Chapter 4: Summary

Overall, evidence was found in the practice phases to support the hypothesis that storytelling can increase in-group perception amongst businesspeople in Cornwall, and that stories which promote pro-environmental behaviours could potentially increase uptake of those or other pro-environmental behaviours, especially when evidenced by normative perception. The following sections will summarise the findings from this research, an overview of which can be found in the final sections.

As described in the introduction, this study sits within an emerging field of research into the effectiveness of stories as behavioural influencers, in this case with focus on normative aspects. The impact of normative messaging on people's actions has been established, providing evidence for what has nonetheless been known as an important part of human evolution – the membership of groups. It is clear that people's perception of norms affects decision-making in many if not most aspects of life. Such studies have been possible by utilising relatively isolated or created scenario/environments, in which direct impacts of messaging can be measured. In the context of environmental impact, there are barriers to such experimentation, due to the large amount of messaging in the public domain and within networks on subjects such as climate change, sometimes conflicting both in their factual and injunctive aspects. Additionally, the measurement of action presents challenges due to the many practical aspects of pro-environmental behaviour uptake, perhaps especially in a business environment where decision-making may be less individual, and normative influence, though certainly present, may be diluted by other needs of the business such as profitability.

Studies in the field measure aspects such as actions signifying intent, brain activity, or qualitatively explore people's iterations. Such techniques provide evidence of internal influence rather than the performance of an action, which may rely on a number of criteria. Intent may be considered a vital step in a process which also requires input from other fields of research to enable behavioural uptake practically. As the reader will note, there are findings from this study which may inform these areas, such as participants' discussion of the effectiveness of technology, or legislative barriers. These are not the focus of this study; instead it focusses on findings concerning normative perception, emotional engagement, and intent.

There are a number of behavioural factors relating to the environment, and also of fields contributing to its study, which is necessarily interdisciplinary. Studies in the field of storytelling have illustrated that stories can be effective behavioural influencers, again because of the human trait of group-forming. Although behavioural psychology and spoken arts may appear to be vastly different in their methods, the fields share many commonalities under different terminologies. Injunctive messaging (section 1.6) commonly takes place in storytelling form, but would more likely be described as moral or prosocial (section 1.1). This study is not the first to recognise these commonalities – many story researchers have cited psychological theory – but it is relatively unique in its testing of data to illustrate potential impact.

This research engaged with approximately 200 Cornish businesspeople, of which the views of about a third have been included in this study. Approximately 35 statements were represented in the exploration phase (section 2.3.1), the stories from ten Cornish businesspeople in section 2.3.2, 20 workshop participants in section 2.3.4, and ten interview participants in chapter 3. They therefore represent a small minority of Cornish working people (see section 2.1.3). Because of this, this chapter does not focus on views expressed other than those that might indicate normative perception, although readers may find some of the other findings in chapters 2 and 3 relevant to their own research.

Findings from the exploration phase, workshop and interviews constitute the majority of this chapter, because they explore the opinions and drive of participants, whereas the digital stories were crafted to emphasise pro-environmental behaviours of businesses. All the data in this study has been gathered through discourse methods, potentially establishing norms that were unique to the parties involved. Although efforts were made to be impartial, the researcher is the common denominator in these interactions (although less so in the workshop) and so the researcher is both influential in the data and its analysis.

4.1 Perceptions of climate change

To summarise views of climate change by Cornish businesspeople would require a large survey and was not the objective of the study. It was notable, however, that of opinions expressed (sections 2.3.1d, 2.3.4a, 3.4.5) there were several instances of

climate science scepticism in the exploration phase, and none in the workshop and interviews. Although it is likely that the context of the workshop meant that participants were more likely to be engaged with climate change issues, it was noted that in the interview phase (section 3.4.5), some participants had previously voluntarily expressed scepticism of climate science, but did not do so during or after the interviews.

There are a number of potential reasons for this, but it may be that the duration of interactions in the latter phases, compared to sometimes brief and spontaneous interactions in the exploration phase, led to increased normative perception between participants and other participants/the interviewer. Conversely during brief interactions in the exploration phase, little exchange of values took place and thus conformity drive was less apparent.

It might be considered that views expressed in the exploration phase were "more honest", however, gaining participants' "honest" views was not the objective of this study, rather, it is a study of how views can be influenced. In the interviews, participants were not directly asked for their views on climate science, so those who had sceptical views did not lie but simply chose not to share them, instead discussing wider issues of sustainability. In other words, these participants focussed positively on common ground, which was unsurprising given the findings of section 1.2, especially the mediatory role of stories. By promoting behaviours as normative rather than promoting the issues instigating them (such as climate change), ideological barriers can potentially be bypassed.

Participants' choice to agree with the overall messaging of the workshop and interviews, despite known differing views, could be described as conformity. In the workshop, this was conformity to the group, in the interviews, conformity to the interviewer and some or all storytellers. By ascribing to a group, a person to some extent takes ownership of its normative values. The participants were thus "honest" in that context. As noted in section 1.5, attitudes can vary between contexts, and durable influence is likely to come from the psychologically close (Allport 1954; Trope and Liberman 2010). It may be that the storytelling format and/or duration of interaction in later phases increased this perception and desire to conform, which would increase the likelihood of behavioural influence. Language indicative of psychological closeness was highlighted in section 3.4.2, evidencing the potential of such influence.

Segnit and Ereaut offer an alternative explanation for the disparity between views expressed. They write that despite the majority of public discourse and "rational selves" accepting that "the climate is changing and that humans have had some part to play", scepticism "speaks to our undeniable wish to wake up one morning and find the whole thing is a bit of a storm in a teacup" (2007: 30). It is possible that earlier phases of the study encouraged flippancy in a way that subsequent phases did not, and that sceptical statements were not "more honest" but examples of a coping mechanism.

Workshop participants used normative language to emphasise in-group knowledge of climate change and concern of its impacts, such as "we know", "us" and "you" (section 2.3.4b, 2.3.4d). In two cases, participants' phrasing illustrates the potentially normatively-muddled nature of this type of messaging:

> Well, when it's **Joe** Public and **they** want a new [product], as far as **they**'re concerned it's **their** little world, and what **they** just want for **whatever** reason is to do that (section 2.3.4c).

> At least two thirds of **them** do not believe that carbon is having any impact at all on the environment, nor do **they** believe that even if it is, there's very much **they** can do about it (section 2.3.4a).

In both these examples, undesirable behaviour/opinions are described as common (descriptive norms), however, injunctive messaging implies disapproval, and disassociation is clear from repeated use of "they/them". As described by Martin, Goldstein and Cialdini, injunctive messaging is of particular importance (2014: 30). Few would wish to be *Joe Public* or "two thirds of businesspeople" in these cases. This illustrates how injunctive messaging is especially relevant to this subject, or others which aim to promote behaviours that are not prevalent (Corner 2011; Defra 2008: 49). In this case, pro-environmental behaviour is implied as common (descriptive normative) to a caring (injunctive) sub-group, and those external to it are othered.

Some participants in the exploration phase described climate change impacts as psychologically distant, in spatial and hypothetical terms, for example by referring to polar bears, and exaggerated predictions (section 2.3.1d). As described in section 1.7, psychologically distant concepts will have less influence on behaviour than those considered as relating to the "self in here and now" (Trope and Liberman 2010). Later

phases did not find evidence of this, but participants were not asked for their views on climate change. Normative promotion of behaviours can potentially increase perceptions of psychological closeness, for example by relating pro-environmental behaviours to esteem needs (Maslow 1943).

