

Conversations about Poverty in New Zealand:  
How the News Media Framed Metiria Turei's Confession  
and Resignation prior to the 2017 General Election

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# Abstract

This thesis analyses how the news media framed Metiria Turei's confession and resignation prior to the 2017 General Election. In particular it investigates how poverty is portrayed, in the 10 weeks of the campaign period leading up to the election, by analysing 18 stories from four New Zealand news media outlets: New Zealand Herald, Stuff, Radio New Zealand and Newsroom. Each of these stories depicts or refers to poverty in some way. The media claims to play a watchdog role in society by disseminating transparent and unbiased news (Lange & Ward, 2004). The study discusses whether or not these four news media outlets meet this objective. Poverty is a complex social and political issue, and the various frames in media discourse provide a map for understanding it. How citizens think about poverty is shown to be dependent on how the issue is framed by the news media (Iyengar, 1990).

This research starts with how mainstream and independent news media covered Turei's speech at the Green Party conference on July 16, 2017, continues through to her resignation as the co-leader of the party on August 9, 2017 and concludes on September 24, 2017, the day after the election results were announced. The research seeks to investigate how the news media framed poverty in reporting Turei's speech and subsequent resignation as Green Party co-leader.

The methodology is qualitative. Discourse analysis is the method that examines the data set using four tools: theory of agenda setting, theory of framing, analysis of themes, and theory of attribution. Van Leeuwen (2008) observes that discourses not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purpose to it, justify it, and, as is shown in this analysis, the representations of poverty have become far more socially and politically influential than the social practice itself.

This research shows how news media introduced and discussed the issue of poverty in the election period. The study found seven distinct themes used as framing devices in poverty reporting; attributions, adjectives, metaphors, analogies, euphemisms, dysphemisms, and the significance of what isn't mentioned. This analysis showed that the news media presented poverty in a way that influenced public perception of the confession and resignation of Turei, and perceptions of poverty in the build up to the election. Ten dominant thematic headings emerged. These were fraud, criminality and deceit, political process, positive impact, political naivety, internal democracy, undermining the left, promoting the left, poverty, gender, and martyrdom. The changes in discourse at various stages shift from a nuanced to a polarised message, labelling Turei's historic behaviour as fraud, and then from a polarised to a nuanced message opening an increasingly meaningful conversation about poverty.

The thesis identifies major problems with news media reporting about poverty in reference to Turei's resignation, such as the lack of an agreed definition of poverty in New Zealand. Another critical point is connected to the political power of the news media in election times. News media have an important role in reporting poverty responsibly. They have the power to shape opinions that lead to voting decisions and therefore to social policy making in New Zealand.

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## Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 The Problem of Defining Poverty

Poverty reduction is currently a global issue (Si, Cullen, Ahlstrom, & Wei, 2018). Despite this, there is no international agreement on guidelines for measuring poverty (Nolan, 2018).

In purely economic terms, poverty refers to the failure of the income of a family to meet a threshold established by a central government, which varies across countries (Alkire & Fang, 2018). Usually, the measurement is done about families and not individually, and its adjustment is based on the number of people in a family. Generally, economists try to identify the families whose financial position is less than the established threshold (Smelser & Baltes, 2001). Little (2018) makes the point that measuring family economic position is based on demand over resources. The international standard of extreme poverty refers to individuals who live on less than \$1 a day (Little, 2018). Definitions of poverty are therefore contextual. For example, \$1 has different purchasing power depending on whether it is spent in a developed, developing, or underdeveloped economy. To account for such factors, poverty has multiple definitions.

Poverty is described in either relative or absolute terms (Donkin & Marmot, 2018). The measurement of absolute poverty is associated with the amount of money needed for meeting basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter (Allen, 2017). Problems related to the broader quality of life or the total level of social inequality are not included in the notion of absolute poverty (Decerf, 2017), nor does it consider people's cultural or social needs (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2015). The result has been the development of a concept of relative poverty which is connected with the economic status of other members of society; the classification of poor people in relation to whether or not they measure up to current standards of living in a given societal context (Dunn, 2017). A significant criticism of both forms of definition is that they are based on absolute income and consumption and do not account for a person's relative status in society (Beale, 2004).

In New Zealand, neither definition of poverty is applied because there is no confirmed official 'poverty line' or formal agreement about how exactly to measure poverty (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018; Wilkinson & Jeram, 2016). This is a major problem in the reporting of poverty in New Zealand. Because there is not one clear, agreed meaning of poverty, it is open to interpretation by journalists.

### 1.1.1 Poverty in New Zealand

In Aotearoa New Zealand, poverty is a hot topic. Economic change and restructuring in the past 30 years have left many individuals, particularly in the younger generation, worse off financially (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018). Changing economic

conditions caused the number of low-income earners to increase in the mid-1990s then start to reduce in the latter half of that decade. Despite a steady decrease, the number of low-income earners in 2004 was still considerably higher than in 1984 (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018).

In 2004 the Ministry of Social Development (2018) introduced the Working for Families financial assistance package. This independently established poverty, based on family income, as the only criteria for financial assistance even though New Zealand has no official definition of poverty. The programme's limited scope was designed for low and middle-income earners and reduced poverty to 17% of the population as compared to 22% in 2004. The rate of poverty was 15% in 2016 (after its increase again during the global recession of 2008 to 2011), and this was still above the 9% level of 1984 (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018). New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (2018) reports that the effect of low income is most evident in the lower financial strata of society. Often, the facilities developed to support the lower financial strata support only a fraction of those in need. For example, Housing New Zealand and other social housing agencies cater for less than one-fifth of the eligible low-income earners, forcing other poor families into costly private rentals with inadequate rent subsidies (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018). According to New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (2018), the implication is that there are approximately 682,500 people, including 220,000 children, living below the poverty line. The striking thing about this figure of 682, 500 is that the total population of New Zealand in July 2017, according to the Ministry of Social Development (2018), was only 4.55 million. The poor therefore represent 15% of the New Zealand population, comprising 4.8% children.

However, despite statistical data highlighting the presence of poverty (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018), there is a wide disconnect between the perception of poverty in New Zealand and the reality of it. This effect has been researched in developed economies for decades. Iyengar (1990) notes that poverty perception is often inaccurately linked to socioeconomic factors such as race and political polarisation. For example, poverty is often framed as a lifestyle choice rather than an unfortunate circumstance, and a poor person is often framed as unable or unwilling to manage their resources effectively. Similarly, it is often assumed that members of certain ethnic and racial groups exploit public resources and remain beneficiaries by choice (Elenbaas & Killen, 2017). It is not uncommon to perceive poverty as a condition of the mind or a fault or weakness of the individual rather than a physical reality (Bourke, 2013). There is also a clear link between individual emotions, political affiliations and individual perceptions of poverty, as explained in attribution theory (Zucker & Weiner, 1993).

Perceptions of poverty have been used to advance or repress political ideas. For example, political leaders often project their own perceptions of poverty, especially on social welfare issues where each politician propagates ideas of poverty that best align with his or her political

view. It was forecast that by the end of the 20th century the subject of poverty in politics would be based more on perception than reality (Petersen, 1984). Today's research supports this, showing that the poor have become more disenfranchised and new families struggle with basic needs (Slagter, 2009). Poverty remains a burning issue and a political football in New Zealand.

### 1.1.2 Role of the News Media in Framing Poverty in New Zealand

Public perception of any topic is influenced by the news media. This effect has been demonstrated in multiple studies on socioeconomic issues (Monroe, 2006; Yan & Liu, 2016). The news media plays a key role in building and propagating perceptions of socioeconomic issues such as poverty. Globally, mass media in developed countries generally refrain from addressing poverty as a significant topic and coverage on socioeconomic issues such as poverty is often overshadowed by political issues, terrorism, and crime (Stackhouse, 2003). This effect is evident in New Zealand. Additionally, poverty is often presented through the lens of a particular political inclination and frame, based on the emotional and political polarisation of the individual (Iyengar, 1990). A media outlet will tailor the presentation of any subject to the taste of its larger audience (Endal, 2015), by reinforcing polarised perceptions.

Therefore, news media portrayal of poverty is an important topic of academic investigation. Understanding this topic further can help identify the gap between the perception and factual reality of poverty. Such analysis is relevant because defining poverty in the context of a developed nation poses unique challenges. For example, a family with an income between \$NZ30,000 and \$NZ40,000 per annum would be considered wealthy in an undeveloped country. Such a family would, however, face challenges living on this income in New Zealand. In fact, even families with an income of \$NZ100,000 per annum may find it difficult to provide more than the basic necessities (Parker, 2017). Such findings can help focus and define the news media portrayal of poverty so that the gap between perception and reality is narrowed.

Journalism in a society has the responsibility of reproducing or portraying any situation without bias (Fuchs, 2017). According to Rupa, Owen, and Baker (2015, p. 4), "for a cosmopolitan and diverse contemporary nation-state such as New Zealand, issues of inclusivity and representation become critical considerations for news media tasked with providing all citizens the information they require to participate in democratic governance". When Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei started a discussion about poverty this resulted in a political incident which was a hot topic in the 2017 New Zealand general election. The narrative on how the news media framed poverty in relation to the 2017 confession and resignation of Turei has the potential to influence public policy and aid or hamper the elimination of societal problems. The news media portrayal of poverty, in light of this 2017 political debacle, is investigated in this research.



### 1.1.3 The State of News Media in New Zealand

The media create and reinforce power structures through the language used to set the national ground-breaking news (Fairclough, 1989). The audience is groomed, and their thinking shaped (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

Mainstream News Media: New Zealand Herald (NZH) and Stuff New Zealand (SNZ), according to their websites, operate as commercial media outlets which depend on advertising revenue to stay in business (New Zealand Herald, 2019) while Radio New Zealand's (RNZ) website says that RNZ belongs to the Crown which funds its day-to-day running and therefore this news outlet is independent of the influence of advertisers (<https://www.rnz.co.nz/about>).

At the time of Metiria Turei's resignation and in the 2017 election period, NZH's primary editor was Shane Currie; SNZ's main editor was Patrick Crewdson; RNZ's Chair of Board of Governors was Dr Jim Mather; RNZ's Chief Editor was Paul Thompson; and the popular RNZ journalist who covered the 2017 election campaign was John Campbell.

The three mainstream media companies are well-established news outlets and information about them is available on their websites. New Zealand Herald is owned by New Zealand Media and Entertainment (NZME) and was first founded in 1863. Stuff New Zealand launched its news agency in 2000 and is owned by Fairfax Media (FM), rebranded to Stuff in 2018. Radio New Zealand is a Crown entity established under the Radio New Zealand Act 1995.

Independent News Media: Newsroom New Zealand's (NNZ) founders and co-editors are Mark Jennings, who was a broadcast news journalist with New Zealand's TV3 channel, and Tim Murphy, the former editor-in-chief of the New Zealand Herald. NNZ claims to deliver in-depth storytelling for thinking audiences (<https://www.newsroom.co.nz/@about>). NNZ is slightly unusual in that it is entirely crowd-funded rather than reliant on advertising, and thus has a different dynamic from the traditional, advertising-led model of mainstream news media outlets. It therefore has an independent voice. NNZ founders promised to present "the things that matter" and hoped to be the "New Zealand version of The Guardian". Start-up funding came from four foundational sponsors including the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington (Radio New Zealand, 2017d). Newsroom is a relatively young news agency, launched in 2017.

It has been established that news media have incentives to be sensitive to the narratives most appealing to advertisers, or to the demographic that the advertisers wish to reach (Durante & Knight, 2012).

## 1.2 Area of Research and How News Media Framed the Issue

This research focuses on the case study of former Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei. The narrative begins on July 16, 2017, at the Green Party Conference, when Turei introduced her party's signature welfare policy by telling her personal story. She said that while raising her child as a single mother on the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) in the 1990s and at the same time studying towards a law degree, there were occasions when she did not disclose to Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) the number of flatmates who were contributing to the rent. Because of this she had access to more money through her accommodation supplement. She was on the DPB at different times between 1993 and 1998. Turei shared her experience of financial hardship in order to start a conversation about poverty during the 2017 election campaign.

After the conference, there was a lot of news media criticism (van Beynen, 2017). However, many social media fans applauded her action and a poll taken the day after her disclosure indicated that the Greens had risen 15% in popularity. Turei said she had written to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), confessing her wrongdoing and offering to return the money if asked (Heron, 2017).

After the conference confession, several allegations were made. Newshub New Zealand reported that Turei's name was on the list of habitation index, created from the electoral roll, indicating that she was living with her child's father in 1993 and 1997 (Lynch, 2017). If the report was true, Turei had lied to obtain her Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB) in the first place as it was meant for single parents only. However, Turei issued a press release denying Newshub New Zealand's claims and saying that she had not lived at the same address as her child's father. She had registered at that address in order to vote in the Mt Albert electorate in 1993 because her friend was a candidate. She also stated that she had shared a flat with her mother for a while in the 1990s but the two were financially independent.

The statement Turei made at the conference raised many concerns. Providing false information to the electoral office is a punishable offence with a jail sentence of up to three months, although the police stated that they had no record of taking action against anyone registered in the wrong electorate. In 2005, former National Prime Minister John Key admitted that he was registered at a Helensville property he owned but he had not lived there at all during the electoral polls of 2002, 2003 and 2004 (Rodgers, 2017). Also, many tertiary students maintain their enrolment at their parents' homes while living in other places. None of this is new to the Electoral Commission and the casting of a vote in the wrong electorate, although not a good look, is not a major offence (Geddis, 2017).

It was not possible to force Turei out of Parliament as a result of these allegations. They would have been difficult to prosecute given that they occurred beyond the ten-year limit for such

offenses (Moir & Cooke, 2017) Turei stated at her press conference that she had no intention of resigning but nor would she seek a ministerial portfolio if Labour and the Greens formed a government. She confessed she had wanted to be the Minister for Social Development (Radio New Zealand, 2017b), but she knew that the questions raised by her admission had ruled that out. She intended to remain co-leader of the Green Party and to help with the management of caucus and the development of welfare policy (Radio New Zealand, 2017b).

The news media took no further interest in Turei's confession until two Green Party members resigned on August 7, 2017, citing discomfort at working under her leadership (Davison, 2017a). This suddenly refocused news media attention on Turei.

Repeated, intrusive questions were asked by Radio New Zealand's journalist John Campbell and, on August 9, 2017, this intensive focus on her personal life compelled Turei to resign as co-leader. Campbell expressed surprise at the decision, and the role he played in her resignation has not been publicly acknowledged (Radio New Zealand, 2017a).

There was speculation that the resignation of the two Green Party members was more an act of rebellion over internal politics (Patterson & McCulloch, 2017), and had no direct link to the confession of Turei three weeks earlier. Delayed news media attention highlighted the political motivation behind the headlines. Scores of single mothers came forward in support of Turei, indicating that her story resonated with many single parents (Dastghieb, 2017).

Despite the rationale behind Turei's decision to keep her income undisclosed, news media scrutiny was unsympathetic and John Campbell investigated her personal life to such an extent that she felt pressured to resign. This effectively buried the discussion about poverty and changed the election message.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Research

The research question is, "How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?"

In order to address this research question, the study focuses on how poverty is portrayed in mainstream and independent news media in New Zealand in the election campaign period from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017. It examines how poverty was framed in news reporting relating to the confession and resignation. The news media plays an influential role in shaping perception. Fairclough (2000b) argues that advances in the 'mediatisation' of present-day politics have opened room for media writers to have substantial influence in framing news and debates around social issues, for example poverty, which ultimately shapes voting decisions. How citizens think about poverty is dependent on how the issue is framed (Iyengar, 1990). Therefore, the media has an important position in an election campaign period because voting

decisions are based on how people have been informed through news reporting. News coverage on poverty can influence the way people think about the social welfare system and how they support it through voting decisions (Sotirovic, 2001).

## 1.4 My Contribution and Intended Readers

This research contributes to the understanding of New Zealand's news media portrayal of poverty in the 2017 election period. Media influences on the perception of poverty are analysed in available mainstream and independent news publications related to the discussion. This study identifies the incidents that took place after Ms Turei's public confession and looks at how news media perceptions of poverty played a role in the focus on personal issues rather than a discussion of the subject. These incidents are used to highlight the ways in which news media frame the perception of poverty. Identifying media bias can be a first step to constructive discussions around the subject. This study aspires to create awareness of the conversations that started about the plight of the poor and to contrast that with perceptions of poverty promulgated by the news media.

### 1.4.1 Contribution and Audience

Identifying the biases involved in reporting poverty can aid policy advisors and lawmakers to better address the issue. This research is written for politicians, journalists, journalism scholars, academics, and social policy advisors in New Zealand.

## 1.5 Methodology

The aim of this study is to create an understanding of how mainstream news media and independent news media portrayed poverty in the 10 weeks leading up to the 2017 New Zealand general elections by analysing the language used in their stories. Fairclough (1989) claims that the news media create and reinforce power structures through language. Mass-media dialogue is intriguing because the nature of power relations established is frequently unclear, and there are grounds for suspecting hidden relations of power (Fairclough, 1989). To address the research question, a qualitative research methodology is applied as a systematic approach to collecting and analysing data. Qualitative methodology is seen as being more descriptive and less objective than the quantitative approach (Kumar & Phrommathed, 2005). Since the data involved in this study is subjective, investigating news media perceptions of poverty and conversations about the poor, a qualitative approach to data analysis is most appropriate. Qualitative methodology is best at providing 'how' answers to a question and facilitating exhaustive investigation.

The thesis is based on 18 stories from mainstream and independent news media which relate to events after Metiria Turei made her confession. The stories consist of data corresponding to thematic keyword searches, such as 'Metiria Turei', 'poor', 'poverty', 'conversations about

poverty', 'welfare' and 'homeless'. The selected stories are from one independent news media house in New Zealand, Newsroom ([www.newsroom.co.nz](http://www.newsroom.co.nz)), and three different mainstream news media companies in New Zealand; New Zealand Herald ([www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz)), Stuff (<https://www.stuff.co.nz/>) and Radio New Zealand (<https://www.radionz.co.nz/>). Of the 18 stories analysed, six are from one independent news media and four are from each of the three mainstream news media houses.

This analysis focuses on conversations about poverty and how poverty was portrayed in news media stories about Metiria Turei in the 2017 New Zealand general election campaign period from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017. The four news media companies chosen, have the highest circulation and readership in New Zealand.

## 1.6 Method

The applied method for this research is Discourse Analysis (DA) which relies on various techniques to study news media texts. These four techniques are: Theory of Agenda Setting, Theory of Framing, Analysis of Themes, and Theory of Attribution. Discourse Analysis is utilised to inspect and interpret the chosen 18 news media stories for this research. A discourse is "the way a topic or subject gets 'talked about' in society at a given time and location in everyday conversations or in the media" (Weerakkody, 2015, p. 289). Van Leeuwen (2008) explains that discourses not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purpose to it, justify it, and in many texts these aspects of representation become far more important than the social practice itself. Discourse Analysis employs four specific approaches. Agenda Setting Theory (AST) states that the national news agenda is set by news outlets for the types of media stories to be presented daily. Framing Theory (FT) analyses the structure of text from different frames in a news media story so that themes and patterns are seen. Thematic Analysis (TA) is a strategy used in FT that captures categorical themes and patterns from identified words found in contrasting frames of a media discourse and attributes them to specific people. Attribution Theory (AT) attributes the categorised themes to an individual behaviour and characteristic.

The rationale for choosing Discourse Analysis is that media research understands language as the principal construct of social practice. This research utilises all four approaches in sequential order to examine content in the chosen stories. These techniques are widely used in qualitative data analysis (van Dijk, 2016). Analysing texts according to the discourses embedded in them sheds light on the power relations in society with respect to institutions, individuals, organisations or groups (Weerakkody, 2015) and is associated with a specific research area or question (Braun, Clarke, & Terry, 2015). The four approaches are explained below: AST, FT, TA and AT.

Agenda-Setting Theory (AST) describes the “ability (of the news media) to influence the importance placed on the topics of the public agenda” (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 176). This theory refers to the way the news media determine which issues become the focus of public attention. The function of the news media in agenda setting is to draw the attention of the public to a specific set of topics, and also to influence how they perceive those topics (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007).

Framing Theory (FT) functions as a form of metacommunication (Hallahan, 2008). Iyengar’s (1991) definition of framing says, “At the most general level, the concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgement and choice problems, and the term framing effects refers to changes in decision outcomes resulting from these alterations” (p. 11). Whereas Reese (2001) defines frames as, “organising principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world” (p. 11).

Thematic Analysis (TA) is a general method of inspecting themes within data or discourse (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012). “It emphasises pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns of meaning (or themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The ways in which news media and politicians frame the issue and perception of poverty are examined rigorously using thematic analysis.

Attribution Theory (AT) can be defined in different ways, but its commonest definition is that it is the internal (reasoning) process through which the motive for our actions and those of others are interpreted and understood (Harvey, Madison, Martinko, Crook, & Crook, 2014).

Attribution Theory explains the manner in which the social perceiver utilises information to form causal judgements about people. Beddoe and Keddell (2016) claim that news reports frame the subject of poverty as the fault of individual behaviour.

The four approaches are utilised in this study to investigate the data. AST explains how the news agenda is set by news media companies. FT determines whether the content structure of different frames is associated with a specific occurrence or wider subject in the media discourse. TA categorizes the text from different frames in news media stories into themes and, lastly, AT interprets the cause of an event or occurrence from the categorised themes, and attributes this explanation to internal factors (the actions of an individual or the result of an independent behaviour or characteristic) or external factors (environment or economic realities or policies).

## 1.7 Personal Motivation

My motivation in carrying out this research is to highlight the importance of reporting news accurately and without bias. I worked as a journalist from 1993 to 1995, and then freelanced for 20 years as a media consultant. In the 1990s the news media primarily focused on editorial

content that was newsworthy in nature rather than advertorial information that was commercialised. I observed that over time the availability of social media and internet access to information has forced news media companies to resort to a business model to stay afloat. This led to a significant rise in advertorial content in published media (Sonderman & Tran, 2013). This dramatic change caught my interest. News media companies can no longer be solely service-oriented organisations which are the ears and eyes of the public. Their profits come from sponsorships, advertisements and advertorials which are supported by businesses and politicians who in turn have a strong influence on the nature of news media stories. This politicisation of news media is a global phenomenon, and it is common for news media to report issues so that specific political narratives are upheld (Oniszczyk, 2011). The business model of journalism threatens news media authenticity and influences media representation. Journalists who try to act with integrity can be hamstrung by the business models of their organisations (Sonderman & Tran, 2013).

In the two years I worked as a journalist, I observed that some editors removed information from news stories, restructured stories and presented distorted stories to support the ideological views and mission perspectives of media owners. Ideally the news media plays a watchdog role in society by disseminating transparent, unbiased and non-politically influenced information in a democratic system (Lange & Ward, 2004). People rely on and trust the news media as sources of news in their everyday lives (Bullock, Fraser Wyche, & Williams, 2001), and news stories form public opinions and attitudes (Kinder, 1998) towards a topic. The news media are powerful in setting the national news agenda whereby language creates and reinforces power structures (Fairclough, 1989). Therefore, taking a neutral stance in news presentation is crucial.

Academic research provides opportunities to investigate complex topics such as news media perceptions of poverty. The current commercial climate has created difficulties for journalists and media companies trying to carry out in-depth investigations and present balanced news. Another factor is that rules around what can and cannot be said or done have increased, threatening the accuracy of news reporting.

This study enables me to analyse the reporting of poverty in New Zealand through a lens of scientific analysis, academic fact-finding and sound research argument. I anticipate that the research will enable me to cultivate an understanding and contribute to new knowledge of journalistic portrayal of poverty. With a nose for news reporting and an interest in journalism, I want to present the findings in a way that contributes to the discussion about poverty in the media by establishing an understanding of poverty in New Zealand. This is my personal motivation, especially when the most vulnerable in society are involved. The presentation of news needs to be seen through a focused lens.

## 1.8 Report of Thesis Structure

A brief outline of the structure of the thesis is provided below.

Chapter 1 (Introduction) provides an overview of the thesis.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) analyses existing literature related to news media portrayal of poverty and its effect on perceptions of poverty. It covers published definitions of poverty, and how news media vary their arguments based on political bias. Studies by other researchers in the field of media perception are also presented. The review highlights the literature gap concerning the understanding of news media perceptions of poverty in New Zealand.

Chapter 3 (Research Methodology) discusses qualitative research as the methodology employed in this research. It explains the work of framing theorists. It studies how language creates and reinforces power structures in mass media. Discourse Analysis, Theory of Agenda-Setting, Theory of Framing, Analysis of Themes and Theory of Attribution are the qualitative methods used to examine the content of the news media stories, and these approaches are explained in detail. The reasons for choosing these methods are also presented. Research design, data selection and ethics are described.

Chapter 4 (Data Presentation) shows how data was analysed, using the chosen methods in Chapter 3, to understand the perception of poverty in the selected stories. The insights gained from analysing the data in chronological order are highlighted. Themes, text forms and word descriptions are identified in the data presentation.

Chapter 5 (Discussion and Findings) presents the overview of data and analysis, discussion of frames and findings around the conversation of poverty in New Zealand. Ten frames are addressed and emphasised in section 5.3. Seven categorised themes are presented as examples of framing in the 18 news media stories.

Chapter 6 (Conclusion), discusses the results, interpretation and implications of the research findings. It notes the limitations of the study and discusses the possibility of improving the present media discourse through these findings by highlighting recommendations and making suggestions for the future.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Poverty and Perception

The research question is, “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?”

The objective of this thesis is to understand the perceptions of poverty discussed in the 10-week research period, and how journalists framed events through text in the 18 selected news stories. Before proceeding, it is necessary to study the current understanding of news media portrayal of poverty, specifically in developed countries. In this context, this chapter discusses mass media perceptions of poverty and the role of media in generating, propagating and shaping those perceptions. This study focuses on poverty in developed countries, because the concept of poverty in academic literature is primarily concerned with third world countries (Casazza, 2015).

This research examines the effect of media bias, which influences journalists directly or indirectly in the way they report poverty. Attention is also given to analysing the way poverty is portrayed in the news media. The difference in definitions of poverty is analysed both nationally, according to New Zealand’s Ministry of Social Development (MSD) as there is no confirmed official poverty line or formal agreement to the meaning of poverty in New Zealand, and internationally (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018; Wilkinson & Jeram, 2016).

The study specifically focuses on perceptions of poverty in economically developed countries such as New Zealand, rather than in underdeveloped countries where poverty is defined by a lack of basic necessities, such as food and shelter. The literature review highlights and addresses the gaps in news media perceptions of poverty, the reasons for this research and its socioeconomic benefit to society when the issue is understood and presented without biases.

#### 2.1.1 The Problem of Defining Poverty

There are multiple definitions of poverty found in the literature. This research inspects the contested understanding of the definition of poverty both in New Zealand and internationally. Different nations and international organisations adopt different metrics to define and quantify poverty, thereby providing varied and often conflicting understandings of the term. These examples are discussed. A key element of this investigation is unpicking what is meant by the term poverty. As long ago as 1971, Fried and Elman (p. 55) quoted English social researcher and reformer Charles James Booth on poverty: “The ‘poor’ are those whose means may be sufficient, but are barely sufficient, for decent independent life; the ‘very poor’ those whose

means are insufficient for this according to the usual standard of life”. Things have not changed significantly. More recently, the United Nations defined poverty as, “a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services” (United Nations, 1995, p. 57).

A clear definition of poverty is essential to identifying the poor in a society (Hulme, 2012). In the context of this study, a definition would allow the researcher to identify the gap between what constitutes poverty by definition and what is perceived as poverty by the news media. The literature shows that poverty is a contextual state. Hulme (2012) says that poverty can be defined only within the political, economic and social conditions of the country or society being studied. Hulme (2012) compares methods by which poverty is assessed, ranging from a minimum spending power to a lack of ability to participate in social activities.

It is important to understand how poverty is measured by different communities and whether or not it is a socially constructed concept (World Bank, 1990). Given the diversity in definitions, it follows that there are multiple approaches to measuring and quantifying poverty. It can be viewed as a lack of access to basic necessities, such as food and shelter. It is often defined solely in terms of income. For example, the classical poverty line method establishes a minimum income and classifies everyone with an income below that as ‘poor’ or ‘below the poverty line’ (World Bank, 1990). This is arguably the most common approach to identifying low-income populations (Moisio, 2004). Therefore, poverty can be measured in terms of capacity to meet basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing and medical care (World Bank, 1990).

Organisations and countries are likely to choose a definition of poverty that best fits their framework. In general, poverty measures depend on social factors such as inequality and income level. Often countries adopt measures, such as \$1 per day in the USA, or targets such as the Millennium Development Goals set out by the United Nations (Hulme, 2012). Traditionally, poverty is defined in financial terms, or the incapacity to access necessities due to lack of financial resources (Haughton & Khandker, 2009). For example, the World Bank defines poverty as ‘a pronounced deprivation in wellbeing’ (Haughton & Khandker, 2009, p. 1).

Recently, there has been a growing interest in defining poverty as a multidimensional construct, accounting for various socio-political factors. This research looks at the dynamic nature of poverty and how the factors that constitute poverty change with respect to socioeconomic constructs and time periods. The two most commonly used definitions of poverty are absolute or relative poverty. Townsend (1979) and Sen (2000) define poverty as a lack of resources or capacity that prevents a person from actively acquiring the facilities that are considered normal by the society in which he or she lives. In essence, this study shows that any definition of poverty is only relevant within the chosen context. This is especially true in developed

economies, where poverty may not be a stark lack of food or basic facilities as it is in underdeveloped countries. The distinction between absolute and relative poverty becomes more important under such circumstances.

Laderchi, Saith, and Stewart (2006) argue that poverty is difficult to measure in relatively rich countries because there are no agreed criteria to distinguish between the poor and the non-poor. The absolute poverty approach considers a set of resources that are absolutely essential for a person to function. If a person is unable to attain these resources, then she or he is considered poor. Absolute poverty does not depend much on the societal context as long as people have access to basic resources (Ringen, 1985). Relative poverty, on the other hand, is defined in the context of the society being studied. In general, most studies measure poverty relative to the society being examined (Moisio, 2004). For example, a person who may be considered relatively poor in a developed country may have sufficient income to be considered rich in an underdeveloped economy. Absolute poverty definitions may not be appropriate in assessing such circumstances. Due to the relative nature of poverty, defining it in the context of a developed, relatively affluent society poses unique challenges and efforts have been made to address this issue. Researchers argue that, given the temporal and relativistic nature of poverty, it is impossible to arrive at a single definition (Gordon, 2006).

The United States of America (USA) is among the few developed countries still using an absolute poverty line to identify the economically weaker sections of its population. Although the method was developed in the 1960s, the national census bureau publishes annual poverty thresholds. In 2018, the federal poverty threshold for a single person in the USA varied between \$12,060 and \$15,060 depending on the state being studied (Wissman, 2017).

Canada does not use an income threshold to measure poverty. The most common measure used in the country is a low income cut off. Essentially, if a family spends 20% more of its income on bare necessities (such as food, clothing and shelter) than an average family, that family is said to be in the low-income category. The idea is that spending disproportionately on bare necessities reduces the disposable income available, thereby limiting spending on education, healthcare, or savings (Collin & Campbell, 2008). The Canadian federal government also uses a market basket measure, where a list of commodities that are considered necessary is used to set a poverty threshold. As Canada does not adopt a single guideline on poverty measurement, social organisations and local governments choose what is appropriate. While the Canadian approach is more relativistic and inclusive than that of the USA, it is not without faults. Varying measures of poverty are considered confusing and often pose difficulties in identifying the most appropriate metric (DeGroot-Maggetti, 2002).

Britain uses a relative poverty index where any household earning lower than 60% of that median family income as the primary measure is considered poor. This provides a relativistic

poverty line where the poor can be identified (Brewer, Goodman, Muriel, & Sibieta, 2007). The downside is that when the median income falls (as it did during the economic crisis of 2008), large sections of the population needing assistance may have no access to it (Whitham, 2015).

Australia relies on individual organisations assessing poverty in specific sectors and taking remedial action to help eliminate poverty in those areas. This approach has the advantage of providing a multi-dimensional poverty measure. However, a lack of government-approved poverty measurement guidelines often hampers overall policy development (McDonald, 1998).

New Zealand lacks the multi-dimensional approach that Australia has. New Zealand does not use an official poverty index. Instead, low-income thresholds are utilised (New Zealand Parliament, 2011).

Perry (2014) sums up the poverty measurement dilemma in New Zealand:

There is no clear delineation between the poor and the non-poor that science can identify independent of judgment. What is crucial in discussing poverty rates and trends is to identify what measure is being used, and to be aware of the different rationales and pictures presented by the different measures. (p. 78)

The New Zealand Ministry of Social Development uses general measures to present hardship and inequality in a poverty framework, as there is no confirmed official poverty line or formal definition of poverty in New Zealand (New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services, 2018; Wilkinson & Jeram, 2016). Perry's (2015) statistical reports of 2013 and 2014 use "low-income thresholds set at 50% and 60% of median household income" to analyse "trends in income poverty" (pp. 98-99). In other words, low-income households in New Zealand are those earning less than 60% of the median disposable income (Rashbrooke, 2013).

The New Zealand Ministry of Social Development use of low-income thresholds in relation to poverty is in line with the International Labour Organization (1995) that defines poverty "At the simplest level, individuals or families are considered poor when their level of living, measured in terms of income or consumption, is below a particular standard" (p. 6). However, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) identifies child poverty in New Zealand and reports that 135,000 New Zealand children (12%) are living in material hardship (2017). This means that at least one in every eight New Zealand children is living in a household without seven or more items considered necessary for their wellbeing. The UNICEF report also says that 290,000 (27%) of New Zealand children are living beneath the income poverty line, leaving many unable to experience the basics that many of us take for granted (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2017).

Long before the 2017 New Zealand general election, the Ministry of Social Development published a list of 17 indicators of poverty. It defines essentials such as (1) two pairs of shoes in good repair and suitable for everyday use, (2) suitable clothes for important or special occasions, (3) home contents insurance, (4) a meal with protein at least each second day and (5)

presents for family and friends on special occasions. The report also highlights economised, cut back or delayed purchases such as many who (6) went without or cut back on fresh fruit and vegetables, (7) bought cheaper cuts of meat or bought less than wanted, (8) put up with feeling cold to save on heating costs, (9) delayed repairing or replacing broken or damaged appliances, (10) did without or cut back on trips to the shops or other local places. Others postponed visits to the (11) doctor and (12) dentist. It identifies financial stress and vulnerability whereby families (13) could not pay an unexpected and unavoidable bill of \$500 within a month without borrowing, (14) feel 'very limited' by the money available when thinking about purchase of clothes or shoes for self and (15) borrowed money from family or friends more than once in the last 12 months to cover everyday living costs. The list includes being in arrears more than once in the last 12 months over (16) rates, electricity, water, and (17) vehicle registration, warrant of fitness or insurance (Jensen, Spittal, & Krishnan, 2005). According to this definition many New Zealand children are living beneath the income poverty line, unable to experience the basics that many of us take for granted (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2017).

While the child poverty rate in New Zealand is 16.3% for the general population, it is as high as 47% when the demographic contains only single parents (Todd, 2008). This nearly threefold rise in child poverty demonstrates the vulnerability of single-parent households.

Maxim Institute researcher Madden (2015) recommends defining poverty as "a situation where a person or family lacks the material resources to meet their minimal needs as defined by most New Zealanders" (p. 1) which is in line with the report of Ministry of Social Development's analyst Perry (2014). Madden (2015) also observes that a broader definition might include non-materialistic aspects, acknowledging that the poor lack many of the choices, others take for granted.

Poverty measurement is, however, only one aspect of the issue. In a democracy, public policy is largely influenced by perception. The diversity in poverty measurements throughout the developed world highlights the difficulties in contextualising poverty. An underdeveloped country can rely on a fixed poverty line or the human poverty index to measure progress in addressing the issue (Alkire & Santos, 2010). However, in a developed society where basic necessities are usually accounted for, a more inclusive and societal definition of poverty needs to be developed.

At present, New Zealand lacks a clear official definition of poverty and low-income thresholds are used (New Zealand Parliament, 2011). New Zealand's lack of a single definition means a lack of clarity in what poverty is for the New Zealand society. While any measure of poverty is arbitrary or not independent of judgement, as it is unlikely to cover all aspects of poverty, a well-constructed and formally agreed definition can certainly help ensure that the poor in

society get assistance (Sarlo, 2018). Poverty perception plays a major part in how the issue is tackled. Understanding the perception of poverty is therefore important.

### 2.1.2 Poverty: An Unstable and Socially Constructed Concept

In the context of social issues, perception is the way in which some issues are understood by an observer. This is based on the relationship between a certain stimulus (such as a new piece of information) and our response to that stimulus (Garner, Hake, & Eriksen, 1956). It is possible that different people react differently to the same stimulus and this phenomenon is highly relevant in the context of complex socioeconomic situations, such as poverty.

Perception is coloured by factors such as political connections, social standing and class prejudices (Kastanakis & Voyer, 2014; Li et al., 2017). The influence of such factors on perceptions of poverty is well illustrated in a study conducted on children from Mexico and United Kingdom (Barraza, 2001). Students in similar age groups were asked to identify their most relevant problems, and it was noted that children from both countries gave the same weight to global issues such as war and environmental degradation. However, students from economically weaker sections of society in Mexico tended to prioritise poverty as a more significant issue. This indicates that the perception of poverty is ingrained from childhood and is significantly affected by the circumstances of childhood. Barraza (2001) reports that a child living in poverty is less concerned with larger issues such as war or environmental destruction. Perception is therefore often coloured by the relative understanding of the situation.

There are various approaches explaining multiple perceptions related to the same issue. Agenda Setting Theory (AST) can be utilised to analyse perception. AST essentially highlights the role of the news media in setting the national news agenda and therefore shaping public opinion (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Information regarding a particular event is transmitted by a news source to create a specific perception (McCombs, 2002). Framing Theory (FT) addresses the process by which an individual, structures a story frame in line with his or her world view. In such cases, individuals often choose to disregard some aspects of the issue, such as poverty, and report only selected information that fit their chosen frame (Reese, 2007). An individual may, for example, consider people on welfare as those unfairly benefiting from public funds while disregarding the situations that necessitate their dependence (Krizay, 2011). Various researchers argue that the poor are disproportionately portrayed in negative stories of poverty in the frame structure process because of limited perspectives in the news coverage which influences public opinion (Golding & Middleton, 1982; Iyengar, 1990; Martindale, 1996).

Framing uses strategies to define its message so that themes and patterns appear (Dickens-Garcia, 1998). Thematic Analysis (TA) is employed by FT to examine the various frames which structure the message to a narrative. TA focuses on locating themes across the data set. Themes found in the text can show how news outlets or politicians frame perceptions of poverty.

Themes are patterns across data sets which are vital to the interpretation of a situation such as poverty and relate to a specific area of analysis (Braun et al., 2015). Lastly, Attribution Theory (AT) explains that an individual often relates a particular event to a certain motivation. For example, a person may perceive the cause of poverty and hardship by attributing it to individual character or behaviour failure (Beddoe & Keddell, 2016). This attribution is transferred to those experiencing poverty and hardship and consequently a judgement is made which is based on assumptions (Graham, 1991). This explanation of AT can be perceived in depictions of poverty. For example, someone's poverty might be attributed to an unwillingness to work, thereby converting a socioeconomic issue to something based on individual attributes. These will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. Discourse analysis understands language as a main form of social practice in this study, hence it utilises all four approaches in sequential order to examine the content in the narratives. These techniques are widely used in qualitative data analysis (van Dijk, 2016). Theory of Agenda-Setting, Theory of Framing, Analysis of Themes and Theory of Attribution are important to the understanding of how news media helps create perceptions of socioeconomic issues such as poverty.

It is important to understand the significance to this research of perceptions of poverty. Perception is seen to significantly influence how individuals respond to social issues and economic topics. It has been demonstrated that individuals who assess greater than actual risks connected to any event, such as Turei's admission, and to issues such as poverty, will most likely resist social policies that might grow the risks (Stoutenborough, Vedlitz, & Liu, 2015). A person who views welfare as a loss of his or her taxes may oppose a decision to increase spending on welfare. Therefore, though a person's perception of risk may be irrational it has the potential to affect public policy.

