Muldoon's National Government on a platform of largely traditional social democratic principles, while seizing on social and econonic crises and what Lange articulated as a need to 'modernise'. However, backstage, incumbent Finance Minister Roger Douglas had developed a radically new policy agenda, which by the time of the 1984 election was the blueprint for a radical free-market programme. Douglas' 1980 musings would foreshadow his determination for drastic change:

> Thirty years ago New Zealand led the world. We were the richest country in the world and we had the most developed system of social security, free education and health care. Today, relative to other countries, we are falling faster than any other developed country...
>
> We can lead the world again, both in standard of living and in social justice.
>
> To do that we need a revolution... (p. 75).

Indeed, it was a revolution Douglas would lead, albeit one in which the violence of revolt was experienced as the whip-lash of sudden, extensive, and increasing reform, and accompanied by poverty, inequality, and *cultural disorientation* (Sztompka, 2000, see

Chapter 7). Following the 1984 election, the atmosphere of crisis which resulted from years of stagnant economic growth—coupled with a political system in New Zealand which at the time permitted governments to make drastic changes through high representation in seats of parliament—led to the beginnings of what Brian Easton (1997b) would coin a 'blitzkrieg' approach to policy reform. This blitzkrieg approach meant the Fourth Labour Government was able to implement their policy programme, spearheaded by Roger Douglas, without regard for the concerns of the public, or opposition within the Labour Party itself. The scale of reforms, which led to a programme of deregulation and privatisation, was drastic and more widespread than that experienced within other Western liberal democracies.

This drastic programme of economic reform was later referred to as 'Rogernomics', and led to market deregulation and tax reform, the scrapping of subsidies and tariffs, a reduction of the top tax rate from 66 per cent to 33 per cent, large-scale redundancies, increased unemployment and income inequality, and an adverse impact on communities around the country (Kelsey, 1995).

Bollard (1994) notes, however, Dougas 'was not a strong traditional politician. He was a poor speaker and a poor debater and was without a traditional support base' (as cited in Kelsey, 1995, p. 32). The support, therefore, of close associates and Labour MPs David Caygill and Richard Prebble, was crucial to Douglas' success. While Caygill, an ex-lawyer, 'was the more intellectual, able to present the case for liberalisation in theoretical terms', Prebble, while also an ex-lawyer, was 'forceful and streetwise, able to argue the case with dissenting groups inside and outside the party' (Bollard 1994, as cited in Kelsey, 1995, p. 32). While other members within Cabinet played a supporting role in the drama of neoliberalisation, Douglas, Prebble, and Caygill would emerge as the 'Troika', and as the key architects of neoliberal reform. Emerging from the Muldoon years with a vision for the future of New Zealand, and a plan in hand, the impact of the significance of the Troika, of Rogernomics, and of Douglas himself looms large in the collective memory of research participants, and as a metonymic representation of a neoliberal take-over, and a betrayal of the Labour Party tradition.

The construction and significance of opposing *character* in shaping the outcome of the 1984 election

Muldoon, Lange, and Douglas, as actors in the drama of the neoliberalisation, have become inseparable from their respective *characters* and as collective, metonymic representations within collective memory. Within the collective memory of participants in this study, each actor has become a collective representation in their own right, both as representative characters in the drama of neoliberalisation, and as symbolic of an era in New Zealand's social, cultural, economic, and political history. The work entailed in becoming such a representation involves both a performative function, on the part of actors, and an evaluative and meaning-making function on the part of their observers/audience. In their struggle for political power, and in performing either the need for change or to stay the course, *actors* invoke both past and present in their use of *background codes and foreground scripts*. An evaluative and interpretive function on the part of their observers/*audience*, and in time, memory-work from those impacted by their actions and decisions dictates the success of the performance, and the manner in which the actor and their decisions are remembered. As such, performative work on the part of key actors within the neoliberalisation of New Zealand—particulary that of Muldoon and Lange—is a deliberate and rehearsed act, both discursively and physically.

Through their construction of character and the performance of power, Muldoon and Lange each sought re-fusion with the New Zealand public as observers/audience in an atmosphere of not merely social complexity typified by advanced liberal democracies, but of *increasing* complexity during a period of relative social division and with an economy rhetorically positioned as being in a state of 'crisis'. In the struggle for power between Muldoon and the National Government, and Lange and the Labour Party, each actor therefore fought to shape the narrative around the pressing issues facing New Zealand, their own fitness for leadership, and the failings and shortcomings of their opponent in a manner each deemed appropriate to the social, cultural, political, and economic context of the time. This struggle from each served the actors in their pursuit of greater *psychological identification* with the public as audience, and increased *cultural identification* by the audience with the performance of character and text.

Narratives which surround key actors, including those informing the construction of character—collective narratives drawn from a shared past in the form of background codes and foreground scripts, the latter providing more immediate context for the performance—must, however, be either actively constructed, or re-articulated and re-produced. For Alexander (2010),

> It's important to realise that, in the course of campaigns, narratives don't just exist, they're created. This process involves a lot of give and take, with candidates framing the story in terms of the problems they see as the most pressing; getting feedback from the public, polls, commentators, and trusted advisors; and adjusting their personae to fit. To win an election, candidates need to know about more than the big problems of the day, they must discern what the public's looking for in a saviour and how to step into that role as if it's a natural fit (pp. 17–18).

In his analysis of the struggle for democratic power between United States Senators John McCain and Barack Obama during the 2008 US presidential election, Alexander (2010) invokes the metaphor of McCain as Achilles to Obama's Hector, with Achilles and Hector situated in opposition, not merely as opponents in mythology, but as opposing representations. For Alexander, parallels can be drawn between Hector's motivations, and today's sacred democratic ideals and the promises of civil society in a manner that can be applied more broadly to democratic struggles for power elsewhere in the world. In the present case, interviewees provide a collecive memory of the struggle for democratic power, the direction of the country in 1984 New Zealand, and the subsequent neoliberalisation of New Zealand. Within the collective memory of participating trade union and community voluntary representatives, Lange is presented as our story's *protagonist*, Muldoon is cast as *antagonist*, while Roger Douglas is situated as a representative *villain* in the drama of neoliberalisation.

An analysis of the two respective biographies of Muldoon and Lange reveals two distinct representative figures. By 1984, the failure of Muldoon and the National Government's policy responses to international economic shocks throughout the 1970s, the subsequent economic crises domestically, and unrest around a number of social issues, meant the 1984 General Election signalled an ideal moment to push for change in New Zealand. Led by the young, charismatic, socially progressive David Lange, the Labour Party sought to position itself and protagonist Lange as *hero* and *saviour* to a country and

economy held hostage by an obstinate and aggressive antagonist Muldoon and the National Government, with their inward-focussed and interventionist economic policies, and unwillingness to implement change in the face of social and economic crises. For Muldoon, change was framed as radical, and youth as inexperience. Only he and his Government could see to it that New Zealand would weather the social and economic storm. For Muldoon, reelection would rest on his ability to convince voters that he was the only true steward of the New Zealand economy, that the economic crisis the country faced was largely the result of international matters outside his Government's control, and that the safest option was to simply continue with the status-quo of 'Keynesian bridging strategies' and polices to control inflation (Schwartz, 1994). On the other hand, Lange's success in gaining democratic power and the leadership of New Zealand would mean building upon growing resentment of Muldoon and *Muldoonism*, framing the social and economic crises as inseparable from both the Muldoon Government and Muldoon's character as a leader, and in convincing voters that *there was no alternative* to a change in leadership and a new direction for New Zealand's economy.

Through an analysis of the speeches of both Lange and Muldoon during and prior to their respective 1984 General Election campaigns, we can not merely gauge a greater understanding of the manner in which cultural pragmatics and the performance of culture led to the successful re-fusion of Lange with a majority of New Zealand's voting public, securing him the premiership, but also how this success conversely resulted from the failings of Muldoon. With a greater understanding of cultural performance in the drama of the 1984 General Election, we can then develop a deeper understanding of the centrality of each actor in the collective memory of participants.

Muldoon as antagonist

The many opportunities politicians take along the campaign trail to address their constituents, various interests groups, and the public at large, provide a key *means of symbolic production* for actors in their performance. Politicians craft their skills in parliament, town halls, and through press releases and televised debates in their bid for power and influence, to control the political narrative, and to shape the character they present to the public and their political peers. Through these means of symbolic production, actors address their audience, reading from both literal and metaphorical

scripts, contained within which are encoded materials, and more explicit references to the context in which the performance is set.

By 1984, Muldoon had spent nearly 40 years in politics, beginning with his time as chairman of the Young Nationals in 1949. Early in his career, he had carved out a reputation as a 'Young Turk', a Party agitator, and later as something of a brawler. Whether by active design, or merely a refusal to temper his more aggressive traits, by 1984 Muldoon's brash character and confrontational style of leadership was as much a defining element of his time as Prime Minister as his handling of social and economic issues. Keith Jackson (1985) would write in 1985 of Muldoon's 1984 election campaign:

> The official three-week campaign was dominated by personalities rather than policies. The Prime Minister placed heavy emphasis upon his 'twenty years of experience' in handling the economy... compared with the admitted lack of expertise in economics of Labour Party leader David Lange. Sir Robert yet again alleged Communist domination of the Labour Party through the trade union movement and linked this with Labour Party proposals to review the ANZUS defence treaty linking New Zealand with Australia and the United States. Few new policy options were offered, it was essentially a government taking its stand upon experience and an indifferent record (p. 76).

Muldoon's positioning himself and his Government as the more experienced of the contenders, as uniquely positioned to lead the country through the crisis, but also his invoking of *red peril*—a notion that by 1984 may have seemed anachronistic and perhaps alienating to many, particularly younger, New Zealand voters—is evident in his speeches leading up to and during his 1984 campaign[10].

In a 1983 address to the Wellington Chamber of Commerce (Muldoon, 1983, August 4) in which he discussed the wage and price freeze and his plan to abolish compulsory unionism, Muldoon asserts his expert authority on the economy, stating 'it is essential to do one's homework, and over the years I have rarely been tripped on the facts', before railing against the Federation of Labour, and the trade unions with their 'totally unrealistic demands' and 'intransigent and antagonistic attitude'. In reference to Lange's

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[10] Speeches and press releases reproduced in the following discussion of 'Muldoon as antagonist' and 'Lange as protagonist' were retrieved through New Zealand's Parliamentary Library archives in Wellington.

call for unity, and a new 'politics of consensus', Muldoon invokes collective memory of the 'bitterness and division' which had beset New Zealand during the Vietnam War, the 1951 Waterside Strike (see Chapter 7), and the resulting 'march up Queen Street'[11], and attempts to relate mounting resentments and discord to an 'unrealistic and 'antagonist[ic]' trade union movement. He describes prominent political figure and then president of the Socialist Unity Party Bill Andersen as 'totally and publicly devoted to destroying the New Zealand economy in its present form so that what he terms a socialist, but others would term a communist economy can rise in its place', and states that were a Labour Government to take power, 'these men [that 'enmesh' the trade union movement] and those who support them... would control that Government as well'.

Muldoon acknowledges in his address to the Wellington Chamber of Commerce that the recession of the 1970s and 1980s 'has now lasted longer by several years than the Great Depression of the 1930s', that there was a need to minimise unemployment, and states his aim to have a low rate of inflation and a much lower interest rate structure. In acknowledgement of mounting calls for liberalisation, he concedes that there were a growing number of economic theorists that would say his aims could be achieved 'by using monetary and fiscal policy without direct intervention', but that he 'has seen the damage that is inevitable when such theories are put into practice' in the United States and Britain, which both saw 'massive double figure percentages of unemployment'. Muldoon ends his address to the Chamber of Commerce with reference to concerns over his interventionist economic policies:

> Some of the things I have been doing recently in the field of economic policy, have been unorthodox. The reason is that these are unorthodox times.
>
> I think all but the most sceptical are now beginning to believe that unorthodoxy runs a poor second to common sense in my text book of economic management.
>
> Common sense and a determination to see out this recession with the maintenance of the highest possible standard of living for our people, is at the heart of my economic thinking.

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[11] The main street of Auckland's CBD, Queen Street has been the site of a number of marches and protests stretching back to the Great Depression.

The large fiscal deficit, and some other aspects of current policy, are increasing our debt burden both internally and externally.

In plain language, we are shifting some of the cost of today's standard of living on to the shoulders of future generations.

In the other side of the ledger, however, the massive capital investments we are making at the present time... are a payment in advance by today's generation which will secure the standard of living of generations of New Zealanders in the future.

Common sense says that that is a fair bargain (Muldoon, 1983, August 4).

Muldoon's sense of paternalism is evident here in his recognition of the economic recession, and acknowledgement of public doubt in its management, paired with his call for faith in him that his economic policies were in the best interests of New Zealanders. The invoking of the term 'common sense' appealed to a public understanding of the status quo within Keynesian social democracy, and underlying this call was further appeal for the New Zealand public to put their trust in him and the economic strategies that typified the post-WWII consensus. However, to 'see out' a recession with the 'highest possible standard of living' called for a level of trust in his leadership that was quickly fading within the New Zealand public at the time.

Later again, in 1983, Muldoon addressed the Pencarrow electorate (Muldoon, 1983, August 22). After attacking journalists and the news media as biased and 'negative', their choice of independent commentators as 'deplorable', and dismissing 'boring political scientists', Muldoon once again addresses calls from across the political spectrum for a radical change in economic policy, 'of the kind that has been quite common over the years', that 'might well have achieved its objective at the cost of untold damage to the personal affairs of many thousands of New Zealanders'. Further to this, of the liberalising and privatisation of New Zealand's economy, and the lifting of protections, Muldoon states,

It is not difficult to devise economic policies that will cause the New Zealand economy to find its own level, to direct our resources to what is most productive,

to destroy what is less productive by way of business enterprise, and to let those who are losers struggle back into the mainstream as best they can.

Unfortunately the rest of the world puts up all kinds of barriers which make it difficult for us to sell products which we produce most efficiently, and so we in turn use some barriers, some subsidies, and various other devices to redress the balance.

This offends the economic purists because it is what they call interventionist, as though somehow that word in itself is a description of something that is evil...

(Muldoon, 1983, August 22).

Here we see Muldoon articulate a direct defense of Keynesian economic policy and a refutation of the form of neoliberalism that had been adopted in the United States and United Kingdom, and that was being proposed within New Zealand, while also pointing to outside forces creating the barriers to New Zealand's economic improvement. Muldoon indicates further privatisation of public assets and lifting of protections as a means of addressing the economic crisis, and its inevitable impacts, would serve to create 'losers' who must 'struggle back into the mainstream as best they can', and contrasts this with his Government's interventionist policies which, for Muldoon, served to protect the community as a whole. In spelling out the principles behind his and successive New Zealand Governments' Keynesian social and economic policies, Muldoon acknowledged the need to justify the then taken-for-granted status quo, or 'common sense' of New Zealand politics in the face of a break down in the post-WWII economic consensus.

As Jackson (1985) notes following the 1984 election, Muldoon attempted to cast Lange and the Labour Party as not merely sympathetic to progressive causes, with strong ties to the trade union movement, but as *communist sympathisers*: a theme he returned to in his 1983 Pencarrow electorate dinner address (Muldoon, 1983, August 22). Here, Muldoon describes a Labour Party moving 'further to the left, and closer to the Socialist Unity Party[12]', before attacking key figures within the Labour Party—'the 'B' team'—by

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[12] The Socialist Unity Party (SUP) splintered from the New Zealand Communist Party in 1966. Federation of Labour secretary Ken Douglas was a prominent member of the SUP in 1983, and Muldoon would actively target the SUP as a chief source of industrial conflict (Franks & McAloon, (2016).

name. Attempts by Muldoon to exaggerate Lange and the Labour Party's association with socialist groups, and their traditional ties to the trade union movement drew from years of similarly targeted attacks which played upon Cold War fears and social and cultural divisions dating back to New Zealand's anti-Vietnam War protest movement. However, by 1984, and following years of criticism both internationally and domestically of American hegemony, the fraying of the ANZUS Treaty over the nuclear question, and a growing generation of New Zealanders who may not have shared the same fears as their parents over the 'red peril', the tactic of playing on the fear of communism, according to participants in this study, was losing its ability to sway a large number of voters. Instead, these associations risked alienating many voters, particularly those younger members of the voting public who did not see closer relations with the United States—embodied and encoded in the question of the ANZUS Treaty and nuclear proliferation—as being essential to national security and New Zealanders' continued way of life.

Having sought to justify in previous speeches his economic policies for the good of all New Zealanders, and the dangers of a 'radical' Labour Party holding power, Muldoon's Pencarrow electorate dinner speech signalled an opportunity for Muldoon to once again frame his opponent Lange's evident charisma and oratory ability as masking his inexperience and lack of knowledge on economic issues:

> ... On the public platform and on television at election time he will pull in votes, there is no doubt of that, but I believe that long before that time comes the public will realise that he does not have the all-round knowledge, experience and ability to lead this country as Prime Minister, and that those closest to him in the 'B' team—Moore, Prebble, Bassett and Douglas and co—would make this country an international laughing stock if they became his front bench in Government (Muldoon, 1983, August 22).

Through his addresses Muldoon attempted to unveil the illusion of Lange's appeal—all bluster and no substance—and knowingly anticipated the success Lange would enjoy through the increasing importance of televised campaigning. Muldoon was later explicit in his calculation of the importance character and personality may play in deciding the election, but once again appealed for voters to see through the façade and instead look to experience and knowledge of the economy. Muldoon asked, 'Is it good for New Zealand

and its people, or is not good for New Zealand and its people? I am happy to have the policies of my Government assessed on that basis, not on the basis of "I do not like Muldoon, therefore everything he says is wrong"'. Mention here also of 'those closest' to Lange—Mike Moore, Richard Prebble, Michael Bassett and Roger Douglas—and the influence they would have on shaping New Zealand's economy, would serve in hindsight as an astute prediction of things to come, although for quite different reasons.

Muldoon concludes his 1983 Pencarrow electorate dinner address by appealing to what he viewed as his 'broad' base of supporters, invoking his 'silent majority'—termed 'Rob's Mob'—of 'ordinary', moderate New Zealanders and Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association (RSA) members, stating, 'We are a broad spectrum party in which people from every walk of life can find a niche. We have no place for extremists because really, extremists will inevitably be uncomfortable in the society of this country', and he once more emphasised his experience. Defensive statements by Muldoon often appear as much to justify his position as leader of the National Party, as they do to call for his reelection. As such, they reflect mounting internal disagreements within the National Party on social and economic issues, while positioning Muldoon as a safe, conservative option in the face of those from both parties he deemed as championing extreme social and economic policies.

Still two months out from calling the snap election, but very much in campaign mode, by the time of his April 1984 address to the Dunedin Business House (Muldoon, 1984, April 13), Muldoon was ramping-up his attacks on Lange's knowledge and expertise on the economy. Muldoon points to Lange and the Labour Party's vague detailing of their proposed economic policy in Lange's four 'forgettable' addresses: 'I doubt whether anyone in this audience, or indeed anyone at all, including the Leader of the Opposition, could set out in detail what it was that he said...', and once again points to Lange's poor knowledge of matters related to the economy: 'the leader of the opposition has several times publicly confessed to having no knowledge of, or understanding of, economics and economic management'. Here, Muldoon even questions whether Lange's being asked to give such speeches on matters he had little knowledge of was perhaps an 'act of cruelty' on the part of his Labour colleagues.

In appraisal of Lange's speeches on the economy as 'a collection of economic platitudes and cliches totally bereft of any indication in detail of what a Labour Government's

economic policies would be and, indeed, hedging on all the important issues of principle', Muldoon frames the content of Lange's speeches in stark contrast with that of his own in which he was happy to delve into numbers and the minutiae of economic matters ('Since 1973, when the first oil shock hit... we have needed to sell four lambs or four bales of wool, to buy imports that three would buy before'). Muldoon quotes his opponent directly in revealing Lange's vagueness and imprecision,

> When [Lange] says 'I firmly believe that poor government economic management has been a major factor in New Zealand's poor performance. It is at the heart of the Labour philosophy that improved economic management will contribute to an improved economic performance'; we again look in vain for any precise indication as to exactly what a Labour Government would do...

> ... clearly the one statement he can stand by is that he knows little of economics and economic affairs (Muldoon, 1984, April 13).

By June of 1984, dissension within the National Party meant that Muldoon no longer had confidence in maintaining a majority in parliament. The call for a snap election was made following MP Marilyn Waring's defection over the nuclear issue. The 1984 snap election was called by a visibly drunk Muldoon on 14 June—in itself an oft-remembered moment in New Zealand history, and indicative of an increasingly caricatured Muldoon—leaving just one month for both parties to campaign in earnest for the General Election on 14 July. On the night he called the snap election, a reporter approached Muldoon and commented on the short time to the election date, stating, 'that doesn't give you much time to run up to the election, Prime Minister'. A slurring and self-assured Muldoon replied, 'Doesn't give my opponents much time to run up to an election, does it?' (retrieved from NZ On Screen, 1992).

Speaking at a press conference on 15 June, when asked what the pressing issues were going into the campaign, Muldoon implored,

> The issue is a very simple one. Who do you want to govern the country? And we will be saying, 'well you know us, the good side and the bad side and this is the lot, no experience, you are taking an awful chance with them, [they] have not even got an economic policy as you. They said they were going to have an economic

policy by the end of August or early September, well that is going to be a bit late for this election.

Again, Muldoon stressed his position as the only true steward of the economy, and attacked Lange's knowledge and inexperience, calling him a 'proper clown', while acknowledging that character and personality would play a key role in determining the outcome of the election,

> I look at the leadership of the Labour Party, a man who publicly confesses that he knows nothing about economics and economic management... I have got to have some confidence that the people are going to say: 'well I do not like that fellow Muldoon all that much but at least he knows what he is doing'.

Tellingly, during the 15 June press conference, when asked what role defense and 'the nuclear issue' will play in the campaign, Muldoon simply replied, 'Some but not too much, particularly the nuclear issue' (Muldoon, 1984, June 15).

Muldoon gave his Election 1984 Campaign Opening Address on the 25 June 1984 (Muldoon, 1984, 25 June) less than three weeks out from the General Election. In his address, Muldoon covers his greatest hits: he highlights his experience, 'We have got the leadership, we have got the experience in leadership, we have got the performance in leadership, but more importantly we have got the team. The experienced team, the team that can form a government that will carry on what we have achieved up until now'. He appeals to his base of conservative voters, 'in the next Muldoon Government there will be no extremists. New Zealand is a down-to-earth, middle of the road country and there is no place for extremists in a New Zealand Government'. He acknowledges the role personality and character will play in the election, 'Every other party's campaign in the next three weeks is going to be an anti-Muldoon campaign'. He stresses his knowledge of the economy, and provides concrete details while maintaining the economic recession, even as it had hit New Zealand harder than other countries, is largely the result of external forces and shifts in the country's economic base: 'I go back to those four lambs or four bales of wool'. He defends his 'Think Big' projects, and his Government's borrowing to maintain New Zealanders' standard of living, and returns to attacking Lange's admitted lack of knowledge on economic matters. He says a Labour Government would in effect be a Socialist Unity Government, before invoking Marsden

Point[13], 'dancing Cossacks'[14], and the 'Soviet Communist system' and its '[dis]regard...
for normal human decencies at whatever level you like to pitch it on'. Muldoon ends his
election campaign opening address with memories of his time at war, and an appeal for
support from a voting bloc consisting in large part of an ageing generation of rugby-mad
returned service men and women:

> Just a week ago, I stood on this platform in front of the annual conference of the
> Returned Services Association. They are showing the marks of the years, most of
> them. I lost five years of my life during World War II and gained the best
> education I ever had. My best friend lost his life in the skies over Britain. I am not
> going to let him and all the others, or the other young New Zealanders down...
>
> I have spoken tonight of the principal issues. I come back to the beginning. It is a
> question of leadership, it is a question of the team. We know what we are doing
> because we have been doing it for a long time. I went to the football at Eden Park
> on Saturday, I enjoyed the game, we won, but I am going to tell you, if this is
> testimonial, I had no difficulty in finding my seat (Muldoon, 1984, 25 June).

Muldoon sought to construct a narrative around his leadership and bid for reelection that
characterised himself and the National Government as secure, experienced, and
responsible stewards of the economy. He appealed to the sacred ideals of the collective,
and the social democratic consensus, against the profane individualism he associated
with neoliberal reform. The perceived failures of the National Government were framed
by Muldoon as the inevitable but temporary outcome of global ecomomic instability. For
Muldoon, relief from the economic crisis would be achieved through staying-the-course
of Keynesian social and economic protection and interventionism. Alternatives posed by
the opposition and dissenters within the National Party were cast as 'extremist', as were

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[13] Marsden Point, the site of the country's only oil refinery, opened in 1964. It was the first of a number of
projects in the development of New Zealand's industrial infrastructure, including the Manapōuri hydro
scheme (see Chapter 7). The Marsden Point refinery would expand as part of Muldoon's 'Think Big'
project, and has been a sight of contention over environmental and industrial issues that continue to this
day.

[14] 'Dancing Cossacks' refers to an infamous televised National Party campaign advertisement from 1975
in which the Labour Government's compulsory superannuation scheme was cyncially framed as
signalling a slippery slope toward Soviet-style Communism.

increasing calls for socially progressive change and ideological and geopolitical independence from the US.

Yet Muldoon's framing of the debate around his own personal economic expertise and responsibility to the New Zealand people meant his *character* as a political actor became a crucial factor in his losing the election. As participants in this study attest, bold assertions of Muldoon's unique knowledge and experience on economic matters, were read as arrogant and inflexible by a public growing increasingly resentful of Muldoonism. Appeals for trust and faith that he alone could lead the country out of the economic crisis and help heal social division, were read as paternalistic at best, and at worst authoritarian, as Muldoon's overbearing and aggressive personality and style of leadership sought to silence and disregard increasing calls for social and economic change. While Muldoon himself would predict the importance of personality and the construction and perception of character in deciding the 1984 election, he failed to recognise just how far the discursive and ideological lines between sacred/profane had shifted in New Zealand's social and political landscape.

Lange as protagonist

Having taken the Labour Party leadership on 3 February 1983, David Lange set about questioning Muldoon's self-proclaimed status as true steward of the economy, and the wisdom of the protectionist status quo. Key to Lange's struggle for democratic power in the lead up to the 1984 General Election, was to frame the New Zealand economy as having been mismanaged to the point of 'crisis', while positioning himself and the Labour Party as the only hope for lifting the economy out of stagnation, and bringing about the social and economic change needed to improve the lives of all New Zealanders. Keith Jackson (1985) evaluated Lange and the Labour Party's win in the following terms:

> The Labour Party decided to meet the leadership head on... Weakness was transformed into strength by the tactic of linking Muldoon with divisions and confrontation whilst the Labour Party was promoted as the consensus party. This became the key theme of the campaign. At the same time Labour made a spirited bid for the middle ground. Although few specific policies were offered, these were carefully selected and directed at the target areas of concern revealed by private

opinion polling. Meanwhile, the Party claimed that it could not commit itself to detailed policies until it had 'seen the books'. Thus the central theme throughout was the National Government's failure (p. 77).

In January of 1984, Lange addressed the Bay of Plenty Combined Rotary Clubs (Lange, 1984, January 9) in the first of a two-part speech outlining the need for reforms to address the economic crisis and to outline 'the role of change in New Zealand society'. In his address, Lange speaks of an economy that 'has become fair to a few, unfair to most', and that has reached the point of 'crisis'. Lange tells those in attendance that 'required change has been unforthcoming, while existing policies are largely unsuccessful. Some policies are totally outmoded and quite inappropriate', and he claimed that positive change is 'long overdue'. Lange acknowledges the slowing of demand impacting developing countries, caused in part by the oil shocks of the 1970s, but said where most other countries were emerging from their economic slump, there was little sign that the New Zealand economic outlook was improving. He emphasises New Zealand's number of registered unemployed was the highest in the OECD since 1976, to its projected rise by the end of 1984, and to record internal and external debts. Lange explains simply and unequivocally that 'If present economic policies are not working, a change to ones that will work is obviously desirable'.

As with Muldoon, Lange appeals to voters' memory of better times, contrasting them with the current 'static living standards', and explained that 'the present generation are currently looking at the prospect of their children suffering a decline in living standards'. He speaks of the inequitable distribution of real take home pay. He couches the need for reform in terms of New Zealand's 'poor economic management, static living standards, and increasingly unequal distribution of income and opportunity'. Lange equates reform with progress and modernisation, while appealing to a younger constituency of New Zealanders, stating, 'Being generally better educated, more travelled and subject to greater change than pre-war generations, present-day New Zealanders are aware of this country's apparent inability to pull itself into the 1980s'. Lange's calls for change were often as vague as they were all-encompassing, and touched on both social and economic sentiment, stating, 'I believe much of the underlying frustrations, the volatility in the electorate, the seemingly irrational attraction to third party messiahs, and the uncertainty in the New Zealand economy and society is due to the failure to meet the groundswell

for change'[15]. He acknowledges that there would be winners and losers resulting from change, but that 'positive policies' would lessen the impact through new opportunities and job creation.

Later in his January 1984 address (Lange, 1984, January 9), Lange outlines New Zealand's economic transition to date, as following a three stage path from: 1) a simple, largely agrarian economy up until 1945, constituting favourable trade with Europe; 2) the 'inward-looking' post-WWII economy of increased industrialisation; and 3) the phase in which Lange saw the New Zealand economy as being on the verge of, the 'outward looking' phase in which New Zealand is more dependent on overseas markets and in which the country must play a greater role in the growing world economy. Crucially, Lange states, 'the issue is not—do we or don't we. Rather it is—how quickly do we adjust', echoing Margaret Thatcher's edict of 'there is no alternative'.

By framing the change needed in New Zealand's economy in terms of a logical, inevitable transition, in modernisation, and in lifting living standards, Lange positioned himself as the man who will lead New Zealand into the future, and into a new era of prosperity. Invoking the myth of egalitarianism, Lange states, 'New Zealanders value equality of opportunity. We purport to be an egalitarian society. If Jack is not as good as his master, then Jack's son should have the opportunity through, say, education, to be as good as Jack's master'. For Lange, reform would help improve Jack's lot. To not reform, Lange says, will mean being left behind as other nations surge forward: 'It's not that our standards have dropped; more that they have stood still while other nations have taken giant leaps forward'. In his address, Lange acknowledges the 'deliberately general' nature of his speech, and points to more detailed policy announcements to be made at a later date. It is also during this address that Lange introduces Labour's new 'consensus model'—a subject explored more fully a week later—in which decisions on the overall framework of reform were to be reached through consultation between the state, private enterprise, unions, and employers, 'and not entirely left to the market place' (Lange, 1984, January 9).

