What are the Merits and Scope for Implementing Self-Reliant Policies in the Nelson Regional Economy?

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What are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?

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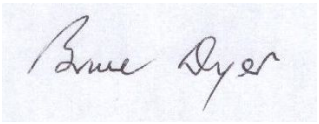
Attestation of authorship

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 any 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.

Signed 

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Abstract

Using the qualitative methodologies of appreciative inquiry and participatory action, this thesis seeks to answer the question, “what are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?” It acknowledges the theoretical and philosophical underpinning provided by Sarkar’s Progressive Utilisation theory and provides an overview of the Nelson regional economy to provide a context for the data provided by the focus group comprised of community leaders from the region. A literature review provided the material necessary to assert the merit of implementing self-reliant policies. It became progressively possible to assess the scope for their implementation from the responses of the focus group and the subsequent survey as well as from incorporating analysis of Nelson City’s *Nelson 2060 - Framing our Future* document. As with Alperovitz and Shuman, (2014), the thesis sees self-reliance as a way regional economies can interact with the rest of the world from a position of strength.

1

Introduction

The introduction relates some of my personal journey and how it links to the study. Also in needing to define what constitutes the Nelson regional economy for the purposes of this thesis, it draws attention to the region's town and country divide. Much of the study is exploratory, in particular in choosing the appreciative inquiry and participatory action methodologies and in purposively choosing a focus group to provide data.

This research can be seen in relation to a personal search that began after leaving university and then working overseas and especially with the breakup of my marriage in 1973 that prompted me to search for a deeper meaning to life. This led me to incorporate the practice of meditation into my daily life which in turn led to learning of Sarkar's holistic socio-economic Progressive Utilisation Theory known as PROUT. The theory, first propounded in 1959, instances a paradigmatic shift in relation to economics, insofar as it incorporates the spiritual in a social science hitherto dominated by materialism. As Galtung described it (as cited in Maheshvarananda, 2012):

> This is the theory of an economic (and political) self-reliant system that is spiritually rather than materialistically inspired . . . In this system money is no longer in command, nor are economists. The goal is not 'economic growth' and the accumulation of wealth, but true human growth that satisfies basic needs, and unlimited spiritual growth topping that. (pp. 177-179)

Seeking to live by yogic principles led me to help establish the Nelson Enterprise Loan Trust in 1997. In addition to providing an income for my family, it created an

opportunity to apply self-reliant principles. Thus the Trust recycles wealth within the Nelson region by making loans of up to $20,000 to small ethical businesses. Ethical in this context means businesses that are socially and environmentally responsible. The effort to live by yogic principles also prompted the purchase of seven acres in the Motueka Valley in 2005 in an attempt to establish a spiritually based community and to model self-reliant living.

In the light of this background, the thesis question 'what are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?' can be recognised as a means of exploring how PROUT's emphasis on self-reliance might be applied, and as a logical extension to my life's journey. Significantly, it involves moving from a personal focus to consideration of how self-reliant strategies might be applied within society. This broadened focus could be said to reflect the maturation of my lived experience.

Contemplating the possibility of an alternative to the capitalist status quo in 2016 has been prompted by what has come to be known as the Great Recession which was precipitated by the 2007-08 global financial crisis and the after-effects. In addition to highlighting the fragility of the global economic system, it can be seen as providing a window of opportunity for the sympathetic consideration of alternatives.

Definition of Self-Reliance

The credit for coining the term self-reliance goes to Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) in a similarly titled essay published in 1841. He saw the quest for self-reliance as being a search for harmony in the universe, which could only be achieved by each person seeking his or her own unique means of self-fulfilment. He demanded that his fellow citizens be worthy of their freedom by daring to be independent in their individual lives. Translated to communities, he emphasised the power of independence, creativity, originality and belief in strength and resilience (as cited in Marinova & Hossain, 2006).

Amable (2011) described self-reliance as one of neo-liberalism's social norms. When applied to communities however, self-reliance repudiates neo-liberalism's notion of people necessarily acting as isolated individuals and there being no such thing as

society (Thatcher, 1987). Indeed communities moving together to achieve economic self-reliance could be seen as both an example of and the essence of society.

Galtung defined self-reliance as development on the basis of a country‘s own resources, involving its populations, and based on the potentials of its cultural values and traditions (as cited in Gooneratne and Mbilinyi, 1992).

In the context of this thesis , self-reliance refers to the development of the capacity within the Nelson regional economy to meet its basic needs including food and energy.

Galtung (1976) offered an additional theoretical context for self-reliance. He interpreted it as a means of the periphery redressing the exploitative imbalance inherent in a centre-periphery dichotomy. In this scenario the centre is the developed Western world and the centre-periphery formation is a vertical division of labour, with exchanges where trade is concerned across a gap in level of processing, where science is concerned across a gap in level of knowledge, and where politics is concerned across a gap in level of initiative - in short, the difference between the sender and the receiver, the leader and the led. The basic idea of self-reliance would be to get out of this type of relationship. The ultimate goal would be to arrive at “a harmonised, co-operative world in which each part is a centre, living at the expense of nobody else, in partnership with nature and in solidarity with future generations” (Cocoyoc Declaration, 1974, p. 898).

Presciently Galtung (1976) foresaw:

> the psychology of the ‘developed’ countries, and the over-developed pockets of the ‘developing’ countries, having to undergo some changes in order for self-reliance to be more acceptable. These changes will probably come about in two ways: negatively as the result of crises produced with the coming redirection and recomposition of world trade…, and positively as a desire for an alternative style of life where self-fulfilment is seen as arising from self-reliance, rather than from mass consumption in an affluent, but clientelised, society. (p. 10)

The Nelson Region

Māori recognise Te Tau Ihu (Top of the South) as a region rather than Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough being distinct areas. Following European settlement in the 1840s, Nelson Province was constituted in 1853. It covered the entire upper South Island, including what is now Marlborough, Buller and parts of North Canterbury. Marlborough was separated off in 1859. The Provincial Government system operated until 1875 when it was replaced by a system of counties and boroughs.

The counties of Collingwood and Takaka operated as such until 1956 when they were amalgamated to form Golden Bay County (Nelson Mail, 2009). This, in turn, was merged into the newly created Tasman District Council in 1989, along with the Motueka and Richmond boroughs and Waimea County (Tasman District Council, 2004).

The region‘s provincial origins are reflected in the regional museum located in Nelson city retaining the name Nelson Provincial Museum, Pupuri Taonga O Te Tai Ao, and Nelson‘s Provincial Anniversary Day that celebrates the founding days of its first colonists.

In 1989, as well as both the Councils of Tasman District and Nelson City being established, the Nelson-Marlborough Regional Council was formed covering the Nelson, Tasman, Marlborough and Kaikoura areas. The Regional Council was dissolved 3 years later in 1992. Discussion with Derek Shaw, one of the councillors at the time, revealed this to have happened at least in part as a result of political factors.

With the dissolution of the Regional Council, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council and Marlborough District Council were reconstituted as unitary councils. As unitary councils each have the responsibilities, duties and powers of a territorial authority in respect of the district for which they were constituted and the responsibilities, duties and powers of a regional council in respect of the region over which they have control.

The foregoing has sought to show that since European settlement, the areas covered by Nelson City Council, on the one hand, and Tasman District Council, on the other, have shared the same history. Similarly as the map on p. 41 shows, the geographical area encompassed by the two Councils forms a natural whole. Economically, the

structural interdependence of the two areas underline that they are essentially one region. As Bill Findlater, CEO of Nelson's Regional Economic Development Agency, cogently described it during the focus group held on 16 September 2015 at Fairfield House, Nelson, the regional economy is effectively one operating region with the rural Tasman area its engine room and the urban Nelson-Richmond area its service provider. (See p 94 below.)

In light of its shared history, the area constituting a geographic whole and the regional economy effectively operating as one region, and notwithstanding Statistics NZ treating the Tasman District and Nelson City as separate regions, for the purposes of this thesis, the Nelson regional economy refers to the area covered by the Nelson City Council and Tasman District Councils.

Choosing to focus the study on the Nelson region was prompted by my knowledge of the region, having lived and worked there for many years since the early 1970s, the size of its population, which according to the 2013 census stood at 93,591, and the fact that Tasman and Golden Bays and their hinterland forms a natural whole. According to Sarkar (1992) such an area:

> is small enough for the planners to understand all the problems of the area; local leadership will be able to solve the problems according to local priorities; planning will be more practical and effective and will give quick, positive results; local socio-cultural bodies can play an active role in mobilizing human and material resources; unemployment will be easily solved; the purchasing capacity of the local people will be enhanced; and a base for a balanced economy will be established (p. 208).

Chapter Two introduces PROUT, the holistic socio-economic theory and philosophy underpinning the research. We take advantage of the insights of Sohail Inayatullah who described PROUT as being comprised of five pillars – (1) Neo-Humanism (the philosophy underpinning PROUT with its principle of social equality), (2) Spirituality, (3) Governance, (4) the Social Cycle and (5) Political Economy (Inayatullah, 2016).

Chapter Three in focussing on the Nelson regional economy, seeks to provide a context for the findings of the focus group that was asked to explore the merits of

implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. It starts by acknowledging the part Māori play in the regional economy before providing an overview of the strategically important areas of food production and energy in the region. It then briefly backgrounds forestry and fishing, two of the region's five main industries and draws attention to the decline in manufacturing as a percentage of the region's gross domestic product (GDP). It reviews the structure of industry including the contribution of co-operatives. In addressing governance, attention is given to the incongruity of there being two unitary authorities governing an area that constitutes a natural geographic and economic whole.

Chapter Four's literature review seeks to establish the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. It does this by first critiquing the methodology underlying the economic system within which we operate. It then looks at significant factors warranting consideration of alternatives to the business-as-usual approach and in particular, the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and the exacerbating levels of inequality. A range of voices affirming the need for change are presented. Notable instances of self-reliance considered include Wales' Pembrokeshire region, the Mondragon co-operatives in Spain's Basque country and the Mondragon-inspired initiative in Cleveland, Ohio. The chapter reviews some of the research relevant to strengthening regional economies like Nelson's before taking an extended look at *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* (Nelson City Council, 2013a). This document, published in 2013, provides the basis of the vision described in Nelson City Council's Long-Term Plan 2015-25.

Chapter Five introduces the methodology used in the research and my ethics application. The chapter opens with a brief acknowledgement that my epistemology - the way I know about the world I live in - has been affected by my practice of meditation. This colours my response to the thesis question. It then reviews the two methodologies - appreciative inquiry and participatory action - used in this research, describing appreciative inquiry as being the study and exploration of what gives life to human enterprises when they function at their best. By contrast, participatory action empowers people to improve the conditions in their lives by putting research capabilities in the hands of the disadvantaged so that they can transform their lives for themselves.

My ethics application was approved by the AUT Ethics Committee on 12 May 2015. It included a summary and reasons for doing this research and the research aims and background. A description of the potential benefits of the research to the participants, the researcher and the wider community was given, as well as the theoretical frameworks or methodological approaches used and how data would be gathered, processed and analysed. The chapter also discusses the focus group that was held on 16 September 2015, including the choice of the method, the process of forming the group, how it was structured, the participants, the facilitation and the follow up survey.

Chapter Six details the focus group outcomes from using the appreciative inquiry process. It also details the results of the survey circulated to participants after the focus group that provided further responses to some of the key issues raised. These responses included support for community forums, attitudes to the region's governance and whether there would be value in further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. Two of the responses to this question were particularly affirming – "There are many reasons to expand this conversation wider and many people who would be interested in being included" and "there is considerable merit in continuing this discussion to effect real change in the region**".**

Chapter Seven presents the findings by attempting to answer the questions posed earlier in Chapter Two as well as considering the findings in relation to the five pillars of PROUT.

Finally, Chapter Eight details conclusions drawn and suggested recommendations.

2

PROUT – a philosophical and theoretical underpinning

There are many traditional paths that acknowledge the spiritual element of socio-economic development. The chapter begins by considering the place of the spiritual when considering socio-economic development for Māori, Canada's Nunuvut and in Buddhism. It then introduces Sarkar's Progressive Utilisation Theory (PROUT) which provides both a philosophical and theoretical underpinning to the research. In so doing, it seeks to place the research in context. PROUT is a holistic socio-economic theory which, in addition to acknowledging physical and mental realities, explicitly incorporates the spiritual. In so doing, it echoes the centrality of spirituality for Māori, Canada's Nunuvut and for indigenous cultures the world over (Cultural Survival n.d.). PROUT articulates a vision in which the domination by corporate interests and the top-down policies characteristic of our globalised world are replaced by increasingly interconnected, self-reliant regional economies.

Māori

"The Māori worldview encourages the building of mauri (life and well-being sustaining capacity) within environment and society" (Reid, Barr, Lambert, & Varona, 2013, p. 3). Both Davis (2006) and Durie (2005) emphasise that "Māori development should be fundamentally rooted in spirituality" (cited in Reid et al. 2013, p. 9).

Ethical guidelines in the form of values, underpin Māori models of sustainable development. Following such values encourages "behaviours that enhance mauri and mana within the human-non-human community, thus maintaining the community's life-sustaining capacity" (Reid et al. 2013, p. 7).

Davis (2006, p. 54) asserted that understanding and respecting the spiritual base of Māori is crucial to environmental sustainability. By a spiritual base she is referring to the creative force of life emanating "from Te Kore [the uncreated] to … Te Ao Mārama [the created]" and manifesting "as life itself unfolding as mauri" (Reid et al. 2013, p. 8). In this regard, Te Kupenga, Statistics New Zealand's first survey of Māori well-being that was carried out in 2013, established that two thirds of Māori felt that spirituality was important (Statistics New Zealand, n.d., 1).

Davis (2006, p. 58) argued that the key to building social wealth is the 'original law' of "unconditional care and regard from one to another. This enabled the capacity to establish and build strong interrelationships, described by Māori as whanaungatanga". The Te Kupenga survey confirms that "relationships are especially important to Māori and their sense of well-being" (Statistics New Zealand, n.d., 2).

Davis (2006, p. 62) also believed that there is a need to maintain and revitalise tikanga[1], language and matauranga[2]. Without this knowledge and philosophical footing, the ancient understandings will not be maintained (Reid et al. 2013, p. 8).

As cited in Reid et al. (2013, p. 9), Durie's model of Māori development is also dynamic in that it prescribes movement emerging from spiritual sources into the world. However, unlike Davis it is not predominantly rooted in a Māori ethical framework. Rather, he adopts a pragmatic approach by looking at Māori access to the resources and opportunities offered by the social, the global and the resource domains. Further, he focuses on the threats to accessing these necessary components.

In this manner, Durie picks up on many of the key elements required to fulfil Maori development aspirations. He also "highlights the exceptionally important element of

[1] The customary system of values and practices that have developed over time and are deeply embedded in the social context (Māori Dictionary, 2016)
[2] The knowledge, comprehension, or understanding of everything visible and invisible existing in the universe (Landcare Research, 2016a)

vision and leadership in the navigational domain for guiding and identifying opportunities" (Reid et al. 2013, p. 9).

Nunuvut, Northern Canada

Nunuvut offers an indigenous example of what Miller and Rowe (2013) believe to be one of the most ambitious, optimistic, and positive experiments in locally-led economic development.

Nunuvut is Canada's largest and northernmost territory and was created on the 1 April 1999 when it was separated from Northwest Territories. At the 2012 census it had a total population of 33,697 comprising mostly the indigenous Inuits. Inuit believe that all living and non-living things have a spirit. Their development is based on **'**Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit' (IQ), which is variously translated as 'traditional Inuit knowledge, principles, values, institutions, organizational systems, or technology' (Miller and Rowe, 2013, p. 126). IQ forms the basis of the territory's vision, which states that guided by Inuit values and culture, by the year 2030:

- Nunavummiut will continue to have a highly valued quality of life and a much better standard of living for those most in need.
- Individuals and families will all be active, healthy and happy.
- Communities will be self-reliant, based on Inuit societal values, with reduced dependence on government.
- Nunavut will be recognized for our unique culture, our ability to help one another, and for our useful contributions to Canadian and global issues (Cited in Miller and Rowe, 2013, p. 129).

Other spiritual traditions contribute similarly valuable insights.

Buddhism

In *Buddhist Economics*, Schumacher (1966) lucidly demonstrates how priorities are affected by taking the metaphysical into account. As an example he suggests that the modern economist tries to maximise consumption while the Buddhist economist tries to maximise human satisfactions. The former seeks to maximise consumption by

optimising productive effort, while the latter seeks to maximise human satisfaction by the optimal pattern of consumption. Such a pattern of consumption, "producing a high degree of human satisfaction by means of a relatively low rate of consumption, allows people to live without great pressure and strain and to fulfil the primary injunction of Buddhist teaching: 'Cease to do evil; try to do good' " (p. 4).

Moreover because physical resources are limited, those who practice a modest use of resources are less likely to "be at each other's throats" than those who have a relatively high rate of use. Similarly people living in highly self-sufficient local communities are less likely to engage in large-scale violence than those depending on world-wide trade.

From the point of view of Buddhist economics, Schumacher suggested that production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life, while dependence on imports from afar and the consequent need to produce for export to unknown and distant peoples is highly uneconomic and justifiable only in exceptional cases and on a small scale.

PROUT

Turning to a consideration of PROUT, it is fair to say that a socio-economic system that stands in contradistinction to capitalism will inevitably have its naysayers. Expressions of support for PROUT from people of the standing of Johan Galtung, Leonardo Boff, Noam Chomsky (Maheshvarananda, 2012) and Howard Zinn (Maheshvarananda, 2003), help put its promise "for the happiness and all-round welfare of all" (Sarkar, 1992, p. 11), in context.

Echoing Māori, the Nunuvut and Buddhism, the relevance of spirituality can be seen in Sarkar's (1959) words where he wrote,

> The ownership of the universe lies with the (Creator)…None of the movable or immovable property of this universe belongs to any particular individual; everything is the common patrimony of all… We must not forget, even for a single moment, that the entire animate world is a vast joint family. Nature has not assigned any portion of this property to any particular individual… (p. 1).

In science and epistemology, the theory of knowledge, a paradigm is a distinct concept or thought pattern. Reinert (2007) described great waves of innovation that significantly change the general purpose technology underlying the productive system as, for example, has happened over recent decades with the development of computers. Perez (2002) and Freeman (2001) name these waves as techno-economic paradigm shifts.

Similarly, propounding a spiritually-based and inclusive socio-economic theory, when the overwhelmingly dominant theory is materialistic and self-centred, can be seen as representing a socio-economic paradigm shift. Thus, for example, the goal of economic activity is moved from profit maximisation to meeting people's consumption needs, and the direction of economic development moves from top down to bottom up. Both represent dramatic shifts in socio-economic thinking.

A feature of the PROUT paradigm is that power moves from being an external agency alone to also being accessed internally. Introducing spirituality redefines the discourse. We know what materialism is but what is a spiritually-based world? The redefinition of the discourse makes it less easily co-opted.

Ontologically PROUT necessarily accepts that reality centrally incorporates the spiritual. In clarifying what is meant by the spiritual, Inayatullah (n.d) suggested four interrelated factors

> 1. A relationship with the transcendent, generally seen as both immanent and transcendental. This relationship is focused on trust, surrender and for Sufis, submission. 2. A practice, either regular meditation or some type of prayer (but not prayer where the goal is to ask for particular products or for the train to come quicker). 3. A physical practice to transform or harmonize the body - yoga, tai chi, qi gong, and other similar practices. 4. Social – a relationship with the community, global, or local, a caring for others. This differs from a debate on whose God, or who is true and who is false, to an epistemology of depth and shallow with openness and inclusion toward others (para. 10).

Defining reality as centrally incorporating the spiritual, PROUT allows for the inclusion of an economic system that is encompassing, has an ethical base, asserts the need for

an equitable distribution of resources and wealth and sees humanity through a social equality lens.

The thesis question, “What are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?” was inspired by PROUT’s vision of a world composed of self-sufficient, albeit interrelated, economic units. While such a world is a far cry from the one we know today, the question can be seen as a contribution to the process of exploring the merits and scope for such policies in regional economies in general and the wider Nelson region in particular.

Regarding self-reliance, PROUT holds that because the promotion of industry in one part of the world cannot eradicate either poverty or unemployment in any other part, it is desirable to form self-sufficient units to produce the essential commodities of life, at least in the fields of agriculture and industry. In this way, people would avoid being faced with tremendous hardship and misery during economic depressions, war and other abnormal circumstances. The scope of these units would increase with the development of transport facilities (Sarkar, 1959, p. 9).

Sarkar (1992) viewed the current economic model as being based on individual or group interests. He argued that instead of this, economic planning needs to be based on the ideal of welfare of all and that making socio-economic regions self-sufficient is the key to ensuring collective welfare. “To develop an area economically, planning must start at the grass roots level – the direction of economic development should be from the bottom to the top, not from the top to the bottom” (p. 195).

