Using storytelling to promote pro-environmental behaviour in Cornish businesses

by

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Acknowledgements

0.1 Abstract

Despite the recognised effects of anthropogenic climate change, global measures have not been extensive enough to mitigate the risk of severe and irreversible impact (IPCC 2014: 17). In the UK, business emissions are slow to improve (DECC 2016), with some business "cultures" being less socially critical of environmentally damaging behaviours than domestic equivalents. To date, little research has focused on the actions of smaller businesses, particularly in a regional context, although region-specific policies are suggested as being most appropriate in terms of influencing environmental behaviour (IPCC 2014; 26). Regional identities must also be considered, as the promotion of behaviours which complement self-identity are likely to be most effective (Moser and Dilling 2007: 71).

Numerous studies have found that normative messaging can influence behaviour (Goldstein *et al* 2007: 15), and although fewer studies have taken place in business contexts, there is evidence that if people perceive themselves to be part of a "business community" they are likely to be influenced by its norms (Dashwood 2012). Perceived injunctive norms are particularly influential, and stories are effective at conveying approval and disapproval (Boyd 2009: 64). Stories are also generally prosocial, and their ability to promote cooperation can be used in planning processes to enhance understanding and depolarise issues (Throgmorton 2005: 128; Wilson and Lewis 2013). Fields that explore norms and stories have made crucial findings on the effective promotion of behaviour change, however, there is little research which explores the interplay between these approaches. This study provides a critical intervention in the field of storytelling, by bringing together normative messaging with the creation of stories, to assess potential influence on a set of small businesses in Cornwall. The research examines the effectiveness of injunctive normative storytelling for promoting pro-environmental behaviours, demonstrating the ways in which storytelling could play an important role in the creation of future region-specific mitigation policies.

0.2 Introduction

0.2.1 Hypothesis

Human activity is causing negative impacts on the environment, of which business activity is a part. Norms can be an effective behavioural influencer. Stories can be an effective method of transmitting norms. Stories might therefore be an effective method of changing human business behaviour and ameliorating negative impact on environments.

This study therefore investigates the potential of storytelling as a mode of changing the perceptions and behaviours of small businesses in a regional economy such as Cornwall.

0.2.2 Note to the reader

It is inevitable that any animal will change the environment in which it lives, however, at the time of writing, there is widespread concern that current and projected changes are significant, unethical and potentially irreversible. As has been illustrated, human action cannot necessarily be categorised as impacting positively or negatively, however, collectively, actions can result in effects that would likely be described as negative, such as species extinction, or human death/suffering.

Although this study explores the potential for the reduction of negative anthropogenic impacts on ecology generally, it must be noted that the greatest of these, and the reason for the initiation of this research, is climate change or global warming, which Timothy Morton describes as a "hyperobject", temporally and spatially so vast that it cannot be grasped (2013). Citing a number of studies, Kelly Levin *et al* note that changing ingrained norms can be incremental and slow, but that strategies such as "mirroring" other normatively supported interventions, deliberative and non-consensus driven stakeholder learning, and non-facilitated endogenous change (presumably normative) can hasten this process: "secondary core" beliefs can be changed without challenging "deep core" values (2012: 147). This is echoed by other research which finds that knowledge of climate science is not a prerequisite for the uptake of low-

carbon behaviour (Corner 2012; Kahan *et al* 2012; Kaesehage 2013). Levin's approach could enable uptake of behaviours which contribute towards climate change mitigation, bypassing ideological issues. This research therefore takes a behaviour-focussed approach, testing the theory of Levin and others.

The next section describes the problem of climate change, rather than the problem of anthropogenic ecological impact, and is external to the literature review because it is considered the driver *for* this research, rather than its direct subject. The reader will, however, find numerous references to climate change throughout this study. As the next sections will describe, there is much to support the promotion of ideologically and practically relevant behaviours, identified through collaborative rather than prescriptive means. For this reason, and the aforementioned benefit of bypassing ideological issues, climate change was not directly referenced in the practical phases. Participants were considered "expert" on those values and behaviours relevant to them, and consequently the literature review does not include an assessment of types of pro-environmental behaviour, of which some were mitigative to climate change and others ecologically beneficial in other ways.

Of terminology used, it is noted that the term "climate change" may be an ineffectual motivator (Morton 2013: 8), but the objective of this written thesis is not to motivate, and the term was not used in the practice phases. The phrase "pro-environmental behaviour" is similarly used with caution. Morton describes with irony, "what we often call the environment is being changed, degraded, and eroded (and destroyed) by global forces of industry and capitalism. Just when we need to know what it is, it's disappearing" (2010: 10). Similarly the term "sustainability" is critiqued (Goodland and Daly 1996; Hall 2004: 86-87), but was used sparingly in the practice phases because some participants advocated its use. This was also the finding of Kathi Kaesehage in her Cornish business-based research (2013). There are arguably issues with any terminology used on the subject. Of ecological entities, Morton claims that they must be allowed to "violate the 'law' of non-contradiction": there are no number of grass blades that constitute a meadow, and a "catastrophe" has no boundary (2016: 73, 76). Although the term climate change is of course not entirely an effect of language, nevertheless, language plays a part in representation.

Chapter 1 discusses existing research relating to persuasive storytelling and normative influence, and the characteristics of the context of this practical research – businesses in Cornwall. The areas covered are necessarily broad due to the complex

issue of human involvement with climate change. Chapter 2 describes the practice, including the development of unique methodological systems, practical aspects of the five phases, and a summary of findings from those phases. This is followed by a detailed analysis of findings from the final practice phase in chapter 3. Chapter 4 summarises the findings, which include quantitative results. The discussion is, however, focussed on the qualitative findings gained from transcriptions of the workshop and semi-structured interviews. An assessment is also made of systems and techniques used in the research.

0.2.3 Climate change

Concepts of climate change are chronological, requiring perception of past circumstances, such as airborne gas levels and average temperatures, and causal judgements about the role of humanity. Around the time of conducting the practical elements of this research, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)[1] released their fifth assessment report, which details significant changes in the Earth's climate system (2014: 2) that are "extremely likely" to have been caused by greenhouse gas emissions (ibid: 4). More than half of emissions are "extremely likely" to have been anthropogenic (ibid: 5). Fossil fuel combustion and industrial processes are cited as the largest contributors to emissions, which the report links to global "economic and population growth" (ibid).

The report describes events which highlight the vulnerability of some ecosystems and many human systems to climatic changes, such as "recent heat waves, droughts, floods, cyclones and wildfires" (ibid: 8). Future risks and impacts are also outlined, such as species extinction, food and water security, human health and the impact of extreme weather. These range from "medium agreement" to "very high confidence" (ibid: 13-15). The report notes greater risks for "disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development" (ibid: 13), and predicts with medium confidence that climate change impacts will displace people and slow down economic growth (ibid: 16). Of the distant future (multi-century/millennial timescale), the risk of "abrupt and irreversible changes" is suggested, unless a "large net removal of CO2 from the atmosphere over a sustained period" takes place (ibid:16).

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[1] Widely considered to be the leading international body on climate change.

Because of the futural aspect of climate change, as well as the complexity of the climate system, probability is a feature of the report, which is merely a characteristic of falsifiable approaches to current scientific reasoning.[2] Hans Reichenbach suggests that "we can do without certainty" (1951: 49). However, as a 2010 article in the Guardian states, "the only way to prove with 100% certainty that humans are responsible for global warming would be to run an experiment with two identical Earths – one with human influence and one without." Probability, whether or not consciously so, is a part of "everyday life", but not necessarily of everyday language. Steve Jones suggests that "because so much of science involves uncertainty it is open to attack from those who have never experienced that sensation" (2011: 68), while Morton observes that "denials involving snowballs are denying the only causality theories that make sense to us" (2016: 14). As section 1.7 will discuss, it is possible that ideological associations and histories of narrating climate change have contributed to that which the IPCC describes as "inertia" (2014: 19).

The IPCC report characterises climate change as a "collective action problem", due to the climatic mixing of greenhouse gasses: "many of those most vulnerable to climate change have contributed little to emissions" (2014: 17). This means that action and consequence are not always linked. They therefore advise "cooperation". The Koyoto Protocol 1997, and Paris Agreement, 2016 (UNFCC 2016) are examples of this on an international level. Section 1.5 explores the benefits of group thinking on "acting for others", however, as will be addressed, group membership relies to some extent on out-group perception. Gordon Allport describes hypothetical group membership circles, lessening in "potency" from family/neighbourhood/city to nation/racial stock/mankind. The latter presents a difficulty in terms of loyalty as "there seems to be a special difficulty in fashioning an in-group out of an entity as embracing as mankind" (1954: 43). This presents problems in addressing global climate change. Morton describes climate change as "massively distributed" (2016: 11), and "unimaginably vast", adding that if "I am directly responsible for beings that far into the future… no one then will meaningfully be related to me; and my smallest action now will affect that time in profound ways" (2013: 60).

The IPPC report's adaptive recommendations are most relevant to this study as it is proposed that individuals as well as governments can implement strategy, which is

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[2] A scientist generally attempts to conduct research objectively and reduce elements of subjectivity (Daston and Galison 2007; Beveridge 1950: 90). Whether or not this is achieved, or should be (Haraway 1988) is another matter. Intuition, for example, plays an important role in science (Beveridge 1950: 68-81). But current methodologies direct how that intuition is managed. Karl Popper writes more on this (1935: 28).

"place and context specific" and values "local and traditional knowledge" (2014: 19). The authors note that "at the national level, transformation is considered most effective when it reflects a country's own visions and approaches in accordance with its own circumstances and priorities" (ibid: 20). As section 1.9 explains, there is evidence that perceptions of unique Cornish identity may benefit from a county-specific approach.

Of strategies for adaptation and mitigation, the report focuses on findings that relate to voluntary citizen-uptake (albeit potentially pressured by perceived norms), rather than enforcement of adaptive/mitigative strategy. While the latter may arguably be most effective, it is not the focus of this study. However, the term "pro-environmental behaviour" is used broadly in this thesis (Stern 2000: 409-410), recognising its interrelatedness with social and economic factors,[3] so an example of pro-environmental behaviour might be supporting increases in legislation rather than lobbying against them. It is noted, however, that there are also problems with legislative approaches (Lazarus 2009).

Over time, as the effects of climate change become more apparent, scepticism as to the validity of climate science appears to be reducing: Segnit and Ereaut describe a trend towards consensus in their study of the public sphere (2007: 9). However, it should not be assumed that such consensus would trigger large-scale mitigative action. Slavoj Zizek suggests that politicians and managers who were previously dismissive of climate science "are now all of a sudden treating global warming as a simple fact, as just another part of 'carrying on as usual'" (2010: 329). At the time of writing, a Presidential election took place in the US with a marked absence of climate change on campaign agendas (Luce 2016). A study of EU and US publics found that people "generally considered [it] less important than other personal or social issues" (Lorenzoni and Pidgeon 2006: 86). A relationship has also been found between climate change perspectives and worldviews (Poortinga *et al* 2011; Painter 2011: 1; Kahan *et al* 2012). Additionally, uptake of pro-environmental behaviours is not always greater in younger generations,[4] which implies that to secure future mitigative action, behavioural influence is necessary.

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[3] As described by (Serageldin 1994: 2). Despite this, it is preferenced over the term "sustainability" (WCED 1987:8; Hall 2004: 87), due to criticisms of misuse and vagueness (Goodland and Daly 1996; Hall 2004: 86-87), also echoed by some participants in the practice phases (sections 2.3.4a, 3.4.10).
[4] Comparison of US survey data spanning over 40 years found that young Americans are less interested in the environment and conserving resources than their elders when they were young (Twenge *et al* 2012).

Christopher Shaw argues that much of climate change discourse is an "ideological act", storied, and abstract due to the way in which humans use story in assessing "truth" and decision-making (2016: 11-12). This is especially the case because climate change is a chronological process and thus its understanding requires thinking about events, past present and/or future in a "narrative account" (Symmons 2001: 31), with "human-flavoured thing data" (Morton 2016: 33). Stories play an important role in cognition (Pratchett, Stewart and Cohen 2002: 31), for "in reality, we are Pan natrans, the storytelling chimpanzee" (ibid: 32). Research into the evolution of language-related brain cortex and genes appear to support this (Preuss 2012), as well as research on the effect of stories on brains (Zak 2012; Zak *et al* 2007). Climate change may not work well as a story because of its protracted plot – a series of potential climaxes rather than one, which span beyond one's lifespan and are therefore difficult to comprehend – and because roles are ill-defined, or do not fit archetypes. As Moser and Dilling suggest: "Unlike many other socially defined problems of the twentieth century, global warming does not clearly resonate with any current cultural icons or values" (2007: 10). It is described by some as a "super wicked problem" because it is difficult to conceptualise or prove, interminable, irreversible (no trial runs), and alogical ("good" and "bad" rather than "right and wrong") (Morton 2016: 36-37; Levin *et al* 2012). Morton likens this to a poem, the reading of which is provisional and influenced by preconception, looped and entangling – "weird" (ibid: 5, 37).

The issue of climate change cannot easily be simplified as a fable in traditional story structure (roles/plot), because its "villain" is most of us, albeit with the aid of prostheses such as engines and computers (Morton 2016: 20-21). Instead, aspects of the issue become storified, such as "climategate" and "the hockey stick" (Maslin 2014: 26-8, 22-23). Mark Maslin argues, however, that within media industries in the 1980s and 1990s climate change was presented as "a dramatic story about the end of the world as we know it, with significant controversy about whether it was even true", since which many news outlets have presented the issue as a debate (ibid: 20-23). Jones is critical of this polarised tendency, which he describes as "a handful of journalists who have taken it upon themselves to keep disbelief alive" (2011: 67), although this may be less prelevant now (Boykoff 2007; Segnit and Ereaut 2007). Such debate is reproduced in "everyday conversation" (Dodds 2014: 12), potentially creating perceptions that it is normative to have a stance on climate change, which will then be reinforced by attribution bias and "the filter bubble" (Pariser 2011; Painter 2011: 3).

Some critics describe climate change as a deliberate conspiracy by people who wish to restrict economic growth and/or liberty (Booker and North 2007; Feldman and Marks 2009; Hitchens 2010; Delingpole 2012). Peter Hitchens writes that "most of the people who would have apologised for Stalin have now found other causes, above all the intolerant and puritan secular fundamentalism that gathers round the belief in man-made global warming" (2010: 125). In Naomi Klein's account of a climate conference, the field of environmentalism was "compared to virtually every mass-murderous chapter in human history, from the Catholic Inquisition to Nazi Germany to Stalin's Russia" (2014: 32). However, Klein's writing has also been criticised for its portrayal of "the mild-mannered and freedom-loving Dr. Friedman as a cold-hearted, war-mongering Mr. Hyde" (Norberg 2008: 2), and the term climate change "denier" has been criticised for its Holocaust connotations (Tom Harper, cited Segnit and Ereaut 2007: 20). Fable is also referenced, such as "David and Goliath" (ibid: 6), "boy who cried wolf", or in the case of *Watermellons*, "the wolf in sheep's clothing".

These examples illustrate the use of plot, character and metaphor as a short-cut to meaning or emotional link to memory. Parallel stories are also used metaphorically by many writers, such as tobacco smoke and health (Oreskes and Conway 2011), BSE in cattle (Booker and North 2007), the eradication of slavery (Higgins 2010), algal blooms (Ireland 2013), friendly squirrels (Hall 2007), the Argentinian economic crisis of 2001 (Storiesformypeople 2012), and Malthusianism.[5] As section 1.1 demonstrates, stories can inform, shape beliefs and attitudes, and challenge automatic behaviours. However, they can do so by exaggerating the relevance of a link which then provides emotive reinforcement.

As numerous examples in chapter 1 will show, categorical thinking applies to both story and normative messaging. On climate change stories, Shaw describes the emergence of "anchoring" theories in which foreign objects are compared to systems or categories that are already known, along with symbolism, which is used to

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[5] "We are burdensome to the world, the resources are scarcely adequate for us… already nature does not sustain us." Tertullian, 200 A.D. (O'Neill 2010) This is commonly attributed to Tertullian at a point in history when the world population was an estimated 3% of that in 2010 [Ecology Network estimate that the world population in 200AD was 190million<223million (Ecology Network 2013), creating a midrange 223million. Compared to an estimated 6,868million in 2010 (ibid), this would mean that the 200AD figure was 3.25% of the 2010 figure, or, one could say that there was a 3,080% increase over 1810 years). As the population grew, technological advancements meant that, instead of 'Malthusian catastrophe', humans found new ways to survive with available resources, for example mechanisation in agriculture, global exchange, and access to fossil fuels. These future advancements were unknown to Tertullian. The quote is often used by those who believe that human advancement will avert catastrophes presented by climate change.

"familiarise" concepts (2016: 17). There is much in section 1.6 to suggest that injunctive normative messaging (that which conveys approval or disapproval) is an effective behavioural influencer, and stories are commonly used for this. Therefore, despite the aforementioned "problems" of climate change stories, it is likely that stories will also play a significant role in behaviour change. This study contributes findings to that growing field.