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[15] Here, in referencing 'third party messiahs', Lange refers to New Zealand libertarian and businessman Bob Jones, and his New Zealand Party, formed in 1983, which drew support from previously National-supporting voters in protest (Franks & McAloon, 2016).

In his second of a two part speech (Lange, 1984, January 16), Lange moved from the *essential need for change*, to outlining Labour's *consensus model*. Again, Lange begins by stating the need for change, the major economic problems facing New Zealand, increasing inequality, and the drop in living standards. The new consenus model, Lange told his audience, would mean that the country's social and economic objectives would be reached through consultation, and that previous models which favoured decisions left entirely to the marketplace or centralised planners were 'outmoded'. The new model, Lange said, signalled a Labour Government would want 'to take as many New Zealanders along with us in formulating, implementing, and in the timing of structural change'. He points to the imposition of Muldoon's wage/price freeze that was both implemented and extended without consensus as being that which the country must move away from. On the wage/price/rent freeze itself, Lange said the resulting inflation was entirely predictable, and 'is a clear example of the failed and outmoded approach to [the] public administration' of Muldoon. For Lange, a further example of this outmoded and outdated model was evident in Muldoon's investment in his 'Think Big' projects, implemented without consultation or consensus—an aproach to Government Lange deemed 'closed, arrogant' and which 'alienates the government from those it governs'. Having yet to make their economic and policy objectives public, Lange assured his audience that the Labour Party would be transparent and consultative, and 'open and forthright' with all sectors in implementing the reforms, stating 'Springing major policy decisions involving giant u-turns in underlying philosophy will not be Labour's approach'. Lange promised that, 'honesty, integrity, courage and openness on behalf of the Government can, to a large extent, build on the foundation of a consensus approach, to solve problems, just as it operates in our common concerns' (Lange, 1984, January 16).

Through his call for c*onsensus*, Lange was able to appeal for agreement from all sectors of New Zealand society around the necessity of structural change, and cooperation in developing its direction, while pairing the need for political consensus with social unity during a period of increasing division. In doing so, Lange equated himself and the Labour Party with change, cooperation, unity, and the hope for economic justice and prosperity, while equating Muldoon with stagnation, antagonism, division, and clinging to an outmoded system that had lost consenus and that no longer fit the needs of an increasingly troubled and complex social and economic landscape.

Lange acknowledged, in his 16 January address, the role trade unions must play in this new consensus, while also acknowledging their likely apprehension and suspicion following eight years of 'oppression' under the Muldoon Government, explaining how detailed policies and economic decisions must await the General Election. Lange ended his address:

> It is true that new consensus involves more complex and more serious problems than in the past.
>
> Our assessment suggests, however, that there is a fair degree of agreement with economic and social policy circles on the need for structural change.
>
> It is generally appreciated that achieving economic growth and highly relevant social programmes requires such change. That, at least, is an encouraging beginning...
>
> ... new consensus is both possible and desirable for New Zealand's development, which... invariably involves change...
>
> ... I believe New Zealanders have had enough of the clouded years when we have been unable or unwilling to decide between twilight and dawn.
>
> We must decide a new era is beginning. A transformation is possible. New policies can carry us forward. But to be successful they should be widely accepted. New consensus, as I have stressed tonight, offers that possibility...
>
> ... to achieve new consensus to institute change, to restore a sense of direction to New Zealand's economic and social future, and to provide badly needed social cohesion (Lange, 1984, January 16).

In February 1984, Lange continued his call for social and economic reform to address the many challenges New Zealand then faced with an address to the Rotary Club of Hamilton (Lange, 1984, February 27) titled 'A Hard Head and Soft Heart'. This metaphor and accompanying message would be central to Lange's campaign, along with his articulation of the social and economic crisis, as he sought to reassure Party members and the public that change would require boldness and bravery, but not at the expense of Labour's traditional concerns for social justice. In his address, Lange suggests Muldoon

would be remembered for the slowest economic growth in New Zealand history, the largest ever increase in unemployment, the largest migration out-flow ever recorded, the massive rise in overseas and public debt, the largest ever price increases, the 'deliberate and calculated undermining of New Zealand's social cohesion and racial harmony', the 'most extravagant and inaccurate economic forecast ever made by a New Zealand Prime Minister', and cynical election year spending to capture electoral votes. Lange professed, 'I believe that history will judge that the massive deterioration in the public finances were the outstanding characteristic of the present National Government's term of office'. In doing so, Lange made clear, that any attempts by Muldoon and his Government to right the ship, would be using the same outmoded and outdated tools that had left the country and its economy seemingly unmoored.

In his February address to the Hamilton Rotary Club (Lange, 1984, February 27), Lange focussed heavily on the economy, outlining in detail the increase in the budget deficit as a percentage of GDP, and the subsequent increase in public debt. Lange states, 'Borrowing, however, merely postpones the evil day. The burden placed on future generations has aptly been described as "international theft" – and has occurred on a massive scale'. Lange relates the 'evils' of borrowing firmly back to Muldoon's leadership and purported expertise: 'He is undoubtedly a most "expert" debt accumulator—certainly his record is unsurpassed in New Zealand'. Lange is also clear and uncompromising in his assessment of the impact of increasing public debt: 'New Zealand, as long as present Government economic policies are continued, is in an economic vice of rapidly increasing debt, rapidly increasing debt interest payments, and rapidly increasing unemployment'. He hints at the likely pain that would be experienced by New Zealanders as the country must now make its inevitable economic transition, stating, 'If action had been taken earlier, as would have occurred under a Labour Government, the adjustment policies which New Zealand must inevitably undertake— and soon—would be much less difficult', but stresses that the task of reform is one he and a Labour Government must take. For Lange, 'It is not just a question of specific economic policy details. It is a question of leadership, of will, and of resolution to tackle New Zealand's problems', with a 'hard head and a soft heart'. For the Labour leader, 'Firm action is the only way of achieving the sustained growth in employment and social justice which are the primary goals and commitments of the Labour Party—they are the reason for the Labour Party's existence'. It was not merely about winning elections, or

holding power—as it was for Muldoon—for Lange and the Labour Party, restoring the nation's economic and social wellbeing was a 'moral imperative'.

In March 1984, at a Victory for Labour dinner in Dunedin (Lange, 1984, March 26), Lange attacked Muldoon's character as a leader directly, and his use of New Zealand's electoral system to win at any costs:

> There is a saying in politics—you get the government you deserve.
>
> I disagree with that. The behaviour of an elected government—its style if you like—should meet minimum accepted standards.
>
> There are generally agreed principles and responsibilities of any government. Yet over the last eight and a half years these principles, standards and responsibilities have been tossed to the political wind.
>
> Politics has a bad name as a result. A sizeable proportion of the public feel alienated from the democratic process.
>
> A major reason for this alienation is the overwhelming desire by the present Prime Minister to retain power. He believes in political power at all costs (Lange, 1984, March 26).

Lange acknowledges increasing divisions within New Zealand society, that have made social and political consensus around solutions to crises on several fronts difficult, and decribes a New Zealand 'split between the haves and the have-nots'. He reminds those in attendance that Labour's role as a reform party would stay true to its history of instituting reforms that would serve all New Zealanders, including the most vulnerable, and continued to position the National Government's economic policies as reactive and short-term solutions to fundamental problems. His appraisal of Muldoon saw his opponent as simultaneoulsy power hungry, incompetent, and stubborn, stating 'the Prime Minister is particularly incapable of bringing New Zealanders together at the early stages of decision-making. For political purposes, the Prime Minister prefers confrontation, the big stick of central government'. Lange assures his audience that only he and the Labour Party could unite New Zealanders and 'turn the country around' through a change in style and management.

Lange gave his fourth major economic address—'a labour perspective on economic management'—on 5 April 1984. Having addressed in previous speeches, first, the issue of *change*, then *economic development* and a *new consensus*, followed by the difficulties imposed by an *increasing public sector deficit*, Lange set about arguing a case for a 'radically different approach to economic management' in which a 'medium-term view' of the economy is taken. He assures his audience that unlike Margaret Thatcher's economic restructuring, New Zealand's, under a Labour Government, would be *managed* to include *fairness* through policies that will address those impacted by change in the short-term. He contrasts his proposed approach to that of Muldoon, who focussed on the short-term, with little attention to the economic consequences or social impact in the medium-term 'two to three years ahead'. He again points to Muldoon's leadership and time in power as being marked by 'threats and controls' that have served financial institutions more so than the New Zealand people. In discussing monetary policy and inflation, Lange exposes Muldoon's apparent failings and the impact it had on the New Zealand people and economy. He acknowledges, 'these are complex issues to deal with in the short time available in one speech' and points once again to critical policies to be dicussed in later speeches (Lange, 1984, April 5).

Less than a week following his fourth major economic address, Lange released a press statement, this time challenging Muldoon on another issue that would define his time as a Prime Minister, politician, and public figure, his relationship with New Zealand's media. Lange states,

> It is an extraordinary situation where the Prime Minister in a democratic country states that he is going to penalise the media financially because they do not print what he thinks they ought to.

> It is amazing that the master of the sensation-making story, the use of red herrings, and personal attacks to distract from the major issues is now condemning the media because they reported those stories... He has conditioned the public to expect a regular diet of superficial diversions so that the real issues are ignored.

> The Prime Mininster more than any other New Zealand leader has avoided media exposure. On numerous occasions he has attempted to intimidate the media to make them see the news the way he wants it (Lange, 1984, April 10).

Lange points to the banning of two prominent political reporters from press conferences, Muldoon's refusal to hold press conferences for 18 weeks in the late 1970s, and quotes Muldoon directly in his insistence that New Zealand enjoy a free and fair press. Lange ends the statement with an appeal for maturity, 'The Government has got to end these attempts to intimidate the media. Let us have an end to these distractions. Let us deal with the real issues facing our nation' (Lange, 1984, April 10).

Three days later, on 13 April 1984, Lange released a press statement under the simple heading 'Muldoon' in which he again directly attacked Muldoon's character, style of leadership, and his address on monetary policy to Dunedin business leaders. Drawing from public perception of Muldoon's character, calling his statement on monetary policy a 'tirade' and 'appalling', citing his preferred 'style' as that of 'personal abuse', Lange ties the character of Muldoon and the 'tired, frustrated' National Party to New Zealand's inability to move forward from 'earlier days' as 'the rest of the world is up and sprinting'. Again, Lange is clear that Muldoon is holding New Zealand back. Only Lange could bring New Zealand into the race, out of the past, and into the future as part of a prosperous global economic community (Lange, 1984, April 13).

In a 5 May 1984 speech to the Labour Party Wellington Regional Conference, Lange addressed the Party faithful on the need for a Labour Government to tackle the crises created by Muldoon and the National Government for 'ordinary New Zealanders' who have 'lost control of their own destiny' and who are now 'alienated from the decisions which directly influence their lives'. Lange tells the conference that voters had grown scornful of politicians as they watch their Prime Minister 'shooting it out with the Press Gallery', politicians who failed to follow through on their promises of improved opportunity, and who operate through a politics of lies and fear. He outlines what he predicted Muldoon and National Party's campaign for reelection would be centred upon as a four-pronged strategy of discrediting the Labour Party's leadership as inexperienced, an assault on the trade union movement, the creation of 'moral fear' over, for example 'law and order', and what Lange called the 'classic ploy, the reds under the bed' in the form of an attack on Labour's defense and international affairs policies. He points to division within New Zealand exposed and utilised by Muldoon in 1981 during discord caused by relations with South Africa's Apartheid Government as something which must

be overcome, and a programme of policy release to show that 'politics does not have to be heartless and hopeless', but 'positive and constructive' (Lange, 1984, May 5).

On 26 June 1984, less than two weeks after Muldoon called the snap election, Lange gave his campaign opening address in Christchurch. In his address, Lange formally introduces his campaign for what he says amounts to more than merely a decision on who wins the election, but for the future direction of New Zealand. In keeping with this sentiment, Lange states his call for change is an appeal for a 'new start', for 'new opportunities', for 'new direction and new vigour'. Lange says New Zealand must 'put behind it the stagnation of the past, the lack of effort and the failure', and set itself 'on the path of recovery and unity'. Lange positions himself as a unifier, and the hero who is ready, willing, and able to lead the country on this new path. He reminds voters of the failure of eight years under Muldoon and the National Government, and states New Zealand 'cannot afford more of the same'. For Lange, 'division and confrontation' had been the name of the game under Muldoon, and the 'deep recession' the country then found itself in was putting the future of New Zealand's children at risk. In his call for unity, Lange asserts,

> New Zealander has been deliberately set against New Zealander... young against old... rich against poor... unions against employers... race against race... town against country... region against region...
>
> Confrontation has debased our national life.
>
> New Zealanders are tired of bickering.
>
> They are tired of provocation fron the top... as a substitute, for leadership (Lange, 1984, June 26).

Lange promised to bring back fairness and a 'positive programme... that will bring growth and a planned expansion of our economy' and set about making the economic crisis inextricable from the character of Muldoon and his leadership. He points to economic decline, and the decline in key social and public services, while exposing a Government that has shifted blame and instead created a 'national witch hunt' against 'the unions, the employers, the doctors, the dole bludgers, the teachers, the church leaders, the finance houses, the public servants, the economists, the media, and even

members of the National Party'. He talks of a country that had been 'tearing itself apart', and a New Zealand that must turn its back on the 'politics of confrontation'. For Lange, 'enough is enough... if New Zealand is to go forward, we need leadership, and a style of government, that brings people together'. Again, for Lange, only he and the Labour Party are fit for the task at hand.

Confronting, perhaps, charges levelled against him of inexperience and a lack of knowledge on economic matters, Lange tells voters in his campaign opening address 'You don't have to be a genius to understand the issues at stake'—New Zealand had borrowed more than it can afford to repay—a 'chilling prospect' which the country now faced. Lange calls on New Zealanders to face the fact that the national debt is not some abstract state of economic affairs. Rather, Lange states, national debt means every man, woman and child in New Zealand was 'in hock to international financiers to the tune of five thousand dollars' each, and this was impacting everything from grocery bills and the healthcare system, to childrens' classroom sizes.

In his opening campaign address, Lange tells his audience he understands the anger that has resulted from this 'breeding ground' of division. The anger that stems from unemployment and a fall in living standards. Anger over unfair taxation and wages policy that disproportionately impacts the poor; anger over failing public services, and increasing difficulties for New Zealanders wanting to own their own home. Under the National Government, Lange says, things have gotten better for a minority, but much worse for the majority: 'It isn't right. It isn't just. It isn't moral'. For Lange, under the National Government, 'The rules of the game were simple: create the social and economic preconditions for disharmony and unrest; then sit on the sidelines and encourage the other players to blame one another, because the game isn't fun, and everyone seems to be losing'. New Zealand, Lange said, 'deserves better than that'.

In his call for unity, Lange stressed that a Labour Government would bring about policies in pursuit of internal peace and social and economic justice for the country's most vulnerable, for workers, women, and older people. Lange implores New Zealanders to 'stop blaming one another for what has gone wrong, and place the blame where it properly belongs... with successive National Governments'. For Lange, it was the National Government who were solely responsible for the lack of economic growth, the internal deficit, the decline in living standards, the decline in public services and social

welfare, the inequitable tax system, and mounting social division. The country must put behind it 'the irrational, incompetent, short-term, ad hoc interventions that have made the New Zealand economy an international laughing stock'. Lange warned, however, the country would need to be prepared for the fact that New Zealand's 'balance of payments, overseas reserves, and budget deficit are likely to be far more serious than we have been told' (Lange, 1984, June 26).

Lange, in his campaign opening address, is clear and specific in outlining the economic realities then facing New Zealand, and the apparent failings of Muldoon and the National Government, but speaks in more general terms about what policies a Labour Government will implement to right the social and economic wrongs he outlines. He points to a co-ordination of monetary, prices and incomes, taxation and expenditure policies, tied in with 'sensible' policies in trade and investment. He says a Labour Government would work directly with the private sector to unlock investment and 'harness the energy' of all sectors and industries in the creation of jobs and building the service industries. He speaks of prioritising small business, and developing new, high-tech industries, of less 'red tape', private-public partnerships, and a revitalisation of the farming industry. He promises to generate thousands of new jobs through fostering growth in the economy and 'generating wealth'. Crucially, Lange promises that shortly after the election, he will form a New Zealand Economic Conference, representative of all sectors, to 'open the books', develop a common understanding of the crisis, and reach consensus on the 'future economic direction of New Zealand'. Lange concludes his opening address:

> there is a clear need for new policies, new attitudes, and a planned *programme* of recovery.
>
> The reward will be in terms of economic growth, increased wealth, more jobs, and improved social services.
>
> But, perhaps, most important of all, will be the restoration of our lost sense of purpose, of dignity and self-respect.
>
> Our New Zealand pride will only thrive when our people are moving together. Where hope, not fear, leads to a restoration of confidence...

In difficult times in our history, in war and in depression, New Zealanders have won through. We have shown others how.

That challenge is here again.

On July the fourteenth, let's bring New Zealanders together (Lange, 1984, June 26).

Lange and the Labour Party would win the 1984 General Election having read the audience and the new social, cultural, political, and economic conjuncture. Against an economic recession, increasing social division, a perception of Muldoon's increasing authoritarianism and mounting resentment of Muldoon's character and handling of the economy, Lange successfully shaped a narrative along new and existing sacred lines. Recognising the end of the post-war cultural and economic consensus, and an end to domination by the post-WWII generation and its social and economic conservatism, Lange successfully framed Muldoon's character, and all he came to represent, as a profanation of democratic leadership, and a shifting sense of collective identity.

Election campaigns are necessarily reduced, symbolically, to a struggle between directly opposing forces, as opponents construct narratives of personal exceptionalism, unique qualification, and exaggerated difference. In this hyperbolic atmosphere, difference is constructed as binary. As failure and success are inextricably linked, one dependent and defined by the other, so too are a candidate's strengths defined by their opponent's shortcomings. Lange's success rested on his ability to link Muldoon's *character* with the perceived failings of his Keynesian bridging strategies and interventionism which were cast as out of touch, out of date, and as producing social and economic inertia in the face of mounting calls for change. Owing to the centrality of both Muldoon and Lange's respective performances in the drama of neoliberalisation, their associations with Keynesian social democracy, structural transformation, and social change in New Zealand, each holds symbolic associations in the collective memory of interviewees.

Having discussed the construction and representation of character, and the cultural performance of key actors within the drama of neoliberalisation, the following chapter will now explore further the place of leading figures in the collective memory of this study's participants as observers/audience.

6

A collective memory of actors and character

While it is true, that in the contest for power during the 1984 General Election, both Muldoon and Lange sought to represent themselves as the only true hero willing and able to lead New Zealand out of social and economic crisis, time has shaped this narrative. A close reading of the collective memory of these two central figures in the drama of neoliberalisation therefore requires a more nuanced and contextualised use of metaphor. Departing from Alexander's grand adoption of the story of Achilles versus Hector in analysing democratic struggles for power, parallels can be drawn between Muldoon and Lange and themes and figures found within two classic works of New Zealand literature, John Mulgan's *Man Alone* ([1939] 1990) and Bruce Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather* ([1962] 1998). While the use of such culturally-idiosyncratic codes will be explored further in Chapter 8, the inclusion of these two works of literature provides a key means of conceptualising each actor's role within the drama, and within participants' collective memory.

The antagonist: Muldoon as a *Man Alone*

The acknowledgement of drastic change in Aotearoa New Zealand, both leading up to and as a result of the 1984 election, necessitates comparative work in both the personal narratives and collective memory of participants in this study. For interviewees, collective memory of Muldoon casts him both in terms of the construction and portrayal of *character*, and as representative of the end of simpler times in New Zealand. As discussed in Chapter 3, within the collective memory of interviewees, the years prior to 1984 are often presented as contradictory in nature, giving rise to culturally complex narratives and shared symbols of meaning. These negotiations of memory, often steeped in recollections of contradiction, require constant interpretative and comparative work by the participants as historical, organisational, and autobiographical memories overlap to create collective meaning.

In the following quote from Bill (TUR), the participant contrasts the years of consenus and relative economic prosperity following WWII with the neoliberalisation of New Zealand after 1984. The participant invokes the literary reference of *Man Alone* as indicative of simpler, more 'settled times', while acknowledging the stark social and economic contradictions of the post-WWII era:

> *It was major upheaval and cultural change. Society had been very stable during the* [19]*50s, '60s and '70s. Very stable. Very comfortable. Very isolated... It was 'Man Alone', the nature of society, where it was very settling, and very based around the farm… But there was also a lot of discrimination, a lot of quite reactionary things around...*

Set in New Zealand during the Great Depression, *Man Alone* tells the story of a former English soldier, 'Johnson', who arrives in Auckland during the Queen Street riots of 1932[16], before later working as a labourer in New Zealand's central North Island. While working as a farmhand, Johnson accidently kills his employer after he engages in an affair with the farmer's wife. Johnson then flees the farm and lives rough in New Zealand's hill country. Since the novel's publication, the term 'man alone' has been used to denote a certain archetype within New Zealand fiction and culture more broadly. The character Johnson, the 'man alone', has come to represent a powerful cultural stereotype—Muldoon's 'ordinary bloke'—exemplifing a stoicism and resilience that became part of a New Zealand identity-myth, and reflective of the mid-1930s cultural nationalist movement in New Zealand art and literature. Dougal McNeill (2012, p. 2) describes John Mulgan, author of *Man Alone*, as 'the good keen man, an all-but-a-Rhodes-scholar, almost bluff, down-to-earth, suspicious of intellectual women'. *Man Alone* in one sense exemplifies a 'robust, direct and honest' style of writing (Evans, 1990, p. 1), which mirrors the male archetype the novel presents, celebrating New Zealand's 'beautiful and terrible landscape' (Menzies, 1990, p. 82), while also representing the great challenges and hardships posed by this period in New Zealand's history, both socially and economically.

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[16] Part of the 'Angry Autumn' or 'Depression Riots' of 1932 in which demonstrations were held by the unemployed and public servants over a lack of social support and pay cuts imposed by government (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2021).

In describing the nature of post-WWII New Zealand as 'Man Alone', Bill invokes a powerful cultural symbol from New Zealand literature. Taken in context, Bill parallels the themes contained within the novel, the plight and reflections of its main character, the imagery of *Man Alone* and what the novel and title has come to represent, with the social, cultural, and economic conditions of New Zealand's 'golden years'. While the participant assesses the post-WWII period as safe, stable, and characterised by a higher standard of living—owing to a certain level of perceived freedom he associates with a strong welfare state and relative simplicity of living—he also acknowledges the isolation of living in a small island nation and the high levels of discrimination experienced by many groups.

Within these contradictions, participants in this study recount many of the same contradictions they find in Muldoon himself. Raised within the Great Depression, and a returned serviceman of the post-war years, Muldoon was the product politically of the post-war social democratic consensus which saw relative social safety in the form of welfarism, together with relative economic prosperity. Taking the role of Prime Minister as this consensus was increasingly challenged, and with mounting divisions over a number of social issues, Muldoon is nevertheless remembered by participants for his collectivist social and economic interventionism, and representative of a nation still largely isolated from the global cultural and economic community. Reference to *Man Alone* therefore invokes collective memory of simpler times, of isolation, and of resilience, of patriarchy, cultural hegemony, and a subtext of underlying social and economic conflict. Muldoon, therefore becomes emblematic of the end of an era, a 'Man Alone' in the face of change, symbolic of the end of cultural and economic isolation, and the dominance of the post-WWII generation's political and economic consensus.

John (CVR) posited similar, if more overt contradictions, in describing the 'land of milk and honey':

> *'Rugby, races, and beer', those were the three New Zealand pastimes. That was kind of what the country was founded on... it was basically 'rugby, racing and beer'. That was life in a very male dominated society.*

Here, 'rugby, races and beer' codes the archetypical male Pākehā in a 'very male dominated society'[17], which Muldoon would later typify in the collective memory of participants, and echoes once again Mulgan's *Man Alone* in its description of the New Zealand in which it is set:

> It was not long before Johnson was at home in this country. He talked as they talked. He got to know the dates of the race meetings and where to get beer in town at most times, and the story of the 1905 match when Wales beat the All Blacks by one try to nil, and why it was necessary to have a farmers government to protect the real interests of the country (Mulgan, [1939] 1990, p. 20).

Developing a collective memory of the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, interviewees described a growing resentment of Muldoon, and the hope for change invested in Lange that reached its peak during the 1984 election campaign. Participants spoke of each actor as representative, metonymic figures within a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation. Related to collective memory of Muldoon as a representative of New Zealand's post-WWII social, cultural, political, and economic life, participants in this study remember Muldoon as signifying the post-war generation, and of the interests of that generation:

> [Muldoon was] *From the Second World War generation.* [An] *absolute belief in the US alliance and the 'free world'/Cold War divide. Belief in traditional institutions—that included unions—and traditional social values, but got his way through bullying others including his own cabinet ministers. That is the way he handled unions. He was good at scaring the public against unions, protesters and anyone else who had a different opinion to himself in order to assure them that he and his Government was a 'safe pair of hands'.*

> (Toby, TUR).

> *It all goes back to the RSA* [Royal New Zealand Returned Services Association] *generation, and Muldoon's belief that somehow he wanted to leave the place better than he found it, and he wanted to look after those people who went through the*

---

[17] 'Rugby, Racing and Beer' was also the title of a 1965 song by New Zealand comedian Rod Derrett and takes a satirical look at New Zealand's 'national heritage'. Use of such culturally-idiosyncratic codes is discussed further in Chapter 8.

Second World War like he did. That old, RSA, rugby union establishment, that was
very strong in that post-war period. And he wanted to look after them. That's why
he bought that pension in at 60; he wanted to look after those like him who had
suffered through that. And they did have a difficult experience...

... Who were Rob's Mob? The RSA generation, because he wanted to keep New
Zealand the way it was, or the way it had been...

(Bill, TUR).

Here, participants Toby and Bill identify Muldoon closely with the generation who had
lived through WWII, and with the the RSA. While Toby couples this association closely
with geopolitical and post-war alliances, particularly the ANZUS agreement which
Muldoon championed and that would later falter under Lange, Bill ties Muldoon's
association with post-WWII New Zealand to establishment New Zealand, and the
specific social and cultural interests of that generation. Apparent in the memory of both
participants, is a coupling of social conservatism and the institutions of social democracy
with the post-war era, while Toby is also explicit in accounting for a prevailing collective
memory of Muldoon's abrasive character as a political figure:

It was about trying to work out an enemy and then hammer them, whereas that
whole neoliberal thing was really the opposite of Muldoon. It was about removing
all the regulations and let the market prevail, and then we won't need to thump
people, because the market will do it for us. And so, look, neoliberals didn't like
Muldoon, because Muldoon was a controller—in the interests of class—but a
controller. A control freak.

Drawing from collective memory of New Zealand's political history, Bill (TUR) also
invokes memory of New Zealand's 15th Prime Minister, the Liberal Richard Seddon.
Seddon became premier in 1893 and dominated New Zealand politics over the course of
five consecutive election victories. He is remembered to have been 'notoriously long-
winded and ridiculed as boorish', but an astute politician who 'turned his apparent lack
of sophistication to his advantage, presenting himself as a man of the people' (New
Zealand History [a], n.d.):

> *... [Muldoon]* was a popular nationalist in the tradition of Seddon, and the inheritor of Seddonism, because he was economically a Keynesian, and tried to keep that, but of course he was like the Dutch boy, trying to keep his fingers in the dam...

Known by the public as 'King Dick', Seddon made considerable liberal reforms, was outspoken against his critics, but was often embroiled in scandal. Even as his time as premier was shaped by his insistence to go-it-alone in exercising his power, he strived to construct an image for himself as a 'man of the people' (New Zealand History [b], n.d.). This *discursive mnemonic pairing* of Seddon and Muldoon, whereby memory of a figure from the past is used evaluatively and metonymically in describing the qualities and motivations of another, was called upon by interviewees in their characterising the leadership of both Muldoon and Lange, as participants associated and drew comparisons between their qualities with those of figures from both the past and present.

Building on Schutz (1970), Schwartz (1997) makes a distinction between the 'pairing' and 'coupling' of commemorative images. For Schutz, 'pairing' occurs when an image is implicitly 'associated with another object that does not appear but without which one is unable to understand the first object's significance' (Schutz, 1970 in Schwartz, 1997, p. 478), while for Schwartz, 'coupling' decribes a more explicit association (1997). In the context of commemoration, Schwartz utilises the two terms to describe the active imposing of real or mythologised qualities of public figures or causes, onto causes or figures from the present. *Discursive mnemonic coupling* is here used to describe an explicit association the participant makes between the character and motivation of Prime Ministers Seddon and Muldoon, which builds upon the participant's narrative and contributes to a collective memory of the period and figure in question. Through this *discursive mnemonic coupling*, the participant further elucidates a collective memory of Muldoon as a populist, a *man alone* in politics, and the impact Muldoon's constructed character had on social, cultural, and political life, and in deciding the 1984 election.

Discursive mnemonic coupling was also drawn upon by several participants in this study as a means of collective remembrance of Muldoon's character in ways much more rooted in the present. Bill (TUR), having coupled Muldoon with Seddon, draws from a more contemporary political figure with considerably wider cultural and political resonance,

Everyone was pleased to see Muldoon go, who was an earlier, milder version of Trump... a much milder version. A populist nationalist, not so ego driven and corrupt, but someone who liked whiskey and chasing women. [But Muldoon was] a much milder version. Seddon was the same, the populist that can appeal to working people.

The coupling of Muldoon and then US President Donald Trump was called upon by participants in this study in not only illustrating Muldoon's brash and confrontational style of politics, but also his adversarial relationship with journalists:

... [Muldoon was] sort of a bit like Trump. Because he dealt with people at press conferences very similar to Trump—especially Tom Scott[18]. And just throwing shit at him at every press conference, and banning him from press conferences, so this stuff was very similar. And every now and then he'd do a rave about the union movement, of course, similar to watching Trump...

(Toby, TUR).

My memory of the Muldoon years... I remember him telling Tom Scott he couldn't come to press conferences. Those things used to nag me. The freedom of speech—a bit like what Trump is doing now...

(Simon, TUR).