The Five Pillars of PROUT

To understand the significance and scope of PROUT, Inayatullah (2016) helpfully saw it as being built on five pillars: Neo-Humanism, the Social Cycle, Spiritual Practice, Governance and Political Economy.

Neo-humanism

Neo-Humanism**,** the philosophy underpinning PROUT, enables a re-visioning of the way we see the world. It expands humanism’s concern for the welfare of human beings, to an awareness of the interconnectedness of all life. Accepting the linkage of all within

the common web of existence, it broadens our outlook from narrowly identifying with group interests, to an encompassing universal outlook.

Neo-Humanism embodies what Sarkar (1982, p. 11) calls the principle of social equality, and offers an enhanced vision of interpersonal relations and society by transcending the view that one group - whether a class, a caste, a nationality, a tribe, a religion or an ethnic community - is endowed with special rights, privileges, or status.

The philosophy of New-Humanism is echoed by Abram (1996) who saw bio-regionalism requiring a radical reconceptualisation of community and the inclusion of other species as constitutive of a bioregional community.

Inayatullah (2016) described PROUT policy-making as engaged neo-humanism (p. 5), with solutions being found at deeper and broader levels than the problem itself. This is reflected in the best-practice recognition of triple bottom lines - the economic, social equity and the environmental aspects - along with the need for a fourth, – the spiritual.

The social cycle

Sarkar (1993, p43) held that society inevitably operates within a social cycle comprised of four differing psychic types – worker, warrior, intellectual and acquisitive. One of either the warrior, intellectual or acquisitive class dominates at any given time with the worker class characterised by a bread-and-butter mentality generally remaining subordinate throughout. Initially the ascendancy of each new class is characterised by their positive influence on social welfare. This eventually turns to exploitation and domination of the other classes at which point revolutionary conditions initiate the entry of the next stage of the cycle.

Sarkar dedicated his life to creating the conditions for the emergence of sadvipras - inspirational individuals embodying outstanding physical, intellectual and spiritual characteristics – and for them to take leadership roles and responsibility for shifting society to the next stage of the social cycle, when confronted with the dominant class bringing about a decline in human welfare. In Galtung's (1996) words, Sarkar saw the courage of the warriors, the creativity of the intellectuals, the industriousness of the merchants and the down-to-earth common sense of the people being combined in one person. Sadvipras see to it that each elite is used for its positive contributions and

yields the ground to its successors when the negative aspects become dominant, like repression (warriors), ritualism (intellectuals) and exploitation (capitalists), and the negative aspect common to all elite groups, arrogance.

Sarkar (1987, p. 3) saw the intervention of sadvipras, as a means of enabling society to avoid gross levels of exploitation and injustice. Thus, over time, the trajectory of human welfare is positive. Taking the social cycle into account makes it possible to place any given economic circumstances in an expanded context.

Globally, society is currently dominated by the acquisitive or capitalist class, characterised inter alia by its extreme concentration of wealth. In the USA, the top one percent have more income than the bottom 180 million (Alperovitz, 2013). In 2010, the combined net worth of India's 100 richest people was $300 billion, a quarter of the country's GDP (Roy, 2014). According to Oxfam (2016), 62 people own as much as half the world's population.

The Māori tradition of esteeming their kaumatua (elders) as the carriers of the status, tradition and integrity of their people and of wisdom and experience (Durie, 1999), can be likened to Sarkar's sadvipra. Were the Nelson's City Council to appoint a group to monitor the progress of *Nelson 2060*, its vision statement, it could be seen as providing a similar opportunity for the expression of the wisdom held in the community.

Spiritual practice

Spiritual practice offers the means to deepen ways of knowing beyond that provided by our intellect. Its help in developing a sense of the interconnectedness of all things could be described as one of the intuitional currents that surpass commonplace understanding. This is one of the reasons for PROUT regarding spirituality as an essential component in what it means to be human, and indispensable in enabling the wise use of the resources of the universe by individuals and society in their search for fulfilment.[3]

Governance

Foundationally PROUT envisages a world comprised of self-reliant regions within a federal and world governance structure. In augmenting the democratic system with

[3] I acknowledge the assistance of Dada Jitendrananda with this paragraph. Email dated 1.9.16

the encompassing vision and wisdom of boards of sadvipras, “PROUT seeks to reconcile the two grand traditions in political theory: democracy and wisdom” (Inayatullah, 2014).

In effect, PROUT seeks a third way that progresses beyond communist and capitalist models of ownership. It also seeks to resolve the local-global dichotomy with economic units that are anchored in their regional communities but progressively engage globally with increasing flows of capital, labour, technology and ideas, once the equity and dignity of local environmental and employment concerns are achieved.

Political economy

Apart from small-scale private and large scale monopolistic government-owned businesses, industry would be predominantly co-operative. An example of this is Taiwan’s official economic ideology, under which key industries should be owned by the State (Chang, 2008). As the ownership of worker co-operatives in particular would necessarily be local, such a system would strengthen regional economies. PROUT envisages economic strength stemming from progressively interconnected self-reliant regional economies the world over, in place of the existing top-down corporate control. Sarkar (1992, p. 16) proposed socio-economic units being formed

> on the basis of factors such as common economic problems; uniform economic potentialities; ethnic similarities; common geographical features; and people’s sentimental legacy, which arises out of common socio-cultural ties like language and cultural expression”.

PROUT asserts that before being opened up to free trade, local economies should be protected so they can grow and become powerful and efficient, an approach that prioritises the economic interest of individuals and communities. Sarkar (1988, p. 29) stated

> make each block economically sound so that the entire socio-economic unit will be self-sufficient. Only then will a country or federation become economically strong and developed in the real sense”.

This is echoed by Ha-Joon Chang (2008, p. 28), a Reader in the Political Economy of Development at Cambridge University, who asserted that

> virtually all the successful developing countries since World War 2 initially

> succeeded through nationalistic policies, using protection, subsidies and other forms of government intervention.

In a similar vein, Reinert in his *How Rich Countries Got Rich…and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor* (2007) argued that poor countries that specialise in line with the theory of comparative advantage, come to specialise in poverty. He cited Friedrich List, the 19th-century German economist who argued that what a country makes matters (p. 268). Even if the manufacturing inside the area is not of world class standard, the people will be better off than if there were no manufacturing and everything is imported. Free trade is suitable only for countries at the same level of development. It is more important that the people within the area are well off and prosperous.

Just as there is no real debate about capitalism currently being the dominant economic system, it is also clear that PROUT represents an exception to the rule of capitalism. Faced as we are with economic, ecological and inequality crises, consideration of alternatives such as that provided by PROUT can be viewed as both rational and necessary responses. Moreover, the merit if not the need to give PROUT serious consideration, is underscored by Einstein's dictum that "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them" (cited in Gallos, 2008, p. 594).

Cato (2013) directly addressed the question of how a system of self-reliant local economies might be designed. As with PROUT, she sees bio-regional economies and, in particular, resilient local economies, as being the solution to society's problem with energy and the environment. Again in concert with PROUT, she adopted Sale's definition of a bio-region as:

> Any part of the earth's surface whose rough boundaries are determined by natural characteristics rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by particular attributes of flora, fauna, water, climate, soils and landform, and by the human settlements and cultures those attributes have given rise to (Cited in Cato, 2013, p. 6).

A significant linkage between bio-regionalism and neo-humanism can be seen in them both being inclusive of other species. Cato wrote "bioregionalism requires… the inclusion of other species as constitutive of a bioregional community" (p. 7).

While Cato's work provided the intellectual case for self-reliant bio-regions, and notwithstanding bioregionalism's aim being "to rehabilitate the intuitive and spiritual aspects of human life, in terms of understanding, public debate and policy-making" (p. 8), it struggles to free itself from its capitalist roots.

Given that the thesis question was inspired by PROUT, questions that its application raises include

- How is the Nelson region's current town and country divide likely to impact on consideration of any recommendations regarding self-reliance policies?
- In light of the principle of social equality, how do existing levels of inequality affect the scope for Nelson's regional economy becoming more self-reliant?
- To what extent does existing regional policy making incorporate multiple bottom lines, including economic, social equity, environment and spiritual aspects?
- Are basic needs in relation to food, clothing, housing, education and health, being met?

An attempt to answer these questions is included in Chapter Seven.

By way of an introduction to PROUT this chapter first acknowledged that there are many traditional paths that recognise the spiritual element of socio-economic development. Five pillars of PROUT, describing its most salient features were then outlined. PROUT is seen as embodying a paradigm shift i.e. a shift in the world view underlying the theory and methodology of economics, for example by rejecting capitalism's self-centred profit- motivated psychology. The social cycle's description of sadvipras as inspirational individuals possessing outstanding physical, intellectual and spiritual characteristics, draws attention to PROUT according a privileged position to those embodying society's wisdom. This parallels Māori esteeming their kaumatua (elders) who are seen as carrying the status, tradition and integrity of their people and the wisdom and experience to guide the younger generations (Mason, 1999). The issue of governance provides a backdrop as to why, far from modelling the promise reflected in being such a richly endowed region, the Nelson region's town-and-country divide inhibits the region's capacity to be the model many of its people aspire it to be.

3

The Nelson regional economy

Figure 1 – Map of New Zealand showing the Nelson/Tasman region
Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/21/New_Zealand_location_map.svg/250px-New_Zealand_location_map.svg.png Reproduced with permission under the terms of a Creative Commons CC BY-SA 3.0 licence.

This chapter seeks to provide a context for the findings of the focus group. It starts by acknowledging the part Māori play in the regional economy before providing an overview of the strategically important areas of food production and energy in the region. As the thesis question makes clear, the focus of this research is to assess the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. Accordingly, rather than attempting a comprehensive coverage of the regional economy per se, the chapter then briefly backgrounds forestry and fishing,

two of the region's five main industries and reviews the structure of industry in the region including the contribution of cooperatives. It addresses the issue of banking in the region and concludes with a consideration of the region's governance.

Māori

Radiocarbon dating has provided evidence of Māori having been in the Nelson area since the 1300s (Walrond, 2015); the earliest settlements in New Zealand were around the wider Nelson-Marlborough region. During the early European settlement period from the 1830s, settlers were heavily reliant on Māori for food, shelter, and transportation especially over water. Māori were commercially astute, with excess produce from their large cultivations particularly of potatoes, being shipped to Wellington and Sydney.

An agreement with the New Zealand Company that organised the European settlement of the region, included provision for 10 percent of the land purchased being reserved for the Māori customary owners, which became known as the Nelson Tenths. The New Zealand Company and Crown also undertook to protect and exempt occupation lands, including pa, waahi tapu and cultivation lands from Pakeha settlement (Wakatū, 2015).

Today, the Wakatū Incorporation that was established in 1977 and is based in Nelson, is the pre-eminent Māori commercial entity in the region. The land vested in Wakatū at the time of its establishment, was the remnants of the Nelson Tenths and some Occupational Reserves and comprised 1393.72 ha valued at $11 million (Wakatū, 2015).

In 2008, the Waitangi Tribunal found the Crown to have breached the Treaty of Waitangi by failing to set aside the reserved land (Wakatū, 2015). Partial redress to the tribal claimants was agreed and enacted in the 2014 Te Tau Ihu Treaty Settlement legislation which included cash settlements of $195.96 million to the different tribes traditionally recognised as being located in the Nelson region. Each tribe has established a Settlement Trust for the benefit of whanau. Trusts have also been created to manage the cash settlements arising from the Treaty settlement legislation (Reid, 2014). Litigation is currently underway in the Supreme Court to address the

outstanding Treaty and Legal breaches (P. Morgan, Chairman of Wakatū Incorporation, personal communication, July 3, 2016).

At the last census in 2013, there were 8,058 Māori in the region, comprising 8.61 percent of the total population.

Today Wakatū Incorporation has approximately 4,000 shareholders. These are descendants of the chiefs and families of hapū that belong to four tribes, Ngāti Koata, Ngāti Rārua, Ngāti Tama and Te Ātiawa, the Māori customary land owners of Nelson, Tasman and Golden Bay lands at the time of European settlement (Wakatū, 2015d). Wakatū has grown to become one of the largest private land owners in the Top of the South (Te Tau Ihu) with assets of some $270 million.

Wakatū's underlying kaupapa (philosophy, or set of principles) as a Māori-centred business, is "to grow an economic base that enables whanau to achieve and maintain spiritual, environmental, social and cultural well-being" (Wakatu, 2015b). It describes its purpose as being "to preserve and enhance our taonga for the benefit of current and future generations" (Wakatū, 2015a). It views the natural environment not only as "a resource but a vital taonga (treasure) to be protected, and as a source of collective identity. Land provides not only physical, but also spiritual sustenance" (Wakatū 2015c). Refreshingly, this way of viewing land sets them apart from solely commercial and profit-driven enterprises which commodify land.

Also distinctive are their values which include

- whanaungatanga "we are a family organisation",
- rangatiratanga "we are courageous and in control of our destiny",
- kaitiakitanga "having been entrusted with the well-being of our people, lands and waters, we are honour-bound to protect them for future generations",
- manaakitanga "respect, nurture and support one another",
- Te Pae Tawhiti - its intergenerational vision,
- always having "a place for kaumatua in governance roles" within their organisation,
- the statement "Our people are precious. Our duty to our heritage is precious"(Wakatū, 2015e).

Insofar as Wakatū Incorporation's shareholders or owners are limited to the descendants of the families descended from the four tribes resident in the Nelson region at the time of European settlement, it can be likened to co-operatives that are owned by people living in a regional community. Both can be viewed as modelling self-reliance. Wakatū's inherent autonomy provides the basis for it to achieve the sustainability goals spelled out in its website such as its guiding objectives

> … to ensure the use and development of our land and resources is sustainable and consistent with our tikanga" and "to create, source and provide products and services of high value and quality that society wants, in a sustainable and ethical manner" (Wakatū, 2015f)

Food Security

An adequate supply of nutritious food is of importance to the Nelson region as it is to all communities. Historically, wars, pandemics, contamination scares and economic recessions have brought attention to the need for a localised food security system. More recent reasons to promote self-reliance instead of relying on centralised and international food supplies include climate change, energy scarcity, population growth and water supply (Mulqueen-Star, 2009). Dependence on food supplies from outside the region leaves communities like Nelson vulnerable to severe food distribution problems during natural disasters, whether slow or sudden.

In October 2014 around 350 people each month were getting assistance from Nelson's foodbank with the organisation having seen a huge increase in the number of Nelson people needing supplies (McPhee, 2014). A year later numbers had shown a further increase, with "an extra 542 parcels delivered in the first half of 2015 compared to the same period last year" (Pullar, 2015).

Nelson's Food for Families began by serving meals to the public with people of all ages attending but mainly from families in low socio-economic situations. It was found that over half of the attendees were children and that many children were attending school with insufficient lunch or no lunch at all. The focus was shifted from community dinners to school kids' lunches with orders being made through the schools (Personal communication with Martin Reading the coordinator, 19.8.2016).

Statistics New Zealand do not collect data that shows the percentage of the food we eat that is imported (Personal communication from Ron Mair of Statistics New Zealand 31.5.2016). However an indication of the Nelson region's dependence on imported foods was given by Frank Brenmuhl (2008), the outgoing chairman of Federated Farmers dairy who wrote "We import 60 percent of the food we eat" (p. 15).

A range of activities in the Nelson/Tasman region reflects a widespread and active interest in the issue of food security. Thus a study entitled *Community Food growing in Nelson: A review and a strategy* (Allison, 2011), was commissioned by the Victory Community Centre and funded by the Nutrition and Physical Activity Programme of the Nelson Marlborough District Health Board. In 2015 the Nelson Environment Centre produced a comprehensive study into food security in Nelson "to enable an enlivened and integrated local food system which will promote community wellness, strengthen local economy and connect individuals, families and neighbourhoods with food supplies" (Vallance, 2015).

Nelson's "Grow It" group is an informal committee that includes representatives from local community gardens, Victory Community Health Centre, Nayland College Community Education, Nelson Environment Centre, Tasman District Council, Nelson City Council and Nelson Marlborough District Health Board. The group has promoted and coordinated training for the community on how to compost and grow food as well as supporting the use of community gardens. Two resource booklets commissioned by the group, "Growing Food at Home Guide" and "Growing Fruit and Nuts in the Top of the South", are freely available from the Nelson Environment Centre's website.

The Localising Food Project which originated in Golden Bay, has the mission of inspiring, empowering and educating communities towards greater local food resilience. The project's vision is to facilitate a movement to enrich local food resilience and empower communities through the delivery of local community resilience workshops and resources, building an on-line local food community and providing inspiring educational films and short stories which document community initiatives already happening around Aotearoa. Its most recent documentary, *SOS: Save Our Seeds*, draws on inspirational models of seed swaps, seed exchanges, seed libraries, seed banks, and family seed businesses from all around New Zealand. It looks

at the significant decline in seed varieties and the rise of corporate control over our food and seeds. Nelson's Elma Turner library hosts a seed library that allows members of the public to borrow seeds for the growing season. After they've grown plants, some of the seeds collected from their freshly grown produce, are expected to be returned to the seed library so others can use them (Hayward, 2016).

One of the ten goals of Nelson City's *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future*, which forms the basis of the council's long term vision (Nelson City Council, 2015), is that "we produce more of our own food" (p. 12). Nelson City is considered a New Zealand leader in growing fruit trees in public places and features "Edible Walks" on its website (Nelson City Council, 2016).

Other activities in the Nelson/Tasman region evidencing awareness of the issue of food security include the existence of the Waimarama and Victory community gardens in Nelson, and community gardens in both Motueka and Golden Bay. The Transition Towns initiatives active in Nelson and Motueka in 2007 and 2008 were part of an international grassroots movement that sought to explore how the community could respond to the environmental, economic and social challenges arising from climate change, resource depletion and an economy based on growth. It was believed that by building local resilience, it would be possible to respond creatively to whatever the future may bring.

Finally, many schools in the region have food gardens. These include Motupipi and Takaka Primary schools in Golden Bay, Victory, Clifton Terrace and Auckland Point School in Nelson and kindergartens in Golden Bay, Hira, Greenwood (Motueka) and Stoke. These have been promoted by Enviroschools and the Nelson Environment Centre's Kids Edible Gardens facilitators.[4]

Of the region's seven secondary schools, Waimea, Nayland, Nelson Girls, Garin and Motueka all have gardens for teaching students gardening skills.[5] Of the two

[4] Marlborough's Kids Edible Gardens programme including that at Tua Marina, is one of New Zealand's best and is fully council supported. (Email from Robina McCurdy, coordinator of the Localising Food Project, 5.6.16)

[5] Sourced from email correspondence with each of the schools.

exceptions Nelson College, has a horticulture area where native trees are propagated for planting around the college and in community projects. While they do not currently have a vegetable garden various attempts have been made. A herb garden to support the food technology classes has been the most successful.

The other exception, Golden Bay High School, has school gardens but work on them is voluntary and not part of a teaching programme.

While the Nelson-Marlborough region prides itself on a healthy lifestyle with good food, in reality the region appears to be following the international trend towards “low quality” food. The 2002/03 New Zealand Health Survey revealed that only 42 percent of Nelson Marlborough people have an adequate fruit and vegetable intake (cited in Nelson Marlborough DHB, 2007).

Figure 2: Garin College’s (2014) all-purpose vegetable garden and new specialist herb gardens.

A North American initiative that could have relevance for the Nelson regional economy is the New England Food Vision involving six New England States. Recognising that their "food system is broken" and that "too many people don't have enough food, and the foundations that our food supply depends on are being destroyed", it has put forward a comprehensive plan to develop a robust, collaborative, sustainable, and equitable regional food system by 2060 (New England Food Vision, 2011).

Energy

The following provides an overview of the strategically important area of energy in the region. The 'Top of the South' generates little power. It imports 120 megawatts (mw), 80 per cent of the region's power needs, via the single 220kV Southern Lakes transmission line which travels through remote country and crosses four branches of the Alpine earthquake Fault - the Wairau, Awatere, Clarence and Hope faults. Scientists have calculated the probability of a large (M8) earthquake in the next 50 years at 30 percent. Such an earthquake could cause horizontal movement of up to eight metres. The aftershock sequence following an Alpine Fault earthquake is likely to continue for many years involving earthquakes of as much as M7 (GNS, n.d.).

While Transpower has spare relocatable pylons (emailed communication from Transpower Team Online, 20.4.2016), whether they would be sufficient were there to be a severe natural event, is open to question. It is entirely possible that an event bad enough to damage the link to the Nelson region could mean there were higher priorities in the Christchurch and Dunedin regions.

The load carried by the transmission pylons is expected to handle the demand up to 2018/ 2020. The transmission link was upgraded a few years ago with the addition of a third conductor set, and its wires are now at full capacity (Bruce Geddes, Technical Director, Freedom Energy Ltd, personal communication 8.4.2016). Any future increase in capacity will involve the costly exercise of pylon replacement to take either more conductors or higher voltages.