0.2.4 Fields

The previous section outlines the context for a study that explores the potential for reduction of negative impact by humans on environments. The next chapter investigates storytelling as an effective method for promoting the perception of norms, situating this research in the field of storytelling, with the inclusion of elements of history and language analysis. As this study focuses on the impact of stories and behavioural influencers, it also gains much from the field of behavioural psychology, in particular research on the effect of normative perception. The critical context also includes business studies research, although as later chapters assert, practical findings about the characteristics of businesses in Cornwall were of most use in the geographical context of this research. Knowledge of climate science was required for the research, but this study does not propose to contribute to this field, beyond the wider context of the environmental humanities.

Despite the ancient role of stories and norms in societies, much of the literature review is drawn from recent decades due to a booming of research into both fields, with many relatively recent findings into the effectiveness of stories as behavioural influencers. There is, however, little research which explores the interplay between these theories. In particular, findings from behavioural psychology are largely quantitative, and those from storytelling qualitative. This research provides a critical intervention in the field of storytelling by combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, especially through the examination of language signifiers, to develop new models that assess potential influence.

Recent projections about the extent of climate change, and movements to mitigate it, mean that there is still much to be learnt in terms of the application of such messaging, contextual variances, and ways of understanding processes of influence,

all of which, present a particular challenge in the case of automatic behaviours. This research is therefore timely in terms of its contribution to the field of storytelling and its potential practical application.

The interdisciplinary approach of this study and its combination of techniques from diverse fields constitute a methodology that also provides a unique contribution to knowledge. The study sits within the field of storytelling, but draws on findings further afield such as anthropological approaches and social science techniques. As the previous section asserts, such an approach is justifiable given the complexity of its subject. There are however risks to interdisciplinary study, in particular whether specific fields or theories are properly represented within a broader literature review. To ensure academic rigour, the research was supported by academics from separate institutions specialising in both storytelling and psychology, and thus a range of methods were considered. As chapter 2 will assert, those chosen drew from both, and as an iterative process responding to the research subject. This is therefore a qualitative analysis of stories and normative discussion about pro-environmental behaviours by some businesspeople in Cornwall, the findings of which may in some cases be transferable to other scenarios.

As the next chapter demonstrates, while much of the theory posits that location specific, normative stories may be effective in promoting the voluntary uptake of pro-environmental behaviours, there is little qualitative investigation of this, especially within Cornish business communities. This research therefore provides new models for the assessment of in-group perception and influence, as well as practical findings which support these hypotheses. It is proposed that these findings and methods be of particular significance to those constructing and/or assessing normative messaging, as well as those researching location-specific and/or business storytelling. These findings have the potential to contribute to the design of further research models for predicting the effectiveness of stories as behavioural influencers.

Chapter 1: Literature review

This chapter will explore methods for promoting voluntary behaviour change through implied norms and/or stories, which contribute to a hypothesis tested in the practice phases. In summary, it will propose that stories may be an effective method in promoting behaviour change because they can provoke emotional responses and relate to people's values, thus potentially de-polarising debate by emphasising similarity and re-personalising "the other". In this way, stories can be perceived by audiences as normative, which has also been found to be a powerful behavioural influencer. Finally the research context of Cornish business will be explored. This is important because normative messaging varies between communities, and indeed findings support the notion that smaller businesses and/or people in Cornwall may have specific characteristics. There is little existing research in this area, and so this project is timely in its focus.

1.1 Stories

Humans often storify complex concepts/events to aid understanding and action. Hayden White explored this phenomenon in a study of archetypal plots in nineteenth-century historical writing (1928). The implications of such framings are readily imaginable: White indicates that in order to create a conceptual apparatus with which to represent a field, one must first "prefigure" that field (ibid: 29). On the use of geopolitical language, Klaus Dodds suggests that "it can quickly become rather abstract, disembodied, and inattentive to the complex interrelationship between people, institutions, and places" (2014: 6).

There are clearly issues with the storifying of concepts, so why do we do it? The answer, according to Steven Pinker, is largely an evolutionary one. He likens life to a game of chess in which moves and countermoves "multiply out to an unimaginably vast set of interactions" (1997: 543). Fictional narratives provide a cataloguing system of "conundrums" and strategies (ibid). In these terms, a catalogue provides a generalisation of story-type, to which a conundrum is cognitively linked and thus considered in that story-like way. The nature of a person's cataloguing system is unique (despite commonalities) and also dynamic. It is responsible for what White

describes as prefiguring, or Hans-Georg Gadamer as prejudgement (Warnke 1987: 76), which is itself categorical, and an essential process (Allport 1954: 20-21). The understanding of ecological impact is therefore linked to what might be described as "ideology", which is explored further in section 1.7.

There are a number of critics who attempt to define what a story is: definitions might be described as quite loose (Simmons 2001: 3), gradational (Worth 2008: 43), or including sub-categories (Gabriel 2000: 25-27). Additionally, research into the commonalities of story types and structure (for example Propp 1928; Campbell 1949; Levi-Strauss 1955; Frye 1957; Genette 1980; Booker 2004), contribute to the field of narratology or a grammar of narrative. Drawing on these findings, some critics research the effectiveness of stories, proposing strategy for their construction/delivery (for example Vogler 1992; Denning 2005; Heath and Heath 2008; Zaltman and Zaltman 2008; Karia 2015), and there are also examples of those who deliver stories, in various forms, as a profession, who might be described as "master storytellers". Memetics, linguistics, psychoanalysis, ethnography and other fields relate to story. Defining or representing these fields is not the purpose of this research, however, aspects of these different approaches relate to this subject.

This study defines story as an account of events, but it also explores the potential of "narrativity" as described by Sarah Worth (2008: 43). Section 2.3.2 will attempt to measure this concept by analysing structure, and to some extent technique. From early examples such as Aristotle, many writers and critics have explored dramatic structure, producing a series of models that vary in elements such as number of "acts", but which are generally similar in their transition from a scene-setting introduction, to action/s, and a reflective conclusion. Gustav Freytag's 1863 model (2012), often described as "Freytag's pyramid", has been used in section 2.3.2 to this effect. In this process, stories are described as more or less "story-like", compared to "statement-like", such as those described by Yiannis Gabriel as "opinions" or "proto-stories" (2000: 25-26). However, it is noted that what Stephen Denning describes as "minimalist" stories can be effective in large organisational settings (2005: 8).

Defining messaging in this way does not predict its effectiveness in changing behaviours. Stories are not effective simply by being story-like, as opposed to statement-like, nor does messaging require a narrative element to be successful. Stories can have a powerful effect on behaviour, both by informing audiences of facts and by rousing emotions and empathy through their telling, but (as will be explored in

the next section), the reception of a story is influenced by the individual stories of a given audience group. As such, what might be considered a folkloric approach to the concept of "story" has been adopted in this study, recognising its existence as a phenomena, fluid in meaning, that might be performed (told) in a number of ways. The reader will find some interchangability between the terms "story" and "narrative" within this literature review, because it draws on findings from fields and theorists who may define the terms differently. It was generally found that within performance contexts, "narrative" refers to the events (plot), "story" of their expression (play), and "telling" as the act of performance, through which meaning is derived. Conversely, some social scientists will view the story as general plot and narratives as multiple versions of that.

Stories can potentially transcend or disrupt normative behaviour by making the ordinary strange (Bruner 2003: 9; Zipes 2001: 135), and the extraordinary familiar (Bruner 2003: 90), thus creating a space for the listener to consider whether "automatic" behaviours are in-line with their own values, to disagree, or to "navigate change" (Wilson 2014). Storytelling is also an act of persuasion (Zipes 2001: 135), often intended to uphold rituals or challenge the status quo (ibid: 132). Jack Zipes offers a definition of "genuine storytelling" as:

> [T]he frank presentation and articulation of experience and knowledge through different narrative modalities in order to provide a listener with strategies for survival and pleasure and to heighten one's awareness of the sensual pleasures and dangers of life (ibid: 134).

In this example the purpose is to "provide a listener with strategies". Brian Boyd goes further still by stating that "narrative is always strategic" (2009: 176). In the context of this research this is certainly the case. However, Zipes also describes "the genuine storyteller [as] a sceptic, a doubter, whose wisdom is conveyed by the realisation that there may be no wisdom or ethic to be passed on" (2001: 135). Semiotically, this construes "meaning" as occurring in the audience's mind/s rather than in the story itself (Barthes 1957; Fish 1980). Zipes suggests that "one cannot determine what wisdom or ethical principles the teller will pass on to the listener. Surely, all tales teach" (2001: 135), while Bruner observes that stories' message can be "so well concealed that even the teller knows not what axe he may be grinding" (2003: 5). In the context of this research, the strategic role is that of the researcher, constructing meaning through the juxtaposition of stories. Tellers will have their own reasons for

storytelling, but it is quite possible that their approach is that of the "genuine storyteller".

The extent to which stories promote "values" which are influenced by norms, and thus establish a "closed loop" is notable. However, the aforementioned openness of meaning is what enables stories to provoke change in people and communities. Boyd describes the chief functions of art and story as "improving human cognition, cooperation, and creativity" (2009: 378). Crucially, the latter does not aim to solve a problem, but generates "new possibilities that *may* prove to solve problems, even significant ones" (ibid: 406). Thus cultures evolve, and through narrative, the past and future is remembered and imagined, which Bruner describes as a fused process (2003: 93). Through this, "selfhood" is constructed (ibid: 63-87), and identity is narrated.

The important role of storytelling in societies is further underlined by evidence that stories are particularly effective at engaging audience attention (Gottschall 2013: 28-32), and that brains can mimic narratives, which Boyd attributes to the "high intensity social information" of stories (2009: 192, 219). As section 1.6 will outline, stories have a significant role in the promotion of norms, and are thus frequently prosocial (ibid: 176), especially those selected for children (ibid: 375). Links between stories and oxytocin (Barraza and Zak 2009), oxytocin and empathy/generosity (ibid), oxytocin and trust (Kosfeld *et al* 2005), and oxytocin and in-group cohesion (De Dreu *et al* 2010), are also evident. However, Arlene Simmons writes that attempts to define and measure stories require a right-brain perspective on a left-brain activity (2001: xix):

> Explaining storytelling is like explaining a kitten. We all know about kittens. We have wonderful memories of kittens – children holding kittens, watching kittens play, petting a kitten. Our memories are meaningful whole. Trying to break them down into pieces is like cutting a kitten in half to understand it. Half a kitten isn't really half a kitten. Breaking storytelling down into pieces, parts, and priorities destroys it. There are some truths that we just know, we can't prove it but we know them to be true (ibid: xviii).

In these metaphors, Simmons resists objective scrutiny over what might be considered as the essence of stories. This research does, to some extent, provide a post-mortem of the "kitten", and it is important to note that in this process, the stories are no longer represented. However, this is not a study of stories but their potential impacts. The aforementioned research into biological links between stories and prosocial values provide insight into the phenomena of stories' influence.

This study explores the potential of normative stories, however, there are different ways that a story might be perceived as normative. Storytelling has the ability to "break down barriers" and create normative perception despite difference. There are a number of writers/performers who promote strategies for effective storytelling, specifically in business settings, who have succeeded in influencing behaviours (Gabriel 2000; Brown *et al* 2004; Denning 2005; Smith 2012; Callahan 2016). Some of their findings will be explored in the following sections, however, it should be noted that their experience is mostly with large corporate international organisations, as opposed to Cornish businesses which are predominantly SMEs.[6]

It is likely that techniques promoted by some of those referred to (especially if delivered by what might be described as a "master storyteller") might well increase perception of similarity and behaviour change in an audience, even if the storyteller is not a part of the audience's community. For example, metaphorical language can enhance an audience's feelings of intimacy (Bowes and Katz 2015). Additionally the role of fiction is endorsed by many of those cited as a powerful influencer of behaviour. However, having geographically situated this research in Cornwall, it was proposed that regionally-specific, rather than universal, methods be applied. Results in sections 2.3.1e, 2.3.4e and 3.4.9 indicate that participants valued regionally-specific narratives, and thus the practical phases were designed to emphasise these elements.

Consequently, the practice phases include stories from actual members of Cornwall's business communities, and tellers' techniques were shaped by the tellers' experiences and "nature" rather than by this literature review. As a result the reader may consider some of the tellers to be better raconteurs than others. However, of stories' ability to change behaviours, technique is just a part. As section 1.6 will explain, perceptions of norms are also a powerful influencer. Whereas technique may increase this perception, it may also be that actual similarities between teller and audience, such as community position, business type or personality type suffice. This research aims to explore this complex interplay.

As this research studies the use of everyday stories as a behavioural influencer, language and performance are relevant. Of organisational storytelling Norlyk,

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[6] Small to medium sized enterprises with up to 249 employees.

Lundholt and Hansen describe a "general looseness of the application of narratological terms commonly used in the storytelling context" (2013). As chapters 2 and 3 will demonstrate, analysis has taken place in written form, by studying transcriptions of stories and of conversations discussing them. In this process, many aspects of the performances (such as tone of voice and body language) have not been studied, and thus its theory has been omitted from this chapter, although it is proposed that further study of this would inform the field.

Of language analysis, there are difficulties in interpreting intentional meaning (Wittgenstein 1953; Austin 1962; Searle 1969), despite "universal" aspects to language (Chomsky 2006). Poetically, William Empson explores juxtapositions of language and the creativity that flows from this (1930), highlighting the benefits of a looseness of language. On local climate change communication Segnit and Ereaut endorse "the everyday playful language of ordinary people" which is imaginative, metaphorical, and informal (2007: 35), and which describes and legitimises "the everyday" (ibid: 31). In a comparison of national and local language use, they describe the latter as descriptive rather than imperative, peer-to-peer rather than top-down, and tangible rather than abstract (for the whole model see ibid: 36). In the practice sections this has been achieved by representing the stories of community members, who used this language naturally, rather than constructing stories in that way. In chapters 2 and 3 an attempt to identify language which implies a perception or promotion of norms has been highlighted, however, this is only one interpretation of the text, as there are no specific references to norms, only potential connotation.

In this section, a brief account has been given of some theoretical findings relating to storytelling which are relevant to this research. As with other parts of this chapter, its referencing is broad in terms of fields, because stories permeate all areas of life. These findings contribute to a critical strategy with which stories and dialogue are explored in chapters 2 and 3. As has been noted, storytelling can be an effective method for promoting behaviour change, within many settings including business. It is not the purpose of this study to test such an established theory. Rather, it aims to explore ways that that influence occurs, which has been researched to a lesser extent, because "storytelling is mess" (Wilson 2014), and so too audience reaction. The findings from this study therefore contribute to areas of audience analysis by exploring similarity/normative perception.

1.2 Resolution

As described in the previous section, narrative plays an essential role in decision-making, however, as explored in the introduction and section 1.7, there are issues with climate change narrative, in particular, the problem of polarisation, be that in the content of narration of perspectives (for example references to good/evil), and also in the narration of narration (for example the emphasis of "sides"). Levin *et al* advise an approach of deliberative stakeholder learning which moves away from achieving consensus, thus bypassing the challenging of "deep core" values by changing "secondary core" beliefs (2012: 147).

Storytelling can also be used as a tool in de-polarising debate. Boyd claims that storytelling is an established method of aiding cooperation (2009: 64), which has evolved as an essential human trait "because its benefits are so substantial, and we can use our intelligence and our sociality – other aspects of our evolved nature – to devise still better solutions to the problems of cooperation" (ibid: 65). He suggests that in larger societies where not all members are known, knowledge of shared norms and institutions plays an important role in cooperation (ibid: 63). Disregard of conventions can trigger in other members what Robert Trivers calls "moralistic aggression" (Trivers 1971: 49). This, Fukuyama notes, can explain "the extraordinary popularity of crime shows and courtroom dramas on television, and the often-obsessive attention with which people follow certain high-profile scandals or crimes" (2011: 40).

Stories can therefore provide a tool for cooperation but also, when perceptually important norms are violated, the narration of punishment. In relation to climate change, there are examples within communities of moralistic aggression, which it is not necessary to reference, and which likely stem from a perception of "wrong" values and disregarded norms.

In his concept of "language games", Jean-Francois Lyotard defines conflict as occurring within a genre of discourse ("litigation") or between genres of discourse ("differend") (1983). H.L. Hix suggests that the latter cannot be resolved by consensus, only domination, unless ruled by a higher litigation, which is "a differend waiting to happen", "like the child's endless iteration of the question 'Why?' which inevitably ends in 'Because I'm your father, dammit'" (1995: 127). In the case of

climate change then, different genres of discourse, or game rules, would prevent consensus. For example if one were to consider the only proof of climate change to be that which is personally and causally observed, then climate change is not happening, and no amount of data can resolve the view.

In his theory of communicative action, Jürgen Habermas describes differences in stance, particularly those of language. He seeks to resolve the issue through a cooperative form of argumentation (1981: 25),[7] which attempts to democratise discourse by freeing it of force, introducing reflective and adaptive rules, and a goal of understanding (ibid). While complete (normative) "rationality" is unachievable, it does attempt to resolve the aforementioned stalemate of differend by creating a mutual and bespoke context for discourse. Of digital storytelling, which will be explored in the next section, Michael Wilson describes a blurring of the traditional roles of teller and listener (2014). Consequently, the term "audience" is used sparingly in this thesis.