Similarly, Chuck (TUR) discursively and mnemonically couples Trump and Muldoon by equating the tendency of each to verbally attack those in opposition, while also signalling the manner in which Muldoon's character, as much as policy, informed the public's reaction against him:

... the Springbok Tour, the anti-nuclear debate, the women's movement, the green movement... It was always every week a new group he was attacking. He was more or less a more intelligent Donald Trump. But I think that all formed a very large reaction against him.

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[18] A popular columnist and cartoonist whom Muldoon banned from his weekly press conferences in 1983. Muldoon also refused to grant interviews with television personalities Ian Fraser and Simon Walker. (Carylon & Morrow, 2013).

Recalling Muldoon and the role public perception of his character played in shaping the outcome of the 1984 election, participants spoke of the mounting resentment for his brash and aggressive political and interpersonal style, and the manner in which he presented himself, and was presented, through media platforms. As John (CVR) explains,

> *I remember an increasing number of conversations; it wasn't really about the Labour Government, but people were just sick and tired of Muldoon. They hated him with a passion, absolutely hated him. And I remember people saying, 'just get rid of Muldoon'. That was it… media was a whole lot different in those days, all you got was what was heard on the radio, and there weren't a whole lot of stations at the time. All you got was what you heard on radio and what you read in the paper. So, in terms of saying to someone, 'well I'm voting for Labour in terms of their policy…' it was kind of, it just wasn't as simple as that.*

The role the media played in informing the construction and perception of the Muldoon character will be discussed elsewhere (Chapter 8). However, it is important to note here the role these forms of symbolic production play in the collective memory of participants, in the remembrance of character, and the role the construction and re-presentation of character played in informing the outcome of the 1984 election. Nevertheless, set against this brash, combative character, against his misogyny, racism, hardline tactics against the trade unions, and disregard and disdain for opposing views, participants collectively remembered Muldoon as in many ways symbolic of a last stand in New Zealand's Keynesian social democratic tradition.

For Peter (TUR), Muldoon's overbearing and authoritative character is summed up in an anecdote in which he remembers a conversation with a friend who jokingly describes Muldoon and the National Government's time in power in terms of an 'occupation'. Here, the line 'where were you during the occupation?' provides a fitting metaphor for the sentiment collectively shared by participants in this study:

> *… I got back from the UK just after the election in '84, and I remember getting a message from an old friend of mine that ended up going on to become a Labour*

> *MP in the Clark Government, and he said to me 'where were you during the*
> *occupation?' ((menacingly)), referring to Muldoon.*

Here, what is remembered as Muldoon's authoritarian style of leadership and 'occupation' by the National Government, in turn frames Lange and the Fourth Labour Government as liberators. A similar sentiment is shared by Toby (TUR), in his memory of a shared sense that there would be sweeping social change following the 1984 election. Again, hopes for social and economic change are set against the memory of resentment of Muldoon, but with underlying acknowledgment of the many contradictions that participants in this study find within the drama of New Zealand's neoliberal transition away from the social democratic consensus:

> *I had come from... further left than Labour, and you know, I'm a great Labour fan,*
> *but I could see from my time in the union movement how it was important to get rid*
> *of Muldoon. I don't think, quietly, we knew what was coming. We thought it was a*
> *traditional Labour agenda...*

> (Toby, TUR).

> *There was a great anti-Muldoonism and too much concentration on the personality*
> *which led to no real solid political analysis...*

> *... People knew that something was coming to an end... there was the desire* [for
> change]*... Muldoon, was smart enough, perhaps if he hadn't been so pig-headed,*
> *he might have been able to adjust, but he didn't.*

> (Bill, TUR).

> *I just know... New Zealand—and including me—had just had a gutsful of him. He*
> *wouldn't listen to anyone, you couldn't go and see him or his ministers and lobby*
> *for change. It just seemed to be 'my way or the highway'.*

> (Simon, TUR).

However adamant participants are in their collective memory of growing resentment toward Muldoon, of the need for change, and of the excitement over the prospect of a Labour Government, greater evaluative complexity is evident as participants attempt to

reconcile the Muldoon character with his significance as New Zealand's last Prime Minister of the post-WWII Keynesian social democratic era:

> *If we go back to the 1984 election there was an expectation that the winds had changed, and they were about to sweep across the country, and this was welcomed, particularly after Muldoon had called the snap election, because we had had enough of Muldoon, and enough of strangulation by regulation. I'm thinking in that sort of social area. And in fact, if you look back now, Muldoon was probably more socialist. He was looking after the bloke who—'Rob's Mob'—as he called them, which were 'ordinary' New Zealanders. He was trying to manage the economy, but people had had a guts-full of it, I think. So there was a huge enthusiasm when Lange was elected.*

> (Adam, TUR).

Man Alone serves as a summarising metaphor for the significance of Muldoon and Muldoonism in New Zealand's social, economic, cultural, and political history, and as a metonymic representation within participants' collective memory of neoliberalisation. As metaphor and as metonym, Muldoon is collectively remembered by interviewees as representative of Keynesian social democracy's ultimately failed last stand against an emergent neoliberalism heralded by Lange, Douglas and the Fourth Labour Government. Through an analysis of collective memory, complex mnemonic associations are revealed, which position Muldoon as representative of the social conservatism, authoritarianism, and Keynesian nationalism of the post-WWII generation, and of social and economic crisis following a period of relative stability. With the defeat of Muldoon—situated as the antagonist in the unfolding drama, and a *Man Alone* standing in the way of social progress and structural transformation—participants recalled feelings of hope that Lange would signal the beginning of new era of *golden weather*. An analysis of participants' collective narrative reveals these hopes were short-lived, with Lange instead signalling an *End of the Golden Weather* of social democracy and collectivism.

The protagonist: Lange signals the *End of the Golden Weather*

The apparent utility of *Man Alone* as a reference point in describing the pre-neoliberal era New Zealand invites a counter-reference for representing the period of

neoliberalisation discussed in this study. Bruce Mason's play *End of the Golden Weather,* also set during the Great Depression and against the Queen Street Riots, is a coming-of-age/loss of innocence tale—qualities of *bildungsroman* within the German literary tradition—which tells the story of an unnamed boy and his relationship with a strange loner. Again, with the story set against and with reference to key social and economic events, *End of the Golden Weather* in one sense depicts an idealised New Zealand—Christmas time in an idyllic setting—yet as with *Man Alone*, the themes and subtext hint toward social and economic unrest. The title itself provides a metaphor for a loss of innocence, both for the narrator, and for the nation. In a *note to the second edition* of *End of the Golden Weather* in 1970, Mason explains the title comes from Thomas Wolfe's *The Web and the Rock* (1937) in which the narrator adopts the metaphor as the title for a novel left unwritten. As Mason (1970) explains, quoting Wolfe (1937) in part,

> By this title he meant to describe that change in the *colour* of life which every child has known—the change from the enchanted light and weather of his soul, the full golden light, the magic green and gold in which he sees the earth and childhood in this period in a child's life, this strange and magic light—this *golden weather*—begins to change and, for the first time, some of the troubling weathers of a man's soul are revealed to him; and how, for the first time, he becomes aware of the thousand changing visages of time, touched with confusion and bewilderment, menaced by terrible depths and enigmas of experience he has never known before. He wanted to tell the story of this year exactly as he had remembered it, with all the things and people he had known that year (p. 12).

Since its publication, *End of the Golden Weather* has often been invoked metaphorically in reference to New Zealand's economy. As early as the 1960s, the title of Mason's famous play was quoted in parliament by a Labour Party member at a time when export prices for wool had dropped triggering increased unemployment and inflation. Brian Roper (1993) invoked the title in describing New Zealand's economic crisis of the 1990s, and also the end of New Zealand's long period of economic stability following WWII (2005). Similarly, Evan Te Ahu Poata-Smith (2013) adopted the metaphor in exploring persistant social and economic inequalities between Māori and Pākehā, and in contrasting the 'long boom' of relative economic prosperity in New Zealand following WWII with the period of economic and political crisis beginning in the 1970s. More

recently, the title has been adopted, particularly in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, to describe all manner of changes and morbid symptoms of the crisis of neoliberalism. Understood in this context as an oft-adopted metaphor representing social and economic change in New Zealand, the literary work *End of the Golden Weather* itself serves as a fitting reference point and *bildungsroman*—or novel of formation—for the character development of Lange, the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, and the harsh realities that would accompany the 'modernisation' of the New Zealand economy.

For participants in this study, Lange and the Fourth Labour Government are symbolic of the end of an era of social and economic life in New Zealand, the end of the Keynesian social democratic consensus, and the beginning of a monumental shift within the Labour Party in hastening the neoliberalisation of New Zealand – the *End of the Golden Weather*. Evident in the following excerpts of narrative from participants interviewed for this research are both feelings of hope and disappointment, and eventually hopelessness and anger, as participants recall their perception of David Lange and the incoming Labour Government, contrasted with their feelings toward Muldoon and the outgoing National Government. In the following excerpt, Bill (TUR) recalls the excitement that surrounded the young, charismatic Lange, set against the older 'worn out' Muldoon:

> *Lange was a force of nature, a great performer, and he was inclusive. Most importantly, what he brought—like Jacinda* [Ardern]—*he brought a freshness, he brought a personality, against a very old, very grey bloke who kept himself going on whiskey...* [Muldoon] *was a fighter, but he was old and he was worn-out and it was all beginning to fray around the edges and he was facing defeat, because of Marilyn Waring, and all that. And the anti-nuclear stuff was starting to bubble up. And he was really… he lost it, and he was trying to hold it all together... and so he—Lange—just wiped him out.*

> *But* [Lange] *was a popular leader and signalled, as you always do, the change—in a way that unfortunately* [National Prime Minister John Key] *did with the last days of the* [Labour Prime Minister Helen Clark] *Government. There's always a figure that comes along and appeals to us, who has personality and is able to communicate... and that was Lange.*

Here, Bill draws from both collective memory and contemporary events, invoking the names of key political figures through his memory of Lange and the Fourth Labour Government taking power. Again, the participant utilises *discursive mnemonic coupling* in describing Lange in relation to New Zealand's Prime Minister at the time of writing, Jacinda Ardern—another young, popular, Labour Prime Minister—but also memory of National Prime Minister John Key (2008–2016) in describing the end of a political era. By coupling Lange with Ardern, before invoking memory of Key, Bill reveals an inherent duality within participants' collective memory of Lange and the Fourth Labour Government. The discursive mnemonic coupling of Lange and Ardern speaks to both the perceived charisma and relative youth of the two Labour Prime Ministers (both among the youngest of New Zealand's Prime Ministers), to their status as relatively socially progressive liberals, and to the hope instilled in each by the Labour Party faithful following long periods of National Party rule. Similarly, memory of National Prime Minister John Key is evoked to signal memory of the end of an era, and the beginning of a new one. Key's rise to leadership followed nine years under Prime Minister Helen Clark and the Fifth Labour Government, a largely 'Third Way' Government remembered by participants in part as helping to realign the Labour Party with some of its traditionally social democratic values, while overseeing a period of sustained economic growth and a commitment to the market-oriented and modernising policies of the Fourth Labour Government (see Chapter 9). Bill's referencing of John Key's centre-right, 'pro-business' National Government, in recalling Lange's rise to power, can therefore not merely be read as the beginining and end of an era, but an end to a period of social and political progress within New Zealand's Labour Movement.

Reference to then National MP Marilyn Waring is also significant for what she has come to represent in the collective memory of interviewees. Waring was just 23 years old when she was elected to parliament in 1975, making her the youngest MP in the House. As one of just four women MPs, Waring sought to represent the views of women and younger people on increasingly contentious issues such as abortion, sexual violence, and the country's anti-nuclear stance. Waring famously crossed the floor in support of Labour's anti-nuclear bill in 1984, which is often viewed as a catalyst for Muldoon's infamous 1984 snap election. For Bill, who evokes the memory of 'Marilyn Waring, and all that. And the anti-nuclear stuff', Waring is remembered for both her role in the events directly leading to the 1984 election, but also as representative of the changing social,

cultural, and political landscape that Lange would seek to both harness and influence, and that Muldoon sought to attack and prevent. Similarly, Toby (TUR) draws from memory of Marilyn Waring, in describing the split within the National Party, the generational divide around key social issues, and the hope placed in Lange and the Labour Party for progressive change:

> *I think that the Fourth Labour Government was elected simply on the basis of 'time for a change'. The tensions inside National—the Marilyn Warings... on one side and the 'New Right'... on the other side, with Muldoon trying to hold everything together. And the new generation of activists that wanted a new-look Government and had been brought into the Labour Party through the anti-nuclear, anti-apartheid and other movements.*

The discursive mnemonic coupling of David Lange with the memory of both former and current Labour figures was also employed by Clare (TUR), who first couples Lange with Labour Prime Minister Norman Kirk, and then Labour Prime Ministers Helen Clark and Jacinda Ardern:

> [Lange] *was young, charismatic—a little like Kirk—and brought with him a lot of hope. There was that feeling of being proud of him, which I guess is a little like Jacinda, and Helen Clark...*

> *... So being proud of a leader, that was a really good feeling. Being proud that your government was saying these really progressive things, you know, around the nuclear free stuff, and the debate at Oxford. That made you feel as a left-wing person that this is a government—this is a country—that I want to live in. This is a person that I'm proud of. Had he been in power in '81, that would never have happened.*

Labour Prime Minister Norman Kirk is remembered as a leader from the working-class. Kirk campaigned against nuclear testing in the Pacific region, and postponed an apartheid-era, racially selected South African Springbok rugby team from touring New Zealand. Here, Clare states outright that had Lange been in power in 1981, the disastrous tour by the Springboks of that year (Chapter 7) would not have occurred. Clare discursively and mnemonically couples Lange and Kirk through a perception of shared charisma, and Lange and Ardern through a sense of pride. Indication of hope in a

renewed progressivism led by Lange and the Labour Government is illustrated by the participant through reference to Lange's support of a nuclear free New Zealand, for ethical foreign policy independent of the US, and his opposition to South African Apartheid. Discursive mnemonic coupling of Lange and Kirk can also be found in comments by Bill and David, while Simon also spoke of a sense of respect for Lange following his Oxford debate on the moral defensibility of nuclear energy:

> *I think he was carrying some of the Norman Kirk aura. Despite the fact that Kirk's term was very short, and Lange was no Kirk anyway, and the circumstances were different.*
>
> (David, CVR).

> *Yeah, I think we had a lot of respect for Lange. I mean the thing that really stands out for me is the way he handled that nuclear debate… I would love to hear that again from start to finish. That was just brilliant. He just shut everyone up, internationally.*
>
> (Simon, TUR).

Even as participants in this study employed the use of discursive mnemonic coupling through the drawing of similarities between key figures in the past and present, still, the most telling comparisons arise when memories of Lange and Muldoon are evoked and cast against one another. Against Muldoon as *Man Alone*—a metonymic figure symbolising an almost authoritarian conservatism, and an older generation of New Zealanders—Lange's formation, rise, and the groundswell of support he developed as a figure representative of change, youth, progress, and democracy through 'consensus', was collectively remembered by participants as signalling the beginnings of a period of excitement and hope. Accompanying the hope afforded to Lange—and all that he came to symbolise—there was also considerable symbolic attachment and identification with the Labour Party itself owing to the social democratic tradition they were understood by participants as being the primary stewards of. This implicit understanding of New Zealand's Labour Party tradition led to considerable trust vested in Lange and the Labour Party by both the voting public, and Party members. As John (CVR) explains,

The perception at the time was that if Labour get in then they'll look after the working man. They'll put taxes up, they'll put more money into health and education... and that's what they'll do...

...We'll be getting taxed more, but anyway, we're professionals and that's kind of the pain that you have to bear living in New Zealand. I expect to pay more taxes than the guy who is working for the [local council], *sweeping the streets. So, my taxes will go to him, so he can pay his rent and get his kids through school. So I wasn't too focussed on that, or too worried. I just kind of thought the Labour Government would come in and… make things fairer...*

However, for participants in this study, the end of Muldoonism, the excitement of a new Labour leader, and the hopes for what the Labour Government could achieve in power were soon shattered. Toby (CVR), for instance, recalls both the excitement and eventual disappointment shared by those who took a more active role in campaigning for Labour's electoral win:

For the General Election in 1984 we all did our bit to get Labour elected. It had been 12 years since [there had been a] *Labour Government... so our union set up a Low-Paid Workers Tour of the bottom half of the North Island, visiting every town and talking about the wage freeze and the low wages that our members were getting. We were jubilant in 1984, but were soon to be very disappointed.*

Clare (CVR) describes the sense of excitement shared by participants as Lange and the Labour Government took power, and again contrasts the characters of Lange and Muldoon, before introducing the 'ghastly' takeover of the Labour Party and Government by Rogernomics and *villainous* neoliberal actors:

My memory of that was just that it was fantastic to have a Labour Government again… I mean Muldoon was just a drunk by that stage, he was really a non-credible person, even within his own Party. But Lange was seen as smart, left-wing, but not extremely left-wing. He was kind of sitting in that space where there was the comfortableness around people who didn't like the so-called 'power of the unions', and so on, but that he would bring back a sense of the balance... Which is, I guess, why the shock stuff around, you know, what happened with Roger Douglas and Prebble and co. was so ghastly.

The significance of the description of 'Roger Douglas and Prebble and co.' will be discussed in greater detail below; however the descriptive and mnemonic import of Clare's statement is clear. Resentment and disatisfaction with the leadership of Muldoon, and his character, is once again contrasted with the character and hope invested in Lange. What followed the 1984 election, and the acquisition of power and influence by key neoliberal actors within the Labour Party would result in a collective cultural, political, and economic 'shock'. Still, for others, Lange's association with 'Roger Douglas and Prebble and co.' is viewed in much starker terms, with Lange understood as complicit in the neoliberal takeover of the Labour Party, and the neoliberalisation of New Zealand:

> *Lange was a fuck-wit. I have no time for Lange at all. He was a fuck-wit. Alright? He made no contribution at all. He was a vain, insecure—a very insecure bloke. I knew him quite well. With a Methodist background, and was putty in the hand for others who wanted to knock-off Muldoon and that. So, you had that thing where they had a bloke who didn't know a great deal about politics and he died a broken man, which I have no sympathy for because the bloke realised too late in the piece what had actually happened, and tried to change it. He was putty in the hand for them... He was well meaning. He wanted to do the right thing, but he allowed himself to get caught by those people, and they used him—the leadership.* [Lange's personal qualities] *did affect, to a certain degree, the history of that time.*

> (Bill, TUR).

The analysis of a collective memory of David Lange as protagonist in the drama of neoliberalisation, together with a thick description and maximal interpretation of his character development and cultural performance, and comparatively cast against those of Muldoon, positions Lange as symbolic of a tragic end to the *golden weather* of the post-WWII economic consensus, collectivism, and of principled social democracy within New Zealand's Labour Party. Cast against Muldoon, Lange is collectively remembered by participants as symbolising hope for greater democratic consensus in the face of economic crisis, greater social cohesion in response to division, and greater social progress against a deep social conservatism. Participants' hope in the young, charismatic Lange would however be short-lived, and in the collective memory of research subjects, Lange as metonymic representation is now recalled as signalling the end of Keynesian

social democracy, the beginning of the neoliberal era, and a betrayal of the Labour Party tradition.

The villains: Roger Douglas and the Troika

In the story of the neoliberalisation of Aotearoa New Zealand, it is telling that the period of reforms beginning with the Fourth Labour Government's rise to power in 1984 is named after then Minister of Finance Roger Douglas, and not Prime Minister David Lange. Whereas the parallel economic reforms under UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher would come to be known as 'Thatcherism', and those of US President Ronald Reagan as 'Reaganomics', the New Zealand experience did not result in the comparable terminology of 'Lange-nomics', or some such formulation. Instead, within the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, three words have come to denote not merely neoliberal structural reform beginning in 1984, but the speed and scale of the reforms, and the conspiratorial nature of their implementation, with Finance Minister Roger Douglas central to all three: *Rogernomics*, the *Troika,* and *blitzkrieg*.

While this study has shown a temporality within participants' collective memory that extends back to colonial times, participants and researcher alike nevertheless must seek out a symbolic and temporal marker or anchor point in the construction of a shared narrative from which to organise collective memory and (re)construct narrative. For this purpose, interviewees present two core markers or 'events' within the drama of neoliberalisation, with the second contingent on the first. While a secondary event is identified within the collective memory presented here as being the intensification of neoliberalisation under the Fourth National Government 1990–1999 (see Chapter 9), for interviewees, the primary event around which the drama is centred is the Fourth Labour Government taking power in 1984 and the implementation of *Rogernomics*.

As Bruce Jesson (1989) notes, by the early months of 1983, the primary responsibilty for Labour Party economic policy was given to shadow Finance Minister Roger Douglas. In those months and amidst a period of economic 'crisis', Douglas—'as probably the least representative person in the Labour caucus in his economic thinking' (Jesson,1989, p. 58)—set about singlehandedly developing economic policy that moved past the mere 'management' of economic instability. With a direct line of communication to New Zealand Treasury—by this stage consisting of many holding and espousing broad

support for theories typified by Chicago School economics[19]—toward the end of 1983, Douglas presented his Economic Policy Package to the Caucus Economic Committee. Although the Package did not entirely reflect the extremes of 'New Right' Chicago School thinking, it nevertheless was indicative of an emergent free-market focus. An alternative package was then developed following opposition from the Labour Party Council, which consisted of both Labour Party parliamentary members, and officials (Jesson, 1989); however, a third policy was later presented as a compromise, and only released after the 1984 snap election was called. As Jesson (1989) notes, 'None of this was to make a difference, however, because the policy package that was to be actually implemented was being prepared even further away from the public arena, in the bowels of Treasury...' (p. 62).

After taking power in 1984, with the economy rhetorically positioned as being in a state of crisis, and with Roger Douglas now Finance Minister, the Labour Government enacted a number of radical economic measures at the behest of the Reserve Bank and Treasury. As Aberbach and Christensen (2001) write,

> The economic crisis was a ready-made problem, so the opportunity for a coupling of problem and solution was at hand. What was now needed was a policy entrepreneur and a window of opportunity. The main vehicle of change was the Labor Party [sic], and specifically Roger Douglas. He had a strategy for both changing the Party's policies and for furthering his position inside the new government, a strategy that was swift and took most other actors by surprise (pp. 418–419)

As Easton (1997b, p. 73) asserts, New Zealand during the period from 1984–1988 was 'characterised by a weak Prime Minister relative to an exceptionally strong finance team'. Owing to this, for Jesson (1989), 'the government's course had been set. A coup had occurred, with power passing to a small group of cabinet ministers and top-level bureaucrats' (p. 65). This economic team and the small group of cabinet ministers central to the 'coup' consisted of Douglas, Richard Prebble, and David Caygill—the *Troika* of neoliberal actors collectively remembered by participants in this study as being central to the neoliberal take-over of the Labour Party, to the neoliberalisation of New Zealand,

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[19] See Jesson (1989) for a detailed discussion of the role of the Reserve Bank, Treasury, and Chicago School-influenced ideologues in the neoliberalisation of New Zealand.

and thus encoded by participants as a metonymic representation of *villainy* within the tragic drama of neoliberalisation.

The Troika's ability to implement drastic structural reform—to advance the drama of neoliberalisation through *climax* and *falling action*—relied in no small measure on their ability to adopt a 'blitzkrieg' approach to policy-making, in which, according to Easton (1997b, p. 80), 'with similarities to the blitzkrieg in warfare... the "lightening strike" involved a policy goal radically different from the existing configuration, to be attained in a short period, following a surprise announcement and rapid implementation'.

At the risk of perhaps unwarranted hyperbolic and literary association, it is crucial here to consider the role of the *villain* as archetype and representation within dramaturgy and cultural sociology. Within the collective memory of participants, the collective narrativisation of the drama of neoliberalisation requires a collective, narratological understanding of the 'villain' as an archetype that fulfills the function of cathexis for participants in a narrative that centres on a 'take-over' of the Labour Party, and an evaluation of the impacts of neoliberalisation.

As previously discussed, interviewees re-construct a narrative of the past informed by their group-specific mnemonic lens, and actively frame the past from a subjectivity resulting from their role as representatives of their respective, yet overlapping mnemonic communities. In this sense, the casting of Douglas and the Troika as villains within the drama of neoliberalisation is not a value-free judgement or evaluation on the part of participants. As Poore (2017, p. 1) writes in a discussion on the 'villain-effect' in popular culture, 'villains often cross over from their allotted narratives and acquire a different narrative function in someone else's story, refusing to 'stay put' or 'know their place' in time and space'. In this sense, it is not unreasonable, but instead likely, that a collective memory centring perspectives from the business sector, or neoliberal or libertarian think-tank, as respective and/or overlapping spheres of mnemonic communion, may instead cast Douglas and the Troika as *hero* or *anti-hero* in the drama of neoliberalisation. In this alternative collective memory, the year 1984 as a symbolic marker of change in New Zealand history may be cast in a no-less consequential, yet considerably more favourable light than that reflected by the research subjects participating in the present study. For interviewees within the current research however, and in the context of the impact of neoliberalisation on both organisational and deeply personal levels, Douglas and the

Troika are cast as the villainous 'bad actors' within the unfolding drama, as evidenced by the collective memory and individual accounts presented here.

For interviewees, as with memory of both Lange and Muldoon, accounts and perception of Roger Douglas focus on his character, his material and ideological impact on the drama of neoliberalisation, and implicitly designate Douglas and the Troika as a metonymic representation of the neoliberalisation of New Zealand and divergence from the traditions of the Labour Party. For some, memory of Douglas and the Troika takes an autobiographical turn, in establishing a proximity or familiarity with the narratological villains through, for instance, Labour Party membership or direct dealings in an official capacity as community and union leaders and representatives. For others, a temporal and/or spatial distance is established by participants, with subsequent time, knowledge, traditionalist, and organisational memory structuring and informing their account. In the case of Mark (CVR) both the participant's proximity and familiarity with Douglas is made clear:

> *... I personally knew Roger Douglas, if I saw him on the street I'd stop and say g'day to him, but I don't like the prick. But the reality was that I joined the Labour Party in about 1983, or 1982. After Muldoon's win in '81, I was so disillusioned with the direction of the country and the Springbok protests and all of that, it was just a bloody dreadful time. And so, I became an activist in 1982, and I worked with the Labour Party in the local branch, and supported Douglas in that election in '82, and again in '87.*

Also evident within Mark's account is acknowledgement once again of the social and political context in which the 1984 election occurred, the deep resentment of Muldoon, but also the collective disdain for Douglas and what he has come to represent within the Labour Party, and within the overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion presented here. Furthermore, Party loyalty is evident in the participant's support of Douglas in 1982 in local elections under the Muldoon Government, but once again in 1987, as the effects of Douglas' programme of Rogernomics were beginning to become evident in its initial impact and future implications.

A certain level of trust and faith in the Labour Party over the course of their first term in Government is evident in participants' collective memory, prior to their moments of full

realisation of the villainous takeover, as will be discussed more fully in subsequent chapters. However, Party loyalties aside, it is important to note that the neoliberal takeover of the Labour Party and structure of New Zealand society was not *immediately* experienced as such by participants. Instead, interviewees recall trusting in both the need for change and the direction articulated by Lange, and what initially seemed like 'sound', 'safe' and 'necessary' economic management on the part of Douglas and his team. Adam (TUR), for example, recalls his impression of Douglas, summarising the complexity of collective memory of a polarising figure in New Zealand history, while indicating an implicit faith in his economic management and in the Labour Party itself:

> *As a person, Roger Douglas was as cold, or as damp as a wet fish, really. He had absolutely no personality, but he had this appearance of being… of having a good head on him… but he was in the wrong Party, as it turned out.*

Mark continues his earlier account with a description of the *blitzkrieg* approach to policy described by Easton (1997b), in a manner that captures the speed and scale of the reform, and the value of hindsight in participants' assessment of the reforms led by Douglas and the Troika:

> *… Douglas sort of used the narrative of a crisis to push through changes and so the first one was obviously the floating of the dollar, then there was the lifting of inter-trade controls, and at the time we had massive inflation of something like 20 per cent, it was horrendous. And there was a series of other problems that hit us, you know current account problems, but I think some of the narrative around crisis was manufactured, and I think there were other alternatives, but we were never given them.*

As discussed previously, *blitzkrieg* refers to the speed of restructuring, the obscuring of real and deviation from pronounced policy intentions, and the sustained nature of Rogernomic reforms. Within the collective memory of interviewees, time has allowed for a fuller appreciation, knowledge, and experience of the reforms. With memory contracting the perception of the temporal period in which reform occurred, collective memory of the sudden and drastic nature of Rogernomics and its implementation is apparent as participants' recall both the speed and scale of the reforms, but also what

Jesson (1989) described as the sense that a 'coup' had occurred within the Labour Party. As Matthew (CVR) assessed,

> *I think we're fair to say that no one who voted in the '84 election knew what Roger Douglas and co. had in store. I don't think David Lange knew…*

Of Lange's role in the drama of neoliberalisation, and the consequentiality of his personal qualities and character in what transpired, Jesson would write in 1989,

> Lange was perfectly suited to be a vehicle for other people's ambitions because of his personal idiosyncrasies. He was not a political operator in the same way as a Bassett or a Moore, and so depended on the political skills of other people. Nor did he have a developed political philosophy, and consequently also depended on the ideas of other people (p. 53).

Bill (TUR) echoes a similar assessment of Lange and the 'coup' by the 'New Right', touching on Jesson's analysis of Lange's 'personal idiosyncrasies', and the personal details, consequentiality, and centrality of *character* in participants' collective memory:

> *Lange was a weak and vacillating individual… Weak and vacillating. Brilliant orator, really… a raconteur, right?* [He was] *used and abused. Used and manipulated by Roger Douglas and his creed—who was without a doubt, the driver—and he got into, as my old dad would have said, 'bad company'. And who was 'bad company'? All those who came back from overseas, from economic institutions, who were anti-Keynesian. They were that group that went to Treasury.*

Here, Douglas again takes on metonymic representation of the neoliberal takeover of the Labour Party, as the villain in the drama of neoliberalisation, but also more explicitly and literally as 'without a doubt, the driver' in introducing an ideologically-driven shift in social power within Government, in implementing his Rogernomics, and heralding the neoliberalisation of New Zealand. Bill continues with his assessment of the cast of villainous bad actors:

> *Now there is no doubt that the economy needed to be restructured, but not at the expense of working people, and not without a plan, and it didn't need to have the neoliberal model, right? And that, I think, is the most important thing, right? Very*

important. And that is what we got... and the thing is, I knew Roger Douglas. He was a fuckin' arsehole... I knew him personally and politically. And I think personally and politically the nastiest of them all, was their hatchet man, their true believer, in this order, was Prebble, then his other supporters; Mike Moore, David Caygill—as they say the fifth man, that always kept himself very low-key, but was there right through, still in the Party. He was the last of the Rogernomes.