A negative perception of poverty may result in resistance to contributions to public policy that assists the poor. A more sympathetic perception may help to move public policy towards aid and support programs (Morton, 2014). In essence, perception plays a significant role in how the poor are treated within a society. This thesis focuses on the role of the news media in developing perceptions of poverty in New Zealand.

## 2.2 News Media Portrayal of Poverty and its Effect on Perceptions of Poverty

The news media plays an important role in shaping society. Baresch, Hsu, and Reese (2010) state that:

News media are no doubt the most important actors in the framing process: They are frame generators, organisers, and transmitters, linking social structure and the individual. News content is not mere combinations of words; it carries embedded social meaning and reflects the prevalent organising principles in society through journalists'

selection of words, news sources, and metaphors. This process sets the boundary of an issue, reduces a complex situation to a simple theme, and shapes people's interpretations by making some elements salient while ignoring others. (p. 638)

A central element of this study is that the news media are not neutral in their representations of poverty issues. The Theory of Agenda Setting addresses the role of the mass media in setting the news agenda and how this plays a part in shaping public opinion (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). People rely on and trust the media as a news source (Bullock et al., 2001), and the news shapes public opinions and attitude (Kinder, 1998). Public opinion counts towards the perceptions of poverty which influence public policy (Page & Shapiro, 1983).

News media generated perception has been explored in various fields of public behaviour. For example, Shelton, Kim, and Barak (2009) report that crime-based entertainment creates unrealistic evidence for jury members in the criminal court. News media have a great influence on the democratic process and function like watchdogs guarding the pillar of democracy. The news media are often described as the fourth pillar of democracy, or the fourth estate, which guard the legislature, executive, and judiciary (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1995).

An objective, unbiased and liberated news media sector is vital to democracy. A diverse, editorially independent news media sector can facilitate healthy public debates, assure the accurate transmission of information and hold people in public office accountable (Kalathil, 2011). News media can inform public opinion and public policy and can encourage public engagement in civic events, thus contributing to the functioning of democracy.

McLeod, Scheufele, and Moy (1999) identify a correlation between engagement with news media and participation in local political activities. Essentially, effective information transfer through the news media can encourage public participation in social issues, which in turn affects public policy. Fishkin (1991) reports that exposure to multiple conflicting views on socioeconomic issues is a necessary requirement for a healthy deliberative democracy. Moreover, forming fact-based opinion in the face of conflicting viewpoints is only possible when the information is presented rationally and with minimal bias (Benhabib, 1992). News media can promote active democratic citizenship by presenting an issue such as poverty with one clear meaning, as opposed to the inherent biases surrounding the topic. Mutz (2001) states that different perceptions of an issue are, in general, good for a healthy democracy. Mutz (2001) explores the role of news media in facilitating cross-party discussions. In the modern world, people tend to live in homogeneous information bubbles, thus reducing exposure to diverse views (Resnick, Garrett, Kriplean, Munson, & Stroud, 2013). It is, therefore, important for news media to present a story without bias in order to facilitate healthy discussion and hold those in power responsible (Kalathil, 2011).

The news media hold an important position, especially during critical periods such as an election because ideally, in a democracy such as New Zealand, citizens and residents make



informed voting decisions based on how they have been briefed and such decisions can have positive impacts in setting social policy. How citizens think about poverty is shown to be dependent on how the issue is framed and portrayed (Iyengar, 1990). News coverage on poverty and welfare can influence people's thinking on these issues (Sotirovic, 2001). The framing of poverty around Turei's confession and resignation is an example of this. Reese (2001) dissects the frames around social issues such as poverty and assesses its key definitional segments by presenting framing as an activity in power executed by news media outlets, specifically as it affects the political understanding of voters during an election process. Thus, the news media role in the campaign process is to present Turei's story without bias so that people can make informed voting decisions in the general election and therefore influence policy makers to put the right support in place for the poor.

The news media are powerful influencers of perception and the tendency is to highlight 'newsworthy events' and promote public participation around such events (Bauer & Bauer, 1960). Many studies agree that news media perception significantly influences the formation of public opinion. Hwang, Pan, and Sun (2008) highlight media bias, proving that news media are not just biased but often hostile when reporting socioeconomic issues. In such circumstances, media are not merely framing news items to fit a certain bias but are openly engaging in emotional reactions to events, thereby dropping the facade of neutral reporting (Hwang et al., 2008). There is an increasing trend for journalists to express anger, rage, or indignation as they report issues.

The research also shows that negative news media perceptions create moral resentment in the audience (Hwang et al., 2008). In addition, news media tend not to consider the effect of perception and its influencing factors when reporting on individual lives and situations (Hwang et al., 2008). Media frameworks for reporting such matters significantly influence each person's reaction to socioeconomic issues (Hwang et al., 2008). The news media are perceptually influential. The next step in this research is to identify the different media representations of poverty and discover how selected news outlets reinforce these interpreted perceptions.

### 2.2.1 Poverty: A Political Issue

Writing in the context of the United States, Lauter (2016) finds that poverty is a political issue. Poverty is not as clearly defined in developed countries as in underdeveloped countries, and people have many different perceptions of poverty. Lauter (2016) suggests that in the USA a large proportion of the population with conservative political understandings, and belonging to the white majority, view poverty as a consequence of individual action or laziness. Lauter (2016) highlights the point that 47% of conservatives and 43% of white blue-collar employees believe that government measures to reduce poverty, such as welfare assistance, have contributed to an increase in poverty. This is in spite of statistics showing that poverty levels in

the USA have dropped sharply since 1990 (Lauter, 2016). The perception of poverty in this study is that welfare has made people lazy and reliant on the social system, increasing the poverty index. Lauter (2016) mentions that 70% of college-educated people from minority populations acknowledged the positive effects of welfare programmes. Members of minority groups perceived welfare as something that helped the poor transition from poverty, with the view that it was a temporary state, while the white majority (and in particular blue-collar workers) viewed poverty as a permanent condition that would burden society (Lauter, 2016).

Different perceptions of poverty indicate that the poor are unlikely to be integrated into mainstream society. In Lauter's (2016) research, the perception was that 40% of Americans were poor but the actual figure is close to 15%. These findings corroborate a similar study on poverty and social exclusion in the United Kingdom. In Fahmy's (2012) analysis, participants point out rampant homelessness and lack of access to welfare in the UK. These studies show that poverty is subject to perception.

Another UK study (Castell & Thompson, 2007) shows a large-scale perception of poor minorities (especially immigrants) as freeloaders who cheat the welfare system. Poverty in this context was viewed as a choice (as in the USA studies) and those experiencing poverty were deemed to have caused or deserved their condition. In fact, a major cause was perceived as people 'choosing to live in the moment'. This perception prevents people from engaging with or even sympathising with the poor, who are viewed as people who cheat and exploit the system. In some instances, poverty was attributed to a lack of intelligence.

While these perceptions were affected by demographic variables, age, and even geography (Castell & Thompson, 2007), people with liberal political attitudes had a more realistic perspective and termed poverty as a political construct (Castell & Thompson, 2007). Political polarisation appears to have had an influence on perceptions of poverty in the UK, often shifting the blame to individual behaviour and character failing (Castell & Thompson, 2007).

This literature review identifies a gap between perception and a nuanced understanding of poverty (Castell & Thompson, 2007; Lauter, 2016). These perceptions appear to be similar across developed countries, where most of the population view poverty as a choice and do not factor in race, personal situations or other conditions. Welfare is often viewed as a kind of charity that produces little positive effect. Statistical data supports the effectiveness of poverty alleviation measures, but the transient nature of poverty is neither appreciated nor effectively communicated to the population (Castell & Thompson, 2007; Lauter, 2016). These studies show that understandings of poverty are broad and varied, thus the news media can use any frame to structure the subject. These results are consistent with a New Zealand study conducted on the perception of child poverty.

Child Poverty Action Group (2014) report that parental neglect is the main cause of child poverty in New Zealand. Most participants in the study were aware of the situation and accepted government measures to curb the crisis. This study shows that one third of New Zealanders support tax increases to help the welfare budget, nearly an equal number oppose the suggestion and 20% of the population is undecided. Child Poverty Action Group (2014) reports that nearly 40% of participants blame child poverty on bad parenting, drug addiction and family violence.

Although people in the study were sympathetic towards children who were living in poverty, perceptions about parenting were similar to those encountered in the UK and the USA (Castell & Thompson, 2007; Lauter, 2016). The UK survey mentions the 'deserving poor' (Castell & Thompson, 2007), and in New Zealand the deserving poor generally include children in crisis and people with health issues. In the New Zealand context, children are viewed as deserving of help while their parents are classified as lazy, unwise, or engaged in drug and alcohol abuse (Child Poverty Action Group, 2014). This understanding of poverty is a perceptual theme presented by the news media, as poverty itself is an ambiguous term in New Zealand.

Gallet (2010), reports more sympathetic results in Australia, where people are more likely to view poverty as a systemic problem. This concurs with studies conducted in countries with the highest human development index, such as Norway and Denmark (Yeboah & Ernest, 2012). Notably, countries where people favour a more systemic explanation of poverty are also countries with the lowest rates of poverty in the developed world (Gallet, 2010; Yeboah & Ernest, 2012). This is especially true for studies in Nordic countries, suggesting that given their relative lack of poverty and their understanding of poverty as a systemic issue, a well-developed public understanding may help poverty reduction. The next section explores the news media's role in generating, perpetuating or reinforcing perceptions of poverty.

### 2.2.2 News Media Perception of Poverty Affects Public Judgement and Policy

While there is clearly a gap between perception or polarised views and a nuanced understanding of poverty, the role of news media is yet to be fully understood. Poverty is an unstable term and a socially constructed concept. This section discusses the role of news media in generating public perceptions of poverty. The objective here is to ascertain whether news media have a role in formulating public perception and whether that public perception can then influence public policy.

Among developing countries, most research related to news media perception of poverty comes from the USA. A study by Gilens (1996) finds that the news media portrayal of poverty creates an image of African Americans as major recipients of welfare. Nearly 62% of poverty-related stories included pictures of African Americans, although this demographic made up only 29% of welfare recipients. Furthermore, categories that generally received more public sympathy (elderly and children) were largely represented by pictures of white people. In essence, white

Americans were portrayed as 'deserving poor' while African Americans were portrayed as 'lazy poor', creating a negative perception of poverty as a problem specific to the African American community. It also generated the impression that African Americans were more likely to depend on welfare, thus creating a negative impression in general (Gilens, 1996). The notion of poverty and welfare recipients in this study has not changed significantly.

Similarly, a study on perceptions of disabled people in the UK (Briant, Watson, & Philo, 2011) shows that when news media reporting became more negative, highlighting instances of welfare fraud between 2010 to 2011, a corresponding shift in public perception was observed.

Participants from the public suggested that as many as 70% of people on disability welfare may be fraudulently misusing the system when the official figures were around 0.5%. In general, news media reports on poverty and welfare in the UK align with the views of the two leading political parties and leave little room for a more diverse narrative (Happer & Philo, 2013).

A study in Australia related to news media perception of poverty show that indigenous people are more prone to be dependent on welfare, drink alcohol and receive handouts from the government than other Australians (Pedersen, Walker, & Wise, 2005). The report points out that poverty is a persistent condition amongst the indigenous people while it is a temporary experience for the non-indigenous population in Australia. This negative portrayal of indigenous people shapes public opinion that results in racism and less support for the minority group (Pedersen et al., 2005).

A review of mainstream news media in New Zealand shows how the poor are misrepresented and stereotyped. Barnes et al. (2012) report that Māori, who are a minority group, are adversely represented by the news media which often portray minorities as recipients of unfair advantages and benefits. The news media also pressure ethnic minorities to assimilate into mainstream culture by projecting such moves as 'good' (Barnes et al., 2012). This is supported by research from other developed countries (Clawson & Trice, 2000; Gilens, 1996) where the poor are largely viewed as members of a minority who unfairly take advantage of a welfare system.

Poverty is also viewed as an issue of 'others' or a deviation from the norm. Such representation trivialises the extent of poverty (Devereux, 1998). Thus, poverty is rarely addressed directly in the news media (Devereux, 1998) although it may be lumped in with other social issues.

Political divides, crime, culture and price rises may be used to contextualise poverty which is rarely treated as a separate social issue (Summers, 2006). It is not unusual to link multiculturalism with poverty in New Zealand. It is often reported that poverty is a part of the immigrant experience, as immigration brings its own conflicts and lack of resources (Ter Wal, 2002).

However, it is often difficult to establish whether media bias generates a skewed perception or whether a skewed public perception (based on personal ideology) in turn generates a biased

news media narrative of poverty. This difficulty is overcome by Finley (2015) who studied the effect of news media on public perception following the fall of the Soviet Union. This study found that while personal experience and political change affected people's perception, a free press (which was not previously available) also influenced people's views on poverty, inequality and fairness. Therefore, it can be said without doubt that news media can alter public perception regarding socioeconomic issues (Finley, 2015). Research also shows that news media function as intermediaries, taking political opinions and social change advocacy and converting them to public opinion (Hanitzsch, Hanusch, & Lauerer, 2016). This shows that news media can alter public perception regarding complex issues. The next step is to identify a link between public perception and public policy.

The role of public opinion on public policy is well documented. Page and Shapiro (1983) provide evidence that public policy is altered by public opinion. Research pertaining to public opinion and its relation to public policy is found in the work of Glynn, Herbst, Lindeman, O'Keefe, and Shapiro (2018). Many researchers have demonstrated a strong and substantial link between public opinion and public policy, but the most definitive study is by Burstein (2003). This research shows that public policy is influenced by public opinion nearly 66% of the time. This effect is substantial even when the organisations or politicians involved have strong biases of their own (Burstein, 2003). Research reveals a clear link between news media coverage of socioeconomic issues and public perception (Mutz & Soss, 1997). Similarly, studies show a relationship between public perception and policy decisions (Soroka & Wlezien, 2004). At this stage, it is safe to assume that news media can play a role in modifying public perception, and thereby, public policy. The next stage of this analysis focuses on social media in the context of perceptions of poverty.

### 2.2.3 Perception of Poverty in Social Media

There are not yet many studies on social media discussion of poverty. However, it has been shown that the poor (especially the unemployed) are less likely to engage in discussions on social media such as Twitter. Additionally, because people tend to interact with members of their own socioeconomic group the online discussions are often dominated by active participants who are not poor (Matthews & Besemer, 2014). There is evidence that many social media memes cater to the neoliberal ideology that poverty is a result of personal choices and decisions (Knezevic, Hunter, Watt, Williams, & Anderson, 2014). It has also been shown that social media amplifies the worst characteristics in a society and therefore the most extreme perceptions regarding the poor are highlighted. It is common for people to collectively congregate on social media, for example the page 'people of Wal-mart' which targets poor or less educated people. Such a congregation is unlikely to happen in real life (Koenig & Rustad, 2015). In essence, social media seems to be a more hostile place, for those suffering from poverty, than the real world. Understanding the perception of poverty in social media is crucial

as Twitter is commonly used as an adjunct news platform to mainstream news media (Lasorsa, Lewis, & Holton, 2012). However, this research does not include Twitter for reasons explained in Chapter 3.4.

## 2.3 News Media-generated Perceptions of Poverty in New Zealand

This part of the literature review focuses specifically on how news media portray the issue of poverty in New Zealand. Media depictions of poverty are identified through text in both mainstream and independent news media. This research investigates whether or not the political situation in the election campaign period influenced the portrayal of poverty. This is particularly important because the news media plays an influential role in perception shaping (Fairclough, 2000b).

Clawson and Trice (2000) claim that news media stereotype the representation of poverty. Such a perception has serious political consequences. It has been demonstrated that the discussion on poverty and inequality had a significant influence on the New Zealand's 2014 general election, with nearly 87% of the population showing a strong concern over growing inequality (Vowles, Coffé, & Curtin, 2017). The neoliberal idea of free market capitalism as a solution to poverty led to over 70% choosing the right-leaning National party over the Labour Party (Vowles, Coffé, & Curtin, 2017).

All political parties use the issue of poverty to defend their socio-political views (Summers, 2006). Left-leaning parties tend to depict the poor as relatively helpless victims in need of assistance, while right-wing parties often link poverty with criminal behaviour to highlight the misuse of welfare. For example, one politician publicised an incident involving a beneficiary snatching a purse from an elderly lady. The criminal was apparently registered as too sick to work and the rhetoric was that such people may be sick to work but are well enough to commit crimes (Summers, 2006).

In general, there are two news media presentations of poverty. One is of the poor being needy, helpless victims of political conditions and economic changes (such as tax cuts or fuel price variations). The other is of people too lazy to work, exploiting a system and living off the taxes of others (Summers, 2006). There is also a tendency to dramatise events using the poor as a collective. Individual situations are rarely presented. Instead, events such as price rises are reported in such a way that the consequences for poor people are exaggerated (Bell, 1996; Summers, 2006). This tendency heightens during festivals such as Christmas (Bell, 1996).

Poverty is generally a politicised topic, and each party tends to propagate the story best aligned with its views. This discrepancy is further highlighted in the New Zealand Herald (Edwards, 2014) which highlights the unwillingness of right-wing parties to acknowledge the magnitude of the poverty problem. This is despite a number of reports discussing poverty reduction as a major

challenge and the ineffectiveness of government measures set to address this issue (O'Brien, 2005). These views are carried by mainstream news media and, in present times, it is common for media houses to take specific political stands. It is not unusual for news media to view poverty as a result of poor life choices and welfare as unwise spending on the part of the government (St John, 2017). On the other hand, beneficiaries report that the welfare system promotes a toxic environment, keeps them poor and does not support efforts to exit the cycle of poverty (Collins, 2017; Forbes, 2017).

## 2.4 Summary and Synthesis of Relevant Literature

This chapter presented a review of the literature on poverty perception in the media. The definition of poverty was studied, with an emphasis on how poverty is defined in developed countries. The difficulties associated with defining poverty in a developed economy were also presented (DeGroot-Maggetti, 2002). This is critical, as the literature shows that the lack of absolute definition of poverty enables a significant degree of flexibility in how poverty is presented and perceived (Iyengar, 1990). The next step is to understand the concept of perception, what it means in New Zealand and how it may vary from evidence-based evaluations. The literature shows the importance of defining poverty with one clear meaning that enables the news media, politicians and public to be on the same page when discussing the issue. The effects of various factors, such as race, minority group and political inclination on perception were discussed in terms of existing literature (Lauter, 2016). A brief summary of the methods used to study perception was also presented. A more detailed discussion of these methods follows in the next chapter.

The basic concepts of poverty and perception were discussed, along with the ways in which people perceive socioeconomic issues such as poverty. It was seen that perceptions of various issues are often biased and even hostile according to specific partisan biases (Hwang et al., 2008). For example, it is common to represent minorities as poor even though they may not constitute the bulk of the poor population, to depict poverty as a matter of choice and recipients of welfare as lazy (Barnes et al., 2012). It is important to note that such trends are universal to every developed country and that the message reported in the news media shapes opinion. In general, those with more liberal political ideologies are sympathetic to the need for welfare support while the right-leaning population see it as a waste of public funds (Krizay, 2011).

This thesis is concerned with finding out the extent to which the news media generates these perceptions. The literature shows a strong correlation between perceptions generated by the news media and those held by its audience (Mutz & Soss, 1997). There is also a significant body of research linking perception to public policy (Burststein, 2003; Glynn et al., 2018). In principle, it is possible for the news media to propagate a false or skewed narrative of an event. This can influence public perception which can, in turn, affect public policy. The literature

shows links between news media-generated public perception and public policy, thereby highlighting the importance of media perception when dealing with issues like poverty. News media frames structure the perceptions of poverty which eventually lead to the formation of public policy based on the voting decisions of the electors.

There is a significant gap in the literature around understandings of poverty due to a lack of perspective on the issue. While there is some research on how mainstream news media view poverty, case studies of single incidents are limited. Most of the focus is on Europe and the USA, and there are no such studies specific to New Zealand. There is a need to understand how mainstream and independent news outlets function in generating perceptions of poverty, and how public opinions are shaped as a result. In general, studies concentrate on broader subjects such as national elections. An in-depth analysis of a single issue, such as Turei telling her personal story in order to lead the discussion around poverty, may provide greater insight.

#### 2.4.1 Addressing the Literature Gap: What is the Gap and Why is it Important?

The research question explored in this thesis is: “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?”

The literature review identifies a gap in how the news media frames poverty and attributes it to a single incident, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election. There is limited analysis of New Zealand media bias around poverty and how news media present poverty. Similar studies in other developed countries have a generic outlook and investigate how poverty is perceived by the news media. There are no studies that investigate a specific incident and analyse how news media reacted to it. This study will therefore contribute to a better understanding of how various biases and constraints affect the narrative around poverty.

This thesis uses a specific political event, the confession and resignation of a sitting MP and party co-leader, to investigate how poverty was portrayed in mainstream and independent news media. Frames from 18 news media stories are analysed. The next step in the research is to understand the use of frames and discuss the methodological approaches employed to analyse the perceptions generated by mainstream and independent news media. The methodology employed in this study is qualitative research which examines the way in which news media use language to create and reinforces power structures (Fairclough, 1989). The analytical tool used is discourse analysis, which investigates the way a topic or subject gets ‘talked about’ in society (Weerakkody, 2015). The methodology and research design are discussed in Chapter Three.



## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how the research question will be addressed: “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?” In order to provide a structured analysis of the methods employed, the chapter has five sections. The first four provide an accumulative understanding of how to present a research thesis in the realm of journalism, starting at the broadest level in terms of the overall philosophy of research that governs the thesis, through to the techniques chosen in research design, and then the functional areas of sampling procedures employed in data collection and the theoretical framework that is used in data analysis. The final component of this chapter reflects on the ethical considerations of a thesis that uses critical approaches to analysing discourse as the main methodology.

This is exploratory research; it explores the causal relationships in the area being studied, especially with regard to the conversation about poverty and its construction in both the mainstream and independent news media. The data is evaluated, new and previously unknown relationships are identified, and the data is synthesised in ways that provide new insights (Sutton & Austin, 2015). In this case, such an approach will help gain an understanding of the perception of poverty and how it is discussed in New Zealand. One of the benefits of a qualitative approach is that it can provide richer sets of data than the quantitative method (Kumar & Phrommathed, 2005). The strategy was adopted because it was the best approach to collecting data on the experiences and the perceptions of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, this form of research is very important in determining attitudes and offering explanations for them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Qualitative data from a sample can be generalised and therefore it can have great predictive value, important in research involving concepts such as perception. One of the strengths of this form of research is that it can quickly utilise a great amount of information and come to reasoned conclusions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

### 3.2 Research Philosophy

The aim of the research is to create an understanding of how mainstream news media and independent news media portrayed poverty, in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei, in the 10 weeks of the campaign period leading up to the 2017 New Zealand general election. This research is done by analysing the language used.

Though qualitative approaches are less objective than quantitative methods (Kumar & Phrommathed, 2005), the nature of this study necessitates a more descriptive approach. The qualitative methodology is much better at providing 'how' and 'why' answers to a question and for an exhaustive investigation of a given area. In qualitative research, the researcher is a participant in the study and actively influences it (Al-Natour, 2011).

Any research owes its reliability and logical consistency to an appropriate choice and utilisation of an appropriate methodology (qualitative research). In essence, the right research methodology (qualitative research) is necessary for the advancement of scientific knowledge (Rajasekar, Philominathan, & Chinnathambi, 2006).

The function of the news media in setting the news agenda is to draw the attention of the public to a specific set of topics and to influence how they perceive the topics in the frames that structure the message (McCombs & Valenzuela, 2007). In the course of an election campaign, media create pictures of candidates first and behaviours second by using specific frames that structure the content of news stories, and these constructed meanings are then presented to the public. An example of this is the (first-level agenda setting) news media image of Metiria Turei as a Māori solo mother who was on the DPB 20 years earlier. Next, news media reinforce the frames that structure the message by referring to specific criminal behaviour, presenting Turei as a single Māori mother on social welfare who admits to historic benefit fraud (second-level agenda setting). These frames turn out to be remarkably significant in connecting the characteristics of Turei as a solo mother on the DPB 20 years earlier to the specific behaviour of confessing to benefit fraud and consequently resigning from her role as Green Party co-leader. Valenzuela and Correa (2006) evidenced this attribute agenda-setting in a study of Chile's presidential election, when voter impressions tallied very closely with characterisations and behaviours framed in the major metropolitan newspapers. Thus, the news media are powerful as they set the national news agenda, write the stories and, in doing so, influence public opinion.

Fairclough (1989) observes that mass-media dialogue is appealing because of its trait and that the hidden power relations established in it are often not transparent. The setting of the media agenda required an interpretation of the subject of Metiria's confession and resignation that connected it to poverty in order to establish the message in the news story. Fairclough (1989) elaborates on the nature of the power relations in news media discourse. The media have the power to produce news stories, determine subjects to be included or excluded and how those events are reported, which exerts power over consumers. Media sources, such as organisations and people in power positions who contribute news material, do not give equal status to all social groupings and therefore poverty may be low on the agenda.

The language used in the interpretation of news subjects with various frames and themes identified, creates and reinforces power structures to frame a topic such as poverty. Public

opinion is shaped by this and therefore so are voting decisions in an election period. In Agenda-Setting Theory, McCombs and Shaw (1972) explain that mass media are known to set the national news agenda and shape public opinion.

Within the scope of this research, only text is considered for analysis in the selected news media discourse. The analysis examines the relationship between a news media discourse and the social context of poverty within which it exists, considering social, economic, and political factors (Fairclough, 2000a). Poverty is a socially constructed concept and the interpretation of the subject is produced by the media in news stories connecting it to an event such as Turei's confession and resignation. The presentation of this subject matter, poverty, is linked to the confession of fraud in the technique known as 'framing', and this defined message affects the way personal opinions are formed. Frames function as constructs that structure or organise the content of a message. For example, news media frames a story around a certain structure to ensure that a specific message is delivered (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). As a theorist, Fairclough (1989) provides insight into the way discourse influences thinking, unconscious power relationships and biases.

The New Zealand 2017 general election period serves as the timeframe and context of this analysis. The news media's role as powerful influencers, ideally providing a platform for a diversity of voices to be heard and reporting a balanced view of stories, is investigated in this qualitative study (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2014). The thesis uses discourse analysis to inspect and unpack texts to discover how news media represents the subject of poverty during election times (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It discusses and analyses the structure of content in news reporting and how poverty is framed (Krippendorff, 2013).

In the context of poverty and the power media holds, news media ideally must encourage strategic debates, conversations and discussions by providing a platform for the public to understand or confront issues such as the story of Turei (Haas & Steiner, 2001). This research and the analysis aim to discover whether or not mainstream news media and independent news media stand by this objective.

In setting out a research methodology, it is important to recognise that there are no absolutely right or absolutely wrong approaches; the task is to adequately connect the research objectives with the research environment and the data there, justifying what is the best manner of addressing those objectives, identifying the best-suited approach and acknowledging potential alternatives (Fay, 1996).

The purpose of this section of the methodology is to set out an overall research philosophy for understanding the events surrounding the confession and resignation of Metiria Turei and how that was represented in various forms of news media, from the point of her initial admission that she lied to stop her benefit being cut through to the aftermath of her resignation. When

conducting a discursive analysis, there is always a temptation to simply move straight to a discussion of the data collection and analysis tools, because the overall philosophy of the project seems obvious (Baert, 2005). However, there is considerable value in first setting out why a deconstructivist and interpretivist approach is the right one.

The first step in making this justification is to set out the overall philosophy of research underpinning the project, and the choices that one makes there in terms of an ontology and epistemology (Fay, 1996).

An ontology is a theory of how the world is and how it exists. Generally, there are generally two broad approaches. Positivists believe that the world exists as a reality composed of inalienable facts (Baert, 2005). Interpretivists hold that nothing in the world can really exist outside the capability of human beings to name and classify the components within it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Pascale, 2010). This thesis applies an interpretivist ontological approach to understand the linguistic structures presented in the discussion of poverty in relation to Metiria Turei's confession and resignation in the 18 selected news media discourses. The ontology in this research will underpin concepts embedded in the message within these texts and interpret their meanings in the chosen news media discourses whereby language creates and reinforces power structures in establishing the narrative. The linguistic structures in the news media discourse result in facts being accepted in the narratives created to frame poverty, and the reinforcement of power structures establishes the narratives by linking them to Turei's confession and resignation.

An epistemology is a theory of knowledge, which refers to knowing and understanding the ontology of the world described above (Moses & Knutsen, 2012). The positivist favours an empirical approach to research, whereas this study aims to isolate and collect facts about how the news media frame poverty in relation to Metiria Turei's confession and resignation from her role in the 2017 New Zealand general election, in order to build up a collective and unambiguous store of knowledge; a procedure most commonly understood as the scientific concept (Baert, 2005). The interpretivist looks to a constructivist approach of understanding the world. If the world is composed of linguistic structures, then the task is to deconstruct them and understand how they are created, transformed, maintained or replaced in the news media discourses linked to Metiria's confession and resignation (Blaikie, 2007).

The particular interest is in how a piece of information or a set of linguistic structures result in something becoming a perception, often unconscious, as in Turei's story in relation to the discussion of poverty, and how other varied representations of the same information or linguistic formations may not be as readily accepted (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Hughes & Sharrock, 2016).

This references the power relations of news media companies in terms of who may have the power to establish certain narratives or linguistic forms over others. The work of Durkheim on the creation of social facts uses linguistic structures in news media publications to understand how poverty is discussed, and such an understanding is the cornerstone of this research (Gilbert, 1992; Jones, 1986). Therefore, a constructivist epistemological position is used.

The epistemology in this study underpins the order of meanings, identified in media dialogue or conversations, which shape perceptions of poverty in news media discourses pertaining to Turei's confession and resignation. Epistemology perceptions of poverty are shaped through constructivist words which will analyse the nature of knowledge and its justification.

This thesis is located within interpretivist, constructivist ontology and epistemology approach respectively. It focuses on a specific incident, the confession made by Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei that she once committed benefit fraud. The starting proposition is that an understanding of the world, and things within it such as poverty, politics, leadership, citizenship and trust, is constructed through discursive means; such understanding is the product of various texts that come together into narratives that position particular understandings of the world as right, correct, factual or normal (Fay, 1996; Iyengar, 1990). The fundamental purpose of the research is to examine the 18 chosen news media narratives of poverty and politics in the research environment described and then deconstruct them to analyse these underlying discursive and power relations.

In particular, the research question is framed as a 'how' question, in terms of how are there not more substantive discussions around poverty in the mainstream news media and independent news media? How do we have conversations about poverty? Positivist methodologies are not useful for addressing 'how' questions, because the answer is open-ended; it cannot be given in a numerical or quantitative form (Pascale, 2010). Ultimately the research philosophy turns on the idea that the group of facts around the confession that led to Turei's resignation are socially constructed, and the way in which they were framed across different media streams at different points in the news story is critical to understanding what happened, which helps to develop a wider understanding of poverty as a socially constructed phenomenon (Weerakkody, 2015). None of the events can be understood as straightforward and inalienable facts that existed independently of Metiria Turei and persist now (Weerakkody, 2015).

The interpretivist approach is also appropriate because it allows a consideration of the role of power in framing the content structure of a particular discourse. News outlets exercise that power to propagate various poverty narratives depending on different biases and audience targeting requirements.

### 3.3 Framing Theory

This section on Framing Theory is based on the ideas of Iyengar and Reese. It explains how framing theory works and how it is specifically used in the analysis. Iyengar talks about frames as episodic and thematic in news coverage of social issues, while Reese discusses frames as organising principles that structure the social world in news reporting. These two theories are discussed in the following sections.

#### 3.3.1 Iyengar's Framing Theory:

Iyengar discusses two types of frames in news coverage. They are episodic frame and thematic frame. Iyengar (1991) explains that:

This work extends the analysis of television's impact (news frames) on public opinion to the important questions of political responsibility and accountability. Specifically, the research explores the direct impact of 'episodic' and 'thematic' news formats, or 'frames', on viewers' attributions of responsibility for political issues and the indirect effects of these frames on public opinion in general. The premise of this research is that news about political issues almost invariably takes either an episodic or thematic frame. The episodic news frame focuses on specific events or particular cases 'like the narrative of poverty related to Metiria's confession and resignation' while the thematic news frame places political issues and events in some general context. It is well known that television news is distinctively episodic in its depiction of political issues. (p. 2)

According to Iyengar's (1991) USA study, "news coverage of poverty, crime and terrorism were predominantly episodic; coverage of racial inequality tended to feature both episodic and thematic reports; and coverage of unemployment was primarily thematic" (p. 3). He asks, "Does episodic framing of poverty, for instance, influence attributions of responsibility for racial equality?" (p. 4). He concludes that "the evidences revealed little spill over in framing effects, even between closely related issues, such as poverty and unemployment" (p. 4). Thus, when poverty and racial inequality or poverty and unemployment are investigated, 'framing effects' are limited to specific issues which take an episodic frame. Iyengar's (1991) study is used as a model to understand whether this research will take an episodic frame or thematic frame or both perspectives.

Iyengar (1991) says, "at the most general level, the concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgement and choice problems" (p. 11). This fits with issues such as poverty, and the term 'framing effects' can be applied to changes in decision outcomes in the Turei narrative. What Iyengar (1991) means is that framing is how the news media chose to tell the story of Turei's confession and resignation, and the audience perceived the story in the way that it was presented to them which consequently shaped their opinions and led to voting decisions.

#### 3.3.2 Reese's Framing Theory:

Reese (2001) explains that framing theory links the contending tendencies of a social investigation such as the story of Turei with a qualitative study measure of closure and

openness. He says the use of framing theory in a qualitative social analysis is viewed as a strength. Reese (2001) says that the traditional behavioural social science approach aims for data reduction and involves counting the explicit emphasis in the text of stories.

Many scholars prefer exact quantification of the frames that structure the story; however, the most significant frame may not be the most repeated frame in the data. Qualitative examination of framing helps to withstand the urge of condensing data and involves sorting the data, in this case news texts and media discourses, into compartments and measuring their size or repetitiveness. Some defined frames are inherently qualitative constructs. In the news media narrative being studied of how poverty was reported, this means collapsing data into smaller measurement sizes which requires the interpretations embedded in the message of the text to be recorded (Reese, 2001).

Essentially, framing is concerned with how interests, communicators, sources, and culture are combined to produce coherent ways of understanding the world. This is developed by using all available verbal and visual symbolic resources, as in the portrayal of Turei's story. Reese (2001) proposes his own working definition of framing as, "frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (p. 11).

Reese (2001) defines framing in the following order:

- (1) Organising: Framing varies in how successfully, comprehensively, or completely it organises information,
- (2) Principles: The frame is based on an abstract principle and is not the same as the texts through which it manifests itself,
- (3) Shared: The frame must be shared on some level for it to be significant and communicable,
- (4) Persistent: The significance of frames lies in their durability, their persistent and routine use over time,
- (5) Symbolically: The frame is revealed in symbolic forms of expression, and
- (6) Structure: Frames organise by providing identifiable patterns or structures, which can vary in their complexity. (p. 5)

Reese (2001) suggests that this definition gives explanations for various research inquiries similar to this research question, which is, "How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?" In the current perspective, the area marked out by framing can be related by the subsequent inquiry model: What power relationships and institutional arrangements of news media, that support certain ways of making sense of the social world through specific and significant frames, are influential in this data set?

These power relationships appear in the content of Metiria's narrative and become particularly crucial in the way they influence the news media stories which guide public opinion on the discussion of poverty (Reese, 2001). Reese (2001) presents framing as an activity in power executed by news media outlets and politicians, particularly as it affects understanding of the political world.

Essentially, the media creates this frame by introducing news items, such as poverty, in ways that guide public thinking in a political campaign and ultimately shapes voting decisions. In short, the news media structures various frames to present poverty to the public in order to measure the intensity of opinion.

One way to analyse the existing textual data is to look for themes and patterns. A theme represents a familiar, repeating pattern across the dataset in the selected narrative, clustered around a central organising concept. It describes the different facets of a singular idea or event like Turei's confession and resignation, demonstrating the theme's patterning in the dataset. Fries (1994) says, "theme is the orienter to the message" of poverty "conveyed by the clause" (p. 234). A theme tells the reader or the public how to understand the news about Turei's confession and resignation conveyed by the clause (Fries, 1994).

In summary, this research will identify which of the six perspectives of frames from Reese's (2001) model it will adopt in this study in order to understand the textual meaning of the selected news media pieces.

### 3.3.3 Framing a Discourse with Themes

Key themes become visible in the strategies used by framing. By framing a discourse in a particular manner, the sender of the message guides the view or attention in a particular direction and away from alternative viewpoints (Weerakkody, 2015). In other words, different discourses and frames can contribute towards creating specific connotations for the receivers of such messages and make their minds unconsciously stick to a particular paradigm.

This study looks at intertextuality in the chosen data set and examines the text in relation to power, whose interests are served, the types of framing and the themes applied (Weerakkody, 2015). Each discourse is read multiple times to understand the essence of the text, and then the summary is presented. The data assesses trends and unpicks frames and themes of the news media coverage for the specified New Zealand election period. A deep dive into the various discourses that were identified across the four news media channels looks at the types of conversations that took place around poverty. Were conversations about poverty polarised or were they nuanced? These questions guide the analysis of the news content as a whole.

Weerakkody (2015) quotes Dicken-Garcia (1998); "in journalism, framing is linked to the 'angle' used in a news story and choosing a 'lead' for it. The lead controls how one tells the rest of the story and what headlines may be used" (Dicken-Garcia, 1998, as cited in Weerakkody, 2015, p. 290). Framing uses various strategies to put on a thematic structure or face. Since the research uses discourse analysis to unpick the different frames which lead to a thematic structure, data gathered from the 18 news media stories is presented chronologically.



### 3.4 Research Design

Within the research environment of the 2017 New Zealand General Election, there is a wide variety of texts that might have been chosen to engage with the stated research objectives and the overall philosophy described above, and a wide array of research techniques available to address them. This section reflects on the overall research design that was pursued and describes the method applied to analyse data.

One of the research challenges was isolating a set of texts that would serve as a credible documentation base in the context of an election (Blaikie, 2007) together with Turei's confession and resignation narrative specifically. Some basic Google searching was undertaken, indicating there were more than 100,000 pieces of information that would qualify as a text for the purposes of researching discursive practices. This reflects not only the obsessive news media attention given to the general election period, but also the increasing use of tools such as social media which make it easier to publish (Weerakkody, 2015). Obviously not all texts were relevant to this research, and careful consideration resulted in the selection outlined in 3.5.3.

Mooney (2009), citing Fairclough (2000b), says that there is a process of 'mediatisation' of politics, whereby the news media have an increasingly prominent role to play in presenting particular stories and debates within an election campaign period (Fairclough, 2000b, p. 3 as cited in Mooney, 2009, p. 437). The media are never impartial and seek to influence how people engage with particular narratives and debates; in this case, the news media companies play a critical part in creating the image of poverty and shaping how the general public think about it and respond to it in terms of their votes and political support (Weerakkody, 2015). That process can be observed in news media stories in the period between Turei's confession and her resignation. Research shows that obsessive news media reporting and political debates work hand in hand in election times, reinforcing each other in ways to pigeonhole discussions around poverty which end up stigmatising the poor (Mooney, 2009).

Therefore, in order to provide some kind of framework to the study, notes were taken during the literature review (described in Chapter 2) as to the specific types of media and text discussed in terms of content (poverty) and types of discursive structure. There are persistent references to something slightly ill-defined as 'mainstream media'. While the term 'mainstream media' has recently taken on a pejorative edge under the 'MSM' shorthand, the phrase has historically been used to refer to mass circulation newspapers and other print media, independent news media, television and radio stations which are particularly well-placed to shape perceptions around elections and general societal perceptions of particular issues (Weerakkody, 2015). According to Chomsky (1997) 'MSM' is a mainstream media abbreviation used to refer collectively to the various large mass media that influence a large number of people, and both reflect and shape prevailing currents of thought. It was further noted that there is a burgeoning stream of literature

that assesses co-produced or user-produced material such as social media content. In both cases, the definition of 'texts' varies; newspaper and radio stories both now tend to be assemblages of words and images, with interesting analyses around juxtapositions and general positioning but with the weight of analysis on the written word (Campbell, 2012; Fairclough, 1995). Social media material tends to focus equally on words, language trends and buzzwords, and not just on images per se but on the way they are produced and disseminated as 'memes' in order to attract what have been referred to as viral circulation properties (Marchetti & Ceccobelli, 2016). Mainstream news media, which is as well recognised as mass media outlets, differs from social media in some key characteristics.