LPG and oil products are shipped into the region. The region's relatively high per capita reliance on petroleum leaves the region more vulnerable to oil price rises and supply disruptions than other parts of New Zealand.

Hydro

Embedded functioning hydro generation in the Top of the South includes:

- Cobb Power Station. Construction of the dam began in 1936. It was commissioned in 1944 and completed in 1956. It has a capacity of 32 mw. Since 2003 is has been owned and operated by Trustpower (Trustpower, 2017).
- Brooklyn near Motueka, was commissioned in 1934. It is owned by Lloyd Wensley, runs at 80kW continuous, can peak at 120kW for about two hours and has a capacity of 0.2 mw.
- Pupu Hydro Power Scheme in Golden Bay which is owned by the Pupu Hydro Society runs at about 200kW. It was commissioned in 1929 and has a capacity of 0.3 mw.
- Also in Golden Bay, Onekaka Hydro, owned by Brian Leyland and partners, has two 500kW turbines. One runs continuously. The other runs 20-30 percent of the time for peak load management. The scheme has a capacity of 1.0 mw (Leyland, 2009).

Wind

The region does not have adequate wind resources apart from Northwest Golden Bay from where the building of transmission lines would probably make it uneconomic.

Solar

With its consistent annual average of over 2,400 hours of sunshine, solar energy is a readily available resource. Nelson City Council aspires to make Nelson the solar capital of New Zealand. However the use of solar power when the sun is shining reduces the demand for hydro-electricity. This is likely to have been a factor in the reduction in buy-back rates in 2014 from 25 cents per unit for the first five kilowatt hours generated and ten cents after that, to between seven and ten cents.

When there is a surplus, storing solar power rather than exporting it requires self-storage systems. While the batteries involved are currently very expensive, demand-driven technological changes are likely to see prices drop.

It has been shown that New Zealand's solar resource is world class for concentrating solar power and that the development of large scale solar power

> plants could be feasible at a number of locations [including Nelson]. It was also shown that the levelised cost of electricity (LCOE - a measure of a power source which attempts to compare different methods of electricity generation on a comparable basis) generated by concentrating solar power was already at a level similar to that paid by domestic consumers. Given the LCOE from concentrating solar is expected to reduce further, there may be an opportunity for this technology in New Zealand into the future (Anderson, Duke and Carson, 2011).

In this regard Kost et al. (2013) asserted that the LCOE of all renewable energy technologies, have been falling continuously for decades. This development is driven by technological innovations such as the use of less-expensive and better-performing materials, reduced material consumption, more-efficient production processes, increasing efficiencies as well as automated mass production of components.

Distribution

With the exception of Nelson city, Network Tasman Limited owns the electricity distribution system for the region. Network Tasman Trust holds all the shares in Network Tasman Ltd on behalf of its consumers. The Nelson city area network is run by Nelson Electricity Ltd which is 50 percent owned by Network Tasman and 50 percent by Marlborough Lines Company which is also consumer-owned (personal communication from Geoff Hoare, CFO of Marlborough Lines Company 14.4.2016).

Nelson city's energy use per head of population is similar to the national average. The National Policy Statement (NPS) for Renewable Electricity Generation's primary objective is to increase the generation of electricity in New Zealand from renewable energy sources from the current level of around 75 percent to 90 percent by 2025 (Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, 2013).

The complexity of the energy environment is usefully elaborated in this context by use of a swot analysis.

Strengths

The region has a range of renewable energy resources including small scale hydro opportunities, solar and bio-mass (especially from waste forestry and horticulture

material). Overall, diversity of generation improves electricity supply as it creates choices for managing it. When there is a problem with one source of generation, it is possible to switch to another.

Weaknesses

The region is currently dependent on hydro-electricity being supplied via a single transmission line, and petroleum and other liquid fuels which are supplied via sea. The need to import its energy supplies leaves the region vulnerable.

On a per capita basis, Nelson city's use of fossil fuels, relative to other types of fuels, is almost double the national average. This makes the city vulnerable to fluctuations in the price and availability of oil (Nelson 2060).

A 2012 Cawthron study found that due to the large size of the businesses involved, meaningful and comprehensive contingency plans to counteract possible energy disruptions are unworkable (Newton, 2012).

Opportunities

Renewable energy comprises 29 percent of Nelson city's total usage. This is significantly lower than the national average (Apperley & Reid, 2013). However its high sunshine hours and other natural features makes the region well placed to increase renewable energy as a percentage of total usage. Indeed, one of the professionals working in the field believes that in conjunction with liquid or gas fuels, given its climate, soils, water resources and population, the region could be practically self-sufficient in energy. Bruce Geddes of Freedom Energy that is Nelson based, claimed that this would involve using waste forestry and horticulture material and some biofuel cropping for biogas or biofuel conversion together with multiple small-scale hydro and solar generation units being set up (personal communication from Bruce Geddes, June 16, 2016).

It is likely that the increasingly urgent challenges faced with the onset of climate change would be ameliorated were the region to make a commitment to becoming self-sufficient in renewable energy.

Threats

The area lacks comprehensive contingency plans, in the event of a failure of supply of electricity and or liquid fuels. Any rise in the price of oil is likely to lead to lower energy security going forward.

Internationally renewable energy is being embraced on a hitherto unheard-of scale. Thus an upsurge in new wind, solar and hydro plants and capacity with some 147 Gigawatts of renewable electricity that came online in 2015, saw renewable energy achieve new global records. This increase represents the largest annual increase ever and as much as Africa's entire power-generating capacity **(**REN21 Global Status Report, 2016).

The Nelson region could learn from Denmark's experience of community involvement. There, a large majority of district heating projects are owned by non-profit consumer co-operatives. In Ringkøbing-Skern for example, 5000 consumers own and hold decision-making authority over the community's solar district heating system, contributing to the community's vision of becoming 100 percent self-sufficient through renewable energy by 2020 **(**REN21 Global Status Report, 2016).

Industry

With a population of 103,520, the Nelson regional economy is characterised by having a diverse industrial base, which has generally enabled the economy to retain a degree of buoyancy. Its main industries are sea food, horticulture, forestry, farming and tourism followed by engineering, ICT and aviation, while regional support sectors include wholesale and retail, business support, health, construction and education. Rather than attempting a comprehensive coverage of the regional economy, the following briefly backgrounds fishing and forestry before reviewing the structure of industry in the region including the contribution of co-operatives.

Fishing

While Nelson is the busiest fishing port in the southern hemisphere (Nelson Tasman Civil Defence, 2012), its fishing fleet has dwindled from about 100 in the 1990s to between 15 and 20 in 2016, with 95 percent of them fishing for Talleys who own the fish quota (Phone discussion 2.7.2016 with Darren Guard, past president of Port

Nelson Fishermen's Association). While New Zealand's quota management system (QMS) has been recognised internationally as being a model in conserving fish stocks (McCormack, 2016), the experience of Nelson's fishing community bears out Wilson's (n.d.) caution, that Individual Transferable Quotas can be destructive to communities through a loss of local control of the resource.

Fifty percent of Nelson's other big fishing company, Sealords, is owned by Aotearoa Fishing Limited which in turn is part-owned by 56 iwi. The other 50 percent is owned by the Japanese conglomerate Nippon Suisan Kaisha, usually known as Nissui (Moore, 2016). While its processing headquarters are in Nelson, Sealord's head office is in Penrose, Auckland. Its declining profits saw 323 layoffs at its Nelson plant in 2008, 70 in 2014 and 40-odd in January 2016. Apart from the profits being lost to the region, the layoffs reinforce the problems inherent in companies like Sealords that are based out of town, unilaterally ceasing production.

Nelson's experience with regard to the QMS can be usefully compared with the Alaskan experience. Twenty one years ago Alaska's Community Development Quota corporations were established by an act of Congress and "were allocated ten percent of overall quota in many species. Today they are vibrant multi-million-dollar revenue community-based, economic-development engines". In contrast "Community Quota Entities [that] were formed ten years into the Alaska Individual Fishing Quota programme by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council… were not allocated any quota shares and must buy them on the open market. They do this with great difficulty, given the price for quota and the capital barriers to entering the market" (Backus, 2010, p. 9).

McCormack (2016) draws attention to the design and implementation of the QMS being aligned with the neo-liberal economic system. She sees evidence of this in the system disregarding "the social while simultaneously accentuating a particularly neoliberal economic paradigm in which sustainability is directed towards sustaining the wealth generating potential of quota holdings" (p. 1). The decline in Nelson's fishing community since the 1990s together with the associated concentration of ownership and wealth, can be seen as examples of the social effects having been disregarded.

Acknowledging that fisheries are a public trust and community economic-development asset and should remain as such, there have been calls in the USA for the

- creation of "catch share design pilot programmes with fixed terms for quota ownership, periodic auctioning of all or part of the catch shares, triple bottom-line (ecological, economic, social) performance based allocations, and other strategies to understand the effects of quota programmes on long-term sustainability".
- mandating "direct allocation of quota shares to community entities", and
- mandating "community ownership of at least 10-25 percent of all quota shares in each fishery management council region" (Backus, 2010, p. 2).

Elinor Ostrom, the only woman to win a Nobel Prize in economics, drew attention to there being a range of models available to ensure the preservation of common pool resources, that are natural resources used by many individuals in common, such as fisheries, ground-water basins, forest and irrigation systems. The models typically include "either centralised governmental regulation or privatization of the resource. But, according to Ostrom, there is a third approach to resolving the problem of the commons: the design of durable co-operative institutions that are organized and governed by the resource users themselves" (London, 1998).

Ostrom's findings, together with the effect the QMS has had on Nelson's fishing community and the associated concentration of ownership and wealth, suggest the need for a review of New Zealand's QMS perhaps along the lines proposed by Backus in the USA.

Forestry

In the year to June 2014, timber products accounted for 62 percent of exports through Port Nelson with unprocessed products clearly dominating the trade.
Table 1 below shows that in the nine years to 2014, processed or value-added products have increased from 24 percent to 39 percent of exported timber products. While the percentage of unprocessed products – sawn logs and pulp - has declined, the substantial volume of exports reflect significant opportunities for additional industrial development and employment.

Table 1
Value-added products as a percentage of exported timber products

	2004-2005		2013-2014	
Forestry products	243,000	24%	404,194	39%
Logs – sawn/pulp	750,000	75%	632,788	61%
Total revenue tonnes	993,000	100%	1,036,982	100%

Source. From Port Nelson (2016)

The forestry products principally include Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) and Laminated Veneer Lumber (LVL) and are manufactured by Nelson Pine Industries in its Richmond factory. MDF is an engineered wood product made by breaking down hardwood or softwood residuals into wood fibres, often in a defibrator, combining it with wax and a resin binder, and forming panels by applying high temperature and pressure. Among other things, it is used for furniture, kitchen cabinets and mouldings. LVL is an engineered wood product that uses multiple layers of thin wood assembled with adhesives. It is a structural product that competes with traditional timber and steel construction applications typically used for headers, beams, rimboard, and edge-forming material.

The Nelson Pine Industries plant at Richmond provides direct employment for 220 people involved in forestry, processing, administration and marketing. Typically, for every one job generated in this sort of production sector, there are another four service-related jobs created in the community (Nelson Pine Industries Ltd, 2016). The company's 35,000 hectares of pine forest, including the 30,000 bought from Hancocks at the end of 2015, provides continuity of supply (Moore, 2015).

Being wholly owned by the Sumitomo conglomerate of Japan means the firm's main profits are lost to the region. A further drawback to the firm's operation is that as with any business owned out of the region, should trading circumstances become unfavourable, the corporation has unilateral rights to cease operating – a familiar feature in many North American regional communities.

The other major processor in the region is the Eves Valley sawmill, owned by Carter Holt Harvey and employing around 200 workers. Carter Holt Harvey is wholly owned by Rank Group Investments Limited, the investment company of New Zealander, Graeme Hart.

Reinert (2007) cautions against the export of unprocessed products. He has demonstrated that manufacturing enables economies to prosper by taking advantage of increasing returns, that is, when output increases by more than a proportional change in inputs. In contrast he has asserted, countries that specialise in supplying raw materials to the rest of the world will inevitably reach a point where diminishing returns set in. Thus in forestry, farming, fishing or mining, at a certain point, adding more capital and/or more labour will yield a smaller return for every unit of capital or labour added, i.e. when output increases by less than a proportional change in inputs, there are decreasing returns to scale.

Table 2 below shows that between 2000 and 2015 the manufacturing component of New Zealand's GDP shrank by a quarter (25 percent), the largest fall being in 2009.

Table 2: *Manufacturing as a percentage of all NZ industries' GDP since 2000.*
Units: $, Magnitude = millions

Year	Total GDP all industries	All manufacturing[6]	All manufacturing as percentage of all industries	Percentage change - 2000 as base year
2000	139,104	19,780	14.22	
2001	143,200	20,359	14.22	0.0
2002	148,075	20,646	13.94	1.9
2003	155,051	22,345	14.41	-1.3
2004	161,851	22,989	14.20	0.1
2005	167,846	23,614	14.07	1.1
2006	173,560	23,846	13.74	3.4
2007	178,341	23,060	12.93	9.1
2008	183,256	23,326	12.73	10.5
2009	181,050	21,321	11.78	17.2
2010	180,021	20,235	11.24	21.0
2011	182,458	20,682	11.34	20.3
2012	187,097	20,657	11.04	22.4
2013	191,392	20,921	10.93	23.1
2014	196,628	21,248	10.81	24.0
2015	203,633	21,708	10.66	25.0

Source. Statistics New Zealand (n.d., 3)

[6] Includes Food, Beverage & Tobacco Product; Textile, Leather, Clothing & Footwear; Wood & Paper Products; Petroleum, Chemical, Polymer & Rubber Products; Non-Metallic Mineral Products; Metal Products; Transport equipment, Machinery & Equipment; Furniture & Other.

Table 3 reveals that manufacturing as a proportion of the Nelson regional economy's GDP showed a similar contraction from 2000 to 2013, with manufacturing shrinking by a fifth.

Table 3
Manufacturing as a proportion of the Nelson regional economy's GDP.
Units: $, Magnitude = millions

Year	Total GDP all industries Nelson regional economy	Manufacturing Nelson regional economy	Manufacturing as a percent-age of all industries	Percentage change with 2000 as base year
2000	1,900	345	18.16	
2001	2,035	393	19.31	-6.4
2002	2,219	419	18.88	-4.0
2003	2,300	408	17.74	2.3
2004	2,481	388	15.64	13.9
2005	2,661	401	15.07	17.0
2006	2,653	372	14.02	22.8
2007	2,848	435	15.27	15.9
2008	3,046	442	14.51	20.1
2009	3,144	417	13.26	27.0
2010	3,268	443	13.56	25.3
2011	3,398	491	14.45	20.4
2012	3,450	512	14.84	18.3
2013	3,580	518	14.47	20.3

Source. Statistics New Zealand, (n.d., 4)

Reinert's analysis suggested that the apparent decline in manufacturing as a percentage of all industry is likely to lead to a weakening of both the regional economy and the New Zealand economy. It adds weight to calls for minimising the export of the substantial volumes of unprocessed products such as sawn logs and pulp from the region, as well as consideration of what other measures might be taken to reverse the decline.

Industry Structure

Table 4 shows that in 2015, 8,364 business units comprising two thirds of all businesses in the region were owner-operated with no employees. A further 20 percent were small to medium enterprises employing up to five staff. In contrast, 63

business units employing 100 or more workers, employed 26 percent of all those employed in the region.

Table 4
2015 Employment by industry in the Nelson regional economy.

Employee count groups	No of business units	Percentage of business units in each employee count group	Employee count	Percentage of employees in each employee count group
0	8364	66.3		
1-5.	2535	20.1	6250	13.7
6-9.	699	5.5	5090	11.2
10-19.	558	4.4	7340	16.1
20-49.	315	2.5	9510	20.8
50-99	84	0.7	5470	12.0
100+	63	0.5	11970	26.2
Total	12618	100%	45630	100

Source. Statistics New Zealand, (n.d., 5)

Table 5

2015 Employment in businesses employing up to 20 people (small-to-medium category) by industry in the Nelson regional economy.

Industry	No of employees in businesses employing up to 20 people	Percentage
Retail Trade	2470	13.4
Accom, Food services	2000	11.2
Agric, forestry, fishing	2060	10.8
Construction	1730	9.4
Manufacturing	1670	9.0
Prof scientific technical	1345	7.3
Wholesale Trade	1110	6.0
Other Services	1105	6.0
Health care & social assist	1095	5.9
education & training	1025	5.6
Other	2856	15.5
	18466	100.0

Source. Statistics New Zealand, (n.d., 6)

Of those working in the small-to-medium business category, (businesses with up to 20 employees), Table 5 shows 13 percent were employed in retail trade, 11.2 percent in accommodation and food services and 10.8 percent in agriculture, forestry and fishing. These three industries along with the seven other industries in the small-to-medium business category employed 85 percent of all workers. In descending order of numbers employed, the other seven industries were: construction and manufacturing; professional, scientific and technical; wholesale trade and other services; health care and social assistance; education and training. Each of them employed between 9 percent and 5.6 percent of the total.

Also in 2013, of people aged 15 years and over, there were 2400 people unemployed, giving an unemployment rate for Tasman of 4 percent in Tasman and for Nelson of 5.9 percent, compared with 7.1 percent for all of New Zealand.

Of the region's 103,520 people, 17.7 percent are 65 or older - compared with 14.3 percent for New Zealand as a whole. The effect of having a relatively high proportion of older people is heightened by younger people moving away for tertiary education and work, and by older people retiring to the region. With the economy reliant on primary processing and tourism, residents have relatively few high-income job opportunities. The growth in house prices since the year 2000 – largely driven by lifestyle migration, retirement and rising house prices in Auckland and other parts of the country – has put home ownership beyond the means of many younger locals (Walrond, 2015 [2]).

Statistics New Zealand figures show that in the 7 years to 2013, the total income of those in the wider Nelson region earning $100,000 or more per annum increased by 75 percent, to the point where in 2013, the incomes of 3.75 percent of earners equate with the incomes of 38 percent of low income earners Statistics New Zealand, (n.d., 7).

Co-operatives in the Regional Economy

Co-operative Business New Zealand (2016), identifies six different types of co-operatives: producer, consumer, worker, purchasing, banking and insurance mutual. Those co-operatives such as worker co-operatives which are owned by people living in the local community, benefit regional economies in a number of ways. They represent

an ownership model that ensures their long-term presence with outside interests being unable to readily buy ownership or control and move the business elsewhere. They also help strengthen regional economies by ensuring profits stay and circulate within the region. They can be seen as a form of social capital inasmuch as they form networks of relationships among people who live and work together, thereby enabling the community to function effectively.

The first consumer co-operative in New Zealand was established by settlers at Riwaka in the Nelson area, in 1844. Co-operatives in New Zealand are predominantly producer co-operatives, with approximately half of Co-operative Business New Zealand's full members being agriculturally based. Large co-operatives in New Zealand include Fonterra, Foodstuffs, The Co-operative Bank, Farmlands and Plumbing World. There are currently few consumer co-operatives or worker co-operatives. Two consumer co-operatives in the Christchurch area are Piko Wholefoods that began in 1979 and the recently formed Harbour Co-operative in Lyttleton. Perhaps the most recent is Nelson's Organic Co-operative that was formed in April 2016 and is located on the corner of Tasman Street and Grove Street (Harbour Co-op., n.d.).

Longstanding co-operatives in the Nelson regional economy include Motueka's Potters Patch, a craft co-operative currently in its 35th year (Potters Patch, n.d), Nelson's Fibre Spectrum, an artist's co-operative that has been operating in Trafalgar Street for 30 years (Fibre Spectrum, n.d.) and Golden Bay's Tui Balms which began in 1984 (Tui Balms, 2016).

Tui Balms is a workers' co-operative with 13 part-time staff. This co-operative aims to keep improving how to work together continuously and set an example for a sustainable co-created business model**.**

> We operate with minimal management hierarchies and a flat wage structure that values the participation in the business, rather than creating premiums for personal skills. Decision-making within the co-operative is generally by consensus on all important matters. Consequently, every staff member's contribution to the business is seen as equally important (Tui Balms, 2016).

In the year to March 2016, Tui Balms donated a significant $46,575 - seven percent of its turnover - to New Zealand registered charities (Tui Balms, 2016).

Other businesses operating along co-operative lines in the wider region include Nelson Building Society – a mutual, NZ Credit Union South and Network Tasman that distributes power in the wider Nelson region on behalf of its consumer-owners. The New Zealand Co-operative Economy Report (Garnevska et al, 2017) shows the number of employees in New Zealand's top 30 co-operatives as 48,459, which comprises 2.37% of 2,045,610, the total number of employees in New Zealand in 2015 (Statistics New Zealand. n.d., 8).