As described in section 1.7, Maslow's hierarchy has some relevance to the topic. One workshop participant hypothetically asked how "are you gonna keep your business running in a flood?" (section 2.3.4g) highlighting safety/physiological implications of climate change. Another noted "climate change has already affected a place I love" (Swarm TV 2013a), relating to belonging needs, and another described "Cornwall's unique opportunity", relating to esteem needs:

> **You** look at bigger businesses trying to peg on a green agenda, now **they're** trying but it's too late, **we're** not going to peg it on, it's not an accessory, it's part of the structure, it's the infrastructure of the business plan (section 2.3.4g).

In the interviews there was little dialogue on climate science or climate change impacts (section 3.4.5). This could be considered a success of the study, as it was hypothesised that behaviour-focused normative messaging might influence behaviour without challenging "deep core" values (in this case, ideological links to perceptions of climate change [see section 1.7]). This is not to suggest that values can be bypassed entirely, rather that to challenge them should be avoided. This is echoed by a number of findings discussed in chapter 1, including those of Levin *et al* (2012: 147), and also Kaesehage, Leyshon and Caseldine whose Cornwall-based research on pro-environmental behaviours in SMEs found that leaders were driven largely by values (2014).

Kaesehage, Leyshon and Caseldine recommend the creation of a "progressive space" for the exchange of "socially informed" (normative) and "value-laden" (prosocial/injunctive) knowledge (ibid: 95-96), although there are issues with "lay knowledge". Kaesehage notes that within a "cluster" (in-group) of Cornish SME leaders, members spoke to each other to acquire knowledge, and that as a result little new information entered the group and climate science literacy was low (2013). Whereas climate science knowledge is not a prerequisite for low carbon behaviour, it is conceivable that well-intentioned behavioural uptake might have the opposite of the desired effect, because impacts are dispersed and often unmeasurable by their instigator. This highlights the importance of external involvement (or inter-group

exchange), for example from people who work in the sciences. As described in section 1.2, storytelling can facilitate this by promoting commonality.

In Dashwood's study of norm emergence, the creation of the kind of "space" that Kaesehage, Leyshon and Caseldine describe was plotted, insofar as a "privileged group" was informed and nurtured by external parties (2012: 251). The process was not prescriptive, or authoritarian, and members designed the aspects of corporate social responsibility which were most relevant practically to their businesses, and also personal values. Wilson and Lewis offer an example of a farmer who is an "authority" on weather changes (2013: 7): it is her acquired knowledge of the role of carbon which enables delivery of meaning in her story.

Located story-sharing exercises, such as those in this study, enable space for value promotion and the creation of regionally relevant norms, but not as a substitute for other forms of communication. This study therefore sits within a larger network of information exchange.

4.2 Difference

In the previous section it was suggested that some participants may have perceived an overall normative messaging during the workshop or having watched the films, which influenced their choice to express or suppress views. In other words, they expressed or repressed opinions relevant to the context of the interaction. This can be a social nicety (norm), but it is proposed that cases where language was emotively injunctive, such as those highlighted in the previous section, were more likely to be indicative of future behaviour intent or influence.

Whereas participants generally appeared to agree with prosocial views expressed in the workshop/films, such as responsibility and environmental impact (section 2.3.4d, 3.4.7), there are also numerous examples of expressions of difference to others, for example expressions of difference to those outside the county, some of which will be explored in the next section. As might be expected, workshop participants did not seem to disagree with one another, which aligns with the findings on normative group influence (section 1.5), and normative convivial behaviour. In the interviews, storytellers were not present and in most cases participants expressed disagreement with, or disapproval of, some but not all of the tellers (examples in section 3.4.12).

Overall, 17% of transcription statements were coded as negative/critical, but this varied between participants, most notably one made just 3% statements that were coded as positive/complimentary (section 2.3.5b). This is not uncommon. Of people's expectation of prosocial collective behaviour, Bicchieri cites a number of studies in which respondents underestimate the behaviour of others, noting that it is "puzzling that people may expect a given norm to be upheld" despite "personal evidence to the contrary" (2006: 9-10). Where financial incentive is a method for changing business behaviour, one interview participant was similarly sceptical about the drives of others:

> If you withdraw all the funding for that and you don't have the people to go round checking it'll all just revert back, **people** will only do what **they're** forced to do (Appendix 11: 410).

In this case the participant was critical of perceived normative behaviour, adding that "**people** won't change" without legislative enforcement, but implying that small business owners in Cornwall may be less financially driven (ibid: 401, 389). This could be considered an example of othering, hence the use of the word "they're" rather than "we're" in the earlier quote, and the participant's implied disapproval (injunctive) of greedy or destructive behaviour by other business owners.

As explored throughout section 3.1, there are few cases where interview participants negatively discussed or gave a low score for a film/storyteller which they also marked as similar. They were asked which businesses/storytellers they were most similar to, and in some cases expressed this by describing differences to other storytellers/businesses (othering). Metaphors were used extensively to express this, including "game playing" and different "playing fields", "lottery" playing and different "breeds" (see section 3.4.2). One participant said that he/she "couldn't even imagine having a conversation" with any of the storytellers. Additionally, language implying otherness is used: numerous instances of "different", as well as "those", "individual" and "less connected" (ibid). Language highlighted throughout section 2.3.4 and chapter 3 is potentially normative ("we") or othering ("they"). This suggests some cases in which normative influence is likely.

As described in section 1.5, defining difference to others (othering) can have an important role in establishing group membership. It may be that in those cases where participants associated with some storytellers and disassociated with others, that that disassociation, or othering, increased perceptions of similarity to favoured storytellers. This could be an argument against profiling. Alternatively, othering could be

incorporated into stories, for example if tellers were to express disapproval of destructive business practices. However, this study focussed on the effects of positive messaging as per the findings of section 1.3.

4.3 Cornishness

There was strong evidence that many participants identified their businesses as operating in similar ways to others in the county, and/or different to others elsewhere in the country (sections 2.3.1e, 2.3.4e, 3.4.9), which was in line with findings of the literature review (section 1.9). It was found in the exploration phase but not in subsequent phases that some participants considered there to be a sub-group of businesspeople identifying as racially or ethnically Cornish (section 2.3.1e). However, no participants in the workshop or interviews identified themselves in this way. As with any in-group, particularly those that might be considered "kin", its members are likely to have a greater influence on behaviour. When comparing spatial closeness (regions of Cornwall) and potential influence no trend was found, although the sample size was small (section 3.2), but it is likely that normative influence would be greater if, for example, narratives were situated as from the same town. However, the smaller the group the greater the resources in crafting bespoke messaging. Some findings of this research support the hypothesis that promoting behaviours as Cornishly-normative may be enough to create in-group perception and thus influence behaviour.

Although it is likely that perceptions of Cornishness will vary greatly between those that consider themselves members of the group, it could be considered that participants' articulation of their perception of Cornishness, often in story form, is the process of definition, described by Boyd as an act of consolidation and communication (2009: 64). Some descriptions were spatial, for example othering of those "up country" (section 2.3.1e), or an appreciation or dependency on natural environments (section 2.3.1e, 2.3.4e), but the majority were social. Some immigrants to the county spoke of "escaping" previous lifestyles (2.3.1e), and one described a previous urban environment as a "toilet" (section 2.3.4f), designating elsewhere as waste. These imply a spatial and social disassociation with a previous group membership, and suggest that participants understand their values to most closely align with those of Cornish people, insofar as they *belong* in Cornwall.