The work of Habermas and other theorists has contributed to fields such as planning and policy analysis (Forester 1989), in which the role of stories in communicative action is also explored (Fischer and Forester 1993; van Hulst 2012). James Throgmorton goes as far as to describe planning *as* storytelling (1996), suggesting that planners are "authors who write texts (plans, analyses, articles) that can be read (constructed and interpreted) in diverse and often conflicting ways" (2005: 125). Findings from the field are relevant because it involves the narrating of futures, often persuasively, and attempts to balance diverse interests. Ecological management, such as climate change mitigation *is* planning. Planners strive for what might be considered an objective stance, insofar as "the meaning(s) of the planners' texts depends on their contexts; that is, their meaning(s) depend(s) on the story or stories of which they are a part" (ibid: 127). Additionally, audiences' own stories and experience of external stories will affect their interpretation (ibid). Most relevant to this study are the findings of planners on the constitutive role of future-oriented storytelling. Thogmorton writes:

> The way in which planners – and others involved in the process of planning – write and talk shapes community, character and culture. How planners (as authors) choose to characterise (name and describe) the people who inhabit and activate their stories shapes how those characters are expected to act and relate to one another. And how planners write and talk shapes who "we" (as a

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[7] This likely influenced Makau and Marty 2001.

temporary community of authors and readers) are and can become (Throgmorton 2005: 128).

On climate change management in Cornwall, Kaesehage found that business leaders perceived that there was no direct support from the government and local council, noting: "they feel very much left on their own" (2013). Additionally, a perception of inconsistent legislation was causing a lack of trust (ibid). In these examples, issues in communication (quantity/content) contributed to a lack of trust and likely emphasised otherness, which would shape future events. On his experience in Africa, Michael Traber writes that "many governments in Africa and elsewhere have been toppled because they failed to listen to the stories of the people. It is dangerous for any state not to take the people's stories seriously" (1988: 117). If the forming of legislation were to be a more inclusive planning process, it is likely that participants would feel more trust of and similarity to planners, even if the result of the process were to be the same minimal support and legislative change. However, if the process were to genuinely strive for inclusivity, then it is likely that outcomes would be different. Knut Lundby describes this as a "bottom-up" activity (2008: 4), in which an outcome cannot be foreseen by its facilitators.

In reshaping the planning process, Throgmorton advises that planners should recognise their position in an intricate web of relationships that contains diverse and conflicting stories, and that they "must find ways to set these alternate stories side by side, let them interact with one another, and thereby let them influence judgements about how particular nodes and links in the web should change, are likely to change, and why" (2005: 128). It is not possible to prescribe exactly how this might happen, because Throgmorton advises a context-specific approach. However, as already outlined, stories can harness attention and aid cooperation, including emotional connection, and the act of listening to a story may itself promote prosocial values, which might also be described as reciprocal altruism.

In a story-sharing environment, a common response to hearing a story is sharing one of one's own, which is linked in some way.[8] For example, a natural response to a story about a long car journey may be the sharing of one's own story about a car, or a journey, or boredom/frustration. The participants collaboratively steer the conversation in surprising directions, and having collaborated together, otherness is reduced between them. It is in this way that a storytelling environment could be

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[8] "One story often leads to another story" (Wilson and Lewis 2013: 4).

considered to mediate, without the presence of a mediator, compared with the approach of a debate which is more polarised. However, this presents a generalisation, as storytelling can also be used to highlight difference, and debate is also a form of storytelling. Boyd suggests that narrative, more generally, enables people to understand other perspectives, and introduces flexibility, which in its full capacity depends on "play" (2009: 176).

As described in the introduction, the subject of climate change may provoke feelings of mistrust in some people, including in Cornish business communities (Kaesehage 2013). Frank Fisher advises citizen participation to promote "understanding and trust between experts and citizens" (2000: 240), and it may be that storytelling is an effective way of increasing perceptions of trust. However, there are also critiques of citizen participation strategies which can be "tokenistic" (Arnstein 1969), particularly where used only in unproblematic contexts. John Raine argues that the question is "how far the 'journey of decentralisation' extends and of the degree to which both government and the public really value 'localism'" (Raine and Staite 2012: 8).

This is certainly relevant in the context of climate change management, however, public engagement is necessary in the context of voluntary behaviour change, which is the focus of this study. The findings of this section illustrate the complexity of resolution in groups. On the techniques for the promotion of pro-environmental behaviours, Corner *et al* note that:

> The vast majority of public communication around climate change has involved individuals, and not much consideration of the social context. It follows, therefore, that if attempts to engage the public more effectively on climate change are to utilise insights from research on human values, these insights would be best applied in more participatory, group level, situations. In fact, there is evidence that deliberative processes themselves promote more altruistic evaluations of environmental issues like climate change (2014: 7).

This aligns with the earlier hypothesis that stories may promote prosocial values regardless of content. The practical phases of this research explore the role and application of stories in group and individual settings. Similar to the intentions of Habermas and other critics, it aims to explore implicit clues in and around those stories, in particular those signalling normative perception. In summary, stories play an important role in shaping moral identity and are a particularly relevant tool for pro-environmental communication because they can sit comfortably with ambiguity. Storytelling enables the shaping of identity with multiple stances (Bruner 1986 134-

150), allowing contradiction, and presenting an alternative to polarised stalemates. Again, such theories are well researched, however, in this study an analysis is made of linguistic normative elements, which contribute towards further understanding of that process.

1.3 Affirmation

A number of researchers have noted that describing the negative impacts of climate change may not be effective in promoting behaviour change. Per Espen Stoknes advises against narrating "the apocalypse of climate hell", arguing that instead "a plurality of stories is needed, each creating meaning and engagements for different groups of people" (2015: 132). Susanne Moser also notes that guilt-promotion is not always effective (2007: 67-71). Nordhaus and Shellenberger further critique the negative rhetoric of environmentalist narratives:

> Think of the verbs associated with environmentalism and conservation: "stop", "restrict", "reverse", "prevent", "regulate" and "constrain". All of them direct our thinking to stopping the bad, not creating the good (2007: 7).

Nordhaus and Shellenberger advise that instead of restrictive terms, language and strategies that harness people's "aspiration" should be used (ibid: 16). In their review of a number of studies, Corner, Markowitz and Pidgeon found that approaches which promoted the specific values of a culture were more successful in changing behaviours (2014: 5). Johan Norberg uses this technique in promoting libertarian attitudes. He suggests that wealth "creates new environmental problems but has within it the means to take care of those problems as well" and that future resources will "make it possible to do things now seen as unimaginable, from using totally clean energy sources and adapting to warming, to removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere" (CATO 2016). Whether or not the reader agrees with such interpretations of science and economics, Norberg's optimistic tone is unlikely to provoke defensive responses (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002).

Ideology or worldview has a significant affect on this issue. Although this research focuses on normative influence, it is also noted that schema theories include similarities relating to messaging that conflicts with identity. Zizek's work (2010)

implies that such defence mechanisms are part of a process of grieving the end of capitalism, and are thereby necessary in properly addressing the issues of climate change. He might describe some elements of this study to be "chocolate laxative" (2006). Morton also likens ecological awareness to chocolate, but describes capitalism as a symptom of the problem (2016: 130, 23). Such paradoxical situations were also described by Corner *et al* (2014: 6). This study does not attempt to resolve them, instead it investigates the potential for behaviour change within the current system.

Moser writes that "increasing the sense of personal vulnerability, responsibility, and empowerment is critical in tapping into people's positive motivation to pay attention" (2007: 74). She advocates normative messaging, describing social norms as providing "a compass for good behaviour" (ibid), perhaps differentiating between social and antisocial norms. In their study of language promoting pro-environmental behaviour, Segnit and Ereaut advise emotionally attracting people to an action by making it appealing and meaningful (the extreme of which is brand identity), rather than a "dated discourse of duty" (2007: 39). A benefit of local narratives, they note, is that collective achievements can be celebrated (ibid: 38).

Some findings from the field of positive psychology are relevant, because techniques emphasise emotions relating to future-mindedness and responsibility (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi 2000). A study by Megan Bissing-Olsen and colleagues found some increase in pro-environmental employee behaviours when conducting positive affect method (2012). Zelenski, Dopko and Capaldi found increases in cooperative and sustainable behaviours after nature exposure (2015). In Maria Ojala's research, a trend between "hope" and pro-environmental behaviour was found in young people (2012), although studies by Sabine Pahl and colleagues did not find this link with comparative optimism and pro-environmental behaviour (Pahl *et al* 2005). Pahl and Bauer did, however, find in another study that perspective-taking of a fictional future scenario (of human victim of environmental change) increased environmental engagement (Pahl and Bauer 2013).

While these studies are diverse, they all emphasise positive elements of human psyche and the influence that this can have on behaviours. The latter example in particular illustrates the potential of stories in promoting behaviour change, although fiction is not the focus of this study. Instead, stories which are "true" have been researched because of the potential for increased normative perception. Or as

Gottschall describes, "truthy" and "fiction" (2013: 161, 12). This will be explored in the next section.

Behaviour change can happen in a number of ways, and section 1.6 will explore findings of normative influence. As described in the introduction, significant change is required to curb the impacts of climate change. However, as Fukuyama suggests, norms and institutions can be "sticky" (2011: 16, 40). Mass change or a "paradigm shift" can happen, and might be described as a "movement". For example, Jean-Paul Sartre's "group-in-fusion" (1960) describes sudden collective action, and Malcolm Gladwell (2000) and Clay Shirky (2008) describe recent social movements, which are essentially story books narrating the growth of ideas into normative action. Similarly Martin, Goldstein and Cialdini describe the phenomenon of small changes "sparking" big influence (2014). It is not possible to summarise all their findings, but compelling social narrative is a commonality. Shirky describes a transition from TV consumption to new media, which enables production and broadcast or sharing (2010: 22). Walter Wallace explains that:

> [Computer integrations] will add the first scientifically foresightful mechanisms of sociocultural evolution to what has hitherto been only blind natural selection and near-blind elite direction. Adding such mechanisms will be like adding headlights to a car we are driving along unfamiliar and unlighted roads at night, not, of course, that the mechanisms will shut down political debate, but they will give it a firmer basis (2013).

Narrative is a significant part of that "revolution", a sub-sect of which might be considered "amateur" digital storytelling. John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam describe the emergence of this form (2009: 3-15) as "a new media practice, an activist/community movement and a textural system" (ibid: 4). Social digital storytelling is relevant to this study because it enables peer-to-peer story sharing. Joe Lambert, influenced by Robert Fuller, describes the importance of "somebodies" over "anybodies" or "nobodies" (2013: 3), thus illustrating the normative element. Lambert also describes digital storytelling workshops (ibid: 70-84), which enable inclusion of those who are less computer literate. Although such story-sharing has many benefits, politically its intention is democratic:

> The pendulum from a data-centric, logico-centric domination of what we consider knowledge and wisdom, to the intuitive/creative/story based wisdom, is swinging our way. We need a more balanced understanding of what it means to be human, and ways for listening processes to be seen as least as valuable as arguing processes (2012).

Globally, there are a number of story-sharing websites, however, there are also examples which are rooted in a locale, rather like the "community address" described by Segnit and Ereaut (2007: 33). In the UK, *Capture Wales* and *London Voices* are analysed by Nancy Thumin, with a discussion of the tension between the concepts of "ordinary people" and "community" (Hartley and McWilliam 2009: 205-217). Of *Capture Wales* (probably the most relevant because like Cornwall it is mainly rural) there is little audience research but for tellers the process created feelings of pride and sense of self (Kidd 2006: 11). Hamish Fyfe, suggests that the strength of *Capture Wales* is not particularly the technology but rather its ability to re-connect people with "an ancient, oral storytelling tradition" (Fyfe *et al* 2010: 29). What Joe Lambert describes as "find[ing] our way back to the campfire" (2013: 5). In addition to connecting people with these inner skills, the technologies can connect people with one other, with new kinds of group-forming (Shirky 2008: 17; Lambert 2013: 2; Wilson 2014), community identity (Lambert 2012: Q6), and increased understanding of different cultures and viewpoints (Fyfe *et al* 2010: 18). In this way, digital storytelling as a movement has the potential to self-organise, which Shirky describes as the "norm of cooperation" (2010: 113).

Project ASPECT is a digital story/workshop project on climate change which has the power to "subvert knowledge hierarchies" through facilitating "deeper levels of public engagement in a subject that has, up till now, been the domain of the expert" (Wilson and Lewis 2013: 4, 1). Digital stories were produced "dealing with issues relating to climate change, but not addressing them head on" (ibid: 4); this potentially reduced polarisation and defensive positions amongst audiences. Similar to findings in the previous section, it was found that "something different happens in the room when an audience is confronted with a voice that carries such authenticity and quiet authority, based on lived personal experience" (ibid: 7).

Of their findings, Michael Wilson and Karen Lewis describe that in addition to policy-maker engagement, significant engagement had also been achieved amongst individuals and groups that had previously not been engaged with climate change issues (ibid: 8), and that although the technique does not provide a "golden bullet" it is certainly a "tool in the box", and a methodology applicable to other areas of public policy-making (ibid: 8, 4). "Voice" is described as particularly influential. They note that,

> The audience feels "drawn in" to the inner, private world of the storyteller. Even when viewing a digital story online, the sense of intimacy is powerful and the voice of the storyteller often remains with the viewer for some time to come (ibid: 5).

In these descriptions, "inner", "private" and "intimate" imply the perception of connection and/or similarity that storytelling can evoke in audiences. Additionally, "lay-person" terminology may have increased engagement. On the difference between climate and weather, they note:

> People (at least people in the UK) experience weather in their day-to-day lives, not climate, and can engage with climate change only through their experiences of weather – or at least their experiences of extreme weather events (ibid: 8).

Here, "people" and "day-to-day" further emphasise normative aspects of language. They note that "many" consider themselves to be excluded from debate feeling "[ill]equipped to engage in it due to a lack of specialist scientific knowledge, or an inability to relate climate change science to their own experience" (ibid: 8). Of the 18 digital stories produced, it was noted that one was most readily engaged with by community groups, that of a Cornish farmer:

> A voice shaped through years of experience of working the land, rather than the carefully measured voice of the politician or academic. It may be a voice that is unschooled, textured by a strong Cornish accent and lacking academic authority, yet this is what gives it authenticity. It is these very attributes that distinguish her from the more commonly heard voice of scientific expertise and lend her greater authority, believability and trustworthiness. She speaks from subjective experience, not objective data, and her expertise is derived from her experience, rather from scholarly endeavour. She is truly the expert of her own world (ibid: 8).

The findings of *Project ASPECT* have shaped the design of this research, as it establishes that spoken stories, in workshop and digital story form, can engage diverse communities with climate change issues. Of the farmer's story, Wilson and Lewis note that the teller's use of language and lived experience may have increased its effectiveness.

In addition to social movements described above, stories with a similar aesthetic are also used commercially. Robert Cialdini notes an increase in "ordinary person" testimonials in advertising (2007: 140), which have doubtless been successful in influencing behaviours. Philip Kotler describes a movement towards values-driven, collaborative/participatory, creative and even spiritual marketing, in which social

media plays a role (2010: 4-22). This, he argues, has emerged from the anxieties and confusion of current times in which consumers search for fulfilment in the products and services they choose, for example by addressing social, economic and environmental needs (ibid: 4). Similarly, Simon Sinek outlines the customer loyalty that occurs when brands "become markers or symbols of the values and beliefs we hold dear" (2009: 54) and David Lewis and Darren Bridger describe consumer shifts from "abundance to authenticity" (2000: 3). Paul Zak further suggests that motivating aspects of "transcendent" over "transactional" purpose, are enabled by emotional, character-driven stories (2014).

The link between stories and prosocial values explains the prevalence of stories in values-driven marketing, indeed the term "story" may provide a shortcut or trigger to perceptions of values. For example on a burrito company's website repeatedly used the term despite there being little on it that would be likely to be described as a story. It may be that such techniques will become less effective in future as customers become savvy to new marketing techniques, however, narrative will certainly continue to play a role in promotion and decision-making.

Criticisms of "greenwash" or "ecopornography"[9] are sometimes used against affirmation stories relating to pro-environmental business behaviours, however, such practices may have increased perception of normative business conduct which could have a positive influence on others. Mark Suchman, citing Karl Weick, notes that "managers charged with enunciating such claims frequently find it difficult to avoid buying into their own initially strategic pronouncements" (1995: 579), and also that over time, a new generation of organisational members will adhere to announced, rather than hidden, goals (ibid: 588). Whereas some behaviours or products are noticeably pro-environmental, others are not, and storytelling may be particularly relevant in the promotion of those to customers and other businesses, potentially increasing normative perception of those behaviours. Energy creation is an example of this, described in some circumstances as "eco-bling" (Taylor 2010), and relating to conspicuous consumption.[10] It is suggested that sometimes visible actions such as the installation of solar photovoltaic panels are performed before others which are less visible, such as building insulation, when the latter, which might be described as eco-minimalism (Liddell 2013), would actually have had a more positive impact on the

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[9] Terms commonly attributed to Jay Westervelt (1986) and Jerry Mander (1960s) and still in use at the time of writing (Segnit and Ereaut 2007: 28).
[10] In 1899 Thorstein Veblen used the term conspicuous consumption to describe overt consumption of luxuries as a means of reputability (the visibility of owned objects or actions) (Veblen 1899: 53).

environment. As will be described in section 1.7, social recognition is important to humans, and so storytelling may offer a means for this.