Banking

Banks operating in Nelson that remit a significant proportion of their profits to their Australian owners are ANZ, Westpac, BNZ and ASB. The most recently announced after-tax net annual profits from their New Zealand operations for the four banks combined, amounted to $4.59 billion (Meadows, 2015). New Zealand-owned banks on the other hand, are Kiwi Bank, TSB, SBS and the Cooperative Bank. Their profits remain in New Zealand.

The Nelson Building Society (NBS), New Zealand's oldest building society that was established in 1862, is a mutual owned by those who bank with it. While not a bank per se, it offers traditional banking services: loans, deposits and transactional banking to retail and SME customers. Sponsorship of outdoor recreational, cultural and sporting activities is a key part of its commitment to community support (Nelson Building Society, 2017). Smaller institutions offering limited banking services to the wider region include the credit union NZCU South and the Nelson Enterprise Loan Trust that offers loans to small businesses in the region covered by the Nelson City Council and Tasman District Council.

Using a New Zealand owned bank means profits stay in New Zealand. The 2013 census (Statistics New Zealand, n.d., 9) revealed that the Nelson and Tasman regions comprised 2.21 percent of New Zealand's population. Assuming the spread of profits made by the Australian banks in New Zealand to be roughly comparable to the distribution of New Zealand's population, and leaving aside the returns to those of

their investors who live in the region, the profits that are lost to the Nelson and Tasman regional economy amount to between $80 and $100 million (personal communication with Associate Professor David Tripe, Massey University June 6, 2016).

Using institutions that are based in the region means that the region will gain greater economic benefit. Tasman District Council uses the ANZ and the Nelson City Council uses Westpac.

Governance

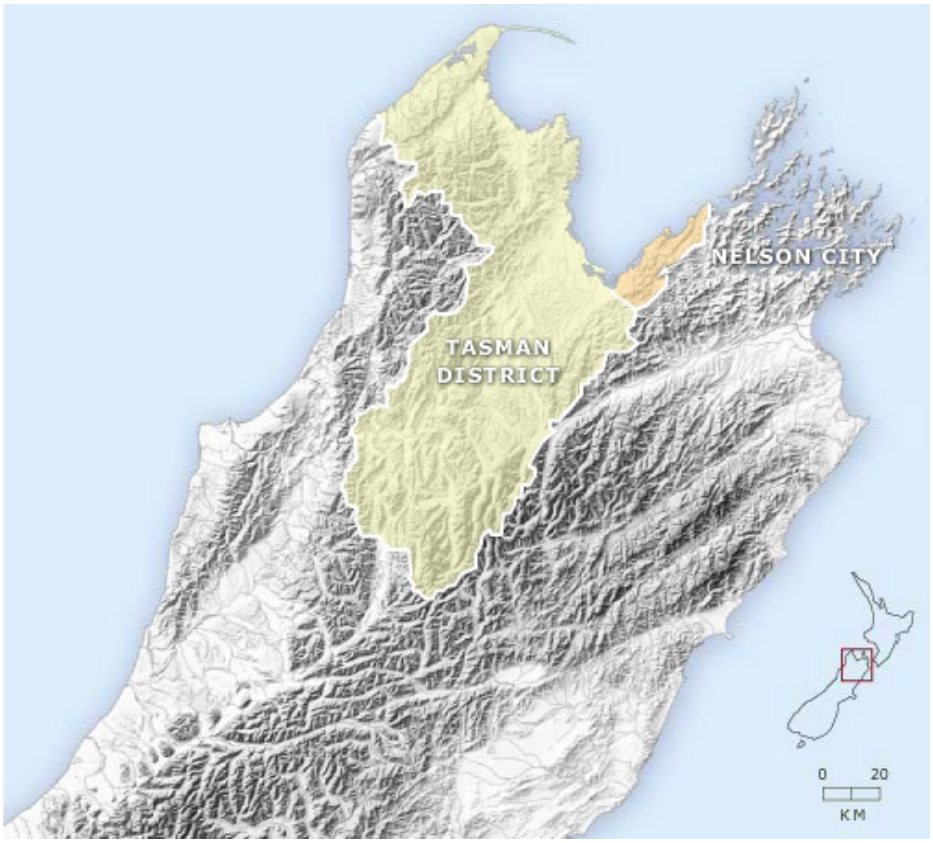
In April 2012, residents and ratepayers of Nelson City and Tasman District voted on a proposal to amalgamate. Nelson City had a voting return of 52 percent with 57 percent voting in favour of the proposal. Tasman District in contrast had a voting return of 64 percent with 75 percent voting against amalgamation (Tasman District Council, 2016).

With Nelson being the urban complement to the rural surrounding regions of Tasman and Golden Bays, the economic fortunes of both are inextricably linked. As well as sharing the same history and culture, the map in Figure 3 shows that geographically they are one. The linkages notwithstanding, a probable contributing factor to Tasman's vote against amalgamation was its leaders being focussed more on the interests of their district than the interests of the region as a whole. Amalgamation may need to wait until it is seen that a united region would be better placed to effectively respond to the challenge of the growing crises: inequality, resource depletion, environmental degradation and the financial crisis. It is likely that a united region would also be better placed to determine a regional identity, the lack of which was recently seen by Christopher Luxon, CEO of Air New Zealand, as weakening the region's tourism potential (cited by one of the focus group participants, 15 September 2015).

Before concluding this chapter, one final issue relates to the Economic Development Agency's Regional Prosperity strategy document covering the period 2014-2020. Robyn Reid (2014) the author of the document, acknowledged that it does not incorporate discussion on external events that will affect the regional economy over the years to 2020 "that neither industry nor regional councils can avoid or influence" (p. 8). In avoiding discussion of external events, the strategy fails to take into account

events such as climate change, resource depletion and economic circumstances that will inevitably impact the region. It also leaves aside discussion of issues such as inequality and the scope for ways to strengthen the regional economy for example by growing its co-operative sector, all issues that would benefit from wider discussion.

Figure 3



Map showing Tasman District and Nelson City

Retrieved from: http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/interactive/28965/local-government-boundaries

Conclusion

This chapter began by recognising that as one of the largest landowners in the region, Maori play an important and largely self-sufficient role in the regional economy. The values they espouse including Kaitiakitanga, 'being honour-bound to protect their people, lands and waters for future generations', their intergenerational vision and esteeming their kaumatua or elders, reflect a principled model and an influence that belies their relatively small population in the region.

The chapter then highlighted the active interest in the region regarding the issue of food security. In respect of energy, it revealed on one hand, how vulnerable the region could be were there to be a severe natural event, and on the other, the scope that exists to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance. In relation to fishing and forestry, it drew attention to some of the issues relevant to the question of self-reliance. Thus it highlighted the concentration of both quota and ownership in fishing to the detriment of the region's fishing community and ipso facto to its levels of inequality. In forestry it raised the problems associated with foreign ownership and the potential dislocation in the event of the operation being mothballed for one reason or another. Drawing on Reinert's (2007) insights, it suggested that the decline in manufacturing as a percentage of Nelson's regional GDP, could lead to a weakening of the economy unless effort is made to ensure that the export of unprocessed raw materials in minimised. The structure of industry and the potential contribution of cooperatives is reviewed. Consideration is given to the incongruity of there being two unitary authorities governing an area that, both geographically and economically, constitutes a natural whole. The chapter concludes with a brief look at banking.

In all, the chapter has sought to provide an overview of the Nelson regional economy in order to provide, together with a review of the relevant literature to which we now turn, a context for the outcomes of the focus group.

4

Literature Review

This chapter seeks to answer the question 'why ask about the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?' It does this first by critiquing the theoretical foundations underpinning the economic system within which we operate. It then looks at significant factors warranting consideration of alternatives to the business-as-usual approach and, in particular, the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and the exacerbating levels of inequality.

A range of voices affirming the need for change is presented, including Shuman's recognition that rather than being "a way of disengaging from the rest of the world", maximising local self-reliance represents a way for regional economies to engage "with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength" (Alperovitz and Shuman, 2014, p. 40).

Notable instances of self-reliance considered include the examples set by Wales' Pembrokeshire region, the Mondragon co-operatives in Spain's Basque country and the Mondragon-inspired initiative in Cleveland, Ohio. The chapter reviews some of the research relevant to strengthening regional economies like Nelson's before taking an extended look at *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future*, a document published in 2013 that forms the basis of the vision described in Nelson City Council's Long Term Plan 2015-25.

The Theoretical Foundations of our Current Economic System

Nelson's regional economy along with Western economies in general, remain mired in the outmoded methodology of positivism. The contrast between the status quo and the emerging world-views, including collaborative commons, feminist economics,

indigenous economics, behavioural economics, ecological economics and Proutist economics, reflects the tension underlying the thesis question.

Positivism, a term coined by Comte in the 19th century (as cited in Sarantakos, 1993), described the doctrine underpinning scientific method reflected in David Hume's assertion that "reason is a more certain guide to truth than experience"(Macrone, 1994, p. 30). In general, positivism refers to a philosophy of science in which metaphysical notions are deemed to be unscientific (Alvey, 2005). This is reflected in the dominant world culture which lives within the Western scientific creation story that matter gives rise to consciousness**.** Vedic science, on the other hand, espouses the exact opposite. "Consciousness is universally primary and gives rise to matter … the conclusion many Western-trained scientists", have come to believe (Sahtouris, 2008, p. 7).

Critics of the positivist doctrine assert that objectivity needs to also take account of subjectivity in the process of scientific inquiry. On the one hand, we have the positivist doctrine underpinning scientific method as reflected in Hume's assertion that "reason is a more certain guide to truth than experience". On the other, we have an acknowledgement that post-positivist approaches are interpretive. As Henriques et al expressed it, this has led to an emphasis on meaning, seeing the person, experience and knowledge as "multiple, relational *and not bounded by reason"* (cited in Ryan, 2006, p. 16), (emphasis added). While the positivist doctrine has effectively been eclipsed, its influence remains evident in the context of economics, where it constitutes neo-liberal capitalism's theoretical foundation (Alvey, 2005).

In his influential *Small is Beautiful,* Schumacher (1973) described economics "as it is currently practised and owing to its addiction to purely quantitative analysis and its refusal to look into the real nature of things, as an effective barrier against the understanding of problems such as checking the adverse effects on the environment and the quality of life of industrialism." (p. 43) Trenchantly, he held that "because there is increasing evidence of environmental deterioration, particularly in living nature, the entire outlook and methodology of economics is being called into question" (p. 47). He described Gross National Product (GNP) which measures how economies perform, as an example of purely quantitative methods.

Alternative Progress Indicators

Since the 1970s, GNP's failure to consider whether growth is good or pathological, unhealthy, disruptive or destructive has led to the development of an alternative measure called Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI) which take social, environmental and cultural capital and well-being into account. In their evaluation of Wellington's Regional Genuine Progress Index, Packard and Chapman (2012), draw attention to two systems of GPI. One, based on the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare developed by Daly and Cobb (1989), measures indicators that have been assigned a monetary value. The other developed by Dr Ron Colman (2004) and his colleagues at GPI Atlantic, Canada uses both monetary and non-monetary valuation in its accounts and involves the community in its development.[7] A 2006 study applying GPI to the Nelson region took into account non-monetary items such as crime, educational attainment, health, library users, suicides, births to women under 20, home affordability, median house prices and median weekly rent (Dyer, 2006). Rather than using monetised data, the model in this study used that developed by Alberta Pembina Institute in which a unique benchmark is chosen for each indicator, based on evidence of the optimal condition over a time series.

The need for an alternative measure of how economies perform has been widely acknowledged. In 2009 a Stiglitz-led Commission produced *Mismeasuring Our Lives : Why GDP doesn't add up* (Stiglitz et al, 2010). In the UK, a programme to measure national well-being began in 2010 with foundations being laid for Government departments to use relevant well-being data (Everett, 2015). In the European Parliament's 2007 report entitled *Alternative progress indicators to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a means towards sustainable development (*Goossens, 2007), it was suggested "The establishment of an overarching, transparent and popular reference indicators system for EU policies might be the next step for improving decision-making in support of sustainable development" (p. iv).

[7] Another Genuine Wealth (well-being) model developed by Mark Anielski in Alberta, attempts to measure the complete conditions of economic, social, and environmental well-being in accordance with the values held by citizens (personal communication with Anielski, 25.6.2006).

Bhutan has adopted happiness as a state policy. Its philosophy of gross national happiness (GNH) recognises people's spiritual, material, physical or social needs; emphasises balanced progress; views happiness as an all-encompassing collective phenomenon, and "is both ecologically sustainable, pursuing wellbeing for both current and future generations, and equitable, achieving a fair and reasonable distribution of well-being among people" (Ura, Alkire, Zangmo and Wangdi, 2012, p. 7).

An indication of how GNH is prioritised is Bhutan's health system with 7.4 - 11.4% of total government spending being in the health sector. Bhutan's constitution states "the state shall provide free access to basic public health services in both modern and traditional medicines" (Cited in Sithey, Thowb and Lia, 2015). Health is recognized as a prerequisite for economic and spiritual development and as a means to achieving gross national happiness. Primary health care is emphasized; privatization of health services is prohibited. A health trust fund was established in 1998 to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential drugs and vaccines. These policies which are based on the philosophy of gross national happiness, provide an indication of the health benefits to the population of prioritizing well-being in national policy-making.

In further expressions of concern about the theoretical foundations of our current economic system as opposed to how it is measured, Hutton (1995) suggested that neo-liberal capitalism's emphasis on personal choice and freedom encourages the privileged to believe in the superiority of private provision and self-regulation and has left them with no appreciation of the common weal or responsibility for the whole. In this context, Verhaeghe (2014) asserted that no extensive study is needed to confirm that neo-liberalism - our current economic and social model - only stimulates the "deep frame of individualism and separation" (p. 242).[8] Rather than the individual being completely autonomous in the neo-liberal system as its proponents would hold, he suggested its "meritocratic system sees autonomy and individual control vanish, to be replaced by quantitative evaluations, performance interviews, and audits" (p. 169).

From his clinical experience as a psychotherapist and as a professor of psychoanalysis, Verhaeghe witnesses the profound impact that social change is having on mental

[8] "The assumption of purely self-interested behaviour remains the standard one in economics" (Sen, 1987).

health, even affecting the nature of the disorders from which we suffer. He has found that as a result of mirroring the neo-liberal narrative of efficiency being "the new norm, material profit the new goal and greed the new virtue" (p. 179), today's society has given rise to a "huge rise in mental disorders" (p. 199).

Verhaeghe's concern that neo-liberalism has impacted in our personalities detrimentally, is echoed by Naomi Klein (2014). In *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs the climate,* the Canadian social activist writes, "Veneration of the profit motive has infiltrated virtually every government on the planet, every major media organisation, every university, our very souls. ... somewhere inside each of us dwells a belief in their central lie – that we are nothing but selfish, greedy, self-gratification machines" (p. 62).

Similarly, renowned anthropologist and 2013 New Zealander of Year, Ann Salmond (2011) believed the pursuit of profit has seen everything in the world - the earth itself, other species, knowledge and indeed, other people - being turned into a 'resource' to be exploited, often without care or conscience.

Vanek believed that capitalism has commodified human beings and the environment to the point where, if maximising profit is taken to be its essential condition, capitalism can be defined as profit equals income less labour and other expenses, with human beings entering the equation as a negative item (cited in Perkins, n.d.).

Bajo and Roelants (2011a) saw the neoliberal economic model that dominates the international economy as seeming "to produce perverse incentives and economic bubbles that often destroy wealth, at least for the vast majority of people". They contrast this with co-operatives, which have shown themselves to be more steady and stable mechanisms for creating wealth for greater numbers of people.

In seeking to return economics to an ethical path, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has been one of those challenging the positivist economic environment that makes a sharp distinction between facts and values with self-interest as the only motivation for human action (Alvey 2005).

The positivist doctrine of reason being "a more certain guide to truth than experience" (Macrone, 1994, p. 30) and metaphysical notions being deemed unscientific, is a world

view that can be seen as impacting not just economics but all disciplines. In the field of research, positivism positions researchers as 'experts' who are expected to maintain an objective stance in relation to the subjects of the research (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Thus anonymous mail-out questionnaires or independent data collectors are used to maintain distance between the researcher and the researched in much the same way as the issuing and trading of shares in publicly listed companies, has the effect of divorcing shareholders from the community in which their companies operate. [9]

In psychology, positivists hold that because they cannot be directly observed and measured, behaviours such as emotions and thoughts are not valid topics for scientific psychology. B. F. Skinner an influential American psychologist, believed that psychology needs to focus on positive and negative reinforcement of behaviour in order to predict how people behave and argued that because we cannot measure it everything else is irrelevant (Hergenhahn and Olson, 2001).

According to Freeth (2007, p. 89), in medicine, "the medical model of assessment, diagnosis and treatment is the predominant model within the UK's National Health Service and particularly the medical profession". The medical model is a method of working that has had a major influence on the nature of the relationship between the patient and the healthcare professional. It usually relies on the expertise of the healthcare professional rather than the patient and can therefore create a culture of dependency. It can depersonalise people by the tendency to see only the problem to be diagnosed, or in psychiatry, the person to be diagnosed and labelled. The medical model can be exploited as a way of gaining power and has the potential to be abusive and coercive. All of this may interfere with the development of a helpful therapeutic relationship in which the patient also contributes significantly to the process.

"The medical model uses the language of illness, pathology … and dysfunction [and] focusses on symptoms and their treatment rather than attending to the whole

[9] In 1958 Martin Buber asked whether we see and understand each other as a community. "By the structure of society it is to be understood its social content or community content: a society can be called structurally rich to the extent that it is built up of genuine societies" (Buber, 1958, pp. 13-14).

person". Rather than being holistic, it reinforces the "reductionist approach [of] … taking things apart and reducing them down to the simplest level to study them".

In education, most contemporary school systems reflect the positivist Newtonian worldview, which sees the world as a gigantic clockwork system with reality being made up of discrete parts, each with its individual structure and function. Understanding this reality entails breaking systems and units into their constituent sub-units and analysing their distinct elements. Bohm (1980) however argued that this world view fails to account for the intricacies and interconnections of complex living and social systems. Instead, he proposed a wholeness model of reality, in which the perceived parts are not at all separate from one another but are unique manifestations and diverse expressions of one complete entity.

The examples above have sought to show that positivism has impacted not just economics. Rather, as the examples from research, psychology, medicine and education reveal, it could be said to apply in other disciplines.

While this criticism of neo-liberal capitalism challenges its theoretical foundations, it could equally well have challenged the consensus, known as the Washington Consensus, on which neo-liberal policies are based. The Washington consensus requires inter alia, trade liberalisation, liberalisation of inflows of foreign direct investments, deregulation and privatisation – the antithesis of the policies that enabled rich countries to become rich. The implementation of these neo-colonial policies by the IMF, World Bank and the WTO has ensured poor countries remain both poor and dependent (Reinert, 2007).

So on the one hand Western economies, with Nelson's regional economy being no exception, remain mired in an outmoded approach to development based on economic positivism. On the other hand, as we shall see, the methodologies fostering self-reliance are primarily qualitative. The difference can be seen as a paradigm shift, if we accept that in this instance the qualitative methodologies reflect a discontinuity with the previous world-view and methods (Reason 1988, p. 9). We are confronted by two distinct paradigms: one where something is not valued unless it is costed; and the other where the most important aspects of life are priceless (Cato, 2013, p. 9).

Significant Factors Threatening Regional Economies like Nelson

Other factors underscoring the need to consider alternatives to the business-as-usual approach include the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and the exacerbating levels of inequality.

Climate change

An indication of how severe the effects of climate could be is contained in the *Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC, 2014), issued on 2 November 2014 by 51 scientists and other experts from 24 countries including New Zealand. The assessment found that the

> failure to reduce emissions, could threaten society with food shortages, refugee crises, the flooding of major cities and entire island nations, mass extinction of plants and animals, and a climate so drastically altered it might become dangerous for people to work or play outside during the hottest times of the year (Gillis, 2014).

These are examples of the negative reasons for entertaining change which Galtung referred to in Chapter 1.

James Hansen, who was head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York from 1981 to 2013, currently directs the Program on Climate Science, Awareness and Solutions at Columbia University's Earth Institute. In March 2016, together with 18 co-researchers, he published *Ice melt, sea level rise and superstorms: Evidence from paleoclimate data, climate modelling, and modern observations that 2 degrees C global warming could be dangerous* (Hansen et al, 2016). Following its publication, in an interview on Radio New Zealand, Hansen stated "human beings are responsible for adding CO2 at a rate more than ten times faster than any natural rate that has occurred in the last 66 million years". From "the last time this occurred … there is evidence of very strong storms, super storms". "The strongest storms in combination with rising sea levels is the worst situation for coastal cities." "The sooner people realise the threat and begin to take action the better" (Hansen, 2016).