Some commonalities were also found between participants' descriptions of Cornish business culture, which again cannot be considered a representation of such a large demographic, but are in line with some of Deacon's findings (2007: 22). A relaxed or "casual" approach to office attire was described by participants as characteristically Cornish (section 2.3.1e, 3.4.9), and another described language use as "normal and honest" (section 2.3.1e). A workshop participant criticised "south east" language and/or policy, stating "about **two thirds** of businesses that operate in Cornwall think that those people are **stupid**" and "**all** the businesses in Cornwall are thinking 'what an **arse**'" (section 2.3.4f). In these examples, both descriptive ("two thirds") and injunctive ("stupid" and "arse") normative language is used. The same participant noted that "**we** pretend **we** want to be like them" to gain funding (section 2.3.4e), indeed a notion of Cornish discernment was reflected by other participants. One stated "**we** know it's **definitively** not the **best** way forward" and "**we**'ve got a **much better** idea" and another "now **they**'re trying but it's too **late**" (section 2.3.4e). In all these examples, descriptive and injunctive norms are aligned.

"**South east**" policy was also criticised by an interview participant, who noted "it **beggars** belief… it's pretty **sad** when it's done like **that**" (section 3.4.9), implying prosocial values. He/she noted that logistic constraints mean that only specific types of industry "**survive**" in Cornwall, which again could be seen to emphasise perceptions of similarity with other businesspeople in Cornwall (i.e. a sub-group of survivors). Another interview participant described a preference for trading locally "**keeping** things **local**" (ibid). Commenting on the businesses represented in the films, another stated:

> It probably had more effect because I know **most** of the names. I've heard of **this** one. I've heard of **this** one. I've heard of **that**. I've heard of **there**. So, I know all the **different** places (ibid).

In this example, it is interesting that the participant shifts from "this" to "that" to "there". Although this may simply be an example of creative use of language and repetition avoidance, it may also be that the participant is first selecting those that are most familiar, and finishing with those that are less so. It would suggest that those described as "this" may be more normatively influential than the latter.

These findings support the hypothesis that spatially locating stories in Cornwall may emphasise in-group perception and thus influence behaviour. Additionally, by celebrating the achievements of other group members, the potential for recognition

(reward) of prosocial acts or "ordinary heroism" within a "located community" is emphasised (Segnit and Ereaut 2007: 7-8). For example, one interview participant, having watched a film about an organic farmer based in the same region of Cornwall noted: "we **should**, I **need** to make **better** connection with them" (section 3.4.12). The impact is therefore uptake of pro-environmental behaviour (purchasing organic food), but crucially it is connected to the community, as is emphasised injunctively. This could be seen as rewarding the farmer for his efforts.

In this study, the "located community" was emphasised, whilst deliberately avoiding its definition. Cornish culture might be perceived in a number of ways, for example reflecting in the different approaches towards analytics expressed by participants and storytellers (section 2.3.2, 2.3.4e, 3.4.10). Perceptions of genuine or honest behaviour could be seen to merely express one's perceived membership to a group or association with a teller, which is why participants' scoring of sincerity and believability was so varied (subjective).

This study contributes to a relatively small field of Cornwall-based research, supporting findings that perceptions of Cornish identity can be non-ethnic and self-defined as uniquely attitudinal, especially through use of out-group descriptions. Crucially, this study finds evidence of this within business contexts, of which there has been little research to date.

4.4 Business

Some participants in the workshop and interview noted that Cornish businesses are generally smaller in size (section 2.3.4e, 3.4.9), having different characteristics to larger organisations, whereas other participants did represent larger organisations, and so did not express those views. The complexity of running a business for profit whilst considering its impact was discussed by a number of participants (section 2.3.4c, 3.4.5, 3.4.7) and also two storytellers (Appendix 2). Views were also expressed that might be considered anti-consumerist, anti-growth (2.3.4d, 3.4.5, 3.4.7) and even in one case anti-capitalist (section 3.4.5) despite the fact that the participant was representing a business. One interview participant stated that a teller has struck him/her as "more as a business more than anything" (section 3.3.2), inferring a preference for those who took a wider view of business responsibility. This

may have been influenced to some extent by the storytelling medium which is associated with prosocial values (Boyd 2009: 176, 378), in other words, Allport's context-specific values (1954: 40). Of the ten interview participants, five criticised one or more of the storytellers for prioritising profit-making, which supports the findings in section 1.7 that people in a business context can be driven by esteem or self-actualising needs. Findings throughout the practice phases reflect the complexity of business identity (section 2.3.1c, 3.1), which can induce situation-specific norms (Goldstein *et al* 2007: 15). Yet personal differences or similarities can also influence behaviour (next section). Some participants described customer and shareholder pressure to keep costs down (section 2.3.4c, 3.4.7), so it is noted that there are a number of different areas of influence on a businessperson as well as practical restrictions. This is why signs of influence, rather than changes to business strategy, are more important for this study.

There was much evidence in the literature review to support the hypothesis that situating narratives as Cornish (section 1.9) and relevant in a business context (section 1.8) would be likely to promote normative perception and thus influence behaviour. An analysis of normative language throughout the practical phases could be seen to support this. However, the literature search did not find evidence as to what extent further refining of business relevance (profiling) would be successful. This is because most research into storytelling in/by business focusses on internal (between employees) or marketing (between businesses and potential customers) narratives, rather than those between businesses. By investigating this specific area, this study contributes to the field of organisational storytelling, exploring the interplay between personal and business similarities, as well as between *peer* and *rival*.

The businesses of interview participants and storytellers were compared, using the criteria of business size, premises type, history/community standing, sector and location (Appendix 13). From these an average score was produced, described here as "actual" whilst recognising subjective elements to the method. In some cases participants' perceptions of business similarity confirmed the actual scoring (section 3.2.2), which supports the method. Comparison of actual business similarity to questionnaire answers relating to enjoyment, trust and believability found more examples of positive association than negative (Appendix 14, section 4.3.3), suggesting that the stories of actually similar businesses may on average be more influential. A larger sample size would be needed to assess this more fully. It has

been noted (section 2.1.1) that the results of other normative studies have only been marginal, because of free will.

Perceptions of relevance articulated by interview participants (sections 3.4.2, 3.4.3) highlight the complexity of influence, as some participants appeared to be more influenced by personal similarities than those of their businesses, which was likely emphasised by the storytelling format. Of the six which noted business similarity (section 3.2.2), their scoring for those films was above average 26 times, neutral 14 times and negative just twice across 14 films and 3 questions (section 3.2.3, Appendix 10). This suggests that business similarity caused participants to rate the films more favourably, or that films which were better enjoyed or trusted were rated as more similar. The commonalities between perceived and actual similarity (section 3.2.2) suggest that the former is the case at least to some extent. In some cases where actual similarity was not in line with results, there is evidence of the latter. As section 4.7 will describe, some elements of the stories had resonance with participants, and it may be that this led to emphasis of similarity.

An overview of stated business similarities and differences in section 3.4.2 found that participants considered numerous factors, ranging from administrative/operational, product/sector, size/standing and objective/ideology. It may be that certain similarities or differences overrode other aspects, and that similarity or difference was also over-emphasised by personal similarity or difference. Many participants described a lack of relevance of some films due to business size, especially by those representing smaller businesses, but again this would require study with a larger sample size as others expressed the contrary (section 3.4.3). In those cases it was noted that tellers' delivery/story may have transcended difference as some participants used emotive language when describing them.

Use of numbers and business terminology appeared to divide participants. In some cases, storytellers who incorporated those aspects were described as "reading from a textbook" or speaking "rubbish learned in business school". In other cases they were complimented for their use of data and terms (section 3.4.10). Of a storyteller who did not use data and terms, his approach was praised as "down to **earth**" by one participant but "a bit **woolly**" by another (ibid). Criticism of economic policy was applauded by workshop participants (section 2.3.4f), although this may have been influenced by informal group leaders (status). Overall, a smaller proportion of participants across all phases of the practical research appeared to prefer the use of

data and/or "business speak", however, of those that did, one said that descriptions of statistical monitoring were the aspect most likely to influence their behaviour (section 3.4.12). To some extent, business size profiling may also predict preference for/against business speak or statistics, and thus increase normative influence. This would need to be further tested.