The research design challenge for this project was to access texts from both of these forms of media. The focus is solely on the written word. Assessing images as well would be beyond the scope of the research project in terms of time and resources. Moreover, the written word is used in ways that are easier to compare and contrast between mainstream news media and independent news media (Iyengar, 1991; Reese, 2001; Weerakkody, 2015). Consideration was given to Twitter, as it is an adjunct to mainstream news media (Lasorsa et al., 2012) and is the social media most commonly employed by journalists and politicians alike, to engage with the public (Parmelee, 2013).

However, retrieving content from Twitter in the chosen 10-week research period posed many challenges. Twitter does not allow searching by date so searching tweets by Twitter username, subject names and terms around poverty would produce huge amounts of data, much of it of marginal or no relevance to the research. Though Twitter was considered, it would be difficult to make meaning with the considerable amount of data it would generate. It was decided that this study will focus on the 18 discourses selected from mainstream and independent news media. Those 18 news media stories, described in detail in the next section, were selected because they were particularly relevant examples within the narrative of the subject. The stories chosen were either opinion write-ups or news stories. While bias is generally accepted as more likely to be present in opinion write-ups, there is inevitably bias in news stories despite claims of journalistic neutrality. Therefore, it was not considered necessary to distinguish between these two genres in terms of the findings, particularly given that the analysis was concerned with how language shaped audience perception, regardless of the conventions of the specific journalistic genre.

Some consideration was given to interviewing some of the key figures, particularly journalists, but it was quickly realised that this was not realistic, and nor would it add validity to the research. It was felt that working with the raw texts would provide greater insight than interviewing people after the fact. It is also noted that several of the 18 news media stories are in fact based on interviews with politicians, academics, poverty organisations and members of the public.

Given these considerations, this study focuses on the key texts in the 18 news media discourses that discuss the conversation about poverty in the 10 weeks leading up to the 2017 New Zealand general election. This provides a rich and meaningful source of data concerning the portrayal of poverty in the research period. The study seeks to understand how the news media in general framed poverty over that period in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei.

### 3.5 Data Selection: Mainstream News Media and Independent News Media

The difficulty with selecting the specific texts from the three mainstream news outlets, New Zealand Herald, Stuff and Radio New Zealand and one independent news outlet, Newsroom, was that there were too many stories to use all of them. Inevitably, any process of paring them down brings the biases and perspectives of the researcher into the process (Culler, 2002). Moreover, there was a distinct shift in the volume of material produced from the point of Turei's admission, which caused only a modest amount of comment, to the point where her colleagues resigned prompting her resignation, when there was a very large amount of material.

Studying all stories on the matrix of words using different searches like Google, Yahoo and the websites of the four news media companies in the 10 weeks election campaign period was beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, the selection of 18 stories is based on key dates when the subject was the main story, and most talked about topic in the four news media companies. The selection was also established from Radio New Zealand's timeline giving a rundown on the matter, from the confession to the resignation and the election outcome, and from the Wikipedia page on Metiria Turei which includes news media stories from her confession to the demise of her political career. These three avenues helped to clarify the choice of data.

This reinforces the necessity of the interpretivist approach for this thesis. The researcher must be properly located within the research environment and understood as mutually constitutive of it. A positivist technique is used, and the objective fallacy used, suggesting that the analyst occupies a conceptually difficult role outside of the study domain but is able to observe without any bias or manifestation of themselves in that investigation, a situation Haraway (1988) laments as the fallacy of a 'view from nowhere' (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

In this case, it is accepted that the researcher is part of a constructive research environment. The researcher engages in a form of purposeful sampling by selecting the texts to be used within the study framework of qualitative analysis. Therefore, the position of the researcher is well within the confines of the study in the approaches used (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

On a purely practical level, picking a small number of texts from the mass content was challenging. It was decided that the best selection methodology would be to select, in pairs, news media stories that followed the broad timeline of the whole Turei affair. Thus, two stories

were selected from when she first admitted her past lies, two are from the aftermath of the confession, two record when her colleagues began to express discontent, two follow the resignation of two colleagues, two record her resignation, two cover the aftermath of the resignation, two reflect on that resignation, two follow the conversation on poverty and two were published a day after the elections. While it is accepted that this timeline is itself something of an artificial construct, it was felt that within the confines of this thesis it was a balanced way of structuring the collection and analysis of data (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The use of pairs is designed to show two contrasting pieces at each stage, with the timeline structure providing a linear filler that describes how the narrative(s) shift over time.

The data collected in the 10 weeks period from the confession and resignation of Metiria Turei which is picked from independent news media and mainstream news media, can be broadly classified into theoretical content that engages with the methods employed and used for the purpose of analysis. Keyword searches were carried out based on a matrix of terms around 'Metiria Turei', 'conversations about poverty', 'poor', 'poverty', 'welfare', and 'homeless' during the 2017 New Zealand general election period, from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017. The data are used to investigate whether or not the narrative of conversations about poverty changed over time and to question how New Zealand as a nation has conversations about poverty.

### 3.5.1 Mainstream News Media Stories: New Zealand Herald, Stuff and Radio New Zealand

The mainstream news media stories were sourced from three well-established New Zealand outlets; New Zealand Herald, Stuff and Radio New Zealand. The stories were downloaded through the academic institution's online library records. A word search using date delimiter fields located and identified the 12 mainstream news media stories in this research. Two of the three publishers are commercial news media outlets which depend on advertising revenue: the third, Radio New Zealand, is government funded. Accordingly, all three have an incentive to be sensitive to the narratives most appealing to their advertisers or sponsors or to the demographic that the advertisers or sponsors wish to reach.

### 3.5.2 Independent News Media Stories: Newsroom

Newsroom was chosen as it is an independent online news medium with a very limited physical presence beyond its website. It is also a relatively new news publication, founded in 2017. Start-up funding came from four foundational sponsors, including University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington (Radio New Zealand, 2017d). This is where New Zealand academics release their research findings. For example, Matthewman (2017) talks about, "Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ's Hypocrisy" during the 2017 election campaign period. This story was deemed useful for this study and, as is not a resource available through

university library sources, the researcher spoke to a senior political correspondent at Newsroom who agreed to download the stories internally and email them. Six key pieces from Newsroom were selected for this study. Newsroom relies on crowd-funded donations and therefore has the potential to be an independent voice for a general audience.

### 3.5.3 Selected Stories Listed Chronologically

The table below lists the six Independent and 12 Mainstream News Media stories that are presented and analysed in Chapter 4. The full text of the 18 news media stories is reproduced in Appendix A.

The 18 Key Stories Selected are in Chronological Order: Stories 1 to 6

Story Number	Date	Type of Media	News Outlet	Story Title	Weblink
1 <sup>st</sup> Key Story	July 16, 2017	Mainstream Media	Stuff New Zealand	Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy	<a href="https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/94777073/benefit-raise-tax-cuts-for-poorest-and-hikes-for-wealthy-in-news-greens-policy">https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/94777073/benefit-raise-tax-cuts-for-poorest-and-hikes-for-wealthy-in-news-greens-policy</a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Key Story	July 16, 2017	Mainstream Media	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as Party Announces Radical Welfare Reforms	<a href="https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11891306">https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11891306</a>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Key Story	July 17, 2017	Mainstream Media	Radio New Zealand	Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty	<a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/335218/deputy-pm-on-turei-s-benefit-dishonesty">https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/335218/deputy-pm-on-turei-s-benefit-dishonesty</a>
4 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	July 17, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	Greens go for the big bang	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/07/16/38868/greens-go-for-the-big-bang">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/07/16/38868/greens-go-for-the-big-bang</a>
5 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 7, 2017	Mainstream Media	New Zealand Herald	Green MPs Quit in Protest Over Metiria Turei	<a href="https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11899846">https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11899846</a>
6 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 7, 2017	Mainstream Media	Stuff New Zealand	Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions	<a href="https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/95542553/two-green-mps-threaten-to-quit-over-metiria-turei">https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/95542553/two-green-mps-threaten-to-quit-over-metiria-turei</a>

The 18 Key Stories Selected are in Chronological Order: Stories 7 to 12

Story Number	Date	Type of Media	News Outlet	Story Title	Weblink
7 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 8, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/08/08/41632/turei-benefit-fraud-backfire">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/08/08/41632/turei-benefit-fraud-backfire</a>
8 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 8, 2017	Mainstream Media	Radio New Zealand	Manurewa Voters have Their Say on Turei's Benefit Fraud	<a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/201853999/manurewa-voters-have-their-say-on-turei-s-benefit-fraud">https://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/checkpoint/audio/201853999/manurewa-voters-have-their-say-on-turei-s-benefit-fraud</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kRhx1BapM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4kRhx1BapM</a>
9 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 9, 2017	Mainstream Media	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Resigns	<a href="https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?cid=1&amp;objectid=11901089">https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?cid=1&amp;objectid=11901089</a>
10 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 9, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	'The Scrutiny on My Family Became Unbearable'	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/08/09/41948/turei-resign">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/08/09/41948/turei-resign</a>
11 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 10, 2017	Mainstream Media	Radio New Zealand	I Will Remember Metiria Turei Differently	<a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/336922/i-will-remember-metiria-turei-differently">https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/336922/i-will-remember-metiria-turei-differently</a>
12 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 10, 2017	Mainstream Media	Stuff New Zealand	Meteria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall	<a href="https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/95631285/meteria-tureis-hubris-contributed-to-her-political-downfall">https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/politics/opinion/95631285/meteria-tureis-hubris-contributed-to-her-political-downfall</a>

The 18 Key Stories Selected are in Chronological Order: Stories 13 to 18

Story Number	Date	Type of Media	News Outlet	Story Title	Weblink
13 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	August 16, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ's Hypocrisy	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/@ideasroom/2017/08/16/42725/nzs-hypocrisy-on-benefit-fraud-vs-tax-evasion">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/@ideasroom/2017/08/16/42725/nzs-hypocrisy-on-benefit-fraud-vs-tax-evasion</a>
14 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	September 3, 2017	Mainstream Media	New Zealand Herald	'End Work and Income's Toxic Culture' - Beneficiaries	<a href="http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11916289">http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11916289</a>
15 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	September 6, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	Metiria Turei's Dream May Yet be Realised	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/09/06/46460/labour-would-restructure-work-and-income">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/09/06/46460/labour-would-restructure-work-and-income</a>
16 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	September 16, 2017	Mainstream Media	New Zealand Herald	Metiria Turei Back on Campaign Trail with Greens	<a href="https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11923069">https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&amp;objectid=11923069</a>
17 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	September 24, 2017	Mainstream Media	Radio New Zealand	Metiria Turei Bows Out	<a href="https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/340115/metiria-turei-bows-out">https://www.radionz.co.nz/news/political/340115/metiria-turei-bows-out</a>
18 <sup>th</sup> Key Story	September 24, 2017	Independent Media	Newsroom New Zealand	Let 2020 be the Year of the 'Povertyquake'	<a href="https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/09/24/49752/let-2020-be-the-year-of-the-povertyquake">https://www.newsroom.co.nz/2017/09/24/49752/let-2020-be-the-year-of-the-povertyquake</a>



### 3.6 Data Analysis

Discourse Analysis is utilised to analyse and interpret the chosen 18 news media stories in this study. A discourse is “the way a topic or subject gets ‘talked about’ in society at a given time and location in everyday conversations or in the media” (Weerakkody, 2015, p. 289).

Weerakkody (2015) cites Dicken-Garcia (1998) to say that, discourses are an organisation’s or society’s technique of discussing, thinking and reasoning about an issue (Dicken-Garcia, 1998, as cited in Weerakkody, 2015). Van Leeuwen (2008) claims that discourses not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purpose to it, justify it, and so on, and in many texts these aspects of representation become far more important than the social practice itself. Discourse analysis should display consistency and bring out the most relevant information from the available data. Essentially, a research method is a set of specific techniques that allows the researcher to explore a research question or hypothesis using available data.

In this study, Discourse Analysis (DA) is used to carry out qualitative analysis, with a key focus on the framing and perception of poverty at different points from the confession through to the resignation Metiria Turei. Fairclough (1995) seeks to form a structured technique for investigating the connection between a text and its social content. Linguistic traits of texts are explained, the connection between the productive and interpretative techniques of discursive application and the texts are interpreted, and the connection between discursive application and social application is preserved (Weerakkody, 2015).

The thesis will investigate whether or not Turei’s confession and resignation influenced the portrayal of poverty in news reporting. Fairclough (2000b) argues that expansions in the ‘mediatisation’ of present-day politics have opened a platform for media writers to have significant influence in framing news and debates around social issues such as poverty. In this study, text is examined. The analysis of a set of texts is used by social scientists to examine patterns in communication in a replicable and systematic manner (Bryman, 2016). In labelling the content of a set of texts systematically, researchers can analyse patterns of content using qualitative research to examine meanings within texts (Bryman, 2016).

This research uses discourse analysis to examine the chosen text through a sequence of methods. These are theory of agenda-setting, theory of framing, analysis of themes and theory of attribution. These approaches give insight into how the news media influence perceptions of poverty through different forms of framing, how that works in the context of an intense political process like a general election and how those frames conflict with the idea of an impartial press. There is a wide array of other DA theories available which have been used to assess texts such as literature or film, but they are not as well suited to engaging with a journalistic set of texts (Culler, 2002).

The rationale behind choosing Discourse Analysis (DA) as the method is because it acknowledges that language is a main construct of social practice. Firstly, Agenda Setting Theory (AST) posits that news outlets position news agenda next to what is a 'hot topic' at any time. However, what is especially fascinating is the way perceptions are framed by news outlets. Secondly, Framing Theory (FT) clarifies that news outlets focus concentration on certain occurrences or occasions or episodes and puts them inside a field of understanding and meaning to define a message that leads to framing a subject. Thirdly, the strategy used is Thematic Analysis (TA), categorises the text in news media discourse so that themes and patterns are spotted. TA identifies patterns and themes across data sets, and in the context of a narrative those themes are subsequently attributed to the character and behaviour of an independent person as explained in Attribution Theory (AT). Lastly, in Attribution Theory (AT), news media reporting frames a subject, such as poverty, and then attributes it as the failing or fault of a particular person. All four approaches are used in sequential order to examine the content across the narratives and these techniques are widely used methods in qualitative data analysis (van Dijk, 2016).

This analysis starts with a discourse study (DA) of the way a topic is 'talked about' in society. These topics are set by the news media (AST) which analyses how the subject is placed within a field of meaning by framing (FT). The words used to frame Turei reveal themes across the selected data (TA) that lead to attribution as the failing of the individual (AT).

Weerakkody says, "Analysing texts according to the discourses embedded in them sheds light on the power relations in society with respect to that institution, individual, organisation or group" (2015, p. 292). In summary, DA is the most appropriate method to study the news media (Phelan, 2017) to ensure credible results (Yin, 1994). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was considered as an alternative method but Fairclough's (2000a) three-layered approach to analysis was not as suitable for this study.

### 3.6.1 Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda Setting Theory (AST) is very relevant to the analysis of news media publications (McCombs & Funk, 2011; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). AST explains that the national news agenda is set by news outlets for the type of media stories to be presented daily. AST essentially concentrates on how an agency (such as a media outlet) can present a specific news event, such as the discussion about poverty, related to the confession of Turei. A pre-set agenda or political policy may be involved in deciding the approach to the discussion around poverty that may then have led to Turei's resignation (McCombs & Funk, 2011). McCombs and Funk (2011) suggest that news media companies may themselves be politically biased according to the personal or corporate beliefs of their owners. McCombs and Funk (2011) advocate recognition of this pre-set agenda as it influences public opinion. This is critical, given that agendas propagated by the

news media are proven sources of influence on public issues (Bryman & Burgess, 2002). The likelihood of specific agendas influencing the reporting of news related to Turei's confession can be analysed using AST, which therefore forms an essential part of understanding the discourse around poverty during the 2017 New Zealand general election.

The significance of AST has increased since the advent of the Internet, as chat rooms, online newspapers, blogs and even individual posts can publish material that overtly aligns with their specific agenda in the political process and such material also shapes public thinking (McCombs, 2005). Agendas set by a news media organisation can form public opinion, reinforce opinion, or help change perception (McCombs, 2005). Much earlier, Lippmann (1922) warned about the dangers of set news agendas by identifying media narratives, such as Turei's confession, as the raw material that facilitates the generation of public opinion.

Some authors go so far as to suggest that a governing authority should be in charge of setting agendas and enforcing them so that all the available data reaches the listeners or readers (Walgrave & Van Aelst, 2006). The implications for public freedom are not explored in this research. However, in general, a strong correlation is seen between existing public opinion and the predominant news media narrative (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). Therefore, one can assume that news media reports on the issues surrounding Ms Turei may have influenced public perception related to the event.

Agenda Setting Theory is optimal for providing a framework for the examination of news media stories related to the confession and resignation of Turei. Any political agenda of news outlets and journalists can be investigated using AST. Such analysis will help ascertain whether there are pre-conceived biases or agendas involved in the presentation of news pertaining to Metiria Turei. AST sets the national news agenda and the media stories are then framed to present various viewpoints, as discussed next.

### 3.6.2 Framing Theory

Framing Theory (FT) assesses the assumption of an individual's view of events, such as the confession and resignation of Turei, through a specific frame or structure. It is essentially a tool employed by journalists to propagate a certain narrative, such as the discussion of poverty, in a specific frame to define the content of the message (Iyengar, 1991; Reese, 2001). By framing a discourse about poverty in a particular manner or direction, it is possible to constrict the views of the audience or public to a particular perspective in the narrative (Weerakkody, 2015). Iyengar's (1991) definition of framing says, "at the most general level, the concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of judgement and choice problems, and the term framing effects refers to changes in decision outcomes resulting from these alterations" (p. 11). Reese (2001) defines framing as, "frames are organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the

social world” (p. 11). In other words, different discourses and frames (denotations or signifiers) can contribute towards creating specific connotations for the audience, making their minds unconsciously stick to a particular paradigm as in the case of Turei’s confession and resignation.

This unique frame is set up so that the event is perceived to agree with an individual’s worldview. In such cases, people often choose to disregard parts of the reality of the situation and choose only events that fit in with their chosen frame (Reese, 2007). In the case of news media as studied in this thesis, FT helps with an understanding of how consumers or readers of the text can be pushed toward a particular conclusion by accepting the particular framing that supports a known worldview of an issue.

Framing Theory explores the role of framing in the communicative process. In essence, when an idea is to be communicated, either directly or via some medium like a news outlet, from one individual to another, then framing will always occur. Framing conversations usually evolve organically, often coloured by the biases of the person framing them (Iyengar, 1991; Reese, 2001; Weerakkody, 2015). In this study the frame, along with the information about poverty related to Turei’s confession and resignation, is conveyed by a news media outlet to a listener or reader. Therefore, in addition to the raw information in the news story, the structured media frames are also transmitted. The reader then absorbs the data according to his or her predispositions and the interaction of the presented frame with her or his pre-existing biases (De Vreese, 2005). Frames are a function of the characteristics of the communicator (the media), the receiver (the public) and the culture or biases in which the information is communicated and received (Entman, 1991). Therefore, FT is an ideal starting point for this analysis of news media stories.

This study is essentially about the contextual perceptions of poverty and how these are communicated. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identify the first part of framing as frame building, which is the process by which a source, in this case a news organisation, chooses a particular framework for presenting a news item. In the case of the narrative about Turei, the information that connects her to poverty then interacts with the audience in a process called frame-setting, where the information received is further influenced by the biases and world views of the receiver. While it cannot be stated for certain whether or not a particular framing approach is deliberate, it is agreed that in most cases individuals prefer to view events and situation in ways that reaffirm their beliefs and judgements (Reese, 2007).

Entman’s (1993) framing concept explains, “to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Iyengar’s (1991) definition of framing says, “at the most general level, the concept of framing refers to subtle alterations in the statement or presentation of

judgement and choice problems, and the term framing effects refers to changes in decision outcomes resulting from these alterations” (p. 11).

Similarly, Krizay (2011) suggests that a person may view something like welfare system as either a burden or a boon to society, based on his or her political and social beliefs. Turei’s confession of undisclosed income when she was a beneficiary may have seemed like an abuse of taxpayers’ money to some people.

In the context of this research, it is possible that different frames chosen to propagate the news of Ms Turei’s confession had different effects. Some may view the events involved in the confession as a necessary survival tool, others might see it as fraud. It depends on how the news is presented (framed). The consequences of framing are long-lasting both for the individual receiver and for society at large (De Vreese, 2005). Representing a news item, such as Turei’s story, in a particular framework can alter public perception about related issues and have larger socio-political consequences (De Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1991). Similarly, equating crime such as fraud with particular groups of welfare recipients, such as minorities or refugees, can develop anti-welfare or anti-minority sentiments within a society.

Using Framing Theory, it is possible to analyse how each frame was employed to convey information related to Turei’s confession and resignation. Frames are revealed through features knitted together. Pan and Kosicki (1993) have said that, “because of this structuring function, a theme is also called a frame”. For instance, they elaborate framing in news media narrative to include four structures, “syntactical structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure” (p. 59), while Gamson and Modigliani (1989) say that, “the five framing devices are (1) metaphors, (2) exemplars, (3) catchphrases, (4) depictions, and (5) visual images” (pp. 3-4). Framing Theory uses Thematic Analysis as a form of strategy to examine and unveil themes found in texts across the chosen news media discourses. This part of the framing process is explained in the next section.

### 3.6.3 Thematic Analysis

Thematic Analysis (TA) is a general form of study applied in qualitative research that inspects themes within data or discourse such as the narratives around Turei’s confession and resignation (Guest et al., 2012). To put a message across in a discourse, framing uses various strategies such that patterns and themes emerge (Dicken-Garcia, 1998). “It emphasises pinpointing, examining, and recording patterns of meaning (or ‘themes’) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 83). Themes are patterns across a data set which is crucial to the explanation of a phenomenon and is associated with a specific research area or question (Braun et al., 2015).

This study presents themes and patterns found in the selected texts to show how perceptions of poverty are presented and framed in each of the media stories. As the 18 news media stories are read in detail, key words are identified. These are based on seven categories which are part of

strategy used in framing. In the context of this study, the seven themes and what they mean are: (1) Attribute, associated to a personal failure or behaviour; (2) Adjective, describing words for example, ‘empowering’; (3) Metaphor, understanding one thing in terms of another; (4) Analogy, drawing similarities between two things; (5) Euphemism, a strategy of using a neutral or fancy term to cover up an unpleasant reality; (6) Dysphemism, (the opposite of euphemisms), exaggerated terms used to make something sound more unpleasant than it really is; and (7) What Isn’t Mentioned, the information left out of the story such as the bravery of an individual sharing her personal experience, or the reality of poverty for the hardworking poor.

The study investigates whether or not each of the seven themes appears as part of the framing device in the selected narratives. Thematic framing is one of the devices used by the media to present news (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Thematic Analysis is a strategy used by FT to capture the seven categorical themes and attribute them as the characteristic and behaviour of an individual, as explained next.

### 3.6.4 Attribution Theory

Attribution Theory stems from Framing Theory. It discusses how a person finds a causal explanation for particular events, such as Turei’s confession and resignation, based on his or her worldview or biases (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967; Weiner, 1972). Fiske and Taylor (1991) state that a person gathers and interprets information and forms a reason for the event based on the viewpoints and attributes of the person who is the subject of the narrative. Framing can lead to generalised predictions based on the event. An example is Turei’s confession story being used to attribute all single parents like her, on welfare at some point in their lives, with ‘cunning’, ‘laziness’, ‘dishonesty’ or ‘willingness to defraud’. Even though AT varies, they all focus on the ‘how’ and the ‘what’ through which individuals process information in trying to understand occurrences, weigh those occurrences, and react to them (Kok, Den Boer, De Vries, Gerards, & Mudde, 2014).

Attribution theory explains how the same piece of information on the Turei narrative can be viewed differently by different individuals. The information is no longer a fixed and isolated entity, but rather a part of the context within which it is perceived. A participant views any information within the context of his or her worldviews or biases. Therefore, the same piece of data, such as Turei’s confession and resignation, can be perceived differently by different people.

The attributes of the subject person also colour the inferences or interpretations drawn. In a sense, her personal attributes are transferred to the event being perceived, causing the reader to view the event through an individualised or specific frame (Potter & Edwards, 1990). A reader

may associate the narrative of Turei's hardship and poverty with her personal failing or behaviour or character.

In principle, a person may assume that the cause of poverty and hardship is attributed to individual failing or character or behaviour, and therefore will explain a stranger's actions as though they understand their poverty and hardship experiences when actually a judgement is made about that person based on assumptions (Graham, 1991).

Beddoe and Keddell (2016) state that news reports attribute poverty as the failing of individual behaviour. Any socioeconomic event can be viewed using AT, and poverty is no exception. A person may associate success with hard work because his or her personal success has been driven by hard work. AT may help ascertain whether pre-existing attributes of society and a lack of skill in navigating issues, such as poverty, played a part in events surrounding the 2017 New Zealand general election. AT will also help investigation of any change in public attitude regarding poverty after Turei's resignation. AT will analyse depictions of poverty according to the seven themes.

### 3.7 Ethics

This section discusses the meta-ethics of the research, and the applied ethics of the data collection and analysis. In terms of the applied ethics of data collection and analysis, there are relatively few things to consider, since the news media stories are in the public domain by default. There are therefore no concerns relating to data privacy, anonymity, confidentiality or obtaining clearances (Rest & Narváez, 1994). There were no interviews or one-on-one recordings used in this study, so the question of ethical considerations is limited and not a major concern in this research.

In terms of the meta-ethics of the project, however, there is an ethical burden that arises whenever a project sets out to use linguistic analysis (Goodwin & Darley, 2008). The opening sections of this methodology reference the constructivist epistemology approach. This is based on the belief that the world is essentially composed of linguistic structures which contribute towards the positioning of social facts or other critical textual information (Gilbert, 1992; Pascale, 2010). Having set that proposition out, it is essential to understand the role of this thesis as a discursive instrument for decision makers. Any potential influence it may hold in that regard stems from linguistic structures and the power formations that shape thinking and opinions.

Given the power accorded to language in the methodology, there is an ethical burden on the writer to avoid passively repeating language believed to contribute to the disempowerment or abuse of any group. The researcher has tried to ensure an unbiased approach by using a well-defined theoretical framework to analyse the news reports. Additionally, a re-reading of the

news media stories is carried out to ensure that there are no casual formations of language that perpetuate negative discursive structures (Bryman, 2016). It is remarkably easy to allow words like 'poor' or 'broke' to slip through without recognising the pejorative manner of their use in positioning certain people. A stringent, quantifiable framework ensures that the language used in news media to describe and discuss poverty is analysed without bias.

The framework of examination chosen for this purpose has allowed for a critical and objective analysis of news media reports so that the information presented in this thesis is studied without biases. Such an approach is essential as this thesis aims to understand the perception of poverty in the real world of news media stories.

### 3.8 Summary

This chapter discussed the methodology, research design, data collection, methods to be used in data analysis and ethics applied to study journalistic reports of the events that transpired after the confession of Metiria Turei, and that eventually led to her resignation from active politics, in the 10-week period, leading up to the 2017 New Zealand general election.

Chapter 4 presents the chosen data from the four news media outlets. The data will provide the basis for the findings in Chapter 5 on how the news media framed poverty in their reporting of the confession and resignation of Metiria Turei in 2017.



## Chapter 4: Data Presentation

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data that analyses conversations related to poverty in the 18 stories identified during the 2017 New Zealand general election period, from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017, in order to answer the research question; “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?” These 18 stories are from four news outlets and only text is considered for analysis. The four New Zealand news outlets are New Zealand Herald, Stuff, Radio New Zealand and Newsroom.

The order of the 18 selected stories is based on key dates when the subject was the main story, and most talked about topic in the four news media companies, Radio New Zealand’s timeline and the Wikipedia page on Metiria Turei. The stories are grouped in pairs under nine headings; (1) The Confession of Turei, (2) The Aftermath of Turei’s Confession, (3) The Betrayal of Turei, (4) The Aftermath of Turei’s Betrayal, (5) The Resignation of Turei, (6) The Aftermath of Turei’s Resignation, (7) Reflections from Turei’s Resignation, (8) The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty, and (9) The Day after Election on Poverty. Two stories from two different news media companies are presented under each heading. The news media discourses were picked in pairs from two different publications to avoid bias in the subsequent analysis. The data collected considered the type of method that will be applied to analyse the discourse.

Discourse Analysis is applied in this chapter. Discourse can be defined as “the way a topic or subject gets ‘talked about’ in society at a given time and location in everyday conversations or in the media” (Weerakkody, 2015, p. 289). The next point is that, “they are shaped by culture and, in turn, shape culture” (Dicken-Garcia, 1998, as cited in Weerakkody, 2015, p. 289). Discourses are not mutually exclusive. Weerakkody (2015) says that, “any given subject or topic can be discussed using several discourses or in different ways, all of which can be valid” (p. 289).

The news media has the potential to influence public opinion, and in effect, play a significant role in government formation and policymaking (Fairclough, 1989; Iyengar, 1991). Political discourses and discussions are opinion-moulding instruments; they are much more than reflections of a stated reality, incorporating conscious and unconscious, implicit and explicit assessments (Iyengar, 1991; Reese, 2001). It is often acknowledged as a fact that because of the mass media’s size, society at large is greatly exposed to what is reported in news stories (Fairclough, 1989). News outlets play a significant role in disseminating information and politics while linking politicians and the public (Schäffner, 2004).

This chapter analyses how news media presented poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Metiria Turei. It investigates perceptions of poverty and how the issue is discussed in New Zealand. Detailed discussion of the findings is reserved for Chapter 5. This chapter sets the context by identifying frames and themes through a rigorous study of the news media stories. It also identifies points as the news content develops over the 10-week period.

## 4.2 Data Chronology: The Stories and their Themes

This section summarises the news media stories with the focus on extracting the data used for analysis and discussion in Chapter 5. The text is introduced with brief descriptions and broad storylines. The data is set out in chronological order as the way that the narrative develops and unfolds over time. It is an important part of the analysis to understand the context and objective of the stories as they progress. The order of stories is in itself a framing device. This data set comprised stories from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017, the 10-week campaign period leading up to the 2017 New Zealand general election. The full text of the 18 news media stories is presented in Appendix A.

The stories have been grouped in pairs under the nine subject headings, following the chronological order timeline to avoid bias in the subsequent analysis. This chronological narrative is part of framing. Relevant text from each story is categorised into themes.

Frames are used as rhetorical weapons according to Weerakkody (2015) and this description of framing will be analysed in the study of the 18 news media stories. Text from news media stories, and content from news programmes in the data, highlights the strategic use of specific thematic connotations, such as attributes, analogies, metaphors, euphemisms, adjectives, dysphemisms and the significance of what isn't mentioned or not referred to (Dicken-Garcia, 1998).

### 4.2.1 Stories in Timeline Chronological Order: Shows a Narrative Story Across Nine Headings and Captures Seven Themes

The data set shows 18 key stories across nine headings. Each heading presents two stories from two different news media outlets. The headings are: (1) The Confession of Turei, (2) The Aftermath of Turei's Confession, (3) The Betrayal of Turei, (4) The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal, (5) The Resignation of Turei, (6) The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation, (7) Reflections from Turei's Resignation, (8) The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty, and (9) The Day after Election. The data presentation captures seven themes and details from these are used in the findings.

#### 4.2.1.1a The Confession of Turei: Story 1

July 16, 2017

Stuff New Zealand: “Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy”

By Stacy Kirk

Headlined, “Benefits Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy”, this story is based on the welfare policy launched by the Green Party at their AGM and it included a news programme report of Metiria Turei’s speech when she made her public admission.

The news programme from Stuff states, “Turei admits benefit fraud”, and continues, “The Greens co-leader has admitted that she lied to WINZ about her living arrangements 20 years ago so that her benefits would not be cut.”

The story progresses with the new ‘Bold Greens Policy’ that aims to benefit the poor. The statement by Greens co-leader Turei, that she lied to her case workers when she was a solo mother studying for a law degree while collecting the Domestic Purposes Benefit, is mentioned next, though it is not part of the headline. This report from the news programme, that Turei lied, is an additional piece of information, and the story explains how her experience as a beneficiary had helped her shape the new policy, ‘Mending the Safety Net’. The news story’s primary focus is the new policy and its potential impact on beneficiaries.

This story is linked to a Radio New Zealand programme headlined “Greens co-leader admits benefit fraud”, and the Stuff story continues with, “Launching the Green Party’s Families Package” at the annual conference, which would tax the rich more and the poor less, scrap drug testing and other rules for beneficiaries and give them a 20% pay increase. The story ends with Turei revealing that she lied to the government when she was a solo mother on a benefit.

The story of around 1100 words relies heavily on quotes from the policy launch, from rival politicians and from other interested parties.

“Our plan will lift people out of poverty and guarantee a basic liveable income for anyone working or on a benefit”, Turei said. “We believe that poverty should never be used as a weapon, especially when children are involved. Our plan to mend the safety net will ensure that all families in New Zealand can afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill.”

She went on to say, “What I have never told you before is the lie I had to tell to keep my financial life under control.”

The report presents both Turei's statement and the new Green Party policy that would lift nearly all penalties and obligations for beneficiaries, raise the amount they were receiving and 'keep the tap running' for as long as it was needed.

New Zealand First leader Winston Peters commented that Turei spoke as though "she had just discovered poverty. Well, big deal, my family was born in a tent, and the first few family members were and know what it's like to be flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed."

Peters said if the government wasn't running a "neo-liberal experiment" with a "lousy low wage economy" then higher benefits would already be in place.

The policy, however, garnered praise from the Council of Trade Unions (CTU) which said it was a comprehensive strategy to improve the lives of lowest paid working people.

"There is no getting around the fact that the only way to reduce poverty is to ensure those in the most hardship have much more liveable incomes, to support themselves and their family," CTU secretary Sam Huggard said.

The words 'lied' or 'lying' are used four times in this story, with 'poverty' mentioned seven times.

Identified words and phrases relating to the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Obligations for beneficiaries to prove they were looking for work, not taking drugs, (2) Adjectives: The poorest, the richest, bold new policy launch, fervent, faithful, solo mum, neo-liberal experiment, lousy low wage economy, rapturous applause, most fundamental changes, vast majority, compassionate, big backwards step, (3) Metaphors: Draw an ideological line in the sand, effective dismantle the Government's welfare reforms, own battle as a mum on the DPB, mending the safety net, keep the tap running as long as they needed, lift people out of poverty, poverty should never be used as a weapon, just discovered poverty, (4) Analogies: Afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill, keep my financial life under control, could not afford to live, study and keep my baby well, born in a tent, (5) Euphemisms: Those in the most hardship, more liveable incomes, lowest paid working people, struggle to find work, minimum wage, basic liveable income, change of living situation, (6) Dysphemisms: Flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed, and (7) What isn't mentioned: That Turei's personal experience of poverty is what motivated her to confess to benefit fraud. She wanted to make the point that the poor are frequently forced to resort to such measures in order to feed their families and survive day to day. She wanted to highlight this issue in the 2017 election campaign in order for policies to be reviewed.

#### 4.2.1.1b The Confession of Turei: Story 2

July 16, 2017b

New Zealand Herald: “Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as Party Announces Radical Welfare Reforms”

By Isaac Davison

Turei’s confession occupies the top spot in the story, while radical welfare reforms take secondary position. The story starts with the words “admits she lied”. Turei says, “It is possible that Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) could do an investigation into my case and I could be charged. I personally feel I have a responsibility to tell it how it is, because other people don't have the privileged position that I do.” She admits that she could face investigations by WINZ and possibly be charged for not disclosing that she had extra rent-paying flatmates. Despite knowing the possible consequences of being charged and that it could hurt the party, she chose to make her admission as she wanted the Greens to be defined by truths and not lies. Her revelation of benefit fraud 24 years earlier was encouraged by the audience at the conference.

The story proceeds with comments from senior politicians. National Party campaign chair Steven Joyce labelled Turei's lie “disappointing” while Labour leader Andrew Little said it was a brave thing for a politician to do. The news story further reveals that after delivering a passionate speech about poverty, Turei had sheepishly admitted to driving a late-model BMW during the election campaign, noting in her defence that it had been loaned by a friend and ran on electricity. The story concludes with the key features and benefits of the proposed Green Party policy, noting that it came after National and Labour announced major packages to support low and middle-income earners.

This New Zealand Herald piece is 600 words long and offers no opportunity for feedback. It uses strong and aggressive words such as ‘illegal behaviour’, ‘lied’, and ‘fraud’. The words ‘lie’ and ‘poverty’ are used four times.

Identified text following the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Defined by our truths and not lies, (2) Adjectives: Extraordinary confession, dramatically reform New Zealand’s welfare system, illegal behaviour, perverse benefit sanctions, brave thing for a politician to do, passionate speech, sheepishly admitted, (3) Metaphors: Trapping people in poverty, lifting every person above the official poverty line, (4) Analogies: Driving a late model BMW during the election campaign, (5) Euphemisms: Low and middle-income earners, low-income families, (6) Dysphemisms: Charged with fraud, illegal behaviour, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: The gravity and seriousness of her decision to withhold facts from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and what it translated to in monetary terms.

#### 4.2.1.2a The Aftermath of Turei's Confession: Story 3

July 17, 2017

Radio New Zealand: "Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty"

By Guyon Espiner

Headlined, "Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty", this story canvasses the opinions of different leaders on Turei's admission and reveals mixed political reaction and a polarized discussion emerging. This is actually a follow-up to a story aired on Radio New Zealand's Morning Report, when a rival politician was interviewed about the admission, and her comments were contextualized with other quotes.

While Labour Party leader Andrew Little commended Turei for the bravery and honesty of her admission, National Party MP Steven Joyce said that people would be disappointed. Deputy Prime Minister Paula Bennett, herself a former recipient of benefits as a sole parent, did not approve of Turei's actions. She said that New Zealanders were hardworking people who paid taxes and expected that people should not cheat the system. She referred to her experience as a beneficiary and stressed that she had never felt the need to lie to Work and Income New Zealand about her circumstances.

Supporting Turei, South Auckland family lawyer Catriona MacLennan was pleased that Turei had drawn attention to the plight of beneficiaries. She said that New Zealand had an incredibly punitive approach to welfare fraud compared with tax evasion, which she said was a far more significant problem and cost the country between \$1 billion and \$6 billion a year. People convicted of welfare fraud, however, were three times more likely to be sent to prison than people accused of cheating on their taxes.

The last part of this story questions Paula Bennett's reaction to a scandal involving National MP Todd Barclay who, after allegations that he had secretly recorded staff at his electorate office, announced he would not be standing for re-election. He was still being paid, despite not appearing in his office for the previous three weeks, but Bennett shrugged off the comparison saying it was "a long bow", that Todd was still working, and he would soon be back in his office.

This story uses more quotes than commentary and gives weight to the voice of an opposing politician who had also received benefits but claimed to have been honest. Most of the tone and language used is framed as a contrast to the deceit. It is worth noting that this story refers to 'Mrs' Turei, whereas all the others use either her given name or 'Ms'.

The words 'lie' and 'lied' are mentioned six times, and 'honest', 'cheating' and 'welfare fraud' are each used twice.

Identified text fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: New Zealanders are hard-working people who pay taxes, (2) Adjectives: Sole parent benefit, honest, not cheating, hard times on benefit, brave and honest to admit to breaking the rules, (3) Metaphors: Comparing Todd Barclay to Turei is a long bow, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Not shown up at Parliament for the last three weeks, a scandal where it is alleged that he secretly recorded staff at his electorate office, (6) Dysphemisms: Didn't lie deliberately, and (7) What isn't mentioned: Direct comparison between Todd Barclay's case and Turei's, also any direct financial comparison of beneficiary fraud and tax fraud. This could have changed the tone more in Turei's favour.

#### 4.2.1.2b The Aftermath of Turei's Confession: Story 4

July 17, 2017

Newsroom New Zealand: "Greens Go for the Big Bang"

By Tim Murphy

This story covers the political impact of the Greens' new welfare policy, which was to give their campaign new ground and their candidates a differentiating factor. The piece is laudatory in tone, using positive words such as 'aspirational' and 'bold', and it frames Turei's admission in the same context.