As has been described in this section, messaging that positively relates to people's values may be effective in the promotion of pro-environmental behaviours, and thus identifying those values is necessary. Messaging which is relevant to particular groups, or creates the illusion of relevance through normative elements, may therefore have a greater influence on behaviour. Such messaging can take a number of forms, some of which have been used in this study and will be described in chapter 2. In particular, digital storytelling has been explored as an approach in this context, drawing on a number of examples described in this section. At the time of writing, digital stories are a relatively emergent form, providing ease of access in terms of both production and dissemination compared to analogue techniques, and their general usage can be quite different to earlier or commercial forms of screen-based story, although both include social and artistic objectives. It is important to note, however, that digital storytelling has not simply "arrived" and been adopted by all communities. As chapters 2 and 3 will describe, great variety was found within this research subject in terms of technological skill and preference for types of story-sharing. Technologies and their usages will continue to adapt over the coming decades, perhaps considerably dating this study as new tools become relevant in different life contexts. As sections 1.1 and 1.2 assert, stories have an important social role and are therefore likely to adapt and continue to be relevant as such developments occur.

1.4 Truth

As described in the previous sections, ambiguity of stories can assist consensus, and provide meaning to new scenarios through catalogue-type thinking. Stories can assist recognition of prosocial acts, but perception of those prosocial aspects can also be exaggerated because of that aforementioned ambiguity, as well as potentially the perception that a story's meaning is likely to be "moral", due to the role of stories in people's development. This can present a problem in that actual mitigative action is

required to curb environmental impacts, as opposed to "the dressing up in fine words of continued inaction" (Segnit and Ereaut 2007).

"Moralistic aggression" is frequently aroused when such exaggerations are considered to be seeking commercial gain, but to remove the persuasive aspects of stories in many cases would be to remove their structure. On her work with businesses, visual storyteller Arlene Birt describes a "highlighting of certain elements of the back story, and maybe, trying to lessen some others" (2010 49:50). Brigitte Norlyk *et al* suggest that stories can be used to grow an organisation's brand, identity and development (2013), however, Lazar Dzamic is critical of storytelling in advertising which he describes as "the emperor's new clothes of a new digital trend" making "something archetypal and very precious into a new fad for commercial gain" (2013). "The problem is that 'storytelling' is just like 'personal presence'" he writes: "one is aware of it only when it lacks" (ibid). Such findings are particularly important to this study because of its business focus. As such this section will further explore the notion of truthtelling, and its relation to others such as intent, authenticity, and authority.

To represent concepts of truth fully within this small section would be a fallacy, but it is noted that what might be considered a century of heightened epistemological debate about concepts of truth has preceded the writing of this thesis, and that those ideas have influenced cultures. In particular, a critique of concepts of reality, authenticity and facts (Nietzche 1887; Heidegger 1927; Sartre 1943; Merleau-Ponty 1945; Barthes 1957; Foucault 1966) has contributed to what may be more questioning cultures. Lyotard describes a "game" of scientific and narrative knowledge and legitimation (1979: 23-27), the objective for which is perhaps not truth but authority. Of narrative, Bruner writes that it "including fictional narrative, gives shape to things in the real world and often bestows on them a title to reality" (2003: 8). Even the internal narrative of remembering creates distortion (Bartlett 1932; Bridge and Paller 2012). In Bruner's "giving shape", narrative is, as described in earlier sections, essential. However,

> Storytelling is somehow not innocent, surely not as innocent as geometry, that it even has a wicked or immoral penumbra? We sense, for example, that too good a story is somehow not to be trusted (2003: 5).

"Untruth" is certainly an aspect of societies, and narrative does enable deception. Jerald Jellison states that the "average person" "lies" 200 times a day (Guardian

2003), thus lying has a social purpose. Aldert Vrij found that people with extravert personalities may lie more frequently, and that although lying can be a selfish act, it is also a "social lubricant" (2007: 316). The latter may be considered as more normative, for example altruism in a "white lie", or in the case of "exaggerations" (ibid: 311) or "stretching the truth" (Bauman 1986: 11), by potentially contributing to enjoyment of life "in the interests of greater dynamic tension, formal elegance, surprise value, contrast, or other elements that contribute to excellence in performance" (ibid: 21). Thus, perception of the teller's intention is important. As described in the previous section, it is normative to desire punishment of others who disregard norms (Trivers 1971: 49; Fukuyama 2011: 40). This is apparent in attitudes towards some proponents of untruths who benefit financially, for example those involved in Enron Corporation's accounting scandal in the 1990s (Boje 2008: 129), the "South Sea Bubble" in the 1700s, or "Tulip mania" in the 1600s. Of the latter Charles Mackay writes that "the most extravagant rumours were in circulation" (1841 :51).

In its "social lubricant" form, untruth may be considered more acceptable. In Bauman's study of Texan dog traders in the 1970s, he found examples of exaggeration that were blatant (1986: 11-32). Within that particular niche culture and time, the art of constructing and telling a story was seen as an important part of business transaction and not a deterrent to sale. One might speculate the relevance of what was largely hobby trading in another country several decades ago, however, blatant falsehoods are not altogether uncommon in advertising and beyond (Mitroff and Bennis 1993; Keyes 2004), to the extent that they are even pastiched in popular advertising campaigns such as adverts for Lynx deodorant. Bauman writes: "considerations of truth and belief will vary and be subject to negotiation within communities and storytelling situations" (1986: 11).

Of journalism and politics, also relevant to this study and also the frequent subject of queries relating to truth, Michael Traber describes two types of pseudo story, the first being a "fake story". This he describes as not being a story at all, but parading as one (1988: 121), exampling a man descending from an aircraft. Such is "[not] really news, let alone a genuine story" (ibid), but "comparatively harmless". The second are those which profoundly distort reality:

> They are stories about achievements which don't exist, about improvements in the economy which we know will never be attained, about corruption which will be eliminated, and about problems which will be dealt with, or at least "looked

into". These are pseudo-stories, we know they are. Yet we print and broadcast them (ibid: 122).

The topic is particularly relevant in an era described as "post-truth" and containing "alternative facts" and "fake news", and it must be noted that profound distortions can emerge both from authorities and their alternatives, such as citizen journalism. Digital story hosts such as YouTube process petabytes of data,[11] censorship of which would require an administrating authority which is at odds with the ideological views of some tellers. Lambert wants: "to help everyone use the power of storytelling to project their authority", and to "become anathema to systems of exploitation, of rank, of privilege" which "creates monsters" out of both "somebodies" and "nobodies" (2013: 2,3). In John Ashton's critique of BBC "adjudication" on climate change, he describes the problem of non-specialist "expert" opinion,[12] which could presumably achieve authority status due to the speaker's qualifications or "science speak". Of such issues, Jones notes the impossibility of balancing fact and opinion, advising that scientists' findings can only be balanced with those "qualified to take a knowledgeable, albeit perhaps divergent, view of research" not, in this case, a politician or activist (2011:16).

Of the numerous publications asserting or debunking climate science, often by non-scientists, many are histories of stories or events. Of two published in the same year, one proclaimed "the truth about the coming climate catastrophe and our last chance to save humanity" (Hansen 2009), another spoke of "the truth about all those science scare stories" (Feldman and Marks 2009), both in capitals. As their stances are so opposing, it prompts the question, which is a lie? The question would be unnecessary if Hansen's title were: "my story about past events and what I think the future holds", and Feldman and Marks' were: "our story about past events and how we think they've impacted the present". Both might sell rather fewer copies though. There is no doubt that in the same way that scientific findings become known to the populace, so too can misinterpretations, and censoring is a near-impossible task. Denning writes: "Denying a rumor can give it credibility. Asking how it got started may ensure its spread" (2005: 30).

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[11] Reportedly 100 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute (YouTube 2014).
[12] "At breakfast time, Radio 4's Today programme informed listeners that despite extensive efforts, the BBC had been unable to find a single British scientist willing to challenge the IPCC's findings. At that point the BBC might have concluded that the IPCC's views represent an overwhelming consensus and left it at that. Instead, BBC news editors evidently cast their net wider. By lunchtime World at One was introducing Prof Carter as an Australian geologist, speaking for the "Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change", or NIPCC. Someone who is not a climate scientist, in other words, representing a Not-The-IPCC body. Indeed, it turns out that the NIPCC is backed by the Heartland Institute, a US-based free-market thinktank that opposes urgent action on climate change" (Ashton 2013).

This study does not investigate the truth of stories, rather ways in which they are perceived as true or false. If a story cannot achieve absolute truth, as indicated earlier, then the negotiation that Bauman refers to concerns the lens of reality, and the culture in which it operates. As with any negotiation, it is shaped by oversteps and backlash (moralistic aggression), continually changing its boundaries. However, storytelling can transcend the constraints of "reality" to represent an integrity of stance, which is a strength of the format. Flannery O'Connor reportedly said that "a story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way. You tell a story because a statement would be inadequate" (Guroian 1998: 17). In Barazza and Zak's study, they found that an emotional story which was fictional increased empathy and generosity (behaviour change). It could be considered that the story had an *emotional truth* (families, death) which audiences related to, emphasising similarity and norms. Conversely an unemotional story lacking in dramatic arc had little effect on behaviours. So, it may be that concepts of factual story truth are not necessary in changing behaviours, hence the role of fairy tales and fantasy stories in moral instruction (Guroian 1998: 13). As indicated by Bauman, communities may display normative approaches to the concepts of truth and belief, and so this study will explore how truth is described by some Cornish businesspeople.

Markova, Linell and Gillespie describe trust (a cultural construct) as "dynamic, multidimensional, often contextual (activity-specific) and subject to perspectives, usually implicit, and only indexed (rather than expressed) by language" (2008: xix). They note its basis in self-other relationships, as a "reflected-upon and calculated relation" (ibid: xix, 20), adding,

> We talk about trustworthiness of an individual as a property or a personal quality invoking others' trust in him or her, and about trust and trustworthiness as individual attributes of truster versus trustee (ibid: 20).

In their model for trust-distrust (ibid: 11), a distinction is made between "taken for granted" trust (basic and generalised) and reflective, conceptual trust such as that involving strangers or institutions, and obligations. For the former they draw on the work of Georg Simmel describing the "reciprocal orientations of humans toward one another in broader societal contexts" (ibid: 14), such as social cohesion, in-group solidarity and local community. "Preconceptual" trust, both personal and group, involve "psychosocial feeling" (ibid: 11), and are the focus of this study. Interestingly Simmel notes that this can be partly destroyed on verbalization, because it is no

longer "taken for granted" (ibid: 19). It may be that trust described emotively is indicative of in-group perception and potentially normative influence.

It is proposed that three elements influence truth-thinking:

- Receptiveness: the context of the listener – his or her receptiveness, faith (ability to trust). Influenced by mood, preconceptions, previous experiences, and the environment of the telling.
- Perception of the teller's character/sentiment and intention – whether he or she is sincere, believable, trustworthy. Influenced by performance of the story and visual elements (this relates to primary trust).
- Perception of the information presented – whether it is understandable, believable, or perceived likelihood of factual accuracy (this relates to reflective trust).

These elements are interrelated. For example, if one was in a "bad mood" one might be more critical of a story than one might on another day. If one considered a teller to be a good raconteur, one might perceive the information presented to be more accurate than one would otherwise. However, one can also perceive a story to be true "despite one's better judgement" (i.e. despite the context of one's life experiences). Or one might consider facts to be true despite suspicion of a teller's motives. It is likely that no model can predict the interplay of these elements, because cognitively they exist not in categories but via a network of links. Overall, they might be considered to represent what Nelson Goodman calls "rightness" (cited Bruner 1986: 135). Bruner writes that "someone will object that a 'tested' theory is true, while a folk theory is some compound of human wishes, fears, and habits" (ibid).

Importance of truth (in the story) and/or a trustable teller is described by some writers (Gabriel 2000: 29; Simmons 2001: 3; Drucker 2004; Denning 2004: 122; Heath 2008: 4; Forman 2013: 44), with findings on how to make stories more "credible" (Heath and Heath 2008: 130-164), including advice for the physical delivery of a story (Denning 2005: 38-41) (Simmons 2001: 87-94). Many of these findings are from organisational storytelling, which emerged as a field in the 1990s (Salmon 2010: 13, 43). Sometimes described as part of a "narrative turn" in societies generally, it is of a perceived re-valuing of story – even in a literal sense – in 'Storytelling in Economics' Deirdre McCloskey calculated that "One Quarter of GDP is Persuasion" (McCloskey and

Klamer 1995). In the preceding decades, the spheres of politics and commerce were said to have rejected what Denning describes as the "native language of narrative" for abstract language and business models, hence the return to or "discovery" of the power of narrative (Brown *et al* 2004: 127).

Much of organisational storytelling is the use of narrative to influence behaviour, and there are some who criticise this approach. Christian Salmon describes a "confiscating of narrative" and "hijacking of the imaginary". He claims that where narrative once shed light on human experience, is now an "instrument that allows the state to lie and to control public opinion" (2010: 12). Sara Maitland argues that orally transmitted culture is gone, and that we have lost the ability to wrench everyday stories from realism (2012: 18:27). Zipes suggests that "artificial stories" are influenced by "homogenisation, depersonalisation, fragmentation, and obsolescence" (2001: 130). This indirectly critiques elements of organisational storytelling, which present techniques for creating an impression of trueness whilst inferring a universality incompatible with that described as "genuine storytelling". However, Zipes also notes that only in the most obvious cases can one tell the difference between genuine and artificial storytelling (2001: 134). Wilson and Lewis note a,

> curious contradiction in personal storytelling in that the more flawed the storytelling performance is through contradictions, inaccuracies and lapses of memory, the more authentic the storyteller appears to be and the more believable the story becomes (2013: 7).

Whether or not one considers organisational storytelling to be "artificial", there is evidence from Denning and others that it can be effective in promoting behaviour change and prosocial values. In his critique of "management gurus", Salmon describes their main reason for success with managers is "their use of stories that inevitably celebrate management's merits and heroism" (2010: 49). Although it is not his intention, Salmon's statement does support a positive psychology approach for this study, in which businesspeople's achievements are celebrated thereby creating a receptive environment for the promotion of behaviour change.

As described in this section, stories can be effective behavioural influencers but also provoke mistrust. Stories are necessary in the forming of descriptive norms about pro-environmental measures that are less visible, and provide an opportunity for the recognition of prosocial acts which, as the next section will highlight, are an aspect of

group membership. However, the framing of narrative relating to climate change carries a paradox of uncertainty:

> So how do we believe? How do we interpret the actions and rhetoric of others, and ourselves, when consensus is essentially a mass leap of faith, the efficacy of our individual efforts to combat it is almost impossible to measure, and the discourse is constantly telling us to beware of empty words? The urgent – and paradoxical – task of any climate change communication is to invest the discourse with meaning. But how do you advocate "actions not words" with words? (Segnit and Ereaut 2007: 29)

In this study, the interplay between participants' perceptions of information believability and teller trustworthiness will be explored in the context of Cornish business.

1.5 Influence

This study explores perceptions of norms, being behaviours considered usual or average (such as "most people wash their hair"), sometimes prescriptive (such as "you should wait in the queue"). Norms are often linked to perceptions of similarity and group (for example there are different approaches to queuing or hair washing held normatively by different cultures). "Group" represents a simplified, binary version of alliances, which are probably more network-like than distinct (for example a Cornish person living close to the Devon border would be unlikely to consider themselves conflicted by opposing cultures). Despite this, the term and concept has been retained for this study because grouping is perceived to occur, and its influence can be reinforced by articulation. As E.P. Thompson writes of class, it exists in the process of labelling, and in the perception of otherness:

> Class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs (1963: 8).

Although it is not proposed that class be the driver of this research, the above does illustrate the phenomena of perceived inclusiveness and similarity to unknown people within one's group. Conversely, otherness has been much researched (Husserl 1931; Sartre 1943; Said 1978). Tajfel and Turner, who later developed social identity theory,

emphasise the importance of comparison of out-groups in constructing social identity (1979: 40). They find that behaviour can be influenced by perceptions of group, although not fully, as there is an interplay between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour (ibid: 34). This draws on findings from earlier minimal group studies which found evidence of in-group favouritism despite the arbitrary nature of groups (described in Turner 1982: 23). The hormone Oxytocin has been linked to altruism (De Dreu *et al* 2010), which may also be considered an indicator of grouping behaviour. It may be that messaging tailored to increase perceptions of similarity is more successful, especially if participants perceive themselves to be part of a group. The same is proposed by Moser and Dilling, on climate change communication:

> Generally, personally familiar sources are more trusted than more distant and less familiar sources; those coming from similar circumstances are believed to understand one's situation better than those coming from very different backgrounds (2007: 13).