As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9, by the end of 1988, and following considerable disagreement within the Party ranks and membership, Prebble had been dismissed from cabinet, and Douglas had resigned over irreconcilable differences. Toby (TUR) foreshadows the significance of the proposed flat-tax in 1987, also discussed later in Chapter 9, which widened the already significant rift between Lange, Douglas, and his team:

My perception of Lange from seeing him speak and from the union dealings with him was that he was a man of huge talents, with his debating skills and one-liners and had a real heart, from his upbringing, for the ideals of the Labour Movement. However, he also had many faults. I think he was quite a weak character, did not want to offend people and was surrounded by people like Douglas, Prebble and others who were true believers in neoliberal thinking, and David Caygill who was also won-over to these ideas. After the 1987 announcement of the flat-tax [Lange] *suddenly woke up to the implications of introducing such a tax for the provision of state services, but dithered and prevaricated as he realised that he had already thrown his lot in with an unstoppable juggernaut.*

Both evident and of significance in Toby's account is the implicit ideological juxtaposition of Lange and the ideals of the labour movement, with Douglas, the Troika, the 'New Right', and neoliberalism. Here, Lange is remembered for his recognised talents and achievements as a debater and orator, for the ideals of social justice he espoused, but also for his weakness of character. Against Lange, the 'unstoppable juggernaut' of neoliberalism is set, casting Lange in a more sympathetic light, and as ultimately no match for the Douglas and the Troika. Again, against Lange's better qualities, and a collective memory of his more favourable attributes as Prime Minister, the villainous qualities of those remembered as both betraying Lange and the Labour tradition, are amplified.

Memory of the key actors Muldoon, Lange, and Douglas was central to participants' shared narrative and collective memory, with each actor viewed as a representational figure within the drama of neoliberalisation. Within the collective memory of interviewees, Muldoon—the *Man Alone*—is positioned as representative of both Keynesian social democracy's final stand in the face of change, and of a deep social conservatism, while Lange is representative of the *End of the Golden Weather*, the dawn of a new era, of social progressivism, but also ultimately of a betrayal of the Labour Party's traditions. Against Lange as protagonist, and Muldoon as antagonist, Douglas and the Troika stand as representative of the villainous neoliberal takeover of the Labour Party. However, for the villains to succeed in their betrayal of the protagonist, and for the drama of neoliberalisation to proceed as recounted through collective memory, conditions would have to be favourable, and a stage set and utilised in the cultural performance of actors, and in the reception of performance and framing of collective memory by observers/audience.

7

Mise-en-scène: Rising action and historic/mnemonic density

Having explored a collective memory of social power, and the cultural performance of key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, further contextual work on the part of participants in this study was achieved through a collective narrativisation of the socio-historical period in which the drama was set. This socio-historical context, or what this study refers to as *mise-en-scène*, was articulated by participating research subjects as setting the scene for neoliberalisation, providing further contextual and expository background to the drama, and illustrating the *rising action* within the collective arc of narrative as being one filled with increasing tension and both *historical* and *mnemonic density*.

Of *mise-en-scène*, and its function as an element of cultural performance, Alexander (2006b) states,

> If a text is to walk and talk, it must be sequenced temporally and choreographed spatially (e.g. Berezin 1997, p. 156). The exigencies of time and space create specific aesthetic demands; at some *historical juncture* [emphasis added], new social roles like director and producer emerge that specialize in this task of putting text 'into the scene' (p. 36).

Mise-en-scène in theatrical production translates as 'putting on stage', and refers to the setting and arrangement of props or scenery, including scenic effects and stage pieces. In its more expansive meaning, mise-en-scène refers to the setting or surroundings of events on stage, or the 'spatio-temporal continuum' (Postlewait, 2005), while in film theory, mise-en-scène refers to all the components before camera (Postlewait, 2005). It is with a mind to this more expansive understanding of the term, that I define *mise-en-scène*. Mise-en-scène as an element of participants' collective memory of the neoliberalisation

of New Zealand therefore refers to the overall setting and social and historical context in which the arguments for—and neoliberal transition itself—were performed, and how and for what purposes this setting—this *mise-en-scène*—is collectively remembered by participants.

In previous chapters, this research demonstrated the manner in which both Muldoon and Lange, as key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation, each addressed the social and economic 'crises', the break-down of the post-WWII consensus, and the increasing generational divide—all elements of *mise-en-scène* the two actors each were required to navigate—in the lead-up to the 1984 election. In the analysis of collective memory, descriptions of mise-en-scène involve remembering the 'structure of the conjuncture' (Sahlins, 1981), or the local social, political, and economic conditions that create the atmosphere in which the performance is enacted. For interviewees, mise-en-scène—the structure of the conjuncture—is remembered as a period of relative historical and 'mnemonic density' (Zerubavel, 2003), as participants recall a concentratedly occupied timeline of events in which there was a significant break from the social, cultural, political, and economic 'consensus'.

For participants in this study, collective memory of mise-en-scène functions primarily as the socio-historical context or background against which the drama of neoliberalisation was performed by actors, and observed and received by the participants as audience. In providing deep socio-historical context, temporal sequencing, and spatial choreography through the situating of key events of significance within participants' collective narrative, the subjects of this research aid in the *re-fusion* of seemingly disparate and dislocated memory, effectively enabling individual memory to 'walk and talk' as *collective memory*.

Setting the scene

Although historical change is a gradual process, with perhaps intermittent periods of drastic transition, the tendency of collective memory of social transition is to interpret specific events as symbolic markers of change. While the year 1984 holds the position in the collective memory of both the nation and smaller mnemonic communities as being a pivotal year for the kind of social and economic change related to neoliberal structural reform, interviewees frequently cited events of significance which occurred both before

and after this pivotal point. Just as a purely economic reading of the justification for neoliberal reform must take into account economic events prior to structural adjustment, so too must social and cultural change be placed in its broader context, with the mise-en-scène of the unfolding drama described and elaborated.

The 1970s–1980s is collectively remembered by participants in this study as a period of extraordinary and escalating change in Aotearoa New Zealand. Of the social and political change during this period, Bruce Jesson (1992) writes, 'The student radicalism of the 1960s had left behind a layer of middle-class people with a concern for social, moral and foreign-policy issues, who formed the basis for the feminist, anti-racist and peace movements' (pp. 41–42). Beginning in the 1970s, New Zealand's economy deteriorated to a point increasingly described as being in a state of crisis, while a new political consciousness had been developing since at least the 1960s, which consolidated groups around issues relating to race, gender, environmental, and peace movements. The rise of this new social and political consciousness in New Zealand's middle-class, brought about by an increasing concern for moral, social, and foreign policy issues, is described by Jesson (1992) as coincidentally coming at a time of decline of political interest within the working class.

For several of the participants in this study, particularly those with no formal political affiliation to the Labour Party in 1984, the mechanics of Rogernomics and New Zealand's structural reform went largely unnoticed in their initial application. In many ways overshadowed by the various social movements of the time and the desire for a change from the old Muldoonism of the late 1970s and early 1980s, it was only when the social cost of neoliberal reform was beginning to be realised that those with little political affiliation began to understand what this seismic shift would mean in the years to come. Nevertheless, coupled with the increasing climate of crises, participants collectively recall a growing generational divide that became increasingly evident as a number of emerging social movements became a crucial vehicle of collective calls for social change over the years prior to reform. Bill (TUR) recalls both the role of social movements as illustrative of a social divide within New Zealand, and the end of an era of socio-economic stability, with Muldoon and Lange each representative of their respective generations:

The Springbok Tour was a reaction to [Muldoon], *as well as all the cultural stuff… Lange actually was the beginning of the changes from this particular RSA/World War II generation.*

So that's my general thinking. [The Springbok Tour] *was about rugby, and that was a cultural thing as much as a… I was very happy to be involved in the anti-apartheid movement, the anti-Tour movement, and it was a great cultural rejection of their view of the world, and the most stable era, that I grew up in.*

The 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand is recounted collectively by participants as being a pivotal time in New Zealand's social, cultural, and political history, and will be discussed as such later in the current chapter. However, a key component of the unique place of 'the Tour' in New Zealand is found in the generational and social make-up of those who were 'for' and 'against' the event, its role in galvanising support across a number of social movements increasing in size and influence, and the Tour's place in collective memory as a high-water mark of increasing social unrest.

In order to place the Tour in its full context, and more fruitfully gauge its centrality in participants' collective memory, we must first turn our focus once again to the socio-cultural and historical context of the pre-neoliberal, post-WWII era.

Included below is an indicative list of the range of social events and movements participants provide through their collective memory of neoliberalisation in New Zealand. The social events and movements listed here belie a complexity in temporally placing movements and policies in social history. As such, although an indicative timeline is provided, there was considerable overlap, both temporally and socially, in terms of key movements' place in New Zealand history, and involvement by supporters. The dates of key events in parentheses below are therefore listed as indicative of the beginning of a period or policy implementation, as in the beginning of the 'Dawn Raids', or a key event which in some way defines or illustrates a collective memory of the associated movement, as in 'Bastion Point', which has come to symbolise Māori land rights. Again, it is crucial to note, significant social events recalled by participants in this study occurred during a period when the New Zealand economy was increasingly referred to as being at a point of 'crisis'.

Significant social and political events recalled by interviewees include:

Waterfront dispute and signing of ANZUS agreement (1951)

Environmental movement (Save Manapōuri Campaign 1959; petition signed 1970)

Anti-war movement (end involvement in Vietnam in 1972)

Beginning of 'Dawn Raids' targeting Pasifika peoples (1973)

Women's rights movement (International Women's Year, 1975)

The Treaty of Waitangi and the rights of Māori (Bastion Point, 1977–78)

Anti-apartheid and anti-racist movements (Springbok tour of New Zealand, 1981)

Anti-trade union march ('Kiwis Care', 1981)

Muldoon re-elected (1981)

Women Against Pornography and protests against US nuclear-powered frigate (1983)

Bombing of Trades Hall (1984)

Lange elected (1984)

Bombing of Rainbow Warrior (1985)

Homosexual law reform (1986).

Significant economic events, together with the many social events and movements listed above were called upon by participants in this study to provide context and clarity to the social and political climate—the *mise-en-scène*—which is collectively remembered by participants as being instrumental in David Lange and New Zealand's Fourth Labour Government taking power in 1984, and in the subsequent neoliberalisation of New Zealand.

Mise-en-scène, multi-dimensionality, and social change

In his analysis of market liberalisation in New Zealand, specifically, how it was that radical transformation was able to be implemented at first by a traditionally social democratic Labour Party, and sustained through two elections and a change of government, Hagel (1998) describes the politics of New Zealand during the period of 1930–1970 as a 'uni-dimensional era' in which partisan competition was based primarily

around the economy and class. However this consensus was placed under considerable and increasing pressure in the ensuing years, with the late 1960s signalling a pivotal moment in New Zealand's social and political history. Hagel (1998) cites the anti-Vietnam War movement, the Save Manapōuri Campaign[20], movements around the rights of women and Māori, the anti-nuclear movement, and opposition to South Africa's Apartheid regime, and writes,

> In a simplified depiction, it is possible to think of these various issues as constituting a single non-economic, social or postmaterialist dimension that cut across the old dimension of conflict based largely on economic class. Certainly, the activist cadres of the movements for change often overlapped. Nevertheless, at the mass level and in electoral politics, each issue had special potential to attract (or alienate) population groups that were at least partially distinct. Thus a more precise analysis would depict New Zealand politics as having become *multi-dimensional* [emphasis added], rather than just two-dimensional (p. 233).

Hagel (1998) highlights the shift from uni-dimensionality to multi-dimensionality and the resulting 'loss of a stable equilibrium' (p. 233) as being a crucial element in allowing for radical policy changes in New Zealand politics. Hagel (1998) explains,

> Once politics moves beyond unidimensionality, spatial models reveal a cyclic pattern, in which any majority can be defeated by evoking new issues and/or by recombining policies so as to induce crucial defections to a winning coalition… Because coalitions are formed through a process of logrolling across issues, the policies that prevail with respect to any given issue are more likely to reflect the wishes of a passionate minority than the central tendency of the majority (pp. 233–234).

Hagel (1998) cites data which illustrates this shift in dimensionality and loss of stability, indicating 'markedly increased partisan volatility and government instability after 1970' (p. 234). With increasing social instability and unrest also a core feature of participants' shared narrative, the current chapter provides an analysis of the manner in which this

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[20] Symbolic of New Zealand's early environmental movement, the Save Manapōuri Campaign of 1969–1972 had its roots in a dispute dating back to 1959 over the development of a hydro-electric plant on Lake Manapōuri, and coincided with the development of New Zealand's movement against the Vietnam War.

instability is remembered as it relates to neoliberalisation following the 1984 General Election.

Within the collective memory of both community and voluntary representatives, and trade union members, memory of structural adjustment, of Rogernomics and the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, is inseparable from collective memory of certain events which both preceded and followed the 1984 election. Memory of the unrest and instability resulting from increased engagement from the public around issues of social and environmental justice amplifies both the real *historical* and perceived *mnemonic density* of the period. It is this relative 'density' of events prior to and during New Zealand's structural transformation that is expressed by interviewees as being central to their memory of the period, and to the *mise-en-scène* of the drama of neoliberalisation.

Historical and mnemonic density in New Zealand

Although analysis of participant interviews can provide a superficial and quantitative 'book-ending' of the temporal range of narrative in participants' collective memory, from pre-colonial New Zealand to an imagined future, a more thorough reading of interview data reveals a periodisation of time around a point of relative historical density.

Of a given 'period' in time, in his writing on 'periodisation', Jameson (1984) explains,

> the period in question is not understood as some omnipresent and uniform shared style or way of thinking or acting, but rather as the sharing of a common objective situation, to which a whole range of varied responses and creative innovations is then possible, but always within that situation's structural limits (p. 178).

While participants in this study were invited to share their memories of the period of neoliberalisation—ostensibly through a reading of their collective narrative to span the period of structural reform from 1984 to the end of the Fourth National Government's first term in 1993—it is telling that the participants collectively periodised a time of relative historical density beginning in 1969 in developing mise-en-scène for the drama of neoliberalisation that would commence in earnest some 15 years later. The clustering of significant social and economic events, both remembered (*mnemonic density*) and officially logged (*historical density*), around the year 1984, and their invoking by participants, positions the year 1984 itself as a symbol of significance. The number of

events recalled during this period is what Zerubavel (2003) refers to as a period of 'mnemonic density'. It is this mnemonic density that reflects the significance of the period itself, and how intensely communities remember certain historical periods. Zerubavel (2003) writes,

> History thus takes the form of a relief map, on the mnemonic hills and dales of which memorable and forgettable events from the past are respectively featured. Its general shape is thus formed by a handful of historically "eventful" mountains interspersed among wide, seemingly empty valleys in which nothing of any historical significance seems to happen (p. 27).

Events of significance, like those which fill Zerubavel's 'mnemonic hills' of historical density become ingrained in collective memory and provide a constant reference point for mnemonic communities to draw upon as the present requires. Here, this study makes a distinction between Zerubavel's *mnemonic density*, and a less nuanced *historical density*. The latter refers to a clustering of significant events in time, the significance of which has been noted in history books and 'official memory', while the former—mnemonic density—refers to how this density is remembered, for what purpose, and to what ends. In the context of collective memory and cultural performance, the performance of power by key actors was enacted against a mise-en-scène of historical density, resulting in the articulation of mnemonic density as a central feature of contextual work for participants in this study.

While some interviewees explicitly cite the year 1959 as marking the beginning of the environmental movement, others the 'green' and 'environmental movement' more generally, and still others simply 'Manapōuri', in the collective memory of participants, public awareness around the Save Manapōuri Campaign, together with opposition to the Vietnam War signalled the beginning of a shift in social and political attitudes in New Zealand, and the beginning of a period of historical and mnemonic density. In providing temporal markers which effectively periodise New Zealand's late Keynesian social democratic era as being one typified by an increase in social movements, stark divisions along generational lines, and increasing economic instability, research subjects describe a historically and mnemonically 'dense' period of social change in contextualising structural transformation. To this end, participants centre the 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand, its social and political impact, and a resulting *cultural disorientation*

(Sztompka, 2000), together with increasing economic crisis and desire for social change, as typifying this historical and mnemonic density, the mise-en-scene of the drama, and the consequentiality of social and economic events in the social transformation that would follow.

Mnemonic density and mise-en-scène

As discussed, a common feature of the collective memory presented by interviewees was the explanatory and evaluative work of situating the neoliberalisation of New Zealand in time and place, relative to other social, economic, and politically significant movements and events. This feature of narrative—the referencing of a wider social context in which to situate structural reform—was regularly called upon by participants in setting a scene of not merely change, but also tension and drama throughout New Zealand. The following excerpt of narrative from James (CVR), illustrates both the historical and mnemonic density of the period in question through the lens of a community and voluntary representative. Of particular interest is the sheer number of events recalled in a semi-listed fashion:

> *In terms of the positives of that period, we were going through the period of the Māori Renaissance. So for us there were a lot of positives coming through that. As Ngāi Tahu we were going through a settlement process, so there was a real drive around that. For others there was the environmental movement…*

> *… During that time too, in terms of politics, you know, we had Whina Cooper, the Land March, all the protests at Waitangi every year, the [Ngā] Tamatoa Movement of young Māori men striving to get Māori identity recognised. We had Tainui and Ngai Tāhu working towards settlement and the battles going on there. Manapōuri. I mean, we were emerging from quite a lot of political protests. We had the nuclear free movement. So there was a lot of political protest that we were aware of…*

Here, James' recollection is centred around what became known as the 'Māori Renaissance', a movement incorporating issues of social and economic justice, post-colonialism, land rights, and a celebration of art, language and culture. Carlyon and Morrow (2013) refer to the period as 'an affirmation of Māori cultural and political identity… closely linked to and augmented by international opposition to racism and

support for the rights of indigenous people' (p. 248). Evident in James' recounting of the period is the Māori Renaissance itself, the fight for Te Tiriti o Waitangi settlements and redress for historical wrongs, alongside environmental and anti-nuclear movements, in which the interests and constituents of social movements would intersect and overlap, creating a broad coalition across race, class, and gender. James' use of possessive pronouns incorporates subjectivities of both nation and Iwi (tribe), outlining a relatively dense period of activism, while indicating an explicit and experiential awareness of this density from those actively engaged during the period in question. However, even for participants in this study who saw themselves as in some way on the periphery of the many social movements of the time, a collective sense of changing times, and a shift in political consciousness was shared and recounted by all interviewees.

Bruce Jesson (1992) describes the rise of 'the politics of individual conscience' in New Zealand during the 1970s and 1980s, described by one participant as 'a new social settlement'. This 'new social settlement' can be understood as further evidence of New Zealand's shift from uni-dimensionality to multi-dimensionality, away from the more traditional class-based economic concerns, to a settlement that valued the politics of individual conscience and identity. Here, Bill and Jane each cite movements for racial justice and gender equality, while Bill also includes the anti-nuclear movement, geo-political concerns, and calls from a new generation of New Zealanders for cultural and political independence from old allies in an increasingly globalised world:

> *The women's movement, the Māori movement. All that… a new social settlement was emerging… and the anti-nuclear, New Zealand's independence from America…*

> (Bill, TUR).

> *For women, International Women's Year in 1975, and that whole '70s period was huge, you know, with the United Women's Convention and that sort of thing, it was a powerful time…*

> *… I attach Māori renaissance to the '70s and '60s... The land march, of I think '75. So '60s, '70s is where I see it, and by the '80s there was a strong Māori presence in the Springbok Tour…*

Similarly, Lisa (TUR) recalls the mise-en-scène of the period as not merely one of historical and mnemonic density, but of organising, of intersecting interests, as a period of increased consciousness around social and environmental issues, and ultimately, one in which there was hope for social progress through social movements:

> *… as a teenager, and as a young woman, there was the nuclear free, you know the* [Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament]*… we were marching in the streets and things like that… Feminism was a really big part of my life, as was the women's movement… So I think that also really contributed to my sense of social justice, because there were these world movements that were going on and that were impacting New Zealand…* [that] *you connected into, and that gave you a sense of these values of fairness, and it did feel hopeful. Even though if you think about the nuclear stuff, it was really scary, but you had the sense that you could change things, by everyone getting together, and doing something…*

Again, in the recollections of the period presented by Bill, Jane, and Lisa, the relative historical and mnemonic density, and the deep meaning of events and movements of the time emerge as significant, with the flourishing of Māori culture, worldviews, and land rights, and women's and environmental movements, presented as a part of a broader generational movement for change. Jane and Peter, in the passages above conclude with reference to the most often cited, and vividly recounted social movement of the time, the anti-racism/anti-apartheid movement, and the 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand.

Elsewhere, within participants' collective memory, through the comparison of one event with another, participants were able to apply a sense of moral equivalence and resonance between certain occurrences of socio-historical and organisational significance. To borrow from Zerubavel's (2003, p. 24) description of 'historical rhyming', participants adopted a form of *mnemonic rhyming*, in which events within collective memory are compared or treated as analogous to other events in their factual or material similarities, but also in the meaning ascribed to both by the group in question. For participants, these comparisons and resultant mnemonic rhyming rely on an implicit understanding of the significance of one event, as it is used to imply the significance of another. Bill (TUR),

adopts mnemonic rhyming in his coupling of two events in New Zealand history that have organisational and mnemonic community-specific significance and resonance:

> *... we're very fortunate in our society, that we've had a rather different tradition of non-violence to a certain degree. We haven't had the... very violent... military control, and juntas and that. Not saying that the government hasn't reacted quite sharply when challenged. We had the* [19]*51 lock-out, and* [19]*81...*

Here, Bill mnemonically rhymes New Zealand's 1951waterside industrial dispute and subsequent lock-out—New Zealand's 'longest and most bitterly fought industrial dispute' (Roth, 1973, p. 78)—with later social turmoil culminating in nationwide protests in 1981. The mnemonic rhyming of events specific to a given mnemonic community or communities, in this case that of the nation and the trade union movement, requires a culturally-specific understanding of the historical event itself and the meaning ascribed to it. The positioning of analogous or comparable events as situated in the past, present, or an imagined future, can be understood as emphasising the moral, evaluative, and meaning-work of participants. As Bill explains in greater detail,

> *'51 was a violent reaction by the state against a group of workers that were challenging the state, which had an element of the old Communist Party behind it... the union movement had to rebuild right through the '60s, '70s and '80s which was a great period of activity.*

> *'81 was a watershed* [moment], *but a far wider class composition across all the classes of New Zealand...*

With the 1951 lock-out holding particular significance in the collective memory of trade unionists, along with the earlier waterside strikes of 1890 and 1913, memory of events some 30 years later are embued with greater meaning and significance. Direct comparision between the most significant industrial dispute in New Zealand and union history, and events in 1981, has broader significance in terms of collective memory, as it transcends organisational memory and appeals to the shared memory of the New Zealand collective itself. Importantly, both events are remembered by each mnemonic community as representing a period of increased tension and division. This research found that the collective memory of New Zealand's structural reform is inseparable from the cultural, social, economic, and political significance of several events in the nation's history, with

the 1981 Springbok Tour referred to by all participants as the event best encapsulating the social mise-en-scène of the period.

The 1981 Springbok Tour: A new political consciousness

The 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand was repeatedly noted as a pivotal social and political event in New Zealand's history, a high point in historical density, a key contributor to mnemonic density, and a feature central to the mise-en-scène of neoliberalisation.

Carlyon and Morrow (2013) outline a history of tension between New Zealand and South Africa around race and rugby. As early as 1928, Māori rugby players were excluded from the national squad for the All Blacks' first tour of South Africa. When this occurred once again in 1960, there were protests and a petition was signed by around 150,000 calling for the tour to be cancelled unless Māori were included. The 1960 petition was unsuccessful, but later in 1967, under National Prime Minister Keith Holyoake, the tour was cancelled due to the South African policy of racial exclusion. By 1970, in a move which caused great offence to Māori, Pasifika peoples, and the shifting sensibilities of a growing number of New Zealanders, Māori and Pasifika players were granted permission by South African officials to tour, and play, as 'honorary whites' (Carlyon & Morrow, 2013, p. 197).

The 1960s and early 1970s saw international pressure against the Apartheid regime increase, with many countries choosing to practise their opposition by refusing to participate in sporting fixtures with South Africa. However, with rugby the national sport, and the South African Springboks fierce rivals of New Zealand's All Blacks, an opinion poll in 1972 found 80 per cent of New Zealanders in favour of allowing the 1973 tour to go ahead (McKinnon, 2013, as cited in Carlyon & Morrow, 2013, p. 198).

In 1973, under Labour Prime Minister Norman Kirk, the Springbok Tour of New Zealand was cancelled, citing safety concerns amidst increasing protest. Later in 1976, Prime Minister Muldoon allowed the All Blacks' tour of South Africa to go ahead in the wake of the Soweto Uprising. The 1976 tour, the perceived complicity in allowing apartheid to continue, the blatant disregard for the lives lost in Soweto, and the continued plight of Black South Africans, made New Zealand 'an international pariah' and was an

embarrassment and outrage for those New Zealanders actively opposed to apartheid, and an increasing number of New Zealanders whose sensibilities were shifting with the social current. As a result, by the early 1980s, the anti-apartheid movement in New Zealand was what Carylon and Morrow (2013) describe as 'one of the most active and well-organised' in the world, with Halt All Racist Tours (HART) and the National Anti-Apartheid Council (NAAC) joining with organisations across the country to form effective coalitions. Nevertheless, New Zealand remained divided on the issue, and by the 1980s, as participants of this research suggest, it seemed Prime Minister Muldoon had envisioned a means of capitalising on the division for the purpose of securing the 28 November 1981 General Election.

On the 12th of September, 1980, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union, with Muldoon's backing, invited the South African Rugby Football Union to send the Springboks to play the All Blacks in a tour of New Zealand. Considerable controversy arose within New Zealand from the offer alone, but on the 19th of July, 1981, when the Springboks landed to begin their 56 day tour, New Zealand experienced an unprecedented level of protest and violence in response. Carylon and Morrow summarised 'the Tour' in the following terms:

> Despite the acknowledged ideological and emotional divides within the country on the issue, the violence and divisiveness that characterised the 56 days of the 1981 rugby tour came as a massive shock. Over 150,000 people demonstrated in over 200 protests; almost 2000 arrests were made; and the cost to the government of defending the tour reached $7,200,000. While the leaders of organised protest movements such as HART were young and left-leaning, the vast majority of those who demonstrated against the tour were not… the majority were liberal and middle class, with a preponderance of teachers and educators, researchers, scientists, media workers, public administrators and social workers (2013, p. 199).

The sense that the 1981 Tour was an event of social, cultural, political, and historic significance was immediate. Shortly after the Tour, Phillip K. Hamlin (1982) wrote in the Auckland Law Review,

> The 1981 Springbok tour has been a unique event in the history of New Zealand. Far more effectively than any other single piece of history, the tour has brought

into the open the diversity and the strength of feeling that underlies basic principles and practices of our society. The physical intensity of the conflict has to a certain extent polarised the opposing groups. It has also made other individuals aware of the significance of the happenings. New Zealanders have had their "world views" challenged, and some have had to question their own philosophies and "think" (p. 323).

Over the following decades, the Tour's significance has been commemorated through museum exhibitions, art instalments, television documentaries, and other published works, and with the 40-year anniversary of the beginning of the Tour marked on 19 July 2021, and 100 years of rugby between the two teams celebrated in September 2021, iconic images from the 1981 protests and unrest were once again a feature of the nightly news in New Zealand. As a landmark socio-political event in New Zealand history, although preceding the implementation of Rogernomics and the beginning of neoliberalisation by three years, the Tour nevertheless featured within the collective memory of participants as central to the mise-en-scène of the drama. The significance of the Tour, articulated by Hamlin, above, was echoed by participants in this study in setting the scene of a collective besieged, and mise-en-scène defined, by crisis, tension, drama, and social change:

> *The only thing I remember as sudden was the 1981 Springbok Tour. That was sudden and that was traumatic. That was massive trauma. And I don't know if there's any connection between that and what happened later, I suppose there's not, but when you ask me about the '80s, that for me is huge.*

> (Jane, TUR).

> *I think '81 was the beginning of social and cultural upheaval…*

> (Susan, CVR).

> *… There was huge unrest prior to 1984. 1981 has to be the symbolic moment, you know? There was a lot of conflict from my perception in New Zealand… there was a huge number of us involved in some form of action at that time…*

> (David, CVR).

That was quite unprecedented for me, because I hadn't been involved in
[protests]*… the industrial action we had taken had been boycotts… there was a*
huge number of us involved in some form of action at that time…

(John, CVR).

In recounting and narrativising a collective memory of the Tour, participants provide
context for protests and social unrest, the cultural significance of rugby in New Zealand,
and the tension, drama, and *trauma* associated with this period. Highly personal accounts
shared by participants, such as memory of violence perpetrated by police against
protestors, and divisions created between friends, and within families and workplaces,
while autobiographical, are collective in nature as they describe shared memory of the
impact of the Tour on New Zealand's social, political, and cultural landscape. John
(CVR), for example, shared a detailed memory of the violence associated with the Tour:

A girl that I flatted with at the time was one of the girls who was bashed down here
on Molesworth Street [Wellington]*… when there was the riot, and they had the*
young trainee officers. I remember her coming home from the hospital that night
with stitches and gashes above her head and that kind of for me, for our flat, was a
really polarising thing. You know, I felt really uncomfortable. It left me with a kind
of feeling of deep discomfort.

Furthermore, accounts that centred the generational, class, racial, and urban/rural divide
in attitudes toward the political nature of the Tour, acknowledge the manner in which it
called into question notions of national identity, and shaped a political consciousness for
many New Zealanders that had not been present or as pronounced prior to the Tour and
the period of historical density. As Mark (TUR), for example, explained,

… I think too, it was a changing of the guard. My dad was a Second World War
veteran and, you know, he was a decent sort of a fella. He wasn't a liberal or a
redneck, he was just… sort of an average guy. I think that generation was shocked
by their children's responses, you know. They just didn't buy into the same values
that they had.