The policy, which would raise all benefits by 20% and remove all sanctions and penalties, is described as a political tool that could give the Greens an advantage. The new policy would win votes from beneficiaries and others who cared about inequality and poverty while drawing criticism from the more righteous. This story also draws attention to the tone of Turei's speech which reflected "come, prosecute me", subtly hinting at her bold and non-remorseful attitude. However, the story also draws attention to the enormous cost of the policy (\$1.4 billion) and adds that the Greens give no indication of where the money would come from except stating that National was forecasting annual surpluses higher than that.

Turei's emotional pitches, which were applauded by many, are quoted. "These kids will wake up in a bed not the backseat of a car, they'll go to school with bellies full of breakfast and a lunchbox full of lunch, they will spend their weekends playing sports not in hospital with bronchitis. That's what we'll do."

The audience of about 200 saved their biggest cheers for the announcement of the removal of sanctions and obligations which, Turei said, treated beneficiaries as 'criminals' and 'second-class citizens'.

Identified words and phrases fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Beneficiaries as criminals and second-class citizens, (2) Adjectives: Ambitious policy platform, enormous bill, risky side of radical, (3) Metaphors: To carve out new ground, poverty as a weapon, (4) Analogies: The ground is firmly at the most progressive left-hand end of the progressive left side of politics, wake up in bed, not the backseat of a car, go to school with bellies full of breakfast, lunchbox full of lunch, spend their weekends playing sports not in hospital with bronchitis, (5) Euphemisms: Supported living payments, struggle to pay the rent, live below the poverty line, (6) Dysphemisms: Whooped and hollered, and (7) What isn't mentioned: The story does not directly discuss any negatives associated with Turei's admission, nor does it question her integrity.



#### 4.2.1.3a The Betrayal of Turei: Story 5

August 7, 2017a

New Zealand Herald: “Green MPs Quit in Protest Over Metiria Turei”

By Isaac Davison

This piece is by the same author as the New Zealand Herald story of July 16, 2017, with a distinct change in tone. The framing is overwhelmingly negative and, unlike the earlier story, includes captions from news programmes.

This story covers the resignation of two MPs over Turei’s actions. It begins with James Shaw’s announcement that Kennedy Graham and David Clendon had quit the party and will not be part of the Green Party election campaign. The story also talks about the formal suspension and possible expulsion of the two MPs, which was in process before they resigned. Turei’s name appears in the headline.

In the story, Shaw expresses his displeasure over the way the two MPs resigned, which was a strong violation of the party’s ethos. He expresses his full support for Turei, and notes that because of her revelations there is finally a conversation happening around poverty. He states that Turei will remain the co-leader of the party and plays down her admission as ‘historical’, claiming that resigning over something that happened 25 years ago would be a disproportionate response. “Frankly, I am kind of over the level of interrogation she has received,” he said, adding that Turei appeared to be treated more harshly because she was poor.

Towards the end of the story a joint statement by the two ex-MPs explains their reasons for resigning. For them, lying to a public agency could never be condoned: civil disobedience could be justified only by “fundamental breaches of human rights” such as torture, genocide or apartheid. “It does not stretch to the adequacy of an income benefit,” they said, adding that, “The timing by Metiria of her admissions, and her continuing justification of her actions, we see as incompatible with the standards of leadership of the Green Party.”

This story is focused on internal processes within the Green Party, with an attempt to frame Metiria Turei as dishonest and the Greens in general as shambolic and disunited. There are four mentions of putting the party at extreme risk, bringing the party into disrepute and disarray. There are two mentions of ‘lying’.

The identified text can be analysed in terms of the seven themes as follows: (1) Attributes: Treated more harshly because she was poor, (2) Adjectives: Underperforming, live debate, extreme risk, historical, disproportionate, incompatible, controversial, (3) Metaphors: Use not found, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Incompatible with the standards of leadership, (6) Dysphemisms: Fundamental breaches of human rights such as torture, genocide or apartheid, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: Possible plight of beneficiaries due to sanctions.

#### 4.2.1.3b The Betrayal of Turei: Story 6

August 7, 2017

Stuff New Zealand: “Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions”

This story starts with the headline, “Two Green MPs to Quit Over Turei Revelations”. Turei’s admissions therefore gain prominence in the story which discusses the resignations of two senior Green MPs in response to Turei’s admission. The two senior party members, Kennedy Graham and David Clendon, said that while they respected Turei and her work they could no longer support her leadership after her revelations. The story explores how the Greens initially gained a massive lead in the polls while Labour plummeted to dangerous lows. It goes into personal details of how Turei received income benefits while living at the address of the father of her child. This is refuted by Turei who states that she enrolled at the address in order to vote for a friend from that electorate. While Turei was forced to rule herself out of Cabinet contention she refused to step down as co-leader, a stance that led to the resignations of the two senior MPs. The story further states that Turei had the support of the party while Graham and Clendon were considered to have brought the Greens into disrepute.

This story is similar to when Turei made the ‘admission’ (Story 1 and Story 2).

The political process frames the message, with the resignations of the two MPs overshadowing and undermining the debate on poverty.

The identified text from this sixth news story picks up on the seven themes as follows: (1) Attributes: Use not found, (2) Adjectives: Longest serving members of the Green Party, tumultuous three weeks, massive bump, high calibre, energetic, genuine regret, furious, (3) Metaphors: Riding high off the back of the revelation offered by Turei herself, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Disgruntled for some time, not happy with their list placings, (6) Dysphemisms: Plummet to dangerous lows, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: The impacts of political developments (Turei’s admission and MPs’ resignations) on the plight of beneficiaries.

#### 4.2.1.4a The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal: Story 7

August 8, 2017a

Newsroom New Zealand: "A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism"

By Bernard Hickey

This story editorialises on the negative impacts of Turei's revelations, for her as well as for her party. The tone of the 1500-word piece is cynical, assuming that the revelations had the political objective of garnering as many votes as possible.

Headlined "A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism", the story frames Turei's benefit fraud revelation as an act of political cannibalism that backfired both for her and for the centre-left. It states that her admission of welfare fraud initially helped the Greens to bite into Labour's support while energizing their own. Turei's admission is presented as "stage-managed" to garner sympathy which sparked debate on the punitive nature of New Zealand's welfare system. The writer frames Turei's speech as a deliberate attempt to use social policy to lift the Greens' share of votes, concluding that the ploy had actually achieved the opposite and proved toxic for Turei as well as for her party.

The story moves into political ground by discussing whether or not Turei's actions had doomed the chances of a Labour-Green-New Zealand First government.

It details how Turei had registered in a particular electorate to help her friend and frames her character and political judgement in a much darker light. The writer states that although Turei's welfare fraud was initially viewed sympathetically, the continued justification of welfare and electoral fraud, along with her refusal to step down as co-leader, had turned that chunk of extra support into poison and not just for the Green Party.

The story discusses how neither Labour nor the Greens would accept Turei into Cabinet, nor would they burn their bridges over the memorandum of understanding in order to change the government. The two resigning MPs are positioned as strong politicians with great track records. Mention is made of the falling vote share of the Green Party and the fact that New Zealand First Leader Winston Peters' clear position on Turei's involvement could force her to resign.

Words such as 'toxic', 'rancour', 'bitterness' and 'caustic' are applied to Turei, while the resigning MPs are described as 'staunch' and 'loyal'. The word 'chaos' is used three times, 'lie' four times, 'fraud' five times, 'poison' and 'toxic' five times each. Turei's actions are framed as 'fully stage-managed', 'a deliberate ploy that used social policy', and 'a political gamble'.

Identified text fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Defined by a lie, continued justification of welfare and electoral fraud along with the refusal to step down have turned that

chunk of extra support into poison, (2) Adjectives: Record lows, record highs, toxic, messy, financially independent, staunch and loyal, intense, punitive, solo mum, careful, caustic, hollow, (3) Metaphors: Political cannibalism, stage-managed, Greens eat into Labour's support, effectively delivering the death blow, tore a chunk of Labour's base, dragged the Green brand even further to the left, character in a much darker light, muddied these waters, burning the bridge, build some kind of firewall, backed into a corner, dinghy of chaos, the bite that killed Little's political career, stories shift beneath the voters' feet, sleek rowing eight, joined at the hip, (4) Analogies: Smearing received by Clendon (one of the three-term resigning MP) also added poison to the mix, (5) Euphemisms: Careful retelling of her story, (6) Dysphemisms: Death blow to Andrew Little's leadership, attempt to consume that chunk is proving toxic, chaos and toxicity seeping, Jonathan Coleman as 'Doctor Death', benefit fraud revelation, and (7) What isn't mentioned: There is no mention whatsoever of the proposed policy of mending the safety net story, and what it planned to achieve.

#### 4.2.1.4b The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal: Story 8

August 8, 2017

Radio New Zealand: "Manurewa Voters have Their Say on Turei's Benefit Fraud"

By Mihingarangi Forbes

From August 8, Radio New Zealand started covering the other side of the story, reporting the voices of people who were living in extreme poverty. While earlier stories focused on Turei, her admissions and the impacts of benefit fraud, this programme's report presents the impacts on people receiving benefits. It captures the voices of a woman who recently underwent surgery, another who is forced to work as a prostitute to support herself and her child, the financial struggles of a single dad and of an Indian student, among others.

While the headline references Turei's benefit fraud, the programme reports the way Manurewa residents feel about her admissions. They were completely in favour of her actions and, if she had stood for election at that point, the confessions would have worked in her favour. There were around 80,000 residents in Manurewa at the time, 5% of whom received unemployment benefits while another 5.5% got the Domestic Purposes Benefit. National statistics show that in 2013, the median income of Manurewa was \$24,700, compared to the national median of \$28,500.

People claimed that they were homeless, that social welfare schemes were not especially helpful and that it was hard to earn a living. Some also claimed that they would have acted the same way as Turei had in order to feed their families and deal with their poverty.

Key words and phrases in this story include 'benefit fraud', 'homeless', 'work a lot to earn their livelihood', 'lower income', 'make ends meet'.

The identified text from the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Use not found, (2) Adjectives: Homeless, poorest, hard, lower income, good families, odd job, (3) Metaphors: To make ends meet, pat on the back, (4) Analogies: Go out and prostitute on the street, tripping over beggars on the street, needing money just for milk and bread, not been on the corner asking for a cigarette (5) Euphemisms: Lower income, work a lot to earn their livelihood, woes and hard times, never had enough to feed my kids, (6) Dysphemisms: Shit food, and (7) What isn't mentioned: The story does not give Turei any credit for driving discussions around poverty.

#### 4.2.1.5a The Resignation of Turei: Story 9

August 9, 2017c

New Zealand Herald: “Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Resigns”

By Isaac Davison

This story is about Turei resigning. She says that the intense scrutiny of her family, combined with her past welfare history, is no longer bearable. The story is by the same writer as the other Herald stories, albeit with a profound change in tone. This story is also much longer, 1500 words, representing something of a climax in the Herald’s coverage.

While Turei’s resignation is mentioned briefly, this story focuses on a Newshub-Reid Research poll showing that the Green Party lost one third of its vote, and goes on to report that for the first time in its history the party will contest the election with a single leader.

The story continues with Turei’s statement that she had not expected the further damaging revelations which forced her to resign. Since opening the conversation about the reality of poverty in New Zealand, she and her family had been under extreme scrutiny. “I knew that by telling my personal story, it would help people hear and understand the reality of poverty,” Turei says. However, the intensity of attacks had increased so much that they were getting in the way of the party’s ability to communicate solutions, not just for poverty, but for water, climate change and the environment. Green Party co-leader James Shaw had backed Turei despite her confessions and subsequent handling of it, and is quoted as saying, “Frankly, I am kind of over the level of interrogation she has received.” He says that she appeared to be treated more harshly because she was poor.

The Herald story then captures the reactions of other political parties. While potential Green Party co-leader Julie Anne Genter termed Turei’s resignation a consequence of “dirty politics”, Labour leader Jacinda Ardern acknowledged her enormous contribution, and the writer notes that Ardern is only 1.4% behind Bill English as preferred Prime Minister.

New Zealand First leader Winston Peters said that Turei’s admission had been compounded by “seriously bad PR and decision-making”. Radio New Zealand reported that a person close to Turei alleged there had been significant support from Turei’s daughter’s grandparents while she was on the benefit, which contradicted her narrative about living in poverty at the time. Turei said these allegations were not the reason for her resignation, which she had decided on before the Radio New Zealand interview.

The Herald story ends with a list of Turei’s offences, but the vocabulary has changed. The word ‘fraud’ is used just once, and much of the aggressive language of the first two pieces, around concepts such as ‘dishonesty’, ‘disorganization’ and ‘lying’, is gone. This story also portrays

Turei in more direct, human terms rather than in the remote tone of the first story; indeed, this is the first story to acknowledge her wider family in the present tense.

Words and phrases such as ‘historical offending’ and ‘confession’ dominate the discourse. ‘Poverty’ is used five times, ‘opening a conversation’ is used twice.

The identified text following the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Treated more harshly because she was poor, (2) Adjectives: Unbearable, extreme scrutiny, dirty politics, intense scrutiny, enormous contribution, very poor, honest beneficiaries, massively damaged, disgraceful, good character, awfully tough, (3) Metaphors: Dig deep and make unfounded accusations, personal vitriol, (4) Analogies: Homeless, work a lot to earn their livelihood, feed her family, (5) Euphemisms: She was at pains to say her decision to resign was not the result of learning bad poll results, (6) Dysphemisms: Vultures that gathered around people’s demise, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: That Turei got trapped in the political slugfest while trying to initiate a discussion around poverty.

#### 4.2.1.5b The Resignation of Turei: Story 10

August 9, 2017b

Newsroom New Zealand: “‘The Scrutiny on My Family Became Unbearable’”

By Bernard Hickey

This story also discusses how questions from Radio New Zealand’s Checkpoint programme about the support Turei got from her daughter’s extended family finally made her resign. The resignation is directly linked with the release of a poll, an hour after the resignation announcement, showing a collapse in the Green Party’s support. The story continues with phrases such as ‘welfare fraud’ and ‘electoral fraud’ and mentions that Turei had not revealed the support received from her daughter’s father extended family while she was on a benefit. Turei is quoted as saying that while the scrutiny was acceptable, it was the scrutiny of wider family members that had forced her resignation.

The story continues with detailed political statistics and commentary on how the events changed the political equations.

It was written by the same journalist as the other Newsroom posts on the subject and remains hostile in tone, although it has not been extended in length. Turei is framed as a victim of political critical mass, with further allegations of electoral fraud on top of her confessed benefit fraud threatening (impending) political disaster in the polls. The striking aspect of this story is that the two resigning MPs merit only a passing mention.

‘Fraud’ is used six times; the word ‘poverty’ four times.

The identified text from this news story fits the following seven themes: (1) Attributes: Resignation of two MPs from the Green caucus in protest at her continued defence of her frauds, (2) Adjectives: Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles, (3) Metaphors: Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Her story of poverty was at odds with what they had seen, (6) Dysphemisms: Use not found, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: Whether or not the two MPs who resigned after Turei’s admission were justified in doing so.



#### 4.2.1.6a The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation: Story 11

August 10, 2017

Radio New Zealand: "I Will Remember Metiria Turei Differently"

By Stephanie Rodgers

This editorial-style piece on Radio New Zealand reflects a sudden shift in tone. While the earlier stories were all about Turei's 'lies', this one suddenly shifts the narrative. Before her resignation the media focused on her personal life, the political fallout for the Greens and the overall change in the political landscape. This story focuses solely on the policies and how Turei's admission had started a conversation on poverty. The writer says that although for many, a decade or two later, this could just be a report on how an MP was forced to resign over allegations of fraud, she would remember it differently. For 30 years no one had challenged the brutal reality of day-to-day life for the poor, and the day a Maori woman spoke out her career was over. No-one could ever win a moral argument about whether or not a woman could be forgiven a lie told to feed her child, so instead Turei's life had been scrutinized in a brutal and personal way. The case was compared with those of two other politicians (John Key and Bill English), who had essentially committed similar mistakes, but because they were not solo mothers, they could become Prime Ministers.

This 500-word story appears as a guest post and is significantly different from anything published previously. For the first time, Turei is framed as a victim of political web.

Strong words are used. Phrases include 'dogged pursuit of the sex life of a 23- year-old', 'hounding by journalists', 'the aroha and support and passion Turei inspired', 'increasingly draconian policies', 'bully a lady' and 'horror of horrors'. 'Brutal' is used three times, 'poor' and 'poverty' three times each.

Identified text in the following seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Hungry if she were fat, poor if she were smiling in photos, (2) Adjectives: Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles, greatest feminist, brutal reality of life for the poor, brutal critique, brutal and personal way, (3) Metaphors: Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price, to dig any further, clung to that last straw, to draw knife-sharp lines between real human rights issues, unworthy, sources crawling out of the woodwork, carve out a truly progressive space in New Zealand politics, (4) Analogies: Treats whanau as a mere accumulation of economic units, pissed as a chook, (5) Euphemisms: Feeding and housing your child, (6) Dysphemisms: Horror of horrors, and (7) What isn't mentioned: The story does not mention Turei's admission of benefit fraud.

#### 4.2.1.6b The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation: Story 12

August 10, 2017

Stuff New Zealand: "Meteria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall"

By Karl du Fresne

This is another opinion piece on Turei's resignation. It says that it wasn't her admission of benefit fraud that turned people against her, it was actually the tone of her confession which implied she had done something noble and virtuous. The writer says it was pride that led to her downfall, which was the case of a calculated play for votes that went wrong. The story discusses the mass backlash that started building on social media, talkback radio and in letters to the editor, and repeats the allegations that had been made in almost every news story.

It is a relentlessly negative piece, mixing the narratives of fraud and criminality with those of political naivety and miscalculation. The two Green MPs who had prompted her resignation are not referred to, and the entire story is shaped around Turei as the sole agent of her downfall.

'Admission of benefit fraud' is used twice.

Identified text fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: What repelled people was the air of sanctimony that accompanied her confession, (2) Adjectives: Most tumultuous fortnight, disenchanted young non-voters, spontaneous and broad-based, less cocky, climactic meltdown, nasty side of the Greens, bitchy politics, messier, respected senior MPs, (3) Metaphors: Air of sanctimony, to fit the part, bathed in the warm glow of the Left's adulation, lifting the lid on something from her past, digging around for other things, suck it up, irony on a Shakespearean scale, finally getting their feet, crashing down by one woman's hubris, reaping a bountiful harvest of disenchanted Green voters, (4) Analogies: Calculated play for votes, a dog whistle, looking less like a heroic crusader, (5) Euphemisms: Ceased to be in control of where things were going, (6) Dysphemisms: Sneakily gamed the system for her own benefit, defrauding Work and Income New Zealand, illegally pocketed, indulging in vengeful Stalinist bloodletting, nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification, and (7) What isn't mentioned: The story does not go into detail about the two MPs who resigned and whether or not their resignations were fairly linked to Turei's admission.

#### 4.2.1.7a Reflections from Turei's Resignation: Story 13

August 16, 2017

Newsroom New Zealand: "Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ's Hypocrisy"

By Dr Steve Matthewman

This 800-word story reflects a shift in discussion from political to social implications. It is an attempt to provide some academic analysis, in particular around why Turei's behaviour saw the reaction it did when similar behaviour had gone unpunished or unrewarded.

University of Auckland sociologist Steve Matthewman contrasts the meteoric rise or fall from grace of two of New Zealand's most prominent politicians, Jacinda Ardern and Metiria Turei, and discusses how Turei's fall reflects on social values. As in an earlier piece, 'Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty', this story examines how something with much greater financial implication to the state, tax evasion, attracts less negative attention and punitive approach than welfare fraud. Matthewman cites statistics regarding a Government 'dob in a beneficiary' campaign in the late 1990s, when the anonymous tip-off line received over 11,000 calls while an IRD campaign to identify tradespersons working under the table rated only a few hundred.

This story is the first to focus specifically on poverty rather than political process, and frames poverty as a social construct requiring analysis rather than something that just exists. The writer is at pains not to 'pick sides' in the sense of judging Turei, but rather uses sociological theory to analyse why people might form the opinions that they do.

'Fall from grace' is used twice, 'tax evasion/avoidance' is mentioned five times, 'dob in a beneficiary', 'gender equality', 'pay parity', 'society of equals' and 'fraud' are each mentioned once, 'poverty' is mentioned three times.

Identified text fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: It matters if your collar is blue or white, or if your skin is brown or white, by personalising pressing issues like poverty, we let the system off the hook, (2) Adjectives: Unduly punitive streak, white and middle class, (3) Metaphors: Meteoric rise and fall from grace, getting a run for his money, working under the table, ripped off from the state, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Income inequalities, wealth disparities, gaps between haves and have-nots, (6) Dysphemisms: Public pounding for welfare and electoral fraud, and (7) What isn't mentioned: More of a social issue piece, this story does not mention politics or elections.

#### 4.2.1.7b Reflections from Turei's Resignation: Story 14

September 3, 2017

New Zealand Herald: "'End Work and Income's Toxic Culture' – Beneficiaries"

By Simon Collins

This piece largely comprises other people's quotes about poverty, and the political support for welfare reform, rather than offering editorial judgement. In a significant shift from the early stance by the same newspaper, this is a news report discussing the plight of the people on benefits. Produced by Auckland Action Against Poverty (AAAP) advocacy group, it gives voice to issues that had not been raised by major political parties. It quotes people who are forced by Work and Income into precarious jobs that don't allow them to take care of their children but don't pay enough to lift their families out of poverty. It refers to a man who died because he was forced to work and could not change his colostomy bag frequently enough. It talks about how the basic increase in benefits has not kept pace with the increase in rents. A mother says, "I'm eating toast for dinner, so my son can have proper food." A mother of four says, "You are only guaranteed work if you are available 24/7 and have your own transport, and even then, it changes weekly. It's very frustrating living at the whim of these temping agencies. You can't arrange kids and day-cares or sitters at the last minute."

Key phrases are; 'raising welfare benefits', 'giving beneficiaries a voice', 'action against poverty', 'not enough left'.

Identified text which fits the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Coercing them into precarious jobs which don't let them look after their children, (2) Adjectives: Frustrating, ruthless, toxic, cold, decent life, (3) Metaphors: Giving beneficiaries a voice, not enough left, lift families out of poverty, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Difficult to get out to change his colostomy bag, eating toast for dinner so my son can have proper food, (6) Dysphemisms: Toxic culture, under such stress that he died, and (7) What isn't mentioned: While Turei's promise to lift core benefits by 20% is mentioned, her admission of benefit fraud is not. The story focuses on giving beneficiaries a voice rather than giving Turei either positive or negative importance.

#### 4.2.1.8a The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty: Story 15

September 6, 2017

Newsroom New Zealand: “Metiria Turei’s Dream May Yet be Realised”

By Lynn Grieveson

This story discusses Turei’s dreams of benefit reform being realised following a rise in support of Labour. Each party’s stance on benefits is detailed and the writer notes that poverty and benefit reform have become major campaign issues, with all the major parties working to develop new policies.

The story talks about Labour committing to a restructure of Work and Income with the aim of making the system more flexible and less punitive.

“One of the very important things for us is reviewing and restructuring Work and Income so it doesn't become a battle every single time you need a little bit of extra money,” Labour's Grant Robertson was quoted as saying. In stark contrast, National threatened to halve the benefits of those with drug problems who refused treatment or work. Alongside this ‘stick’ National promised a carrot; guaranteed work experience and budget planning help for the long-term unemployed and rehabilitation for jobseekers struggling with drugs. These policies were part of a package that would cost \$72 million over four years.

National appeared to highlight the negatives of people on benefits, associating beneficiaries with drug use and thus neglecting the real issues of poverty. The party seemed disconnected with the realities of life on a benefit, especially for those with mental health issues, disabilities or poor health and also for solo parents.

Although Turei’s situation is mentioned only briefly there are multiple references to politicians making blunders when answering questions on poverty and disability, particularly in regard to understanding the complexities of the benefits system and the implications of that for people who use it.

Supported living payments are mentioned four times, the benefit system is mentioned seven times and pay equity three times. ‘Government support’ and ‘welfare’ are other terms used.

Identified text fitting the seven themes includes: (1) Attributes: Halve the benefits of those with drug problems, job seekers struggling with drugs, (2) Adjectives: Historic benefit fraud, flexible, less punitive, disabled people, disabled children, regrettable tweet, worst possible way, unfortunate choice of words, good lives, (3) Metaphors: A battle every time you need a bit of extra money, ‘Stick’ used for National’s threat, love has consequences, (4) Analogies: To choose between food and going to the doctor, (5) Euphemisms: Rather be out on the harbour, long-term unemployed, students with special needs, (6) Dysphemisms: Historic benefit fraud,

and (7) What isn't mentioned: The story stops short of crediting Turei with initiating conversations about poverty.

#### 4.2.1.8b The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty: Story 16

September 16, 2017d

New Zealand Herald: “Metiria Turei Back on Campaign Trail with Greens”

By Isaac Davison

Headlined “Metiria Turei Back on Campaign Trail with Greens”, this story covers Turei talking about poverty. It begins with a report of an emotional campaign speech in which she received enormous support from the crowd, with many saying I Stand with Metiria. “About two months ago I told the country my story and gave the country the gift of a story of a real life and the real life of what it's like to live on a benefit in this country”, Turei said. She became tearful when speaking about the response to her controversial admission that she had lied to Work and Income New Zealand, a revelation that would later lead to her resignation.

Turei said, “When did we decide that our country would be so mean? So unfair? That solo mothers and their babies and the working poor grandparents taking care of grandkids should have to suffer so much just for a decent life?”

Most of this story is based around quotes from Turei herself or from others at the rally she attended. These frame the benefits system as cruel and unjust, leaving people with very little options; in contrast to the framing of the benefit system in earlier stories from the same publication.

The word ‘poverty’ is used three times. Phrases used are ‘working poor grandparents taking care of grandkids’, ‘solo mothers and their babies’.

Identified words and phrases fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Use not found, (2) Adjectives: Cruel and unfair, mean, prosperous, happy, loud cheers, working poor, controversial, lovely, wealthy, homeless, stupid, (3) Metaphors: Gift of the story of a real life, a big song and dance, really poor people messing up Queen Street, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: What it’s like to live on a benefit, homeless people in Auckland, (6) Dysphemisms: Use not found, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: While the piece quotes Turei’s statements, the story falls short of giving any opinion on the way things unfolded politically after her admission speech.

#### 4.2.1.9a The Day after Election: Story 17

September 24, 2017c

Radio New Zealand: “Metiria Turei Bows Out”

This story is about Metiria bowing out of politics after 15 years. The word ‘lied’ appears in the opening sentence. Green Party co-leader James Shaw said that Turei had started an important conversation which had made people uncomfortable, including some inside the party. “We have paid a heavy price for that and Metiria has paid a particularly heavy price for that.”

After resigning from the Green Party list, Turei stood as an independent in the Te Tai Tonga electorate but managed only about half of the votes of Labour’s Rino Tirikatene who was strongly returned.

Ms Turei said, “I will never regret making poverty a major issue in this election. I wish I had understood the impact on my family better when making that admission, but I don’t regret having done it.”

The tone of this story suggests a sense of rehabilitation, or at least that Turei had been proven right in some respects.

‘Benefit fraud’, ‘lied’, ‘welfare payments’, ‘poverty’ and ‘conversation’ are each mentioned once.

Identified words and phrases fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Stood down six weeks ago and came off the party’s list after revealing she had lied, (2) Adjectives: Heavy price, (3) Metaphors: Paid a heavy price, (4) Analogies: Use not found, (5) Euphemisms: Bowed out of politics, (6) Dysphemisms: Use not found, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: The story falls short of presenting Turei as standing up for the issue of poverty in the election and therefore risking her own career.



#### 4.2.1.9b The Day after Election: Story 18

September 24, 2017

Newsroom New Zealand: “Let 2020 be the Year of the ‘Povertyquake’”

By Catriona MacLennan

This story supports Turei as having started a conversation about poverty but lost. It discusses how fake news based on fearmongering and selfishness suppressed the real conversation, stating that Turei’s admission of benefit fraud electrified the country and finally started a real debate about poverty and the plight of beneficiaries. The writer details how information about who Turei flatted with 25 years earlier was considered more important than the Mending the Safety Net policy she had helped to draft.

Turei had galvanized a part of the New Zealand community which has never before had political representation, the story says, and if those people had turned out to vote the political landscape would have been utterly changed. The conclusion is that Turei, who had spent 20 years campaigning against poverty, had sacrificed her political career over the issue.

Turei is presented as a martyr and the story uses confrontational vocabulary when referring to her actual resignation. The language is common to freedom struggles around the world and encourages readers to ensure that her ‘sacrifice’ was not in vain.

‘Poverty’ is mentioned five times, the word ‘sacrificed’ three times.

Identified words and phrases fitting the seven themes are: (1) Attributes: Use not found, (2) Adjectives: Fake news, fearmongering, awful, selfishness, unliveable levels, honest, compassionate, decent, (3) Metaphors: Mending the safety net, downward spiral of escalating debt and despair, admission of benefit fraud electrified the country, (4) Analogies: A sidebar in journalists’ stories, (5) Euphemisms: Turei had to be brought down, most disadvantaged, low wages, homelessness, (6) Dysphemisms: Tremors of a povertyquake, mental health crisis, wrecked the lives, subsequent immolation, and (7) What isn’t mentioned: The earlier political turmoil of the elections is not mentioned.

#### 4.2.2 Snapshot of the Description of Themes Across the Narrative Story

##### Headings

A narrative story is unfolded across nine headings in chronological order. Each narrative story heading displays two news media stories in thematic presentation from two different news outlet. In table format, each story showcases the seven themes which present the identified text in the findings. The order of stories, which are exhibited thematically in the 18 tables below, is part of framing.

#### 4.2.2.1a Narrative Story Heading One: The Confession of Turei

##### Story 1

Table 1			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 16, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy	The Confession of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Obligations for beneficiaries to prove they were looking for work, not taking drugs		
Adjectives:	The poorest, the richest, bold new policy launch, fervent, faithful, solo mum, neo liberal experiment, lousy low wage economy, rapturous applause, most fundamental changes, vast majority, compassionate, big backwards step		
Metaphors:	Draw an ideological line in the sand, effective dismantle the Government's welfare reforms, own battle as a mum on the DPB, mending the safety net, keep the tap running as long as they needed, lift people out of poverty, poverty should never be used as a weapon, just discovered poverty		
Analogies:	Afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill, keep my financial life under control, could not afford to live, study and keep my baby well, born in a tent		
Euphemisms:	Those in the most hardship, more liveable incomes, lowest paid working people, struggle to find work, minimum wage, basic liveable income, change of living situation		
Dysphemisms:	Flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed		
What isn't mentioned:	That Turei's personal experience of poverty is what motivated her to confess to benefit fraud. She wanted to make the point that the poor are frequently forced to resort to such measures in order to feed their families and survive day to day. She wanted to highlight this issue in the 2017 election campaign in order for policies to be reviewed		

#### 4.2.2.1b Narrative Story Heading One: The Confession of Turei

##### Story 2

Table 2			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 16, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as Party Announces Radical Welfare Reforms	The Confession of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Defined by our truths and not lies		
Adjectives:	Extraordinary confession, dramatically reform New Zealand's welfare system, illegal behaviour, perverse benefit sanctions, brave thing for a politician to do, passionate speech, sheepishly admitted		
Metaphors:	Trapping people in poverty, lifting every person above the official poverty line		
Analogies:	Driving a late model BMW during the election campaign		
Euphemisms:	Low and middle-income earners, low income families		
Dysphemisms:	Charged with fraud, illegal behaviour		
What isn't mentioned:	The gravity and seriousness of her decision to withhold facts from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and what it translated to in monetary terms		

#### 4.2.2.2a Narrative Story Heading Two: The Aftermath of Turei's Confession

##### Story 3

Table 3			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 17, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty	The Aftermath of Turei's Confession
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	New Zealanders are hard-working people who pay taxes		
Adjectives:	Sole parent benefit, honest, not cheating, hard times on benefit, brave and honest to admit to breaking the rules		
Metaphors:	Comparing Todd Barclay to Turei is a long bow		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Not shown up at Parliament for the last three weeks, a scandal where it is alleged that he secretly recorded staff at his electorate office		
Dysphemisms:	Didn't lie deliberately		
What isn't mentioned:	Direct comparison between Todd Barclay's case and Turei's, also any direct financial comparison of beneficiary fraud and tax fraud. This could have changed the tone more in Turei's favour		

#### 4.2.2.2b Narrative Story Heading Two: The Aftermath of Turei's Confession

##### Story 4

Table 4			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 17, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Greens go for the big bang	The Aftermath of Turei's Confession
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Beneficiaries as criminals and second-class citizens		
Adjectives:	Ambitious policy platform, enormous bill, risky side of radical		
Metaphors:	To carve out new ground, poverty as a weapon		
Analogies:	The ground is firmly at the most progressive left-hand end of the progressive left side of politics, wake up in bed, not the backseat of a car, go to school with bellies full of breakfast, lunchbox full of lunch, spend their weekends playing sports not in hospital with bronchitis		
Euphemisms:	Supported living payments, struggle to pay the rent, live below the poverty line		
Dysphemisms:	Whooped and hollered		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not directly discuss any negatives associated with Turei's admission, nor does it question her integrity		

#### 4.2.2.3a Narrative Story Heading Three: The Betrayal of Turei

##### Story 5

Table 5			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 7, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green MPs Quit in Protest Over Metiria Turei	The Betrayal of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Treated more harshly because she was poor		
Adjectives:	Underperforming, live debate, extreme risk, historical, disproportionate, incompatible, controversial		
Metaphors:	Use not found		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Incompatible with the standards of leadership		
Dysphemisms:	Fundamental breaches of human rights such as torture, genocide or apartheid		
What isn't mentioned:	Possible plight of beneficiaries due to sanctions		

#### 4.2.2.3b Narrative Story Heading Three: The Betrayal of Turei

##### Story 6

Table 6			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 7, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions	The Betrayal of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Longest serving members of the Green Party, tumultuous three weeks, massive bump, high calibre, energetic, genuine regret, furious		
Metaphors:	Riding high off the back of the revelation offered by Turei herself		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Disgruntled for some time, not happy with their list placings		
Dysphemisms:	Plummet to dangerous lows		
What isn't mentioned:	The impacts of political developments (Turei's admission and MPs' resignations) on the plight of beneficiaries		



#### 4.2.2.4a Narrative Story Heading Four: The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal

##### Story 7

Table 7			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 8, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism	The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Defined by a lie, continued justification of welfare and electoral fraud along with the refusal to step down have turned that chunk of extra support into poison		
Adjectives:	Record lows, record highs, toxic, messy, financially independent, staunch and loyal, intense, punitive, solo mum, careful, caustic, hollow		
Metaphors:	Political cannibalism, stage-managed, Greens eat into Labour's support, effectively delivering the death blow, tore a chunk of Labour's base, dragged the Green brand even further to the left, character in a much darker light, muddied these waters, burning the bridge, build some kind of firewall, backed into a corner, dinghy of chaos, the bite that killed Little's political career, stories shift beneath the voters' feet, sleek rowing eight, joined at the hip		
Analogies:	Smearing received by Clendon (one of the three-term resigning MP) also added poison to the mix		
Euphemisms:	Careful retelling of her story		
Dysphemisms:	Death blow to Andrew Little's leadership, attempt to consume that chunk is proving toxic, chaos and toxicity seeping, Jonathan Coleman as 'Doctor Death', benefit fraud revelation		
What isn't mentioned:	There is no mention whatsoever of the proposed policy of mending the safety net story, and what it planned to achieve		

#### 4.2.2.4b Narrative Story Heading Four: The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal

##### Story 8

Table 8			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 8, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Manurewa Voters have Their Say on Turei's Benefit Fraud	The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Homeless, poorest, hard, lower income, good families, odd job		
Metaphors:	To make ends meet, pat on the back		
Analogies:	Go out and prostitute on the street, tripping over beggars on the street, needing money just for milk and bread, not been on the corner asking for a cigarette		
Euphemisms:	Lower income, work a lot to earn their livelihood, woes and hard times, never had enough to feed my kids		
Dysphemisms:	Shit food		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not give Turei any credit for driving discussions around poverty		

#### 4.2.2.5a Narrative Story Heading Five: The Resignation of Turei

##### Story 9

Table 9			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 9, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Resigns	The Resignation of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Treated more harshly because she was poor		
Adjectives:	Unbearable, extreme scrutiny, dirty politics, intense scrutiny, enormous contribution, very poor, honest beneficiaries, massively damaged, disgraceful, good character, awfully tough		
Metaphors:	Dig deep and make unfounded accusations, personal vitriol		
Analogies:	Homeless, work a lot to earn their livelihood, feed her family		
Euphemisms:	She was at pains to say her decision to resign was not the result of learning bad poll results		
Dysphemisms:	Vultures that gathered around people's demise		
What isn't mentioned:	That Turei got trapped in the political slugfest while trying to initiate a discussion around poverty		

#### 4.2.2.5b Narrative Story Heading Five: The Resignation of Turei

##### Story 10

Table 10			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 9, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	'The Scrutiny on My Family Became Unbearable'	The Resignation of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Resignation of two MPs from the Green caucus in protest at her continued defence of her frauds		
Adjectives:	Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles		
Metaphors:	Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Her story of poverty was at odds with what they had seen		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	Whether or not the two MPs who resigned after Turei's admission were justified in doing so		

#### 4.2.2.6a Narrative Story Heading Six: The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation

##### Story 11

Table 11			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 10, 2017	Radio New Zealand	I Will Remember Metiria Turei Differently	The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Hungry if she were fat, poor if she were smiling in photos		
Adjectives:	Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles, greatest feminist, brutal reality of life for the poor, brutal critique, brutal and personal way		
Metaphors:	Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price, to dig any further, clung to that last straw, to draw knife-sharp lines between real human rights issues, unworthy, sources crawling out of the woodwork, carve out a truly progressive space in New Zealand politics		
Analogies:	Treats whanau as a mere accumulation of economic units, pissed as a chook		
Euphemisms:	Feeding and housing your child		
Dysphemisms:	Horror of horrors		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not mention Turei's admission of benefit fraud		

#### 4.2.2.6b Narrative Story Heading Six: The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation

##### Story 12

Table 12			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 10, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Meteria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall	The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	What repelled people was the air of sanctimony that accompanied her confession		
Adjectives:	Most tumultuous fortnight, disenchanted young non-voters, spontaneous and broad-based, less cocky, climactic meltdown, nasty side of the Greens, bitchy politics, messier, respected senior MPs		
Metaphors:	Air of sanctimony, to fit the part, bathed in the warm glow of the Left's adulation, lifting the lid on something from her past, digging around for other things, suck it up, irony on a Shakespearean scale, finally getting their feet, crashing down by one woman's hubris, reaping a bountiful harvest of disenchanted Green voters		
Analogies:	Calculated play for votes, a dog whistle, looking less like a heroic crusader		
Euphemisms:	Ceased to be in control of where things were going		
Dysphemisms:	Sneakily gamed the system for her own benefit, defrauding Work and Income New Zealand, illegally pocketed, indulging in vengeful Stalinist bloodletting, nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not go into detail about the two MPs who resigned and whether or not their resignations were fairly linked to Turei's admission		

#### 4.2.2.7a Narrative Story Heading Seven: Reflections from Turei's Resignation

##### Story 13

Table 13			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 16, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ's Hypocrisy	Reflections from Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	It matters if your collar is blue or white, or if your skin is brown or white, by personalising pressing issues like poverty, we let the system off the hook		
Adjectives:	Unduly punitive streak, white and middle class		
Metaphors:	Meteoric rise and fall from grace, getting a run for his money, working under the table, ripped off from the state		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Income inequalities, wealth disparities, gaps between haves and have-nots		
Dysphemisms:	Public pounding for welfare and electoral fraud		
What isn't mentioned:	More of a social issue piece, this story does not mention politics or elections		

#### 4.2.2.7b Narrative Story Heading Seven: Reflections from Turei's Resignation

##### Story 14

Table 14			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 3, 2017	New Zealand Herald	'End Work and Income's Toxic Culture'- Beneficiaries	Reflections from Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Coercing them into precarious jobs which don't let them look after their children		
Adjectives:	Frustrating, ruthless, toxic, cold, decent life		
Metaphors:	Giving beneficiaries a voice, not enough left, lift families out of poverty		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Difficult to get out to change his colostomy bag, eating toast for dinner so my son can have proper food		
Dysphemisms:	Toxic culture, under such stress that he died		
What isn't mentioned:	While Turei's promise to lift core benefits by 20% is mentioned, her admission of benefit fraud is not. The story focuses on giving beneficiaries a voice rather than giving Turei either positive or negative importance		



#### 4.2.2.8a Narrative Story Heading Eight: The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty

##### Story 15

Table 15			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 6, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Metiria Turei's Dream May Yet be Realised	The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Halve the benefits of those with drug problems, job seekers struggling with drugs		
Adjectives:	Historic benefit fraud, flexible, less punitive, disabled people, disabled children, regrettable tweet, worst possible way, unfortunate choice of words, good lives		
Metaphors:	A battle every time you need a bit of extra money, 'Stick' used for National's threat, love has consequences		
Analogies:	To choose between food and going to the doctor		
Euphemisms:	Rather be out on the harbour, long-term unemployed, students with special needs		
Dysphemisms:	Historic benefit fraud		
What isn't mentioned:	The story stops short of crediting Turei with initiating conversations about poverty		

#### 4.2.2.8b Narrative Story Heading Eight: The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty

##### Story 16

Table 16			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 16, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Metiria Turei Back on Campaign Trail with Greens	The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Cruel and unfair, mean, prosperous, happy, loud cheers, working poor, controversial, lovely, wealthy, homeless, stupid		
Metaphors:	Gift of the story of a real life, a big song and dance, really poor people messing up Queen Street		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	What it's like to live on a benefit, homeless people in Auckland		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	While the piece quotes Turei's statements, the story falls short of giving any opinion on the way things unfolded politically after her admission speech		

#### 4.2.2.9a Narrative Story Heading Nine: The Day after Election

##### Story 17

Table 17			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 24, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Metiria Turei Bows Out	The Day after Election
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Stood down six weeks ago and came off the party's list after revealing she had lied		
Adjectives:	Heavy price		
Metaphors:	Paid a heavy price		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Bowed out of politics		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	The story falls short of presenting Turei as standing up for the issue of poverty in the election and therefore risking her own career		

#### 4.2.2.9b Narrative Story Heading Nine: The Day after Election

##### Story 18

Table 18			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 24, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Let 2020 be the Year of the 'Povertyquake'	The Day after Election
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Fake news, fearmongering, awful, selfishness, unliveable levels, honest, compassionate, decent		
Metaphors:	Mending the safety net, downward spiral of escalating debt and despair, admission of benefit fraud electrified the country		
Analogies:	A sidebar in journalists' stories		
Euphemisms:	Turei had to be brought down, most disadvantaged, low wages, homelessness		
Dysphemisms:	Tremors of a povertyquake, mental health crisis, wrecked the lives, subsequent immolation		
What isn't mentioned:	The earlier political turmoil of the elections is not mentioned		

### 4.3 Text Form: Order of Presentation

Texts often reflect the dominant ideology in society (Finley, 2015; Knezevic et al., 2014). News media are immensely powerful because they are perfectly positioned to control the creation of texts that are presented to wider audiences (Fiske, 1992). This section describes the different textual forms and frames seen in the chronology of 18 selected stories from four news media companies.