Evidence of climate change impacting the Nelson region can be seen with average temperatures, from December 2015 to February 2016, having been the hottest

documented in Nelson, since records began in 1943. Similarly Australia's summer has been the hottest on record. This came on the back of 2015 being its hottest year (Phillips, 2016). According to Jonathan Bamber (2016), professor of Physical Geography at the University of Bristol, and an international expert on the thinning polar ice sheets and projections on sea level rise, the probability of having events like that is much higher because of human (anthropogenic) global warming. He suggested there is a need to build resilience by building infrastructure and having a society that is able to deal with shocks and extremes, whatever they are.

Further evidence of the impact of climate change on the Nelson region is provided by the significant weather events such as the one-in-500-year downpour for Takaka and, in Nelson, the one-in-250-year event, both of which occurred in mid-December 2011 and led to a Declaration of Emergency (Terry, 2012). More recently, on 24 March 2016, the Tasman region experienced one-in-50-year floods that devastated parts of the district (Nelson Mail, 2016).

The instability of the global economy

The 2008 Global Financial Crisis demonstrated the instability of the global economy. It underscored the need to consider alternatives to the business-as-usual approach for Nelson's regional economy, particularly in light of financial analysts and economists continuing to warn of systemic problems persisting. Thus Stephen Haber, Professor of Financial Economics Stanford University's interviewed on Radio NZ stated, "In the USA, I have seen nothing that convinces me that the (global financial crisis) will not happen again" (Haber, 2015). In a note to its clients in January 2016, the Royal Bank of Scotland warned of a "cataclysmic year" for the world economy (Fletcher, 2016).

In their new book, *Growing a New Economy: Beyond Crisis Capitalism and Environmental Destruction*, Bjonnes and Hargreaves (2016) asserted that "dismantling of the real economy in order to pay off debts created by the financial economy is leading us closer and closer toward a state of collapse" (p. 42). "It is not only the environment of the planet, but also the present global financial-economic system which is getting increasingly out of balance" (Bajo & Roelants, 2011, p. 212).

Levels of inequality

Regarding inequality**,** in drawing attention to underlying systemic problems, economists Wolff (2010), Batra (2011) and Alperovitz (2013) have all highlighted how over the last three decades in the US, productivity has increased while real wages have stagnated. The resulting wage-productivity gap has created a systemic imbalance between aggregate demand and aggregate supply in the economy. With wages being a key lever for creating demand in the economy, and productivity driving increases in supply, people could only consume the increased supply of goods and services by using cheap and easy credit. But after the housing bubble burst in 2007-08, credit has no longer been easily available and levels of debt have been exposed as unsustainable, a vicious cycle that is unlikely to change without the economic system being restructured so that wealth and economic power are distributed more equitably.

Alperovitz (2013, xii) also pointed out that while "real wages for 80 percent of American workers" have barely risen "for at least three decades", the income for the top 1 percent has doubled from around ten percent to roughly 20 percent of all income. He also drew attention to the top one percent, having "more income than just about the entire bottom 180 million Americans" (p. 3), and believes the country is close to a "legitimation crisis – a time when the values that give legitimacy to the system" can no longer "be achieved by the system" (p.140).

This situation is replicated around the world. Arundhati Roy informed us that while the combined wealth of India's 100 wealthiest people is 25 percent of the country's GDP, "more than 80 percent" of its population lives "on less than fifty cents a day" (Roy, 2014 p. 94). Placing it in a global context, Oxfam's Davos report released on 18 January 2016 showed that 62 people own the same as half the world's population (Oxfam, 2016).

The scope for nation states to confront the heightening inequality is seen by some commentators to be declining. According to Bernard Arnault, CEO of the French luxury group LVMH, "businesses, especially international ones, have ever greater resources, and in Europe have acquired the ability to compete with States ….Politicians' real impact on the economic life of a country is more and more limited" (quoted in Wade, 2014: 156).

In New Zealand the stagnancy in real wages is comparable to that in the US. Drawing on Bill Rosenberg's living wage campaign presentation to the Wellington City Council in 2013, Prue Hyman wrote "in New Zealand, if earnings had kept up with labour productivity growth since 1989 (when the average hourly wage was $21.49 in 2011 dollars), the average would have been $31.85 in March 2011. However in 2011, the average was only $23.43 with scarcely any growth in 22 years, reflecting the increasing rewards to capital rather than labour" (Hyman, 2014: 93).

Addressing the issue of inequality in New Zealand in apocalyptic terms, Susan St John, Associate Professor of Economics at Auckland University wrote "we need to act decisively and soon, or risk a future of gross inequality and social disintegration" (St John, 2014: 154).

Wilkinson and Pickett's book *The Spirit Level* (2009), showed that the more unequal our society, the worse social indicators become including obesity, teenage birth rates, mental illness, homicide and rates of imprisonment, low trust, low social capital, hostility, and racism. Like the USA, New Zealand has wide levels of income disparity and increasing social inequity.

In *State of the world 2015: Confronting hidden threats to sustainability,* Prugh (2015) wrote

> strengthening democracy may also be the best way of attacking one of the most neglected, even untouchable, social justice dimensions of sustainability: inequality in wealth and income. Building cultures of local and regional democracy will generate higher-quality decisions and policy about most problems that communities perpetually face, but inequality is of particular concern because it lies at the root of many social ills that affect rich and poor alike (pp 138-9).

Only 14% of Nelson and 5% of Tasman residents reside in the lowest decile areas compared with the national average of 20% (Nelson Marlborough DHB, 2015). Be that as it may, according to Professor Peter Crampton, one of the researchers who produced New Zealand's 2013 Index of Deprivation Report (Atkinson, J., Salmond, C. and Crampton, P., 2014), "the report shows areas of high deprivation has not changed

much since they began the index 20 years ago… We are an increasingly divided country… The income distribution trends, the gap between the rich and the poor grows and grows. Using current economic policies there is no stopping that trend" (Knott, 2014).

In the 25 years to 2006, census figures reveal that inequality in Nelson grew twice as fast as in the Tasman region. Combined, in 2006 the two regions had a Gini coefficient of .431 where 1 is perfectly unequal and 0 represents no inequality. This compares to .447 for New Zealand as a whole (Alimi, Mare & Poot, 2013) a level that places New Zealand inauspiciously in the group of more unequal societies. The National Business Review's rich list (2016) records four Nelson individuals/families, Goodman, Talley, Sturgess and Morgan, as being worth a total of $2.45 billion.

Table 6 shows that half of the Nelson electorate's schools, with 76.1% of the electorate's pupils, are decile seven and decile eight schools. In the West Coast-Tasman electorate on the other hand, 64% of schools with 70% of the electorate's pupils are decile four, decile five and decile six schools. While the West Coast-Tasman figures are not identical with those for the Tasman region per se, they are indicative of the Tasman region having a lower socio-economic status than the Nelson region.

Table 6: *Number of Schools and Pupils in Nelson and West Coast-Tasman Electorates by Percentage According to Decile Status.*

No of schools				No of pupils			
Decile rating	Nelson	West Coast - Tasman	NZ	Decile rating	Nelson	West Coast - Tasman	NZ
1	0	1.6	10.4	1	0	1.2	7.4
2	6.3	6.3	9.7	2	3.6	5.3	7.5
3	3.1	7.8	9.6	3	0.7	8.8	7.9
4	0	23.4	9.9	4	0	37	9.6
5	3.1	23.4	9.7	5	0.8	18.8	10.1
6	12.5	17.2	9.5	6	8.9	14.3	9.5
7	31.3	3.1	9.9	7	49.5	4.1	10.7
8	21.9	6.3	9.1	8	26.6	4.4	9.3
9	12.5	7.8	9.8	9	8.2	4.1	10.4
10	6.3	0	10	10	1.5	0	14.6
Not allocated	3.1	3.1	2.3	Not allocated	0.3	2.1	3
	100.1	100	99.9		100.1	100.1	100

Note. Adapted from West Coast-Tasman and Nelson electorate profiles (2012), Parliamentary Library.

Other Voices Questioning the Business-as-Usual Approach

In addition to the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and the exacerbating levels of inequality, the following voices also affirm the need to look beyond the business-as-usual approach.

In a study that forms part of the Sustainable Development in the 21st Century (SD21) project implemented by the Division for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs with the support of the European Commission, Raskin is quoted as saying

> Contrary to the conventional wisdom, it is business as usual that is the utopian fantasy; forging a new vision is the pragmatic necessity (cited in Constanz et al 2012, p. iv).

In *The Great Transition,* a report published by the UK's influential New Economics Foundation, Ryan-Collins (2009, p. 3) asserted that creating a new kind of economy is crucial if we want to tackle climate change and avoid the mounting social problems associated with the rise of economic inequality. It provides the first comprehensive blueprint for building an economy based on stability, sustainability and equality. The report argues that nothing short of a great transition to a new economy is necessary and desirable, and also possible.

> Business as usual has failed… The financial crisis exposed deep flaws in the approach to economics that has dominated policy-making for a generation. It turns out that letting markets rip does not always lead to the best outcomes for societies. Government intervention, far from being inherently inefficient, turned out to be essential to prevent system-wide collapse. A return to blind faith in markets to deliver a future of endless, rapid growth is impossible to imagine now.
>
> This promise was always illusory, even on its own terms. Economic liberalisation has not delivered rapid growth on a consistent basis, but has been characterised by booms and crashes. Fewer and fewer have benefited from the booms as wealth and incomes have become increasingly concentrated, while those who suffered most from the crashes saw few if any benefits in the good

> times. Inequality has risen to record levels in many developed countries – not much has been 'trickling down'.

Alperovitz (2013) claimed that because the power of labour vis-à-vis capital has been irretrievably eroded, politics is unlikely to change the system's direction. Faced with this reality, he saw scope to build on initiatives that both enhance the community and democratise wealth, including worker co-operatives and power distribution. He gives the example of the three-way alliance announced in 2009 between the United Steelworkers International Union (USW), North America's largest industrial union with 1.2 million active and retired members, Spain's Mondragon, the world's largest workers' co-operative founded in 1956 with enterprises in some 40 countries, and Kent State University's Ohio Employee Ownership Centre. Collectively "they promote union co-ops as a solution to several deficiencies of the US workplace," such as "lack of democracy, wage disparity between highest and lowest-paid employees, and job insecurity" Ridenour (2014).

US examples of successful worker ownership range from Co-operative Home Care Associates in New York City to the Evergreen complex of solar, greenhouse, and laundry co-operatives in Cleveland, Ohio whose Mayor, Frank G. Jackson, is quoted as saying "Cleveland wants to be where the world is going, not where the world is"(Massetti, 2011). Encouragingly, mayors and city councils in places like Austin, Texas; Madison, Wisconsin; Richmond, California; and New York City have started to provide direct financial or technical support for these developments (Alperovitz, 2016).

The relevance of worker co-operatives in the current context, is that by being co-operatively owned and managed by their workers, they offer a viable and alternative form of industrial organisation. In addition and in contrast to the neo-liberal model, worker co-operatives represent a means of sharing wealth and the power that goes with it.

Alperovitz (2016) also cited other bottom-up initiatives that strengthen regions, including more than 250 community land trusts, that are not-for-profit, community-based organizations designed to ensure community stewardship of land, being set up across the US to prevent gentrification, and States owning and managing land, real estate, and mineral rights and using the proceeds to fund social services and reduce

taxes. In Alaska for example, the revenue collected from the extraction of the state's oil and minerals, enables dividends to be paid out annually to state residents as a matter of legal right.

Galtung (1976) suggested one strategy could be the development of a double economy - a regular one with the importation of foodstuffs and oil and other commodities, and a reserve economy where new patterns of growing food, and new forms of energy production, conservation and conversion are developed. Better still would be a combination in times of non-crisis of both economies, a "walking on two legs" policy, because of the obvious benefits to be derived from this type of diversity (p. 14).

In respect of self-reliance more specifically, Shuman saw maximising local self-reliance, "*not as a way of disengaging from the rest of the world, but as a way of engaging with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength"* (Alperovitz and Shuman, 2014, p. 40) (emphasis added). This is comparable to the process of deglobalisation which refers to the "restructuring of the world economic and political system so that the latter builds the capacity of local and national economies instead of degrading them": that is, transforming "the global economy from one integrated around the needs of transnational corporations to one integrated around the needs of peoples, nations, and communities" (Focus on Global South, 2003, p. 1).

Molly Scott Cato (2013, p. 3) drew attention to the global economy as a system of self-reliant local economies that meet most of their own needs from within their boundaries. This has been a basic assumption amongst green economists now for several decades.

The US-based Institute for Local Self Reliance (n.d.) has championed local self-reliance for more than four decades. On its website's home page, the Institute describes self-reliance as "a strategy that underscores the need for humanly scaled institutions and economies and the widest possible distribution of ownership".

Instances of Regional Self-Reliance

The Pembrokeshire region of southwest Wales

This region is notable for having explored the scope for innovation and improvement

of local economic interdependence through greater self-reliance. A study of Pembrokeshire by Midmore and Thomas identified the scope for tourism and agriculture to work together to develop a distinctive brand for the region and for increasing organic agriculture and renewable energy production, contributing to an external image of a 'green' economy (Midmore and Thomas, 2006).

According to Sambeteanu and Dower, the organisation central to the initiative, Pembrokeshire's Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development (PLANED), has enabled integrated community-led development that is "unique in the United Kingdom and rare in Europe" (Sambeteanu & Dower, 2011). It is a community-led local development partnership that together with its predecessors, has been supporting community development in Pembrokeshire for over 20 years.

PLANED has endorsed a bottom-up approach believing that while it may take longer to develop, it should result in stronger and more sustainable projects in the longer term. Its workshops provide a participative and enjoyable way for local people to develop an understanding of their local area economy (Plugging the Leaks, n.d.). The workshops enable people to identify the main flows of money both in and out of their local area economy, and to develop leak-plugging ideas. Valuably the workshops highlight the desire of local people to purchase more from local businesses as well as understand the need to produce more goods locally and add value to local produce.

Other specific bottom-up self-reliant approaches PLANED uses, that facilitate the engagement of communities in local development, includes Community Appraisal, a method that includes gauging the viewpoints of members of a community on particular issues; Visioning, the action of developing a plan, goal, or vision for the future; and Future Search, a planning meeting that helps people transform their capability into action in a short space of time. PLANED also engages with similar community-based organisations including organisations in Ireland and Finland, to demonstrate the value and effectiveness of a seamless, complimentary process of community-led action planning.

Worker Co-operatives

Co-operatives in the Nelson regional economy were discussed earlier in Chapter Three. The following looks at two examples of worker co-operatives and their contribution to regional self-reliance.

Decision making in worker co-operatives is determined by those who work in them, on the basis of one person, one vote. With their ownership being rooted in the local community, they represent an ownership model that ensures a long-term presence which helps strengthen regional economies by preventing outside interests being able to buy ownership or control. This also shields management's ability to pursue socially responsible policies for the long-term interests of the community e.g. by pursuing job-growth policies (Lutz, 1999 p. 186).

In their book *Capital and the Debt Trap,* Bajo and Roelants (2011) asserted that co-operatives "herald a moral value system, with such declared values as democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, honesty and social responsibility" (p. 101). They "believe that the contribution of co-operatives as one of the pillars of sustainable economic development, as an engine for creating shared and intergenerational wealth, will be recognized sooner than later" (p. 220).

Bajo and Roelants also see "the horizontal and democratic approach of co-operatives, sometimes involving a substantial ratio of the adult population in a given country or locality, (as raising) the issue of how citizens could have more say in economic and entrepreneurial decisions that directly concern their future" (p. 222). Finally they recognise that "co-operative experience has revealed the capacity of ordinary citizens to take weighed economic decisions, act against bubble-type and erratic economic behaviour, and contribute to the stability and long-term development of real-economy activities that generate wealth" (p. 222).

Perhaps the most well established and well-known example of co-operatives are the Mondragon Co-operatives of Spain's Basque region. Inspired by Jose Maria Arizmendiarrieta a Catholic priest, they were first formed in 1955 amidst acute poverty, with the goal of building local industry as a way of keeping youth at home rather than them needing to move in order to find work. The first co-op which began

by building paraffin heaters, was set up by five technical college graduates, students of Arizmendiarrieta, who had been taught a form of enterprise based on solidarity and humanism. Six decades later the Mondragon Corporation's group of co-operatives is Spain's seventh biggest company with subsidiaries in 17 countries.

Mondragon co-operatives

Mondragon has financial, industrial, retail, and knowledge divisions. Its finance division includes social welfare, insurance and its own bank, the Caja Laboral Popular, with hundreds of branches and assets of c$US10 billion. Mondragon's industry division manufactures consumer and capital goods, industrial components, products and systems for construction, and services to business. Its retail division covers commercial distribution and agro-food businesses and includes Eroski one of Spain's main retail groups. Its knowledge division comprises Research Centres, a University with 9000 students and several vocational training and education centres. Distinctively, Mondragon University is a co-operative jointly owned by its academic and administrative staff.

Defining features of Mondragon's co-operatives are its worker-owners and consumers-members participating in the co-operative's decision-making bodies, and its wage ratio between the highest and lowest paid workers, which ranges from 3:1 to 9:1 in different co-operatives and averages 5:1. The wage ratio of a co-operative is decided periodically by its worker-owners through a democratic vote

Mondragon's mission is "*to ensure wealth in society through the creation of sustainable employment for all"* (Bajo & Roelants, 2011, p. 218). In 2015, Mondragon's President Josu Ugarte said that apart from sharing profits, ownership, and management, Mondragon has three key values: solidarity, inter-co-operation, and social transformation. When asked what he meant by social transformation he replied, "Our solidarity in terms of salaries changes the distribution of wealth in society. If the Basque region in Spain were a country, it would have the second-lowest income inequality in the world. So for me, this is social transformation" (Hansen, 2015).

The Evergreen co-operatives

The Evergreen co-operatives began in 2009. Located in Cleveland, Ohio they were

inspired by Mondragon's example. The project team had a vision of worker-owned and environmentally sensitive businesses, providing services to educational and medical institutions of Cleveland's University Circle. The co-operatives were established with support from the City of Cleveland, and a group of local anchor institutions. These included the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, Case Western Reserve University and the Cleveland Foundation that provides grants and leadership on key community issues to Cleveland residents. The anchor institutions are important customers for the three business co-operatives (Anderson, n.d.).

Currently, Evergreen consists of a laundry, Evergreen Energy Solutions, providing solar installation, LED retrofitting, and construction services, and Green City Growers, a hydroponic greenhouse producing lettuce, herbs, and microgreens. Together the three businesses have around 110 employees.

Normally worker-owners bring some capital to the table. However, given the target population and the process by which workers come to Evergreen, raising capital in that way was not possible. Instead, all three businesses were entirely debt financed. Much of the financing came from the Evergreen Co-operative Development Fund (ECDF), a loan fund with contributions from the Cleveland Foundation and another local philanthropic organisation, anchor institutions and several local banks. All provided very low-interest start-up capital for the three businesses.

The co-operative businesses are explicitly linked to a community transformation strategy-agenda. Evergreen's companies reside within a broader strategy to reinvest in and rebuild Cleveland's low-income neighbourhoods through the Greater University Circle Initiative. While striving toward an ambitious goal to employ a total of 1,000 people, each company is designed to benefit its worker owners and contribute to a larger community-building agenda. This agenda is coordinated by the Evergreen Co-operative Corporation (ECC), which is the keeper of the mission of Evergreen.

From the outset, these businesses were set up so that workers would own 80 percent of the business with the other 20 percent owned by a holding company.

Workers are eligible for membership in the co-operative after one year of employment and have to be voted in by the other members. Once they become members, workers

receive a $0.50/hour wage increase, an equity stake in the business, and a patronage account that is funded by business profits. Members are also eligible for a programme that provides very low-interest auto loans, along with a home ownership programme initially funded by the

Cleveland Foundation that helps members purchase and rehabilitate homes in the target neighbourhoods - not only building wealth for the members, but improving the neighbourhood more broadly. Over 20 Evergreen members have taken advantage of this programme and now own their own homes.

The co-operatives have been built by leveraging the economic strength of the anchor institutions including hospitals, nursing homes, universities, museums and cultural centres. In partnership with these institutions an effort was made to identify supply chain purchasing opportunities such as laundry services, food, renewable energy and recycling that could be sourced locally. Evergreen then developed locally-based businesses matched to these procurement needs. The project represents a classic example of self-reliance, with the goal of driving as much of the estimated $3 billion purchasing opportunities into the community as possible, and, in the process, catalyse a network of locally-based businesses that hire their workforce directly from the neighbourhoods (Edgington, 2010).

Benefits of Small Locally-owned Businesses

The following draws attention to research that is relevant to strengthening regional economies like Nelson's. Three studies from the USA, highlight the benefit to regional economic growth from the presence of many small locally-owned businesses.