Like truth, the concept of group mind has a history of discussion. Herbert Spencer, influenced by Plato, wrote of "a perception that there exists some analogy between the body politic and a living individual body" (1860: 9.6). In 1920 William McDougall wrote that a group mind is more than the sum of its parts and might be described a "collective soul" (1920: 7). These ideas have influenced research in cybernetics, game theory and memes. However, McDougall warns of the degrading effects of being caught up in the crowd and the "contagion of reckless spirit" (ibid: 20), and before him Gustave Le Bon of intolerance and exaggerated emotion (1895).

Of group interaction, Susan Williams describes that entering into "shared reality" means that differing views are not "competitors for belief", and that perspectives are changed, making accommodation more possible and likely: "it is not simply a summing up of the views with which we begin" (2004: 155). This is an expansion of techniques described in section 1.2. Of organisations, Norlyk, Lundholt and Hansen describe a "body" with coordinated parts (2013), and David Boje describes their "collective memory", drawing on the work of Maurice Halbwachs (2008: 80-86). The extent to which one considers a group or an individual to be a separate entity merely presents a perspective of group activity either from the stance of the individual or the group. In the context of this research Segnit and Ereaut's "communal individual" (2007: 33) is used.

The concepts of norms, groups and ideology are significant in human evolution. Although the term norm is used in this study, one might also replace it with the term normative value, because, as this section will describe, there is much emotional investment in norms. Hence the number of studies relating to "values" in this chapter. Lyotard, citing Immanuel Kant and other philosophers, describes that in an ethical sense:

> Obligation in and of itself does not need the authorisation of a norm in order to take place, quite the contrary: by legitimising prescription, one suppresses the dissymmetry of the obligation, which is what distinguishes the regimen of prescriptive phrases. It is precisely a function, though, or at least an effect, of the normative to make the obligated one's situation symmetrical. By prefixing the prescriptive with *It is a norm decreed by y that x ought to carry out such and such an action,* the normative wrenches *x* from the anxiety of idiolect, which is also the marvel of the encounter with the other and a mode of the threat of *Ereignis.* This threat, this marvel, and this anxiety, namely the nothingness of a 'what-is-to-be-linked', are thus normalised. They are the same for other *x's*, for the you's of the normed obligation. The normative, excluded as it is from the ethical, leads into the political. It constitutes a community of addresses of the prescriptive, who qua addresses of the normative, are advised as they are, if not necessarily equal before the law, at least all subject to the law. It does not make the obligation transitive, that's impossible, it makes it common (1983: 143).

This could be seen to illustrate the problem with normative value, in which its application is a form of disconnect, and its process political. This is apparent in Williams' description of "shared reality", in which she notes that "the view that will prove the most justified is the one that is best able to accommodate a broad range of perspectives", but that "some views may not be properly accommodated at all, for example racist and sexist views" (2004: 155). It is not clear whether Williams could envisage a racist or sexist shared reality amongst a certain set of individuals, and it may be that the method enhances prosocial values to the extent that such prejudices would not be apparent. But it is also possible that Williams is expressing perception of an ethical norm, or a rule for collaboration of this kind, which, as Lyotard describes, is political.

Of rule-following, Fukuyama writes that "the human brain has developed certain emotional responses that amount to autopilot mechanisms promoting social behaviour", which makes humans "conformist, norm-following animals" (2011: 39). Of those emotions, he writes:

We feel anger when a norm is violated, such as when a stranger goes out of his way to disparage us, or when a religious ritual shared by our group is mocked or neglected. We feel shame when we ourselves fail to live up to the norm, and we feel pride when we have the approbation of the community for achieving a collectively valued goal (ibid).

Boyd also describes the evolution of cooperation "through a series of social and moral emotions" (2009: 382), and highlights the role of narrative in coordination, which he describes as a "strategic social process" (ibid: 176). He describes the importance of this:

The spread of cooperation through large communities of mostly unrelated individuals with inevitably competing interests needs the support of numerous evolved adaptations and cultural interventions that build on them (ibid: 382).

Fukuyama also suggests that although norms and rules can be "sticky" and resilient to change, their usage is rational because "if we had to constantly negotiate new rules with our fellow human beings at every turn, we would be paralysed and unable to achieve routine collective action" (2011: 39). Cialdini describes the importance of "automatic compliance" with norms (2007: 5), Christina Bicchieri of "cognitive shortcuts" in which norms are activated in similar settings (2006: 5) and John Searle describes the sometimes unconscious nature of rule following (1995: 143-147), communities' self-regulation (2010: 160), and also the role that language can play in "collective intentionality". Of the latter, Searle writes that "mutual knowledge about intention occurs between two people, when each intends, and each knows that the other intends and each knows that the other knows that, and each knows that each knows that other knows that, and so on indefinitely" (ibid: 46). This relates to Markova, Linell and Gillespie's trust model (described in the previous section) in which "taken for granted" trust (2008: 11) is "indexed (rather than expressed) by language" (ibid: xix). Although norms, intentionality, and trust, are arguably separate topics, they are similar in that they are social phenomena, and often interrelated: norms may be conveyed in ways similar to Searle's description, dependent on "taken for granted" trust between parties. Because norms are not static, this discursive aspect is important. Storytelling could be considered an example of "indexing" of norms: Boyd describes their rehearsive role:

In both factual and fictional forms, stories can consolidate and communicate norms, providing us with memorable and shared models of cooperation that stir our social emotions, our desire to associate with altruists, and our desire to dissociate ourselves from cheats and freeloaders. Such memorable images of pro- and antisocial characters and actions common to whole communities can

not only define and communicate shared standards but ensure that all know what others know of these standards (2009: 64).

In this way, norms are articulated as a form of feedback, in which communities can check and re-check that values are shared. More poetically, Arthur Frank suggests that "stories and humans work together, in symbiotic dependency, creating the social that comprises all human relationships, collectives, mutual dependencies, and exclusions" (2010: 15). Social norms are therefore regulators, which Michael Hechter and Karl-Dieter Opp note are generally unwritten, spontaneously formed, and informally forced (2001: xi). Legal norms are written, designed, and enforced by a specialised bureaucracy (ibid). As this research explores the potential for uptake of voluntary behaviour change, the next section will focus on social norms, however, it is important to note the potential of the latter in changing behaviours, for example through legislation, although social norms would arguably play a role in its instigation.

Norms are often performed automatically, and considered as "common sense", but groups also influence beliefs (Cohen 2003). Perceptions of group membership are therefore important in constructs of identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979): for example supporting a political party, being a member of a family, or working for an organisation that has a perceived culture. However, we are not merely the sum of our groups (ibid: 34). Bruner describes opinion as forming from one's collective stances (1986: 134-150). People may identify with a number of groups, potentially with conflicting identities, and thus an individual may respond differently to messaging depending on the context in which it is delivered (Nye and Hargreaves 2010; Littleford, Ryley and Firth 2014). There are, however, groups that have a greater influence than others, suggesting a hierarchy of influence, which surpasses context (Allport 1954; Trope and Liberman 2010). As an example, Allport posits:

> Suppose a child attends a lesson in intercultural education in the classroom. The chances are this lesson will be smothered by the more embracing norms of his family, gang, or neighbourhood. To change the child's attitudes it would be necessary to alter the cultural equilibrium of these, to him, more important groups. It would be necessary for the family, the gang, or the neighbourhood to sanction tolerance before he as an individual could practice it (1954: 40).

Relating this to a business context, it illustrates that business behaviours are affected by personal experiences or identity, which has also been found in other studies (Bedford *et al* 2010: 4). However, as the aforementioned studies show (Nye and Hargreaves 2010; Littleford, Ryley and Firth 2014), setting or situation does have an

influence on behaviour. Consequently, the child in Allport's example may present intercultural values in the classroom, as per the norms of that context. Allport's focus is not behaviour, but belief, which probably has more effective long-term and paradigm-changing potential. He notes the success of some projects in which whole group attitudes and norms have been changed through hierarchies (1954: 40), but also notes that people's attitudes do not necessarily conform to the norm of their group (ibid). In the context of Cornish businesses, this study aims to explore the extent to which people are influenced by other businesspeople, and/or Cornish-people, whether the commonality of running a business in Cornwall can create a perception of similarity, and what an influential hierarchy might be. However, it is also important to note that such influences will vary between people.

As described in section 1.2, stories can help people resolve difference by reducing otherness. In a group sense, outside perspectives may help reshape norms or habits which are damaging to the environment. In a survey of SME management by Netregs, 91% of respondents believed that they did not undertake environmentally harmful activities, whereas on further enquiry it was found that 46% of the businesses did (Netregs 2009: 3). Outside knowledge is an important factor for behaviour change, because without it, the need to change may not be identified. Similarly, Kaesehage found that there was a lack of environmental knowledge amongst a cluster of Cornish SMEs, noting "they all have similar information. But that also means that they don't get information that is new and that comes from the outside" (2013).

Although Kaesehage's "cluster" is relatively closed, Allport notes that there is often greater exposure to otherness in occupational settings, compared to what might be described as the likeminded comfort of people's personal lives in which they "eat, play, reside in homogeneous clusters" (1954: 17). Although societies may have diversified in subsequent decades, Allport's view could be seen as an extreme example of group influence that still takes place. He writes:

> In occupational situations we are much more likely to have to deal with members of out-groups. In a stratified industry or business, management must deal with workers, executives with janitors, and salesmen with clerks (ibid: 18).

Additionally, a business' customer base or other business collaborators might further expand out-group interaction. Allport describes that these differences can cause an intensified psychological separateness (ibid), but they also potentially expand

normative influence, as repeated interaction with others (for example through story sharing) can form a perception of closeness. Business environments therefore present an opportunity for new groupings and knowledge acquisition.

There is evidence from numerous studies that perceptions of similarity and in-grouping are likely to increase behavioural influence. A less-researched area, however, is that of predicting the phenomena. Big data analysis and artificial intelligence is constantly being developed and can be useful (Agrawal 2016; Frankel 2017; Vizard 2016) but the algorithms are not perfect. Language is "a labyrinth of paths" (Wittgenstein 1953: 88), and so qualitative techniques are well suited for exploring the how and why, which is often emotive in the case of storytelling and grouping behaviours. As with storytelling, the abilities of group perception to influence behaviour are utilised in the business sector, whether that be internal employee team-building exercises or "tribal" marketing (Godin 2015). On customer attachment to brands, Sinek describes the role that "feelings", "values" and "beliefs" play in concepts of brands, and also perceptions of similarity and "belonging" (2009: 53-54).

This study focuses on messaging between people from different businesses rather than customer communications. However, findings from marketing industries are relevant because they are also business narratives, and because they have devoted a great many resources to the crafting of normative messaging. Brand identity could be seen to exploit this desire to belong (Klein 1999), which highlights the effectiveness of in-group emphasis as a behavioural influencer. It must be considered that the kind of grouping described above (internal, brand) may consequently increase out-group perception of those representing other business. However, as has been discovered by comparison studies, perceptions of otherness may still provoke rivalry and behaviour change. In Sinek's example, the process of understanding and identifying with something as abstract as a brand is described as primarily an emotional one, and behaviourally influential. Bicchieri describes an effective method of emphasising in-group perception more generally amongst people:

> Common fate, perceived similarities, and verbal interactions, among other things, should contribute to the process of perceptual group formation, inducing people to categorise themselves as part of a more inclusive unit. We would then expect a period of discussion, especially on a theme close to the subjects' lives, to engender cooperative behaviour, as would the experience of sharing a common fate (2006: 162).

Her discussion aligns with findings in section 1.2, and are incorporated into the methodology of this study. Grouping is an effective behavioural influencer because people perceive behaviours to be normative to a group. Norms can be perceived within wider societies, or even as human norms, in which the out-group is the few who disregard them. Larry Prusak argues that:

> Stories promote cultural norms. I don't think norms develop from stories, but stories carry lessons about behaviour. Stories say, "Do this, not that!" That establishes and helps these norms to be perpetuated within organisations (2005: 28).

In this study, an exploration will be made of participants' perceptions of similarity and norms in the context of other Cornish business' pro-environmental messaging. To do so clues within language, such as emotions and normative language, will be studied that might further inform how a process such as that described above occurs. These findings could contribute towards the design of models for predicting in-group perception and influence, and thus efficiency of communication.

1.6 Norms

As described in the previous section, humans often perceive themselves as group members, and perceptions of group norms can influence behaviour. Storytelling is used to emphasise similarity/inclusivity and also difference from out-groups. However, grouping is to some extent a construct, as current societies are more networked (rather than historical tribes), in which groups are multiple and perhaps transient. For example, two people might describe themselves as Cornish but have very different perceptions of membership. Additionally, norms or rules are simply interpretations, "to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule" (Wittgenstein 1953: 86).

This section will explore some findings in which the promotion of behaviours as normative has influenced behaviours. However, it is important to note that if normative messaging conflicts with identity, it is unlikely to be successful. This relates to what Cialdini describes as "normatively muddled" messaging in which "injunctive norms" (perceptions of which behaviours are typically approved or disapproved) conflict with "descriptive norms" (perceptions of which behaviours are typically

performed) (2000: 105). He describes that messaging can be most persuasive when both are combined (ibid). Cialdini uses an example of a TV advertisement, but as an alternative, an excerpt from *Time Out Magazine's A-Z of Green Living in London,* has been used here:

> On average, Londoners use 167 plastic bags each every (sic) year: about 1¼ billion in total. Since each one takes around 500 years to decay in landfill, this is an embarrassment (Time Out 2008).

The explicit message is that people should use fewer disposable plastic bags (indeed the article goes on to recommend the Onya reusable bag whose strapline was "Caution plastic bags are not cool" (an injunctive norm). However, a descriptive normative message informs the reader that the average Londoner uses 167 disposable plastic bags in a year, therefore that typically Londoners use disposable plastic bags. The final part is an injunctive normative message of disapproval. The writer states not that he or she is embarrassed, but that it is "an" embarrassment, which could be read as claiming a typical viewpoint, potentially activating the perception of a norm. In this example, descriptive and injunctive norms are in conflict.

Injunctive norms are considered to be particularly influential on behaviour (Cialdini, Reno and Kallgren 1990). Summarising more recent studies, Martin, Goldstein and Cialdini write: "the strongest context for encouraging desirable behaviours comes from evidence that clearly conveys other people's respect for norms" (2014: 30). Contrastingly, Bicchieri notes that descriptive norm-compliance can be imitatory, self-serving and unsustained because of a lack of perceived expectation or punishment for non-compliance, although she does note that "critical mass" is an example of the descriptive norm influence (2006: 31-34). Of injunctive norms, storytelling is an effective method for conveying approval or disapproval, and is therefore likely to be effective at influencing behaviour. Additionally, "super wicked problems" such as climate change have injunctive "alogical" elements (Morton 2016: 37), so injunctive messaging is probably especially relevant in that context. Measuring the effect of story-based injunctive messaging is difficult (compared to a read sentence or observed action which is relatively isolated from other persuasive factors) because of the multiple persuasive aspects of storytelling. For example, in a study by Cialdini and colleagues on the impact of short films, they found that non-normative factors, such as information and humour, were also influential (2000: 108). Although this presents problems of measurability it does further support the hypothesis that normative storytelling may be particularly effective.

Another logistical problem is the automatic and unconscious aspects of normative influence. In Cialdini and Wesley Schultz's study promoting reduction of residential energy consumption California, the factors which respondents claimed to be least influential in deciding to conserve energy were those which had the greatest influence (2004: 3). They note: "Consistently across our studies, participants rate normative messages as the least effective and believe that they are not influenced by their perceptions of others. But our data show otherwise" (ibid: 6). This is also apparent in business settings. In a study for DEFRA, less than half of participants (representing SMEs) considered social and behavioural benefits to be influential on pro-environmental behaviour uptake (Hillary and Burr 2011: 117). It may be that as in Cialdini and Schultz's study, normative influence is of greater influence than they are aware. Levi-Strauss describes that social structures are "independent of men's consciousness of them (although they in fact govern men's existence)" (1963: 121). Subsequently, in this study analysis focuses on participants' normative language and perceptions of similarity, rather than their stated perceptions of influence.

Of normative language studies, Cialdini and Schultz found the phrase "join your neighbours" to be an effective influencer (2004), as did "join your fellow guests" in another study (Goldstein *et al* 2008). A number of other studies and initiatives have noted the effects of comparison exercises in which users' behaviour is notably changed based on the observed or implied actions of others (Cialdini 2000; Schultz *et al* 2007; Laskey 2013; Cook 2011). This pattern has also been studied in employees' behaviour. Siero *et al* found long term desirable behaviour change in a comparative feedback study (1996: 235). However, this technique can have what Schultz *et al* describe as a "boomerang effect" (2007: 429) – or as Goldstein *et al* describe it the "magnetic middle" (2007: 22-24) – on those already performing the desired activity at a greater level or rate than the average. This can be counteracted by the inclusion of an injunctive supporting message (Schultz *et al* 2007: 432), which implies that the behaviour is approved. The technique has been successfully adopted commercially, such as the Opower's emoticon.[13]

Similarly, studies on large organisations suggest that companies (and thus the people who manage them) behave comparatively. A study by Siero *et al* found that comparative feedback improved employees' energy consumption in a metallurgical

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[13] Customers receive a smiley face and word of approval such as "good" if above average (Opower 2013).

company (1996). A study by Brandlogic and CRD Analytics found that 15 participants significantly overestimated their companies' environment, social and governance factors compared to other companies, but the following year only 2 did, and 18 underestimated (compared to 3 the previous year). Crucially, of 94 companies measured in both years, 93 improved their level of sustainability (2011; 2012). Positive supporting messages may have contributed to this, and also where benefits to the company are positive, such as marketing opportunities or energy savings, the "magnetic middle" may have less of an effect.