News media stories are among the most widely read types of written text. This section focuses on the building blocks and influence of the layout of a news media story, with a brief discussion of structure and the order of presentation. The characteristics of the language, in terms of sentence length, complexity and tone, are discussed and the role and importance of headlines, lead sentences and quotations are highlighted.

Traditionally, the structure of a news media story has been an inverted pyramid, where the most important or relevant information is placed on the top and the least important information is placed at the bottom. The important information must come first, resulting in what van Dijk (1988) calls the “instalment structure” (p. 178). This means that news topics and their schematic categories are delivered in parts throughout the story, and we have seen this structure in all the texts under study.

The headline is an integral part of the news media story. It is meant to ignite the reader’s interest and make him or her read the whole story. It is the first thing that a person reads, and it not only provides a framework for the reading process but also steers the reader in a particular direction. As Fries (1994) notes, the reader begins to read the text with the headline. Thus, after reading the headline “Deputy PM on Turei’s benefit dishonesty”, the reader has an expectation of what the following text will be about, and he or she will do everything possible to connect that text to the headline. Similarly, in the story headlined “Manurewa voters have their say on Turei’s benefit fraud”, Turei is presented as someone who did commit benefit fraud and the reader expects to be told how Manurewa voters feel about the issue.

Most of the stories in this study use both quotations and reported speech. These are an integral part of news media stories because, to a considerable extent, news is what somebody says. Quotations also make a news media story livelier and more authentic. According to Jukanen (1995, p. 21), the “dominant feature of hard news is that it contains a large amount of direct or indirect speech” (Jukanen, 1995, as cited in Pajunen, 2008, p. 11). Bell (1991) states that “direct quotations are rather the exception than the rule in news stories because reporters mainly turn their interviewees’ comments into reported speech as seen in most of the news pieces” (p. 209).

The earlier stories in this study are composed largely of direct quotes, although few are from Metiria Turei herself. In some cases, more than half of the available word count comprises

direct quotes with little direct editorialising, although the selection and editing of the quotes is in itself an effective mechanism for framing. Later stories, written in editorial style, use fewer direct quotes and, in some cases, no direct quotes at all.

The use of quotations and indirect speech is a practical way for the reporter to get around expectations that he or she should be neutral and impersonal. Pajunen (2008, p. 11) cites Jukanen (1995, p. 44) to say that the use of quotations relieves the reporter from responsibility because “presenting opinions in the form of quotations from important people is more effective and seemingly objective than presenting the writer’s own opinions” (Jukanen, 1995, as cited in Pajunen, 2008). However, the selection of quotations is not necessarily objective because reporters may include only those parts of a speech which they deem significant and which serve their ideological aims (Caldas-Coulthard, 2002; van Dijk, 1988). In plain words, while the reporter may ostensibly have simply published the quotes, he or she is always subjective in choosing to publish or not publish parts of the text to fit their narratives. For example, in the New Zealand Herald news piece headlined “Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as party announces radical welfare reforms”, the comments of National Party campaign chair are selectively presented. The story reads, “National Party campaign chair Steven Joyce said Turei’s lie was disappointing.”

In the same story, we see that the quotes presented are those which the writers deem significant and which serve their ideological aims. Labour leader, Andrew Little is quoted as saying that Turei’s admission was a brave thing for a politician to do. The story terms Turei’s speech on poverty as “passionate” then proceeds with her “sheepishly” admitting to reporters that she drove a late-model BMW during the election campaign, noting that it had been loaned by a friend, and ran on electricity.

In one of the stories, Deputy Prime Minister Paula Bennett is quoted as saying, “I think people work really hard in this country and they pay their taxes and they want it to be fair and for that we expect people to be honest and not cheating.”

Caldas-Coulthard (2002) and Fairclough (1995) observe that the representation of speech is always mediated and interpreted in one way or the other. No speech representation is objective or neutral; rather the sayings are transformed through the perspective of a teller who is an agent in a discursive practice. In the order of stories from Radio New Zealand’s timeline titled, “Deputy PM on Turei’s Benefit Dishonesty”, we see the use of indirect speech which, in a way, concurs with the views of Caldas-Coulthard (2002) and Fairclough (1995). It states that Labour Party leader Andrew Little welcomed Turei’s admission, commending her for being brave and honest in admitting she broke the rules.

The form of these stories shifts noticeably across the timeline, mainly in terms of length and content. The first, about benefit rise and tax cuts, is around 1100 words, leading with the new Green Party policy and, in subsequent paragraphs, discussing Turei's admissions.

Story length varies between 600 and 800 words, with a sudden spike to 1400 words in an editorial-style piece framing Turei's admission as a potentially fatal act of political cannibalism. Subsequent stories revert to the shorter format except for the resignation announcement (around 1500 words) and, towards the end, a story of more than 1400 words that almost positions her as a martyr.

These longer stories mark three stages. First, Stuff's story of July 16, 2017 leads with highlights of the new policy and then covers Turei's admission. Secondly, Newsroom's editorial-style piece of August 8, 2017 describes her admission as political cannibalism and a ploy for votes. Thirdly, the New Zealand Herald story of August 9, 2017 announces her resignation.

Each of these longer stories represents the increasing interest at different points, and the later stories are reflective think pieces rather than synchronic recordings of events.

In summary, the 18 news media stories show significant shifts in length, form and content. The initial stories lean heavily on direct quotes and reported speech, although the selection and presentation of quotes is not necessarily objective and would bear further scrutiny, while the subsequent ones are more editorial in style with little or no direct quotes. There is a marked change in the length too, with the editorial-style stories averaging around 1400 words compared with the 600 to 800 words of the more direct news coverage.

#### 4.4 Word Description: The Unfolding Narrative

The data shows the development of a story through changing word use to make the narrative stronger and more compelling. This section will highlight and analyse the operative words in the news media stories, including the descriptive words used to frame the narrative and evoke the images required.

The first story, based around the features of the new Green Party policy, uses the word 'bold' to indicate its uniqueness and what would be required to implement it. Most of the language relates to poverty. Examples are 'basic liveable income', 'born in a tent', 'lowest paid working people', 'lousy low wage economy', 'lift people out of poverty', 'no working person will struggle to pay the rent', 'no beneficiary will live below the poverty line', and 'beneficiaries as criminals and second-class citizens'. The word 'lies' appeared five times. A second story, published the same day as the first, takes a very different tone with a strong focus on Turei's admission and on poverty. Key words and phrases include 'fraud', 'lying', 'illegal behaviour', 'trapping people in poverty', 'low-and-middle-income earners' and 'Turei's lie'.

Gradually more negative words and phrases are used; 'lie' (multiple times), 'breaking the rules', 'cheating', 'welfare fraud', 'benefit fraud', 'lying to a public agency', 'incompatible with the standards of leadership', 'continued justification of the welfare and electoral fraud', 'refusal to step down'. There is little or no mention of words relating to poverty. There is more political content as the news media stories develop. Words and phrases include 'massive bump in the polls', 'Labour plummet to dangerous lows', 'benefit fraud revelation was an act of political cannibalism', 'political gamble', 'neo-liberal experiment', 'mass backlash', 'dirty politics of political enemies', 'seriously bad PR and decision-making', 'sent to prison', 'stage-managed', 'deliberate ploy that used social policy', 'toxic', 'dinghy of chaos', 'calculated play for votes' and 'dog-whistle'. Judgemental words and phrases about Turei include; 'forced revelations', 'she bathed in the warm glow of the Left's adulation', 'nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification'. Immediately after her resignation there are negative phrases such as; 'pride led to her downfall', 'scrutiny of her family members' and 'family members forced her to resign'.

After her resignation there is a sudden change in both tone and content of the coverage, with a strong focus on beneficiaries and the welfare system. Words and phrases include 'opening a conversation about the reality of poverty', 'commitment to social justice', 'championing the rights of children', 'welfare poverty', 'punitive nature of the welfare system', 'punitive approach to welfare fraud compared with tax evasion', 'sanctions and penalties that beneficiaries face', 'poverty to be something that is a social construct and requiring analysis', 'pick sides', 'render judgement', 'precarious jobs that did not allow them to take care of their children, neither was the pay enough to lift their families out of poverty', 'a man died because he was forced to work and could not change his colostomy bag every two to three hours', 'basic increase in benefits raise has not kept pace with the increase in rents', 'very frustrating living at the whim of these temping agencies', 'the real life of what it is like to live on a benefit in this country', 'solo mothers and their babies and the working poor grandparents taking care of grandkids should have to suffer so much just for a decent life?', 'fake news based on fearmongering' and 'selfishness suppressed the real conversation'.

Also, the continued use of poverty-related words is found, such as 'the brutal reality of life for the poor', 'child poverty rates', 'increasingly draconian policies', 'critique of a draconian welfare system', 'income inequalities', 'wealth disparities', 'anti-poverty rally', 'tremors of poverty quake', 'unliveable levels', 'homelessness', 'low wages', 'mental health crisis', 'dob in a beneficiary', 'poverty-stricken area of New Zealand' and 'opening a conversation about the reality of poverty in New Zealand'.

Towards the end of the study timeline there is a change in tone regarding Turei. 'Fraud' becomes 'allegations of fraud', and the use of poverty-related words increases. There is also a more sympathetic and positive attitude to Turei with the use of words and phrases such as; 'the day a Maori woman spoke, she was finished', 'could never win a moral argument about whether



a woman could be forgiven a lie made to feed her child and make her life better', she 'started a conversation about poverty but lost', 'treated more harshly because she was poor', 'they scrutinized her in a brutal and personal way', 'two other politicians had essentially committed the same mistakes but since they were not solo mums they could serve as Prime Ministers', 'New Zealand's most prominent politicians', 'I Stand with Metiria', 'never regret making poverty a major issue in this election', 'started a conversation about poverty but lost', 'treated more harshly because she was poor', 'Metiria Turei's admission of benefit fraud had electrified the country and finally started a real debate about poverty', 'the awful treatment of beneficiaries', galvanized a part of the New Zealand community, which has never before had political representation', 'Turei, who has spent 20 years campaigning against poverty, sacrificed her political career to fight poverty', 'to have a system more flexible and less punitive' and 'extreme scrutiny'.

## 4.5 Conclusion

Discourse Analysis was applied to identify different textual forms in evidence across 18 stories published by four news media companies during the 10 weeks of the 2017 New Zealand election period. Each story was studied in terms of length, key themes and figures of speech used to stimulate interest or create rhetorical effect. Dicken-Garcia (1998) says that discourses are an organisation's or society's approach to discussing, thinking and reasoning about an issue. Any given subject or topic can be discussed using several different discourses.

Discourses in news media stories or debates are shaped and dominated by the agendas, interests, viewpoints, ideologies, subjectivity and relative position of participating individuals. Sixteen of the selected discourses occurred in the pre-election period and two are from the day after the election. The texts appear to be dominated by different frames either for or against the subject, in this case Green Party co-leader and sitting MP Metiria Turei. While most of the stories appear to be stating facts by publishing the bulk of their content in quotes, the introductory or concluding lines often indicate specific viewpoints, ideologies and interests.

Chapter 4 introduced seven themes that could be used to explore the data. These are: attributes commonly ascribed to people suffering from poverty; adjectives used to describe poverty; metaphors used to explain the condition of poverty; analogies for poverty; what isn't mentioned about poverty related to Turei's confession and resignation; euphemisms and dysphemisms employed to reference poverty.

The aim of this chapter was to present and analyse 18 news media stories that track the discussion around the political events of how media frame poverty, starting with Turei's confession and ending with her resignation. Each story was presented, analysed and evaluated in terms of the themes identified. This approach also tracks changes in theme as the political story unfolds.

The chapter highlighted different discourses and identified the frames that carried the discourses. It also examined the data in chronological order in terms of their discourses, agendas, frames, themes, attributes and links to power relations. Different framing strategies were used over the election period that influenced readers or consumers in particular directions. These frames and themes have been identified and presented to provide context for the detailed analysis and discussion in Chapter 5.

# Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

## 5.1 Introduction

The research question addressed in this thesis is: “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?” The first part of this thesis establishes the importance of perception in the discussion of poverty and describes how news media discourses shape perceptions of poverty. The period chosen for the study begins with Turei’s confession regarding benefit fraud and ends with her resignation. The 18 stories chosen for the study are from four leading news outlets, and the framework of discourse analysis was used. This chapter discusses the nuances of framing, and how frames affect the perceptions of Turei’s resignation and the ensuing discussion of poverty. The news media discussions of poverty are investigated by highlighting the nuances and biases involved. An element of the study also discusses perceptions and the nuanced comprehension of poverty.

The thesis presents an in-depth academic investigation into the news media framing of poverty. This chapter discusses the conversations Turei began about poverty, how the topic was framed by news outlets and the ways in which poverty was perceived and interpreted by the news media, politicians and the general public in the selected 18 stories which eventually led to voting decisions and policy recommendations.

How did news media framing of poverty in the 2017 New Zealand election campaign period present the message? The research identifies incidences where the discussion of poverty was significantly shaped and altered by news media. Conversations about poverty, in relation to the confession and resignation of Turei, were framed and presented in ways which shaped opinions antipathetically. Section 5.3 and 5.4 includes relevant examples.

## 5.2 Overview of Data and Analysis

The 18 online news media stories in this research were chosen by searching for key words and phrases such as ‘Metiria Turei’, ‘conversations about poverty’, ‘poor’, ‘poverty’, ‘welfare’ and ‘homeless’. They come from the three different mainstream news media companies and one independent news media company in New Zealand; New Zealand Herald, Stuff, Radio New Zealand and Newsroom. They cover the 2017 New Zealand general election campaign period from July 16, 2017 to September 24, 2017. The news media stories are grouped into nine subject headings and, in order to minimise bias in further analysis, the discourses are picked in pairs from two different publications. The nine subject headings are (1) The Confession of Turei, (2) The Aftermath of Turei’s Confession, (3) The Betrayal of Turei, (4) The Aftermath of Turei’s Betrayal, (5) The Resignation of Turei, (6) The Aftermath of Turei’s Resignation, (7)

Reflections from Turei's Resignation, (8) The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty, and (9) The Day after Election.

The Discourse Analysis (DA) method chosen for this research rests on four approaches; Theory of Agenda Setting, Theory of Framing, Analysis of Themes, and Theory of Attribution. The discourse topic might be defined as the gist, the kernel or the summary of the text. Van Leeuwen (2008) states that discourses not only represent what is going on, they also evaluate it, ascribe purpose to it and justify it, and in many texts these aspects of representation become more important than the social practice itself. DA is applied to the stories in this study, in chronological order, in terms of discourses, agenda, frames, themes, attributes and links to power relations in the society. It looks at intertextuality and examines the use of text in news media reports related to current events and issues that illustrate instances and power to it; whose interests are served in the process; the types of framing and the themes applied (Weerakkody, 2015).

The four New Zealand news media outlets selected are those with the highest circulation and readership. It is often acknowledged that because of the sheer size of mass media, society at large is highly influenced by what is reported in news stories. Thus, news outlets play a significant role in disseminating information and politics while linking politicians to their public (Schäffner, 2004).

This research assesses trends in the progression of news, uncovers different aspects of framing and picks out thematic stress points in the narratives that define the messages related to Metiria's confession and resignation.

The news media played a key role in presenting the issue of poverty in the unfolding Metiria Turei story. The evidence shows that news media misrepresented the facts and distorted the issue of poverty, which was framed by the agendas of different political parties. The focus was often interrupted by negative messages and narrowed down to irrelevant aspects of the story, although for some members of the public, some journalists and one political party, the events proved to be a first step to constructive discussions about poverty.

### 5.3 Organising Principle: Findings of Seven Themes that are Evident in News Media Stories

There are seven distinct themes identified in the data that provide the basis for understanding the news media discourse on Turei's confession and the events leading to her resignation. These themes, summarised below, provide clear insight into how the news media framed poverty in the language and words used to discuss the issue during the 2017 New Zealand election period. The identified texts found in the selected 18 news media stories are listed under the relevant themes.

### 5.3.1 Attributes for Poverty

In many of the stories, words and phrases such as ‘drug problems’, ‘lazy’ and ‘job seekers struggling with drugs’ are used in conjunction with ‘beneficiaries’. The onus is on beneficiaries to prove they are looking for work, not taking drugs, and showing up for appointments and courses. People living in poverty are portrayed as probably being on drugs, lazy, dishonest and so on. Other attributions include doubting someone is really hungry because they are fat or doubting someone is poor because they are smiling. Beneficiaries are seen as ‘criminals’ and ‘second-class citizens’, demonstrating that a personal failure is attributed to a behaviour.

### 5.3.2 Adjectives for Poverty

A thorough read of all the 18 stories in the data set reveals many adjectives used for poverty. One of the key descriptions of poverty is a “lousy low wage economy”. In another story, homelessness is used as a description of poverty. One story talked about the brutal reality of life for the poor. ‘Awful’ treatment of beneficiaries, ‘unliveable’ levels, most ‘disadvantaged’, ‘widest’ income inequalities, ‘hard times’ on the benefit are other adjectives used for poverty, and in one story a benefit sanction is described as ‘perverse’.

### 5.3.3 Metaphors for Poverty

All the stories use metaphors extensively. In one story Turei says, “One of the very important things for us is reviewing and restructuring Work and Income so it does not become a battle every single time you need a little bit of extra money.” In another, one of the beneficiaries illustrates poverty by saying, “I have to choose between food and going to the doctor.” A news story quotes a mother saying, “I’m eating toast for dinner, so my son can have proper food.” Metiria also talks about “keeping the tap running for as long as they need”, meaning providing financial aid for the length of time it is required.

In another story, Turei says, “Our plan to mend the safety net will ensure that all families in New Zealand can afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill.” Here she outlines goals that poverty-stricken people aspire to, and she uses metaphor to explain the extent of poverty.

Metaphors used to describe Turei’s behaviour include, ‘She bathed in the warm glow of the Left’s adulation’, ‘less like a heroic crusader and more like someone who had sneakily gamed the system for her own benefit’, ‘draw an ideological line in the sand over the presence of the welfare state’, and ‘Metiria has paid a particularly heavy price for that’.

### 5.3.4 Analogies for Poverty

Analogy means drawing similarities between two things. In one story, poverty is compared with being born in a tent. One political leader says, “My family was born in a tent, and the first few family members were and know what it's like to be flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed.”

Another story quotes a woman venting her frustration at “living at the whim of these temping agencies”.

### 5.3.5 Euphemisms for Poverty

According to Schneider (2013), a euphemism is “the substitution of a mild, indirect or vague term for one considered to be harsh, blunt, or offensive”. Sometimes called doublespeak, a euphemism is a word or phrase which pretends to communicate but does not. It makes the bad seem good, the negative seem positive, the unnatural seem natural and the unpleasant seem attractive, or at least tolerable. It is a language which avoids, shifts or denies responsibility. It conceals or prevents thought and it is very much visible in the stories under study.

In most of the text there are subtle words being used to describe poverty and the precarious state of the poor. Euphemisms include ‘supported living payments’, ‘low wages’, basic liveable income’, ‘income disparities’, ‘budget planning help for long-term unemployed’, ‘homeless’ and ‘welfare’.

### 5.3.6 Dysphemisms for Poverty

Dysphemism is the opposite of euphemism. Exaggerated terms are used to make something sound more unpleasant than it really is. In one story the writer refers to “tremors of povertyquake”, comparing poverty to an earthquake where the entire political community witnesses a shake-up.

Elsewhere, poverty is described as “a downward spiral of escalating debt and despair”, which indicates that for people in poverty there is no end to misery. ‘Mental health crisis’ is another expression used to show the impact of poverty. One story mentions that many beneficiaries, who are people struggling to make ends meet, go to jail. Turei’s admission of benefit fraud is said to have “electrified the country”. One of the stories sympathetic to poverty issues says that benefit cuts have “wrecked the lives of thousands of New Zealanders”. “Meteoric rise and fall from grace”, exaggerates the circumstances Turei has been through. Other such terms include “nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification”, “vengeful Stalinist bloodletting”, “the party has been brought crashing down by one woman’s hubris” and turning “a chunk of extra support into poison”. Also, the use of words such as ‘torture’, ‘genocide’ or ‘apartheid’ in the same discourse, frames Turei rather negatively.

### 5.3.7 What Isn’t Mentioned about Poverty

What isn’t mentioned in the first 16 media stories and only highlighted in the last two is that Turei started the conversation on poverty. None of the news media acknowledge the journey that she has gone through from being on a benefit to someone who is actually raising the issue of poverty and representing the underprivileged. She could have been portrayed as a brave,

hardworking person who had experienced poverty, and yet carved out a highly successful political career, but she wasn't.

These themes are placed in seven categories and used by media outlets as framing devices in the selected 18 news media discourses to frame poverty in the 2017 New Zealand general elections. Framing devices "suggest how to think about the issue" of poverty (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989, p. 3).

## 5.4 Discussion on Frames as Rhetorical Weapons: Conversations about Poverty in New Zealand

According to the literature, frames can be tools for steering a news media story in a specific, predetermined direction. The coded 18 narratives under study, capturing the seven themes which frame the structure of the message, fall under 10 dominant thematic headings. They are (1) Fraud, Criminality and Deceit, (2) Political Process, (3) Positive Impact, (4) Political Naivety, (5) Internal Democracy, (6) Undermining the Left, (7) Promoting the Left, (8) Poverty, (9) Gender, and (10) Martyrdom. This section discusses the various frames used in the 18 narratives related to Metiria Turei's confession and her subsequent resignation. The 10 dominant thematic headings are drawn together, and the study highlights specific instances where particular frames in the narrative are exploited by the news media to present events. The objective is to understand how the same news event can be presented so that varied perceptions are generated in the minds of readers. These frames range from those classifying the event as a criminal act to those viewing it as simply a part of the political process or a noble act for which Turei was unfairly judged.

The frames chosen for news media stories can direct a reader's interest in a specific direction, providing blinkers (bringing attention to), or blinders (diverting attention from) to certain aspects of the news (Weerakkody, 2015). News media discourse is a powerful tool that can be used to alter a society's perception of any issue. There is a considerable amount of influence connected with being able to control a discourse by managing perceptions (Weerakkody, 2015). Naturally, understanding perceptions propagated by the news media on any key issue is useful.

### 5.4.1 Fraud, Criminality and Deceit

The first discernible theme is based on the framing notion of fraud and deceit in the actions of Metiria Turei, linking that to cheating the benefit system. Some of the stories, notably in the New Zealand Herald (Davison, 2017b) but also in other news media (Davison, 2017a; Espiner, 2017; Kirk, 2017; Stuff New Zealand, 2017), employ a deliberate language of criminality as part of the framing process. This frames the narrative as Turei having committed an offence and breaking the law. The stories also cover public reaction to her admission of being a criminal. One of the discourses concludes with the following text; "Turei sheepishly admitted to reporters

that she was driving a late-model BMW during the election campaign, while noting that it had been loaned by a friend and ran on electricity.” This positions Turei in a highly negative light, by using the phrase ‘sheepishly admitted’. All the other contextualising information is pushed back in order for the framing of this theme to work: it requires that poverty is seen as a matter of blame and attributed to personal failure rather than any kind of mitigating factor, and the focus is on the single act of lying to the benefit agency in the 1990s. A key example of this theme is the story headlined, “Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy” (Kirk, 2017). This story, while presenting the new policies and economic schemes, also highlights Turei’s benefit fraud. In fact, the story begins with a framing mechanism, referencing a programme headlined, ‘Turei admits benefit fraud’. Therefore, while the story does discuss relevant issues it also focuses attention on the criminal aspect of Turei’s actions, thus undermining the issue being discussed. This story also comments on the naivety of Turei’s disclosure.

The framing of this theme is prominent in some of the coverage up to the point of Turei’s resignation (Davison, 2017a; Espiner, 2017; Stuff New Zealand, 2017). There remains a theme about dishonesty and blame, which points to the damage done to the Green Party and the general cause of the centre-left in the election (Hickey, 2017a).

#### 5.4.2 Political Process

Much of the material studied is concerned with the implications of Turei’s admission for the internal political processes of the Green Party and how that would play out in the election. This is part of the framing process, and it is necessary to break the framing of this theme down into a number of sub-themes in order to understand the content appropriately.

The stories from New Zealand Herald, “Green MPs Quit in Protest Over Metiria Turei” (Davison, 2017a) and Stuff New Zealand (2017), “Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions”, discuss how the resignations of the two MPS were actually helpful in advancing the political interests of the party. It is argued that the entire event was stage-managed in order to increase Green Party votes while weakening Labour. The idea is framed as an attempt to become more relevant to voters in the lower social sector. However, the stories conclude that the act backfired, with more people concentrating on the benefit fraud than on Turei’s personal experience as a beneficiary. These stories are the only ones that view the confession as a wilful and planned political act for advancing the political cause of the Green Party, but the possibility of such a theme cannot be ignored.

#### 5.4.3 Positive Impact

Initially, there was a very optimistic frame to the positive impact theme. The Stuff story argues that the Greens had forged new political ground in New Zealand by developing a radical policy for welfare reform that left the other parties looking old-fashioned and stale (Kirk, 2017). There



are multiple references to poll surges for the Greens in the few weeks after the admission, and to the fact that Turei was praised and lauded by her supporters.

This positive impact is best illustrated in the Newsroom story “Greens Go for the Big Bang” (Murphy, 2017), which reviews how policy and administrative changes initiated by Turei’s confession were useful to society at large. The story says that the confession was made in order to have “a more ambitious policy platform than ever before”, relatable to many working-class people or beneficiaries support and living below the poverty line. Positive words such as ‘aspirational’ and ‘bold’ are used to describe the proposed new policy.

Similarly, Radio New Zealand’s story, “Manurewa Voters have Their Say on Turei’s Benefit Fraud” (Forbes, 2017), presents a positive view of the confession and suggests that if Turei had remained a contender in the election campaign, the event would have worked in her favour. Additionally, it reports many people claiming that Turei’s act was motivated by the necessity to feed her child and that under similar circumstances they might have done the same. In essence, there are news media stories that view the act of benefit fraud through a sympathetic understanding framework. Such a frame views her confession as a positive act that will eventually lead to positive change.

#### 5.4.4 Political Naivety

In the middle of the timeline, there is a specific theme of political naivety that emerges as a framing mechanism. This frame implies that Turei was arrogant and foolish to think that her admission would not have political consequences, and that the news media would not go looking, as of course they did, for further details that would prove damaging (Davison, 2017c; du Fresne, 2017; Hickey, 2017b). This is linked to the framing of blame and attribution of failure in that Turei had damaged the Green’s electoral chances and that of the wider centre left, fundamentally undermining her own stated political objectives.

The Newsroom story headlined, “A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism” (Hickey, 2017a), highlights and frames Turei’s naivety in expecting the confession to have positive effects on her political interests. The New Zealand Herald, under the headline, “Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Resigns” (Davison, 2017c), calls her confession a mismanaged publicity stunt and really bad decision making. This is part of the framing operation which also highlights the loss of nearly 33% of Green Party votes because of Turei’s political naivety. This is a good example of the strategy involved in framing a particular message. Additionally, the Newsroom story, ““The Scrutiny on My Family Became Unbearable”” (Hickey, 2017b), details how this framing as an act of political naivety led to the scrutiny of Ms Turei’s private life, bringing about her resignation.

#### 5.4.5 Internal Democracy

A lot of the coverage reports internal Green Party politics and the democracy of the story, beginning with concerns expressed by the two MPs who subsequently resigned and then discussing Turei's own political future. This theme picks out the idiosyncrasies of proportional representation, including dissatisfaction with where people are ranked on the party list and subsequently whether they are on the list at all. This is a curious theme because it strips away any mention of poverty or any other contextualising factors in order to focus on the mechanics of internal selections and what happens if people are not ranked as highly as they think they should be.

The Stuff New Zealand (2017) story, "Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions", presents the resignations as an event overshadowing any potential discussion on poverty. In addition, the Newsroom story, "A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism" (Hickey, 2017a), discusses how Turei continued to defend her fraud and then refused to step down, framing the issue to be worse than it was. The story explores the various political aspects of the confession. For example, the Green Party could not really distance itself from its co-leader without distancing itself from its economically disadvantaged voters. Similarly, they could not endorse the confession and defend Ms Turei without endorsing the benefit fraud. Therefore, the political intricacies of such an event also form a valid frame.

#### 5.4.6 Undermining the Left

The Stuff story, "Metiria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall" (du Fresne, 2017), is less sympathetic than most, framing her confession as a political tool aimed at gaining votes. The writer claims that this move backfired as people did not endorse her benefit fraud and this led to her resignation. The story also frames Turei's pride as attributing to her downfall and uses this event to criticise the left as a whole. This story frames the politician's deceit and lack of integrity and, by extension, the party's lack of integrity. This is a clear example of using Turei's confession and resignation as a framing tool to discredit the left.

The later stories in the timeline have a distinct theme, which is part of the framing process, that Turei's actions were a gift to the forces of conservatism in the election because they caused the left to be associated with fraud and criminality and therefore pushed away voters. This is the beginning of references to the admission as a calculated gamble rather than a story of personal honesty, a gamble that backfired badly due to political naivety. It is suggested that her actions actually harmed the prospects for reform of the benefit system, and undermined hopes of a better life for the poor people she claimed to represent.

#### 5.4.7 Promoting the Left

The stories tend to frame Turei as a left-leaning politician. This is illustrated by the Newsroom story, "Metiria Turei's Dream May Yet be Realised" (Grieverson, 2017). This discusses the

political stances of various parties in relation to poverty and highlights the fact that all the major political parties have taken initiatives to combat poverty. It says that Labour was committed to making the welfare system more flexible and less punitive so that people would experience greater support and might be more likely to escape the poverty trap. Similarly, National proposed guaranteed work experience and budget planning help for the long-term unemployed, also more rehabilitation places for those struggling with drug addiction. These were among National initiatives in a \$72 million project to be implemented over four years.

The later stories in the research timeline also feature a theme of Turei promoting the left by creating a space for the (female) Labour leader to move into and seize onto some of the campaign issues being raised. Moreover, as the political debate shifted because of the news media framing of the admission, it had put pressure on all the other parties to create new policy or defend old policies around welfare and poverty and had also given a voice to many marginalised people who were thus encouraged to vote, many for the first time (Davison, 2017d; Grieveson, 2017).

#### 5.4.8 Poverty

Poverty doesn't appear as a critical subject or message till almost the completion of the study period (Matthewman, 2017). In the earlier coverage, poverty is presented as an excuse and as some sort of unsound background fact in the narrative rather than a topic deserving significant attention in its own rights (Davison, 2017b). In the later stories a considerable number of nuanced themes about poverty appear. The intricacies of the social welfare structure and its toxic culture are highlighted, along with the realities of being poor. Potential actions to be taken against poverty and its expected conducts and behaviours are recognised for the first time in the coverage (Collins, 2017). Additionally, the news media stories around the theme of poverty appear to have generated an acknowledgment of the need for change, and this affected publicly reported policy statements in the lead-up to the election (MacLennan, 2017).

Turei's admission and resignation are presented alongside discussion of new policy benefiting the poor, which is part of the framing process in the news piece, "Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy" (Kirk, 2017). This framing process is comparable to the story headlined "Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as Party Announces Radical Welfare Reforms" (Davison, 2017b). This story also discusses poverty reduction policies for those experiencing hardship and, in the same narrative, highlights the Turei incident. This illustrates how the procedure of framing works. It is noteworthy that poverty is frequently talked about in the news media as a political topic, and coverage is regularly weakened by an emphasis on events related to the two Members of Parliament's resignations.

In fact, the story headlined “Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ’s Hypocrisy” (Matthewman, 2017), is debatably the main piece to shed light on poverty in its own right as a social problem which could be better understood and alleviated. Nonetheless, most of the news media stories see the events around Turei’s admission as being directly connected with poverty and utilise the circumstances as an opportunity to investigate the topic in greater depth.

#### 5.4.9 Gender

The last few stories in the timeline pick out Turei’s gender as a key factor in framing poverty in relation to her confession and resignation. They reference the fact that her treatment by her colleagues was fundamentally different from the way that a male politician would be treated under the same circumstances; indeed, specific references are made to male politicians who had committed very similar offences but were not subject to the same level of scrutiny that characterised this story, and were certainly not forced to resign.

The Radio New Zealand story, “I Will Remember Metiria Turei Differently” (Rodgers, 2017), brings in the gender aspect of poverty in relation to her confession. It says, “the day a Maori woman spoke, she was finished”, “she could never win a moral argument about whether a woman could be forgiven a lie to feed her child and make her life better.” This story also argues that for three decades there had been no constructive discussions on the difficulties faced by poor people in New Zealand. It suggests that the motivation behind Turei’s decision to withhold information regarding her income was not greed, but that she was trying to make life a little bit comfortable for her child. Her admission was politically exploited by scrutinising her life and framing her character in the most personal and invasive way, causing her to resign. This story also highlights the fact that two other politicians who had committed the same crime were still free to run for office as Prime Minister and hypothesises that because they were neither solo mothers nor poor, they were more highly respected by society.

#### 5.4.10 Martyrdom

A final theme is that of martyrdom. The last few stories in the research period support the proposition that Turei effectively sacrificed her own career in order to bring the issue of poverty into the mainstream, and this would be her lasting legacy. This seems to be a counter-theme to the idea that she was foolish or naive in her actions, which was part of the framing strategy used to devalue the pressing issues raised. In fact, those issues are so important that she staked her career on them and was gracious when she lost. This take on the subject is illustrated in the Radio New Zealand (2017c) story, “Metiria Turei Bows Out”. This story is almost apologetic and sympathises with Turei the politician, explaining that she was right at least as far as presenting the problem of poverty. Similarly, the Newsroom story, “Let 2020 be the Year of the ‘Povertyquake’” (MacLennan, 2017), supports the resignation. Unlike the Radio New Zealand story, this is completely supportive and highlights the idea that she sacrificed her political career

to start a conversation about poverty. Using language normally employed to describe martyrs or freedom fighters, this story tries to frame events around the idea of Turei's martyrdom and implores readers to ensure that her sacrifice will not be wasted.

These various frames employed by news media to view Ms Turei's confession and eventual resignation illustrate how the narrative about poverty was presented. This research demonstrates that framing is a serious political tool that can alter the perception of any specific event. The frames used by news media are diverse, and each serve specific purposes. The research identifies attempts to highlight specific viewpoints even when the story itself does not directly discuss them. For example, a story on policy is sensationally titled, 'Ms. Turei confesses to fraud', thereby propagating a preconceived notion.

This is in agreement with the findings of Weerakkody (2015). From the analysis above, it can be seen in the framing process that the same action resulted in Turei being hailed as a martyr by some while others perceived her as committing fraud for personal gain. Much like the global discourse on poverty, it can be seen that the frames employed are highly polarised. A more detailed summary of the findings and their importance in the global context is presented in the next section.

## 5.5 Findings

Mass media in developed countries like New Zealand seldom discuss poverty as a topic needing critical attention. The discourses on poverty related to Turei's confession and resignation during the study period were sporadic and frequently misleading, prompting debates around politics rather than potential solutions to the problem of poverty.

The conversations about poverty were initially polarised but news media reporting later became more nuanced. The data analysis provides evidence that the news media framed poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei. Journalists often bring their own unconscious biases to their reporting (De Vreese, 2005; Fairclough, 1989; McCombs & Funk, 2011).

The data analysis found language used in a variety of ways to frame perception. Much of it is aggressively disparaging about issues of poverty, some is misogynistic in nature, and some is offensive and racist.

In this study, various news media stories pertaining to the confession and resignation of Ms Turei are investigated through the lens of discourse analysis. The literature review established that this research is at the forefront in examining a sole incident pertaining to media perception of the poor, and that it is the only investigation to analyse news media stories about a single political occasion in relation to conversations about poverty in New Zealand's 2017 election

campaign period. The types of framing and the themes used (Weerakkody, 2015) in the selected news media stories that reported the event are studied in chronological order. Seven specific themes are identified and examined. This chapter discusses the frames used to report the events. It examines whether or not frames can alter the reception of news media stories, even when the same events are being reported.

Weerakkody (2015) rightly observes that a chosen frame can highlight certain aspects of an issue, diagnose a reason for the issue even if the diagnosis is not entirely holistic, and make a judgement. In Turei's case, it was possible to present and highlight her dishonesty without presenting her struggles. This, in turn, led to judgement of her character. The chosen frame could then invoke a moral evaluation on the issue (such as Ms Turei being driven by greed and not necessity) and suggest remedies (such as asking her to step down).

Framing can also lead to generalised predictions based on the event being discussed, such as 'all single parents on welfare are lazy'. Frames linking Turei's confession with welfare range between optimistic and pessimistic and are at times pluralistic and futuristic in the various narratives obtained. The underlying discourses promised advantages to both Turei and the Green Party. As the media narrative progresses, a negative articulation is observed as news media stories start to present the Green Party's serious losses and how the votes had fallen. The talk at this point becomes pluralistic. The new policy story, 'Mending the Safety Net', reports extensively on perspectives connected to poverty from all parties. At the tail end of the narrative there is speculation about who will succeed and what effects the Turei confession will have on the future of social welfare structures and responses to poverty issues.

From this analysis, it is apparent that frames can alter the perception of an event. Framing can support or oppose certain political ideologies, reinforce stereotypes, and distort the message or meaning of poverty. The news media stories in this study illustrate the point. For example, Turei was portrayed as a martyr by some news media. Others reported her confession as a calculated political move that backfired. It was argued that she was unfairly judged because she was a single parent and a woman. Other writers argued that the confession was ill thought out and that it was unrealistic to expect change as a result. Some news media simply reported the event as a crime. Later stories discuss more nuanced consequences of Turei's confession, including policy and the approaches various political parties are likely to take in addressing poverty.