Reporting in the Harvard Business Review, Glaeser and Kerr (2010) found that "regional economic growth is highly correlated with the presence of many small entrepreneurial employers" rather than a few big ones. As a corollary they found that "cities relying on only a few large firms for employment, experienced slower subsequent job growth than cities with an abundance of small firms" (p. 26).

Fleming and Goetz (2011) asserted that “economic growth models that control for other relevant factors reveal a positive relationship between density of locally owned firms and per capita income growth, but only for small firms with between ten and 99 employees, whereas the density of large firms that are not locally owned and having more than 500 workers has a negative effect” (p. 277).

The third US study asked ‘does local business ownership and size matter for local economic well-being’? More specifically it questioned whether locally owned businesses should be supported over non-locally owned businesses and small businesses over large ones. It found evidence that “local entrepreneurship matters for local economic performance” and that “smaller local businesses are more important than larger local businesses for local economic performance” (Rupasingha, 2013, p. 1).

According to Mueller, Ouimet and Simintzi (2015), policies that promote locally-owned and community-scaled businesses, may help reduce income inequality. From analysing wages and firm size in 15 countries over 30 years, they found that while large firms pay an average higher wage than small firms do, those higher wages don’t affect low and medium skilled employees, who earn the same or less than they do at small firms. Rather, those higher wages come in only at the top, with large firms paying highly-skilled employees significantly more than they would make for a similar position at a smaller company. In other words, the authors found the gap between the best-paid workers and everyone else is much greater at big corporations than it is at small and medium sized businesses. As a result, in countries that have experienced high levels of corporate consolidation, income inequality has grown much more than in places with a more diversified economy of small and medium sized businesses (Mueller et al, 2015).

Local multiplier effect

The New Economics Foundation’s (n.d.) Local Multiplier 3 (LM3) is a well proven method to measure the economic impact of local money flows and how organisations can practically improve their local economic impact. It is intended for those wishing to measure the impact of aspects of local spending in their communities. Thus “using LM3, the United Kingdom’s Princes Trust (North East) was able to demonstrate that £1.9 million disbursed in 2006/2007 generated £4.1 million per annum within the North East regional economy via the impact of grant funding, development awards, supplier spend and expenditure on staff salaries”(New Economics Foundation, n.d).

Were the Tasman District Council to use LM3 it could, for example, quantify the impact its Community Grants have within the regional economy. It could also be used to assess the impact of consumer spending in locally owned businesses as opposed to businesses based outside the region. The New Economics Foundation is willing to provide support in applying LM3.

Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future

The Nelson City Council's publication *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* was formally adopted by Council on 4 June 2013. The publication was the outcome of 13 workshops and feedback from visitors to the Ecofest Expo, all held during 2011. Participants were invited to share their thoughts and ideas on how they want Nelson to be in 2060 (Nelson City Council, 2013). The outcome of work by the then mayor's Taskforce on Sustainability, the publication is described as "Nelson's sustainability strategy". As such it draws attention to the "need to understand and plan for challenges and opportunities that global trends such as climate change, energy availability, population change and growing income gaps might cause" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 7).

Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future acknowledges that as with other cities across the world, Nelson is vulnerable to global challenges including "changing economic conditions and the uncertainty of access to imported goods and resources that we rely on" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8).

In addition to recognising the need to look ahead, "think differently and work in a different way" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 6) the document identifies issues of concern including the city's carbon footprint. Steps were taken to engage with the community, seeking to establish an overall vision with specific themes and goals, and make suggestions as to how to achieve the goals and measure progress.

In line with this study's underlying thesis, *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* states

> We can protect our livelihoods and will be able to withstand shocks better by producing and supplying more of our own basic requirements such as food, building materials and local energy and at the same time, support our local economy (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8).

The ideas that have come together in *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* have been in process over the term of three Councils. The 2011 community consultation process comprising a series of conversations and workshops, was focussed by Council's Framing our Future committee as well as the Taskforce on Sustainability, comprising 33 leaders from the Council, business and community organisations. Since 2013, when the current council was elected, there has been a shift from it being focussed by the Framing our Future committee which was disestablished, to ostensibly existing across the board. Examples of it remaining alive are Nelson City's 30 year asset-management plans which take *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* as a driving document and this year's civic awards that are to be framed around *Nelson 2060* as the document has come to be called (R. Reese, Nelson's current mayor, personal communication, June 6, 2016).

Research to identify the current sustainability challenges facing Nelson was conducted by the Cawthron Institute in 2011, and formed the starting point for much of the subsequent work (Challenger & Newton, 2011). The Cawthron Institute is an independent research institute based in Nelson, "specializing in aquaculture, marine biosecurity, coastal and estuarine ecology, freshwater ecology, and analytical laboratory testing".[10]

Reflecting its environmentally focussed scientific expertise, the challenges identified by the research were air quality, atmosphere (greenhouse gases and ozone), biodiversity, coasts, consumption, energy security, externalisation of environmental impacts, food security, freshwater (quality and quantity), land cover and land use, population, societal impacts, transport and waste disposal.

Notwithstanding it being conducted during the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis, the Cawthron study neglected to include the region's dependency on the global financial system among the sustainability challenges it identified. The director of Cawthron at the time was Gillian Wratt. Her review of the study's findings before they were released, was deemed by Ian Challenger, one of the authors of the report, to be a factor in the findings excluding consideration of poverty, materiality and the value of buying according to fair trade, the goal of which is "to empower marginalised people

[10] www.cawthron.org.nz

and improve the quality of their lives" (Fair Trade Resource Network, n.d), (Ian Challenger, personal communication, December 11, 2015)

Indications of the council's commitment to *Nelson 2060*

Nelson City Council's commitment to realising the strategy is clearly stated in *Nelson 2060*. Thus on page two, the council states, "We look forward to working with the community to implement this strategy," and on page six it is stated "This is a living document that will change as we move towards 2060".

The strongest evidence of the document remaining relevant is that the vision contained in *Nelson 2060* is embodied in Nelson's Long Term Plan 2015-25 (Nelson City Council, 2015). On page 16, the plan states:

> "As part of the last Long Term Plan process, Council adopted a long term vision for Nelson, based on consultation with the community. This vision describes what people want Nelson to be like in the future, and states that in 2060:
>
> "Nelson is an inclusive city, with a diverse range of residents who can connect easily to each other and to the beautiful place we call home.
>
> "Our inclusive leadership style supports our unique approach to living, which is boldly creative, ecologically exemplary, socially balanced and economically prosperous.
>
> "The vision covers four themes:
>
> 1) A sustainable city of beauty and connectivity.
>
> 2) Outstanding lifestyles, immersed in nature and strong communities.
>
> 3) A strong economy built on knowledge and understanding.
>
> 4) Successful partnerships providing good leadership."

In 2015, the Council allocated $20,000 for the *Nelson 2060* process to be kept current. The present mayor acknowledges its failings including issues of social equality, gender balance, inadequate recognition of the Treaty and diversity, but is passionate about its promise and is committed to work to add to the document (R. Reese, personal

communication, June 22, 2016). That said, an indication of *Nelson 2060*'s limited impact to date is revealed by the vision for the Nelson Tasman Region 2020, contained in Nelson Regional Economic Development Agency (EDA)'s Economic Development Strategy covering the period 2014-2020, making no mention of *Nelson 2060*.

The background issues elaborated in *Nelson 2060* are:

Climate change

"Rising sea levels and a warmer more unstable climate [could affect] where and how we can live and build… our local economy, agriculture and tourism. Everything from plants, animals, pest and public health could change" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8). The report acknowledges the interconnectedness of the environment and its role in sustaining life.

Our economy

"We will continue to compete with much larger cities in New Zealand and overseas for skills, business and investment".

Our reliance "on areas outside of Nelson to produce the food and other products we need [leaves us] at risk from changes in price and supply".

"It is vital that we protect" our environment. Together with our climate and access to water, it underpins our economy "through tourism and primary production".

A "healthy economy can create employment through providing new skills and opportunities".

We have "a chance to explore renewable energy options, create new business [and use] less energy" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8).

Energy and resource scarcity

Nelson's per capita use of fossil fuels is almost double the national average. This leaves us vulnerable to fluctuating oil prices and availability. Natural assets include solar and biofuels which offer opportunities to develop renewable energy to enable Nelson to be more self-sufficient (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

Water, land cover and land use

Assets include plenty of productive land, well-established primary production, significant coastal and marine area for recreational activities and commercial

development including the aquaculture industry. Care must be taken regarding the use of land to protect natural ecosystems and so that the built heritage and landscapes are recognised. This means urban expansion must be monitored, and attention paid to how we farm and produce food [and look after] fresh and coastal waters and soil (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

Changing Population

Increasing numbers and a larger proportion of people are expected to be in the over 65 age range, as well as reducing numbers and proportion of children and young adults (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

Keeping people in the region and attracting new people

Ensuring Nelson is affordable is important for social and economic wellbeing and for keeping a workforce needed to run the local economy.

Nelson's creative and well-informed communities and its diverse range of people with practical and sophisticated talents, views and cultures contribute to Nelson being an attractive place to live (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

Planning together

There is a need to coordinate government agencies, diverse community groups and council.

Treaty settlement legislation and the role of tikanga (what we do) and kawa (the way we do it) and Māori culture must be acknowledged in order to deliver a sustainable Nelson into the future (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

The ten goals identified in *Nelson 2060* are:

1) Support and encourage leaders across our community
2) We are all able to be involved in decisions
3) Protect the natural environment
4) Produce more of our own food
5) Adapt to change
6) Use renewable energy rather than fossil fuels
7) Have a thriving economy

8) Centre of learning and practice in kaitiakitanga and sustainable development – acknowledges the mauri (or life force) of the land

9) Everyone's essential needs are met

10) Reduce consumption so resources are shared more fairly (Nelson City Council, 2013a, pp 12-13).

These goals were decided through a range of workshops, expert reviews, surveys and conversations with council staff and others in the community.

Fundamental to the goals are four sustainability principles:

1) We reduce our use of substances extracted from the earth's crust, such as fossil fuels and metals (sic), and by using renewable energy sources and improving energy efficiency.
2) We reduce our use of artificial substances that persist in the environment rather than biodegrading, by recycling, using natural biodegradable materials and reducing the use of synthetic chemicals.
3) We don't damage our life supporting ecosystems. We sustain those things that gave the Nelson region its original character. We use sustainably produced primary produce and protect our indigenous biodiversity.
4) We eliminate conditions that undermine people's capacity to meet their basic needs, by providing affordable and safe living conditions, access to education, discrimination-free communities and inclusive and transparent democratic processes (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 39).

Critique of *Nelson 2060*

The document fails to address the issue of power. Goal 1 (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 15) suggests that one way we might support and encourage leaders is by "supporting an equal society". In light of the region's levels of inequality and its attendant power imbalance referred to earlier, it is fair to ask, how is it possible to ensure resources are shared more fairly, as described in Goal 10?

Goal 2 states “We are all able to be involved in decisions”. Suggestions as to how we might do this, fails to recommend the use of facilitating forums, notwithstanding them being proposed in the “How we might do it” section on page 37 of the document.

There are contradictions. Goal 8 promotes Nelson as a centre of learning and practice in kaitiakitanga and sustainable development. In this connection it cites Bunnings, one of Australia’s largest public companies operating in Australia, NZ, Bangladesh and the UK. [11] While *Nelson 2060* acknowledges the need to think and work in a different way, its faith in the market economy suggests the vision is being held back by a business-as-usual mentality reflected in using Bunnings as a model.

Theme 2 –“outstanding lifestyles immersed in nature and strong communities” states, “Vibrant co-operative networks have secured social equity and resilience” (p. 51). Given this recognition of the value of co-operatives, it is surprising that Theme 3 “strong economy built on knowledge and understanding”, makes no mention of the co-operative model. Unless businesses are entrenched in the local economy, which is a feature of the co-operative model, there is no assurance they will stay.

The photograph illustrating Theme 4 that states “Successful partnerships [provide] good leadership”, pictures men and no women. Its failure to reflect gender partnership goes against the underlying spirit of the theme of successful partnership.

In terms of economics, *Nelson 2060* portrays a business-as-usual approach which effectively privileges the existing neo-liberal economic model, the theoretical foundations of which have been shown to be wanting. Business-as-usual effectively means opting for more inequality and increased top-down globalised corporate hegemony. The approach neglects consideration of alternative strategies such as choosing to build communities from the bottom up, and suggests a comparatively superficial awareness of the model of economics underpinning our economic reality, a model characterised by materialism, self-centred individualism and an acquisitive society. To the extent that *Nelson 2060* is about the “need to think differently and work in a different way” (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 6), the failure to critique the neo-liberal model can be seen as undermining the credibility of its vision.

[11] In September 2015 Bunnings New Zealand workers began strike action to protest a new roster that would mean workers' shifts could be chopped and changed with just two weeks’ notice.

Nelson 2060 is primarily a vision statement. From an Appreciative Inquiry standpoint, it corresponds with the first two of the four phases i.e. the discovery and dreaming phases. Without a commitment to its realisation, which is delivered by the remaining design and destiny phases, the vision's promise remains unfulfilled.

How are sustainability and self-reliance framed in the *Nelson 2060* document?

Sustainability, defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission, 1987, p. 41) is at the core of the *Nelson 2060* vision. "*Nelson 2060* is Nelson's sustainability strategy" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 6).

Self-reliance is inferred in the following:

> We can protect our livelihoods and will be able to withstand shocks better by producing and supplying more of our own basic requirements such as food, building materials and local energy and at the same time support our local economy (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8).

> [Nelson's] high per capita use of fossil fuels relative to other types of fuel…makes us vulnerable to fluctuating oil prices and availability…our natural assets offer opportunities to explore and develop all sorts of new forms of renewable energy to meet our needs and allow us to be more self-sufficient. Further development of solar and biofuels for meeting our energy needs is an obvious opportunity (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 9).

What does *Nelson 2060* represent?

The document emphasises the environment, the economy, art and beauty, engagement and leadership.

Considered more deeply:

1) The economy would include co-operatives as a means of increasing connectivity and addressing equity, inequality and security for the community over time.

2) There is a need to question the current economic model. Will it serve us well going forward or whether there is a need to explore an alternative(s)?

3) In terms of Sarkar's social cycle, economic power (as compared with worker, regulatory or intellectual power) can be seen as dominating the Nelson regional community. In terms of Galtung's centre-periphery dichotomy, the regional economy is subject to the economic domination of the centre (Galtung, 1976, p. 2).

Summary

Leaving its shortcomings aside, *Nelson 2060* remains a valuable exercise in providing a framework for consideration of the region's self-reliance. That it has survived over the terms of three Councils, to date, is a cause for celebration and provides grounds for believing that *Nelson 2060*'s vision can be kept alive and is achievable. In large part, the document reflects the intent of the thesis question. *Nelson 2060* is an example of the community working together to fashion an intergenerational 50 year vision and can be likened to the intergenerational vision contained in Wakatū Incorporation's Te Pae Tawhiti.

Notwithstanding there being grounds for believing that Nelson 2060's vision can be kept alive and is achievable, its recognition on page six that "We need to think and work in a different way" has yet to be demonstrated. The process begun in 2011 appears to have plateaued if not faltered. Given that the challenges of sustainability were seen as urgent two years ago (O'Brien, 2014), there is a clear need for it to be reinvigorated. Lacking the committee that drove it prior to the 2013 Local Body elections, *Nelson 2060* gives the impression of being in need of fresh leadership. Appointing a monitoring group answerable to Council and holding community forums using processes such as Appreciative Inquiry would be a valuable way to enliven the next phase of its implementation.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to answer the question *Why ask about the merits of implementing self-reliant policies?*

In practice, economics remains wedded to a quantitative doctrine that has nurtured a world increasingly ruled by profit-driven corporations. Its impact needs to be seen in the light of the risks posed by evidence of the deteriorating climate change scenario and the ongoing global financial crisis, the underlying causes of which, together with a

destabilising concentration of wealth, remain a threat to the world's economic security.

The challenge to the self-centred and materialistic world view, from people like Schumacher, Sahtouris, Korten, Alperovitz, Reinert and Sarkar among others, means we are faced with a clear choice going forward. Either it is a business-as-usual approach which implies opting for more inequality, more climatic extremes and increasing top-down globalised corporate hegemony; or alternatively, we could choose policies that enable building communities from the bottom up.

In the light of the apparent risks, it is contended that a precautionary, if not conservative approach, merits consideration of alternative strategies. Positive reasons to change include neo-humanism's inclusive and encompassing world view and the examples provided of Mondragon's cooperatives, Pembrokeshire's community-led local development partnership.

In answer to the question posed at the outset "*Why ask about the merits of implementing self-reliant policies",* it is contended that the risks, on the one hand, and the positive reasons to change, on the other, provide sufficient grounds for the implementation of self-reliant policies to be given serious consideration.

Snadden (2016) in a letter to a Nelson editor expresses the underlying concern by writing:

> One of the good aspects of this area, is that it is not yet overwhelmed by globalisation, and we should work consciously towards the nurture of our local area, a much healthier, more ethically defensible economic model than the present world-wide infatuation with a failed neo-liberal paradigm.

5

Methodology

This chapter opens with a brief acknowledgement that my epistemology - the way I know about the world in which I live - has been affected by incorporating spiritual practice into my life. This has coloured my response to the thesis question. It then reviews the two methodologies - appreciative inquiry and participatory action - used in this research. Appreciative inquiry is "the study and exploration of what gives life to human enterprises when they function at their best" (Whitney 2010, p. 6), and builds on the idea that what we focus on becomes our reality. Participatory action on the other hand, empowers people to improve the conditions in their lives by putting research capabilities in the hands of the disadvantaged so that they can transform their lives for themselves.

Previously I mentioned having practiced meditation since the early 1970s. Sarkar (1978) describes meditation, the principal practice of intuitional science, as helping in the development of intuition. Features of the practice can include a heightened awareness of our interconnectedness, the primacy and ubiquity of consciousness and the need for a moral foundation. Having become aware of spirituality's place in my own life, has heightened my awareness of its scope for transformation not just of economics but much of contemporary society, including justice, education and health.

The spiritual dimension has ontological implications in that it informs the nature of reality as it is generally known. It also has epistemological implications insofar as it underpins how we know the world. Its praxis implications become apparent when research enhanced by "mystery, silence and … meditative empiricism" (lessens the gap

between thought and action and so “enables truly transformative academic practice to emerge” (Bussey, 2002, p. 303).

In choosing to use participatory action and appreciative inquiry (AI), I have opted for qualitative methodologies. Their choice was made easier by acknowledging that both adopt a bottom up approach and specifically acknowledge the metaphysical (Whitney, 2010, and Reason, 1998). Briskin, Erickson, Ott and Callanan (as cited in Whitney, 2010), described AI’s capacity to create a spiritual resonance, “as collective wisdom, a palpable sense of connection to each other and to larger forces, it is more than just collaboration” (p. 78). They also convey an element of optimism a feature which is especially evident in AI’s focus on what works. Additionally, in being recognised as able to cope with multiple methodologies and methods including participatory action and focus groups (Waring as cited in Murray, 2012), AI appeared to fit well with what was proposed in this research.

Appreciative Inquiry

There is already much to be celebrated about the Nelson region. People very often make a positive choice to come and live in there. Of the 12 who participated in this study’s focus group, all but one – who had been born in the region - consciously chose to make it their home. It features an environment renowned for its natural beauty and sunny climate. Thus in using Appreciative Inquiry to find out what gives energy and vitality to the region, there is much on which to draw.

In the foreword to Reed (2007), McNamee wrote

> If we ask questions about problems we create a reality of problems. On the other hand, if we ask questions about what works or what gives life to a community, group or person, we participate in [constructing] a reality of potential.

It is a methodology that begins with “a dialogue between individuals, expands to groups and builds to embrace and declare community-wide intentions and actions”. From initially seeking to make explicit the “highest achievements, core values, and

aspirations embedded in all human systems", it has been shown to contribute "to whole system change in the public and non-profit sectors" (Finegold, M., Holland, B. and Lingham, T., 2002 p. 235).

In writing about some of AI's theoretical underpinnings, Finegold et al, (2002. p. 236) described AI as "a post-modern approach to organisational and community change, and represents a radical departure from classic organisation development interventions". Classic interventions have "emerged from a paradigm in which sources of knowledge are derived from logical reasoning and empirical, verifiable experience". They saw the traditional modes of inquiry into organisational life seeking

> to determine cause and effect leading to knowledge having predictive value for organisational effectiveness. It relies on an action research model that focusses on problem solving through a progression of steps: identifying problems or deficiencies in the system; analysing the causes; proposing solutions; and developing an action plan to 'treat' the problems (French and Bell, 1984). This ''medical model'' of diagnosis and cure treats the organisation as sick and deficient, or as 'a problem to be solved'.