As with the previous section, there are resource benefits to crafting normative messaging which targets a group that is distinct enough to be normatively influential but of as great a membership size as possible. Findings are not conclusive as to whether it would be more effective to further define business types, but business size (turnover, number of employees) was highlighted as most likely to be considered relevant. Of business sector, in the case of one participant (section 3.1.9) the reverse of the hypothesis occurred. It may be that increased rivalry (competing) in business contexts compared to social contexts (conforming) can increase the likelihood of othering. As described in section 1.6, comparison can be an effective influencer in social and business contexts. Whereas rivalry may have affected the participant's liking of the film or teller, their behaviour might still have been influenced, perhaps more so. Intragroup conflict has been found to be motivational in organisational settings (Jehn 1997). This again would require further study on a larger sample size.

4.5 Personal similarity

As earlier described, norms can be situation-specific (Goldstein *et al* 2007: 15) and thus people's behaviour can vary between environments. The results of studies that compare pro-environmental behaviours in the workplace and at home vary (section 1.8), however it is notable that one which did find significant similarity between people's behaviour in those modes also took place in Cornwall (Tudor, Barr and Gilg 2007). Conversely, in the exploration phase some participants described different workplace behaviours and even personalities to some extent (section 2.3.1d, 2.3.1c). One participant described their business behaviours as more environmentally damaging, citing time and competition pressures (section 2.3.1d). Reasons for this were also described in section 1.8. Nonetheless, it was clear that most if not all participants' and storytellers' personalities and values were intrinsic to the way that they ran their businesses, which was also a finding of Kaesehage in relation to Cornish business leaders (2013). In this study, storytelling was used to emphasise prosocial values that might be considered personal.

Similar to the previous section, a scoring system was designed which compared perceptions of interview participants' age, gender, class/education, accent/language/mannerisms, interests, style/appearance and ethos with those of storytellers. A far greater proportion of the method was subjective than that of business similarity scoring, and some elements would likely be considered contentious. For this reason, it is described here as "predicted" (rather than "actual" as in the previous section). Despite this, of the three interview participants who marked a storyteller as similar personally, in two cases the scoring had also predicted it to be the case (section 3.2.2); thus, it may be considered that the method was a suitable alternative to established profiling algorithms, given resource constraints.

No overall alignment was found between predictions of personal similarity and participants' perception of the films' enjoyment, trust and believability. It is not possible to establish whether this was because the method was inaccurate and/or because personal similarity is not an important factor in the enjoyment or trust of stories in this context. A comparison of participants' own perceptions of personal similarity and their questionnaire answers found results more fitting with the hypothesis. Of the three aforementioned participants who noted personal similarity, two completed the questionnaire, and their enjoyment, trust and believability of those films was above average nine times, neutral three times and never negative across 4 films and 3 questions (section 3.2.3). As with the previous section, it is not clear whether personal similarity caused participants to rate the films more favourably, and/or whether those films which were better enjoyed or trusted were rated as more similar.

In the workshop, signs of personal connection between participants will have been largely nonverbal. In the interviews, participants chose or were prompted to explain why they considered storytellers to be personally similar. Language was used creatively to describe this, for example spatial metaphors. One participant described the "way" a storyteller had "answered", and another said that a storyteller had "expressed some of the same sentiments". Two participants described hypothetical scenarios: one imagined "having a cup of tea" with storytellers and another stated that a storyteller was "the **most likely** person I'd go to the pub and have a drink **with**" (section 3.4.2). The normative aspects to these statements, such as "**affinity**", "**we**", "**same**", "**link**" and "**benchmark**" could be considered, along with their content, to signify in-group perception, especially in the case of the imagined public house visit

(because only one storyteller was identified). It might be considered a strength of the storytelling format that participants perceived similarity to this extent. It is likely, based on the findings of the literature review (section 1.6) that in these cases storytellers' injunctive messaging would be influential on behaviour.

The persuasive potential of storytelling has been numerously researched, including in organisational settings (section 1.1). A "good" raconteur can transcend personal difference, and thus perceptions of similarity, like stories, are subjective. The accuracy of participants' perceptions of similarity are only relevant if similarity were to be used as a profiler for the construction of normative messaging. This could be further tested with more advanced systems, but it is likely that at the time of writing audience response is not fully predictable.

4.6 Influence

The prosocial role of stories in societies means that they are potentially an effective method of promoting pro-environmental behaviour in this context (section 1.1), however, it is also noted that stories are one of many methods that might be used to promote pro-environmental behaviours normatively.

In the workshop, participants appeared to bond using stories, evidenced by in-group and normative language, as well as the othering of business practices perceived to be more common outside the county (section 2.3.4e). This, alongside value-based endorsement of pro-environmental behaviours would conceivably increase the likelihood of their uptake, because of the potential links to status within that group. It is a version of the "progressive space" or "privileged group" described earlier (section 4.1), in which norms emerge through democratic peer-to-peer narratives.

In the interviews, which are the focus of this study, there is evidence that participants perceived similarity to some tellers personally and/or in the businesses they represented. This would also indicate the potential for normative influence. An analysis of participants' questionnaire answers revealed that of those which varied +- 0.05 from their average scoring, in 42% of positive variance did the participant also mark that film as similar, compared to 8% of negative variance (section 3.4.2). This means that participants generally liked and trusted those they were similar to, and/or felt similar to those they liked and trusted. Of the 13 instances that participants

perceived a storyteller or business was similar to them/theirs, they also stated that it might influence a change in their working practices 11 times. Conversely only three times did a participant note potential influence by a storyteller or business that they had not marked as similar (section 2.3.5a). It is also possible for influence to be non-normative, or not injunctively normative, for example some participants responded to information in the films that related to the practical application of pro-environmental methods/technologies (section 3.4.12). However, this study focuses on prosocial aspects of behaviour adoption evident by participants' emotive and/or injunctive language.

In two cases where predicted similarity scoring matched with above average questionnaire results, participants' use of normative language further emphasised influence (section 3.4.2). Some participants may have been more influenced by similarity/norms than others. The two similarity scoring methods in some cases matched with participants' own perceptions of similarity, and to some extent enjoyment/trust of the films (section 3.2.2, 3.2.3). It would not have been possible to predict which of the two systems (business or personal) would have been most effective, so there is still some progress to be made towards effective profiling in this context (although, as the next section will illustrate, it may be that establishing normative perception through narrative aspects is a more effective approach).

Whether or not a business or teller is actually similar to a participant is irrelevant, if the desired behaviour change occurs. It may be that narrative elements can increase perceptions of norms and influence behaviour, but alongside other factors, such as a teller's status, and a participant's desire to be associated with the teller (for example due to admirable values, or perceived usefulness commercially). Wilson and Lewis found in their study that one of 18 digital stories was most affecting amongst a range of audiences, which they attribute to the teller's authenticity and life experience, through which "authority" is established (2013: 8). In this case the farmer's story would perhaps have been less influential on other farmers, who would have made their own observations of weather patterns. This is also an argument against profiling for close similarity.