The data analysis and discussions lead the research to a conclusion. The analysis shows that the reporting of one incident differs considerably depends on the frames utilised. This signifies that the occasion or event can be featured in one specific context over others. This chapter explores the stories chosen for this study under 10 dominant thematic headings. Each story caters to specific constructs. Not one of the chosen stories is framed to present all the viewpoints.

The tendency of the news media to frame events in certain lights is not limited to New Zealand, nor to this specific event. The literature review shows that news media have a great deal of freedom in framing poverty to propagate a narrative of their choosing by blaming the poor for their condition, blindly supporting a welfare state as the only viable solution to addressing poverty, or using an example of poverty to present various biases and constraints which generate negative perceptions affecting the discussion.

This power of news outlets to change perception by altering the frames of production is discussed by analysing the occurrences that framed poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Turei as Green Party co-leader. It is shown that her admission at first produced profoundly polarised reactions from the news companies, with certain media backing her choice to retain information about earning, and others characterising her deeds as a conscious offence. After her resignation there was a shift of perspectives that reduced the polarised outlook to a more nuanced portrayal.

This is in agreement with the treatment of frames pertaining to Turei as episodic and thematic. Iyengar (1991) says, “Episodic framing depicts concrete events that illustrate issues, while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence” (p. 14). Iyengar (1991) observes that news reporting is twice as likely to frame the issue of poverty episodically, attributing it to individual behaviours (within the control of an individual, as in the case of Turei), rather than thematically; that is, connected to the realities of a wider social economic problem which is out of an individual’s control. Examples of thematic problems are the Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) system or New Zealand’s tax system. In the selected news media discourses poverty is framed episodically, in ways that shift the blame onto the poor themselves, rather than thematically, which would highlight government welfare organisation and socioeconomic issues (Iyengar, 1991). Episodic reporting (Iyengar, 1991) emerges in the coverage of the 2017 New Zealand election campaign which attributes the cause of poverty to individual (Turei’s) failing or behaviour.

The news media focused on the negative (wrongdoing) side of Turei’s action rather than her financial hardship as a single parent. Her conduct was framed as an offence rather than an example of how the poor live daily. This provided an opportunity for news media to focus their attention on poverty in New Zealand. Instead, the news media failed to convey Turei’s message which was to put a face on poverty. In relation to the analysis, this means that the news media framed the issue of poverty episodically. After the confession, perceptions of poverty in New Zealand became cynical and news media started a polarizing narrative. After Turei’s resignation the message slowly shifted to a nuanced discussion.

The territory marked out by framing in this research is backed by Reese’s inquiry model. Power relationships and institutional arrangements of news media that support specific frames are

influential in organising how the message of poverty is presented in relation to Turei's confession. These show in a recognizable snapshot of organised meaning in the content of the narrative and become crucial in the news media stories which guide public perceptions of poverty (Reese, 2001). Reese's model presents framing as an exercise in power by the news media, specifically as it influences our understanding of the poverty and political world. This is how the news media framed poverty in relation to Metiria Turei's confession and resignation from her Green Party co-leader role in the 2017 election campaign period. Essentially, the media created this frame by introducing news media stories about issues, such as poverty, that navigated public thinking in a political campaign which ultimately shaped voting decisions. In this study, the news media structure various frames for the depiction of poverty by connecting poverty with Turei's confession and presenting the issue to the public in order to measure their opinion and the intensity of their engagement.

The thematic patterns surface in various parts of the narrative, and some patterns are more noticeable than others. However, all the themes are clear patterns which emerge from the way the frames in the news media stories are structured for specific audiences. Most of the themes overlap; nevertheless, they are isolated in this analysis for coherence and simplicity of comprehension.

Themes from various frames work as constructs that define the content of the 18 narratives. The first stories have poverty and the new Green Party policy as core themes. As allegations around Turei's admissions gain ground, the narrative shifts from poverty to the perceived non-ethical behaviour of Turei, with words such as 'cheating' and 'fraud' appearing. The narrative then shifts to core politics, and how her revelations led to a loss of confidence in her party. Poverty-related issues or discussions disappear almost completely from this narrative. After Turei's resignation, the narrative changes back to social, poverty-related issues.

This study also highlights gaps in the analysis related to poverty and its perception. For example, there is little academic research in New Zealand on the perception of poverty based on a single event. Additionally, New Zealand lacks a concrete definition of poverty, so that means news media and politicians can frame, alter and distort the narrative around the issue. The news media frames poverty in relation to Turei, linking the issue to her confession and resignation. What isn't mentioned by the news media is that Turei showed bravery in sharing her experience. The things she achieved in her political career as a Member of Parliament are not discussed in the narrative, nor are the poverty experiences of the hardworking poor. The findings of this entire study, along with its recommendations, are discussed in Chapter 6.

## 5.6 Summary

This chapter considered the data pertaining to news reporting of a single political event in New Zealand. It investigated the confession of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei regarding the



non-disclosure of income when she was a single parent on a welfare benefit, and the subsequent news media discussions that lead to her resignation from active politics. Some news media stories framed the event as Turei falling on her own sword by using her personal story to advocate conversations about poverty.

The news media reinforced the binary of a polarised approach to the issue of poverty rather than a nuanced approach. In essence a poor person, as represented by Turei in this case, was presented either as helpless and needing assistance or as a lazy person who was exploiting the government-funded support system. The nuances of poverty and the socioeconomic factors that contribute to it were lost somewhere in the course of the discussion. Analysis of the news media stories during the research period showed that conversations about poverty were initially polarised. However, over time, especially after Turei stepped down, the discussion took on first a polarised view, followed by a nuanced approach and wider perspective to the subject. It is safe to conclude that Turei's confession and resignation played a role in creating space for quality and nuanced conversations about poverty.

The analysis showed that news media used specific fixed frames to investigate the events that framed poverty in relation to Turei's confession and resignation. Some news media stories portrayed her as a martyr for the cause, while others were framed to show positive policy changes and discussions initiated by the event. The left-leaning political ideology was supported by distinct frames while reporting these events.

Simultaneously "A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism" framed the event as a badly executed piece of political theatre carried out to increase the Green Party vote, while "Meteria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall" framed it as politically naive. It was also suggested that the subsequent resignations of two prominent Green Party members diluted and overshadowed potential news media discussion about poverty. Additionally, there were some frames that reflected and reinforced societal biases against women, single mothers and ethnic minorities. It was said that while Turei had to step down from her roles, other politicians who had committed similar crimes were free to run for office.

This research highlights the lack of a balanced message about poverty in reported news during the 2017 election campaign. Every story was framed, and the frame within each story altered the perception of an event that started with an honest discussion around poverty. It can be seen that all the selected texts presented either a highly sympathetic version of events or a version that vilified Turei. Essentially, she was presented on one hand as a poor mother who had to commit fraud to feed her child, and on the other as a fraud who exploited the welfare system for personal gain. This framing reinforces the polarised views of poverty and poor people that exist in New Zealand society.

The event under investigation was the admission of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei, at her party's pre-election conference, that when she was an economically disadvantaged single mother, she committed benefit fraud by failing to disclose a portion of her income. Her confession was motivated by her desire to start a discussion on poverty. Instead, it immediately sparked polarised and less-nuanced conversations about poverty. Many people, including reporter John Campbell whose news stories led to her resignation from politics, tried to find ways to discuss the sensitive issue of poverty but instead presented a case of benefit fraud. Turei's resignation, however, stimulated less polarised and more nuanced conversations about poverty.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

### 6.1 Introduction

This research establishes the power of the news media in shaping perception. It starts by examining how the news media covered Metiria Turei's speech at the AGM meeting of the Green Party on July 16, 2017, extends through to her resignation as the co-leader of the party on August 9, 2017, and continues up to September 24, 2017, which is the day after the election results were announced. Questions asked by Radio New Zealand journalist John Campbell were the catalyst that compelled Turei to resign (Radio New Zealand, 2017a). In essence, the perception created by news media discourse around the conversation of poverty forced the seasoned politician who started the discussion to retire from active politics.

This led to the research question and focus of the analysis for the thesis, “How did the news media frame poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei in their reporting, 10 weeks prior to the 2017 New Zealand general election?”

In order to direct people to social issues like poverty, creating a public consciousness of the situation is important, especially in a democratic society. In creating this awareness, the news media have a major part to play. The perception of poverty created by media through news coverage undeniably has an impact in establishing public perception. A specific media outlet will often structure the frames of the content in order to adapt to the flavour of its larger audience (Endal, 2015), and in doing so perception is established in the message of the news report that shapes public thinking.

Bernard Cohen (1963) said, that the press “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about. The world will look different to different people, depending on the map that is drawn for them by writers, editors, and publishers of the paper they read” (p. 13). Poverty is a complex public issue and the various frames in news media discourse provide a map for understanding it. How citizens think about poverty is shown to be dependent on how the issue is framed by the news media (Iyengar, 1990). Framing is concerned with how interests, communicators, sources and culture are combined to produce coherent ways of understanding the political and poverty world in an election campaign which is developed by using all available verbal and visual symbolic resources, as with the portrayal of Turei's story (Reese, 2001).

Analysis of news media depictions of poverty is critical because of this media role in shaping perception. There is a clear link between individual emotions, and political affiliations and the individual's perception of poverty, as explained in Attribution Theory (Zucker & Weiner,

1993). Such distorted perceptions are not limited to the general public. A range of perceptions have been used to advance or repress political ideas regarding poverty and other social issues, as in the case of Metiria Turei's story. In brief, this research establishes that there is a reluctance to openly talk about social issues, specifically poverty in this study, with efforts to exclude such subjects from the news media agenda. Circumstances such as poverty are seldom approached holistically. Rather, the news media presents a biased perspective of the issue by choosing the frames with which to structure the content of the message.

## 6.2 Research Summary

The thesis was based on 18 stories from mainstream and independent news media which related to events that took place after Metiria Turei made her confession. The data was analysed using thematic keyword searches. The applied method for this research was Discourse Analysis (DA), which was utilised to inspect and explain the chosen 18 news media stories. Discourse Analysis understands language as a principle structure of social practice in this news media study, hence it utilises four approaches in sequential order to examine the content in the narratives. These methodological tools are widely used in qualitative data analysis (van Dijk, 2016). Within the scope of this research, only text was considered for analysis. The thesis studied the relationship between a discourse and the social context within which it exists, considering social, economic, and political factors (Fairclough, 2000a).

## 6.3 Findings

Ten dominant thematic headings emerged from the analysis: (1) Fraud, Criminality and Deceit, (2) Political Process, (3) Positive Impact, (4) Political Naivety, (5) Internal Democracy, (6) Undermining the Left, (7) Promoting the Left, (8) Poverty, (9) Gender, and (10) Martyrdom.

It was shown that Turei's admission at first produced profoundly polarised reactions from the news organisations, with some news media stories backing her choice to retain information about her income and others characterising her deeds as a conscious offence. In either case, after her resignation there was a shift of perspectives that reduced the polarised outlook to a more nuanced portrayal. Metiria Turei was interviewed by John Campbell on her resignation (Radio New Zealand, 2017a). She was asked, "How do we have these conversations [about poverty] then? How do we inject realism and rationale stocktaking into our treatment of those people two decades on? And is it about how those people tell their stories as well as how we treat them?" Campbell then went on to say that Turei had opened the conversations about poverty and that the intense scrutiny of her personal and family life which ended her political career was the price she had paid for opening that increasingly meaningful conversation.

It was notable that the framing of fraud, criminality and deceit was prominent in some of the coverage up to the point of Turei's resignation (Davison, 2017a; Espiner, 2017; Stuff New

Zealand, 2017), but after her resignation the notion of criminality as a salient feature of the story was not evident in the mainstream news media reports.

News media are extremely powerful in shaping perception. From the analysis undertaken for this study it is apparent that frames alter the perception of an event. They can support or oppose certain political ideologies, reinforce stereotypes, and distort the content of messages. The research discussion provides examples of this. For example, Turei was portrayed by some news media as a martyr. It was claimed that the incident was a calculated political move that backfired. It was argued that she was unfairly judged because she was a single parent and a Maori woman. Some writers believed that the confession was ill thought out and that it was unrealistic to expect change as a result. Other authors framed the event as a crime. Later stories discussed more nuanced consequences of Turei's confession, including party policy and the approaches various political parties were likely to take to address poverty.

The data analysis and discussions led to conclusions. The analysis showed that the portrayal of a specific incident differs significantly depending on the frames used to introduce the incident. The implication is that an incident reported can feature one specific context over others. Not one story in the data set studied here was framed to present all viewpoints. The study showed that the news media, perhaps unconsciously, used certain fixed frames to investigate the events that framed poverty in relation to the confession and resignation of Metiria Turei as Green Party co-leader. Some frames highlighted the way positive policy changes and discussions around poverty were initiated by the event. The left-leaning political ideology was supported by certain frames while reporting these events.

The news media reinforced the binary of a polarised approach to the issue of poverty rather than nuanced approaches. In essence, a poor person such as Turei in the 1990s was portrayed as helpless and needing assistance, or as a lazy and cunning person exploiting the government-funded support system. The nuances of poverty and the socioeconomic factors that contribute to it were lost somewhere in the course of the discussion.

In the coverage of Turei's confession, a similar approach was seen in the initial stages. The data showed that conversations about poverty were initially polarised. However, over time and especially after her resignation, the discussion took on a wider perspective and approaches were nuanced rather than polarised. Discussions around poverty became wider and more complex in a positive way, and it is safe to conclude that her confession did play some part in initiating and opening the space to have a quality conversation about poverty. Nevertheless, this dialogue was never fully developed and not one of the fundamental inquiries was tackled.

The overall conclusion shows that news media dialogues about poverty issues in New Zealand are incomplete, frequently deceptive and misleading. Public sentiment is key in a democratic

society needing to address social problems. The research established a clear correlation between news media-generated public perception and public policy.

However, there is much to be understood about how news media influenced public perception. This study, limited to 18 news media stories about a single event over a 10-week timeframe, clearly illustrates that perceptions around poverty vary significantly. Therefore, managing news media discussion around topics such as poverty can have significant socioeconomic consequences over a longer timeframe.

## 6.4 Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Further Research

This study is one of the first academic enquiries that tries to understand how mainstream and independent news media in New Zealand portray poverty by studying a single political event in an election period.

### 6.4.1 Limitations

This thesis is based on a small sample of data and therefore is limited in scope. One limitation of this thesis is that only text in the content of the stories was analysed. The analysis was limited to a single event over a relatively short span of 10 weeks. The study was limited to an event taking place in a single developed country, New Zealand. The data came only from leading online news media, and other forms of publication such as social media were not included. Further, the researcher could not find comparable linguistic studies on poverty in New Zealand, so the findings were based solely on the analysis of 18 news media stories.

The researcher's close involvement with the texts could have constituted difficulties for the reliability of the results. In qualitative research, there is the possibility that the researcher's perspective, ideology and social perception can influence the findings. To overcome this, the stories were chosen from four different news media outlets based on Radio New Zealand's timeline and Wikipedia's entry on Metiria Turei. A keyword search was also used to find instances of 'Metiria Turei', 'poor', 'poverty', 'conversations about poverty', 'welfare' and 'homeless'.

Care was taken to ensure an unbiased approach in the data analysis by using well-established thematic coding methods. The seven themes: Attribute, Adjective, Metaphor, Analogy, Euphemism, Dysphemism, and What Isn't Mentioned were applied in a close investigation of how the 18 news media stories were framed. This ensured the reliability of results (Dicken-Garcia, 1998). Using this methodological approach, the language used by news media to describe and frame certain aspects of the issue of poverty was carefully analysed (Weerakkody, 2015).

However, the interpretation of qualitative data inevitably has a degree of subjectivity, and the personal perceptions of the researcher must be acknowledged. The methodology is interpretivist

and, despite every effort to analyse the news media portrayal of poverty without bias, it must be acknowledged that the researcher is never neutral. All knowledge is constructed based on the experience of the perceiver. The researcher can bring his or her own biases to the study and so occupies a difficult position; outside of the study domain but able to observe without bringing any biases or personal perspective to the investigation.

The research approach, using a well-defined theoretical framework to analyse the news reports critically and objectively, was important because this thesis aimed to understand the perception of poverty in news media stories. A stringent framework ensured that the language used in news media to describe and discuss poverty was examined without bias. This study was motivated by a sense that Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei was treated badly. The researcher wanted to be able to prove that the news media framed her demise negatively in order to sensationalise her admission. Despite every effort to analyse the news media portrayal of poverty without bias it must be acknowledged that the methodology used was interpretivist and the researcher is never neutral in such cases.

#### 6.4.2 Further Research

In future analysis, media depictions of poverty could be better understood by comparing this data with news media studies from other countries that have a definition of poverty. It would be interesting to see how New Zealand news media fared against news outlets in countries with more formal and better-established definitions of poverty. Further study could also examine the correlation between news media-generated perceptions and public perceptions of poverty, general public opinion and voting patterns.

Additionally, given the relative youth of social media as a discussion platform, it is important to understand how poverty is talked about with others. As social media transforms from a means of communication to a news source like Twitter, understanding perceptions generated in social media becomes more relevant. Today, one in ten people cite social media as their primary information source. This influence is only likely to increase (Newman, Fletcher, Levy, & Nielsen, 2016). Therefore, it is not irrational to assume that media such as Twitter will significantly influence public perception, much like mainstream news media. This perception will, in turn, affect public policy (Burststein, 2003).

In fact, the influence of social media on the political landscape is fast becoming evident. The 2016 elections in USA are perhaps the most significant example of how social media such as Twitter can affect a political campaign. In that context Twitter became a significant news source; Tweets triggered and amplified specific news stories, which then affected public perception. Politicians directly communicated their views on Twitter rather than through mainstream news media (Broersma & Graham, 2012). Twitter is an easy and direct publishing platform which is becoming widely used in New Zealand too, and it was treated as a news

source during the 2017 New Zealand election campaign. Such direct communication with the public, unmediated by traditional news outlets, can affect political and social decision-making.

A study by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) shows that during the US election campaign, fake news stories were widely shared and circulated on social media. Given that people tend to believe stories that align with their views, these may have reaffirmed the neoliberal outlook, thereby facilitating the rise of right-wing politics (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Thus, understanding social media influence on public perception with regards to concepts such as poverty is a critical future area of research in New Zealand.

The 18 stories selected for this study were either opinion write-ups or news stories. While it was not considered necessary to distinguish between these two genres in terms of the findings given that the analysis was concerned with how language shaped audience perception regardless of the conventions of the specific journalistic genre, further research could differentiate the influence of these genres on audience perception. Studying media stories by genre will also provide insight to the extent of unconscious bias in opinion write-ups compared with news stories.

Other possible avenues of research that would contribute relevant insights could include the use of focus groups to gather more direct data regarding public perception of poverty and whether or not people are aware of the influence media (mainstream, independent and social media) has on forming perception.

Another important area to be studied is how public policy documents treat poverty. Discourse analysis would be helpful in understanding how government bodies view and approach poverty (Ministry of Social Development, 2018; New Zealand Parliament, 2018; Perry, 2015; Wilkinson & Jeram, 2016). It would be interesting to understand whether these public policies vary with changes in political leadership.

A further avenue to explore could be the activism that began with Turei's confession and resignation. Research could ascertain the types of activism generated and whether it was effective in terms of the conversation around poverty during and after the 2017 New Zealand election period.

Finally, it would be useful to get the perspective of the person at the centre of this discussion. A direct interview with former Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei would shed light on how the discourse affected her decision to resign. Such an important interview would further the work and research done around poverty and poverty perception during her political career. These suggestions for future research are based on the importance of investigating perceptions of poverty perception in New Zealand for bringing about structural change.



## 6.5 Recommendations and Conclusions

This study highlights the importance of having a unified definition for poverty. By analysing media perceptions around poverty, it became evident that the views presented by news media are often biased and support a predefined agenda. A solid definition of poverty would make such perception skewing difficult.

Recognising various political and social biases in the way the news media report and portray the issue provides an essential starting point in constructive and meaningful conversations about poverty that focus on solutions rather than the politics behind the issue. Such an approach would create a more realistic picture of the actual situation, thereby enabling New Zealand and its policymakers to better address the problem of poverty. The platform of academic research in New Zealand provides the potential to investigate an issue such as media perception of poverty.

Poverty issues are seldom presented by the news media holistically and without bias. There is always a reluctance to highlight the actual hardship experienced by the poor or to have open and informed discussions around the subject of poverty. Attempts are made to remove these messages from the news media agenda by attributing the causes of poverty to laziness, alcohol or drug abuse. When Turei's story was presented, news media stories emphasised her dishonesty without including her struggles as a beneficiary. This led to a judgement about her character that led to her resignation, thus burying the discussion of poverty.

It is apparent that the reporting of a single incident fluctuates significantly, dependent on the frame utilised for highlighting the occasion. This study identifies clear examples of the polarisation of news reporting. Ideally news media narratives should be accurate and positive. The issue of poverty in New Zealand could be presented in a balanced and unbiased way, creating a nuanced comprehension around the facts. This implies that an event can be presented in ways that feature particular perspectives over other views. In the Turei narrative, the message of poverty was distorted by the varying frames that structured the story.

This investigation is one of the first in New Zealand to analyse news media portrayal of poverty perception involving a single political event in New Zealand. The underlying discourses about Turei's confession promised advantages, not only for her but also for the Green Party. As the news media narrative progressed, a negative articulation was evident in stories about the serious fall in Green Party votes. The discussion of poverty at this point became pluralistic, with various perspectives debated in the new policy story, 'Mending the Safety Net'. In the last stories, the narrative looked towards the future.

This study highlighted serious problems in how news media address poverty. There was no insight into the daily struggles of beneficiaries trying to make ends meet, and the circumstances in which people relying on the welfare system can slip into prostitution or drug dealing. Turei's

conference speech featured instances of individuals reliant on welfare who found that what they received was inadequate. She tried to rally the public in support of the individuals living in poverty, but in doing so was perceived by other politicians and the news media as vulnerable to attack and was consequently forced out of a political career. Because of the extreme investigation that the news media put Turei through, her family faced inquiries on issues that ought to be viewed as personal, such as how they helped one another out. Reporting a story from this perspective labels the individual and can be harmful to their life in the public space where they live and move. Turei was portrayed on the one hand as a deceiver, a fraud and a political opportunist and on the other hand as a champion, a political scapegoat and a martyr.

An official national definition of poverty would go a long way towards re-shaping perceptions of poverty, as it would force news media to concentrate on the issue without a pre-set political and ideological agenda. One clear agreed meaning would reduce confusion around the discussion of poverty and promote accurate information transfer. Therefore, an official national poverty definition for New Zealand is highly recommended.

Although no clear link has been established between Turei's resignation and later policy changes, it cannot be said that her confession had no positive impact. The coalition government is actively engaging in conversations about poverty. For example, child poverty reduction legislation was introduced by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jacinda Ardern, and was passed in December 2018 (New Zealand Parliament, 2018). The Child Poverty Reduction Act (2018) aims to halve child poverty within a decade and improve the wellbeing of children and young people in New Zealand. According to Ardern, who is also the Minister for Child Poverty Reduction, the reason for this bill is to encourage a focus on child poverty reduction, facilitate political accountability against published targets, require transparent reporting on child poverty levels in the yearly National budget, and create a greater expectation on all governments to address child well-being (New Zealand Parliament, 2018). The Child Wellbeing and Poverty Reduction Group (CWPRG) was established in February 2018 and is committed to the government's initiatives around poverty and the vision of New Zealand as the best place in the world to be a child.

At May 2019 there have been three welfare changes out of 42 recommendations since the Turei incident in 2017. The changes are: scrapping benefit sanction on solo mums who did not name their child's birth father (a policy advocated by Turei before her resignation), increasing the abatement threshold for people on the welfare system so that people can keep more of what they earn before they are taxed, and employing more frontline welfare staff to help people into meaningful and sustainable work (Flahive, 2019). Turei's sacrifice was not in vain, as mentioned in the story, "Metiria Turei's Dream May Yet be Realised" (Grieverson, 2017). The Turei incident arguably led to the restructure of the welfare system that brought about some

changes around poverty which were previously discussed in these stories, “‘End Work and Income's Toxic Culture’ – Beneficiaries” (Collins, 2017) and “Let 2020 be the Year of the ‘Povertyquake’” (MacLennan, 2017).

Metiria Turei was interviewed by Spinoff news media more than two years after the confession. She said she did not regret her 2017 speech but was proud of the message and stood by it because the voices of poverty had not been heard for a long time. Her speech had prompted activism around the subject (Newshub New Zealand, 2019). Conversations about poverty gained much ground after the 2017 New Zealand general elections, when a coalition government was formed with the Labour Party, New Zealand First and the Green Party, and eight Green MPs entered Parliament.

It is hoped that the knowledge gained through this research will empower better conversations about poverty in the future and provide a foundation for more nuanced understanding of the subject.

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# Appendix A

## Snapshot of the Description of Themes Across the Narrative Story

### Headings

A narrative story is unfolded across nine headings in chronological order. Each narrative story heading displays two news media stories in thematic presentation from two different news outlet. In table format, each story showcases the seven themes which present the identified text in the findings. The order of 18 stories below, which are also exhibited thematically in 18 tables, is part of framing.

# Narrative Story Heading One: The Confession of Turei

## Story 1

Table 1			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 16, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Benefit Raise, Tax Cuts for Poorest and Hikes for Wealthy in New Greens Policy	The Confession of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Obligations for beneficiaries to prove they were looking for work, not taking drugs		
Adjectives:	The poorest, the richest, bold new policy launch, fervent, faithful, solo mum, neo liberal experiment, lousy low wage economy, rapturous applause, most fundamental changes, vast majority, compassionate, big backwards step		
Metaphors:	Draw an ideological line in the sand, effective dismantle the Government's welfare reforms, own battle as a mum on the DPB, mending the safety net, keep the tap running as long as they needed, lift people out of poverty, poverty should never be used as a weapon, just discovered poverty		
Analogies:	Afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill, keep my financial life under control, could not afford to live, study and keep my baby well, born in a tent		
Euphemisms:	Those in the most hardship, more liveable incomes, lowest paid working people, struggle to find work, minimum wage, basic liveable income, change of living situation		
Dysphemisms:	Flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed		
What isn't mentioned:	That Turei's personal experience of poverty is what motivated her to confess to benefit fraud. She wanted to make the point that the poor are frequently forced to resort to such measures in order to feed their families and survive day to day. She wanted to highlight this issue in the 2017 election campaign in order for policies to be reviewed		

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## Benefit raise, tax cuts for poorest and hikes for wealthy in new Greens policy

Stacey Kirk • 16:59, Jul 16 2017



PETER MEECHAM/STUFF

The Greens co-leader has admitted that she lied to WINZ about her living arrangements 20 years ago so that her benefits would not be cut.

Benefit sanctions will be lifted, the poorest taxed less and the richest more, while a Green Party in Government would also seek to raise all benefits by 20 per cent.

In a bold new policy launch, Greens co-leader Metiria Turei has also revealed she lied to her case workers when she was a solo mum, studying a law degree, while collecting the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

Speaking to a fervent core base of party faithful, Turei told the conference of her parents' struggle to find work and her own battle as a mum on the DPB, lying to the state about how many people were living in her house.



### Your experience of receiving a benefit

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Her experiences have shaped the party's welfare policy, dubbed "mending the safety net", which will likely prove controversial and draw an ideological line in the sand over the presence of the welfare state.

#### READ MORE:

- \* [Welfare policy '15 years in the making'](#)
- \* ['Unacceptable' is a two-way street](#)

The \$1.4 billion policy would provide a suite of major changes that would effectively dismantle the Government's welfare reforms introduced in 2012, that placed obligations for beneficiaries to prove they were looking for work, not taking drugs, and showing up for appointments and courses.



Launching the Green Party's Families Package at the annual conference – which would tax the rich more and the poor less, scrap drug testing and other rules for beneficiaries as well as giving them a 20 percent pay increase – Metiria Turei revealed she lied to the government when she was a solo mother on a benefit.

The Greens policy would lift nearly all penalties and obligations for beneficiaries, raise the amount they were receiving and keep the tap running for as long as they needed.

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"Our plan will lift people out of poverty, and guarantee a basic liveable income for anyone working or on a benefit," Turei said.

"We believe that poverty should never be used as a weapon, especially when children are involved.



CAMERON BURNELL

Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei has made a bold pitch for the Beehive – removing all benefit sanctions, raising payments and changing tax thresholds.

"Our plan to mend the safety net will ensure that all families in New Zealand can afford to put food on the table, keep a roof over their head and pay their power bill."

The Greens would change the Working for Families "in-work tax credit" to a Children's Payment that goes to all families who currently qualified for it. The current qualification thresholds would not be changed.

The poorest families could receive up to \$72 a week extra as a result, on top of changes to tax thresholds and the minimum wage.





Those changes would include reducing the bottom tax rate from 10.5 per cent to 9 per cent for anyone earning less than \$14,000, while anyone earning more than \$150,000 per year will have their tax rate hiked from 33 per cent to 40 per cent – expected to generate about \$605m in revenue.

It assumed the proposed tax changes already outline by the Government in the May Budget would be reversed in a Labour-led Government.

In her speech, Turei talked about raising her daughter Piu, while on the DPB in the early 90s.

"What I have never told you before is the lie I had to tell to keep my financial life under control," she told the party.

"Because despite all the help I was getting, I could not afford to live, study and keep my baby well without keeping a secret from [Work and Income NZ]."

She and her daughter were forced to move around a lot; five different flats with various people.

"In three of those flats I had extra flatmates, who paid rent, but I didn't tell Winz. I didn't dare."

So Turei said she was announcing "the most fundamental changes to our welfare system in 30 years".

She expected the policy to lift 179,000 children out of poverty.

Former Social Development Minister Paula Bennett introduced the welfare reforms of 2012. Her story as a former beneficiary who lifted herself out of her situation is also widely known.

"As with the vast majority of people on benefits I never deliberately lied to Work and Income.

"I understand the difficulty some people encounter when they have a change of circumstances, that's why I always encouraged Work and Income to be compassionate when people may have worked an extra hour or two, or had a change of living situation."

Turei's announcement was met with rapturous applause from party faithful. However critics have been quick to seize, claiming on her admission saying she should be setting an example.

Finance Minister and National campaign director Steven Joyce said the policy was a "big backwards step".

"Particularly with the removal of obligations. The work that we've done over the last few years has reduced the numbers of people on a benefit and put more people into work.

"We're down to levels of the 80s and 90s, in terms of people who are dependent on a benefit. And that hasn't all been about the obligations it's been about the economy as well, but the obligations are an important part of that."



Her admission of lying to keep hold of more of the benefit was "disappointing".

"And a lot of people will be disappointed by that. People that are working pay their taxes, but also people that are receiving a benefit.

"We don't always agree with the rules that operate, but most people operate within those rules and those that do will be disappointed to see she's not doing that," Joyce said.

NZ First leader Winston Peters said Turei was speaking as though "she had just discovered poverty".

"Well, big deal, my family was born in a tent, and the first few family members were and know what it's like to be flooded out and evacuated to the cowshed."

Peters said if the government wasn't running a "neo-liberal experiment" with a "lousy low wage economy" then higher benefits would already be there now.

But the policy has garnered praise from the Council of Trade Unions, which said the party had set out a comprehensive strategy to improve the lives of lowest paid working people.

"There is no getting around the fact that the only way to reduce poverty is to ensure those in the most hardship have much more liveable incomes – to support themselves and their family," secretary Sam Huggard said.

#### THE PREDICTED OUTCOMES

- A sole parent on a benefit, with two school-aged children and no paid employment: \$179.62 better off each week.
- A sole parent receiving the Student Allowance, with two children, and part time work on just above minimum wage: \$176.15 more each week.
- A single person on jobseeker support: \$42.20 more each week.
- A two-parent family, with one working parent on the median income, with three children: \$104.52 more each week.
- Two parents, both on jobseeker support, with three children: \$207.46 more per week.
- A two-parent family, both earning the median income of \$48,000 with three children: \$130.19 more each week.
- Two parents, one in paid work earning \$70,000 a year, two children: \$87.85 more a year.

**Comments on this story are now closed**

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Narrative Story Heading One: The Confession of Turei

Story 2

Table 2			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 16, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Admits She Lied to WINZ, as Party Announces Radical Welfare Reforms	The Confession of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Defined by our truths and not lies		
Adjectives:	Extraordinary confession, dramatically reform New Zealand's welfare system, illegal behaviour, perverse benefit sanctions, brave thing for a politician to do, passionate speech, sheepishly admitted		
Metaphors:	Trapping people in poverty, lifting every person above the official poverty line		
Analogies:	Driving a late model BMW during the election campaign		
Euphemisms:	Low and middle-income earners, low income families		
Dysphemisms:	Charged with fraud, illegal behaviour		
What isn't mentioned:	The gravity and seriousness of her decision to withhold facts from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), and what it translated to in monetary terms		

NEW ZEALAND

## Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei admits she lied to WINZ, as party announces radical welfare reforms

15 Jul, 2017 12:40pm

4 minutes to read

Metiria Turei. Photo / File



By: [Isaac Davison](#)  
Social Issues Reporter, NZ Herald  
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Green Party Metiria Turei concedes she could still be charged with fraud after she admitted lying to authorities to keep her benefit.

In her biggest speech of the year, Turei made the extraordinary confession while announcing her party's plans to dramatically reform New Zealand's welfare system.

Speaking at the Green Party AGM in Auckland, she said that as a solo mother on a benefit she did not tell Work and Income NZ that she had extra flatmates who were paying rent.

At a press conference afterwards, Turei said she could still face consequences for her illegal behaviour 24 years ago.

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"It is possible that  
WINZ could do an  
investigation into

my case and I could be charged.

"I personally feel I have a responsibility to tell it how it is, because other people don't have the privileged position that I do."

Asked whether beneficiaries in a similar position should lie to authorities, she neither encouraged nor dissuaded them, saying that it was up to them.

An audience of around 250 people at the AGM were silent as she revealed her story, but nodded along and made encouraging noises, one member saying "ka pai Metiria". She admitted that her admission could hurt her or the party, but said she wanted the Greens to be "defined by our truths", not by lies.

Turei's experience on the DPB was one of the driving forces behind the new "Mending the Safety Net" policy. It goes well beyond changing entitlements, instead aiming to completely transform a culture which Turei said had become punitive and was trapping people in poverty.

The Greens want to lift core benefits by 20 per cent while scrapping all sanctions, including penalties for women who fail to reveal the name of their child's father, or sole parents who want to begin a long-term relationship - promises which prompted a standing ovation from the Green members.

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NEW ZEALAND

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19 Jul, 2017 5:00am  
🕒 3 minutes to read

The Greens will also raise the top tax rate while lowering the bottom tax rate, a move which co-leader James Shaw said would mean 97 per cent of New Zealanders earning less than \$150,000 would receive \$209 more a year.

It comes after National and Labour announced major packages to support low and middle-income earners.

Turei said even Labour's more generous package would not achieve the Greens' ultimate goal - ending poverty in New Zealand. Their policy was based on lifting every person above the official poverty line.

Labour leader Andrew Little said his party would be open to adopting parts of

the Green policy, in particular scrapping some of the "perverse" benefit sanctions. On Turei's admission, Little said it was a "brave thing for a politician to do" but he was not worried about any damage to Labour's likely coalition partner.

National Party campaign chair Steven Joyce said Turei's lie was "disappointing" but did not go as far as saying WINZ should pursue the Green co-leader over it. He described the Green policy as a "big backward step".

After delivering a passionate speech about poverty, Turei sheepishly admitted to reporters that she was driving a late-model BMW during the election campaign, while noting that it had been loaned by a friend and ran on electricity.

### **'Mending the Safety Net' package**

- Increase all core benefits cent (Jobseeker Support, Sole Parent Support, Supported Living Payments, Student Allowances) by 20 per cent.
- Reduce the bottom tax rate from 10.5 to 9 per cent for people earning less than \$14,000 per year.
- Raise the top tax rate to 40 per cent for people earning more than \$150,000 per year.
- Raise the minimum wage from \$15.75 to \$17.75 in the first year, and eventually to 66 per cent of the average wage.
- Scrap the In Work Tax Credit and create a children's credit for low-income families worth \$72 per week
- Lift the amount people can earn to \$200 before their benefit is reduced.

### **What is it worth?**

- Single parent not working, two children: \$7197 per year (\$138.40 more than National Budget package)
- Single parent on student allowance, working part time, two children: \$7197 per year (\$138.40 more)
- Two parents, one earning \$70,000, two children: \$2797 per year (\$53.78 more)

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## Narrative Story Heading Two: The Aftermath of Turei's Confession

### Story 3

Table 3			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 17, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Deputy PM on Turei's Benefit Dishonesty	The Aftermath of Turei's Confession
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	New Zealanders are hard-working people who pay taxes		
Adjectives:	Sole parent benefit, honest, not cheating, hard times on benefit, brave and honest to admit to breaking the rules		
Metaphors:	Comparing Todd Barclay to Turei is a long bow		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Not shown up at Parliament for the last three weeks, a scandal where it is alleged that he secretly recorded staff at his electorate office		
Dysphemisms:	Didn't lie deliberately		
What isn't mentioned:	Direct comparison between Todd Barclay's case and Turei's, also any direct financial comparison of beneficiary fraud and tax fraud. This could have changed the tone more in Turei's favour		

## POLITICS

## Deputy PM on Turei's benefit dishonesty

10:54 am on 17 July 2017

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Deputy Prime Minister Paula Bennett, who also received a benefit as a sole parent, says she was never in a position of having to lie to Work and Income, as Metiria Turei did.



There has been a **mixed political reaction to Mrs Turei's admission** that she lied to Work and Income in the 1990s so her sole parent benefit would not be cut.

Labour Party leader Andrew Little said Mrs Turei was brave and honest to admit to breaking the rules, but National Party MP Steven Joyce said people would be disappointed.

Mrs Bennett said she was often on a sole parent benefit herself, but also said Mrs Turei's admission was disappointing.

She said she had never found herself in a position where she had to lie to Work and Income.

"I think people work really hard in this country and they pay their taxes and they want it to be fair and for that we expect people to be honest and not cheating.

"I was often on benefit, I had jobs and I was always trying to get off when I was on, because I wanted to work and didn't want to be on a benefit.

"But no, I didn't deliberately lie, I didn't lie as such about my circumstances ... I didn't lie to them about my circumstances to get more money.

"I remember hard times on the benefit and I've never bought into that people choose to be there ... and that it's a great lifestyle, because it's not, it's actually really hard."

She disagreed with the Green Party policy of removing the practice of cutting benefits to those who failed to comply with particular rules.

"I think we should be talking about the fact that they're talking about taking away work obligations as part of their policy, and I've got to be honest that just completely horrifies me.

"It's never for missing one job interview, there's always a warning system, there's always a series of circumstance.

"I can tell you that for most of those that receive a sanction they never actually get any cut in the weekly amount they get."

She admitted there were thousands of people who did have their benefits cut, however.

"We've equally, though, got the lowest number of sole parents that we've had since 1988.

"And those women and their children - they are predominantly women - are doing so much better off benefit, not just financially but equally for the hope and everything that they've got in that household.

"If you can work you should be, and if you are on a benefit and you can be looking for work then I think most New Zealanders expect there to be a mutual obligation that you're doing that."

South Auckland family lawyer Catriona MacLennan said she was heartened that Mrs Turei was drawing attention to the plight of beneficiaries.

She said New Zealand had an incredibly punitive approach to welfare fraud compared with tax evasion, which she said was a far more significant problem.



"On the government's own figures, benefit fraud at most is \$30 million a year." - Family lawyer Catriona MacLennan 6'33"  
[Playlist](#) | [Download](#)

"Tax evasion is between \$1bn and \$6bn a year, yet we go far more seriously after beneficiaries."

Ms MacLennan said people convicted of welfare fraud were three times more likely to be sent to prison than people accused of cheating on their taxes.

#### Comparing Todd Barclay to Metiria Turei a long bow - deputy PM

Mrs Bennett said it was a wide bow to draw to compare it to National MP Todd Barclay who, after a scandal where it is alleged he secretly recorded staff at his electorate office, announced he would not be standing in the next election.

Mr Barclay has not shown up at Parliament for the past three weeks, but was still being paid about \$3000 a week.

Mrs Bennett said he was still working.