Kimura, (2010, p. 2) drew attention to the problem-focussed approach being "weakness-based". Metaphorically speaking, in this approach, one sees the glass as half-empty, that is, a community has only half of what it needs. Therefore, community problems are to be solved by filling the other half of the glass. Solving problems is central to this approach. Hence Kimura suggested the problem-focussed "approach is adaptive and reactive to continually occurring problems. It is also reductionist in the sense that everything is reduced to problems", and "negativistic in the sense that (negative) problems are the focus of the approach". Thus, in using this approach, "people tend to feel negative rather than positive".

In contrast, Kimura, (2010, p. 3) described AI as a "strength-based approach that affirms the existing strength, capacity and resources of a community". Instead of being seen as 'half-empty' the glass is viewed as already 'half-full' (with necessary resources, e.g., material, finance, knowledge etc.).

Therefore, people in the community can further expand what they already have toward betterment … AI looks at the successes and the best of the past and present experiences instead of the failures and negative experiences. The successes and the best naturally give energy and enthusiasm to people and community… Such positive aspects of reality are utilised for the creation and generation of the preferred future.

AI seeks to "create an alignment of strengths in ways that make a system's weaknesses irrelevant" (Peter Drucker interviewed by Cooperrider, 2011).

Finegold et al (2002, p. 3) detailed the five principles on which appreciative inquiry is based:

> The constructionist principle: … human knowledge and organisational destiny are interwoven. The way we know has a direct effect on what we do.
>
> The principle of simultaneity: … Change begins with the first questions we ask, and the questions we ask determine what we find. Stories elicited by our questions become the scaffolding for conceiving and constructing the future… the questions we craft have profound implications for changes in social practice.
>
> The poetic principle: …This principle shifts the metaphor of organisation as machine to that of organisation as text. Like a poem… any human system is subject to endless interpretation… We can look for what is going wrong or what is going right … greater gains are made when the means and ends of inquiry are aligned. Therefore, if we seek to increase employee retention, for example, it makes sense to inquire into why people stay in our organisation rather than focus on [why they leave].
>
> The positive principle: … the more positive the inquiry the more it endures. When we inquire into those times when we are at our best, most successful, or most energised, people are drawn together. The positive data that emerges from such inquiry inspires people to form networks of collaboration to build on their strengths and reach for their dreams.

> The anticipatory principle: … An anticipatory view of organisational life [holds] that the image of the future is a guiding force in organisational life. Significant research from such diverse areas of study as medicine, sports psychology, education, and sociology support the relationship between positive imagery and positive action (Cooperrider, 2001).

AI's core processes - focussing on the positive, inquiring into stories of life giving forces, locating themes that appear in the stories, creating shared images for a preferred future and fashioning ways to create the preferred future - become apparent with its implementation. This involves four easily identifiable stages known as discovery, dream, design and destiny (Finegold et al, 2002).

Discovery: In the discovery stage, using carefully crafted appreciative questions, "participants share narratives of a time when they participated in a high-point work experience…[i.e. when a person feels] that their work and its relationship to the context successfully comes together" (Calabrese, Hester, Friesen, and Burkhalter, (2010 p. 254). ''AI is a narrative and relational model, so the questions [asked] are designed to engage participants in the telling of stories … about what gives energy and vitality to the system. It is an inquiry into and an appreciation of the 'best of what is' " (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 239).

To put it into practice, pairs of people interview each other

> to explore their strengths, assets, peak experiences, and successes, and to understand the unique conditions that made their moments of excellence possible. The underlying question … is, ''what is going right and how do we get more of it?'' It represents an intentional choice not to analyse deficits but rather to acknowledge and learn from even the smallest victories. Rather than searching for the root causes of problems, it … searches for the root causes of success.
>
> [Problems are not dismissed. Rather the approach offers] … a positive lens through which people can cast an appreciative eye on their system. The interviews themselves forge new and strengthened connections and begin to locate the sources of energy for change (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 239).

In applying AI in this research, rather than being invited to share their personal high-point work experiences, participants were asked "*What gives life to the regional economy?"* This question sought to elicit from participants, what, from their experience, they believed about the regional economy could be built on to achieve greater regional strength.

Dream: "In the dream stage, participants create powerful metaphors and imagine how their organisation might look in the best of all possible circumstances. This imagined future is referred to as a shared dream" (Calabrese et al. 2010. p. 255).

> As people share their stories and engage in a dialogue about their meaning, themes and patterns emerge that inspire hope and possibility. From the most compelling images embedded in the stories, they begin to address the underlying questions of the dreaming phase: … 'What might we become if our exceptional moments were the norm?' It is a time to imagine an ideal future … [and for] passionate thinking. What distinguishes this phase from other visioning processes is that the dream is drawn from the stories of the positive past … [Being] a dream that is grounded in people's real experiences, [this stage is both] more believable and more achievable. It is the beginning of transforming the current story into a new narrative of hope and possibility (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 239).

Design: In this stage, participants collaborate to develop a blueprint "that stretches and challenges the status quo" (Calabrese et al. 2010. p. 255). "If the dream represents a shared ideal, the highest aspirations for the future, then it follows that there will be changes in the way people are doing things. The task of this phase is to create a blueprint that will inform the system's structures and policies that can move them toward the realisation of their dream [and is encapsulated in] provocative propositions - statements that stretch the system from where it is to where [the participants want the system] to be" (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 239).

It is a time for sustained dialogue so that people arrive at a level of depth, commitment and trust, as together they design principles they are prepared to live by. Because the provocative propositions are rooted in the dream and the discovery of

best past experience, they inspire confidence to reach beyond one's grasp. These propositions become filters by which to measure any of the structural or procedural changes that are made. People ask, ''If we make this change will it move us in the direction of the ideal?'' (Finegold et al, 2002. P. 239).

Destiny**.** "Guided by these design principles, the system moves to achieve its destiny… As people move through discovery, dream, and design, they begin to [perceive] the organisation or community in a new way (Finegold et al, 2002. P. 240). Thus "participants define common essential core processes of their work and a social network to add to their blueprint. They identify personal and group commitment to implement their provocative proposition" (Calabrese et al. 2010. p. 255).

"As it is a recursive process, people within the system continue to value their successes, inquire into what is working well, and continue to seek ways to get more of it" (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 240).

As the destiny stage was used in this research and reflecting the exploratory nature of the focus group process, rather than making commitments to implement their provocative propositions, participants were asked how they saw self-reliance in the future of the regional economy and their role in that.

AI was developed in the late 1980s by David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Cleveland's Case Western Reserve University. Since then it "has been used with a broad range of public, private, and non-profit organizations around the world and with groups of all sizes, from small work teams to multi-national corporations" (Finegold et al, 2002. p. 236), creating new kinds of conversations and leading to positive and powerful outcomes.

It has also spawned other versions. Thus 'Imagine' is a community participation method based on AI.

> It builds a vision for the future using questions to focus people's attention on success. The questions are designed to encourage people to tell stories from their own experience of what works. By seeing what works and exploring why,

> it is possible to imagine and construct further success, ensuring that a vision of the future is created with a firm basis in reality (Imagine Ryedale, 2007)

The following provides examples of AI's use in relation to: four Japanese towns; tourism in Nepal; the journey that Cleveland in the US has taken to renew itself; and in helping a declining rural community in the Midwestern USA become sustainable.

Kimura (2010) provides case studies of four Japanese towns that have successfully used Appreciative Inquiry in their revitalisation. In Ohyama the mayor appreciatively inquired or recognised the existence and potential of the region's wild plum and chestnut trees. With the assistance of the municipality, farmers were persuaded to adopt production of these trees.

In Nagahama, an AI approach was taken in the preservation and utilisation of the former bank building and the renovation and utilisation of the traditional local shops along the road to the local temple. Nagahama was already *half-full* (with its rich historical landscape) and was able to improve what it already had, along with the development of glass handicrafts to attract many visitors.

An Appreciative Inquiry into what distinguished Yufuin, identified the quiet rural scenery of Mount Yufu and the rice fields below, as a resource to be promoted and nurtured. Finally an AI approach recognised that Bungotakada's latent local resource was the best of the past, i.e. its existing buildings.

Nyaupane and Poudel (2012) chose AI as a research method to discover "how tourism helps in the conservation of biological diversity and livelihood improvement in Nepal" because of its effectiveness in a situation "where many stakeholders with diverse interests work together" (p. 982). It was seen as a strength-based approach that could help "validate and appreciate the richness of rural knowledge [as well as empowering] rural communities … often alienated by the use of technology and technical jargon" (p. 986). It was found to promote positive change in the communities involved.

Meyer-Emerick (2012) detailed how in 2009, the city of Cleveland used the "Appreciative Inquiry Summit process to engage a broad group of stakeholders in envisioning a new sustainable local economy for the Cleveland region" (p. 52). The city

was seeking to hasten its transition from a rust belt economy to one focussed on sustainable development. Its goal “was to develop a plan for a green and sustainable economy by the year 2019, the 50th anniversary of the [in]famous 1969 Cuyahoga River fire” (p. 58 when an oil slick on the river caught fire and significantly damaged two railroad bridges.

Meyer-Emerick drew attention to how Glavas, Senge and Cooperrider (2010) saw the success of the AI process as being due to four criteria: (1) the whole system was involved by having “representation across the sectors and demographics of the region’s 1.6 million people”; (2) AI’s strength-based approach made it possible to build momentum on an established, successful base with a positive vision; (3) once the process began, “the mayor and other sustainability champions ‘got out of the way’, thereby empowering the participants to incorporate their energy and vision into the resulting initiatives”; and finally, and also from the outset, (4) in addition to those who are traditionally involved in change efforts, others were continually consulted and involved, thereby building social capital (p. 64).

Meyer-Emerick (p. 65) cited a study by Portney and Berry, (2010) that “found a strong relationship between political and civic participation and the pursuit of sustainability in American cities”. They concluded that in the final analysis sustainable cities are cities whose residents participate – they are “participatory cities.”

Calabrese et al. (2010) related how AI’s 4-D cycle was applied in a US rural Midwestern school district setting to create a sustainable rural school district and community. The community “was faced with a declining and aging population and growing cynicism among teachers and administrators who believed the district’s best days were over”. The … challenge was compounded by the great disparity between this rural community’s rich and poor residents” (p. 250). It was found the process improved communication and collaboration strategies among the nine stakeholders involved. Importantly it enabled them to move “from powerlessness to powerfulness through their shared narratives and encouraged non-judgmental communication, mutual respect, and the acceptance of a diversity of viewpoints” (p. 262).

One of the limitations in using AI with this study's focus group, was that it was a one day event. Indeed the person who initially undertook to facilitate, withdrew because he felt it needed to be conducted for longer and with a bigger group and that it would not be sufficiently productive. Sarantakos (2013, p. 208) observed that "the number of groups included in a study varies… with, in practice, the number of groups employed in a study [being] as few as 10". Then, Rankin and Ali (2014) suggested the group should never last for more than 2 hours. In the event, the availability of the participants for this study's focus group resulted in the group being conducted in a single day over two consecutive sessions with a break in the middle for lunch.

Notwithstanding that in all probability, more could have been achieved if it had been held over 2 days with a greater number of participants, the survey of participants following the event reflected the success of the group. It also provided an opportunity for participants to experience the AI approach.

Participatory Action

Appreciative inquiry is the primary methodology in this research. Participatory action is "based on a participative … relationship with the world, [and represents] a move away from the distance and separateness of objectivity" (Reason, 1988, p. 10). This study's research involved using a focus group to consider the application of self-reliant policies within the Nelson region, in order to enable the participants to take action to improve conditions both in their lives and the lives of others (Park, 1993).

In this instance, the research involved the researcher forming a partnership with others to learn about the dimensions of the dominant system's economic hegemony and the transformative potential offered through collective action. It is proposed that because we are all affected by the positivist world view – that we are separate from each other and the world around us – we are all disadvantaged and unable to fully realise our potential, both individually and collectively. "Its aim is to help [people] be self-reliant, self-assertive and self-determinative as well as self-sufficient" (Park, 1993, p. 2).

Four imperatives elucidated by Reason (1998) both underpin and justify using this methodology. The first is the political imperative that arises with the right and ability for people to have a say in decisions affecting them. Reason emphasised the need for this by highlighting “the primary critique of non-participatory research, [in] that it serves the dominant culture by monopolising the development and use of knowledge to the disadvantage of the communities in which research takes place” (p. 150). The political imperative is also apparent from recognising that neo-classical economics’ “emphasis on competition over collaboration, destroys people’s sense of belonging and their ability to participate in any way in the political economy of their country” (p. 152). In this regard, participatory action can be seen to being philosophically aligned with the co-operative model.

The second imperative is the epistemology of participation**.** Echoing Sahtouris, Reason asserted that the dominant Western worldview or paradigm is “based on a fundamental epistemological error that humans are separate from each other and from the natural world” (p. 157). Using Skolimowksi's words, he saw this as being responsible for "ecological devastation, human and social fragmentation and spiritual impoverishment" (as cited in Reason, 1998. p. 157), with participation denied and people living in an alienated consciousness. He discerns a shift, with human beings coming to participate intentionally and with greater awareness in the creation of their world.

The third imperative affirms participation as an ecological imperative, insofar as humans are part of the planet’s life processes. The pursuit of short-term conscious goals at the expense of the wider whole contributes to the destruction of the balance and harmony of the whole. Reason suggested that “if we fail to make the developmental transition to an aware participative relationship with the planet, we will, in all probability, create an environment unfit for human habitation” (p. 162).

Finally, in addition to its political, epistemological and ecological dimensions, Reason saw participation as a spiritual imperative in that one of the primary purposes of human inquiry is “to heal the alienation, the split that characterises modern experience” (p. 162). Ideally, one of the outcomes of this research will be that these

imperatives are implicitly acknowledged, and contribute to a discourse as to how to maximise the overall well-being of the Nelson regional community.

Park (1993, p. 8) describes participatory research as beginning with a problem. In the present instance, the problem could be stated as the inherent dependency and subservience of regional economies in general, and the Nelson regional economy in particular. It can also be seen as one of the invisible structures impacting our lived environment (Mollison, 1988).

While the focus group provided the opportunity for participation, there were no actions planned or taken as a result.

Ethics

The need to ensure that ethical concerns are addressed is acknowledged as being significant when conducting research involving groups of people (Denscome as cited in Katavake-McGrath, (2015). As the research involved conducting a focus group, it necessitated submitting an ethics application to the AUT Ethics Committee.

As well as summarising the research, the application explained the reasons for it being undertaken, its aims and background, and its potential benefits to the participants, the researcher and the wider community. The application also outlined the methodological approaches being used and how data would be gathered, processed and analysed.

The ethics application described how by using a focus group, the research was participatory, in that it was undertaken with people rather than being done to them. Participants shared by contributing ideas towards the issue being addressed and were likely to have gained something in the process (MacCulloch, 2012).

The application described how the process involved the researcher participating with others to learn about the dimensions of the dominant system's economic hegemony and the transformative potential offered through collective action. It proposed that in being affected by the positivist world view, we are separate from one another and the

world around us, and that as a result, we are all disadvantaged and unable to fully realise our potential, both individually and collectively.

In the application, I described how the research's main data relating to the scope for implementing self-reliant policies, would come from using a focus group comprising some of the region's community leaders to envisage the application of self-reliant strategies to the Nelson regional economy. Tape-recorded transcripts of the focus group enabled it to be reduced into a manageable form so that it could be organised around any themes that emerged, and finally interpreted in light of the thesis question.

AUT's Ethics Committee's approval of my ethics application dated 12 May 2015, is shown as part of Appendix A.

The key ethical principles guiding AUT's Ethics Committee (Auckland University of Technology, n.d.), are

- Informed and voluntary consent
- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality
- Minimisation of risk
- Truthfulness, including limitation of deception
- Social and cultural sensitivity, including commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
- Research adequacy
- Avoidance of conflict of interest

The need for informed and voluntary consent was addressed by having the participants complete a consent form prior to the focus group. In particular it asked whether they wished to be identified as a participant. All but one of the 10 agreed to be identified. The Consent form is shown as Appendix C.

There were no issues of particular note arising from the other key principles.

Focus Group

Choice of the focus group method

The decision to use a focus group was made because it enabled the collection of data by means of a facilitated group discussion utilising AI's discovery, dream, design and destiny format. In addition, by allowing for collective participation, the focus group method fitted well with the participatory action methodology.

The group consisted of purposively chosen community leaders to allow the possibility of the research being more than just an academic exercise. As community leaders they were individually better equipped to avoid any censoring and conforming issues that Carey and Smith (1994) described as a potential problem of focus groups.

The group met just the once, which could be viewed as a limiting factor. Had it met more than once, there is a chance of the dialogue having gone to a deeper level. The limited ability of the group to follow through with the implementation of the provocative propositions generated in the design phase, could be seen as another drawback. In the event, this was addressed by the facilitator asking the participants 'how do you see self-reliance in the future of the regional economy, and what's your role in that?'

Putting it together

When my initial research proposal was submitted in November 2013, I anticipated that the focus group would be held within six months. This timeframe proved to be unduly optimistic and in the event, the group was held in September 2015, four months after my ethics application was approved.

Having had the ethics application approved, I then needed to establish who was willing and available to take part. Initially I had thought to use two focus groups, one composed of decision makers from the region and the other of self-reliant practitioners. My rationale for seeking to involve decision-makers was that involving such people would, on the face of it, and assuming the policies were found to have merit, be more likely to see self-reliant policies being implemented. It also revealed my predilection for seeing self-reliant strategies adopted.

Thinking to involve self-reliant practitioners was prompted by recognising that the practical commitment and lived enthusiasm of such people would helpfully inform the research. The decision to proceed with the group of decision-makers alone was taken on pragmatic grounds. Managing the research process with one group was proving to be challenging enough, and I believed not including self-reliant practitioners would neither negate nor materially impact the outcome.

Upon reflection, I came to acknowledge that choosing decision-makers could exclude people who, while not decision-makers per se, were nonetheless positively impacting their community. In the event I opted for the term 'community leaders' on the grounds that together they were likely to constitute a more inclusive group. The term community leaders was inclusive of both those who were influential because of the position they held and those who had demonstrated a capacity to impact the community.

While decision-makers could be seen as having power over others, the power of community leaders comes more from their relationship and involvement with others. The community leaders selected have demonstrated a commitment to social justice and/or a capacity to materially address progressive community well-being and/or be in positions that would enable them to help facilitate the implementation of self-reliant policies.

Establishing when the group would meet, required deciding on a date that worked for the largest number of potential participants. Hallas' (2014, p. 519) observation that "the effort required to organise participants for focus groups is considerable" proved true, with the logistical challenge involved prompting one of the participants to write "welcome to my world of herding cats". In addition to consulting the facilitator it involved emailing all 20 or so possible participants on three separate occasions to establish a date that would best suit the largest number. Eventually, the date chosen was Wednesday 16 September 2015.

Participants

An effort was made to ensure that overall the participants comprised a balanced group by including Māori, women and people of diverse backgrounds, ages and from

different parts of the region. Possible participants who were approached but were unavailable on the day included Māori, a youth representative and those with backgrounds in education and business.

Of the 23 who were invited to participate, ten were available on the day and of these, two were available for only part of the time. I believe that the group's composition successfully reflected balance. Of the ten participants, four were women. Additionally, while not available herself, Nelson's mayor arranged for Councillor Mike Ward to attend in her stead.

The nine participants who agreed to be identified were Annette Milligan of Nelson's Independent Nursing Practice, Bill Findlater and Lesley McQue of the Economic Development Agency, David Armstrong of Vision Motueka, Kindra Douglas of Victory Community Centre, Matt Lawry and Mike Ward, Nelson City Councillors and Cr Martine Bouillir and Mayor Richard Kempthorne of the Tasman District Council.

One participant had a background in health and business, one a scientific background, two had been journalists, and one was an artist. Geographically, one was from Golden Bay, one was from Motueka, with the remainder being from the greater Nelson-Richmond urban area.

As in the case of Nelson's mayor nominating one of her councillors, there was a sense that some of the participants were self-selecting. In another case, when his schedule precluded him staying for the whole day, Bill Findlater of the Economic Development Agency nominated his deputy. When the deputy also proved to be unavailable, another staff member attended in his stead.

Accepting that I had limited control over the composition of the group (not to mention the timing) my task was made easier by recognising that the thesis question and indeed the whole process was exploratory.

Participants were made aware that the focus of the group was the scope for implementing self-reliant policies in Nelson's regional economy. Thus the original invitation to join the focus group invited participants

> to join a facilitated focus group to explore the question 'what are the merits

> and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?' The global financial crisis and climate change have emerged as overriding issues of our time. The challenges and the opportunities they present have prompted the question which forms the basis of a thesis I am doing through AUT.