Of impact, some participants described the potential uptake of pro-environmental business practices or investment in products, two emphasising creative or enjoyable aspects to this, whereas others did not consider impact to be likely (section 3.4.12). However, in the case of normative influence, its automatic effect can cause people's

perception of what influences them to be unreliable (Cialdini and Schultz 2004: 3, 6). Similarly, the emotional effects of stories can be automatically or subconsciously influential, improving (but not guaranteeing) engagement. Some stories were criticised by some participants for their vagueness, stating a preference for accurate information and "depth" (section 3.4.4). In some cases, though, their scoring indicated a preference for stories that were less specific and had abstract elements. For this reason, language analysis has been used throughout to expose participants' use of normative or in-group language, which may be a more reliable indicator of potential influence. For example, one participant stated:

> I think he's perfectly **right** that if you try to think about all the things that you can do with the things that you've got around you, then **surely** that's got to be the way forward as opposed to sticking things into the bin and then throwing them in the ground (section 3.3.1).

Injunctive language has been highlighted. Some participants stated a desire to be personal or business customers of storytellers, one stating "we **should**, I **need** to make **better connection** with them" (section 3.4.12). In this case, presumably the stories' prosocial and/or pro-environmental elements have increased in-group perception and also custom for the storyteller. Whereas increasing storytellers' profits was not an aim of this study, it is likely that grouping based on such values could increase pro-environmental uptake for both parties. This will be discussed further in section 4.9.

It is proposed that the majority of normative influence evidenced by language was positive (association), yet there were also numerous examples of othering in the workshop phase (section 2.3.4). Although perceptions of normative association are likely to have a positive influence on behaviour, it should not be assumed that othering is evidence of a lack of, or negative influence. Conflict is also an element of group dynamics, and as has been identified, can be motivational. In one example (section 3.1.9) a participant was especially critical of a teller whose business was similar. This may relate to social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979), in which differentiation is particularly prevalent between similar out-groups; or social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), in which identity is formed comparatively, again by choosing those most similar to do so. Competitive behaviour is a consequence of this. On balance, there were more examples of participants praising similar tellers or their businesses, and criticisms of those very different (for example in business size), than examples that were highlighted as potential rivalry. This study focussed on

positive normative messaging, however, storytelling is a creative act and necessarily subjective. It is not possible to eliminate negative reactions, which might nonetheless have positive impacts, but it is probably the case that dislike of a film and/or teller would reduce the likelihood of a participant choosing to watch the film.

Little explicitly metanormative language was found, but storytelling itself is arguably metanormative. In one example (also described in section 4.3), a workshop participant narrated a discussion between a Cornish businessperson and a funder from outside the county, who wanted figures such as "return on yield dah dah dah" (section 2.3.4f). The message of the story was that "GDP/GDA agendas [are] skewed by the **south east** and **their** particular way of running business", but it also contains an implicit message:

> The sad thing is that **businesses in Cornwall** <u>will look at it</u> and he's thinking "stupid Cornwall", **all the businesses in Cornwall** <u>are thinking</u> "what an **arse**" (ibid).

In this example, the potential consequence of an out-group behaviour is implied. It is the story itself: peers <u>looking</u> and <u>thinking</u>, criticising and retelling.

4.7 Stories

It has been noted in the literature review that stories can influence behaviour, especially by promoting prosocial values or norms. A challenge of this study has been identifying how a story might be told or worded to have that effect. Barazza and Zak found an emotional story which followed what might be considered "traditional" story structure was effective (2009), although Denning notes that in an organisational setting such structure is not always present in effective stories, that might lack plot or turning point, hero or heroine (2005: 8). Participants used stories in all practical phases (section 2.3.1, 2.3.4e, 2.3.4f, 3.4.6), sometimes followed by description of meaning. An overall impression of these fits Denning's description of minimal stories (ibid: 8), which often lacked climax and, probably for reasons of sensibility, did not celebrate the achievements of a specific hero. An analysis of story exchanges in the workshop found both examples of more traditional structure as well as shorter stories and narrations of hypothetical events (section 2.3.4f and 2.3.4g). In both the workshop and interviews, certain individuals were more prolific storytellers than others, although group dynamics will have had an effect in the workshop.

In section 2.3.2, the ten digital films were analysed for story structure (section 2.3.2a, Appendix 4), talking speed, disfluencies, tense and chronological markers, use of word types particularly those that might be considered embellishment (section 2.3.2b) normative language and metaphors (section 2.3.2c). Although the sample size was small, films scored as most storylike were more likely to diverge from present tense, be narrated slowly, and include syllabled adverbs (section 2.3.2b, 2.3.2d). It may be that to some extent this supports the method/s of analysis, but it should also be noted that the same subjectivity which influenced story analysis was also the instigator of the other areas of analysis.

Unfortunately, for reasons described in section 2.2.5, not all films were shown to participants in the interview phase, and thus only five films could be compared to the aforementioned analysis, which did not provide a large enough dataset for correlational analysis. Instead, graphs are displayed in section 3.4.4, in which some trends are apparent. The findings should be viewed with caution given the data size, but it is notable that no potential trends were found which did not fit with the hypothesis or were not explainable. They have therefore been included with the aim that these initial findings will prompt further research into their effects in a context such as this.

To summarise these findings, a potential (but not constant) trend was found between participants' enjoyment of the films and storyness score (an assessment of story structure), tellers' use of future tense and divergence from past tense, and their adverb usage by syllable. Perceptions of teller sincerity showed some alignment with storyness (both score and opinion based), and divergence from present tense. There was also some alignment of perceptions of information believability with use of normative language and lesser use of abstract metaphor. Additionally, some quadratic (middle-favouring) trend was evident between enjoyment and story pace and fillers/disfluency.

Of the latter, it may be that participants assessed the films comparatively and that talking speed and disfluency were less tolerable in their extremes, however, no trend was found between sincerity or believability perceptions. The finding that stories which diverged from present tense scored higher (enjoyment and sincerity) was unsurprising, although the potential preference for future rather than past tense was unexpected. It may be that in a business context a more future-facing approach is

preferred, and this was also a recommendation by Segnit and Ereaut on effective local discourse to combat climate change (2007: 36). Of the counting of many-syllabled adverbs, its potential link with enjoyment was expected as it was considered to be indicative of embellishment and emotion (Gayle and Preiss 2009). Again, a trend between information believability and normative language was expected. The analysis included use of second-person by tellers, which could be considered as directly addressing the audience (in-grouping), or implying collective pronoun (descriptive normative). The potential reverse trend between abstract metaphor and information believability was unexpected, but explainable because its use was largely at the expense of detail, which some participants considered important in this context (section 3.4.10). The film containing most abstract metaphor, in the form of subtle implicit meaning, was unclear to three of the participants, one preferring explicit and what might be considered traditional story structure:

> This is where we were, these are some of the challenges we've had, this is why we've decided to do it, this is what it's delivered to us and wa-hey. That's what I would like to have seen him say (section 3.4.4).

It is not possible to establish which of these factors were most influential on participants' scoring, nor which have been missed, although they might be further tested within a controlled environment, for example by testing similarly worded stories on a large dataset and omitting certain aspects. However, creating the "perfect" story is not the objective of this study (and likely impossible), and there is evidence that in-group perception may have occurred in a number of cases despite, or perhaps because of, these imperfections.

Throughout the study, normative and expressive language has been highlighted and both were especially prevalent when participants story-shared – there are many examples in section 3.4.6, which, although interesting, are not the focus of this study. They do, however, provide an insight into injunctive and grouping language used by the participants, which to a lesser extent was found in their feedback on the films, informing the findings.

Of interview participants' reaction to the films, some aspects were described favourably by many participants, although not universally. Of the four aspects highlighted in section 3.4.4, one was business related (making profit is essential to running a business), whereas the other three related to personal lives: being cold, wanting to live somewhere nice, and being on holiday. In some cases participants

reacted sentimentally to these aspects of the narration, and scored those films highly. It is proposed that these aspects were successful because of *how* they were narrated but also because they described universally-experienced actions or desires, increasing participants' perceptions of similarity to tellers. As described in section 1.2, stories can be an effective tool for establishing common ground, and thus normative perception. The format allows for seemingly superfluous (injunctive) information, supporting the practical (descriptive) messaging of pro-environmental behaviours and products.