A strength of normative messaging is that it can provoke behaviour change that is automatic (despite injunctive muddling). Frans Siero *et al* found that social norm manipulation can influence behaviours without changing attitudes or intentions (1996: 235). This cognitive dissonance is where storytelling methods can enhance norm promotion, as storytelling can be used to emphasise meaning and values, linking emotional engagement with action. This may be more effective in achieving long lasting behaviour change, because it may be that normative rationalisation can occur post-automatic behaviour. Fukyama notes:

> Human beings are rule-following animals by nature; they are born to conform to the social norms they see around them, and they entrench those rules with often transcendent meaning and value (2011: 7).

Storytelling can also promote norms by describing out-group behaviour, which may be most effective when described as rare and disapproved of. Another study by Cialdini *et al* aimed to reduce petrified wood theft in Arizona's national park. They found fewest thefts in the proximity of a negatively worded sign reading "please don't remove the petrified wood from the park", accompanied by a picture of a visitor stealing a piece of wood, with a red circle-and-bar symbol superimposed over his hand (2006: 8). The least successful at reducing thefts was the negatively worded sign which reinforced the prevalence of wood-taking (ibid: 9-10).

It is important to note that negatively worded normative messages which are in line with laws or by-laws may be different to those relevant to climate change which can be normatively muddled with their surrounding context. For example, an authoritative message promoting "car free day" might be printed and placed on lampposts and in windows of a busy car-filled road, perhaps in sight of a glossy billboard advertising the latest automobile. Thus, a carefully constructed normative message is undermined by larger context of the world in which it sits. Corner writes: "for many

sustainable behaviours, the problem is not that positive social norms aren't being highlighted, but that the norms are simply not there to promote" (2011). Similarly, DEFRA claims: "we remain some way from a sense of collective national action that might engage those segments who are more driven by social norms" (2008: 49). The petrified wood experiment was an opportunity, largely, to conduct a study in relative isolation. If visitors to the woodland were to have driven past sellers of petrified wood ornaments, were the homes of their friends and family to have been lined with petrified wood mementos, the results might well have been different.

As previously described, messaging is not received in isolation, and thus, if normative messaging is used to promote behaviours conflicting with the ideology of a person or their group, then injunctive norms are in conflict (muddled). This supports the hypothesis that messaging will be more successful if it is tailored to the beliefs of audiences, and if tellers are in-group. In Goldstein, Cialdini and Griskevicius' study promoting the reuse of hotel towels, they found that the perceived behaviour of those in physical proximity had a greater impact on people's behaviour.[14] These findings are significant because the experiment's subjects may have been influenced by a perception of group inclusivity despite the anonymity of hotel stays (not "knowing" the other group members),[15] due to a perception of spatial closeness. The concept could conceivably extend to other "psychological distances" such as demographic, beliefs or specialism. The authors note: "it's usually beneficial for us to follow the behavioural norms associated with the particular environment, situation or circumstances that most closely match our own" (2007: 15). This supports the hypothesis that identifying stories or tellers as Cornish or from Cornwall may increase normative perception and that differences in the definition of group membership are unimportant. Additionally, storytelling's aforementioned link with prosocial values may reduce the conflict of normative muddling, be that injunctive (ideological) or descriptive (lack of prevalence of behaviour).

These are just some of many psychological studies in which norm promotion has likely influenced people's behaviour. In summary, methods of norm promotion might include:

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[14] Those who viewed the descriptive norm sign "join your fellow guests" were more likely to reuse than those who viewed the environmental message "help save the environment" (44.1% compared to 35.1%) (ibid: 474). In the second experiment signs specifically referred to other guests, other citizens, other users of the specific room, or gender (Goldstein *et al*. 2008: 476). Compared to the standard 'help the environment' message, which this time received 37.2% participation, the results were 44.0%, 43.5%, 49.3% and 40.9% respectively (ibid: 477). Thus, those guests whose message informed them that 75% of specific users of their room (with room number included) reused their towels, were significantly more likely to reuse their towels.
[15] Although it may be that hotel staff were perceived to be the influencer rather than theoretical customers.

- Promoting a desired activity as widely performed and approved of by most people.

- Present an unwanted activity as relatively rare and disapproved of by most people.

- Providing the participant with peer comparison information and where their activity is above average, including a supporting message.

- Falsifying peer comparison information to imply that a participant's performance is below average (there are ethical concerns with this as an approach).

In this study, the first option will be explored, however, Bedford *et al* note that guilt may also be an effective pro-environmental behavioural influencer (2010: 6). As described earlier in this section, a problem with pro-environmental norm promotion is a lack of prevalence of desired behaviours (and thus muddled messaging). However, it may be that this will be less of an issue in the coming years, they note:

> Whilst few of the pro-environmental behaviours we examined showed signs of being current social norms, many appeared to have the ability to become social norms. Overall, we concluded there is a growing perception of a need to undertake some pro-environmental behaviour as part of being a responsible person (ibid).

However, this could simply be an example of injunctive messaging. In this thesis, a qualitative study is made of language that might promote, or evidence perception of, normative behaviour. It is proposed that previous studies' use of control groups have proven the phenomenon of normative influence, and as such this study builds on that theoretical field by exploring how those norms occur within a specific context. Whereas previous studies have predominantly used isolated and simple messaging to test specific influence, such methods would be hard to achieve on "messy" (Wilson 2014) storytelling, and in the context of business behaviour/climate change in which influences are multiple. Despite the logistical difficulties of such a study, there is much to suggest that an investigation of the interplay between theories of story and norm influence is warranted. To do this, potentially normative language used by teller and audience has been analysed. For example, in the previous quotation by Bedford and colleagues, "there is a growing perception" would likely be described as descriptive normative, and "responsible person" as injunctive normative. There is no model for such analysis, which has subjective elements, for example the extent to which "many

[had] the ability" would be considered normative. It is likely that such definitions would vary from audience to audience and also that they might be considered gradationally, especially in the act of storytelling which, as has been identified, links to prosocial values. Bruner writes that:

> Because its "tellability" as a form of discourse rests on a breach of conventional expectation, narrative is necessarily normative. A breach presupposes a norm. This founding condition of narrative has led students of the subject, from Hayden White and Victor Turner to Paul Ricoeur, to propose that narrative is centrally concerned with cultural legitimacy. A new generation of legal scholars, not surprisingly, has even begun to explore the implicit norms inherent in legal testimony, which, of course, is principally narrative in form (1991:15).

This may be due to the way that language has developed. Levi-Strauss argues that "it is generally recognised that words are signs; but poets are practically the only ones who know that words were also once values" (1963: 61).

In Stephen Finlay's linguistic analysis of normative language, emphasis is given to implicit endings, enabling analysis through non-normative components (2014: 5). For example, the sentence "Albeniz's compositions are good" he follows with "for people with an ear for expressionist music to listen to". He notes that whereas normative phrases of this kind are taken to express "truths", they are "relativised to a particular class of 'agent'" (ibid: 24-25), often involving objective probability (ibid: 42). Of those few examples of "final ends" (those "judged Good because they are desired ends in themselves" [ibid: 199]), he writes:

> Human motivation is often opaque, and identifying the ultimate object of desire or the final end can be difficult even introspectively. After thousands of years of philosophical debate it remains controversial, for example, whether anything other than pleasure or happiness is desired or good for its own sake (ibid: 202).

It is perhaps this ambiguity that makes normative messaging effective. As an alternative to direct assertion, Finlay suggests that it has a number of benefits, firstly (referencing Dennett and Joyce), that "by making her prescription indirect through the device of moralism, the speaker also pragmatically expresses her intolerance or refusal" (ibid: 187). Secondly, that people's social impulses reduce the wish to antagonise others and thus "by speaking as if the prescribed proposition were factual, the speaker ostensibly puts her epistemic authority on the line, in effect challenging the agent not to call her a liar" (ibid). These, along with other strategy such as bluff and "humanity" appeal, lead to an "especially efficient way of communicating strong

prescription", which are "difficult to express disagreement with" (ibid). As such, it is social norms which enable normative influence, and normative language is "performative utterance" (Austin 1962).

Overall, Finlay's description of normative influence is "by the end-relational information that our semantics identifies as the descriptive content", which is "[not] the psychological force of desires, but the equal and opposite reactive force of the world pushing back against them". With metaphor he describes that "normativity is the shadow cast by our desires in the external world, and is no more a part of our psychology than our shadows are parts of our bodies" (2014: 249-250). It could be considered that Finlay's analysis enables a descriptive (probability statements) compartmentalisation of many injunctive (moralistic endorsement) normative phrases.

To study language use to the extent that Finlay does would not be possible within the scope of this study, but his findings are crucial in revealing the processes of normative language construction and some reasons for its influence. Additionally, his endorsement of the "armchair method" of analysis (utilising one's competence of linguistic institutions) (ibid: 8, 258) is important methodologically.

Of the aforementioned problem of promotion of non-normative behaviours, language also plays a part. Searle describes the role of status function declarations in the creation of new institutions (2010: 93-104), through "words, words, words" (ibid: 106) which include descriptions of deontic power (ibid: 100-102). These he describes as typically:

> "rights," "duties," "authorisations," "requirements," "permissions," and
> "certifications," [connecting with] important verbs, especially the modal auxiliary
> verbs "ought," "should," "can," and "must."

These contribute towards an "institutional reality", complex but necessary because "we have a special kind of consciousness in which we have a sense of making decisions that are not forced" (ibid: 133). He explains that the system functions because it can rationally provide the basis for desires (ibid 143). Of course, to some extent Searle's "institutions" are descriptions of legal norms, as his examples tend to be such, but it may be that the formation of social norms are similar in their use of language and authority/status. In their usage, Bicchieri describes the process as categorical (which was also a finding of stories' usage in section 1.1):

> Norms are context-dependent, meaning that different social norms will be activated, or appear appropriate, depending on how a situation is understood. In turn, our understanding of a situation is influenced by which previous contexts we view as similar to the present one, and this process of assessing similarities and 'fitting' a situation into a pre-existing category will make specific norms salient (2006: 5).

She notes the importance of language in this, for example activation by the word "we" to perceptions that "one 'ought to' trust in-group members", compared with "they" (ibid: 156). Again, use of such language will be explored in chapters 2 and 3 with a view to contributing towards this research field and that of storytelling, between which there is little referencing. For example, storytellers might talk of "change" or "tradition" and "good", psychologists of "influence" and "injunctive messaging", but there are similarities in the findings.

1.7 Agency

In the previous sections, techniques for behavioural influence were described, which largely rely on people's desire to conform, be that to the injunctive prescriptions of an authority (which might be informally established), to a perceived "common" action, or through a participatory and mutually-changing process. Stories have a role in all such techniques, be that through expressing authority and approval/disapproval, describing an action as frequent, or establishing similarity between parties. It is also noted that storytelling as a technique is often used to promote pro-social values, in which cases storytelling is normative. However, desire to conform is not the only driver of people's behaviour, which is one reason why normative studies do not achieve 100% behavioural influence.

As categorisation has been a theme in previous sections, the hierarchy of needs 5-stage model by Abraham Maslow (1943) has been explored, in part due to its popularity (anecdotally) beyond the field of psychology, including its use in business contexts (Businessballs 2014; Lawler 1973: 13). Maslow's model ranks "consciously felt wants and desires" rather than action[16] (1943: 387), beginning with physiological needs on the satisfaction of which, higher needs gradually emerge (ibid: 388-389).

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[16] Someone on a hunger fast, for example, may do so for higher tier needs, but their thoughts will likely be on the need for sustenance.

The "average citizen", he describes, might be "satisfied perhaps 85 per cent in his physiological needs, 70 per cent in his safety needs, 50 per cent in his love needs, 40 per cent in his self-esteem needs, and 10 per cent in his self-actualisation needs" (ibid). On environmental issues, Ted Nordhaus and Michael Shellenberger narrate Maslow's model chronologically:

> Environmentalism and other progressive social movements of the 1960s were born of the prosperity of the postwar era and the widespread emergence of higher-order post materialist needs. As Americans became increasingly wealthy, secure, and optimistic, they started to care more about problems such as air and water pollution and the protection of the wilderness and open space (2007: 6).

Here, increases in living standards and affluence enabled people to pursue higher-tier needs, first with consumerism (Veblen 1899), which relates to belonging and esteem needs, and then pursuing fulfilment needs, which for some meant environmentalism. "Need" is used loosely in this case. Morton notes that "there was no transition from 'needing' to 'wanting'. Neanderthals would have loved Coca-Cola Zero" (2016: 15).

Normative or prosocial messaging relates to belonging and esteem needs (tiers three and four), so an individual is likely to prioritise physiological and safety needs (tiers one and two) over conformity (which could be a consequence of desire to belong). Storytelling can promote such values, but can also describe those of other tiers, for example stories are important in religions (tier five), or in the understanding of altruistic elements of pro-environmental behaviours, or by informing people of risks of flooding to livelihoods (tiers one and two). In Pahl and Bauer's study, a climate change story relating to lower tier needs was linked to improved environmental engagement (2013), but it is likely that such engagement was influenced by empathy (higher tier). As per the findings of earlier sections, this study explores the potential of stories that are positive, relating to belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation. Of the latter, Corner, Markowitz and Pidgeon note that self-transcendent values are congruent with positive engagement with climate change (2014: 7).

Maslow's hierarchy can also be considered in terms of business (as an entity) needs, rather than those of the individual/s running it. Physiological needs might be translated as its resources (materials, labour, products), safety needs as its durability (which primarily requires the turning of profit). Only on the relative satisfaction of these needs can a business pursue higher levels which might include its place within its community (belongingness needs), its impact (esteem needs), and whether it has

reached its potential (self-actualisation needs). This is merely an illustration, for example Milton Friedman would probably argue that the higher tiers simply do not exist in a business sense: "there is one and only one social responsibility of business – to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game" (1962: 133). However, as the practice phases illustrate, participants in this study did not appear to take such an approach in the running of their businesses, and other studies of SMEs found a similar range of motivation. In a study of bed-and-breakfast owner-managers in rural Scotland, researchers found that non-economic goals were also a driver in business, citing lifestyle enjoyment, personal satisfaction, making a difference and being responsible (Sampaio, Thomas and Font 2012: 186), which could be considered esteem needs. The authors also found that formative experiences influenced management techniques, and that owner-managers had unique visions of what "the environment" is, and what environmental practices might be (ibid: 190), had "little regard to, or recognition of, interventions designed to influence their behaviour" (ibid: 191), and "expect[ed] the adaptation of environmental practices to give them a sense of 'feeling good' about themselves" (ibid). As with that study, this research is situated in a largely rural area that has a significant tourist industry and large proportion of small and micro businesses.[17] This illustrates that not only might businesses follow socially responsible *models*, but that all businesses probably design their own to some extent, in a way that is relevant to that business.

Of language used to describe values or needs, no business "talks" and thus there is an intermingling of personal and business voice, perhaps especially in the case of smaller businesses where individuals author a larger proportion of external and internal messaging. Below is an example of self-actualisation from a business perspective:

> Every business has the potential to either discover or create a deeper purpose for itself, which goes beyond maximising profits or shareholder value (Flow 2013).

Normative language is used persuasively ("every"), as well as aspirational language ("potential", "discover", "create", "deeper purpose", "beyond", "value"). As sections 1.3 and 1.6 illustrate, it may be that positive, normative language is effective in the promotion of behaviour change, compared to guilt-promotion which can provoke

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[17] Micro businesses are 0-9 employees.

defensive mechanisms. In the following examples about climate or environmental change, what may be considered normative language has been highlighted.

> **We** abuse land because **we** see it as a commodity **belonging** to **us**. When **we** see land as a community to which **we belong, we** may begin to use it with love and respect (Leopold 1949: viii).

> The question now is whether **we** will have the courage to act before it's too late. And how **we** answer will have a profound impact on the world that **we** leave behind not just to you, but to your children and to your grandchildren (Obama 2013).

> If **we** can produce a **collective** awakening **we** can solve the problem of global warming (Thich Nhat Hanh 2010).

Aldo Leopold's statement may be considered as relating to tier three (belonging and love), Barak Obama's to tier four (esteem), and Thich Nhat Hanh's to tier five (self-actualisation). Interestingly, Obama shifts from plural first-person to singular second-person, which could be considered as both normative and authoritative, speaking directly to audiences' esteem needs.