"He's certainly been advocating on behalf of his electorate, he's still doing that work, he's still doing work on behalf of his constituents and things.

She said it had been recess for the past week and the coming week, and although he had not been at Parliament for the two weeks before that she expected he would return to Parliament after the recess.

"He's not fronting to the media and he doesn't actually have to do that. I mean, he has been doing his job in his electorate and I expect to see him in the next three weeks in Parliament."

"I think most people would give him a week, or six days that he wasn't in Parliament, to be fair."

She said she thought the government did give beneficiaries a fair break as well.

"For those who have their benefits cut the difference is they can reapply really easily, and as such get their benefit back."



Narrative Story Heading Two: The Aftermath of Turei's Confession

Story 4

Table 4			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
July 17, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Greens go for the big bang	The Aftermath of Turei's Confession
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Beneficiaries as criminals and second-class citizens		
Adjectives:	Ambitious policy platform, enormous bill, risky side of radical		
Metaphors:	To carve out new ground, poverty as a weapon		
Analogies:	The ground is firmly at the most progressive left-hand end of the progressive left side of politics, wake up in bed, not the backseat of a car, go to school with bellies full of breakfast, lunchbox full of lunch, spend their weekends playing sports not in hospital with bronchitis		
Euphemisms:	Supported living payments, struggle to pay the rent, live below the poverty line		
Dysphemisms:	Whooped and hollered		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not directly discuss any negatives associated with Turei's admission, nor does it question her integrity		



JULY 17, 2017  
Updated August 9, 2017



Tim Murphy  
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COMMENT

## Greens go for the big bang

Green Party members were promised their election campaign was going to carve out new ground and give their candidates a point of difference. Yesterday they got it.

That ground is firmly at the most "progressive" left-hand end of the progressive left side of politics.

Co-leader Metiria Turei safely put the Greens beyond the reach of any post-election entanglement with National by announcing a policy to raise all benefits by 20 percent and remove all sanctions and financial penalties that beneficiaries face from WINZ to stay on welfare. The minimum wage would go up to \$17.75 an hour in year one and keep rising to more than \$21 over time. And a new top personal tax rate of 40 percent for those on \$150,000 and over a year.

Bang. The Greens will not be out-bid for the votes of those 360,000 and their families who receive benefits, including the young on student allowances, those out of work, sole parents and those on supported living payments. Nor will it be outbid for votes of those most concerned about inequality and poverty statistics.

For good measure, Turei confessed to having not told social welfare officials that when she was receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit she had had flatmates who paid towards the rent.

It was all risky stuff. Relatable, perhaps, for many but equally off-putting to the more righteous segments of the electorate. While the Green audience whooped and hollered and gave Turei at least two standing ovations, you could almost hear the other parties calling for an investigation and for her to pay back whatever money she might have been 'overpaid'.

Go on, prosecute me, she seemed to be saying.

There were indications from early on at the Green conference that the party would not be settling for incremental positions on policies. Sarah Helm, the campaign's organiser, opened the public part of the Greens' meeting by declaring this election needed that something extra.

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**The conference has placed the Greens on the risky side of radical. Probably just where they want to be.**

---

Citing the campaign successes of Bernie Sanders in the US Democratic primaries and the Dutch Green Party, she said the party knew it wouldn't grow the Green vote and change the government if it didn't have "a more ambitious policy platform than ever before."

"To make the Greens a part of the next progressive government we need to run the best campaign this party has ever waged."

Turei's co-leader James Shaw pushed the Greens' other big button, climate change, on Saturday with a commitment to a Green Infrastructure Fund involving up to \$400m of public money over four years, plus private backing. He specified where the government spend would come from - by raising energy royalties.

Turei's welfare speech on day two did not set out how the Greens would fund what would be an enormous bill to raise the total benefits bill by one fifth at a stroke. Supporting documents said the

cost of "fixing benefits and Working for Families" would be \$1.4 billion and the increased top tax rate would provide \$163.4 million, with \$35m more saved from not policing benefit sanctions. The gap of about \$1.2 billion a year was not explained in the paperwork, but the Greens say National is forecasting annual surpluses higher than that figure.

"We will not be a government that uses poverty as a weapon against our own people," she said. "No working person will struggle to pay the rent. No beneficiary will live below the poverty line."

It is a bold call and a difficult promise to make, even with a big spend and removing sanctions. "These kids will wake up in a bed not the backseat of a car, they'll go to school with bellies full of breakfast and a lunchbox full of lunch, they will spend their weekends playing sports not in hospital with bronchitis. That's what we'll do."

It will be attacked for being utopian, unachievable and unaffordable. Yet for the Greens it stakes out a place on the political spectrum that they want to occupy.

Turei's policy announcement was distinctly more fervently and loudly welcomed than even the climate change policy the day before.

The audience of about 200 saved their biggest cheers for the removal of sanctions and obligations which Turei said treated beneficiaries as criminals and second-class citizens.

"That includes the sexist punitive section 70A which cuts women's benefits if they can't or won't name the father of their child.....and it includes the intrusive interrogation of a sole parent who is just trying to find a life partner - someone to love."

Political reaction was predictable. National's campaign manager Steven Joyce focused as much on the proposals to remove obligations on beneficiaries as the cost, saying the changes would send welfare dependency backwards by many years, removing the incentives to get off benefits and back to work.

Sarah Helm had told the party members the campaign had been worked on for two years. The conference has placed the Greens on the risky side of radical. Probably just where they want to be.

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## Comments

Narrative Story Heading Three: The Betrayal of Turei

Story 5

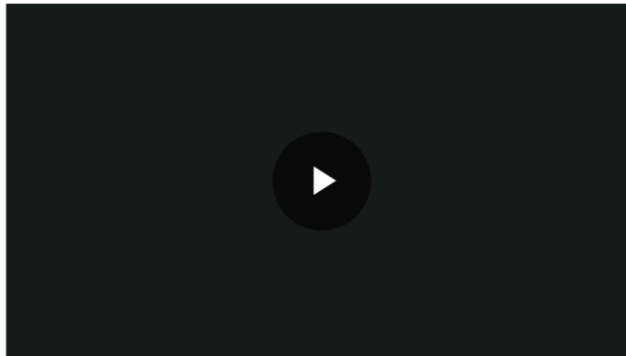
Table 5			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 7, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green MPs Quit in Protest Over Metiria Turei	The Betrayal of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Treated more harshly because she was poor		
Adjectives:	Underperforming, live debate, extreme risk, historical, disproportionate, incompatible, controversial		
Metaphors:	Use not found		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Incompatible with the standards of leadership		
Dysphemisms:	Fundamental breaches of human rights such as torture, genocide or apartheid		
What isn't mentioned:	Possible plight of beneficiaries due to sanctions		

NEW ZEALAND

## Green MPs quit in protest over Metiria Turei

7 Aug, 2017 5:55pm

⌚ 4 minutes to read



James Shaw announces that Kennedy Graham and David Clendon have quit the party and will not be part of the Green Party election campaign



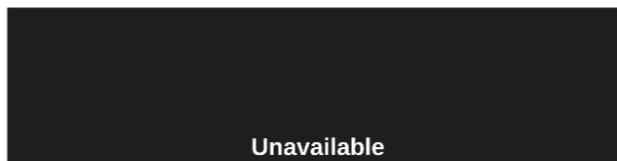
By: [Isaac Davison](#)  
Social Issues Reporter, NZ Herald  
[isaac.davison@nzherald.co.nz](mailto:isaac.davison@nzherald.co.nz) [@isaac\\_davison](#)



The Green Party plans to formally suspend two MPs who resigned in protest at co-leader Metiria Turei's actions.

They could also go further and expel senior MPs Kennedy Graham and David Clendon from the party altogether, forcing them to finish their Parliamentary careers as independent MPs.

Co-leader James Shaw said he was sorry to lose Graham and Clendon, who resigned from the party this evening.



He respected their decision to stand down, but did not respect the way they did it.

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"The way they have chosen to go about it is strongly in violation of every norm, culture and process that we have," he told reporters at a late-night press conference at Parliament.

And despite the disarray caused by Turei's confessions about benefit fraud and her subsequent handling of it, Shaw said he fully backed her, and the 12 other members of the caucus were behind her.

"As I keep saying, there is a conversation now happening, there is a constituency coming forward who are saying thank you for taking this on.

"They are actually getting representation in Parliament for first time."

Although Turei's resignation had been a "live debate" over the past few weeks within the party, she would still be co-leader on election day.

"She will stay on," he said.

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NEW ZEALAND

**Turei: decision made before Jacinda got in touch**

6 Aug, 2017 3:07pm

🕒 3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

**Editorial: Turei should come clean or go**

5 Aug, 2017 5:00am

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NEW ZEALAND

**Turei on benefit fraud: 'I don't regret a minute'**

3 Aug, 2017 12:04pm

🕒 3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

**Political Roundup: In defence of Metiria Turei**

7 Aug, 2017 6:27pm

🕒 12 minutes to read

The party will discuss the suspension of Graham and Clendon at a caucus meeting tomorrow morning. The way they handled their resignation had put the party "at extreme risk" so close to the election.

"They didn't have to do it this way," he said, adding that they should have waited until after the election.

Shaw said he would seek to formally expel the two MPs from the party - a step further than suspension. Shaw said this was possible with the Green Party rules for MPs who brought the party into disrepute.

He rejected suggestions that Turei had also brought the party into disrepute, saying her problems were historical.

"We felt that resigning for something that happened 25 years ago was totally disproportionate.

"Frankly, I am kind of over the level of interrogation she has received," he said, adding that she appeared to be treated more harshly because she was poor.

Graham and Clendon have removed themselves from the party list and from their electorates, effectively meaning they will not make it back into Parliament.

The party had moved to erase their records this evening, wiping them from the list of candidates on the party's website.

#### **'LYING CAN NEVER BE CONDONED'**

The two men explained their reasons for resigning in a joint statement.

"We do not believe that lying to a public agency - Winz, IRD or any other - can ever be condoned."

They said civil disobedience was sometimes justified, but this should be limited to "fundamental breaches of human rights" such as torture, genocide or apartheid.

"It does not stretch to the adequacy of an income benefit," they said.

They added: "The timing by Metiria of her admissions, and her continuing justification of her actions, we see as incompatible with the standards of leadership of the Green Party."

Graham and Clendon called for the party to appoint a new female co-leader for the election.

"As long as Metiria remains co-leader of the party we are unable to support the Green campaign for the 2017 election."

Turei announced on Friday that she would not resign over her controversial benefit history, but that she would not seek a ministerial position if the Greens were in government after the election.

Graham was ranked eighth on the list, and was likely to get re-elected in the



September election. Clendon was ranked at 16, placing him on the cusp of re-election.

Graham has been an MP since 2008. Clendon came into Parliament in 2009 on the list, replacing Sue Bradford. He was demoted in the list rankings for this year's general election, falling from 11th in 2014.

Green Party general manager and campaign director Sarah Helm revealed this evening that both MPs were asked by the party to stand down at the general election but refused to.

As a result, they were demoted in the list rankings, she said, and had been disgruntled ever since.

"I think they were looking for a reason to resign or withdraw."

Helm also revealed that the two MPs had been "underperforming" in the election campaign so far. Clendon had made just one phone call, and Graham had done three to four hours' campaigning work, she said.

Shaw said this evening that the party was disappointed with the MPs' decision to resign.

"I want to thank David and Kennedy for their service to the Green Party. We wish David and Kennedy all the best," he said.

Shaw said their withdrawal meant candidates including Hayley Holt moved up two places on the list and closer to Parliament.

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Narrative Story Heading Three: The Betrayal of Turei

Story 6

Table 6			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 7, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Two Green MPs Quit Over Metiria Turei Admissions	The Betrayal of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Longest serving members of the Green Party, tumultuous three weeks, massive bump, high calibre, energetic, genuine regret, furious		
Metaphors:	Riding high off the back of the revelation offered by Turei herself		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Disgruntled for some time, not happy with their list placings		
Dysphemisms:	Plummet to dangerous lows		
What isn't mentioned:	The impacts of political developments (Turei's admission and MPs' resignations) on the plight of beneficiaries		

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## Two Green MPs quit over Metiria Turei admissions

21:08, Aug 07 2017



RNZ

Two Green MPs will have to quit after their co-leader Metiria Turei refused to step down.

Two senior Green MPs have resigned in protest at their co-leader Metiria Turei's refusal to step down in the wake of revelations she lied to obtain a benefit, essentially saying they couldn't condone her actions.

Kennedy Graham and David Clendon made the threat to quit in protest on Monday afternoon. It is understood their resignations were accepted and they will retire at the election. The pair, two of the longest-serving members of the Green Party, told RNZ while they respected Turei and her work, they could no longer support her leadership.

"We've got to a stage where the two of us think that we can not serve under her leadership... for the rest of this election campaign," Graham said.



MONIQUE FORD/STUFF

Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei has ruled out a ministerial role, but won't resign as co-leader.

Clendon said modern elections were "all about the leadership. We have a list, we have policies but ultimately the leadership is what determines outcomes... I believe Metiria's judgement has been somewhat flawed in choosing not to step down. I cannot in good conscience say I give whole-hearted support to our current leadership which therefore in my own mind disqualifies me from being a candidate".

#### READ MORE:

- \* [Metiria Turei and the future of the Greens](#)
- \* [Turei rules out ministerial role](#)
- \* [Greens co-leader admits registering false voting address](#)

Graham said their position was taken in "sorrow, not anger", while Clendon said his decision was made with "genuine regret".

Green co-leader James Shaw called a press conference at Parliament at 9:30pm.

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The party has had a tumultuous three weeks, initially riding high off the back of the revelation offered by Turei herself, that she lied to Work and Income about her living costs – failing to inform them she had extra flatmates while a single mother receiving the Domestic Purposes Benefit between 1993 and 1998.

Her admission saw the Greens gain a massive bump in the polls and Labour plummet to dangerous lows. But further details emerged that Turei had at one stage been registered as living at the address of the father of her child, while she was collecting the DPB. Turei denies she was living there – rather, she was just enrolled there so she could vote for a friend standing in that electorate.

At another point she was living with her mother, who was a flatmate. Turei was forced to rule herself out of Cabinet contention, if the Greens made it in to Government, but she refused to step down as co-leader.

A source close to the party has suggested the two MPs threatened to go, and the party was prepared to let that happen.

Green Party general manager Sarah Helm said the pair had done very little in the way of campaigning, and suggested they had been disgruntled for some time.

"Neither of these candidates have been campaigning for us all year. David's made one phone call, and Kennedy's put in about three or four hours worth of calls.

"My understanding is that both of them were not happy with their list placings either," Helm said.

The party is understood to be furious at how the two MPs have handled it – going outside normal parliamentary channels to tell media of their plans.

In a statement, co-leader James Shaw confirmed Graham and Clendon had decided to withdraw their names from the Green's 2017 party list.

"We are disappointed they've made this decision, though we respect their right to do so. The Green Party is fortunate to have high calibre and energetic candidates on the party list, who are campaigning hard for the party," he said.

"With this decision, candidates including Hayley Holt, Teall Crossen, Teanau Tuiono, Leilani Tamu, Matt Lawrey and Elizabeth Kerekere all move up two places on the Green Party list."

He thanked the two for their service to the Green Party.

"We wish David and Kennedy all the best," Shaw said.

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Narrative Story Heading Four: The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal

Story 7

Table 7			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 8, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	A Potentially Fatal Act of Political Cannibalism	The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Defined by a lie, continued justification of welfare and electoral fraud along with the refusal to step down have turned that chunk of extra support into poison		
Adjectives:	Record lows, record highs, toxic, messy, financially independent, staunch and loyal, intense, punitive, solo mum, careful, caustic, hollow		
Metaphors:	Political cannibalism, stage-managed, Greens eat into Labour's support, effectively delivering the death blow, tore a chunk of Labour's base, dragged the Green brand even further to the left, character in a much darker light, muddied these waters, burning the bridge, build some kind of firewall, backed into a corner, dinghy of chaos, the bite that killed Little's political career, stories shift beneath the voters' feet, sleek rowing eight, joined at the hip		
Analogies:	Smearing received by Clendon (one of the three-term resigning MP) also added poison to the mix		
Euphemisms:	Careful retelling of her story		
Dysphemisms:	Death blow to Andrew Little's leadership, attempt to consume that chunk is proving toxic, chaos and toxicity seeping, Jonathan Coleman as 'Doctor Death', benefit fraud revelation		
What isn't mentioned:	There is no mention whatsoever of the proposed policy of mending the safety net story, and what it planned to achieve		



Metiria Turei announcing she would not resign as Green Party co-leader, but would rule herself out of being a cabinet minister. Photo by Sam Surroude Sachdeva.



AUGUST 8, 2017  
Updated August 9, 2017



Bernard Hickey

COMMENT

## A potentially fatal act of political cannibalism

*Metiria Turei's benefit fraud revelation was an act of political cannibalism that backfired both for her and the centre-left, writes Bernard Hickey*

The decision to talk about about her welfare fraud successfully helped the Greens eat into Labour's support and energise its base, but the unintended consequences may prove fatal for Turei, and potentially for the chances of a centre-left Government.

Turei's political gamble in her speech to the Green Party annual conference on July 16 certainly seemed to have paid off in the first few weeks. Her carefully stage-managed update to her personal story elicited sympathy among many centre-left voters and sparked an intense debate about the punitive nature of much of our welfare system.

Support for the Greens rose around five percentage points to record highs and Labour's support fell around the same amount to record lows, effectively delivering the death blow to Andrew Little's leadership.

"Today's announcement is very personal to me. I've thought a lot about what I was going to say," Turei said on July 16 in that speech, which also announced a Green Government would increase benefits 20 percent and end the punitive measures around work and relationships for those on benefits.

It was a deliberate ploy that used social policy - rather than the environment - to lift the Green share of the centre-left vote and increase its power in any post-election negotiations. It effectively tore a chunk out of Labour's base and dragged the Green brand even further to the left and away from the 'Green' part of the party.

The trouble is the attempt to consume that chunk is now proving toxic for both Turei and the Greens.

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**"Nobody wants to be defined by a lie."**

**Metiria Turei**

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It is an open question about whether it dooms the chances of a Labour-Green-New Zealand First Government. Ironically, the bite that killed Little's political career has given Labour a much better chance of leading a Government, while achieving the exact opposite of Turei's original ploy.

"Nobody wants to be defined by a lie," Turei said on that day. "Nobody – whether you're a politician or a solo mum," she said of her lies to MSD.

Unfortunately for Turei, she is now indeed defined by that lie and the other lies she did not reveal in that careful retelling of her story.





David Clendon (L) and Kennedy Graham. Photo: Lynn Grieson

The forced revelations on Sunday night that she deliberately registered as living in a house in one electorate - the house of the father of her daughter - while living somewhere else so she could vote for a friend cast her political judgement and character in a much darker light. The detail about her mother living with her as a flatmate while Turei was financially independent also muddied these waters. Trust is hard won and easily lost when stories shift beneath the voters' feet.

Turei must have known that her personal living arrangements would come under intense media scrutiny and that her story had to be the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

The justification of the welfare fraud was initially sympathetic when it appeared she had nothing else to hide. The continued justification of the welfare and electoral fraud, along with the refusal to step down as co-leader, have now turned that chunk of extra support into poison, and not just for the Green Party.

#### **Attempting to build a firewall**

Jacinda Ardern's decisive comment on Friday that she would not accept Turei in her cabinet was an attempt to build some kind of firewall between Labour and the Greens without completely burning the bridge of the Labour-Green Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to change the Government.

Last night's resignations by Kennedy Graham and David Clendon from the Green Party list in protest at Turei's actions and their forced resignation from the caucus have added a new element of toxicity into the mix.

Until last night, Turei could at least claim there was unity in her party behind her stance and the adjustments to her story. That was clearly not the case. The bitterness and rancour underneath the

treatment on the way out of Graham in particular was caustic for the Greens' brand for civility and consensus.

The party's youth wing co-convenor, Meg Williams, tweeted: "Fxxx Kennedy Graham and David Clendon tbh". Green Party general manager Sarah Helm suggested they had resigned because they were unhappy with their list positions and had not been active campaigners.

Graham, an MP for nine years and the brother of National Party cabinet member Sir Doug Graham, was a staunch and loyal Green Party member with strong track records on climate change issues and foreign affairs. He did not deserve to be slandered on the way out.

Clendon, also a three-term MP, did not have quite the same profile, but the smearing he received also added poison to the mix.

Turei again refused to resign both before and after the Green caucus meeting on Tuesday, saying she had the backing of the rest of the caucus.

But pressure is intensifying on Labour to try to dissociate itself from the chaos and toxicity seeping from the left end of the centre-left spectrum.



Labour leader Jacinda Ardern discusses the Greens and Metiria Turei during a stand-up press conference. Photo: Lynn Grieveson

#### **'Relentlessly positive' despite the facts**

Ardern stood by the MOU in a news conference in Parliament on Tuesday morning, but refused to comment any further on the Green leadership, saying only that it was up to the Greens.

Her answers lacked the clarity and decisiveness of Friday and showed how far she had been backed into a corner by the turmoil within the Greens. She said she had not spoken to Turei and is clearly trying to put distance between them, saying only that discussions between Labour and the Greens were happening between staffers or MPs.

She portrayed discussions between Grant Robertson and James Shaw as accidental.

She said she was focused on Labour and said she would deliver stability as the leader of the Labour Party. She was also forced to abandon any sense of negativity towards the Government, saying she had cautioned Deputy Kelvin Davis about his characterisation of National's Bill English as having the personality of a rock and Jonathan Coleman as "Doctor Death".

She also announced Labour would not pursue National with any further questions on the Todd Barclay affair.

#### **'A dinghy of chaos'**

But those comments about stability rung hollow and have served only to strengthen National's appeal for stability and to contrast its 'sleek rowing eight' with the opposition's circling and jostling in a dinghy of chaos.

English was quick to highlight the chaos.

"There's some real pressure on the left-wing parties and they are getting themselves in quite some mess. They are all tied together – Labour and the Greens have a memorandum of understanding, so it affects all of them," English told reporters in Parliament.

---

### **"The attitude to your mistake matters as much as the mistake."**

#### **Bill English**

---

"Labour and the Greens are joined at the hip and I imagine it is a real concern. It looks as if with the turmoil on the left, Labour may have to take a view on Metiria Turei," he said.

"I think the attitude to your mistake matters as much as the mistake. In this case, though, Labour and the Greens are putting themselves forward as an alternative government and it is all looking pretty messy and they have to sort that out."

The other player who will be crucial in this mix is Winston Peters. He has never been that keen on the Greens as a partner in a wider three-way coalition and Turei's benefit fraud and welfare reform ideas don't play well with his appeal to conservative and provincial voters. He has yet to stake out a clear position on Turei's involvement. If he does rule out her involvement in a three-way coalition, then the pressure on Turei to resign for the good of the party will be intense.

### **It's not all good for National**

However, it's not one-way traffic for National.

There is a chance that the Green vote collapses below 10 percent and the left part of the centre-left vote that Turei had won through late July shifts back to an Ardern-led Labour, possibly with an extra dividend.

A Labour on 35 percent or higher would make a much more attractive partner for Peters in a two-way Government, if Peters were to get 15 percent or more on September.

Unintended consequences have been a theme of the last six weeks. There may be a few more to come in the remaining 46 days to the election and the 66 days before Peters' self imposed deadline of October 12 (the returning of the writs) for when he decides as kingmaker who the Government will be.

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Narrative Story Heading Four: The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal

Story 8

Table 8			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 8, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Manurewa Voters have Their Say on Turei's Benefit Fraud	The Aftermath of Turei's Betrayal
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Homeless, poorest, hard, lower income, good families, odd job		
Metaphors:	To make ends meet, pat on the back		
Analogies:	Go out and prostitute on the street, tripping over beggars on the street, needing money just for milk and bread, not been on the corner asking for a cigarette		
Euphemisms:	Lower income, work a lot to earn their livelihood, woes and hard times, never had enough to feed my kids		
Dysphemisms:	Shit food		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not give Turei any credit for driving discussions around poverty		

POLITICS / AUCKLAND REGION

## Manurewa voters have their say on Turei's benefit fraud

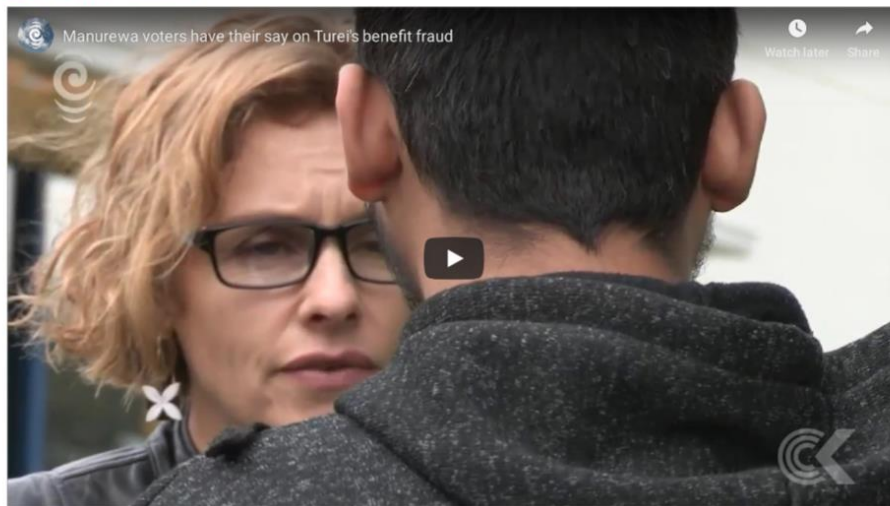
From **Checkpoint**, 5:13 pm on 8 August 2017

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Manurewa residents talk to RNZ's Mihingarangi Forbes about Metiria Turei's decision as a single mother to commit benefit fraud.

Tags: [politics](#) [Auckland Region](#) [Manurewa](#)

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- Christchurch terror attack: The day NZ changed forever
- Kiwi kidnapped in Syria last seen in 2018 - NY Times journo
- Tiger Woods' win sends golf world into spin
- Israel Folau sacked by Rugby Australia

Narrative Story Heading Five: The Resignation of Turei

Story 9

Table 9			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 9, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Green Party Co-Leader Metiria Turei Resigns	The Resignation of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Treated more harshly because she was poor		
Adjectives:	Unbearable, extreme scrutiny, dirty politics, intense scrutiny, enormous contribution, very poor, honest beneficiaries, massively damaged, disgraceful, good character, awfully tough		
Metaphors:	Dig deep and make unfounded accusations, personal vitriol		
Analogies:	Homeless, work a lot to earn their livelihood, feed her family		
Euphemisms:	She was at pains to say her decision to resign was not the result of learning bad poll results		
Dysphemisms:	Vultures that gathered around people's demise		
What isn't mentioned:	That Turei got trapped in the political slugfest while trying to initiate a discussion around poverty		

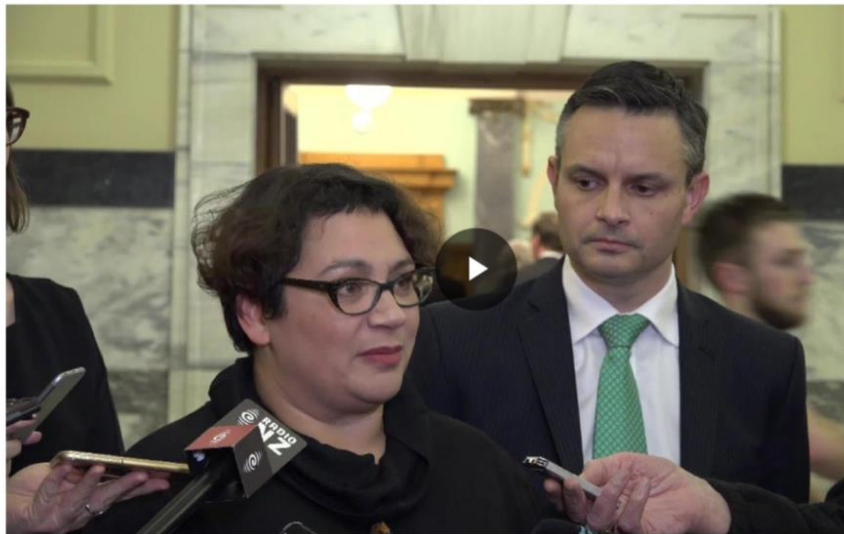


NEW ZEALAND

## Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei resigns ...

9 Aug, 2017 5:05pm

8 minutes to read



By: **Isaac Davison**  
Social Issues Reporter, NZ Herald  
[isaac.davison@nzherald.co.nz](mailto:isaac.davison@nzherald.co.nz) @isaac\_davison



### KEY POINTS:

- Metiria Turei resigns
- Scrutiny of family over Benefit fraud "unbearable"
- Greens plummet to 8.3% in polls
- Co-leader James Shaw will be single leader at election - first time in party's history



Metiria Turei has resigned as Green Party co-leader, saying scrutiny of her family over her past welfare history had become unbearable.

While she was at pains to say her decision to resign was not the result of learning bad poll results, a [Newshub-Reid Research poll](#) released tonight showed the Greens had lost a third of its party vote.

It plummeted 4.7 points to 8.3 per cent. National was down .8 to 44.4 per cent, Labour was up 9 points to 33.1 per cent and New Zealand First was down 3.8 points to 9.2 per cent.






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Turei has been under growing pressure after she admitted to historical offending while on the benefit 20 years ago.




Aug 9 2017 5:37 AM




[Twitter reacts to Metiria Turei's resignation](#)

NZ Herald

Twitter users, for the most part, had an instant outpouring of support for Turei.



NZ Herald online 

Aug 9 2017 5:38 AM


ACT Leader David Seymour responds to the resignation of Metiria Turei:


"The resignation of Metiria Turei is a major victory for taxpayers, for honest beneficiaries, and for decency in politics," Seymour said.

"Metiria Turei has finally done the right thing by the public and her party, but also her family who are now spared the intense scrutiny they would have faced as media investigated the undeclared support she received while on a benefit.

"ACT's focus on this issue has been completely vindicated. Metiria would not have resigned if there was no truth to the reports fed to me – reports that I prompted media to challenge her on.

"This means we can now move on to a campaign that focuses on policy, not personality."



NZ Herald online 

She will retire from Parliament at the election, leaving the Green Party to go into a general election with a single leader for the first time in its history.

Turei will not be replaced until the party's AGM next year and co-leader James Shaw will lead the party alone until then.

Speaking to media this evening, Turei said that if she continued as co leader it would undermine all the Green Party's hard work over many years.

The scrutiny, which had "become unbearable, frankly" was the main reason for standing down, and she was not expecting further damaging revelations which would have forced her to resign.



Turei has been under growing pressure after she admitted to historical offending while on the benefit 20 years ago. Photo / Getty Images



Since opening a conversation about the reality of poverty in New Zealand and the solutions to it, she and her family had been under extreme scrutiny.

### Related articles:

NEW ZEALAND

**'Hurt' Turei: Why I'm staying as co-leader until election**

8 Aug, 2017 3:22pm

NORTHERN ADVOCATE

**Outgoing MP looking forward to more time in Northland**

10 Aug, 2017 6:00am

🕒 3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

### Leighton Smith: James Shaw - you're a fool

9 Aug, 2017 9:47am

🕒 Quick Read

🕒 3 minutes to read

NEW ZEALAND

### Labour eyeing new Green gap in Wellington

9 Aug, 2017 8:35am

🕒 2 minutes to read

"I knew that by telling my personal story, it would help people hear and understand the reality of poverty," Turei said.

"And that has happened - thousands of people have contacted the Green Party with their stories, and many have come forward to tell these in the media as well.

"I also knew that it would open the way for people to criticise me - and I knew the risks of that - but the intensity of those attacks has become too much for my family, and they are now getting in the way of our ability to communicate our solutions - not just for poverty, but for water, climate change and the environment."

She said that resigning was her decision and it was not in response to the incoming poll, saying that it was "not that bad" for the Greens.

"The party did not ask me to resign and as recently as last night the executive gave me a vote of confidence."

She had said just yesterday that she would stay on as co-leader until the election even if the Greens plummeted in the polls.

Co-leader James Shaw said Turei will no longer be on the Green Party list but will campaign for the party vote only in Te Tai Tonga, Shaw said.

He thanked her for her years of service to the Green Party.

"Metiria has been a servant for the party, the environment and for our people for many years. Her dedication and commitment have been unparalleled. As I have said, she chose to tell her story in order to open a conversation - and she has done that.

"I urge everyone who believes in the environment and our people, including those who have come forward in the last few weeks, to continue with their support. It is more important than ever that we change the government."



Co-leader James Shaw said he will be the sole co-leader for the election. Photo / Mark Mitchell



Yesterday, he backed Turei despite the disarray caused by her confessions and her subsequent handling of it.

He rejected suggestions that Turei had also brought the party into disrepute, saying her problems were historical.

"We felt that resigning for something that happened 25 years ago was totally disproportionate.

"Frankly, I am kind of over the level of interrogation she has received," he said, adding that she appeared to be treated more harshly because she was poor.

## Parties react

Reaction has started rolling in from Green MPs and other parties in response to Turei's resignation.

Julie Anne Genter, tipped as a future party leader, wrote on Facebook that Turei's downfall was partly the result of "dirty politics".

"There has also been a fair amount of personal vitriol directed at her, and intense scrutiny of her family. Make no mistake, this is the work of dirty politics. Our political enemies were willing to dig deep and make unfounded accusations - and

Metiria knew this would not stop. The continued pressure on her family was untenable."

Labour leader Jacinda Ardern - who in tonight's poll is only 1.4 per cent behind Bill English for preferred prime minister - acknowledged her "enormous contribution".

"In my nine years in Parliament I have seen MPs from almost all parties resign under tough circumstances. Behind almost every single one has been a history of working hard and championing the people they have represented.

"I want to acknowledge Metiria's enormous contribution to politics and important causes during the fifteen years she has been in Parliament.



"We have worked together both as Parliamentary colleagues and also as members of our respective senior leadership teams."

She said Turei has always had a steadfast commitment to social justice, especially championing the rights of children, and changing the Government.

National minister Paula Bennett said it was a sad end to Turei's political career.

"I imagine it's really disappointing for her. It's kind of nice to pick your own time in this place so I bet it's disappointing for her."

National's campaign chair and Finance Minister Steven Joyce said Turei's resignation "probably had to happen".

"It was going to cause even more trouble for the Greens. But it is just a sign it is a real mess on the left at the moment, and a lot of change is occurring. And I think that will be something people will weigh up as we head into the campaign."

New Zealand First leader Winston Peters said Turei's admission had been compounded by "seriously bad PR and decision-making".

"It was seeking to justify what had happened. And if you know people who have known real poverty and how tough it is out there, and go online and look at some of those comments - there were a whole lot of very poor people who were not falling for that line.

They didn't find it forgiving because they hadn't done that thing themselves.

"And I suppose that is a commentary on the good character that still remains in this country. In the end that's what happened here."

Peters said politics was "awfully tough" and he didn't want to be one of the "vultures" that gathered around people's demise.

"It's tough to see anyone go from here in that way, nobody wants that to be part of their legacy."

ACT leader David Seymour said it was "a major victory for taxpayers, for honest beneficiaries, and for decency in politics".





Greens co-leader Metiria Turei, announcing she will stand-down as leader immediately. Photo / Mark Mitchell



"Metiria Turei has finally done the right thing by the public and her party, but also her family who are now spared the intense scrutiny they would have faced as media investigated the undeclared support she received while on a benefit.

"This means we can now move on to a campaign that focuses on policy, not personality."

He said the party had massively damaged its brand.

"Many beneficiaries struggle to survive and they go to jail for doing what she proudly flaunted that she had done. I think it is disgraceful and I think many more of the facts that were going to come out as her story kept changing are probably best left unsaid now."

Green MP Denise Roche and Kennedy Graham, who had pulled out of the party because of disapproval over Turei's handling of the welfare issue refused to comment.

## New allegation

Radio NZ reported this afternoon that a person close to Turei had alleged that the MP had received significant support from her daughter's grandparents while she was on the benefit in the 1990s.



The source said this contradicted Turei's narrative about being in poverty at the time.

Turei said these allegations were not her reason for standing down, and she decided to resign before being asked about them by Radio NZ.

Turei admitted last week she enrolled at a Mt Albert address where she did not live in 1993 so she could vote for a friend.

Enrolling to vote at an address you do not live at is an offence.

Turei also confirmed her mother was a flatmate for part of the period she claimed the benefit in the 1990s. She said they were financially independent at the time.

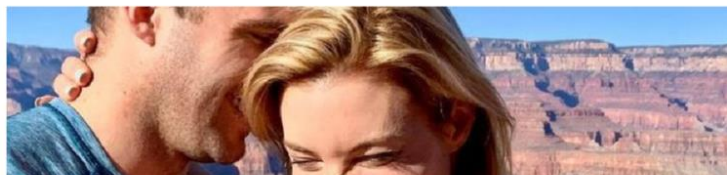
She revealed last month that she did not disclose to Work and Income in the 1990s that she had extra flatmates while she was a solo mother on the domestic purposes benefit.

But she did not reveal then that one of them was her mother.

## Herald recommends



Rugby: Rugby Australia issue Israel Folau a breach notice to terminate...



Narrative Story Heading Five: The Resignation of Turei

Story 10

Table 10			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 9, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	'The Scrutiny on My Family Became Unbearable'	The Resignation of Turei
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Resignation of two MPs from the Green caucus in protest at her continued defence of her frauds		
Adjectives:	Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles		
Metaphors:	Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Her story of poverty was at odds with what they had seen		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	Whether or not the two MPs who resigned after Turei's admission were justified in doing so		



Metiria Turei announces her resignation as Green Co-Leader at a hastily arranged news conference with fellow Co-Leader James Shaw. Photo by Lynn Grieveson



AUGUST 9, 2017  
Updated August 9, 2017



Bernard Hickey

ELECTION 2017

## 'The scrutiny on my family became unbearable'

***Metiria Turei has stunned her supporters and electrified an already tumultuous election campaign by resigning as Green Party co-leader less than 45 days before the election. Bernard Hickey reports from Parliament.***

After days of rejecting calls for her to resign, a set of questions from RNZ's Checkpoint about the support her daughter's extended family gave Turei when she was a young mum on the benefit

appeared to be the final straw.

Her resignation on the black and white tiles of the foyer outside the Parliamentary debating chamber came less than an hour before the release of a poll showing a collapse in the Green Party's support after it emerged Turei had committed both welfare fraud and electoral fraud in the early 1990s and may not have revealed all the support she received from the family of her daughter's father while she was a solo mum on a benefit.

"I can deal with the political scrutiny, I've been doing that for a very long time now, but that scrutiny of family members and broad family members is unacceptable," Turei told reporters after her co-leader James Shaw had announced she was resigning and he would be the Green Party's sole leader for the rest of the election campaign.

"I made the decision actually in travel between meetings in Wellington today, that the right thing to do for my family and the party was to step aside," she said.

Shortly before the news conference, Turei had said on *RNZ's Checkpoint* she would be resigning.

A relative of her daughter's father had told RNZ that the child's grandparents had provided significant support to Turei while she was on the domestic purposes benefit and said her story of poverty was at odds with what they had seen. The family member had said it was "galling" to hear Turei talk of her dire situation of poverty forcing the welfare fraud when she was being supported by the grandmother of her child and did not need to commit the fraud.

RNZ had submitted questions about the allegations to her this afternoon.

Turei and fellow Co-Leader James Shaw made the announcement shortly after 5 pm in Parliament, ending days of speculation about her leadership and the resignation of two MPs from the Green caucus in protest at her continued defence of her frauds.



Metiria Turei smiles up at Co-Leader James Shaw as he praises her in front of reporters. Photo: Lynn Grieveson

Turei said she made the decision this afternoon while in a taxi driving between meetings after considering the pressure on her family and the party.

The resignation came shortly before Newshub published the results of a Reid Research poll taken over the last week, covering the period that included Jacinda Ardern's elevation to the leadership of the Labour Party and the new revelations calling into question Turei's mid-July story about welfare poverty.

The Reid Research poll found Green support fell 4.7 percentage points to 8.3 percent, while Labour support rose nine percent to 33.1 percent. National support fell 0.8 percent to a 10 year low of 44.4 percent. The NZ Herald reported that a poll by UMR for the Labour Party had found Green support had almost halved to 8 percent from 15 percent over the last two weeks, while Labour's support rose from 23 percent to 36 percent.