In two cases, interview participants either explicitly re-narrated (section 3.3.1), or used similar language (section 3.1.7), to such aspects of stories, and in other examples to a lesser extent (sections 3.1.8, 3.3.3, 3.3.5, 3.3.6). In particular, the example in section 3.3.1 is surprisingly accurate given the amount of information received by the participant between watching and quoting the film. In these examples, the implicit meaning of those aspects might be summarised as:

- Hindsight/ambition (business progression).
- Respecting difference/having integrity (messaging holidaymakers).
- Integrity/agency (customer expectation).
- Realistic and considerate strategy (designing for the client).
- Realistic and ethical strategy (making money key but not sole aim).

This highlights the injunctive power of storytelling. In all but one of these cases, the teller's message was explicitly injunctive or prosocial, and in the one that was not, the participant framed its meaning in that way. In no cases did participants re-narrate solely practical elements of the stories. This further supports the hypothesis that participants may be more influenced by emotive, narrative or normative aspects than they are aware. It is proposed that first-person re-narration of narrative is indicative of in-group perception.

4.8 Storytellers

In the workshop phase, certain participants appeared to be confident storytellers, and through those stories described previous experiences that may have elevated their group status. However, participants were not asked to share their perceptions of

group dynamics. By not doing so, it is proposed that the potential influence of that perceived group is more lasting. Of preconceptual trust, Markova, Linell and Gillespie note that it can be partly destroyed through verbalisation, because it is no longer "taken for granted" (2008: 19). Although articulated group membership, such as being part of "Cornish business culture" would likely increase influence, it is unlikely that questioning about dynamics within that group would do so, because that is the "taken for granted" aspect. It may be considered instead that the workshop phase contributed positively to the environmental impact of this study whereas the interview phase contributed more to its findings.

By directly questioning interview participants within an ostensibly anonymous setting, the aim was to increase understanding of some of the emotional and instinctive factors involved when watching digital stories of this kind. As a result, it may be that some aspects of automatic influence were diminished.[56] It is also possible that the act of verbalising opinions may have exaggerated them, increasing both positive and negative impacts. This emphasis or exaggeration of affect enables findings to be drawn from a small sample size, which might otherwise have been less evident.

As section 3.4.7 describes, many participants discussed tellers' motivation in response to questions about sincerity and believability. Of the ten participants interviewed, five implied critically that certain tellers were driven primarily by financial gain, although it varied depending on which tellers they referred to. This presented an interesting paradox as all participants were representing businesses, however, it was an aim of this study to emphasise participants' values through prosocial storytelling. Additionally, *reason* for uptake of pro-environmental behaviours was critiqued by one participant, who preferred those who had "thought that was a good reason for doing it" rather than it being imposed by compliance. Another noted of two tellers that "they were doing their jobs really well, but at five o'clock they probably cut off" (section 3.4.7). Although these examples are negative, they are promising for this study in that they display emergence of injunctive normative perception, which is likely to have a greater impact on behaviour than descriptive (Martin *et al* 2014: 30).

One of the films prompted particularly diverse views by interview participants, some perceiving the storyteller to be driven by enjoyment, interest and lifestyle, whereas others criticised his perceived profit-making or trend-exploiting drive (section 3.3.1). Similarly, some participants described him as "**real**", "passionate", "**nice**" and "down

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[56] Turning "primary" (feeling) into "reflective" trust (Markova, Linell and Gillespie 2008: 11).

to **earth**", whereas others questioned the utility of his product and practices, one describing his pro-environmental strategies as "**late** in **the game**" (ibid). In this case, the participant used much othering language, and the unintentional reference to game theory is telling. It may be considered that differences and a lack of usefulness to the participant both personally and between their businesses increased out-group perception and decreased cooperation.

Participants' perceptions of sincerity and believability were largely matching, but there were examples of perceptions of believable information but insincere tellers, and of the reverse. The gradational question style probably encouraged gradational rather than binary concepts of truth. This is because of the elasticity of truth in storytelling (Bauman 1986: 11). Participants tended to discuss truth from the perspective of the teller, for example two noted:

> I found that they all told **different** truths, I didn't feel like any of them weren't telling **their** truth (section 3.4.8).

> I think **they** genuinely believe it. I didn't really think oh **they're** trustworthy or not, I just thought oh yeah you really believe this kind of **rubbish** (ibid).

There is probably a level of politeness in these responses, as it is generally more acceptable to state that people are misguided than deliberately misleading. Although negative, these examples do illustrate the strength of digital storytelling as a format, as all participants made assertive statements about their perceptions of tellers, despite only watching a few minutes of footage of them talking. One participant stated that they had perceived "a per cent of their ethos quite well" (ibid). These and other findings show that audiences' responses to digital stories in a business setting can be intuitive and emotive, prompting feelings of connection or disassociation similar to experiences in a physical environment.

Because participants showed preference for different films in their scoring, little can be summarised as to teller type or delivery that might increase normative influence (unlike the findings of *Project ASPECT* in which a particular film was most effective [Wilson and Lewis 2013: 8]). Of the injunctive aspects of stories which seemed to have some resonance among participants (highlighted in the previous section), the reader may consider that emotive aspects of their delivery increased this impact. For example, the following excerpt from a film was referenced positively by four of the ten interview participants:

We
Try not to forget that
People are coming
To go on holiday
As opposed to be
Told how they might want to go back and live their lives (Appendix 1-2).

In this example, disfluencies in the delivery may have increased participants' enjoyment and belief of the story. Wilson and Lewis note that "flaws" in performance can increase perceptions of authenticity amongst audiences, compared to those "*too* polished, *too* rehearsed, *too* perfectly rendered" because this does not represent "the unreliability of the memory and the fallibility of the human being" (2013: 7). The intimacy of the digital story format (as if the teller is speaking directly to the audience) may give a sense of immediacy, which is why a speaking style as flawed as the "everyday" is effective. This intimacy could increase perceptions of in-group.

As has been noted, the proportion of disfluency in films was not found to impact participants' perception of teller sincerity or information believability. The style of filming/editing was complimented by some participants as "genuine", "nostalgic" and "homemade" (section 3.3.2, 3.4.11), one noting:

> I think that adds atmosphere, so I think that means that it isn't as sterile in a studio type situation, and that it's not a PR exercise it's just explaining what they do. So I don't mind that it's not that polished (section 3.4.11).

Others said that they did not have an opinion on the style because they were focussing on the content or listening, one noting "they weren't too slick, you didn't notice them" (ibid). It could be considered that the filmic style was less intrusive, also contributing to potential perceptions of immediacy.

Section 2.3.6 summarises the digital storytellers' experience of taking part in the process. For many, it was a first experience of this kind, and some expressed discomfort watching the films and displeasure concerning their performance. This was especially the case among female storytellers, although the sample size was too small to draw any conclusions. Conversely, others were satisfied and even surprised by the quality of their stories.

Some storytellers took part in the study to assist their businesses, presumably as a marketing opportunity, however, there was little-to-no uptake of the offer to share films online. For some, the information shared in the films became out of date quickly,

whereas for others, it may be that the "homemade" aesthetic was not fitting with the companies' brands (section 2.3.6c). This presents an issue for the digital story format in a business context, in terms of practicality and also potentially audience response, although it is conceivable that participants' praise of the "homemade" aesthetic was partly influenced by social desirability responding.