Although this messaging is certainly persuasive, it is not received in isolation, competing with other stories and also practical circumstances relating to essential, lower-tier needs. However, it is likely that at the time of conducting the practical research, participants were fed and housed. The volatility of business does present future uncertainty, but uncertainty exists in all vocations. It does again highlight the importance of relevance. However normative the messaging, a business is unlikely to invest in pro-environmental products if it has limited funds (this relates to "ability" in DEFRA's *Framework for pro-environmental behaviours* [2008: 34]). That described in the introduction as "inertia", or a lack of agency, is not a product of lethargy but a balancing of priorities (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002: 256). This is why a variety of behaviours were presented in the practice phases, some of which had no direct financial cost.

Nordhaus and Shellenberger write that "needs" and "values" vary significantly: "for any politics to succeed, it must swim with, not against, the currents of changing social values" (2007: 6). Whereas a story has the potential to change someone's opinion about a topic, it does so by connecting with that person's existing values. For example, in Zak's study, storytelling was found to be effective method of promoting altruistic *behaviour* (2007), but it is not proposed that the story created the value of

caring about others. Nick Ut's photograph *The Terror of War* is arguably a story in a picture. It is widely attributed as having changed public opinion in the US on the Vietnam war (Telegraph 2016), but it did so by connecting to existing values about the treatment of children. Of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* Bruner writes that "it played as great a part in precipitating the American Civil War as any debate in Congress" (2003: 10). Referencing the Russian formalists, he observes that stories (fiction in this case) "alienate the reader from the tyranny of the compellingly familiar", putting the world in new light (ibid: 9). If in this case the "familiar" is normative, then stories have the potential to transcend normative influence.

As described in the introduction and section 1.5, the global nature of ecological impact presents behavioural barriers in terms of in-group preference (Allport 1954: 43). As findings in the practical phase will show (section 2.3.1e), some participants described climate change as a psychologically distant subject, spatially and hypothetically. This relates to construal level theory, in which objects or concepts are perceived in terms of psychological distance from "the self in here and now", in dimensions of time, space, social distance and in the hypothetical realm (Trope and Liberman 2010).

In those cases uncovered in the practical phase, Trope and Liberman describe that construals would be more abstract, which in turn would increase their perceived distance and that of other dimensions (2010: 440, 442). Studying perceptions of the distance of climate change, Spence, Poortinga and Pidgeon found that, while abstract thought may have a role in some ethical elements of the concept, that "psychological closeness could be related to stronger intentions to act" (2011: 13). This does support the local-focussed element of this hypothesis, however, it does not present a strategy for the minority who believe climate science to be untrue (rather than psychologically distant). For those who have prejudged this to be the case, there are barriers to its remedy (Allport 1954: 23-24), but it is likely that in those cases of long-term ideological change, stories would play a part.

Shaw describes that all climate change narratives are ideological (2016: 10-21), but the problem of ideology, writes Pinker,[18] is that it contains the ideal of "utopia", which can justify the demonisation or dehumanisation of others, to achieve that goal (2011: 671-678). As described in the introduction, to curb the impacts of climate change

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[18] Likely influenced by (Mannheim 1936).

would require significant changes. Imagining those changes potentially links people to their imagined utopias, which might present as dystopias for others. Changed landscapes, curbed consumption, population control, market freedom, administration, global political power, investment, legislation, taxation and public ownership are all potentially linked with climate change strategy, favourably and/or unfavourably, as are characters within those narratives, such as environmentalists or entrepreneurs (or entrepreneurial environmentalists). Hence the emotive and polarised narratives described in the introduction.

There are a number of ways that climate change might be managed, but all require change of some kind, be that under an authoritarian or liberalised structure. Because of this, climate change management may conflict with some perspectives that are conservative towards change.[19] As earlier described, institutions are "sticky" (Fukuyama 2011: 16, 40). As Fukyama describes, because of the investment of norms (and thus emotions) in those institutions, when they become dysfunctional due to environmental changes: instead of changing incrementally, there is stasis followed by "catastrophic change" (ibid: 44). This may be why some describe a need for "paradigm shifts" in addressing climate change (Driessen and Glasbergen 2002; Rodi 2010), and the potential for fierce resistance by some to this prospect.

Ideology is one of seven "dragon families" which Robert Gifford identifies as reasons for people's inaction managing climate change (2015). The folklore metaphor is used to represent concepts that block humans from their goals, which is also a double entendre: "drag on" (ibid: 28). Also included are limited cognition, sunk costs, discredence, perceived risk, limited behaviour, and social comparison, the latter being the focus of this research, however, it is important to consider the interplay between that and other drives, which was also a finding of the practical phases. The IPCC report notes that "individual and collective assumptions, beliefs, values and worldviews" can contribute to inertia and that the "social acceptability" of climate policies "are influenced by the extent to which they incentivise or depend on regionally appropriate changes in lifestyles or behaviours" (2014: 26-27). Although an individual's world view is unique, it is also influenced by that person's peers and experiences.

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[19] For a description of conservatism see (McAnulla 2006: 69-70).

In this section, behavioural motivation has been described, and its relation to normative perception. It is likely that messaging which is complementary to audiences' ideology or values ("identity campaigning" [Crompton and Kasser 2009: 5]) will receive more attention and be more influential, although as the practice phases demonstrate, there are difficulties in predicting whether a story will be ideologically relevant. It is also proposed, as were the findings of section 1.3, that positive behaviour-focussed messaging may be more successful at influencing behaviour change than negative warning stories, because of the disjuncture between action and consequence, and the discernible lack of psychologically close consequence on lower tier needs. In those cases of climate science scepticism, it is also proposed that normative messaging promoting behaviours, rather than issue-based messaging could potentially bypass ideological conflicts by engaging belonging needs.

It is therefore proposed that messaging which engages audiences' belonging, esteem, and self-actualising needs may be effective in influencing behaviours, especially when narrated by those perceived as in-group authorities. In the next sections, the context of this practical research will be described.

1.8 Business

This study has been designed to focus on a particular demographic, to increase normative perception, and also relevance. As was indicated in the previous section, there are a variety of ways that negative ecological impacts might be managed or mitigated, and worldview will influence how those different methods might appeal or repel. It is therefore important that messaging be relevant to audiences, both in terms of ideology and practicality (of desired behaviours). By focussing on a demographic group, relevance will likely be increased.

Greenhouse gas emissions in the UK were estimated to have reduced by 35% between the years 1990 and 2014 (DECC 2016: 5). The supply of energy accounted for 31% of 2014's emissions, transport and residential 35%, and agriculture and business 26%. Of the reductions by sector, least improvement was made in transport, followed by agriculture, residential and business, the latter having achieved a 23%

reduction in emissions (ibid). However, the main driver for this was changes in the iron and steel industry pre-2009, and little change had been noted since (ibid: 18). Between 2013 and 2014, emissions increased in transport (covering both personal and business) and agriculture sectors, and only decreased marginally in business (ibid: 5). Compared to other areas of the UK, Cornwall's carbon dioxide emissions were in the mid-range for domestic, industrial/commercial and transport in 2012 (DECC 2014: 34-36). Of small businesses, (SMEs) in 2006 they represented 49% of business turnover in England and Wales, generated 60% of commercial waste, and caused 43% of serious pollution incidents (Murnaghan 2009: iv).

These figures imply that there is scope for further improvement in emissions in Cornwall, and that nationwide the business sector's trajectory of improvement may be less than that of residential. At the time of writing, there is little regulation of SMEs, with projections that the "burden" will reduce further (Murnaghan 2009: 6). This research (promoting voluntary behaviour uptake) is therefore timely in terms of its potential practical contribution. Moser and Dilling claim that like individuals, "organisations have inertia of their own" due to ingrained practices, funding or time constraints (2007: 13). In the same way that people can misjudge the impacts of activities in their personal lives,[20] so too of their business activities. A study of leading brands (worldwide) found that many overestimated their sustainable practices compared to others.[21]

Research into normative messaging to increase pro-environmental behaviours found that more studies had taken place on people's actions in their private lives than business lives. Of studies in business settings, Hevina Dashwood's account of the adoption of CSR (corporate social responsibility) policies in mining industries describes normative perceptions within a particular context, influenced by global CSR movements (in other industries), but also internal initiatives, from the 1990s onwards (2012). Although the businesses in this study have different characteristics to Dashwood's, her qualitative plotting of emergence of a norm, and why some companies were early adopters, is useful, especially because she has gathered a number of statements by company leaders. For example, a descriptive normative

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[20] A study on US and Japanese students found that people tend to overestimate their own pro-environmental behaviour in comparison to others (Ando, Ohnuma and Chang 2007).
[21] Brandlogic and CRD Analytics scored 100 leading companies on their perceived and actual reported performance on environment, social and governance (ESG) factors. Of those that strayed over 20 points from alignment (i.e. were most inaccurate in their perception of ESG performance), 15 overestimated their ESG (and performed below average), while only 3 underestimated it and performed above average (Brandlogic and CRD Analytics 2011: 6). This suggests that inaccurate peer comparison may be more common in businesses whose sustainable performance is below average.

message towards the start of the movement reads: These actions appear to lack the **critical mass** required to achieve the shift in performance that is clearly **required** (ibid: 232).

The injunctive norm of "requirement" is relatively passive compared to the descriptive norm of common inaction. As has been identified, normative muddling is an issue in early-adoption of behaviours, however, Dashwood describes that at that time a number of initiatives, such as working groups, and conferences, were taking place. These may have increased perception of a sub-group, or "privileged group" (ibid: 251), in which case the descriptive element of the above statement could be perceived as othering. In the same period, another leader stated:

> While on the one hand the mood of **disquiet** presents many challenges, it also provides those of **us** who are willing to get out on the **front** foot in addressing the issues, and engaging in dialogue, with a very significant opportunity to create a major competitive advantage (ibid: 233).

In this case, normative language of "us" and injunctive of disapproval promotes a behaviour. Descriptive normative language does not describe majority behaviour, instead describing the sub-group of "those in front". Additionally, the latter half of the sentence expresses a reason for behaviour uptake, which may be read as financial gain from status, expressed with a practicality that would not ordinarily be expressed, or perhaps even realised, in a personal context. Dashwood notes:

> There was a strategic calculus about the benefits of being early movers in shaping mining industry norms, but also a degree of conviction about the **intrinsic value** of aligning the mining industry with the norm of sustainable development (ibid: 243).

Of outside influence, Dashwood describes the mining industry's "very bad reputation" before the movement (ibid: 251), and that early adopters were influenced by the "global norm" of sustainable development or "societal norms", and a desire to be "proactive rather than reactive" (ibid: 241). Such perceptions will certainly have influenced a self-assessment of past industry performance for a participatory project in which injunctive normative language was used such as "bad" and "abysmal" (ibid: 238).

These findings display the importance of injunctive normative language in norm emergence within business contexts, highlighting the importance of status in business

dealings but also the linking between status and perceived gain, for example in obtaining government permits (ibid: 149). However, Dashwood also highlights the importance of companies' internal dynamics and different drivers for adoption (ibid: 251), which justifies a study such as this which explores a different business context. There are few studies of small businesses in rural areas, which was also the finding of Kaesehage, Leyshon and Caseldine in their review (2014: 81).

Of research which does explore SME behaviour, Carolyn Murnaghan's report for the Environment Agency gives a summary of many studies (some of which are described elsewhere in this chapter) and three case studies in which she critiques techniques used by organisations promoting pro-environmental behaviours in business (2009). For the case studies she applies DEFRA's *Framework for pro-environmental behaviours*, in which activity is grouped and compared by the verbs "engage", "exemplify", "enable" and "encourage" (2008). Murnagham's findings are numerous, but many relate to legislative or practical aspects of pro-environmental behaviours, whereas this study's focus is methods of engagement. Among her findings, she recommends:

- The use of tangible, peer-to-peer, descriptive and pragmatic solutions.
- The promotion of pro-environmental behaviours as core to SME business operations.
- The development of case studies of SMEs engaging internally in pro-environmental behaviours (for use by other SMEs and government).
- Cultural capital research to determine whether it is possible to engage SMEs as a population.
- Explore social marketing techniques for behaviour promotion.

(2009: iv, 26)

Of social marketing, she cites Kline Weinreich, who describes several traits which correspond to behaviour change, which include:

- Believe that performance of the behaviour is consistent with self-image.
- Perceive greater social pressure to perform the behaviour than not.

(ibid: 13 citing Weinreich 2011)

This study researches the potential impact of normative messaging on businesspeople based in Cornwall, and thus potential for a voluntary increase in pro-environmental behaviour. As Murnaghan's report identifies, there are improvements

to be made, both by SMEs in their environmental impacts, and researchers in their engagement.[22] The majority of studies within a business context focus on employee behaviour (cited throughout this chapter), whereas this study explores normative perception between businesses (external influence). This study therefore contributes practical findings to a lesser-researched area of messaging and interaction between businesspeople.

Specifically, this research focuses on business behaviours, however, research cited in earlier sections does include that of people in their private lives. A study of SMEs in the east of England also found "values" to be a significant motivator (Williams and Schaefer 2012). The exploration stage of this practical research (section 2.3.1c) found that some participants considered their work and personal modes as both separate and intertwined. Also, in line with the findings from other research,[23] some participants perceived their behaviour to be of greater impact on the environment when in the workplace (section 2.3.1d). This further justifies this study's focus on business behaviour, as it may be that perceptions of normative pro-environmental behaviour are more prevalent in personal/residential/lifestyle groupings. Munster and Schrader write that "employees' private role as consumers is considered crucial for learning and practicing environmental attitudes and behaviour" (2011: 141), however, the influence may occur less in reverse, as a study of pro-environmental behaviours for DEFRA found normative influence in the workplace was only significant amongst those without an active friendship group (Bedford *et al* 2010: 4). A study based in Cornwall found participants' tendency towards pro-environmental behaviours to be similarly matched in home and work settings (Tudor, Barr and Gilg 2007). However, in their study of pro-environmental behaviours in homes and workplaces, Nye and Hargreaves found situation-specific differences between these spheres, due to differences in peer groups, roles and behaviours (2010). Additionally, in a study of home and office energy usage, Littleford, Ryley and Firth found setting to be the defining feature of behaviour, and no evidence of spill over effects (2014). For example, a person might display a number of pro-environmental behaviours in the workplace, but not necessarily replicate those behaviours with similar equipment in the home (such as computer monitors, light switches). This implies that relevance of promoted behaviours is only a factor, and that workplace dynamics and identity may

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[22] She writes that campaigns and interventions tend to be targeted at either individuals or large high-risk businesses (Murnaghan 2009: 7).
[23] A survey of office workers in London found that participants were more likely to recycle at home than at work (Gray 2008). A survey in Britain found that 40% of respondents said that they recycle plastics at home but not at work (DEFRA 2009).

play a greater part. It is proposed that as this study targets work-based behaviours, messaging should take place in that context, although in chapter 3, findings are explored which further support the intertwining of the personal and workplace (sections 3.2.1, 3.4.2). These findings illustrate the complexity of work and personal identities and behaviours.

This study explores the potential for increased voluntary behaviour change by people in their business context, and thus within the current mode of capitalism. To challenge that context might produce defence mechanisms which can prevent the uptake of pro-environmental behaviours (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002). As chapters 2 and 3 will describe, participants in the study displayed a variety of views about ecological environments and the role of business in climate change management. It is therefore not possible to profile the demographic as perceiving a normative stance on the subject. Additionally, no evidence was found that participants networked in or identified themselves as part of business sectors, thus the focus of businesspeople in Cornwall was not further refined. The pros and cons of this will be discussed in the final chapter. In chapter 2 and 3, some participants' perspectives of what might be described as the "character" of the group are explored, which include use of normative language. While it is not proposed that these opinions represent "businesspeople in Cornwall", they do appear to represent those participants' perception of commonalities in their groups. It may be that in those cases where similar perspectives were shared by several participants, further research could explore the frequency of those views within a larger sample.

1.9 Cornwall

As described in the previous section, the context for this research is the behaviours of businesspeople in Cornwall. This was not further refined to a particular sector, because no evidence was found of sector-specific networks during the exploration phase (section 2.3.1). Other research by Kaesehage on businesses in Cornwall also found evidence of an informal knowledge-sharing "cluster" amongst SMEs which was not sector specific (2013). This supports the non-sectored demographic and also the normative hypothesis of this research, as Kaesehage describes the cluster as involving trust. She says: "they'd rather go to their neighbour and ask them what have

you done about climate change how does that affect you how does that work for you?" (ibid).

In line with the discussion in earlier parts of this chapter, Kaesehage also found that discussing climate science was not a prerequisite for the uptake of pro-environmental behaviours. This echoes Corner and Kahan who find that concern and "climate literacy" were not always aligned (Corner 2012; Kahan *et al* 2012). Kaesehage also found that participants considered "sustainability" to be manageable but climate change "big" and "scary" (2013). She does, however, advocate messaging which details regionally-specific climate change impacts, and notes that uptake of pro-environmental behaviour is values-based (ibid), which is fitting with other studies of SME behaviours (Williams and Schaefer 2012).

Of the characteristics found in participants who wished to engage with climate change, Kaesehage noted that "regional identity" and appreciation of Cornwall's natural landscapes was a commonality (2013), although it is not clear whether the trend was causal. The practical phases of this study also found instances of regional pride, identity (and perception of difference to other regions), appreciation of landscape and feelings of responsibility towards the ecological environment and/or other humans (section 2.3.1e and 2.3.4e), which were not always synonymous with a belief of climate change evidence. The risk of increased flooding was described by one participant (section 2.3.4a), and indeed Cornwall's geography does appear to make the county vulnerable to flooding, with several major floods every year (Cornwall Council 2011b).