But the biggest shift was in the preferred Prime Minister support levels. Ardern rose 17.6 percentage points to 26.3 percent and just below Prime Minister Bill English on 27.7 percent, up 1.9 percent. Winston Peters fell 1.9 percent to 10.0 percent.

"I do think if I continue as co-leader I will hinder the success of the kaupapa, and the kaupapa is to change the government and make sure the Greens are at the very heart of that new government," Turei said.

"That's what I've been working 15 years for," she said.

Turei had repeatedly said in recent days she would not resign as leader after revealing on July 16 that she committed welfare fraud in the early 1990s while raising her young daughter, a move she said was aimed at sparking a debate about the punitive nature of the welfare system.

However, it also emerged on Sunday she had falsely declared she was living in an Auckland electorate to vote for a friend, and had flatted with her mother while on the benefit. Kennedy Graham and David Clendon resigned from the caucus yesterday morning and the remaining members of the caucus declared their unanimous support for her.



Green MP Kennedy Graham, along with fellow long-serving MP David Clendon, resigned over Turei's revelations. Photo: Lynn Grieveson

Shaw said the Green Party would select a new co-leader after the election and he would run as the sole leader ahead of the September 23 election.

"I'd like to pay tribute to Metiria for all the work that she has done in her time as co-leader...for the battles she has fought, for the sacrifices she has made, and for the lives she has changed," Shaw said in opening the news conference.

He stood by her decision in the July 16 speech to the Green Party's annual conference to use her own story of poverty as a single mum to challenge the welfare system's approach to cutting the benefits of solo parents and unemployed people if they worked or had partners. She announced a Green Policy to end this approach to welfare and increase benefits 20 percent.

"It started a conversation that made people uncomfortable, including members of our own party and our own caucus. We have paid a heavy price for that, and Metiria has paid a particularly heavy price for that," he said.



"I did not ask her to resign."

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Narrative Story Heading Six: The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation

Story 11

Table 11			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 10, 2017	Radio New Zealand	I Will Remember Metiria Turei Differently	The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Hungry if she were fat, poor if she were smiling in photos		
Adjectives:	Galling, heavy price, black and white tiles, greatest feminist, brutal reality of life for the poor, brutal critique, brutal and personal way		
Metaphors:	Electrified an already tumultuous campaign, the final straw, battles she has fought, paid a heavy price, to dig any further, clung to that last straw, to draw knife-sharp lines between real human rights issues, unworthy, sources crawling out of the woodwork, carve out a truly progressive space in New Zealand politics		
Analogies:	Treats whanau as a mere accumulation of economic units, pissed as a chook		
Euphemisms:	Feeding and housing your child		
Dysphemisms:	Horror of horrors		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not mention Turei's admission of benefit fraud		



## POLITICS / COMMENT &amp; ANALYSIS

## I will remember Metiria Turei differently

5:45 pm on 10 August 2017

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By Stephanie Rodgers - @bootstheory

*Opinion* - I have no doubt that in the political vernacular, 10 or 20 years from now, it will simply be stated, 'Only weeks before the 2017 general election, Metiria Turei was forced to resign over allegations of fraud.' The same way everyone knows Rob Muldoon was pissed as a chook when he called the 1984 snap election, or George W Bush won because of Ralph Nader, or Julia Gillard was the greatest feminist Australia ever produced. We know these to be true, and do not need to dig any further, and never question what wider assumptions or prejudices they betray.

I will remember it differently.



Photo: RNZ

I will remember that for 30 years, no one really challenged the brutal reality of life for the poor in New Zealand. We lamented child poverty rates. We railed against increasingly draconian policies and re-brandings. But there was a gentlemen's agreement that things weren't that bad, the system did what it could, it was just so complicated, we can't simply give people money, they've got rights but they have responsibilities too.

I will remember that as soon as someone - a Māori woman who survived poverty and didn't forget where she came from - said 'This is fundamentally wrong, and we must do better,' she was finished.

I will remember that this was never about electoral fraud or a politician's integrity coming under close scrutiny in a brutal and personal way, though people clung to that straw, who knew they'd never win a moral argument about whether a young woman could be forgiven a lie made to feed her child and make a better life for herself.

I will remember that Bill English and John Key committed essentially the same misdeeds - one lying about his living situation to gain money, one voting in a different electorate from where he lived - but because neither were 23-year-old solo mums, that made it okay for each to serve in turn as our Prime Minister.

I will remember those on the left who celebrated *I Daniel Blake's brutal critique of a draconian welfare system*, so swift to attack Turei for 'condoning lawbreaking' or to draw knife-sharp lines between real human rights issues, which justify civil disobedience, and unworthy ones, like feeding and housing your child.

I will remember the hounding by some journalists, making a story of their coverage of the story. How this crystallised the latest political reporting fad: holding a microphone in someone's face asking the same question 30 times until they slip or snap, and making that the headline. Tune in at 6pm to see me bully a lady into revealing she's not a robot!

I will remember people skiting on social media and fronting television broadcasts declaring it was their investigation, their dogged pursuit of the sex life of a 23-year-old, that got the scalp of a once-destined deputy prime minister - a very unfortunately loaded phrase.

I will remember how it became about whether she could really be hungry if she were fat, or really be poor if she were smiling in photos, about anonymous sources crawling out of the woodwork to declare, horror of horrors, that *her family might have been supporting her* more than was strictly allowed by a system that treats whānau as a mere accumulation of economic units.

I will remember that it was never about any of these 'facts'; it was about sending a clear message that she would never be allowed to move past this, never be allowed to live in peace, and that her child and her family were fair game. The same message everyone who's suffered and dares to challenge their oppression receives.

And I will remember the *outpouring of aroha and support* and passion Metiria Turei inspired. So many people saying that she'd inspired them or their rangatahi, including beneficiaries, to give a damn about this election. So many who finally saw someone in politics who looked and sounded like them, or like they gave a damn.

I hope, too, I will remember that this didn't end with Metiria Turei's resignation. That the Greens continued to carve out a truly progressive space in New Zealand politics, as the only party willing to stand up and say, 'This is the job of government. Looking after people. We're failing right now, but we will fix it.'

Only time will tell.

Political history is a funny thing. We all love a just-so story about the world. What Metiria Turei showed us above all, in her last few weeks as co-leader of the Greens, is that we can challenge those stories, we must challenge those stories, if we are to make the world a better place. No matter the personal price.

*Stephanie Rodgers is a unionist, blogger and director of Piko Consulting.*

- Turei's exit no fairytale ending
- Second poll shows jump for Labour, slump for Greens and NZ First
- Greens' tough week 'entirely recoverable' - Shaw
- No-one is discussing what the Greens actually stand for
- Victims deserve better than Turei's poorly played hand

Tags: Election 2017

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Narrative Story Heading Six: The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation

Story 12

Table 12			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 10, 2017	Stuff New Zealand	Meteria Turei's Hubris Contributed to Her Political Downfall	The Aftermath of Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	What repelled people was the air of sanctimony that accompanied her confession		
Adjectives:	Most tumultuous fortnight, disenchanted young non-voters, spontaneous and broad-based, less cocky, climactic meltdown, nasty side of the Greens, bitchy politics, messier, respected senior MPs		
Metaphors:	Air of sanctimony, to fit the part, bathed in the warm glow of the Left's adulation, lifting the lid on something from her past, digging around for other things, suck it up, irony on a Shakespearean scale, finally getting their feet, crashing down by one woman's hubris, reaping a bountiful harvest of disenchanted Green voters		
Analogies:	Calculated play for votes, a dog whistle, looking less like a heroic crusader		
Euphemisms:	Ceased to be in control of where things were going		
Dysphemisms:	Sneakily gamed the system for her own benefit, defrauding Work and Income New Zealand, illegally pocketed, indulging in vengeful Stalinist bloodletting, nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification		
What isn't mentioned:	The story does not go into detail about the two MPs who resigned and whether or not their resignations were fairly linked to Turei's admission		

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## Meteria Turei's hubris contributed to her political downfall

Karl du Fresne • 05:00, Aug 11 2017



GETTY IMAGES

Metiria Turei's career as an MP appears to be all but over after she quit as Green Party co-leader.

**OPINION:** This was going to be a Turei-free column. Honest. But how can anyone ignore what has been arguably the most tumultuous fortnight in politics since 1984?

My colleague Tom Scott had a cartoon in Wednesday's *Dominion Post* in which a priest asked a boy: "What has Metiria Turei's admission of benefit fraud and the Green Party's subsequent meltdown taught us?"

The boy's answer: "Never admit to making a mistake even 25 years later."



ROBERT KITCHIN/STUFF

Metiria Turei and James Shaw address media after their caucus meeting.

That's a legitimate interpretation of what happened, but my take on it is slightly different.

**READ MORE:**

\* [The Jacinda effect - it's definitely a thing](#)

\* [Greens co-leader Metiria Turei resigns and Jacinda Ardern's popularity soars in new poll](#)

I think most people are prepared to forgive politicians for things they did when they were a lot younger and prone to bad judgments. But I don't think it was Turei's admission of benefit fraud that turned people against her.

What repelled many people was the air of sanctimony that accompanied her confession, as if she had done something noble and virtuous.

People noted that she made this declaration a few weeks out from the election. She said she did it to start a conversation about welfare, but it looked like a calculated play for votes: a dog-whistle. Turei may have been hoping to tap into that same tranche of disenchanted young non-voters that came out behind Jeremy Corbyn in Great Britain and Bernie Sanders in the United States.

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The tactic seemed to work, initially at least. The Left was desperate for a hero – remember, this was before Jacinda Ardern stepped up – and Turei seemed to fit the part. For a few days she bathed in the warm glow of the Left's adulation.

But then things started to fall apart. A backlash started to build, one that was spontaneous and broad-based rather than orchestrated by Turei's political foes. You could see it building on social media, on talkback radio and in letters to the editor.

By the time Turei was summoned to an interview with Work and Income investigators, she was looking decidedly less cocky. She had also changed her tune. From being airily non-committal at first about whether she would repay the taxpayers' money she had illegally pocketed, it was now: "I'm very clear that I will certainly be repaying any over-payment."

But things were to get messier yet. Turei didn't seem to grasp that lifting the lid on something from her past would only encourage reporters to go digging around for other things that might be interesting.

Once that happened, she ceased to be in control of where things were going. That should be Media 101 for politicians.

Sure enough, other facts began to emerge: first a wrong address on the electoral roll and then the rather inconvenient fact that the father of her child was listed as living at the same property – a bad look when she had claimed the DPB. It even turned out her mother had been one of her flatmates while she was defrauding Work and Income by not revealing income from other people in the house.

The cumulative effect was that Turei was soon looking less like a heroic crusader and more like someone who had sneakily gamed the system for her own benefit.

The public was entitled to wonder what else might be in her past. But more crucially, it was entitled to form a judgment about her character.

Then came what seemed a climactic meltdown, when two respected senior Green MPs decided they could no longer, in conscience, share the same party ticket with her.

That exposed a nasty side of the Greens that the public hadn't previously glimpsed. The recriminations were vicious until co-leader James Shaw pulled back from a vow to expel the two.

Shaw said he changed his mind after getting some sleep. I suspect the truth is that he realised how bad it looked for the Greens – who want everyone to think of them as a kind, gentle party that eschews bitchy politics – to be indulging in vengeful Stalinist bloodletting.

But by then it was too late. The damage was done.

And now Turei herself has gone, amid a nauseating display of self-pity and self-justification. "I wish I hadn't had to do this," she whimpered to John Campbell.

Well, she started it, and she should suck it up.



There's irony on a Shakespearean scale in the fact that just when the Greens had high hopes of finally getting their feet under the Cabinet table, the party has been brought crashing down by one woman's hubris. But it's great for the clean-nosed Ardern, who is now reaping a bountiful harvest of disenchanted Green voters.

Stuff



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Narrative Story Heading Seven: Reflections from Turei's Resignation

Story 13

Table 13			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
August 16, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Benefit Fraud vs Tax Evasion: NZ's Hypocrisy	Reflections from Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	It matters if your collar is blue or white, or if your skin is brown or white, by personalising pressing issues like poverty, we let the system off the hook		
Adjectives:	Unduly punitive streak, white and middle class		
Metaphors:	Meteoric rise and fall from grace, getting a run for his money, working under the table, ripped off from the state		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Income inequalities, wealth disparities, gaps between haves and have-nots		
Dysphemisms:	Public pounding for welfare and electoral fraud		
What isn't mentioned:	More of a social issue piece, this story does not mention politics or elections		





The political careers of Jacinda Ardern (L) and Metiria Turei have taken significant turns in a short time. Photos: Lynn Grieverson



AUGUST 16, 2017  
Updated August 16, 2017



**Dr Steve Matthewman**  
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## Benefit fraud vs tax evasion: NZ's hypocrisy

*University of Auckland sociologist Steve Matthewman contrasts the meteoric rise and fall from grace of two of New Zealand's most prominent politicians*

It has been the best of times and the worst of times for two prominent women in New Zealand politics: Jacinda Ardern and Metiria Turei. The former assumed the leadership of the Labour Party and the Opposition on August 1. The latter resigned as co-leader of the Greens just over a week later, her 15-year parliamentary career likely having ended. The media is abuzz with talk of the "Jacinda effect". One journalist wrote of the coming of the "Jacciah", Labour's very own messiah. She certainly seems to have delivered them from dismal polling. Party support is up, and Bill English is getting a run for his money in the preferred PM stakes. Turei, meanwhile, has taken a public pounding for welfare and electoral fraud. What is a sociologist to make of all this?

Turei's fall from grace tells us something about social values. We, the general public, get more upset about what's ripped off from the state than what's withheld from it. Benefit fraud exists, so does tax evasion. But as Kerre McIvor recently noted, when the Government ran a 'dob in a beneficiary' campaign in the late 1990s the anonymous tip-off line received over 11,000 calls, while an IRD campaign to identify tradespersons working under the table received but a few hundred calls.

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**Tax avoidance is clearly the greater evil – it takes more from the public purse – but it is far less likely to be punished. Up to 1000 welfare beneficiaries are prosecuted each year.**

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Lisa Marriott's work shows that welfare fraud amounts to \$30.6 million per annum, which is not insignificant. However it is nothing compared to government losses from tax avoidance. The Inland Revenue Department costs this at a bare minimum of \$1.2 billion annually, although it admits that it may potentially be many times that.

So when it comes to beneficiaries it would seem that the state has an unduly punitive streak. Tax avoidance is clearly the greater evil – it takes more from the public purse – but it is far less likely to be punished. Up to 1000 welfare beneficiaries are prosecuted each year. Only something like 60 to 80 tax evasion cases are filed annually. Tax evaders do not come under anything like the same level of scrutiny. They are less likely to be investigated, fined or incarcerated. They are more likely to be white and middle class – in criminality, as with many other things, it matters if your collar is blue or white, or if your skin is brown or white. (The state keeps ample statistics to this effect which you can fact check at your leisure.) Here, then, is another indisputable sociological insight: we treat people of different races and classes differently.

---

**Jacinda Ardern's elevation to the top position in Labour has clearly found favour with women voters, doubtless exasperated by differential treatment.**

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We also treat people of different genders differently. While New Zealand always comes out favourably in global measures of gender equality, it remains the case that women await pay parity. Back in 2015 Jan Logie examined data from the New Zealand Incomes Survey. On current trends she estimated it would take another 120 years for women to earn as much as men.

Jacinda Ardern's elevation to the top position in Labour has clearly found favour with women voters, doubtless exasperated by differential treatment. Such differences were on display on the day of her ascendancy. She was questioned on her future child plans, which is something no male political leader has been asked. And as a sociologist I would be remiss not to mention another element of Jacinda's popularity, although not necessarily related to gender, which is her charisma. This is an all-important x-factor in the realms of leadership and politics. By comparison Andrew Little, whatever his workplace talents, had, well, little.

It is also sociologically interesting to consider what and whom we believe. I had some interesting experiences accompanying my partner when she co-chaired the Children's Commissioner's Expert Advisory Group on Solutions to Child Poverty. People readily believed in the reality of bad parents, but they typically found it harder, if not impossible, to believe in the reality of child poverty. One of our foundational myths is that ours is a society of equals. Yet since the 1980s we have witnessed some of the widest income inequalities anywhere in the world. Peter Skilling's 2014 survey of 1000 people certainly showed that New Zealanders vastly underestimate our wealth disparities. The gaps between haves and have-nots are bigger than most of us realise.

While we have focused on personalities, in the run-up to the election it makes good sense to scrutinise policies and practices. We are good at praising and blaming people, but not so good at finding fault in social structures, or our economic and political arrangements. Indeed, by personalising pressing issues like poverty we let the system off the hook. The debate surrounding Turei's benefit claims (or Ardern's family plans for that matter) should be set within the context of what we as a society are prepared to excuse and tolerate, what we are not, and what we are willing to change and why.

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Narrative Story Heading Seven: Reflections from Turei's Resignation

Story 14

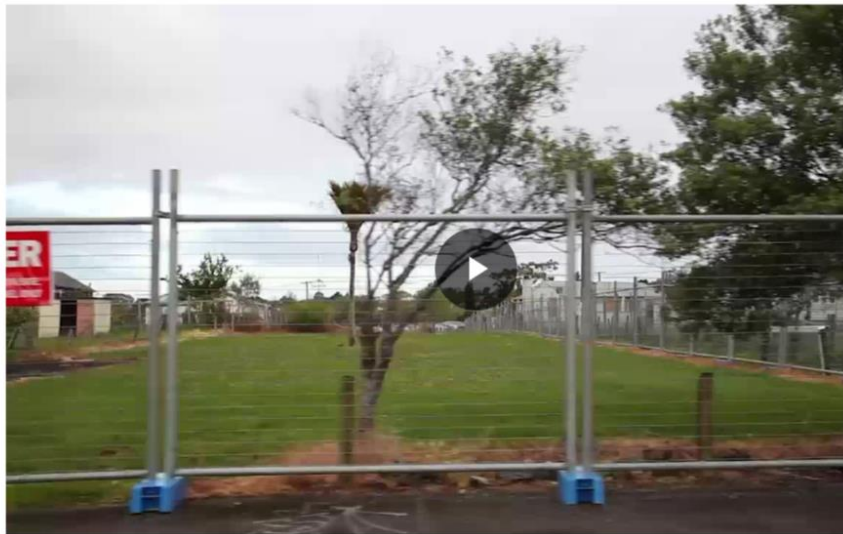
Table 14			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 3, 2017	New Zealand Herald	'End Work and Income's Toxic Culture' - Beneficiaries	Reflections from Turei's Resignation
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Coercing them into precarious jobs which don't let them look after their children		
Adjectives:	Frustrating, ruthless, toxic, cold, decent life		
Metaphors:	Giving beneficiaries a voice, not enough left, lift families out of poverty		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Difficult to get out to change his colostomy bag, eating toast for dinner so my son can have proper food		
Dysphemisms:	Toxic culture, under such stress that he died		
What isn't mentioned:	While Turei's promise to lift core benefits by 20% is mentioned, her admission of benefit fraud is not. The story focuses on giving beneficiaries a voice rather than giving Turei either positive or negative importance		

NEW ZEALAND

## 'End Work and Income's toxic culture' - beneficiaries

3 Sep, 2017 2:00pm

4 minutes to read



Not Enough Left: Beneficiaries speak on their visions for welfare, work and housing. / Accompany Collective & AAAP



By: **Simon Collins**

Education reporter, NZ Herald  
[simon.collins@nzherald.co.nz](mailto:simon.collins@nzherald.co.nz)



Beneficiaries are calling for ending a "toxic culture" at Work and Income and raising welfare benefits by hundreds of dollars a week.

Advocacy group Auckland Action Against Poverty has produced a video giving beneficiaries a voice on issues which have been largely ignored by both major political parties in the election campaign so far.

The beneficiaries say that Work and Income is "coercing" them into precarious jobs which don't allow them to look after their children, yet also don't pay high enough wages to lift their families out of poverty.

One man on the video says a man in a wheelchair was sent to work by himself in a booth in a shopping mall and found it difficult to get out to change his colostomy bag as required every two or three hours.

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"He was under such stress that he died," the man on the video said. "He died because he was forced to go to work."

Benefit rates for families with children were [raised by \\$25 a week last year](#), the first increase in basic benefits above inflation adjustments since the unemployment benefit was cut by \$14 a week and sickness benefits were cut by \$27 a week in 1991.

But average rents have risen even more. An unemployed family of two adults and two children under age 13 receiving the maximum accommodation supplement in Manukau now gets a net \$701.51 a week including family tax credits, but the [average rent in Manukau in July](#) was \$470, leaving just \$222.51 a week to live on.





A mother said, "I'm eating toast for dinner so my son can have proper food." Photo / Auckland Action Against Poverty



A mother says on the video: "I'm eating toast for dinner so my son can have proper food."

A man says getting a job on the minimum wage of \$15.75 an hour (\$630 for 40 hours a week before tax) doesn't help much: "Your net income in your hands is not that much better, and sometimes lower, than if you were on a benefit."

A mother of four told the advocates: "You are only guaranteed work if you are available 24/7, own transport and even then it changes weekly.... It's very frustrating living at the whim of these [temping] agencies. You can't arrange kids and daycares or sitters at the last minute."



"When you need support from Work and Income they are ruthless". Photo / Auckland Action Against Poverty



Beneficiaries on the video describe Work and Income's attitude to them as "toxic", "very cold" and "humiliating".

"You are made to feel like scum," a solo parent told the advocacy group.

Another said her benefit was being docked by \$28 a week because she couldn't name the father of her child.

Auckland Action Against Poverty co-ordinator Vanessa Cole said benefits would need to go up by "hundreds of dollars" to give beneficiaries a decent life.

The agency is campaigning in particular to end the penalty on sole parents who can't or won't name the other parents of their children. Labour, the Greens, NZ First and the Maori Party [have all agreed to abolish the penalty](#), but National and Act still support it.

But Cole said the Green Party was "the only party that has come out in solidarity with beneficiaries".

Former Green co-leader Metiria Turei [promised in July](#) to lift core benefits by 20 per cent and scrap all sanctions, including the current rule that cuts off benefits when a sole parent enters a new relationship. The Greens would [keep paying the benefit until the couple marries or stays together for three years](#).



National's Budget in May promised [big increases in family tax credits and accommodation allowances](#) that would lift the net income of the unemployed Manukau couple with two young children by \$91 a week to \$792.57 from next April.

Labour would [raise family tax credits by an additional \\$11 a week](#) for the first child and pay beneficiary families [an annual \\$700 subsidy](#) (averaging \$13.45 a week) for power bills, raising the Manukau family's income to \$817.09 a week.

NZ First has not made any promises on welfare except to "[ensure that benefits \(and abatement levels\) are inflation adjusted](#)".

## Herald recommends



A cop slapped a suicidal hospital patient. Then the video emerged



Narrative Story Heading Eight: The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty

Story 15

Table 15			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 6, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Metiria Turei's Dream May Yet be Realised	The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Halve the benefits of those with drug problems, job seekers struggling with drugs		
Adjectives:	Historic benefit fraud, flexible, less punitive, disabled people, disabled children, regrettable tweet, worst possible way, unfortunate choice of words, good lives		
Metaphors:	A battle every time you need a bit of extra money, 'Stick' used for National's threat, love has consequences		
Analogies:	To choose between food and going to the doctor		
Euphemisms:	Rather be out on the harbour, long-term unemployed, students with special needs		
Dysphemisms:	Historic benefit fraud		
What isn't mentioned:	The story stops short of crediting Turei with initiating conversations about poverty		



National candidate Nicola Willis (second from left) found herself the odd one out at a panel discussion on disability issues and benefit reform alongside NZ First candidate Talani Meikle, Grant Robertson (Labour) and Mojo Mathers (Greens). Photo by Lynn Grieveson



SEPTEMBER 6, 2017  
Updated September 10, 2017



Lynn Grieveson  
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#### BEST OF THE WEEK

## Metiria Turei's dream may yet be realised

***Metiria Turei's revelations of historic benefit fraud may have forced her to quit as Green Party co-leader and seen her party plummet in the opinion polls, but the rise in support for Labour may yet see her dream of benefit reform realised. Lynn Grieveson reports.***

Labour has committed to a restructure of Work and Income with the aim of making the system more flexible and less punitive.

"One of the very important things for us is reviewing and restructuring Work and Income so it doesn't become a battle every single time you need a little bit of extra money," Labour's Grant Robertson told an election forum yesterday.

"My office and I spend so much time just helping people get the entitlements they should have. We need a big cultural change at Work and Income so it is actually there as a service for all of you," he said to an audience of disability rights advocates.

This puts Labour in stark contrast to National, which today threatened to halve the benefits of those with drug problems who refuse treatment or a job. Along with this "stick", National is promising guaranteed work experience and budget planning help for long-term unemployed and rehabilitation places for job-seekers struggling with drugs, as part of a package that would cost \$72 million over four years.

#### **Calls for culture change, cash and cards**



Labour's Grant Robertson said the party was committed to changing the culture at WINZ. Photo by Lynn Grieveson

Robertson was joined on the panel at the Wellington forum (which was organised by IHC in partnership with several other disability sector groups) by Greens disability spokesperson Mojo Mathers, New Zealand First Rimutaka candidate Talani Meikle and National's Wellington Central candidate Nicola Willis.

They were asked by Ally Moore, from disability advocacy group People First, whether their party would increase the rate of Supported Living Allowance received by disabled people. She said she

faced being on the benefit all her life, but found herself having to choose between food and going to the doctor.

Mathers said the Greens also wanted "reform of the culture at Work and Income", and was able to detail the party's specific policy on benefit increases.

"We are committed to overhauling the social welfare support system including increasing all core benefits by 20 percent and ensuring people can keep more of what they earn while on a benefit by changing the abatement rates," Mathers said.

She said that the Green's policy was that beneficiaries should be able to earn up to \$200 a week before the abatement kicked in, and up to \$400 before the top abatement rate applied.

The Greens also want solo parent benefits reformed so parents entering relationships are not deemed to be "in the nature of a marriage" and liable to lose benefits until the relationship also meets the requirements of the Property (Relationships) Act – a much stricter test that usually requires them to have been living as a de facto couple for three years.

Robertson was less clear than Mathers in his initial answer on whether Labour would increase the rate of supported living payments, but when pressed for a 'yes or no' answer by moderator Susie Ferguson, said: "Yes."

Meikle, standing in for New Zealand First disability spokesperson Ria Bond who was ill, said she was unable to give a specific answer on raising supported living payments. But she said the party would be pushing to effectively extend the SuperGold Card scheme to people with disabilities so they would be able to access the same or similar transport benefits and other discounts.

#### **A tough assignment**



Wellington Central candidate Nicola Willis remained gracious while tackling the tough job of apologising for a party MP and minister. Photo by Lynn Grieveson

With New Zealand First's representative mostly aligning with the Labour-Green position, and ACT leader David Seymour pulling out of the event, it was a challenging meeting for National's Nicola Willis.

Willis was able to point to National's election policy of \$18 caps on GP visits for everyone with a Community Services card or receiving the accommodation supplement, as well as the lifting of the Accommodation Allowance and an ongoing commitment to raise the Supported Living Payments each April by CPI (Consumer Price Index). Labour has promised to cap GP visit costs for the same people as National at \$8 per visit for adults and \$2 for teenagers.

It is always a tougher job to be defending the incumbent Government's record at such election events, but Willis had the extra challenge of being forced to apologise for recent comments by two National MPs.

National's Minister for Disability Issues Nicky Wagner was criticised for tweeting from a disability meeting in June that she would "rather be out on the harbour". To barracking from the audience, Willis said it was "a regrettable tweet interpreted in the worst possible way", which had "really upset" Wagner.

She said work pressures meant Wagner could not attend yesterday's event. Wagner was also unable to make a previous panel discussion in July, and on that occasion her stand-in was Wairarapa MP Alastair Scott.

Willis was forced to apologise for him as well, after he responded at that meeting that "love has consequences" when asked about disabled people losing benefits when they move in with partners.

"With all respect to Alastair I think that was a very unfortunate choice of words," she said.

"I have a lot of sympathy for that situation, which is that it is a big deal to take a relationship to the next level where you move in with someone and I can only imagine that having the complication added to that that your income support is reduced at the same time is a real challenge."

But she managed to hit her own jarring note and appear out of touch when she added that: "We do, across all benefit support, income test for family circumstances and the reason for that is so that if someone is in a living arrangement with someone that is earning \$500,000 a year, we don't think they are someone that we should be targeting government support at. And then that principle is applied across the system."

Robertson's eyebrows shot up at that, and when it came to his turn to speak he raised again the need for more flexibility in the benefit system.

"The problem here is the way in which the benefit system is applied with such rigidity," he said.

"Nicola raised the example where someone moved in with somebody who was earning \$500,000 a year, then we would take account of that. The problem is that is not the circumstance of most people and we need the benefit system to be applied practically and well to enable people to live good lives."

#### **A state apology – and some costly policies**

Willis also found herself the odd one out when it came to an emotive issue that audience members were keen to discuss.

On the historic abuse suffered by people in state care, she said National saw no need for further inquiries or a state apology.

The Government had "done a lot of work with individuals and we are satisfied that redress has happened," Willis said.

Labour, the Greens and New Zealand First all said a state apology was needed, with Labour going further to call for a Royal Commission of Inquiry. The Human Rights Commissioner and the United Nations have also called for an Inquiry.

An apology might not cost much – but Robertson also indicated that Labour would increase the availability of funding for students with special needs and would move on the potentially very expensive issue of pay equity for support staff working with disabled children.

"The Labour party is focusing in this election in particular on [a] truly inclusive education system," he said.

"Our goal is to uncup the ORS funding and make sure that every child in our schooling system has a right to learning support that they need and that schools are supported properly, and that those who work in our schools as teacher aides are supported and funded properly and actually have pay equity within the system they are working in."

ORS (Ongoing Resourcing Scheme) funding is currently capped at 1 percent of the student population, meaning students are effectively having to compete to prove their needs are greatest, with many having applications refused.

Uncapping the funding would mean more teacher aides – and the issue of pay equity for school support staff, including teacher aides, has been bubbling away since the pay equity agreement for aged care workers. A similar agreement for school support staff would see a big injection of education funding required from the Government.

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Narrative Story Heading Eight: The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty

Story 16

Table 16			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 16, 2017	New Zealand Herald	Metiria Turei Back on Campaign Trail with Greens	The Aftermath of Conversations about Poverty
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Cruel and unfair, mean, prosperous, happy, loud cheers, working poor, controversial, lovely, wealthy, homeless, stupid		
Metaphors:	Gift of the story of a real life, a big song and dance, really poor people messing up Queen Street		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	What it's like to live on a benefit, homeless people in Auckland		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	While the piece quotes Turei's statements, the story falls short of giving any opinion on the way things unfolded politically after her admission speech		

NEW ZEALAND

## Metiria Turei back on campaign trail with Greens

16 Sep., 2017 6:05pm

3 minutes to read



The Greens party former leader Metiria Turei addresses a crowd in Otara over poverty.

NZ Herald

By: Isaac Davison

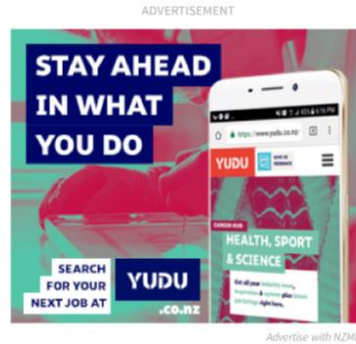


Metiria Turei has returned to the election stage with a speech decrying how cruel and unfair New Zealand has become.

The Green MP spoke at an anti-poverty rally in the Otara town centre in South Auckland this afternoon - her first significant role in the Green campaign since she stood down as co-leader five weeks ago.

Around 200 people attended the rally, including actor and Green Party supporter Robyn Malcolm. Some in the crowd held signs saying "I Stand With Metiria" and there were loud cheers when Turei rose to speak.

"About two months ago I told the country my story and gave the country the gift of a story of a real life - the real life of what it's like to live on a benefit in this country," she said.



She became tearful when speaking about the response to her controversial admission that she once lied to Work and Income to hold on to her benefit - a revelation that later led to her resignation.

"When did we decide that our country would be so mean? So unfair?" Turei said. "That solo mothers and their babies and the working poor grandparents taking care of grandkids should have to suffer so much just for a decent life?"

"We never decided that. That was never our choice, was it? And now we've got the opportunity to fix it."

Turei said the Greens were the only party taking poverty seriously in New Zealand. In a subtle dig at National and Labour, she said her party would go further than just measuring or reducing poverty.

Turei declined to speak to media afterwards. Until now, she has mostly limited her campaigning to the Te Tai Tonga electorate she is standing in. Unless she wins the seat, she will leave Parliament at the election.

Malcolm also spoke at the rally. In a speech which veered between comedy and anger, she said the idea that New Zealand was prosperous and happy was a myth.

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"Has anyone seen that stupid Air New Zealand ad that they play on the planes at the moment ... with some B-grade Hollywood stars representing New Zealand?

"I sit on the plane and think what country are they talking about? They're all wearing white and looking at rainbows and clear waters and clear streams and everybody's happy and lovely and everybody's got their happy, lovely plate of kale and we're all just a lovely bunch of wealthy, happy New Zealanders sitting down here at the bottom of the world.

"And it's bulls\*\*\*."

She cited an Australian documentary-maker who recently visited New Zealand and said he had no idea there were so many homeless people in Auckland.

"I was reminded of one of those - I can't remember his name - ... from the Business Roundtable who made a big song and dance about the really poor people messing up Queen Street.

"I thought, this is not my country. These are not my people."

## Herald recommends



Narrative Story Heading Nine: The Day after Election

Story 17

Table 17			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 24, 2017	Radio New Zealand	Metiria Turei Bows Out	The Day after Election
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Stood down six weeks ago and came off the party's list after revealing she had lied		
Adjectives:	Heavy price		
Metaphors:	Paid a heavy price		
Analogies:	Use not found		
Euphemisms:	Bowed out of politics		
Dysphemisms:	Use not found		
What isn't mentioned:	The story falls short of presenting Turei as standing up for the issue of poverty in the election and therefore risking her own career		

## POLITICS / ELECTION 2017

## Metiria Turei bows out

7:05 am on 24 September 2017

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Metiria Turei has bowed out of politics after 15 years, saying she does not regret telling her benefit fraud story.



Metiria Turei after announcing she was resigning as Green co-leader. Photo: RNZ / Rebekah Parsons-King

The former Green Party co-leader **stood down six weeks ago** and came off the party's list after revealing she had lied to increase her welfare payments in the early 1990s.

Mrs Turei later admitted enrolling at an address **where she was not living** in 1993, saying she did it to vote for a friend who was running as a candidate.

Despite resigning from the Greens list, she stood in the Te Tai Tonga electorate but only managed about half of the votes of Labour's Rino Tirikatene, who has been strongly returned.

Ms Turei said she had regrets, but not about telling her story.

"I will never regret making poverty a major issue in this election. I wish I had understood the impact on my family better - of making that admission - but I don't regret having done it," she said.

Mrs Turei said it was up to the voters whether she went back to Parliament, and she is completely fine with not being returned.

A new co-leader to replace Mrs Turei will be selected at the Greens' next general meeting.



Green Party leader James Shaw. Photo: RNZ/Elliott Childs

Party leader James Shaw has said Mrs Turei started an important conversation which had made people uncomfortable - including some inside the party.

"We have paid a heavy price for that and Metiria has paid a particularly heavy price for that."

Tags: [politics](#) [Election17](#) [Green Party](#) [Metiria Turei](#)

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Narrative Story Heading Nine: The Day after Election

Story 18

Table 18			
Date:	News Outlet:	Story Title:	Narrative Breakdown:
September 24, 2017	Newsroom New Zealand	Let 2020 be the Year of the 'Povertyquake'	The Day after Election
Seven Themes			
Attributes:	Use not found		
Adjectives:	Fake news, fearmongering, awful, selfishness, unliveable levels, honest, compassionate, decent		
Metaphors:	Mending the safety net, downward spiral of escalating debt and despair, admission of benefit fraud electrified the country		
Analogies:	A sidebar in journalists' stories		
Euphemisms:	Turei had to be brought down, most disadvantaged, low wages, homelessness		
Dysphemisms:	Tremors of a povertyquake, mental health crisis, wrecked the lives, subsequent immolation		
What isn't mentioned:	The earlier political turmoil of the elections is not mentioned		





*'Turei sacrificed her political career to fight poverty.' Photo: Lynn Grieveson*



SEPTEMBER 25, 2017  
Updated September 30, 2017



Catriona MacLennan  
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BEST OF THE WEEK

## Let 2020 be the year of the 'povertyquake'

2017 was the year in which the first tremors of a povertyquake started in Aotearoa, but fake news based on fearmongering and selfishness saw them speedily suppressed.

Former Green Party co-leader Metiria Turei's admission of benefit fraud electrified the country and – finally – started a real debate about poverty and our awful treatment of beneficiaries.

In the wake of her confession the Greens soared to 15 per cent in the *1 News-Colmar Brunton* poll, their highest-ever result.

Small wonder, then, that Turei had to be brought down.

She had galvanised a part of the New Zealand community which has never before had political representation.

If those people had turned out to vote, the political landscape would have been utterly changed.

Turei has spent 20 years campaigning against poverty. She said she had made submissions, given speeches and promoted members' bills, but the result had been no improvement.

In fact, things had got worse.

All she had left was her story and her baby's story.

She was right. Without her admission, the Greens' 'Mending the Safety Net' welfare policy would have been a sidebar in journalists' stories.

Political journalists have serious reflection to do on their takedown of Turei.

They decided their job was to dig into who Turei flattered with 25 years ago.

Our country would be a very different – and much better – place if they had instead seen their role as challenging the Minister of Social Development on why benefits are deliberately kept at unliveable levels.

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### **Do any of those who took down Turei have any idea of exactly how little beneficiaries receive each week?**

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If Turei had family support when she was on the benefit that is a good thing: it is the only way she could have survived and completed her law degree.

Beneficiaries without family or other help do not actually survive. They face a downward spiral of escalating debt and despair.

Do any of those who took down Turei have any idea of exactly how little beneficiaries receive each week?

Commentators universally described Turei's confession as an error. It was not. She sacrificed her career for what she believed in and worked for.

The Greens' immediate rise in the polls confirmed the correctness of her decision.

Her subsequent immolation is an indictment of Aotearoa and persuaded the most disadvantaged in our community that their view there was no point in voting was correct.

The other key feature of the election was the ripping aside of Prime Minister Bill English's mask as an honest, compassionate conservative.

This was never an accurate image, given that one of English's first acts on being elected to Parliament in 1990 was to vote in favour of the benefit cuts which have wrecked the lives of hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders and continue to cause poverty to this day.

It was not former Prime Minister John Key who for eight years drove the policies which have resulted in homelessness, low wages, a mental health crisis and other despair.

Key was the popular face, but it was English who was the policy initiator.

In 2017, when Labour overtook National in the polls, English did not hesitate to import Trumpism to Aotearoa and to repeatedly make inaccurate claims.

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**English won for National the largest share of the votes, but he lost the respect of a wide swathe of the electorate – people who until now might have disagreed with him but regarded him as “fundamentally decent”.**

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He saw that National could not defeat Labour on policy and debate, and decided to win at all costs.

In the final televised leaders' debate English stared into the camera and said Labour's fiscal plan had an \$11.7 billion hole, Labour would increase income tax, and the party with the largest number of votes had the right to form a government.

All of those things were untrue.

English won for National the largest share of the votes, but he lost the respect of a wide swathe of the electorate – people who until now might have disagreed with him but regarded him as “fundamentally decent”.

When politicians are dishonest with voters, it diminishes and degrades our democracy.

That should concern all of us.

2017 was also the election in which there were more Māori leaders and deputy leaders of political parties than ever before. By the end of election night, three of those leaders were gone from Parliament.

But they have led the way for other Māori and there will be more in future.

In particular, Māori Party co-leader Marama Fox made a massive impact in her short time in Parliament, including by persuading the Government to increase baseline benefits by \$25 a week.

She was also the consummate MMP politician – respected and wooed by all sectors of the political spectrum.

Also gone from the House is Green MP Mojo Mathers, who is deaf and finally gave representation to the 24 percent of disabled New Zealanders who have never had an advocate in Parliament before.

Turei sacrificed her political career to fight poverty.

Let 2020 be the election of the povertyquake, when New Zealanders come together in shared concern for all parts of the community and vote to lift everyone up, rather than only the favoured.

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