4.9 Discussion

There are a number of findings which have been drawn from this study, from varied practical research contexts, their commonality being Cornish businesspeople, whom, as would be expected, expressed themselves diversely. Despite this, as summarised in section 4.3 and 4.4, there are supportive findings that Cornish business is a viable framing device for normative pro-environmental behaviour promotion through stories, because a number of participants expressed in-group perception in these terms. Although there were some commonalities in descriptions of Cornish business culture, there were also contradictions, but defining Cornish business culture is not necessary because its reference can potentially trigger automatic influence (in-grouping) without the need for definition. For example one participant stated that Cornish business is "**more human**" (section 2.3.1e). Within this statement, the participant has othered the non-Cornish, and implied both descriptive ("more") and injunctive ("human") norms. It could conceivably be influential despite potentially crossed definitions. For example, the teller might intend that being "more human" is enacted through corporate social responsibility techniques, but the audience might relate it to a low-impact life, less driven by ambition. The ambiguity of language is therefore potentially mediatory.

As has been stated, further reducing the size and diversity of the group, for example focussing on more tightly defined geographical areas of Cornwall, or certain industry sectors, might further increase normative influence, but on a coordinated level there are resource costs to this approach. There is evidence that the wider grouping was effective, exhibited in the normative language highlighted throughout the thesis, and un-prompted references to Cornish business culture described in sections 2.3.1e, 2.3.4e and 3.4.9. This study focuses on coordinated story-sharing, but it is noted that smaller groupings may have greater "potency" and influence (Allport 1954: 43).

The five phases of research described in chapter 2 present a chronological process, but essentially normative storytelling was tested in two scenarios: a live story-sharing

environment in the form of a workshop, and the creation and dissemination of digital stories. In both cases, evidence was found that participants associated with storytellers, by expressing in-group or othering language, describing norms and values. This has been highlighted throughout the study.

It is important to emphasise the subjective nature of that process. In their language study, Segnit and Ereaut describe this as an "interpretive" process, in which not "truth", but a "tool for thinking" is presented (2007: 5). They explore the use of "linguistic repertoires" which might be described as the norms of language within contexts. In this study, it is the repertoires of norms which are in focus. For example in the quotation below, an interview participant compliments some practices described in the films:

> I think having figures **is good**, I think **we're all** going in **the same** direction **really** (section 3.1.2).

The statement is strongly normative, both injunctively with use of the word "good", descriptively with the words "all" and "really", and in-grouping with "we're" and "same". But the words "is" and "the" are also normative in this context, lessened perhaps by "I think". Comparatively, another participant criticised a teller for being "late into the game" of sustainability, stating:

> **Most people had** a fairly **good awareness** going back ten years now, **people were** starting to become **aware** of **these** things (section 3.3.1).

Again, "good" and "aware" are injunctive, "most" and "people" descriptive, "we" in-grouping; but the power of "had" and "were" should not be underestimated. On the same subject the participant added: "**Actually it's cleverer** and clearer to use virgin [materials]". It is worth considering how this injunctive message might be received differently by audiences if the participant had instead said "I think it's cleverer…". The former version might be more likely to provoke automatic norm compliance, whereas the latter might be more reliant on perceptions of the teller.

Language has not been highlighted and described to this extent throughout the study, as it would be impossible to analyse every determiner, and a complete analysis would only be a complete analysis of an individual's interpretation. Instead this technique adds to the "tools for thinking" described by Segnit and Ereaut, that draws on narrative analysis and semiotics, and values the unique but connected role of the

researcher as a functioning and experienced member of this language group, as are all of the participants in this study.

The strength of this analytical technique is that it illustrates influence rather than impact: the latter would be difficult to measure in the context of this study. For example, one interview participant described how they had been influenced by a digital story about recycling:

> He talked about how he **actually** drives it to be more creative, and **actually** creating things from what you already have rather than bringing in raw materials. Because [personal context] I'd like to try and do that too (section 3.3.1).

In this example, the participant has been inspired by the story, and associates with the teller as is evidenced by the sharing of personal context, the switch from third to second to first-person, and double use of the word "actually", which asserts truth. "Creativity" is also twice referred to, which might be described as the implicit meaning of the story as experienced by the participant. The explicit message – a particular recycling method – was noted as having little relevance to the participant's business, compared to practices described in other films. As described in section 1.6, injunctive messaging can be a particularly effective behavioural influencer, but it might operate by prompting a different, relevant behaviour rather than that described in the story. It might inspire the participant to adopt a behaviour described in another film, or use their creativity to implement a new way of working. The qualitative techniques of this study increase the ability to plot this fuzzy concept.

In the above example, statement and language are aligned: the participant is describing influence, and clues in the language support that. However, as described in section 4.6, emotive and/or automatically normative aspects of influence are not always apparent to audiences, which is why the linguistic elements are so important to this study. For example, when asked about impact of digital stories an interview participant said:

> I don't think there's anything that we've heard from these guys that we haven't either considered or done (section 3.4.12).

In this case the participant is assessing whether they might practically adopt described practices, but not the potentially injunctive normative impact of the films, which might include desire to conform, compare or compete, perhaps the latter in this

case. Such drives are crucial to much that might result in pro-environmental behaviour uptake, because of the collective, diluted and perceptively disconnected nature of actions and consequences within global ecosystems and climate.

Of the consumption of shared resources, Bicchieri describes the problem of significance, which results for many in the stance of what she calls "conditional co-operator" (2006: 140). This often requires evidence of the cooperation of others through communication, which can enhance group identity and elicit social norms (ibid: 141). Of such communication strategy, Segnit and Ereaut endorse language of "ordinary heroism" within located communities in which an individual is "a big fish in a small pond" or has "peer to peer authority". They propose that pro-environmental movements are like desirable brands, to which people are emotionally drawn (2007: 36-39).

Social spaces or practices which enable recognition and celebration of such behaviours (and status), for example through peer-to-peer story exchange, are crucial in this. They do not provide the solution to the ecological issues of our time, as there are practical constraints on behaviour which require coordination of a different kind. Instead this technique sits within a larger system such as that described by DEFRA, in this case focusing on "engagement" of the "4Es" (2008). As norms emerge, stories play an active role in their definition, through the mediation of differing versions and uncoordinated dispersion. It is perhaps to be expected therefore that earlier in the process of emergence, versions will differ the most. This could in part explain the strength of some participants' disapproval of tellers' motives. In those cases, the potential for reputational damage must be considered. This is especially important to consider when producing widely distributed digital stories, and is an inevitable risk of participation, which should be communicated to participants less familiar with this emerging medium. In this study, an overall impression of the interview transcripts suggests that in most cases, participants' esteem of tellers and/or their businesses increased, evidenced by in-group and normative language, as well as explicit praise.

There is of course an argument to be made that the celebration of pro-environmental behaviours through stories such as these is disingenuous given the scale of environmental issues and the extent of change required to curb them. However, this is simply a symptom of the "super wicked problem", in that there is no way to solve it neatly and know that it has been solved (Morton 2016: 37). As described in the introduction, definitions of the problem, and methods for its reduction, will vary

between individuals. Rittel and Webber note that "what comprises problem-solution for one is problem-generation for another" and "there is no gainsaying which group is right and which should have its ends served" (1973: 169). In a collaborative approach (Head and Alford 2015), this would support methods that engage parties on a micro as well as macro level and within the different realms of people's lives.

By encouraging perceptions of socially-rewarded behaviour amongst communities, there is the potential for exponential increase and significant change, through norm emergence. Narrative expressing such achievements is an important part of this (Suchman 1995: 579, 588). On a similar theme, Corner *et al* note that participatory, group level, deliberative processes can "themselves promote more altruistic evaluations of environmental issues like climate change" (2014: 7). This fits with the findings of section 1.2, in which the strengths of inclusive design, and the role of stories in this, were explored. It could be considered that the act of holding a workshop and of disseminating digital stories had a positive impact on participants' behaviours, by increasing altruistic values and latterly, perceptions of a norm of social recognition for pro-environmental behaviours.