In recalling personally significant events, emotional and often highly detailed memories
were called upon by participants to effectively sign-post the importance of a given

episode—in this case the 1981 Springbok Tour and resulting social division—as being central to the overarching question of the nature and meaning of significant change during this time in New Zealand's history. Together, distinct memories and evaluations of the period paint a picture of the politics of the time, and an understanding of the top-down nature of the generational divide, exemplified by then Prime Minister Muldoon, as illustrated in a reflection shared by Toby (TUR):

> *So I think Muldoon could see… that he perhaps didn't agree with apartheid, but he could see that this was a great wedge issue. It was associated with the past, with the strength of the social institution called the rugby union. It was a core rural issue, and so he played it for as long as he could, and for whatever he could get. So it won him the 1981 election.*

The collective memory shared by trade union and community and voluntary representatives of social change in New Zealand, presented here, has been shown to be one of mnemonic density as participants recall a period of densely populated social movements and events, best exemplified by the 1981 Springbok Tour. In the drama of neoliberalisation collectively recalled by interviewees, this social density—both historical and mnemonic—together with the 'economic crisis' articulated by key actors, and experienced by the public as observers/audience, serves as the mise-en-scène and context for a collective memory of neoliberalisation. While an understanding of *historical density* paints a picture of the sheer number of newly emerged social movements and events, an appreciation for *mnemonic density*—what details of this density are remembered, for what purpose and by whom—can illuminate the lasting impact of the period of New Zealand history in question.

Historical density of the period is widely understood, lending itself to countless works, this study included, and is evident in the collective memory of participants. Interviewees cite numerous, sometimes overlapping and intersecting interests and social movements. They cite the polarisation that seemed to reach its peak during the 1981 Springbok Tour, the emergence of a new political consciousness, the rise of 'the politics of individual conscience' (Jesson, 1992), and a shift from uni- to multi-dimensionality in New Zealand politics (Hagel, 1998). This shift in the socio-political landscape of New Zealand is collectively remembered by participants as being a pivotally important moment in the history of the nation, and in the neoliberalisation of New Zealand. The country was

changing, and increasing numbers of New Zealanders were demanding equal rights and opportunities, for an end to race- and gender-based discrimination, for protection of the environment, an end to war, and for the country to carve its own path forward in an increasingly globalised world.

Over the long-term, these groups—representing a number of social and political interests—would increasingly find their voices heard, and demands met, as the shift to multi-dimensionality demanded more equitable representation in government, business, civil society, and cultural life. Over the short-term, however, the result of their calls for change and to be heard increased polarisation and culminated in conflict and bloodshed during the Springbok Tour as the established social democratic, yet socially conservative Muldoon Government, dug its heals in for one last stand. The pursuant conflict would lend itself to a mise-en-scène of both social and economic crisis, and memories of *cultural disorientation* for participants in this study.

The 1981 Springbok Tour as cultural disorientation

Piotr Sztompka's (2000) theory of 'cultural disorientation' provides insight into the effects of culturally significant events which then become incorporated into a community's collective memory. Sztompka (2000) describes *cultural disorientation* as occurring when, 'the normative and cognitive context of human life and social actions loses its homogeneity, coherence, and stability, and becomes diversified or even polarised into opposite cultural complexes' (p. 453).

In defining cultural disorientation, Sztompka (2000) notes that the more the event upsets the established order, the stronger the 'shock' is likely to be. This shock to the core of the collective disrupts the group's domain of fundamental values and central expectations and can occur when a group understands itself as being within a new culture or social formation. In this sense, cultural disorientation arises when the culture, or identity the group carries and understands as their own, is suddenly at odds with the environment the group finds themselves in, and as the core values and beliefs of the collective are suddenly questioned. These core constructions, which make up the very basis of the group's imagined identity and shape the collective's understanding of social issues, come into question, as the group is confronted by conflicting representations of social reality. This understanding of cultural disorientation provides a means of understanding and

examining the deep impact of the 1981 Springbok Tour for many of those affected by the violence and conflict, but also of the feeling of deep *discomfort* experienced by many who had their deeply engrained cultural values and assumptions questioned.

Opposition to the 1981 Springbok Tour unified, if only temporarily, members of many different groups and social movements en-masse for the first time in New Zealand's history, while also polarising opinion in an extremely visible and confronting manner. As coverage of the Tour and the accompanying protests were broadcast on television and printed in newspapers, those not actively involved through physically joining protest movements, or attending the matches, developed their own opinions from the comfort of their homes. As Crawford (1988) writes,

> New Zealanders were confronted with a series of social disturbances, including an account of the New Zealand police using their batons to strike down anti-apartheid marchers. Although the majority may have clung to a tattered philosophy of "sport and politics should be mutually exclusive", the harsh reality of battered heads and flailing batons showed that rugby had become the fulcrum of profound social upheaval (p. 112).

The Tour became deeply polarising, and through a rugby game, many began to question the legitimacy of a grand narrative that championed egalitarianism, while welcoming an openly racist organisation onto New Zealand's shores. That a series of rugby matches became the vehicle for a broader conversation between New Zealanders about race and equality, and signalled a shift in political consciousness, may seem surprising when viewed as a singular event. However, when viewed as a peak during a period of historical density, and as resulting from and hastening a shift in socio-political dimensionality, coupled with the accompanying violence of resulting protests and the personal nature of sport and identity, the Tour was perhaps more fitting of a vehicle for social change than it may at first appear. As Bill (TUR) explains,

> *I think that if you have a look at it all, society was still very much based in the '50s, '60 and '70s, and it was a different culture then than it is now, and I think it was all sort of coming to a head, because of the oil shocks, and all the repercussions of the Brits joining the EU. The Springbok Tour was also part of the new, emerging generation, that hadn't gone through the Second World War. And*

that's the whole thing about rugby and its central part in our society. I think that was the key time, and I think with Muldoon, something had to happen.

Here, Bill is matter-of-fact in his summary of the interconnectedness of social and economic events, of generational division, the Springbok Tour, and the eventual defeat of Muldoon in 1984. However, as participants recount more personal memories of the chain of events and the Springbok Tour in particular, feelings of shock, trauma, outrage, and discomfort are evident. Terms like 'sudden', 'upheaval', and 'massive trauma' were sentiments shared among participants and go some way to explaining the impact of the Tour, and its significance in collective memory. Elsewhere, 'a lot of conflict' (David); 'huge unrest'; 'unprecedented for me' and repeated use of the word 'uncomfortable' (John); and deeply personal accounts of division between rural and urban New Zealanders, and within families, workplaces, and organisations, all point to a perception of relatively sudden social unrest and division that was difficult for participants to reconcile across various social groups. This difficulty—articulated collectively by interviewees—signals experiences of *cultural disorientation* and of disruption as residual and emergent structures of feeling, and attitudes, clashed amidst a social and economic landscape increasingly described as reaching a point of 'crisis'.

Multi-dimensionality and cultural disorientation

Participants in this study recall navigating this shifting terrain and feelings of cultural disorientation by choosing sides, organising, and increasingly focussing their disdain toward Muldoon and the National Government. The end of the 1981 Springbok Tour must have been something of a relief for government and public alike, and in the months following, opinion polls indicated a slim majority in opposition to the Tour (Carlyon & Morrow, 2013). The 1981 General Election was held just eleven weeks following the Tour's conclusion, and Muldoon's National Party won by a narrow margin.

Having won the 1981 election, Muldoon came to symbolise both social and economic stagnation, as a representative of the 'old' established, socially conservative order, and of economic interventionism in the face of deepening economic woes. As Carlyon and Morrow (2013) write,

By the early 1980s, Muldoon faced opposition from a proliferation of diverse sources: liberal conservatives and free marketers in his own party, financiers, farmers, feminists, trade unionists, the media, radical Māori activists, environmentalists and anti-nuclear campaigners, and of course his long-standing enemies in the liberal middle classes (p. 207).

With the shift to socio-political multi-dimensionality complete, and Muldoon the object of increasing resentment by a large number of New Zealanders, the 1984 General Election was Labour's for the taking. Participants in this study recall being impressed with the young, charismatic Lange, who spoke to the 'new social settlement' and multi-dimensional New Zealand on non-economic issues of social importance, while speaking in vague, yet grand terms of the need to modernise the economy. Jane Kelsey (1995) writes that even as Labour Party conferences in the year following the 1984 election rejected the market-led approach to reforms,

Few beyond the inner circles of the policy council seemed to grasp the transition that had already occurred. As the Rogernomics agenda became more widely understood, and party remits which condemned it were brushed aside, the extent of the takeover became clear. The Labour government became the vehicle for a programme which neither its members nor electorate had endorsed, and which was irreconcilable with the basic tenets of social democracy (p. 35).

Clare (TUR) described in simple terms the feeling of being an unwitting participant in the transformation beginning in 1984:

Well, it's a little bit like, you know, boiling the frog; you don't quite realise what's happening until it's happened to you.

Furthermore, over the three years of Labour's first term in Government, according to Kelsey (1995, p. 35), 'Labour's activists focussed on non-economic issues, and the disaffected kept their criticism largely in-house'. It therefore comes as little surprise that participants spoke of further *cultural disorientation* when structural adjustments were implemented as the Fourth Labour Government went about their programme of neoliberal economic reform. James (CVR) provides a poignant summary of the experience of unexpected and drastic reforms following a period of social unrest:

… there were big social movements, but less understanding of the ground shifting. So the ground was shifting on you, without you even really understanding it, or knowing it. The kind of… the way society was structured was shifting, without you really understanding… what was happening. So for me that period was one where the impacts on people were kind of obvious. What to do about it was you responded practically to try to achieve some practical result without understanding that there was perhaps a greater political shift that you needed to be addressing.

Metaphorically speaking, the 'ground shifting' invokes the image of a change of seismic proportions, or a conveyor belt which moves everything against its will or without the knowledge of its passengers, forward into an unknown future, even as significant social movements gained traction in their own right. Toby (TUR) spoke similarly of wide spread and transformative structural change happening at a time of increased social change:

I mean, during that time I was 27–30 [years old], *so like a whole lot of other people we had boundless energy. So this was great, there was all this stuff going on, and the sky was the limit. It just seemed… not that a revolution was taking place, in the sense of a political revolution, but that there was a lot happening in which people wanted change. So we organised…*

… there was stuff happening below the surface, that I don't know if we were totally aware of, or in control of it. And, so really, activity was good, and we felt pretty strong about it, but I'm not sure if our analysis of what was happening was particularly good…

… I don't think, quietly, we knew what was coming…

As has been demonstrated, a common feature of the collective memory presented by interviewees was the explanatory and evaluative work of situating the neoliberalisation of New Zealand in time and place, relative to other social, economic, and politically significant movements and events. This feature of narrative—the referencing of a wider social context in which to situate structural reform—was regularly called upon by participants in setting a scene of not merely change, but also tension and drama throughout New Zealand. Conceptualised as the element of *mise-en-scene*, against and

within which the performance of neoliberalisation was set, participants' memory of setting and social context is recalled as being a period of relative historical and mnemonic density, or increased eventfulness, culminating in the 1981 Springbok Tour of New Zealand. Against this mise-en-scene of drama, division, and tension, with its resulting *cultural disorientation*, and amidst increasing calls for change following the social conservatism and stagnation of the Muldoon years, the 1984 General Election was set, and the securing of power by Lange and the Labour Party was successfully achieved. However, further cultural disorientation was to follow, as the 1984 General Election and the securing of power by the Fourth Labour Government would signal a break from the Labour Party's traditions, and a monumental departure from the post-WWII Keynesian social democratic consensus.

8

(Mnemonic) Means of symbolic production

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Within Alexander's theory of cultural performance, the *means of symbolic production* encompasses those 'mundane material things that allow symbolic projections to be made' (2006b, p. 35). With Alexander's theory focussing on the causality of proximate actors within the performance itself, in time and place, the means of symbolic production describes the element of cultural performance in which those who perform choose felicitously from the dramatic props on offer, while engaging with modern social and communicative platforms of meaning transferral and persuasion. Selecting the physical stage for performance, creating photo and televised opportunities, engaging in town hall meetings or other physical settings, and establishing and maintaining authenticity throughout, are all crucial to the performance of meaning, and subsequent identification and reception by observers/audience. According to Alexander (2006b),

> [actors] need objects that can serve as iconic representations to help them dramatise and make vivid the invisible motives and morals they are trying to represent. This material ranges from clothing to every sort of standardised expressive equipment (Goffman, 1956: 34–51). Actors also require a physical place to perform and the means to assure the transmission of their performance to an audience (p. 35).

For Alexander, the successful fusion of actor–script–audience, requires access to the means of symbolic production. As the means through which key actors within the performance of power seek to perform cultural text, construct a narrative around character, sway their audience, and secure power, it has been shown how Muldoon and Lange employed both Government and Party edifices, and media scrimmage as a means of symbolic production (Chapter 5).

Within the collective memory of interviewees, the *means of symbolic production*—as remembered by participating trade union and community and voluntary

representatives—is presented in this study in terms of two interrelated forms. First, as the means through which key actors within the performance of power sought to perform cultural text, sway their audience, and secure power; and second, as the *mnemonic means of symbolic production* employed by participants in recounting collective memory. Here, *mnemonic means of symbolic production* refers to the cultural and mnemonic objects, or material and psychic 'props', as they are utilised in conveying the collectively narrativised memory of participants. As Alexander (2017, p. 138) notes, 'Props are not only material but symbolic, not so much reflections of ordinary things as translations of dramatic meanings into material forms'. The mnemonic means of symbolic production utilised by research subjects therefore describes the memory-forms and symbolic 'props' produced and invoked by research subjects for their representational utility in recounting events or themes of shared significance in collective memory.

Illustrating the first of two interrelated forms, a recent example of a political actor utilising and commanding the means of symbolic production for the transmission of political purpose, and the successful re-fusing of actor–script–audience, can be found in the 'Address to the Nation', as both *means* and *form* of symbolic production.

On March 21, 2020, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern addressed New Zealand in the early days of what would become one of the most consequential challenges facing New Zealand and, indeed, the world: the COVID-19 pandemic. Those watching the live address saw the Prime Minister, nestled within a tight frame, between two New Zealand flags. Slightly out of focus behind Ardern, to her right, sat an ornamental Māori wood carving. To her left, a framed photograph of Labour Prime Minister Sir Michael Joseph Savage (Image 1).

Image 1. *Ardern, 2020*   (RNZ, 2020).

Interestingly, the gravity of Ardern's live Address to the Nation was in part conveyed by the rarity of the very form itself. There have been few moments in New Zealand history since the ubiquity of television that have warranted a live address, performed from the Prime Minister's office, and addressed directly to the nation. Following Prime Minister Sir Michael Joseph Savage's 1939 radio Address to the Nation in which he announced New Zealand would follow Britain into WWII—'Where Britain goes, we go, where she stands, we stand', and prior to Prime Minister Ardern's Address to the Nation on COVID-19—'Please be strong, be kind, and unite against COVID-19', the most recent Address to the Nation was given by Prime Minister Muldoon in 1982 when he announced his Government's wage and price freeze—'Even if it costs us some short-term inconvenience, it's worth doing'.

Image 2. *Muldoon, 1982*   (retrieved from Singleton, 2012).

Pictured here (Image 2.) in a similarly tight frame, yet without the symbolic accoutrement employed by Ardern, Muldoon paints a stern portrait, possibly more telling of the times than of design. Nevertheless, the austere staging of Muldoon's address appears indicative of a leader not so much tasked with 'rallying the troops', but with 'tightening belt straps'. Perhaps overshadowed by collective memory of his character, Muldoon's stately Address to the Nation on the wage and price freeze was not recalled in detail by participants in this study. Indeed, within the collective memory of interviewees, there are at times conflicting views around the role of television and its significance in the drama of neoliberalisation, as illustrated in the following statements by Adam, David, John, and Bill:

> *I think Muldoon was sort of getting to be portrayed as sort of a lout and, you know, a bit of a bully. Which I think he was* ((laughs)). *And so that was beginning to be depicted… maybe not in 'granny herald', but certainly in the Evening Post of the day, and the Dominion and other newspapers, and I think television and radio were beginning to question* [Muldoon and his policies]...

(Adam, TUR).

We heard [Lange] *make promises on television, quite eloquently: 'Workers won't lose their jobs. Don't worry about the economic adjustments… I haven't lost my way'.*

(David, CVR).

There was no… media was a whole lot different in those days. All you got was what was heard on the radio, and there weren't a whole lot of stations at the time. All you got was what you heard on radio and what you read in the paper. So, in terms of saying to someone, 'well I'm voting for Labour in terms of their policy…' it was kind of… it just wasn't as simple as that.

(John, CVR).

I lived it. It was a lot different when you just live. You don't realise it was a very insular life, even more than today. There was no globalisation, no access to the multiplicity of news sources. People lived. This was a time when places shut down for the weekend, it was a much quieter, slower pace of life. Also, we often judge things by today's standard, whereas it was another lived situation.

(Bill, TUR).

Owing to the relative lack of references by participants to televised news, and specific descriptions of key events as they appeared on television—such as Muldoon's 1982 Address to the Nation on the wage and price freeze—for the purposes of this study, television as a means of symbolic production and representation for actors in the drama of neoliberalisation is presented as secondary to direct engagement by key actors with the New Zealand public on the campaign trail, and with Party members at official conferences and similar political arenas. Memory of media, including television and film was, however, evoked by interviewees as a *mnemonic means of symbolic production* in the narrativisation of collective memory and for the purposes of illuminating key events and themes, together with mnemonically re-produced material, psychic props, and cultural artefacts of symbolic and explanatory significance.

Irrespective of the lack of explicit reference on the part of interviewees to Muldoon's televised address on the wage and price freeze, research participants nevertheless collectively recall the freeze itself as being a significant and consequential event in New

Zealand's social and economic history, and in the drama of neoliberalisation. Just how and for what purposes this event is collectively remembered, and the ways in which participants utilise mnemonic means of symbolic production in recounting its impact and consequentiality to the drama will be explored later in the current chapter. But first, a brief discussion is in order on the use of culturally-idiosyncratic codes by participants, as a mnemonic means of symbolic production.

As discussed in Chapter 2, culturally-idiosyncratic codes take a number of forms across the discursive practices of key actors, and within the collective memory of participants. As such, they become a form of cultural shorthand within a collective's shared understanding and system of meaning. In their use of culturally-idiosyncratic codes as mnemonic means of symbolic production, participants produce symbols of shared significance for their meaningful and explanatory value, as a means of conveying the cultural import of particular memories and ideas, and as lighting which illuminates the drama and meaning of neoliberalisation in the New Zealand context. As such, for the participants in this study, the invoking of cultural codes as props and the meaning interviewees attach to them, including items of television, film, literature, and photo-imagery, serve as a mnemonic means of symbolic production in the narrativisation of collective memory.

The iconicity of memory-forms and mnemonic cultural objects

Having discussed the use and function of culturally-idiosyncratic codes by participants as a mnemonic means of symbolic production, it is important to further explore the iconographic power of such codes, as they appear in collective memory as culturally-specific references, invocations of imagery and meaning, and the explanatory invocation of *mnemonic cultural objects* (Neiger et al., 2011).

Cohen and colleagues (2018, p. 453) broadly define *iconic photographs* as 'symbolically powerful photographs of singular historical events which are widely reproduced and circulated by media, crystalise and catalyse public debate, and become incorporated into collective memory', and as a 'fecund object for addressing debates about the power of images... and the overall importance of news photographs to collective memory and group identities'. The authors provide three overlapping features as defining iconic photographs:

(a) As a symbolically dense image that is widely circulated, attracts public attention, gives rise to public discussion, and helps shape the collective mood at the time that it is first circulated;

(b) As a widely recognised collective mnemonic device, representing an event, an era or an historical theme for subsequent generations; and,

(c) As a formal blueprint for other images made in later periods which echo or deliberately imitate it (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 455).

Importantly, for Cohen and colleagues, 'an iconic photograph can become a symbolic template for the creation of transgenerational and transnational symbolic forms and meanings, and for memory 'echoes' from one event, period or group to another' (2018, p. 455). The images—both mental and physical—memories, cultural artifacts, and mnemonic objects drawn from by participants of this research vary in their iconographic power. Images, *mnemonic postcards* (see below), and cultural objects, whether material or psychic, serve as symbolic props in collective memory, and can be understood as what Moghaddam (2002) calls a 'carrier' which transports and translates meaning. According to Moghaddam (2002),

> Carriers are at once public and collective, private and individual. They are public and collective in the sense that they are present in public space and are collaboratively constructed through the contributions of many people over generations (p. 225).

An example here can be found in the iconic photograph below (Image 4.) of the 'fish 'n' chip brigade' of Lange, Bassett, Douglas, and Mike Moore (left to right). Taken in 1980 while Labour was in opposition, the 'fish 'n' chip brigade' was the name given to the four politicians, along with Richard Prebble (present at the time, but not pictured), after it was published in a newspaper following the group's unsuccesful attempt at seizing the leadership from Labour's Bill Rowling. The photograph has since become an iconic image, representing for many, the neoliberal take-over of the Labour Party, and drastic structural transformation that would follow. Mark (CVR), invokes reference to the fish 'n' chip brigade—the memory of which is now synonymous with the iconic image below—as symbolic of earlier betrayals within the Labour Party, and the subsequent neoliberal takeover by the group in question:

... prior to the election, Douglas had been working, and he spoke about it at Labour Party meetings, how he had been working with Treasury officials on alternative budgets and that sort of thing. And of course, I'm not sure when the 'fish 'n' chip brigade'... when was that do you know? There was a picture of Lange and Douglas, Moore—all pricks. And they stabbed Rowling in the back with that budget, and that was obviously the beginning of that insider... group that became so dominant subsequently.

(Mark, CVR).

Image 4. *The fish 'n' chip brigade*   (Dale, 1980, in Wassilieff, 2006).

Where some objects of mnemonic symbolic production presented here are deeply embedded in the collective memory of the *nation*, and presented and re-presented through media over many years, others have achieved particular salience within trade union and community and voluntary groups, or simply for the individual in question. What all the images, symbols, and cultural objects presented here share with iconic photographs, is their ability to give rise to public discussion, and to act as a collective mnemonic device in representing an era or theme. Where iconic photographs 'help shape the public mood at the time it was circulated', the memories, images, and cultural objects presented within this study help to *convey* and *translate* memory of the collective mood outside the moment, and over time. Furthermore, participants objectify, and in a sense

concretise memory and make recollections tangible, by invoking mnemonic objects as meaningful and symbolic short-hand explanations for more complex memories and ideas. In this sense, cultural and mnemonic objects, such as consumer goods or references to popular culture are representative in collective memory of the physical and every-day structure of feeling, and memory of structural change.

Objectifying memory-forms

In April of 1982, Muldoon announced the wage and price freeze following the second oil shock of 1978–1979, amidst rising inflation, the end of full employment, issues of foreign debt, and the failure of the Government's 'Think Big' projects to adequately stimulate the economy. Having initially been signalled by Muldoon as only lasting 12 months, the wage and price freeze lasted two years until it was ended by Lange and the Fourth Labour Government. For research subjects, stagflation and the resulting protracted freeze was a significant economic event, which, coupled with increased social crises and division, became an economic turning point in the drama of neoliberalisation. As such, and for participants, significant associated depth of meaning accompanies the freeze itself, and the memory-forms invoked in recounting its impact.

As a significant economic turning point, collectively remembered alongside increasing social division as hastening the end of both Muldoonism and the Keynesian social democratic era, participants collectively associate the freeze with not only economic crisis, but also with the austerity of Keynesian interventionism, and cultural/consumer monochromism. For participants, memory of otherwise mundane consumer products and processes becomes a meaningful mnemonic means of symbolic production, as interviewees sought to illustrate memory of consumer restrictions imposed under the Keynesian era, with products made more widely available following the 'opening-up' of the economy through neoliberalisation. Mark (TUR) succinctly describes the mounting resentment towards the Muldoon Government, and economic restrictions resulting from both global and domestic pressures that culminated in the wage and price freeze of 1982:

> *When you live through the Muldoon era, where there was freezes on everything except bloody what suited the bosses—we had for a while there car-less days, where you couldn't drive your car, because of the shortage of petrol. Society was bloody boring, it was constrained. And* [Roger] *Douglas came in and unleashed*

everything, and all of a sudden it was decided it was a much more fun time to live in.

Reference to the availability and range of consumer goods at different times in New Zealand's social and economic history is a key mnemonic means of symbolic production utilised by interviewees, in the conveyance of meaning, and in comparative work between the Keynesian social democratic and neoliberal eras. For Mark, the liberalising of the economy and lifting of the wage and price freeze is linked to social and cultural freedoms which accompanied a more 'dynamic' economy. This coupling of a liberalised economy and a more modern and exciting social and cultural environment was similarly expressed by a number of research subjects in terms of the increase in material and consumer goods entering the country following the 1984 election, with references to, for example, extended shopping hours, and an increase in the variety of consumer products and technologies. In this sense, material objects become symbolic props which aid in the explication and narrativisation of collective memory as *objectifying memory-forms* by adopting the material and mundane as collective representations of greater significance.

The 'freeing-up' of the economy, together with more readily available access to a diversity of products was often cast by participants against Muldoon's wage freeze, once again symbolically associating both Muldoon and Lange, as representative of two vastly different eras of social, cultural, and economic life:

> *You've got to remember too that Muldoonism was... you know in those days you had a whole heap of other stuff going on, like you couldn't buy stuff from overseas. You couldn't get overseas imports coming in, and so* [Lange] *was going to open up the economy as well and make it better for everyone and easier for everyone to get things.*

> (James, CVR).

> *Well I remember coming back to New Zealand in '84 after five years away and thinking the place had already changed quite a lot. You know, it was in the '80s that we began to get the coffee revolution, you know, the first signs of that. There were* [better] *restaurants, a better wine selection... there were some small changes that made it feel a bit more vibrant, and less dull...*

... That was very attractive, I think, to loads of people. You know, I'd have to say there were aspects of some of that that were good for me, all the access to new goods... I remember in the '70s, my brother worked at [a technology firm] *and when he went overseas I asked him 'can you buy me a pair of Levi's?'* ((laughs)). *So, all of that, as a consumer, felt quite good, but of course there is a huge price to be paid for that.*

(Peter, TUR).

Toby (TUR), however, more explicitly relates growing resentments toward Muldoon to the wage freeze, particularly from members within the trade union movement, while linking this to a more widely felt need for social and economic change from a younger New Zealand population:

I think the neoliberals sort of tied [social and economic arguments for structural reform] *together. The wage freeze I think in a way was Muldoon's last gasp. Just to freeze everything. And I think that pissed-off workers and unions who couldn't get pay increases, but it also pissed-off a whole lot of other people...*

... so I think the explosion that happened afterwards, Roger Douglas gave an opportunity for people to say, 'all of your problems are caused by [the interventionist economy]'*, and if you're going to have freer social conditions in terms of sort of shaking-off the RSA generation, then it needs to be accompanied by greater economic freedom, and economic freedom means individual choice. And largely* [what the neoliberals argued] *was... 'New Zealand is going to be so saddled with debt, and in fact "there is no alternative"'. We need to free everything up, we need to go onto a floating exchange rate, we need to take power away from the politicians and give it to the Reserve Bank. We need to start looking at ourselves as being a part of the global economy instead of trying to protect our own national interests.*

That was sort of accompanied by Air New Zealand, you know, you didn't have to walk out onto the tarmac anymore ((laughs)). *More coffee bars opened up. So, many of the people thought 'well this is quite good really'. You sort of had more gadgets which came to us quicker, like fax machines and bloody mobile things and that...*

Through an assessment of the case made for reform, and the impact of both the wage and price freeze and social change in influencing the outcome of the 1984 General Election, the influence of Treasury and the Reserve Bank, the end of relative isolationism, and greater consumer freedom, Toby draws together a number of key ideas and themes indicative of the collective memory of the cohort of participants. Toby achieves this by situating the wage and price freeze as an economic turning point and 'last gasp' from Muldoon, before finishing his account with memory of increased availability of consumer goods—as a mnemonic means of symbolic production—that accompanied trade and market liberalisation.

Elsewhere, interviewees recall the interventionist and protectionist Keynesian economic policies of the Muldoon era, which sought to safeguard the primary sector and key industries, while promoting full-employment and national self-sufficiency. The result, as remembered by participants in this study, was often rife with inefficiencies and absurdities, and was anathema to those looking to 'modernise' and restructure the economy:

> *Well, you can look at it two ways. The first way is that, as Lange and Bob Jones said, that New Zealand was akin to a 'Polish shipyard'. The second way to look at it was that people had jobs. People had a reasonable income. If you got sick you could depend on the public health system to look after you. If you wanted a house, you could get a house. So, you know, there were two ways of looking at it.*

> (Chuck, TUR).

Goldfinch and Malpass (2007) discuss the often articulated 'myth' of New Zealand as the uniquely over-regulated 'Polish shipyard' and trace the likely first use of the metaphor to Labour MP Jim Sutton in 1986, although the authors posit it may have been used earlier by Lange himself. As Goldfinch and Malpass (2007) explain, the metaphor 'soon became a convenient shorthand for previous styles of economic management, often used by advocates of the radical economic reforms of the Fourth Labour Government of 1984–90 and the further liberalisation under the National Government 1990–99' (p. 120). Here, it is similarly adopted by Chuck as a culturally-idiosyncratic code to denote pre-neoliberal economic management in New Zealand, in a manner that takes on further collective significance when considered against the individual and

collective memory of interviewees. Yet, in keeping with the complexity of coded associations discussed previously, Chuck provides an assessment of the highly regulated economy that considers its impacts on the general welfare of New Zealanders during a period in which New Zealand's Keynesian welfare state maintained strong support for its citizens.

Simon (TUR) similarly echoes the 'Polish shipyard' narrative, describing protections extended to farmers, and the 'mindless' practice of oversuppyling meat processing plants as a means of stimulating the economy:

> *That was when farmers were getting supplementary minimum prices and the industry was going fairly well at that point, because what was happening was that farmers were encouraged to hang onto their stock, because they got a subsidy from the tax payer. So, farmers were finding all sorts of stock that they never knew existed, so there was a real racket running.*

> *So, we did reasonably well in those years. A lot of the sheep were rendered down, but still a lot of sheep went overseas as well, and the lamb kill went from about 29 million, up to about 39 million... and some of those sheep had to be rendered down in the end because there was just no market for them. It was mindless. And that was in Muldoon's era, his final throw of the dice.*

Although Goldfinch and Malpass (2007) assert that the Polish Shipyard metaphor was overstated, and served more as a justification for drastic reform than a balanced assessment of Keynesian social democratic New Zealand, the associations the metaphor invites were an often-expressed feature of participants' collective memory. Within such recollections of waste and inefficiency under Muldoonism, participants in one sense rationalise elements of the neoliberal reforms and their objectives, while highlighting the collectivist principles and objectives of Keynesian social democracy. In doing so, participants concede that interventionism and protectionism at its most extreme was unsustainable, while maintaining that the core sacred principle of collectivism that drove such policies and practices should have been the driving force of structural change. Articulated in this manner, participants once again collectively state there were, and there remain, alternatives to neoliberalism.