Some pro-environmental behaviours can be triggered not by climate change but an appreciation of natural environments, for example finding alternatives to landfill or preserving wildlife habitats. Many parts of Cornwall are recognised and protected Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Cornwall AONB 2016), and its mining landscape is a world heritage site (UNESCO 2016), contributing to a significant tourist industry.[24] Thus it is likely that many people in Cornwall identify with and appreciate its landscapes. This further supports the hypothesis for regionally-specific messaging.

Sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.5 include a comparison of participants' business sizes and sectors with county averages. Compared nationally, in 2013 Cornwall had a greater

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[24] In 2011 it was calculated that tourism spending in Cornwall amounted to 1.8 billion (annual) and that tourism accounted for 25% of employment (Visit Cornwall 2011: 2).

proportion of self-employed people (15.5% compared to 9.4%), and a greater proportion of businesses turning over less than £50,000 (22.2% compared to 18.4%) (Cornwall Council 2013b). In 2016 Compared to the UK average, Cornwall had low earnings, negative GVA (Gross Value Added) per head and declining productivity, but increased employment, increases in new businesses and self-employment (Cornwall Council 2016b). Despite increases in employment, business start-ups and self-employment (ibid), Cornwall's economy was behind that of most of the UK. In 2015, 44 (13.5%) of Cornwall's neighbourhoods were in the 20% most deprived in England, potentially qualifying for support and funding (Cornwall Council 2015). It is therefore important to consider the financial barriers preventing uptake of some pro-environmental behaviours, reflected in DEFRA's *Framework for pro-environmental behaviours* (2008: 34), in which variables of "willingness" and "ability" are mapped. Of the latter, it is noted that external constraints limit people's ability to act, for example in rural areas public transport limitations limit people's ability to reduce car usage (ibid), which is also relevant to Cornwall. These findings contributed towards the designing of the second practice phase (section 2.2.2) in which storytellers described a range of behaviours some of which had no direct monetary cost, and in chapter 3 audience responses relating to relevance were explored.

Cornwall's history includes wealthier times, although not necessarily distributed or relating to living standards. Its coastal setting contributed to a significant maritime history (Payton, Kennerley and Doe 2014) and its geology a mining one (Bullen 1998; UNESCO 2016). There was much wealth in the district of Camborne-Redruth at the time of the industrial revolution, mainly from copper mining (Cornish Mining 2016), whereas in 2015 five of its neighbourhoods were amongst the 5% most deprived in England (Cornwall Council 2015: 3). In the same way that a person defines him or herself by her experiences, it could be considered that Cornish identity is influenced by histories beyond the perceiver's lifetime, especially when symbols of past times, such as engine houses (UNESCO 2016), or tall ships attractions in Falmouth port (FTSA 2016), are visible on the landscape or represented in media. The county's current beauty and rich history could further contribute to identities linked to the county. Commercial emphasis on shipping, mining and (at the time of writing) tourism, has changed the landscape and the people in it.

The word "Cornish" can be coined by both newcomers to the county and also those considering themselves to be of Cornish race. Mark Stoyle explains that up to and during the Tudor period the Cornish were commonly regarded as a separate ethnic

group, but that by the 1700s, due in part to a decline in the Cornish language, this perception outside of Cornwall had largely ceased (Stoyle 2011). Within the county, Bernard Deacon describes a prevalence of Cornish identity which is both "of England" and "not of England" (2007: 22), described as "industrial celts" (ibid: 23). Of a post-1960s burgeoning of "oppositional" Cornish identity, he writes that "in the public history arena reconstituted memories of trauma and subjugation, claims for restitution and a culture of victimhood seem to have gained pace" (2009: 19). In what he describes as people's striving to "root" themselves in the land, Deacon criticises an over-exclusivity in which definitions for "true" Cornishness are sought (2013: 20). This was also a finding of the practice phase in which some participants described networks which preference Cornish race (section 2.3.1e), and Charles Thomas writes "if a cat has kittens in the oven it doesn't make them into pasties" (1973: 12). Amongst those networks, messaging which emphasises aspects of Cornishness – local history, Cornish proper names, inclusion of the Cornish flag, use of versions of revived Cornish language, use of accent – might increase perceptions of normative behaviour and thus have a greater effect on audiences. However, as the practice chapters will establish, whereas many participants described a perception of normative culture, few described an ethnic identity. In the 2011 census, 13.8% of respondents stated that they had a Cornish national identity (Cornwall Council 2013d: 5). Amongst the 86.2% who did not, there may be in some a perception of their otherness (of which evidence was found in section 2.3.1e), which might reduce normative perception.

Considering those who perceive themselves to be of Cornish race as a sub-group for the purpose of normative messaging may be an effective technique, however, this is but one of many perceived groupings that those audiences might respond to. The fifth phase of practical research (chapter 3) explored participants' own perceptions of similarity amongst a demographic variety of storytellers. The findings may contribute towards future studies which categorise groups more specifically.

Deacon advocates a subjective definition of Cornishness which includes those who are born outside of the county. "Ethnic boundaries are porous," he writes, "people can and do change their ethnic identifications" (2013: 24). In this definition, perceptions of Cornish culture and normative behaviour are not merely appreciated by subjects, but taken on as ideology or perceptions of group membership. Sentiments fitting with this theory were encountered in the practice phases (sections 2.3.1e, 2.3.4e, 3.4.9), in which normative language was used to describe and identify with perceived

commonalities. This may be akin to what Kaesehage describes as "regional identity". As described in previous sections, perceptions of group membership also require perceptions of out-group otherness, which are also evident in those sections, described often as "difference". Deacon's "myth" of Cornish character is also defined by the other:

> There is a powerful myth that the Cornish were by nature great individualists. Put positively, they refused to be constrained by fashion or custom and stuck out on their own. They were hardy emigrants on the frontiers of empire, religious nonconformists and free-thinkers or self-reliant men economically, free from the 'tyranny' of either trade unions or giant corporations. Put negatively, they could never agree on anything and were fundamentally incapable of organising themselves. They constantly squabbled over minor and unimportant issues, whether where to build railway lines (in the 1800s), or how to spell revived Cornish (a century later) (2010: 106).

The latter part of the quote would probably be considered as othering. Whether or not the "myth" described is accurate of common Cornish behaviour, in the context of this research is irrelevant. Equally, the accuracy of participants' perception of common behaviours/attitudes and Cornish history is also irrelevant. Subjective Cornishness is a subjective concept, but concepts can be powerful behavioural influencers. Even if the historical rooting of a myth is inaccurate, it can still change behaviours. This study will therefore explore the potential for associations between pro-environmental behaviours and perceived normative behaviours within Cornish culture/business culture, which might include perceptions of a free-thinking, rebellious nature.

This may be influenced as much by Cornwall's geography as its history. Anecdotally, Cornwall is sometimes described by inhabitants as an "island" due to the prevalence of coastal and river boundaries. Its position on the southwest extremity of England, and slower transport,[25] mean that its distance (time and spatial) from London, which might be considered the location of the "centre of power" is increased. This relates to Power Distance Index in Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory (2001). In a survey of SMEs in the UK in 2009, 15% stated that they were "very dissatisfied" with support received by the Government on pro-environmental strategy, and it was found that generally, the smaller the business size, the more dissatisfaction was expressed (Netregs 2009: 5). In this example, power distance index is low, and authoritative messaging may be less well received. Some findings in the practice phases (sections

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[25] Cornwall has no motorway. Additionally, its trains are slower. On the main line from Penzance to Reading, the line speed is <75mph between Penzance and Plymouth, rising to <105mph between Plymouth and Westbury, and <125mph from Westbury to Reading (Network Rail 2012: 3).

2.3.1e, 2.3.4e, 3.4.9), in which otherness was expressed, suggest that messaging that is designed for national audiences, or which is authoritarian, may be less effective in promoting behaviour change.

Of "local" messaging, Nat Segnit and Gill Ereaut write that despite the increase in technologically-networked communities, community identity is still often location-based (2007: 8). They suggest,

> a growing desire for a sense of locality – at least among some population sectors – in the rise of farmers' markets and demand for locally produced food. It is clearly not out of date to talk about physical communities. At its most contemporary, in fact, the virtual becomes a bridge to the physical (ibid: 38).

Non-location-based virtual communities do of course exist, such as those described in Clay Shirky's *Cognitive Surplus* (2010), but they would likely have different norms and are not the focus of this study. Returning to Segnit and Ereaut, "community address" is their suggested term to replace "citizen of the world", in which an individual is a member of a "knowable, physically located community" (2007: 33). Of this approach they write:

> The 'unit' of the physical locality allows a degree of reification – making real and concrete – of the otherwise abstract and unknowable connection between action and effect in the area of climate change. Furthermore, addressing people as members of a located community positions them as having more power to act: they are big fish in a small pond, not powerless members of an unmanageably large group (ibid: 8).

The approach could be considered therefore in terms of proportions: a greater proportion of impact from a pro-environmental behaviour, a greater proportion of community influence/approval, and a greater proportion of discourse and equality. This and other findings from this chapter support the hypothesis that a local approach may be successful in promoting pro-environmental behaviours. In this study the "community" has been selected as Cornwall, due to concepts of Cornishness expressed in both this section and the practice phases, but it is noted that further segmenting of the county might increase normative influence further. There is much to support the hypothesis of perceived or actual Cornish business culture, and that as such, in-group messaging may be behaviourally influential.

1.10 Discussion

There is evidence that many ecological changes affecting planet Earth and its inhabitants are a result of human action, a pressing example of which is climate change, which was briefly explored in the introduction. This thesis is not an argument for change, as others have made that far more eloquently, with careful injunctive normative persuasion, and as such have assisted the thinking of many in addressing such problems despite their abstraction. Instead, this thesis builds on that argument for voluntary behaviour change, and explores some methods for persuasion, which might hasten the emergence of new pro-environmental norms.

Examples throughout this chapter highlight the importance of contextually specific messaging and behaviours, and for this reason a research context was selected, whilst recognising that humans have the potential to negatively impact on environments, in a number of settings, such as domestic, social or occupational. As section 1.8 illustrates, decisions made in occupational settings (including political) certainly account for much of these impacts. This study focuses on activities or behaviours in a business setting, because in its place of research (Cornwall, England), at the time of writing, businesses are relatively autonomous and environmental legislation is not extensive, nor incentives significant. Some believe that the current capitalist system presents contradictions for those running businesses that might be considered cultural. Although cultures vary, and there are undeniably businesses that are primarily "ethical" (often given terms such as "social enterprise"), it is also the case that many businesses operate primarily for financial profit, indeed some constitutionally so. These are the focus of this study, the objective being to explore techniques that might increase voluntary uptake of "pro-environmental" behaviours (despite the term's broad definition) within current systems.

Storytelling methods vary between fields, and of course between humans. It is used in marketing, management, and politics, to influence behaviours, with greater emphasis over the preceding decades (Salmon 2010). In what might be described a "post-truth" era (Roberts 2010), there is little evidence that emotional narrative is lessening in its ability to influence. Research into stories effectiveness in behaviour promotion in business settings has shown this. However, much of that research has taken place in large organisations in the US, and focusses on internal change, such as efficiency. It may be on the subject of SME pro-environmental behaviour that findings are different – not that they are less effective (probably the opposite) – but

that different narrative techniques are effective. This study therefore contributes to a gap in research on organisational storytelling.

There is much research to support theories that perception of social norms can be an effective behavioural influencer, and that manipulation of normative messaging can result in behavioural change. Such studies have often benefitted from settings uncomplicated by contradictory messaging, such as spatial areas or topics which might not frequently be discussed. This is not the case when promoting pro-environmental behaviour, commonly linked to concepts of environment/climate change, of which media outputs are numerous. It is likely that for most potential participants, messaging on the subject has and will be received socially. With much, potentially conflicting, messaging, it would not be possible within the limitations of this study to test the impact of normative messaging on this subject. However, it could be argued that normative theory has been well tested, including in business settings. If the receiver of a message perceives it to be normative, then it could be considered that the probability of behaviour change has increased.

As identified in this chapter, stories can be an effective behavioural influencer because humans have evolved using them socially and also to convey information. They can be an effective method for messaging that might be considered normative, because of their role in societies (importance, attention), potential to emphasise emotion (norms are emotionally invested in), ability to describe "convention" (descriptive norms), use of inclusive language (in-group), and most importantly their "moral" (injunctive) elements, in other words their licence to transform fact into emphasised (biased) message. This combination of descriptive and injunctive elements mean that storytelling is an especially effective means of conveying social norms, the latter of which may be most significant (Martin Goldstein and Cialdini 2014: 30). The link between stories with prosocial values or "morality" means that they can be an effective method for increasing altruistic tendencies in people, and thus are fitting in a context where pro-environmental behaviours benefit unknown others. It is also noted that such behaviours can reap social benefits.

Storytelling is manipulative, but its malleability is its strength as a tool for resolution. It may be that story exchange (rather than delivery), can emphasise similarities between participants and de-polarise debate (although the opposite can also occur). There are a number of ways that such exchange can take place, perhaps most effectively in a casual manner, however, workshop-style sharings can also be

effective (Williams 2004: 155; Fischer and Forester 1993), as well as digital methods (Lambert 2013). Such methods are perhaps more effective than commercial storytelling strategy (which is more prescriptive), because the relevance of pro-environmental "solutions" varies between communities, and thus participatory techniques may be more effective (Corner *et al* 2014: 7; Murnaghan 2009: 26).

Concepts of trust and truth have been highlighted throughout this chapter, for example relating to science communication, authority, and professional storytelling. As explored in section 1.5 and 1.6, perceived in-group messaging may be most effective at influencing behaviour, because trust is often "taken for granted" in these settings (Markova, Linell and Gillespie 2008: 11). The practice phases will therefore emphasise participatory and/or in-group messaging, and explore audiences' perception of truth and trust. Although out-group disapproval can be an effective method of promoting norms, there is much throughout this chapter to suggest that positive messaging which promotes behaviours that align with an audience's worldview may be most effective in relation to climate change. On their review of communication strategy, Segnit and Ereaut write:

> The local communications that stood out took a linguistic approach quite distinct from both national communications, and from the less compelling local examples that were simply local imitations of the national. The most significant difference was in their means of addressing the individual. He or she was constructed as a (powerful) member of a real, physically located community; the action (s)he could take was framed as collective or communal; the voice used was playful, metaphorical, and moreover, collaborative – peer-to-peer – as opposed to top- down or authoritative (2007: 7).

While it may be possible to construct language such as that described, in the practical phase stories were studied which were provided by members of the community. Normative perception was potentially increased by this technique. However, it did mean that stories were not constructed to make full use of persuasive language techniques such as those used in marketing strategy.

As has been identified, stories may be an effective method for increasing pro-environmental behaviours in businesses, through the perception of norms or otherwise. It is posited that focussing research geographically, in the county of Cornwall, may increase perceptions of similarity, due to spatial closeness and concepts of cultural identity. As with any county, Cornwall's history, landscape, economy and cultures are unique. What might be considered a geographic and

operational remoteness could further emphasise perceptions of difference. It is likely that a tailored approach to messaging can increase normative perception. There is not, at the time of writing, extensive information available on pro-environmental normative messaging in businesses located in Cornwall. Thereby this research contributes to the field of Cornish Studies research as well as regional studies based in other geographical areas with similar characteristics.

As described in the introduction, humanities research is arguably relevant in the addressing of environmental issues such as climate change, as are findings from a number of fields. There are a number of movements and studies which are either humanities-based or include humanities representation/techniques, which explore media-based interventions, and this study contributes to that research. Some examples are described in this chapter, such as Project ASPECT, and others include Cape Farewell (2017) and the UK Droughts and Water Scarcity Programme (NERC 2017).

In the next chapter, methods for practically testing this theory will be explored. However, it is noted that research into the effectiveness of storytelling and normative messaging is extensive. It is therefore not proposed that this study aims to prove the effectiveness of normative storytelling, rather explore how that might operate in this context. Other researchers have found somewhat of a research gap into SME pro-environmental behaviours (Murnaghan 2009: 27; Kaesehage *et al* 2014: 81), which, along with perceptions of what might described a distinctive Cornish culture, could lead to characteristics of norm description or perception that could be used to more effectively promote pro-environmental behaviours amongst those groups or similar others. Little research has taken place into the application of such messaging in a Cornish business context, however, it is noted that the findings of this study cannot claim to represent all Cornish businesspeople, rather specific individuals within that demographic. Chapters 2 and 3 will attempt to better reflect those individuals.

This study aims to contribute to the field of storytelling by identifying normative elements in the process of persuasion which might contribute towards a model for predicting whether a story would be more or less likely to influence audiences. It explores how stories are perceived and told (quantitatively proving their effectiveness). New methods have been developed in the practice phases, enabling testing of some of the theory described in this chapter. As with the qualitative findings of Dashwood's extensive study (2012), findings cannot necessarily prove or disprove,

but they can begin to plot a process which, due to its automatic and emotional elements, is complex and often opaque.