Overall, there was much to support the hypothesis that storytelling can be effective for conveying injunctive normative or value-based messaging to business audiences in this context. As described in section 4.7, some injunctive aspects of the stories had particular resonance with more than one participant, and emotive language or first-person re-narration displayed likely influence. Interestingly, one of these (holidayers not being told how to live their lives [previous section]), was injunctively non-injunctive, in other words morally promoted the norm of not moralising, instead "leading by example" which is of course implicitly normative. This and other examples illustrated businesspeople's consideration of the wider (non-direct, disseminated) impact of their business, in this case its influence on the actions of others. All participants appeared to consider their business role as including responsibility towards the environment and communities, and there were numerous examples of emotive language and the intertwining of personal and business identity.

There are practical aspects to be considered on the application of such techniques outside of a dedicated research environment. Opportunities for social story-sharing between businessespeople were found to occur throughout Cornwall. Several participants favourably described having networked with other business leaders at working groups, conferences and other events in which information was shared and

steps celebrated. These ranged in size from single figures (potentially creating an impression of privileged group) to hundreds (descriptive norm), and were thus influential in different ways. Some of these were attended by the researcher in the exploration phase (section 2.2.1), and phase three took place in collaboration with The Cornwall Sustainability Awards (section 2.2.3), which increased in size and status during the years attended. In terms of informal occurrences of story sharing, the study by Kaesehage, Leyshon and Caseldine of information networks is especially relevant (2014). This study contributes to the field by highlighting the use of othering and normative (especially injunctive) language in that context.

Although the technique of digital storytelling has been widely adopted by large businesses globally, it is less prevalent amongst smaller businesses. Resource constraints probably play a part in this, but perhaps business cultures also. As described in section 1.9, Cornwall has a greater proportion of SMEs than other areas of the country, and thus, as might be expected, little evidence of digital storytelling in this context was found to exist prior to conducting the practical research, which is why stories were created as part of this research.

The increasing availability and affordability of technologies to enable digital story creation, and the slow increase of computer literacy amongst populations, will lessen the resource barriers, which, amongst emergence of new media trends, will likely result in an increase in digital stories of this kind in Cornwall in the years to come. As described, the films created for this study were made at a technical level that might conceivably be achieved in-house by a business, using non-professional equipment and software, and by a non-professional filmmaker (the researcher). This was done to emulate the kind of digital films that might be available online in this context. Audience filmic feedback was mixed but minimal, as participants appeared to focus on the stories' content and delivery (section 3.4.11). For the tellers, there is some evidence that discrete but not extensive removal of disfluencies was effective, which did require a higher technical level of editing. A comparison of these with other digital films that were in use by some tellers found that the use of lighting, or increased brightness/midtone amplification might have increased their uptake of the opportunity to disseminate films online, but this was considered to be more a feature of professional rather than in-house production (section 2.3.6c).

Of the content of the films, some storytellers noted that information shared in the films had gone out of date quickly, which further supports the focus of low cost in-house

filmmaking. The sharing of data was especially vulnerable to obsolescence, compared to other films that might be considered more traditionally storylike. Examples of the latter included those which described the creation of a business and its values, or emotive and metaphorical aspects of day-to-day business. Prosocial or injunctively normative aspects to these stories might also be more influential, however participants' views on data were mixed, and for some these aspects were most important (section 3.4.10).

The question of whether businesspeople would choose to watch the digital stories of other businesspeople is an important one. Participant feedback on this was noted in section 3.4.13, but it is likely that a practical study focussing on this would give a better impression. Of participants' opinions about the films, these vary greatly, because the format is necessarily subjective. Although in some cases predicted similarity (personal and business) was supported by participants' enjoyment of digital stories, perceptions of sincerity and believability, and of likely impact, there were also findings to the contrary. Commonalities were far greater between participants' own perceptions of similarity and their answers, in which desire will have played a part. This is a strength of the storytelling format, as it can emphasise similarities between members of different groups, by describing core values and universal experiences such as those described in section 4.7 that had resonance with several participants.

Perhaps especially within business contexts, extreme similarity may provoke feelings of rivalry rather than conformative desire (section 4.4). Although this could also be behaviourally influential, it might increase the likelihood of negative impact for the storyteller. Enjoyment is also an important aspect in the voluntary engagement with films of this kind. It may be that stories representing businesses that are *fairly* similar were most effective, but this would need to be tested amongst a larger dataset. Although this study did not aim to test it, othering was also found to be an important element of in-grouping. Overall, arguments were found for and against profiling.

4.10 Conclusion

As the results from this study show, the many aspects of influence at play when stories are told, presents challenges for those crafting stories for impact, or in predicting their effectiveness. Despite this, stories may be the most effective aspect of norm emergence because of their ability to convey injunctive norms or prosocial

values. These factors are especially important in the adoption of pro-environmental behaviours, which often require collective action for impacts to be significant. Stories can therefore be used to influence behaviour change and also provide the social reward when those impacts are invisible. Story-sharing environments can take many forms, such as informal and spontaneous socialising, more formalised and dedicated events (such as the workshop), and virtual platforms such as those for digital storytelling.

From a research perspective, there is much to be learned regarding the strengths of digital storytelling, as a relatively emergent form. Its distributive powers are significant, but can also be dispersed amongst mass and conflicting data. Within this study, its potential impacts could be studied in a dedicated environment, and it was found that in a Cornish business context, as with many other contexts researched by others, stories enabled a significant effect on audiences, promoting in-group perception despite their virtual nature.

The approach is not new, as such techniques have been used in a number of fields including those of environmental behaviour. However, the particulars of this approach are unique in their focus on normative aspects of language within a context. This study is not the first to highlight the significance of such language, indeed many have explored its linguistic construction to a far greater extent, but this study focuses on its relation to intent.

Evidence was found that emotive, injunctive aspects were influential in some cases, and that in many of those cases audiences considered themselves or their businesses to be similar to the teller. Such perceptions are influenced not just by actual similarity, but also desired similarity. It is generally known that storytelling and other arts have emotive tools for transcending difference. As has been identified, the Other may provide important insights to closed groups, so such transcendence is necessary. Ironically, stories provide both the means for othering and the antidote.

There was some evidence in this study that particular aspects of the narratives were effective in promoting perceptions of similarity. These included emotively told descriptions of commonly performed acts, such as going on holiday, feeling the cold, or wanting to live somewhere nice. Additionally, injunctive aspects of the stories were found to be successful in a number of cases, specifically relating to running a business. These could be summarised as "integrity", covering customer relations

(empathising with clients) and an approach to business strategy that might be described as holistic. It is not proposed that these would be universally effective – these topics had meaning to the tellers which is why they were effectively told – however their normative commonality is clear.

These findings are reliant on language analysis techniques which, although subjective in nature, reveal implicit aspects of influence that might not otherwise be apparent. The techniques enable an analysis of influence practical for a study of this size and budget. It is proposed that these techniques could inform other studies on normative impact, within humanities or social sciences fields.

Overall, it was found that community stories can be effective behavioural influencers, which has also been a finding of other studies. Focussing on digital storytelling, some barriers to storyteller uptake were highlighted, especially relating to a business context. These findings are therefore especially relevant to those promoting pro-environmental behaviours in business contexts. Despite this, much was found to support the hypothesis that the method would have a majority positive effect, i.e. increase the likelihood of pro-environmental behaviour uptake, evidenced by in-group or normative perception in audiences.