Popular culture as cultural mnemonic object

Further mnemonic means of symbolic production utilised by participants in constructing collective memory, and which are embued with collective significance, draw from popular culture. As previously discussed, John Mulgan's novel *Man Alone* was invoked by a participant in describing a New Zealand prior to neoliberalisation, with this invocation inviting comparisons with Bruce Mason's *The End of the Golden Weather* in symbolising both an end to Keynesian social democracy, and an end to the good grace Lange enjoyed as a figure within the Labour Party. The novel, as a means of symbolic production in the process of memory transferal was not, however, the only use of fiction in popular culture from which participants drew.

Peter (TUR) described perceived waste and inefficiencies within New Zealand's public sector prior to structural reform with reference to a satirical sitcom that screened in New Zealand from 1981–1985. *Gliding On* (Holden, 1981) was a New Zealand television show written by Roger Hall and adapted from his play *Glide Time* (1977). *Gliding On* satirised the working lives of those in New Zealand's public services, with 'glide time' referring to flexible working hours practised within the public sector, and the sitcom itself associating this flexibility with negative perceptions of a wasteful and inefficent sector. *Gliding On*, with its drab patina, was followed by the aptly named *Gloss* (Finn & Bailey, 1987), a soap opera epitomising a new cult of consumerism and ostentatious wealth, and later, *Market Forces* (Holden, 1998), once again lampooning the public service, but this time within the post-Rogernomics neoliberal era, as workers grapple with the rise of consultancy, full-cost recovery, and redundancies.

Image 5. *Gliding On.*   (retrieved from NZ On Screen, n.d. [1984]).

Peter, drew from collective memory of *Gliding On* as a mnemonic means of symbolic production in describing attitudes toward the public sector, and conveying how unfair and inaccurate perceptions of the public sector lent credence to an emerging neoliberal discourse around the promotion of efficency and accountability:

> *There is a big values thing at play, and a lot of people think that the public service is wasteful, and that public servants are lazy, and the 'Gliding On' thing, which was happening, and just played into that narrative...*
>
> *... it was ripe for the anti-public service, and* [the idea] *we need to drive efficiencies, and drive better accountability.*

Toby (TUR) would also invoke collective memory through media as a mnemonic means of symbolic production with reference to the 2001 film *The Navigators*, directed by Ken Loach and written by Rob Dawber (O'Brien & Loach, 2001). *The Navigator* follows the lives of a group of railway workers grappling with the impact of the privatisation of British Rail beginning in 1994. According to Toby,
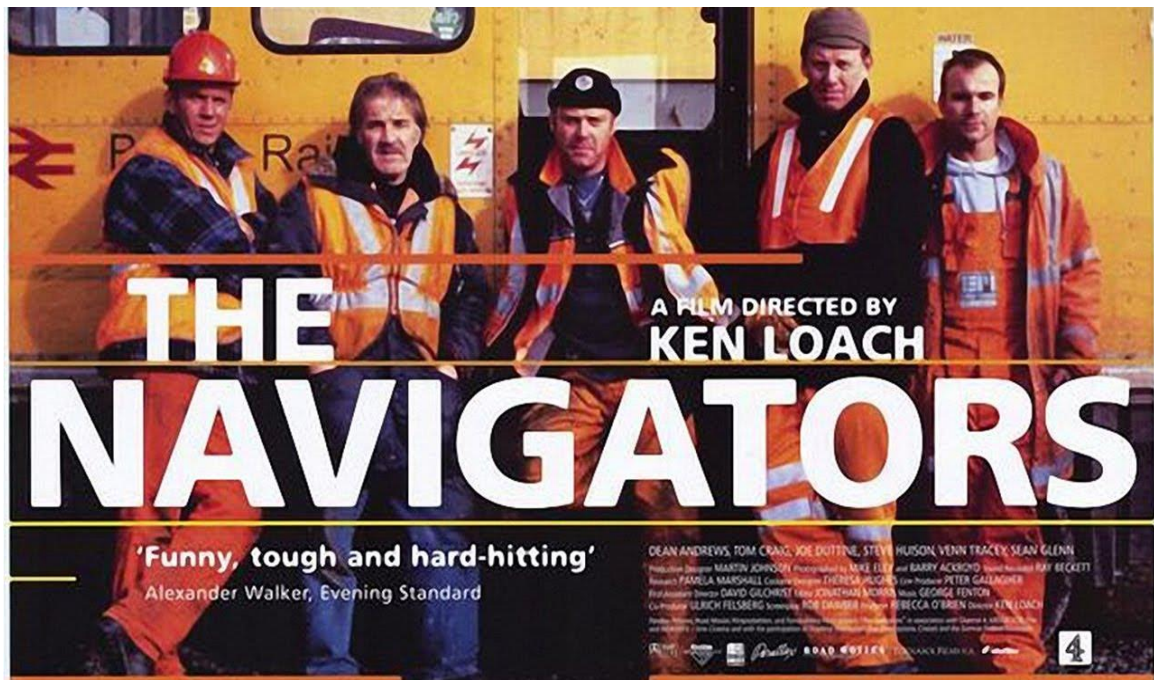
Image 6.   (retrieved from British Railway Movie Database, n.d.).

> *... all of that 'modernisation', if you like, was happening alongside* [structural reform], *and it was associated with... an economic narrative of 'do you want to go back to when you had to wait three months to get a phone connected?'...*

> *There's a really good film called 'The Navigators' which is about British Rail and the changes that took place, and it's quite sort of funny in a way. It's all these guys that work for British Rail, and gradually it gets corporatised and privatised...*

> ... [the neoliberal argument was] '*We need to modernise'. And 'modernise', really when you look at it, was going back to the 1890s, or even further, in terms of a free market economy in which innovation can flower because all these restrictions are removed, and if in fact all these innovations are allowed to flower the rewards will trickle down to the bottom. And the problem, the reason we weren't succeeding as a country was because there was red tape all over the place.*

In his discussion of *The Navigators*, Toby completes a narrative begun by Peter. While Peter presents *Gliding On* as indicative of an emergent attitude toward the public sector that justified the neoliberal project of promoting greater efficiencies, the privatisation of key industry, rationalisation, and cuts in public spending, Toby, in his discussion of *The Navigators* understands these reforms, and neoliberal economic policies as ultimately

regressive. For Toby, the failings of British Rail, and the impact on workers in *The Navigators* serves as illustrative of the failings of neoliberalisation in New Zealand.

Mnemonic postcards and the iconicity of moments

The manner in which Lange and Muldoon utilised the media and political fora as a means of symbolic production in their struggle for power has been demonstrated through preceding discussions on key actors in the drama of neoliberalisation. In his autobiography, Lange wrote of his 'good fortune' in entering politics at a time when television was beginning to play a key role in the contest between political parties. According to Lange (2005),

> I learnt from Norman Kirk how important image is in politics. A gesture seen on television made far more impact than any number of words in the paper... Television was good to me. I was large. I was confident. I was reassuring. I was a teddy bear (pp. 121–122).

It is therefore surprising that participants did not articulate more detailed accounts of the ways in which the drama of neoliberalisation unfolded on television, or how the portrayal of *character* as it relates to key political actors was shaped by the manner in which the audience related and responded to actors via the nightly news. Instead, accounts from interviewees indicate a heightened intimacy between audience and actor—relative to 21st-century New Zealand politics—as members of the public met with actors in townhall settings and elsewhere on the campaign trail. For others still, memories of the drama of neoliberalisation stem from a greater involvement in the political process—as members of the Labour Party, activists, and trade unionists—once again relegating televised announcements and portrayal of events as secondary to the lived and remembered experience of participants.

A common feature of the narratives of participants involved in this study was the infrequent yet significantly meaningful use of a more in-depth, descriptive, highly personal, and emotional form of storytelling, the impact and meaning of which takes on collective significance when functioning within a broader narrative concerning the past. Here we turn to what this study terms as participants' use of *mnemonic postcards*, as mnemonic means of symbolic production.

Building upon studies within psychology of what has been termed 'flashbulb memory' (Brown & Kulik, 1977), *mnemonic postcard* here refers to an instance of memory, recalled with greater relative detail as an aside, or explanatory break from the participants' rhythm of narrative, and taking the form of story-telling similar to anecdote. Mnemonic postcards, as defined here, are differentiated from mere anecdote primarily by the manner in which they serve to not only describe and evaluate a moment or event in time, but also provide meaning to the event and its significance within collective memory. Furthermore, evident within the mnemonic postcards conveyed by participants in this study is an element of evaluation: the memories presented serve an evalutory and explanatory role that extends beyond the storytelling/anecdotal function and provides meaning within a collective arc of narrative. In this sense, participants reach back into their past and draw vivid memories of collective meaning and significance, which are then analysed and interpreted by the researcher for their significance to the collective, and to collective memory. As such, while the more detailed asides referred to as 'mnemonic postcards' in this study may at first appear as mundane, or serving only to illuminate and capture the point being made during a given moment in the interviewees' narrative, they serve a higher and more meaningful function in highlighting moments of collective significance for participants.

The significance of the use of mnemonic postcards by participants is found in their ability to convey a wider explanatory function and collective meaning that further illuminates a shared narrative and collective memory of the past. In this sense, much like an iconic photograph or flashbulb memory, seemingly personal and autobiographical memory of a given event or exchange, whether mundane or extraordinary, is 'captured' and narrativised within participants' memory, shared as a reference point of meaning and significance, and often expounded upon and imbued with greater meaning over time and as subsequent events transpire.

Participants' narratives took highly personal turns, and mnemonic postcards were evoked as they sought to attach greater meaning or significance to certain events or the period of time in question. These accounts are easily distinguishable from the broader narrative of which they are a part, both in terms of their highly personal nature and detail, and also in terms of structure. The interspersing of highly personalised and emotive memories among more formal or official voices of the group or organisation achieve the added

effect of mixing both 'official' and 'vernacular' voices (Schudson, 1993), substantiating the claim that collective memory 'lives with greatest strength in those forms that bring public event-memories and private memories together' (Wagner-Pacifici, 1996, p. 312).

Recalling the function of the means of symbolic production as it relates to cultural performance, key to the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand was key actors' ability to perform the necessity of structural adjustment, or otherwise. Of the performance of power, and the means of symbolic production, Alexander (2011) writes, 'Most basic of all is the acquisition of a venue. Without a theater or simply some makeshift stage, there can be no performance, much less an audience. Likewise, without some functional equivalent of a soapbox, there can be no social drama' (p. 65). Two key uses of mnemonic postcards conveyed by participants involve the performance of power by David Lange prior to and following the 1984 election, and the 'town hall' and Labour Party Conference, as means of symbolic production utilised by Lange.

James (CVR) conveyed use of a mnemonic postcard that illustrates both the popularity of David Lange during the 1984 General Election campaign, but also the perception of Lange as a 'man of the people', which has become a part of collective memory:

> *I remember Lange because I was driving through the village and there were a lot of people hanging around the village hall. So I pulled over and wandered over to see what was going on, and I asked what was happening and they said they were waiting to see 'that guy from Labour. The candidate for Prime Minister'. So I hung out in the foyer of the hall and a car pulls up and Lange pops out and he comes into the foyer, and his man goes up to the front of the hall to introduce him, and me and Lange are standing in the foyer looking at each other, saying, sort of 'g'day'. And then the guy introduces him, he goes up, does his 'soap-box' talk in the hall, and out into the car again and off to the next village. Yeah, I remember that well…*

Structurally, and as a more detailed aside of shared significance within the participant's narrative, this memory of a brief encounter is presented by James as a mnemonic postcard. The informal nature of this chance encounter and the casual greeting of 'g'day' upon meeting further emphasises the perception shared by participants in this study of Lange as approachable and likeable, cast against the notoriously difficult Muldoon. Furthermore, it illustrates the means of symbolic production employed by Lange on the

campaign trail, as he travelled the country 'performing' his suitability to the role of Prime Minister. The participant continued,

> *… Lange was a talker. So he was talking, as well, to rural New Zealanders who wanted to come and see him. And there were a lot. I mean, that hall was full…*

> *… I don't remember his talk, but I remember that he was a talker. And he had his patter, people going 'yee-ha!'. And he did— he came to represent a Labour Party that was interested in people. It was exciting. It was a difference. It was a change…*

David (CVR) also recalled the function and impact of these townhall meetings and small-town visits in which Lange took the opportunity to directly engage with members of the public and allay any fears or misgivings:

> *There was a huge amount of blatant management of opinion. You know, they'd go to some rural, or timber town, and make absolute promises in this very resonant, lay-preacher type voice that he's got, and I think it was a hell of a shock to people when they realised that it was pure bullshit. So there was just shock, after shock, after shock. That's how I remember it.*

David continued, this time with his memory of the Labour Party's 'victory conference' (Image 7.), following the 1984 election,

> *Oh it was euphoric. That theme song,* [Wind Beneath My Wings], *kept being replayed, everybody was happy, and the conflict and the uncertainty of what seemed to be the Muldoon era—which I have to say I now see quite differently than what I did then—I've totally reinterpreted what Muldoon was trying to do. I think he had very worthy objectives, and was basically taken to the cleaners by special interests. But he was 'the reviled one' at the time. And he played to that, of course. He said 'well if you're going to revile me, then I'll revile you'. But the conference was large, the worker's flag was crimson red, and it had that feeling of a movement. Like 'Here we are. This isn't right. Now we can really fix this'.*

Image 7. *Lange celebrates*   (Ministry of Culture and Heritage, 2014)

David's memory of the forms of symbolism at the victory conference, from the uplifting theme song, to red 'worker's flag', are inseparable from the hope and 'euphoria' he felt as the country would once again be led by a traditionally social democratic Labour Party. Here, David indicates his re-evaluation of Muldoonism in light of the neoliberalisation that would follow, while also indicating an underlying hope shared and recalled by interviewees that the 1984 election would signal an end to 'conflict' and 'uncertainty'. The red worker's flag, the Labour Party victory conference, the participant's memory of the uplifiting music, seemingly on repeat, were all symbolic props and means of symbolic production adopted by Lange in his victory performance, and serve as features within a mnemonic postcard presented by David for the purposes of capturing a shared sense of joy, hope, and victory. David continued with his memory of the post-victory conference Party meetings:

... I went to Roger Douglas' office to talk to him. I had been told that Lange's room was absolutely packed... and there were ten in Roger Douglas', which I think was very eloquent in itself. And there was Trevor de Cleene[21] sitting beside him with his bone-handle walking stick banging on the floor emphasising to the delegates that there would be no subsidies. And I asked if there would be subsidies because I come from an area where farm subsidies basically kept it all going, and Trevor de Cleene was asked what was going to happen to those communities, and he said 'no no, we have to bite the bullet and go through with it'. And Roger Douglas was absolutely clear about the programme that he was going to institute. And he gave it out in writing, he was absolutely clear and straight forward, and I realised pretty much then that I was in the wrong political party.

It was very, very astonishing, and from there I never believed a word Lange said about being jumped and surprised. To me it was an astonishing coup. You can see in hindsight now, but that realisation was huge, and very disorientating because I thought that this was me, and suddenly the Party was gone.

Highly emotive and personalised memories and use of mnemonic postcards increased in frequency in the recollections of participants in recalling the realisation of the beginning of the process of neoliberalisation and the perceived deterioration of New Zealand's Labour Party tradition. David begins his use of mnemonic postcard with possessive determinatives in his association with the Labour Party, and his excitement with the news of electoral victory. Statements made by David such as 'We were the Government', and references to 'our Government' provide further ownership, agency, and meaning to the notion that 'Now we can really fix this'. The banging of a bone-handle walking stick signals the beginning of *falling action* as David realises 'suddenly the Party was gone'. When asked what his hopes were at the Labour Victory Conference, and the series of Party meetings that followed, David replied:

That we could resolve it all. This was the end of conflict and division and [an end to the] *lack of resolution about what we should do.* [An end to the]... *wage and price freeze which was an attempt to deal with that, the inequities. It was a 'fair go' for the average bloke. You know? There were a hell of a lot of inadequacies,*

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[21] A supporter of Rogernomics and appointed undersecretary to Roger Douglas. Trevor de Cleene resigned from cabinet after the ousting of Douglas.

but still there was an attempt to stay the conflict and the divisions. And at that conference, the victory conference, it was going to be done. You see? That was it. And that was the Saturday, and the Sunday was meeting Roger Douglas for the first time... It was very eventful, I tell you.

David's narrative moves from the 'rapturous' 1984 Labour Party election victory conference to the realisation of the beginning of dramatic structural adjustment which would follow, the readjustment of New Zealand's Labour Party, and the sense of betrayal experienced by many of the Party faithful. Furthermore, the participant's own evaluation of this memory as being pivotal in their realisation of the social, economic, and political significance of reforms beginning in 1984 is made explicit with the assertion that 'suddenly the party was gone'.

Similarly, the following use of mnemonic postcard conveys not merely Karen's (TUR) memory of the announcement of the proposed Goods and Services Tax (GST) at the Labour Party Conference in 1985, but the broader significance and meaning attached to this event as being symbolic of the greater impact of Rogernomics, and the participants realisation of the 'astonishing coup', and a break within the Labour tradition:

Oh look, you can't believe what it was like, I guess, unless you were there. As a young person I thought everything until 1984-ish, everything we did in the Labour Party conference, everyone felt connected together, we all supported the same policy. That period, you could have put a knife through the Labour Party. And I remember thinking 'fuck, this isn't my family anymore. This isn't the people I connect with. I can't stand here and listen to this, and all these grey suited men'. I remember this image of Roger Douglas and all those men standing up and announcing the GST thing. It seemed to me they were all in the same suit, and there wasn't a woman amongst them, and I thought 'I can't be here'. I was working for them, but I can remember thinking 'you're ruining our country. You're doing things that the people don't want'. So it was quite powerful at the time...

... They shafted us big time, those men. Do you remember that? Have you seen that photo? [Image 8.] *I always will. I have it etched in my mind. And that conference was just so divided...*

Image 8[22]. *GST announced*   (retrieved from Trotter, 2011).

Here, Karen draws from memory of the 1985 Labour Party conference as a means of symbolic production for Lange as protagonist, and the Troika, as villainous 'bad actors'. Together with an iconic photograph of Lange and the Troika (Image 8.), and memory of the announcement of GST as mnemonic postcard, the participant continued with her evaluation of the metaphoric significance of the 'grey-suited men' present at the announcement:

> *… For me... it signified a complete travesty of what we really believed, which was social justice. That's what it signified, for me, if I have to put it into words... All those grey suited men, standing in a semi-circle, telling us that we were going to have a GST... The good old socialist principles had gone. The good old values, I don't know, of people. You know?*

> *… The image was corporate, and ughhh* ((disgust))… *and I remember other people around me reviling. It didn't symbolise the Labour Party. It wasn't our Labour Party. It was a takeover by Rogernomics, and all the people in the room were people who supported him, and they were all white men, and they were ugly.*

---

[22] From left to right, David Lange (foreground), Michael Bassett, Richard Prebble, and Roger Douglas.

Quite simply ugly. And I mean, this stayed with me, and that was my trauma. The Labour Party conference itself was trauma. You'd never seen anything like it…

… So definitely with people from the left, there was a huge outpour of grief really, about what happened to the Labour Party, and I don't think I ever felt strongly connected to them again, even though I try build relations with them, I don't think I really trust them ((Laughs)). But they continued the march didn't they—and seriously—and didn't provide any safety from that for the people in our country, that's how I feel.

In this account the 'grey-suited men… standing in a semi-circle' are significant in more than merely the announcement of a new tax which the participant opposed politically and in principle, as GST was predicted to impact those in low-income jobs and large families the hardest. The 'grey-suited men' stood united as both metonym and metaphor, a representation of a new political landscape and a travesty of the traditional position of New Zealand's Labour Party. The participant recalls this mnemonic postcard as a turning-point of evaluation and realisation which encapsulates the broader position of interviewees in their evaluation of the social and political impact of Rogernomics, neoliberalisation, and the fracturing of New Zealand's Labour Party.

Within the collective memory of interviewees, the *means of symbolic production*—as remembered by participating trade union and community and voluntary representatives—has been demonstrated as operating within two interrelated forms. As the *mnemonic means of symbolic production* employed by participants in recounting collective memory, and as the *means of symbolic production* through which key actors within the performance of power sought to perform cultural text. Within the former, images—both mental and physical—memories, cultural artifacts, and mnemonic objects, were drawn from by participants of this research, and vary in their iconographic and explanatory power. As utilised by key actors within the drama, participants recall the means of symbolic production utilised by actors as sites of hope, and then shock and betrayal as they recalled *moments of realisation* of the nature of structural change. These moments of realisation on the part of participants, of the extent of structural reform, the beginnings of neoliberalisation, the 'take-over' of the Labour Party, and the break from the Party's social democratic principles, together signal the beginnings of a *falling action* within the collective memory presented here. As will be discussed in the following

chapter, these moments of realisation took different forms, and were a response to both individual policy announcements and implementation, and to their accumulated impacts.

9

Falling action and realisation: Schism or reintegration?

Thus far, over the course of the preceding chapters, this study has demonstrated the utility of considering participating trade union and community and voluntary representatives' collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand in terms of the elements of Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of cultural performance. Adopting this framework, it has been demonstrated the ways in which:

1. Collective representations, shared beliefs, values and culturally-idiosyncratic symbolic associations—or the ***background codes and foreground scripts*** utilised by actors within the drama of neoliberalisation—are recalled by interviewees, and re-produced and re-articulated as an explanatory feature of collective memory.

2. Collective memory of the dynamics of ***social power*** is couched by participants in a collective understanding of a shared past, both in terms of the period of neoliberal structural reform in question, and a past that is both mythologised and offically recounted.

3. The trade union movement and community and voluntary sector constitute an overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion, as ***observers/audience*** to the drama of neoliberalisation.

4. Participants recall the centrality of key ***actors*** in the drama of neoliberalisation, the construction of their respective ***character***, and the ways in which key actors have taken on metonymic representation in the collective memory of interviewees.

5. The ***mise-en-scène***—or the social, cultural, political, and economic conditions that created the atmosphere in which the drama of neoliberalisation was

enacted—is shown to have been a period of relative historic and mnemonic density.

6. Participants recall the various ***means of symbolic production*** utilised by actors within the drama of neoliberalisation, while also adopting a range of ***mnemonic means of symbolic production*** in conveying collective memory of the unfolding drama.

Furthermore, the collective memory of participating interviewees was earlier demonstrated as constituting a *collective arc of narrative* indicative of dramatic structures. This collective arc of narrative broadly conforms with an established public or 'official' memory of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand. Drawing on Freytag's Pyramid, the collective arc of narrative presented by participants was shown within the discussion of the study's theoretical orientation as comprising of:

Exposition. Setting the scene, and the introduction of key characters/actors. Participants situate the drama of neoliberalisation in its socio-historical context through a discussion of the dynamics of social power as they relate to the post-war social democratic consensus, and a residual–dominant 'structure of feeling' of a pre-neoliberal New Zealand.

Inciting Incident. Participants describe the New Zealand economy as being in a state of 'crisis', while Prime Minister Muldoon's power is increasingly challenged.

Rising action. Participants describe a period of relative historical and mnemonic density amidst increasing calls for social and economic change in New Zealand. David Lange becomes Leader of the Opposition and challenges Muldoon in the 1984 General Election.

Climax. Prime Minister David Lange and the Fourth Labour Government gain power and New Zealand enters a period of drastic neoliberal structural reform.

Falling action. The realisation by participants of the implications of 'Rogernmomics', the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, and a significant shift away from the supposedly core tenets of New Zealand's Labour Party.

> ***Resolution***. Schism or reintegration? Participants recall a resulting breach within the Labour Party and its tradition, the beginnings of a culture-shift within New Zealand society more broadly, and neoliberalisation intensifies under the Fourth National Government.

> ***Denouement***. Participants return to the present with evaluation of the impact of neoliberalisation and its structure of feeling, while providing insight into the production and management of significant structural reform.

Departing from Alexander's theory of cultural performance, and returning once again to the collective arc of narrative present in participants' collective memory, the current chapter focusses on the latter components of *falling action*, through *resolution*, before *denouement* is discussed in Chapter 10.

Falling action: Collective memory of the realisation of neoliberalisation

As previously discussed, Lange and the Fourth Labour Government inherited an economic and social landscape increasingly described as being in a state of 'crisis'. Having ousted Muldoon and the National Government through a successful performance of the need for change, the equally successful framing of Lange and the Labour Party as an antidote to Muldoonism, and amidst a *mise-en-scène* of economic crisis, social division, and relative historical density, the new Prime Minister, the Labour Party, and the 'troika' of villainous 'bad actors' set about the performance of governing and the implementation of structural reform.

As Kelsey (1995) notes, 'The unstable political and economic conditions in which the 1984 snap election was called seemed almost scripted to facilitate urgent and radical change' (p. 29). Following the announcement of the election, an expectation of a new government coupled with the anticipation of a possible currency devaluation led to a run on the New Zealand dollar and heightened an already urgent sense of crisis and emergency. Muldoon, having suffered a loss to Lange and the Labour Party, but still in power and with an unwavering confidence in his own expertise in economic management, refused to take the advice of the incoming Government and officials to deal with the resulting crisis by devaluing the dollar. Muldoon capitulated to the incoming Government's demands later in July of 1984, and the currency was devalued

by 20 per cent, but the damage was done and the resulting atmosphere of crisis—compounded by Muldoon's final act of obstinacy—was crucial to the speed and extent of the process of neoliberalisation that would follow. As Lange would explain in 1996:

> The circumstances of those few days in government gave Roger the opportunity to do what he had always wanted to do anyway. But he wouldn't have been able to do that had we gone through the orthodox routine of an election in November then a budget in June... When the crisis hit in July 1984 it was Roger Douglas who, above all, had thought through the economic issues—so when the Cabinet needed to fall back on an economic philosophy, it was Douglas who had one (James & Sallee, 1986 in Kelsey, 1995, p. 30).

The inherent drama of this *liminal* period of transition from Keynesian social democracy to the programme of Rogernomics and the neoliberalisation of New Zealand, was therefore positioned as the height of crisis, and paved the way for the implementation of reforms long in the making behind closed doors. Having promised a more democratic approach and multi-sectoral consensus to the economic direction of the country, the Government first convened the Economic Summit Conference in September 1984 during what Kelsey (1995) describes as the 'honeymoon phase' of New Zealand's structural reforms. However, by the beginning of the following year, the agents of structural change were moving at pace and to an extent that became synonymous with New Zealand's blitzkrieg approach to structural reform. It is during this *falling action–resolution* stage of the collective arc of narrative presented by participants that the actor Jim Anderton makes his first meaningful appearance (see p. 235) within participants' collective memory, signifying increasing divisions within the Labour Party in response to the neoliberal take-over of the Party, and as symbolic of the belief in the existence of alternatives in the face of drastic structural change.

As discussed in the previous chapter, through the use of mnemonic postcards as a mnemonic means of symbolic production, interviewees recounted the profound impact of structural reform and the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand on organisational, political, societal, cultural, economic, and deeply personal levels. All expressed feelings ranging from shock and confusion, to deep anger and betrayal, at what is collectively understood as being a sharp divergence from the prevailing post-WWII consenus and from what had previously been deemed traditionally Labour values and principles.

Moments of realisation of this divergence—signifying a *falling action* in the collective arc of narrative—varied among participants, and between mnemonic communities. The passing of the State-Owned Enterprises Act in 1986 was one such shared signifier, notable for its impact on employment and communities, as was the announcement of GST in 1985, implemented the following year, and later the passing of the State Sector Act 1988.

As the 'blitzkrieg' approach to reform continued at pace, participants coupled their collective memory of reform and the resulting impact of neoliberalisation across society with internal divisions within the Labour Party. Take the memory provided by Mark (CVR) of this period:

> *I think there was a readiness, and I'm thinking around the labour movement particularly, a readiness to embrace the 'new' Labour way, of whatever way shape or form. So when Labour started to come up with some of its early reforms... we were saying 'well it must be good for us, in some respect* ((laughs)), *because it's different', and 'we didn't vote this government in to have them shaft us'. There was that idea of trust... and I think the other part of the conversation was... saying, 'well, no. They're untrustworthy bastards' you know, 'this isn't good. This privatisation agenda, or whatever you want to call it, won't be good for us'.*
>
> *So there were two conversations going on at the time. And I can sort of remember people at the time saying, 'well, we need to cooperate with this government, because it's the best government we've got', and others of us were saying 'no, we don't need to'* ((laughs)), *you know? 'We've got to stand on principle'. And I guess that was a point of difference, in some respects...*

For participants in this study, then, realisation of the 'astonishing coup', of the break within the Labour Party from their traditionally social democratic values, and the new direction in which New Zealand was heading, signals the *falling action* within participants' collective arc of narrative, and the beginning of the *resolution* phase in collective memory. This resolution phase is that in which participants collectively recall a *breach* within the Labour Party and its traditions, and the beginnings of a culture-shift within New Zealand society more broadly. In keeping with the dramaturgical approach adopted by Jeffrey C. Alexander and scholars of cultural sociology, this phase in the

drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand can be more closely examined through the application of Victor Turner's theory of *social drama* (1974).

Drama of neoliberalisation as *social drama*

Victor Turner (1974) defines social dramas as 'units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations' (p. 37) and writes that social dramas take place within groups where conflict manifests itself 'in public episodes of tensional irruption' and in 'aharmonic phases' of unravelling social process that provide a 'processional form' of drama (Turner, 1974, p. 33). According to Turner (1974), it is the 'processional form' of social drama—its structural and processual qualities—that allow for the transferal of the concept as a sequence of stages or events in the analysis of conflict across communities and societies. As Turner (1974) writes,

> In the social drama... though choices of means and ends and social affiliation are made, stress is dominantly laid upon loyalty and obligation, as much as interest, and the course of events may then have a tragic quality... Conflict seems to bring fundamental aspects of the society, normally overlaid by the customs and habits of daily intercourse, into frightening prominence. People have to take sides in terms of deeply entrenched moral imperatives and constraints, often against their own personal preferences. Choice is overborne by duty (p. 35).

According to Turner's (1974) theory of social drama, the units of aharmonic process can be summarised as including:

1) *Breach*: A break from regular social relations within or between groups or communities.
2) *Crisis*: Follows from the breach and escalates if not promptly addressed. There is always contingency in crisis, or 'liminal characteristics', as the crisis can be settled or lead to greater instability.
3) *Redressive action*: Attempts to address the *crisis* and prevent greater instability caused by the breach and resultant crisis. Redressive action can take a number of forms, 'informal or formal, institutionalised or ad hoc'.
4) *Reintegration* or *Schism*: The final phase of the social drama, in which successful *redressive action* leads to the *reintegration* or settling of the group,

or if unsuccessful, an irreparable *schism* between the group's opposing parties or factions (pp. 38–42).

Within a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation, participants' memory of the beginning of structural reform and the sharp divergence away from collectively understood core tenets of the Labour Party, can be understood as representing a *breach* both within the Labour Party, and in New Zealand society more broadly following an extended and relatively uncontested period of Keynesian social democratic consensus. Considered in these terms, the *resolution* phase of interviewees' collective arc of narrative can be understood as the phase in which participants recall internal conflict within the Labour Party and across society in response to structural reform and its impacts. For those participants who were actively involved as Labour Party members, this conflict is collectively remembered as that which resulted from strategies and personal decisions to either aid in the *reintegration* of the Labour Party, or to be party to a resulting *schism*.

Considered by participants at the macro-historical level, and as *collective memory*, the *climax* in the drama of neoliberalisation represents the *breach* which sparked the resulting social drama. That is, the 1984 General Election, the securing of power by the Fourth Labour Government, and the neoliberal 'take-over' of the Labour Party, is collectively remembered by participants as being both constituent of the *climax* in the collective arc of narrative (collective memory), and as sparking the *breach* which resulted in social drama. At the individual level, and as has been previously discussed, interviewees recall several interrelated events that take on both personal and collective significance as turning points and moments of realisation that this breach had occurred.

While for some participants, the events that served to confirm their realisation of neoliberalisation stand out, and provide concrete instances of epiphany on the part of the interviewee, for others, such realisation has come through hindsight and only years later. Clare (TUR), for instance, is unsure of her own personal realisation, or of a specific, key turning point in the drama of neoliberalisation, but provides the example of the reforms to the public sector by way of the State Services Act 1988:

> *I can't even remember what the genesis of it was, apart from what you read about now and with hindsight, but the whole beginning of the dismantling of the state*

sector, was just 'what the fuck is going on here? How is this happening?'. And of course... it's not until you do read the analysis later, even though there was commentary... on the left about what Douglas was doing, it just didn't seem real. And also... you could see what was happening overseas, but we really led the way. It was the 'New Zealand experiment', and people running around all over the place wanting to learn from us, you know? We completely wrecked our state infrastructure...

For others, the realisation of a shift in the Labour tradition, and of a new direction for New Zealand came with the announcment of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 1985 and its passing in 1986. As Martha (CVR) explains,

But I do recall the Party conference when it was proposed there would be a GST, and a lot of people started to think, you know, 'what the hell? Why are we going down this track?'. And I had been in the UK when the [value added tax] *had been introduced, which was obviously very much the same thing, and it had very clearly penalised people on low incomes, you know? It was a flat-tax, in effect, which disproportionately effects low income earners, and... the proportion of their income which goes into things effected by GST is much greater than those with bigger incomes. I mean all those arguments are obvious ones.*

I remember the arguments at Party conference, that people were starting to think, 'this is not a Labour policy, this is intrinsically not a Labour policy. This is something else'. But there was still quite a lot of loyalty, you know, the word 'loyalty' was starting to be used at that time, as a kind of whip almost. Kind of, 'we have to do this thing, there's no alternative, this is the Party-line', and I'm deeply distrusting these days of Party-line thinking.

As previously discussed, the announcement of the proposed GST at the Labour Party Conference in 1985 was significant both as a piece of policy, for its impact on working people and families, and for its divisiveness within the Labour Party. Understood by the majority of participants in this study as essentially a tax cut favouring the country's wealthy, participants' memory of its announcement and later implementation serves as one of several symbolic turning points in the drama of neoliberalisation and in Labour

Party history, which served to further complicate the ensuing crisis, and that participants recall as cementing the need for *redressive action.*

An extended excerpt of narrative from Toby (TUR) illustrates the social drama from *breach* through to attempts at *redressive action* in the form of greater involvement from the industrial with the political wing of the labour movement:

> *... it came to me properly that we were in opposition to the Government when they stood up after the '87 election and announced the flat-tax. And I think that was the turning point. Like there had been some work happening before then, but once you started heading into this territory and all of the cabinet line up behind Roger Douglas and Lange, that you could see this wasn't actually a way of modernising the economy for the purposes of social justice. This was a major realigning of our whole economy, and it was going to end in some mammoth change economically... little things that sort of come to a point where you see that, you know, there's a war here going on and we need to choose which side we are on. So certainly with myself and my union, we got into a full-frontal position with the Labour Government, and tried to turn them...*
>
> *... So at that point I started attending my local Labour electoral committee, and mainly to bring up these issues. I mean we're part of a movement to turn these bastards around, but it soon became apparent to me that... these people weren't for turning, they were pretty bloody attached to where they were going...*

Toby's account is significant in not only illustrating his moment of realisation of the scale and impact of reforms, his explanation of attempts to 'turn these bastards around' as a form of redressive action, and his expression of the need to 'choose a side' that would serve either *reintegrative* or *schismatic* functions. The participant's account is also significant owing to the symbolic nature of the announcement of the proposed flat-tax in question. The flat income tax-rate floated by Roger Douglas in 1987 signalled something of a high-water mark in Douglas' tax reforms and his working relationship with the Prime Minister, who had become increasingly concerned about the impacts of structural reform. Following the announcement of a package that included a flat income-tax rate of of 22 per cent, increased GST, and extensive privatisation, in 1988 Lange announced that the package was unlikely to go ahead, and by the end of the same year, the rift between

Lange and the Party's neoliberal agitators was clear. As Franks & McAloon (2016) write,

> By the end of 1988 the government was dysfunctional. Lange's and Douglas' offices engaged in open warfare. Douglas discussed radical options in public. Lange was isolated, needing support from core traditional elements in the party whom he had alienated with his sharp tongue and support for Douglas over the previous years. Some MPs repeatedly offered to support Lange in changing the policy direction, but he seemed unable to take up these offers. In November, after a dispute over privatisation process, Lange removed Prebble from the state-owned enterprises portfolio. Prebble then made unflattering remarks on television about Lange's mental health and was dismissed from cabinet. A month later, after Lange refused to renew the contract of Douglas' press secretary, Douglas informed him that he could no longer serve in a Lange ministry, and this was taken as a resignation (p. 221).

Whether by way of tax reform, corporatisation, privatisation, or their material and social impacts, participants in this study recall events that were symbolic of turning points in their understanding of the nature of the Government's reforms, and in their support of structural adjustment. For participants, redressive action in response to the breach came in the form of either direct action and involvement within the Labour Party, or in trust and hope as a member of the Labour-voting public that any pain experienced in the short-term was of the type Prime Minister Lange had promised may be necessary to ultimately realise the promises of the Labour tradition. With reference to social drama within the political sphere, Turner (1974) notes,

> one can compare the ordering of social political relations which preceded the power struggle erupting into an observable social drama with that following the redressive phase. As likely as not... the scope and range of the [political] field will have altered; the number of its parts will be different; and their magnitude will be different. More importantly, the nature and intentions of the relations between parts, and the structure of the total field, will have changed. Oppositions may be found to have become alliances, and vice versa... The bases of political support will have altered. Some components of the field will have less support, and some will have none (p. 42).

Following Turner, further examination and comparison of social and political relations within the Labour Party provides clarity in considering the *falling action* and *resolution* phases within participants' collective memory as social drama. For those seeking direct action, and for whom reintegration with/of the Labour Party was increasingly deemed an impossibility, a new saviour was sought in the form of former Labour Party president, Jim Anderton.

A vocal critic of Roger Douglas and the programme of Rogernomics, Jim Anderton was Labour Party president from 1979–1984, but would leave the Party in 1989 to form the NewLabour Party, and later the Alliance Party, following a period of increased fracturing between the Labour Party caucus, the wider Party, and those strident in their opposition to the reforms. As tensions increased, participants recalled mounting division within the Party membership itself, at a time when the 'symbolically deflated'[23] (Alexander & Jaworsky, 2014) Prime Minister Lange was increasingly viewed as having lost grip of the Party and the country's direction. Karen (TUR) invoked a mnemonic postcard from the 1985 Labour Party Conference that is indicative of not only this division, but of the need for redressive action:

> *I just felt* [Lange] *was really isolated, and I guess in some ways he looked like a lonely man. I don't know that his heart was with the Rogernomics crowd really, in some sense... no one was with him. He came down to talk about nuclear free, that was around that time, and I remember* [thinking] *'here's our leader', but I think he was lost in space, if you want to say it like that. I don't think he was quite in there. I mean Roger* [Douglas] *was probably always trying to shaft him, and then you had the left, so he was actually... no one was talking to him. Not even the people who might have been the Rogernomics people, versus the Anderton camp.*
>
> *So he was isolated, and still trying to champion an important issue, but he had lost control of the economic, and that's what I saw. I just saw this person that no one could find a way to talk to, because people probably had divided into camps. And while he was in that photo* [see Chapter 8, Image 8.]... *I think I remember that there was agitation in trying to remove him from the leadership. So there was a lot of people agitating against him. But he looked lonely and aloof, and for someone*

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[23] Figuratively and literally. In 1982 Lange underwent bariatric surgery, resulting in significant weight loss (Lange, 2005).

that leads the country, shouldn't people be rushing up to shake his hand? But no one went near him. Nobody.

… it's not what you'd expect when you see a leader. Maybe he had lost belief in the Party himself, and just couldn't put any energy in to it himself, and engaging with people. And I remember saying... to Jim [Anderton], *'God, do you think someone should go and talk to him?'. I think I managed about 30 seconds, because we were all young and thinking 'why aren't all the other people talking to the leader?'.*

Here, the mnemonic postcard provided by Karen serves to encapsulate a shared understanding expressed by interviewees of Lange as an outlier in his own Party, in direct contrast to both the popularity he enjoyed as Leader of the Opposition in the run-up to the 1984 election, and the hope invested in him by the Labour-voting New Zealand public and Party members. The image evoked by Karen of Lange as a literal *man alone* serves in the collective memory of participants in this study as symbolic of New Zealand's irreparably fractured Labour Party, of a loss of faith placed in Lange by New Zealand's political left, and as symbolic of collective *anagnorisis* (Woods, 2021), or the dramatic, shared realisation of circumstances, in this case, that Lange had lost control of the Party and the direction of the nation[24]. The symbolic significance of Lange alone in the memory of this participant was one which resonated with several interviewees; not in the detail of this autobiographical memory, but in the shared significance of his being alone as a symbol of a lack of confidence in Lange, his 'symbolic deflation', the takeover of the Labour Party by right-wing reformers, the deep divisions within the Party itself, and divisions within the liberal-left more generally. Karen continued:

I was there until Roger Douglas and GST, and then I left and went with Jim [Anderton] ... *I was always on the left of the Labour Party, but I can remember up until the GST debate… I used to come to Labour Party conferences as a young person and we felt like one family, we all spoke the same stuff, until such time as*

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[24] Later, in 1988, and following Douglas' announcement of a proposed flat-tax, further privatisation including of infrastructure, education, and social services (Lange, 2005), and a collapse in unity within cabinet, Lange famously announced there would be a pause for a 'cup of tea', in an attempt to halt the further advancement of Rogernomics.

we had Roger Douglas, and then it disintegrated widely... there was a big divide... right in the Roger Douglas divide, right in the real nexus time...

For Karen, with the announcement of GST as a turning point—symbolic of the neoliberal take-over of the Party—*schism* through the formation of a breakaway Party led by Jim Anderton became the penultimate form of redress. Yet, for other participants in this study, loyalty to the Labour Party, to its history, and a commitment to preventing a further right-wing shift within the Party and the very structure of the economy, would see a greater emphasis on reintegrative measures. Bill (TUR) describes the rationale of many Labour Party members and supporters who decided to stay and work towards the reintegration of the Party:

> *One of the real problems that you had was that in the Party people like myself, and quite a number of us, stuck with the Party because we had seen what* [happened] *in Australia when you leave the main social democratic party. That basically you get buried. It just peters-out because it doesn't have a mass popular base. We were fortunate because we all stayed and the Andertonites left, and we forced the Douglasites out, and we were left with a sort of centre-left, and centre-right group around Helen* [Clark] *and we were able to rebuild it and get rid of the worst excesses of it.*

For many, however, the decision between reintegration and schism was a deeply personal, emotional, and almost traumatic experience. As Martha (CVR) explains,

> *So, I wasn't entrenched in that, I was sort of watching it happen, but struggled a bit with how to maintain… I mean it's like, 'they're my tribe, they're my team', you know? And I always felt that, which is why I was one of those people that never even thought about going to the Alliance, because I was, 'Labour is my team', and I would rather be there to try and get it back on track, rather than say 'I'm giving up on it and I'm going to go somewhere else'.*

The resolution phase of participants' collective arc of narrative is therefore one in which interviewees summarise the impact of neoliberalisation and structural reform on not merely their respective mnemonic communities and the communities they serve, as discussed in Chapter 4, but on the Labour Party itself and participants' Party affiliation. With the Labour Party in disarray, the NewLabour Party now formed, and with the Party

suggesting a possible return to cabinet by Douglas and Prebble 'in the interests of reconciliation' (Franks & McAloon, 2016, p. 223), Lange resigned as Prime Minister in August of 1989. The following year, and with mounting public concern over the speed and scale of structural reform, and its impacts, the Fourth Labour Government's six years in power—first under Prime Minister Lange, then Geoffrey Palmer (1989–1990), and finally Mike Moore (1990)—ended with a resounding defeat at the hands of the incoming Fourth National Government who campaigned in part against the speed of neoliberalisation. Any hopes that the 1990s would see a retreat from neoliberalisation, however, were promptly dashed. Instead, neoliberalisation would intensify under Prime Minister Jim Bolger, with National Finance Minister Ruth Richardson soon to become a new metonymic representation of the intensification of neoliberalisation in New Zealand.

Neoliberalisation intensifies

As a continuation and intensification of neoliberalisation beginning in 1984, for interviewees, further structural reform during the Fourth National Government's first term from 1990–1993 is collectively remembered as the logical conclusion of reforms begun under the banner of Rogernomics. As such, the subsequent period of reform through the early 1990s represents a secondary climax in participants' collective arc of narrative, and a final peak in Zerubavel's (2003) relief map of 'mnemonic hills and dales'. Future studies may seek to examine a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand with a focus on reforms under the Fourth National Government, with *social drama* perhaps applied to social and economic reforms dubbed 'Ruthanasia'. However, the present study focusses on a periodisation of neoliberalisation in New Zealand with 1984 as the central and symbolic year of change. Reforms under the National Government were, however, a central feature of the collective memory of participating trade union and community and voluntary representatives, as interviewees recounted the impacts of neoliberalisation on their respective mnemonic communities, organisations, the communities they serve, and on New Zealand society.

For each mnemonic community as *observers/audience* to the drama—representing an overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion—the defeat of the Fourth Labour Government in 1990, and the passing of the Employment Contracts Act (ECA) and announcement of the 'Mother of All Budgets' in 1991, would signal a cementation of

neoliberalisation and of the new structure of New Zealand society. Following the Fourth National Government's taking power, as Carlyon and Morrow write,

> If voters hoped that by electing a new government in 1990 they would slow down the pace of reform, or even initiate a shift away from a market driven, laissez-faire approach and return to a more collectively responsible system, they were mistaken. The revolution that commenced in 1984 was about to enter a second stage. National forged ahead with more reforms that would have adverse social and economic impacts on individuals and families, particularly those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale. Promises were broken, welfare slashed, unions destroyed, and a 'user pays' philosophy introduced into education and health (2013, p. 317).

In July 1991, National Finance Minister Ruth Richardson produced what she herself termed 'the Mother of All Budgets'[25], in which the new Government implemented cuts across a number of portfolios, introduced 'user pays' to health services, education and state-housing, harsher income testing for superannuation, and slashed income support payments. Poverty doubled in New Zealand between 1984 and 1993 (Carlyon & Morrow, 2016), during a period of social and economic policy reform dubbed 'Ruthanasia', a programme which included cuts to welfare, a tightening of eligibility for all benefits, and new rules stipulating 'stand-down' periods of up to six months before the unemployed could access income support. These cuts were implemented, against a mise-en-scène of economic recession, with numbers on welfare increasing, and unemployment reaching a record peak in 1992. As participants explained:

> *And then by '91 of course, in the middle of the recession, that was pretty deep and bitter, and that was the election of Bolger, who talked about 'A New Zealand as you want it', which was bullshit, because of course Ruth Richardson and* [Jenny] *Shipley then sort of rolled out the second phase of the neoliberal agenda which was the cuts to social spending. And that was probably always part of the agenda.*
>
> (Mark, CVR).

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[25] In a questionable appropriation of metaphor, Richardson borrowed from former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his January 1991 description of the Gulf War as 'the mother of all battles'.

That was far more vicious than anything Labour did. That was the most vicious, inhumane thing you've ever seen. There was a lot people who remember being the kids of beneficiaries, who were attacked and had a major reduction in their… [Domestic Purposes Benefit] *and their welfare benefit. The 1990–1993 Budget cuts are what stick out for me. And what people were required to do, the stand-down period and that. That was far more vicious. There was the making of money, but Labour didn't deal to people and individuals personally, other than those that were made redundant…*

(Bill, TUR).

The '91 Budget—the Mother of all Budgets—was the one that was really striking, as far as the impact on my community goes. Benefits being cut by 20 per cent had an immediate and chilling effect… on our community, on standards of living in our community, and the impact on wellbeing… relationships and marriages. We saw more whānau breaking up over that period.

(James, CVR).

The same year, in a pointed attack on the power of trade unions, and in pursuit of greater individual 'freedom' and improved 'flexibility' in the labour market, the ECA was passed, ending compulsory unionism, despite widespread opposition from community and voluntary sector and trade union representatives. Trade unions and the power of working people to act as a collective were greatly diminished over this period, as a neoliberal focus on 'personal responsibility' and individualism intensified, with union membership falling by 50 per cent over the decade 1991–2001 (Carlyon & Morrow, 2013, p. 324). Bill (TUR) recalls the impact of labour reform on trade union membership, the implications of which still bear upon unionism and New Zealand workers to this day:

I think there were a lot of young people who came into the workforce in 1990– '93 that have been affected by it, and who were probably quite disadvantaged by that period, and you know, were very much affected by that individualism… The union movement lost a whole generation. They're either under 40, or like me, over 55. There's not many active in the union that are in the 45–55 [age group]*… we lost a big, a whole group who didn't come up in that period of the '90s.*

As discussed in Chapter 4 on the impacts of neoliberalisation in shaping the shared expreriences of community and voluntary and trade union representatives, structural adjustment and the intensification of neoliberalisation culminating in the ECA and cuts in social spending have left indelible marks on each community, and on New Zealand society as a whole. Again, where there is considerable agreement between each group and among participants, is in the ongoing impact on working people, the poor, recipients of income support, and on families and communities. Recall the account of James (CVR), and his memory of the significance of the corporatisation of New Zealand Rail during the 1980s, and later, its privatisation in the 1990s, and the impacts of job losses and redundancies in his small South Island town (Chapter 4). Here, James continues his account, this time linking corporatisation and privatisation with job losses and cuts to welfare under the Fourth National Government:

> *It was normalised quite quickly... we had people who were permanently on a benefit that wasn't worth enough, and seasonal workers... that had to save during the season to cover their stand-down period, and then didn't get enough to cover their lifestyle either. And then there were people like your railway workers that were restructured out of a job and all of those things that were going on. So it was kind of normal for every family to have people... who were on 'struggle street', who were unemployed, who were struggling to make it through. So everyone knew someone, and if you were in that position then your friends were likely to be in that situation, and so everyone kind of saw that we were all in this, and it's all kind of the same for us.*

> *So, kind of from 1986 where there were a lot of people in unemployment, through to '92 and the benefit cuts. It was kind of large chunks of the population were unemployed, in some cases had never been employed, and it was kind of normal. It wasn't unusual, it wasn't... that they could remember a time when it wasn't like this.*

In recounting the impacts of increasing unemployment under the Muldoon Government, of corporatisation and privatisation first under Labour, then National, and of the 'Mother of All Budgets' and welfare reform, James recounts the experience of one town that is indicative of the experiences of many during this period of early neoliberalisation. Reference here to the 'normalisation' of entrenched unemployment, lack of opportunity,

and increasing poverty, following a prolonged period of full employment and an expansive and supportive welfare state, is illustrative of both a material and *affective* transition into a new, dominant 'structure of feeling' which typifies the neoliberal era. Trade union representatives and the trade union movement as a whole also had to grapple with this transition, as illustrated in the following excerpt of narrative provided by Lisa (TUR):

> *So, it was a time of the employer pushing to individualise, and the law pushing to individualise, and people being fearful...*
>
> *... the law became a very big lever that employers could use. But the reason I guess why we ended up with that was because there was this process that started in the mid-'80s, where... the consensus of everybody gets a fair deal, if you like, shifted.*

The recollections here of James and Lisa serve as indicative accounts of a collective memory of the intensification of neoliberalisation in the early 1990s, in which memory of the ECA, the *Mother of All Budgets*, and *Ruthanasia* are central to interviewees' shared memory and organisational and individual experience. Each provides a mnemonic community-specific perspective, with James recalling the impacts on individuals and families, and Lisa providing an account which centres experiences through the lens of trade unionism and the collective. Together, both James and Lisa illustrate the material and affective transition that accompanied neoliberalisation expressed by the collective cohort of interviewees.

A Third Way establishes the dominance of neoliberalism

Progressing temporally and narratologically through collective memory, having recounted the intensification of neoliberalisation under the Fourth National Government, participants signal the beginning of *denouement* with reference to the Fifth Labour Government under Prime Minister Helen Clark, before more pointed and explicit assessments and reflections on the impacts of neoliberal structural reform, and their hopes for the future.

The Fifth Labour Government 1999–2008 was formed as a coalition Government negotiated with Jim Anderton and the Alliance Party, a formation resulting from the amalgamation of four smaller Parties, including NewLabour. The coalition Government

led by Prime Minister Helen Clark and the Labour Party was itself made possible, in part, due to public disquiet resulting from Muldoonism and the drama and impacts of neoliberalisation from 1984 through the early 1990s. Replacing the First Past the Post electoral system introduced in 1853, Mixed Member Proportional Representation (MMP) was introduced in 1996, following disaffection from New Zealand's voting public fatigued by a system that allowed for the unchecked authoritarianism of Muldoon, the drastic, sudden, and expansive blitzkrieg tactics of the Fourth Labour Government, and their intensification under the Fourth National Government (Carylon & Morrow, 2013). With 85 per cent of New Zealanders voting for change in the first non-binding referendum on the introduction of MMP in 1992 (Carylon & Morrow, 2013), it was little surprise that the second binding vote the following year resulted in the most significant electoral transformation in nearly 150 years. The introduction of MMP would therefore effectively see the end of complete dominance by the Labour and National Parties, the end to unchecked privilege and power in parliament and policy implementation, and increased voice and influence for New Zealand's minor Parties. It would also mean that the composition of parliament and government, and any one Party's ability to implement drastic and unpopular reform, would forever be changed.

Research subjects were divided between recollections of a sense of renewed hope with Helen Clark and the Fifth Labour Government's rise to power following nearly a decade of rule under the Fourth National Government, and more explicit cynicism for Clark's 'kinder' neoliberalism. As Louise Humpage (2016, p. 81) notes, the Fifth Labour Government 'retained and defended a neo-liberal economic policy regime but, in making efforts to moderate its social outcomes, further embedded this economic agenda by containing resistance to it'. Under Clark, the ECA was repealed and replaced by the Employment Relations Act 2000, which sought to once again moderately regulate the Labour market after a decade of liberalisation. Later the Working for Families package introduced in 2004 aimed to support working families on low incomes through in-work tax credits, childcare subsidies, and housing assistance. Ostensibly aimed at rewarding and providing assistance to those in work, and encouraging transition from welfare to employment, beneficiaries were exempt from the programme. Working for Families was then followed by the Social Security Amendment Bill in 2006, which sought to further encourage the welfare-to-work transition, requiring all welfare recipients to either work, or train, under penalty of their welfare payments being halved should they refuse to

accept an offer of employment. Understood as having signalled not merely an adoption of Third Way ideology, but also an adaptation within the New Zealand context (Piercy & Mackness et al., 2017), the Fifth Labour Government therefore continued the free market approach begun in earnest in 1984, together with an albeit modest revival of the role of the active state, civil society, and a greater emphasis on balancing social and economic needs.

For some participants, a renewed hope vested in Clark's Government stemmed from optimism that a 'Third Way' might temper the worst excesses of neoliberalisation, and revitalise the Labour tradition. For others, New Zealand's Third Way is recalled through a *presentist* lens that considers contemporary issues of persistent and increasing poverty and inequality, and as evidence of the failures of successive governments and of neoliberalism itself. As Jane (TUR) would recall:

> *... in the early '90s it was still quite hard because Labour wasn't making any headway, and National was doing dreadful things, but this was the thing—you felt guilty because National was just taking what had been done in the name of Labour and making it worse.*

For Jane, considering the intensification of neoliberalisation as a continuation of reforms first introduced by a Labour Government meant corrections in policy were crucial both for the Party and the country itself. However by 1999, the centre had shifted, and the centre-left policies of the Clark Government and the Labour Party would operate within the new structure of neoliberalism. While all participants cite social and economic improvements under the Clark Government, there were marked differences between the manner in which relative progress was articulated, roughly falling within two camps. The split identified here, and reflected in participants' narratives, serves as further illustration of *schism* and attempts at *reintegration* within the Labour Party tradition, the labour movement, and New Zealand's liberal left-wing.

Recalling the intensification of neoliberalisation under the Bolger Government, the introduction of the ECA and Mother of All Budgets, and the associated impacts on individuals, families, and communities across New Zealand, participants expressed memory of a shared sense of relief as the Fifth Labour Government took power, although

this relief was tempered by what many saw as merely a continuation of the neoliberal programme:

> *… what Helen Clark tried to do was to redress some of the issues, but doing it through, as it were, the established system… there has really been no new thinking… and I don't think that there has been, in any way, that I can see, starting from that 1984 Labour Government.*

<div align="right">

(Matthew, CVR).

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> *I think there's a whole set of issues for Labour, and I think* [Helen] *Clark probably set things back on a, you know, 'what you saw was what you got'. But that wasn't the case with the previous Government, the Lange Government...*

> *… It wasn't fundamentally changed by Clark, you know. She was not a… she stabilised things in a way, and there were some benefits, but she didn't change the underpinnings at all in my view.*

<div align="right">

(Martha, CVR).

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Here, Martha and Matthew each convey an assessment shared by participants in this study that the Clark Government in some ways sought to rectify the worst excesses of neoliberalisation, and reintegrate the Labour Party, while firmly placing the first Labour Government of the 21st century within the neoliberal tradition. Implicit within such statements is an acknowledgement that any further 'progress' would only be understood within the new structural paradigm, and that the hegemonic hold of neoliberalism and take-over of the Labour Party was complete. Meanwhile Mark (CVR) is more pointed in his assessment of the policies introduced by the Clark Government as largely a continuation of neoliberalisation:

> *So, poverty rates rose further* [during the 1990s], *and then at the time the Labour Party protested massively and loudly about that in opposition, but when they got the power they did nothing… Working for Families was a response, I think belatedly, to the benefit cuts of 1991. But it wasn't really a response to that, it was just a way of, you know, supporting middle class welfare.*

... the people at the bottom still got nothing. There was no reinstatement of benefit cuts. There was the rescinding of the market rents for state houses, but there wasn't a massive investment in state housing.

Nevertheless, participants expressed a shared sense of hope and relief as Helen Clark and the Labour Government took power, particularly from those research subjects who remained loyal to the Labour Party over the early course of neoliberalisation and through the period of Rogernomics. Recall the assessment of Bill (TUR), who articulated the perspective of Labour Party supporters who resisted any urge to leave the Party and join NewLabour:

We were fortunate because we all stayed and the Andertonites left, and we forced the Douglasites out, and we were left with a sort of centre-left, and centre-right group around Helen [Clark] and we were able to rebuild it and get rid of the worst excesses of it...

... It moved a bit to the centre under Clark, and... hopefully the next Labour Government will move a bit more to readdress the inequalities, but you're now seeing the inequalities of that period.

Bill articulates a more hopeful perspective shared by the Party faithful, in which progress may be achieved with every new iteration of the Labour Party. Bill continued, stating,

... I learnt from that, that if you stay in the Party you can continue the battle and eventually we'll win, and we saw-in Helen Clark of course, and so those of us... I decided very early on that I would stay and fight it...

... we fought that pitch battle within the left to basically rebuild Labour's reputation through the Clark Government and start the beginning of fighting back against the neoliberal agenda...

... Clark was the bridge that had to weather the winter of discontent, to bring about changes... and we've now got a much more... we have a Government [under Prime Minister Ardern] that is the equal of progressives of the Kirk Government.

Bill's account here is illustrative of sentiment and rationale shared by those interviewees who chose to stay with the Labour Party, seeing reintegration as a process that would

span several governments. Bill sees the Clark Government, and what he describes as Clark's 'Swedish-German social democracy', as a form of bridging government that was integral to the rebuilding of 'Labour's reputation'.

For participants, a core feature of collective memory of the Clark Government, as with that of Lange, was the centrality of perceived social progress. Jane (TUR), for example, remembers Helen Clark as a symbol of progress and renewed hope:

> *Things do get better again. They go bad and they get better again… The 2000s when Labour was in power, it started to get better, it started to feel more like 'my New Zealand society' again. It started to. It didn't ever get there completely though because the neoliberal stuff was still there, it had never really gone. The language was still there and the ways of thinking were still there. But there were good things happening as well. It balanced it a bit… there were all sorts of exciting things happening… it felt to me like a more hopeful place.*

According to Jane, the Fifth Labour Government was associated with renewed social progress, of things getting 'better again', and as a source of pride, even as neoliberalisation and its associated language and structure were further entrenched throughout this period. For participants then, whether viewed more in a positive or negative light, the Fifth Labour Government and New Zealand's adoption of Third Way ideology would bring marginal improvements economically, and more significant social improvements when cast against the social and economic devastation of the 1990s. Nevertheless, neoliberalisation would continue through the beginning of the 21st century, with neoliberalism centred as the hegemonic structural and ideological paradigm. With the Labour Party in coalition with the Alliance, the Fifth Labour Government is representative in the collective memory of participants of *partial reintegration* in the formation of Third Way politics and policy, yet also of *schism* in the development of social democratic and left-wing alternatives empowered by MMP.

Having moved temporally and narratologically from *falling action*, to *resolution*, recounting the social drama of neoliberalisation, and its entrenchment through the 1990s and 2000s, participants signal the beginning of *denouement* in their collective narrative, through a situating of collective memory more firmly in the present.

10

Denouement: Past, present, and future

Having recounted the drama of neoliberalisation in Aotearoa New Zealand, following a collective arc of narrative from *exposition* through *climax* and *resolution*, by way of collective *denouement*, participants in this study situate their assessment of neoliberalisation within the presentist tradition of collective memory, with an assessment of the impact of structural transformation vis-à-vis the current conjuncture, and with an eye to future possibilities. In doing so, participants return to core discussions around the current dynamics of social power, structures of feeling, perceptions of the present mise-en-scène, further assessment of the impacts of neoliberalisation on community/organisation-specific and societal levels, and their hopes for New Zealand's social, cultural, political, and economic future. Through these mnemonic frames, participants collectively trace a path from the 'Third Way' Fifth Labour Government of 1999–2008 through to the present moment, providing insights into the current conjuncture and the value of reflecting on the past.

With participant interviews conducted in 2016 and 2018, the social, political, and economic context in which memories were shared, and data gathered, made often unexpected turns between engagements with research subjects. In early 2016, few would have predicted the meteoric rise of Labour Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern following the removal of Andrew Little as Opposition Leader, or for that matter the ascent of former US President Donald Trump, or the outcome of the Brexit vote and the protracted process of Britain's leaving the European Union. For those interviewed in 2016, the hopes of a Labour Government soon gaining power may have seemed a pipedream, with polls showing historically low support for Labour, and participants looking instead to the ascendency of figures like US Senator Bernie Sanders, and then UK Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, for the hope of progressive social and economic leadership. Likewise, from the perspective of participants interviewed in 2018, following Ardern and the Labour Party's entering Government, the defeat of Ardern's progressive peers

internationally, and the rise of right-wing authoritarianism and nationalism around the world, the year may have signalled a concurrent mix of hope, domestically, and dismay, considering international trends.

Owing to the temporal subjectivities of participants, certain emphases, perspectives and reference points within individual narratives differ between research subjects. Such is the nature of collective memory, as every new day, year, or occurrence provides individuals and whole communities with further perspective and understanding of past, present, and future, with both mnemonic lenses and mnemonic frames transformed or repurposed in subtle and more fundamental ways. As such, it may perhaps be tempting to consider the collective memory presented here as a collective memory of trade union and community and voluntary representatives from 2016–2018, yet such a limiting conception of collective memory ignores the relative *persistence* of collective memory, in the *traditionalist* sense.

Within a traditionalist understanding, we can better appreciate the persistence of the collective arc of narrative shared by participants in narrativising the drama of neoliberalisation, while not losing sight of the ways in which individuals and communities more passively view the past through their mnemonic lens, and actively assess the past by way of their mnemonic frames. With this in mind, we better understand, for example, the discursive mnemonic coupling of Lange and Ardern as a *presentist* evaluation, which draws from the present and imbues the latter with the sacred qualities of hope and progressivism associated with a collective memory of Lange. Viewed through the *traditionalist* lens, however, we can better understand Ardern as not the point nor the object of analysis in such a comparison, but rather as a means of highlighting certain perceived qualities associated with Lange that have persisted in collective memory. This is not to say that assessments of such qualities will not change, in the presentist sense, as new information and understanding is shared, and new reference points shape communities' mnemonic lens and framing. Rather, it is to say that there is a persistence, in the traditionalist sense, that provides a consistency and conformity of participants' collective narrative, irrespective of contemporaneous events and more overtly presentist elements of denouement presented here.

Whether interviewed in 2016 or 2018, in providing denouement to their collective narrative, participants conclude a collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation

with discussions on the lasting impact of neoliberal structural reform; the belief that there *were* and are *always* alternatives to neoliberalism; considerations of the hard road ahead in redressing the wrongs of the past; and the hopes vested in a new generation of New Zealanders in pushing for social, economic, and environmental justice, and once again championing the sacred principles of the collective.

Ultimately, interviewees were unanimous in their assessment of the drama of neoliberalisation in New Zealand, and its impacts and effects. In recounting the mise-en-scène of the period in which the drama was set—including the mounting and protracted period of perceived social and economic 'crisis', the perceived waste and inefficiencies associated with the Keynesian economic system and related bridging strategies, and New Zealand's relative social, cultural, and economic isolation from the global community—participants agreed that significant change in response to the prevailing contradictions of the time was necessary. Yet comments from Adam and Bill are illustrative of a shared sense, if not of mourning, then of deep disappointment and betrayal around what they understand as having been lost in the process of neoliberalisation and structural transformation, and of the long road towards correcting what they see as the injustices of the past:

> *I remember saying once that it would take five minutes to destroy the country through this particular agenda, and it will probably take three generations to restore it. It's a long process. And people have become… they know no different. They've been born into it…*

> (Adam, TUR).

> *When you look back in history it was a watershed New Zealand, and it was a way to not do large structural change… it just showed you, in the future when you have major structural change, which will come with digitalisation and other things forced on us—global warming, climate change—you have to do things in a way that has a human dimension to it. People do count. And you have to look after people, and make sure that people aren't crushed in the process. Just basic humanity.*

> (Bill, TUR).

Evident within Adam's account is an acknowledgement not merely of the drastic nature of structural change, and the negative outcomes of neoliberal policies, but also of the entrenchment of neoliberalism as the hegemonic order of the last 40 years. The assertion that people 'know no different' and have 'been born into it' serves also as further acknowledgement of the now 'common sense' status of neoliberalism, in the Gramscian sense, owing to the dominant nature of the neoliberal project and decreasing living memory of Keynesian social democracy and structural transition. Implicit within invocations of neoliberalism's 'common sense' status are the perceived difficulties of encouraging those born after 1984 to become conscious of the contingent, impermanent, and actively constructed and maintained structure of society, as a new generation knows only the logic and discourse of neoliberalism. Clare (TUR), shared this sentiment presented by Bill, stating,

> *… it's been internalised. So young people now think that it's* [the only] *way. Young people don't feel like they have rights at work, and whatever gets dished up to you is it, and if you don't have someone presenting another reality, if you don't have the union organiser coming in and saying, 'hey, have you thought about this or that', or if you haven't been getting taught it in schools, then that becomes the reality. And if that becomes the reality then no one questions it, and it's really hard to fight it.*

However, participants were also unanimous in agreement that *there were* and *always are* alternatives to neoliberalism. Returning to a collective memory of the cultural performance in which the need for change was articulated by key actors, and re-enacted by the public as the dominant ideology, Chuck (TUR) once again positions the necessity of change articulated by Lange and neoliberal actors as not merely a means of addressing economic crisis, but also as an answer to Muldoon and the social conservatism, traditionalism, isolationism, racism, and sexism he came to personify:

> *… There were always alternatives. And I think the problem was that in the '80s, and even now… we were consistently told… at Labour Party conferences,* [and] *we were told this at work, that it was either living under Muldoon, or doing what we are doing now. There was nothing else. And the fact is that there were always alternatives, they just got completely crowded out, and so on. So, you were endlessly talked over…*

… there's a need to have a robust discussion and debate, and to actually be aware of the alternatives, even if you don't agree with them, to actually talk about them and to be aware of what is happening. And I think that, as I said, in the 1980s these sorts of debates were closed off, you were told 'this is it', this is the only way, and if you don't agree with it then you're stuck in the past. And to a certain degree, I mean, that's still the argument…

Situating his memory and assessment of neoliberalisation firmly in the present, the participant furthers the denouement function by asserting the need for 'robust discussion and debate' in the present, and in public and civil spheres, to push back against assertions of neoliberalism's 'common sense' status and seek out new alternatives. Similarly, Matthew (CVR) refutes the common sense view that there was no alternative to neoliberalisation, but cites the difficulties ahead in reaching a consensus around alternatives to neoliberalism, while indicating a possible path forward in championing a narrative for change that draws from a residual structure of feeling which centres a 'fair go' for New Zealanders:

[TINA] *was never true. Of course, there has always been alternatives. Quite a few of them actually…*

… There's never consensus, because you have so many different threads throughout society, but I think there's a consensus, and there always has been, that people should have a 'fair go', in a broad sense of the word. So, not excluded from the basics of… housing, and enough income to live on, and maybe the ability to take a holiday domestically in New Zealand, [and to] *bring up a family without deprivation. I think there is still consensus around that.*

Related to the egalitarian myth and narrative, invocation of the culturally-idiosyncratic code of a 'fair go' refers to a New Zealand/Australian-ism suggesting people should be afforded an equal chance or opportunity to succeed as citizens. Matthew concretises and provides substance to a vision of the 'fair go' narrative by asserting a shared cultural belief or 'consensus' that alludes back to the welfare state and its institutions, and an apparently shared vision of lifting and keeping people out of poverty.

Returning to apparent contradictions inherent in the pursuit of social and economic justice in the current conjuncture, participants described a neoliberal structure of feeling

in which great gains have been made in the name of social equality, both materially and symbolically, and particularly as social equality relates to identity, even as economic and income inequality grows increasingly pronounced, and arguably untenable. For interviewees, the contradictions of social progress and economic inequality are articulated as a defining characteristic of the dominant structure of feeling of neoliberalism, and a central feature of denouement in collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation. Again, further complexity arose within participants' individual and collective memory as research subjects were confronted by the contradictions of, for example, social conservatism, social inequality, and greater economic egalitarianism under Keynesian social democracy, and social liberalism, social equality, and greater wealth and income inequality following neoliberalisation. As Bill (TUR) explains,

> *What* [the Fourth Labour Government] *did for Māori with* [Te Tiriti o Waitangi]*, and the nuclear stance, there were some quite progressive things done for Māori and women, so there were some social changes that were for the better. But some people did very, very well out of it, and the management of it could have been a hell of lot better, and more 'even'. It could have been redistributed, but it was all about selling everything off. It was ideologically driven by some fairly fucking nasty operators with some right-wing people behind it who were in the public service…*

> *So I think if you look back, there was a real sense of betrayal in the Labour Party … people's worlds were shot to death with redundancies, and I think it was a very brutal form of structural readjustment that left a lot of people as casualties, and then a group basically captured the surplus value of state assets. It was a very unpleasant period.* [A] *very stressful period for everyone involved, and a lot of people lost jobs, and there were people who never really managed to recover their lives again.*

Bill's assessment here is one shared collectively by the cohort of participants, in which the advent of neoliberalism, the end of Keynesian social democracy, and the resulting increase in poverty and wealth and income inequality, was also a period in which the success of various social movements and pressures from previously marginalised and oppressed groups saw relative improvements in social equality. Mention here also of the anti-nuclear movement and Lange's 'nuclear stance', is representative within

participants' collective memory of New Zealand's increased geopolitical independence and affirmation of a national-political identity within the global community, with both greater national independence and social progressivism accompanying, yet separate, from the process of neoliberalisation itself. Here also, Matthew (CVR) expresses an assessment shared by participants that the social progress demanded by New Zealand's social movements—discussed as a feature of the mise-en-scène within the drama of neoliberalisation—advanced, even as there has been considerable *regression* by way of the increased individualism and economic inequality typifying the current era:

> *… the harsh truth, and it's a really harsh truth, is that the economic philosophy…* *at the moment is accentuating the differences more and more all the time. So we're* *not improving the disparities. We might be a bit, between men and women, so* *perhaps on a gender basis, but not between poor New Zealanders and wealthy* *New Zealanders. It's getting worse. So there is no equalising or redistribution* *effort that would bridge the gaps— the fissures—that are opening up in society.* *And the more you atomise society, the bigger those fissures are going to become.* *And at the moment, that's an ongoing process.*

In emphasising the social progress that has resulted in greater social equality, participants also highlight the impacts of economic inequality and its social and cultural affects, in the current conjuncture. Echoing previous statements that reflect the shifting dynamics of social power, and a profanation of the sacred ideal of the collective, Adam (TUR) provides an assessment of neoliberalisation shared by participants:

> *I don't think it's been for the best at all really. I think we have a fractured society* *in many respects. I don't think society cares for itself enough. I think that's kind of* *evident still in the way the state funds important areas of the public sector, like* *health, education, the notion that in health there's community support. You know,* *relying on the Salvation Army, and these community groups stepping in, and given* *a bit of funding to help…*

Adam's mention here of the 'fractured society' of today, together with Matthews 'gaps', 'fissures' and references to an 'atomised society', invoke once again the sacred/profane binary system of meaning, within which participants collectively suggest a neoliberal profanation of the sacred values of collectivism, solidarity, and egalitarianism. As a trade

union representative, Adam draws from knowledge of the impacts of poverty, inequality, and a lack of social and financial support, a weakening of the welfare state, and the retreat by government in the provision of a strong social safety net, on the community and voluntary sector. Within such articulations, participants express a hope that the increasingly apparent contradictions within the current conjuncture will ultimately lead to further progressive social and economic transformation:

> *I think neoliberalism and its contradictions are becoming so apparent, that, you know, I think maybe we have a chance of cracking it. I'm not absolutely resigned to the fact that I'll die with neoliberalism as a dominant ideology.*

<div align="right">(Mark, CVR).</div>

In doing so, participants articulate the current structure of feeling of neoliberalism, and implicitly juxtapose its dominant structure and affects, with collective memory of Keynesian social democracy and its affective qualities. Implicit within the collective memory of participants is the belief that the pursuit of social and economic justice, and greater egalitarianism and socially-liberal individual rights, was never a binary trade-off. Rather, for true social justice, and for New Zealand's arc of social progress to continue unabated for the collective good, it must be accompanied by economic justice and a return to, and improvement upon, New Zealand's once sacred ideals of collectivism and egalitarianism. In their shared denouement, participants hold that collectively remembering and commemorating the positive aspects of Keynesian social democracy and the welfare state is vital to any progressive project, and to the development of alternatives to the neoliberal paradigm, lest the public forgets the role of social democracy in shaping the country, and building Aotearoa New Zealand's wealth and identity.

Moving temporally from a collective memory of the Fifth Labour Government, and unrealised hopes/partial reintegration of the Labour Party and its social democratic traditions, participants individually and collectively share their hopes and reflections on the current political and ideological moment, through discussions of the future of the Labour Party and a broadly understood Left in New Zealand politics. Here, Martha (CVR) expresses a tempered hope shared by participants in this study that within the current conjuncture there may be possibilities for progressive reform:

... There's [currently] *an openness, I think, to thinking about some different models… ((hesitant))… but only a bit. I think there's not actually a realisation of the harm that has been done by this 'experiment' that went from Lange to the end of the Bolger-Shipley Government…*

This tempered hope is one shared by participants interviewed for this study in 2018, following Jacinda Ardern's unexpected rise to prominence, and the Sixth Labour Government's taking power in 2017. Ardern's Labour Government, and other more recent socio-political events therefore serve as reference points for assessment of the drama of neoliberalisation by interviewees, colouring perceptions of the past, without altering the traditionalist-informed structure of their collective memory:

I think about [the period of neoliberal structural adjustment] *quite a lot. Particularly with the changes that are happening with* [Ardern's] *Labour Government. This Labour-led Government makes me think about what happened with the Fourth Labour Government, and how we are basically in this process of trying to roll-back stuff and how hard that is, and how painful that is for lots of people. Because, you know, it was a time when things were better, and we weren't experiencing the things that we are experiencing now… so a lot of the stuff that I'm doing in my work… makes me think, 'fuck you bastards. If that hadn't happened', and that kind of thing.*

(Clare, TUR).

... you can't be unaffected by the past, and what's happened in the past, and how we've responded to it. So yeah… I mean, obviously we've got a Labour Government in power now and, as I see it, we've got these huge opportunities…

(Lisa, TUR).

Again, the vital role of remembrance, collective memory, and of acknowledging and understanding New Zealand's social and political past is appreciated by Clare and Lisa as being crucial to understanding not only the current Labour Government of 2017 to the time of writing, but in articulating a shared vision of the future. For interviewees, this shared vision is not merely one in which the impact of structural reform is acknowledged, and progressive policy is implemented to address inequities, but also one

in which new narratives may be created which are informed by New Zealand's shared past as a nation:

> *We do have to work in shifting the narrative. I mean, I'm hopeful that generation X and the millennials, and Jacinda—I'm just hopeful that they are up to it in terms of accepting a new narrative and a new moral framework. I'm not certain, I think the current regime is not great… I think we really have to work hard at it… and maybe Jacinda is the person to do that. I think she has to be braver. I think that she and others are of a generation who aren't tarnished by what's been done in the past. So, I think there's a reason to be optimistic.*

(Mark, CVR).

For participants, Ardern and her Labour Government's emphasis on the soft qualities of kindness and compassion must be accompanied and informed by a material and structural shift that re-thinks, and re-articulates the once sacred principles of the collective:

> *I think the speech Jacinda made to the UN about kindness, I think there is a different kind of flavour about what people want in society, that this government is starting, in the way it is operating…*
>
> *… That you need to centralise a whole range of things in order for it to be fairer and more equitable for people, but I think that this government has the possibility to make some real changes about the way people behave and the way that people think… that the economy is not the be-all and end-all. That of course… we have to make money, but it has to go hand-in-hand with what sort of society we want to have, and how we want to live.*

(Clare, TUR).

Through assessments of the social and cultural affects of neoliberalisation, participants point to new contradictions within the now dominant structure of feeling of hegemonic neoliberalism, and express hopes of what they perceive as an inchoate or emergent structure of feeling expressed in part by a new generation of young people. Bill (TUR) frames his assessment of the past and the current conjuncture through his perspective as

a trade union representative and in a hope shared by participants in this study for a more progressive future led by those born within the neoliberal era:

> *I have seen people who never recovered from that period* [of structural reform]. *I think there were people who were demoralised and very embittered, and it had an impact on their lives… I think the under-30s now are much more politically aware than that grouping…*

For Bill, the legislated attack on trade unionism through the ECA added to a de-politicisation of a generation of New Zealanders, which he hopes to see counteracted by a growing, younger cohort of trade unionists. Implicit within these hopes is once again the sacred/profane binary, in which the profane individualism of an older generation worst impacted by neoliberalisation and its intensification, is cast against a younger generation of New Zealanders who may once again discover the sacred power of the collective. Bill's hope in a younger generation of New Zealanders now finding their voice through trade unionism, and a number of social movements, was shared by the collective cohort of participants:

> *I'm hopeful in the young people I meet, my children and their friends, and the kinds of attitudes and views that they hold. I think they're a lot better, and a lot more thoughtful. They don't have the answers, but they think about those things. I think my generation didn't. So I think the next generation of people, in my experience, the ones that I kind of run into, give me huge cause for hope.*
>
> <div align="right">(John, CVR).</div>

> *I just think we… have a really good set of cultural values, and… increasing awareness… particularly in my kids' generation. So I just think there's massive reason to be optimistic, as a country. We can really achieve things…*
>
> *… I think it's one of those things that, you know, time is on their side… you only have to start pointing out the privileges of the baby boomers, and their monopolisation of power and wealth, to prick the ire of the following generations, and to organise something around.*
>
> <div align="right">(Mark, CVR).</div>

For John and Mark, hope lies in a younger generation of New Zealanders who have been born and have matured within a period of neoliberal hegemony, who have no living memory of the Keynesian social democratic welfare state, but for whom the contradictions of neoliberalism are becoming increasingly apparent. Chuck (TUR) agrees, but sees opportunities via a greater awareness of these contradictions across generations:

> *I do think there is a degree of unrest. You know, why are we getting paid these low wages? Why can't we have better conditions? And I think for older workers, I think there is a great deal of resentment, you know, that they had these conditions and they've been taken away from them. But I think in one way I'm filled with a great deal of hope for young workers, because I think that there seems to be a greater realisation today that perhaps there are other ways, there are other avenues open to them.*

> *… there seems to be a great deal of push-back happening… Plus there are a whole heap of other concerns too, which I think are sharpening the focus against neoliberalism. One of them, of course, is climate change—what do you do? Is the market mechanism and so on, established over the last 40 years, capable of dealing with climate change? And the answer is no, no* [it is] *not.*

For participants, and expressed here by Chuck, the degree of unrest, resentment, the realisation of alternatives and of what has been lost, and increasing concerns over social and economic inequality, must be harnessed for the sake of progress and to address the greatest crisis facing humanity. Evident within the collective memory presented here, and more explicitly articulated through denouement, is a shared understanding of not merely the cumulative impacts of neoliberalisation over the last 40 years, but also of an utter inability of neoliberalism to address the pressing issues that define the current mise-en-scène and historical conjuncture.

Reflecting the current mise-en-scène, participants collectively describe an emergent structure of feeling, still inchoate, yet increasingly informed by the economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental concerns of our times, and share a view of the importance of articulating not only the 'harm' caused by the neoliberal experiment, and the urgency of the crises of the current conjuncture, but also of the need to construct a

new narrative, informed by a collective memory of the previous Keynesian social democratic paradigm, and its residual structure of feeling:

> *I think, for those people that do remember, the New Zealand experiment was so painful. And the countries that picked up that model and did the same thing, like Britain, are suffering exactly the same consequences that we are. So, there's that thing that we don't seem to learn the right lessons…*

> *You only get old once, and you don't want to be one of those old people who say, 'back in my day', like it was nirvana. But if you don't, or you forget what some of those things were, and if you're not telling those stories to younger people, then that memory is lost. And there were good things about growing up in the '50s and '60s, and there were some shitty things as well. So it's not either/or, but it's the things… it's about trying to keep what's good and worthwhile, and the values that you have as a person, to keep those things going through and passing those things on to your kids, and talking about them with your friends and family.*

> (Clare, trade union representative).

Conclusion

The period of neoliberal structural reform beginning in 1984 under the Fourth Labour Government, and culminating in further reforms implemented by the Fourth National Government in the early 1990s, stands as one of the most consequential and impactful eras in the history Aotearoa New Zealand. While the 'crisis' of Keynesian social democracy throughout the 1970s and early 1980s resulted in neoliberal structural transformation in Western liberal democracies and developing economies the world over, few nations were subjected to the speed and scale of reform experienced in New Zealand. The dramatic nature of the New Zealand experience was compounded by the introduction of neoliberalism by a traditionally social democratic Labour Party, and within a collective purportedly oriented by a foundational narrative of egalitarianism.

Policies introduced by the Sixth Labour Government in 2021, including boosts to benefit rates and the announcement of Fair Pay Agreements, have sought to partially address some of the inequities created and exacerbated over the period of neoliberal structural reform from 1984–1999. As Minister of Finance Grant Robertson proclaimed during his Budget 2021 announcement, in reference to 'The Mother of All Budgets', 'Today's Budget is set against the backdrop of two previous Budgets, one delivered last year and one that was delivered 30 years ago…' (2021, p. 1), adding:

> … for me this is primarily a moral issue. I recently watched a documentary about the reforms pushed through in the late 1980s and early 1990s in New Zealand. One person in that documentary made the comment that New Zealand would likely be paying the price for the cuts made well into the next century. Well, more than 20 years into this century that person has been proved disturbingly correct. Levels of hardship and deprivation have grown, with some periods of plateau, over the decades. The intergenerational effect on wellbeing has been enormous (Robertson, Robertson, 2021, p. 10).

With Robertson directly referencing the early period of structural transformation through the Budget 2021 announcement, the past and its impact on the present continues to be a

contested space. Statements in response by opposition MPs sought to frame the Government's ambitions as an outmoded return to the past, with National MP Chris Bishop stating:

> … [Robertson] misremembers history, and, actually, there's a lot of misremembering of history going on in the Labour Party at the moment, because in the Labour Party's version of history, pre-1984, before that big bad Roger Douglas came along with his mates Caygill and Prebble, and then they were followed by Ruth Richardson, their other mate from the other party, in their version of history, pre-1984, New Zealand was a glorious country: unemployment was low… [a land of] milk and honey… there were no strikes. Whereas the reality is, as the smarter Labour Party members know… actually, New Zealand pre-1984 was a sclerotic economy, compared to a Polish shipyard—an economy that was on its knees (Bishop, 2021, May 20).

More than merely the performance of politics, invocations of collective memory of 'pre-1984' New Zealand, and explicit references to this period through policy implementation, highlight increasing fissures within the neoliberal consensus of the past 40 years. As New Zealand and countries around the globe grapple with the fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing wealth and income inequality, housing crises, impending environmental disaster, and the rise of right-wing authoritarianism, the relative density of social and economic events since at least 2008 may signal the beginnings of a liminal space through which the cultural disorientation of the current historical conjuncture can give way to a clearer vision of future structural transformation. Whether any such transformation will merely see a re-articulation within the neoliberal paradigm remains to be seen. However, with the active state re-emerging as the force best equipped to address the defining crises of our times—as evidenced through state responses to COVID-19—commentators and figures from across the political spectrum are increasingly looking to the past amidst a lack of consensus around future alternatives.

Through interviews with a total of twenty-one representatives of the trade union, and community and voluntary sectors, this research has presented a collective memory of neoliberal structural reform in Aotearoa New Zealand. In doing so, I have demonstrated a case for the application of cultural sociologist Jeffrey C. Alexander's theory of *cultural pragmatics* in the analysis of collective memory, in which memory of social performance

and the narrativisation of collective memory, is collectively and mnemonically dramatised, and analysed, as analogous to theatrical performance. Through this lens, my research has presented a collective memory consisting of the elements of *background symbols and foreground scripts*, *social power*, *observers/audience*, *actors, mise-en-scene,* and *(mnemonic) means of symbolic production*, in which participants dramatise memory of the neoliberalisation of New Zealand within the tragedy-genre, and narrate the drama from *exposition*, through *climax, resolution* and *denouement*. Applying the six-component framework of cultural performance in the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of collective memory reveals the ways in which seemingly disparate, heterogenous, idiosyncratic, and autobiographical memories can be conceived of as *memory assemblage*, and as providing coherence and form through their allocation as an element of cultural performance. Through this novel approach to both cultural performance and social memory, I have demonstrated the manner in which memory assemblages are co-functioning elements of a shared narrative, and a common collective memory. Furthermore, the coherence provided by both the theory of cultural performance, and the collective arc of narrative, can be understood as aiding in *mnemonic re-fusion*, and sense- and meaning-making on the part of both the researcher, in the application of the elements of cultural performance, and by research participants, in their structural narrative approach to expressing collective memory.

Taking a collective and dramatic structural narrative approach, and incorporating Freytag's Pyramid or a *collective arc of narrative*, I have argued that research participants have demonstrated *exposition*, *inciting incidents*, and *rising actions* of social and economic crisis culminating in the defeat of Muldoon by Lange and the Labour Party. Having provided a collective account of rising tension, participants narrated a collective memory of structural reform and the 'betrayal' of the Labour Party's social democratic principles as *social drama*. Adopting a processional and processual approach in the analysis of the past, the social drama as recalled collectively by participants was shown as necessitating and resulting in collective acts of resolution in both the lived experience of research subjects, and as a function of narrative. Through their collective memory, within an overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion, participants recount the tragedy of neoliberalisation, as a lived past, and an ongoing process they must continue to navigate and make sense of. Through their shared memory, participants reassert the inherent contingency of neoliberalism, insist that *there are alternatives*, but

also suggest that any future transformation must emerge from a reaffirmation of the sacred power of the collective, and must place *people* before *the market*.

The novel approach I have taken over the course of this research, in applying Alexander's framework for the analysis of cultural performance to the study of collective memory, exposes certain tensions in the theory's application to social memory studies. Through a structural narrative approach, an acknowledgement and incorporation of both traditionalist and presentist accounts, and the conceptualisation and incorporation of cultural performance as something both *remembered* and implicit in the *act of remembering*, I have endeavoured to resolve the inherent temporal and epistemological tensions that result from the application of the framework to collective memory. In doing so, I have demonstrated the manner in which theories of cultural performance and the structural narrative approach provide further form and order to heterogenous and autobiographical accounts in the re-construction and re-fusion of a truly *collective* memory. While this study has demonstrated the ways in which these complementary approaches may be successfully applied to any number of significant events in a given collective's past, future research in this area would be bolstered by further exploration of the tensions that exist between the analytical frameworks of collective memory and cultural performance adopted in this study, most notably, the negotiation of time and subjectivity.

As counter-memory and historical knowledge contest the legitimacy of New Zealand's foundational identity-myth of egalitarianism, there remains a *residual* structure of feeling of a time before the pronounced inequality and atomisation of the current era. Together participants assert that these social democratic affects and sacred associations must be harnessed for truly progressive social and economic transformation. As Alexander (2007) writes,

> The imposition of inequality, and struggles over justice, inclusion, and distribution, are culturally mediated. Both the creation and maintenance of inequality and the struggle against it are fundamentally involved in meaning-construction, for both good and for ill. This means they are oriented to 'boundaries' of a symbolic kind (p. 25).

Through their collective memory of the drama of neoliberalisation, participants hold that reaffirming those residual, sacred principles of social democracy within an emergent structure of feeling, may supersede the cultural dominance of neoliberalism. In doing so, they reimagine the symbolic boundaries of the present, with reference to and incorporation of the symbolic boundaries of a residual past.

Focussing on New Zealand's trade union movement, and community and voluntary sector, as an overlapping sphere of mnemonic communion, and a cohort of subjects in which collective memory resides, this research invites comparative studies of similarly discrete mnemonic communities within civil society, and from across the political spectrum. Adopting the strong program framework of cultural performance, and a structural narrative approach, future research may wish, for instance, to re-construct a collective memory of neoliberalisation from the perspective of New Zealand's business community and associations, or perhaps a collective memory of structural change from members of key industries and public institutions who faced redundancies as a result of neoliberalisation. A study of the latter kind may seek to focus on the many New Zealand towns hardest hit by neoliberal reforms as potential or actual *sites of memory* (Nora, 1996).

Such research will be strengthened by approaches that centre meaning in the analysis of the past, and situate and map that meaning in its present context. From a cultural sociological perspective, the adoption of the strong program's theories of cultural performance and structural hermeneutics provides such an approach, giving form, structure, and meaning to collective memory, and identifying the symbolic boundaries through which any future social transformation may be articulated.

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