In addition, the Participant Information Sheet accompanying the invitation advised the purpose of the research as being

> to explore the merits and scope for the Nelson region becoming more self-reliant. Being more self-reliant would enable the region to engage with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength as well as safe-guarding against the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and exacerbating levels of inequality. As one of Nelson's community leaders, you are being asked to participate in the hope that the research will have practical outcomes.

The Participant Information Sheet forms Appendix B.

Facilitation

Notwithstanding my concerns that an outside facilitator would not be as familiar with the issues as myself, and that he or she may not be awake to addressing nuances as they arose, I elected to utilise someone with experience to facilitate the group. An outside facilitator also meant ceding some control in addition to what Cary and Smith (1994) called the "group effect". On the other hand, not-with-standing the loss of control, the gain in using an outside facilitator as well as a focus group was the promise of richer information becoming available.

The decision to use the appreciative inquiry methodology was made in discussion with my supervisors on 22 May 2014 and prompted me to search for someone with experience of the process. Searching the web using "appreciative inquiry New Zealand" I came across One Beat, a Wellington-based organisation that uses the appreciative inquiry format when facilitating events. Contact was made with Terry Stewart, one of the group's principals, and on 16 September 2014, we met in

Wellington. Helpfully, he undertook to come to Nelson and do the facilitation without charge.

We remained in touch but it wasn't until I contacted him after having gained ethics approval in May 2015 that I learned he was only prepared to facilitate a fully-fledged community exercise, not the exploratory exercise with a focus group envisaged for this study. His concern was that an exploratory exercise would waste both his time and that of the participants. While a good deal more would have been achieved had it been more comprehensive, the focus group provided the opportunity to explore the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy with a group of community leaders and at the very least, provided them with an opportunity to experience the appreciative inquiry approach.

On my supervisors' recommendation, I began looking for someone else and made contact with three people who could possibly help. One, based in Dunedin, was unavailable as she was about to begin a job. Neither of the other two fitted entirely. One recommended Peter Lawless, a Nelson-based professional facilitator. While not experienced in using appreciative inquiry per se, a positive three-way discussion on 8 July with Peter, my supervisor and myself, confirmed Peter in the role. In what seemed additionally affirming, Peter also generously offered to facilitate the focus group without charge.

I met with Peter prior to the meeting of the focus group on 3 September to prepare a design for the day. I also met with him after the focus group on 23 September for a debriefing session. This resulted in my deciding to follow up the focus group meeting with a survey of the participants.

The meeting of the group on Wednesday 16 September 2015 was held in Fairfield House's Gallery room from 11am to 4pm with a break for lunch that was provided by my wife. A bladder of apple juice and a jar of either home-made jam or chutney was provided for participants as an appreciation of their attendance. The focus group discussions were recorded using two digital recorders – two in case one malfunctioned.

The survey

During the follow up debriefing session with the facilitator that provided an opportunity to reflect on how the focus group had gone, it emerged that there were issues about which it would be helpful to have additional input. As a result a survey was planned to be composed of statements made by participants during the course of the focus group. Before it could be prepared two things were needed: first the recorded discussions of the focus group needed transcribing, and second, approval of the AUT Ethics Committee was needed prior to it being circulated to participants. (In the application to the Ethics Committee, the word 'questionnaire' was used rather than 'survey'. In the event, the wording used in the survey suggested it more accurate to be described as such.)

The services of a professional transcriber were obtained and further approval from the Ethics Committee was forthcoming as shown in Appendix A.

The survey of six statements/questions was posted and emailed on 2 November 2015 to the same ten participants who took part in the focus group. Five of the statements requested respondents to either agree or disagree, and, at the suggestion of my supervisors, also invited the respondents to make any additional comments. The sixth question invited any other comments that they would like to make.

I believe that the responses received from the participants affirmed the value of the initiative.

The survey and responses form Appendix E**.**

6

Outcomes of the focus group

The group used the appreciative inquiry methodology that first elicits stories of life-giving forces, before locating themes that appear in those stories, creating shared images for a preferred future and fashioning ways to create that preferred future.

Broadly, the day was planned as follows. Participants were first asked "*What gives life to the regional economy?"* On the basis of the participants' responses, they were then invited to explore "W*hat could the future be?"* Following lunch, the participants were asked to suggest an image of a preferred future – a provocative proposition about how our regional economy could be different with policies of self-reliance. The session concluded with each participant being asked to describe how they saw self-reliance in the future of the regional economy and their role in that future.

Details of how the focus group was designed forms Appendix D.

Participants were seated in a half circle facing the facilitator. Behind him, a banner on the wall which read, "*Exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy*", reiterated the focus of the group.

At the outset each participant introduced themselves, giving their name, their role in the regional economy and how they came to be in the region. It was noteworthy that of the 12 in the room including myself as the researcher and the facilitator, only Tasman's mayor had been born in the region. Everyone else had chosen to live there for one reason or another, including seeing it as the best place to be, its outdoors and sense of vibrant life, work opportunities and warmer climate and compelling first impressions. One had come to Nelson from the United Kingdom, two were originally

from Melbourne, one from USA. Others originally hailed from South Auckland, Hamilton, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Dunedin and Southland.

Following the introductions and before he left, Bill Findlater, Chief Executive Officer of Nelson's Regional Economic Development Agency, emphasised that in his view the regional economy is only one operating region, with the Tasman area its engine room and the Nelson-Richmond area its service provider. He also spoke of his conviction that businesses worldwide have lost a sense of corporate responsibility, suggesting that this reflected an indictment of social values in the Western world. He described the EDA's mission as creating better, more meaningful jobs.

From the introductions, the facilitator asked participants to find the person in the room who they believed to have the most similar perspective to them. In keeping with appreciative inquiry's strength-based approach, that affirms the existing strength, capacity, and resources of a community, they were asked to discuss the question "*What gives life to the regional economy*?" and summarise it in a sentence.

This produced the following answers

- *People interacting to satisfy each other's needs based on land and water resources in the region, stimulated by innovation, population growth, external demand, desire for improvement and creativity.*
- *The need to participate and contribute, to meet the needs and aspirations of all people who live here and beyond within an environment that continues to sustain us.*
- *Diversity of people and resources; Abundant, pure, plentiful resources; Benevolent weather; The potential for our area to be self-sufficient and resilient; Balance of practical, hands-on types of industries and creativity; A transient population and tourists who add a richness and a life to the area.*
- *A regional economy needs money, people, creativity and a nurturing efficient environment with an engaged population who just do it!*
- *Having profitable businesses that are integrated into a sustainable and mutually beneficial economic system, and are integrated with the community.*

With one exception, these answers to the question, "*What gives life to the regional economy*?" express the belief that people give life to the regional economy. They give life to the regional economy by meeting needs and aspirations and are supported by the environment as well as being stimulated by a range of factors including innovation, demand, desire for improvement and creativity. The exception focusses more on the contribution of businesses.

In contrast to the first question 'what gives life to the regional economy?' that evoked an enthusiastic response, the following question didn't seem to evince the same enthusiasm, perhaps because participants didn't have sufficient time to reflect and obviously build on the first.

After answering the first question, participants were then asked to form groups of three to answer "*What could be created to give more of that life to the regional economy*?" This question accorded with appreciative inquiry's dream stage in which participants create powerful metaphors and imagine how their region/organisation might look in the best of all possible circumstances.

The small groups were formed by going around the circle, with the first person taking number one, the second person number two, and the third, number three. This was repeated around the circle. The groups of three were formed by one group being composed of ones, another of twos and the third of threes. During the course of the ensuing discussion, the facilitator moved people between the groups, a technique used to help generate alignment. Regarding this technique, in each group something begins to emerge. When a person is moved they carry the emergent with them and then the people in the group they go to have to explain what is emerging there. This rapidly clarifies the commonalities and differences. By the time people have been moved three times a collective sense of what they align around will emerge. They are then invited to speak this directly from intuition. This moves the whole group to the intuitive and they have a rich mix available from what has happened in the smaller groups. Alignment then emerges and is crystallised.

Answers from the three groups were

- *Our region has a unique number of attributes and so there's a certain kind of culture to Nelson. Those attributes include cycle ways, national parks, walkways, recreation, leisure and industries that operate here.*
- One participant questioned whether we want more of the kind of economy we currently have, or whether we want a more inclusive economy that meets the needs of the whole community and has a more equal distribution of wealth. He asked how we can ensure that all those people who are currently disengaged or disempowered or disenfranchised actually have a part to play and feel fulfilled in the regional economy. He rephrased his comments to make a positive statement:
- *People come here and enjoy our community, enjoy our food and the way we all support each other.*
- *We are an inclusive, creative community that is reflected in the arts and housing. We are well fed from locally sourced food, and have the best employers on the planet.*

The ensuing discussion elaborated these answers by highlighting the following issues:

- We aspire to be leaders in producing quality locally sourced food as well as fully utilising the excess produce from orchards in the region. We have found alternatives to food being sent for packaging in Christchurch and then returned to Nelson to be sold.
- Building modular homes and showcasing different models of living e.g. instead of older people being in rest homes, we enable them to live with children, young people and other single people.
- We **e**ncourage growth of villages so there are mini communities within the wider community
- The region is known as being artistically creative and a nice place to be. Alternative communities exist here. The region's culture could be enhanced by having places that bring people together. We are known for the creative way we approach things generally and not having enormous extremes of wealth.

Appreciative inquiry's third phase, its design phase, involves creating a blueprint that will inform the system's structures and policies that can move the participants toward the realization of their collective dream. To this end, participants were requested to build on their answers to the previous question and come up with provocative propositions describing what could be done to make our regional economy different.

- *"Like Oregon's Portland, Nelson does everything possible to become a destination for people attracted by our interesting community and lifestyle, environment, arts, community, progressive thinking, good food, mountain biking, wine and craft beer".*
  (Portland, the largest city of Oregon in the United States, is frequently recognised as one of the most environmentally conscious cities in the world because of its high walkability, large community of cyclists, farm-to-table dining, expansive network of public transportation options, and 10,000+ acres of public parks.)

- *"We want to develop the region's culture of caring and kindness based on caring/kaitiaki for people, the environment and the world"*.
  In part, this is due to Nelson having a higher proportion of people with intellectual disability than other parts of the country. This, in turn, is linked to people with intellectual disabilities being provided with community housing within the wider Nelson community, following the closure of two of Nelson's hospitals – Ngawhatu in 2000 and Braemar in 2003 where they were formerly living. Developing a culture of caring and kindness can also be seen as reflecting the kindness we have been shown in having been bequeathed a hospitable climate and beautiful environment.
- *"People live and work to the vision of the Nelson region as a unique place of creativity, innovation and inclusion. We actively contribute to what we produce, what we offer and what we care about".*
- *"We envisage a regional economy that is less carbon intensive and more people-intensive goods and services where great employers offer good jobs to all members of the community".*
  Carbon intensive describes any process that has a high carbon footprint in relation to its economic importance.

- *"My community is a lifestyle, creativity and sustainability role model"*.
  The region is a place that people look to in order to discover how we became so gorgeous, safe, generous, inclusive, creative and sustainable. This place is a role model. We are a place of wellbeing. We know how to live well here.
- *"We wish for a future that helps engage our younger people. Hopefully this would lead into discussing how to change the culture into one with more localism and more future thinking".*
- *"All our regional policy is approved by a WWII housewife"*.
  There would be no wastage, resources would be fully utilised. We would make the most of what is available
- *It would be worthwhile to hold regular forums to create the future we collectively want, to energise the community into doing something different*.

Other points of significance that emerged were

- Acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension
  "I have no doubt the whole of humanity is in a paradigm shift at the moment, where one old way of being is crumbling and falling and a new whole paradigm is coming in".
  "We are spiritual beings, there's no doubt about that. We're souls who have a body and everything is energetic and vibrational alignment".
  "We're creating the new paradigm so we're bringing it in. So I am very hopeful".
  "It looks like we could go completely down in a crumbling heap but actually there's massive potential in there too".
  "I see both of that happening at this time and we're seeing the worst and the best in a way".
- "Give support to the people who do it well". This suggestion aligns with the appreciative inquiry approach.
- Effort could go into making the region more of a destination.

Finally the facilitator invited participants to say how they see self-reliance in the future of the regional economy and their role in that:

- *"It is hard to be self-reliant unless you have some sense of self awareness. Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity. If we could actually just be Nelson that would help us in terms of our identity which will then help us in terms of our self-reliance because we'll know what we're about".*
- *"Being much more challenging about where stuff comes from and choices about purchase, even when that choice means paying more for it, if that results in building a community which is a strong community".*
- *"I see a self-reliant community as one where people can support themselves and be part of the community and realise their own aspirations and self-worth".*
- *"Self-reliance isn't about self-sufficiency because we have an obligation to the rest of the world. Rather it's about sourcing many of our needs from as close to home as possible. This makes good environmental and social sense".*
- *"Self-reliance is just as much about me as about us as a community. Being willing to have those conversations in an ongoing way to keep that compass heading to the true north of whatever it is. It's about environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing".*
- *"Self-reliance – I'm a big supporter of localism".*
- *"We don't have to have a closed community but capable of it if things got really bad.*

  We have to fight for ourselves, to become self-reliant ourselves. It's not the whole Nelson economy that's just vital. It's the Motueka economy. I think there's a lot of alignment between the two though and I see the sorts of policies around the things that have already been said – be confident of who we are and be able to project that to the world".

The Follow-up Survey

The follow-up survey was sent out to the focus group participants six weeks after the focus group. It invited them to agree or disagree with five statements, all of which had been expressed at the focus group, and to add any additional comments they might have.

1) The group came together to "Explore the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy".

- **There would be value in exploring this further.**

Of the ten respondents, only two disagreed.

One of them, who was present for only half the day, stated, "*I think we fairly well explored this on the day."*

The other stated, "*I think the question-proposition needs better definition before there is an attempt to explore it further".*

Of the seven who explicitly agreed with this statement, two responses stand out.

- *The focus group felt like a solid beginning. Under-standing the concept and the implications. There are many reasons to expand this conversation wider and many [other] people who would be interested in being included.*
- *The group really only had to time to scratch the surface…there is considerable merit in continuing this discussion to effect real change in the region.*

These responses clearly indicate support for further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy.

2) The best predictor of good health is feeling as though you are in control of your own life.

- **This has relevance at the community level.**

Eight respondents agreed with this statement. Perhaps the most positive response came from a respondent who ostensibly disagreed with the statement.

- *A community being in control of its own destiny has many positive implications.*

3) Christopher Luxon CEO of Air New Zealand mentioned recently "you don't really have a regional identity."

"How can we develop a regional identity that's recognisable so we can say yes, this is who we are?"

"Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity and what we're all about and what we want to project to the world."

- **Having unified governance could facilitate the development of a regional identity.**

These statements raised the contentious issue of the possible amalgamation of Nelson City and Tasman District. This was the subject of a poll in April 2012 that saw 57 percent of Nelson City voters voting for amalgamation, and three quarters of Tasman voters, voting against. It was not surprising that the issue of Nelson City and Tasman District being separate unitary authorities was raised by participants, given that the two authorities border each other, with a boundary that separates what is increasingly becoming one large urban sprawl.

The participant who quoted Luxon in the focus group disagreed that having unified governance could facilitate the development of a regional identity. Indeed he sees unity through amalgamation as "unnecessary and potentially destructive", believing instead that it is possible to develop a sense of regional identity with the two councils and agencies collaborating.

In contrast, while one respondent did not think it necessary to merge the region's two councils to achieve a regional identity, eight of the 10 respondents agreed that having unified governance could facilitate the development of a regional identity. Their position was probably best reflected in the following response

> "*For such a small place, a truly regional perspective, identity and collective impact for wellbeing has to be based on a unified governance."*

4) "My community is a lifestyle, creativity and sustainability role model."

- **This is a proposition the regional community could aspire to.**

Eight agreed.

One respondent expressed the belief that the "first principle has to be that our region has a common ground on which to create a strategic goal."

Another expressed the view that while the lifestyle and creativity aspects are fairly mature, the sustainability aspect has a long way to go.

5) "The need to engage the entire community is important"

- **Community forums to discuss issues such as food security, housing and transport would help people become engaged.**

Nine agreed.

The single disagreement was based on such events being “talkfests that see a whole lot preaching going on to the converted”.

Other responses expressed concern as to how to engage the wider community.

Analysis of the Focus Group and Survey Data

My ethics application stated that the analysis of the data from the Focus Group would be coded using NVivo or a manual process to reduce it into manageable form, organised around any themes that emerged, and finally interpreted in light of the thesis question. In the event, a manual process was used to interpret its outcomes.

Prior to the focus group meeting, participants were sent an invitation, a Participant Information Sheet and a backgrounder. The invitation advised the group’s purpose by inviting them

> “to join a facilitated focus group to explore the question ‘what are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?’ The global financial crisis and climate change have emerged as overriding issues of our time. The challenges and the opportunities they present have prompted the question which forms the basis of a thesis I am doing through AUT”.

The Participant Information Sheet reinforced the invitation, by advising the purpose of the research as being

> “to explore the merits and scope for the Nelson region becoming more self-reliant. Being more self-reliant would enable the region to engage with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength as well as safe-guarding against the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and exacerbating levels of inequality. As one of Nelson’s community leaders, you are being asked to participate in the hope that the research will have practical outcomes”.

The backgrounder provided further reinforcement by stating

> "The Nelson regional economy is at risk from climate change and, as the global financial crisis revealed, from the instability of the global financial system. Additionally regional and national economies alike are captive to the hegemonic power of multi-national capital. Their vulnerability reveals an underlying dependency. Taking these considerations into account, a prudent approach would suggest the wisdom of exploring ways of heightening the resilience of the Nelson regional economy. In particular they warrant assessing the scope for the region to become more resilient by adopting bottom up strategies such as implementing self-reliant policies."

The backgrounder sent to focus group participants forms Appendix F.

Finally the banner that was situated on the wall in front of the group when they met, read

> "Exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy."

Notwithstanding these efforts to establish the focus of the group, on the day, the issue of self-reliance in relation to the regional economy was barely mentioned. Indeed one of the participants asked whether the participants were being asked to "endorse (my) philosophy" which suggested a degree of resistance.

That said, eight out of the ten respondents to the subsequent survey agreed that "*There would be value in further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy*".

As mentioned ten participants took part in the focus group. Their choosing to attend but not to focus on the question they had met to address, raises the question about why they attended? Apart from one participant who had been asked by Nelson's mayor to attend in her stead and another who took the place of a colleague, all of the attendees had responded to my personal invitation to attend.

Other possible reasons for their attendance could include the social connection and interest aroused from knowing who else would be there and curiosity.

While the group warmed up in the course of the session, they did not seem to have warmed up to the subject matter. Either the issue was deemed unimportant or not understood. A further explanation could have been that the group was only just warming up to the issue.

My optimism in thinking community leaders would engage with the issue of self-reliance and that, as a result of their engagement, the research could have a practical outcome (rather than simply being an academic exercise) seems to have been borne out. Seven of the ten respondents to the questionnaire agreed that there would be value in further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy with two in particular being strongly supportive.

There was some discussion among participants regarding what would happen if there were no jobs and people were unemployed. One suggestion was that "that's where trouble and strife starts to happen." Related to this was the suggestion that the regional economy included "a community of great employers". At no stage in the group was there any reference to the stability and inclusiveness that worker cooperatives could offer.

The issue of the region's governance was mentioned specifically a number of times:

> "It is hard to be self-reliant unless you have some sense of self awareness and something that I think has come up a lot is that Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity and what we're all about and what we want to project to the world. We are one community. We are one economy, we are one group of people. I think if we could actually just be Nelson that would actually help us in terms of our identity which will then help us in terms of our self-reliance because we'll know what we're about."
>
> "When we talk about the regional economy we are really only one operating region. We have the engine room of the economy which is really the Tasman area. The servicing side of the region is Nelson/Richmond so you can't look at it in isolation. It is one."
>
> "The insecurity Tasman has about considering itself part of the Nelson region…."

These comments make clear that the existing political divide remains an unresolved issue. Participants spoke of the wider Nelson region aspiring to being known for its inclusivity. It is probably fair to say that inclusivity is not reflected in its political makeup.

During the focus group Christopher Luxon, CEO of Air New Zealand was quoted as having said "you don't really have a regional identity."

Elaborating on Luxon's remark, Ian Collier, Air New Zealand's Regional Manager advised that for marketing, Air New Zealand seeks to assess regions in terms of why people want to visit, live and work there. They need absolute clarity as to the region's tourism proposition and in particular need two or three pillars to define a region's identity. Such definition needs all the stakeholders to be on the same page. In the Nelson/Tasman region, stakeholders include Nelson Tasman Tourism, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council, Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Association. He warned of the risk of parochialism getting in the way of a good proposition and clouding out the requisite clarity. He suggested the pillars could be two or three of the following – sunny climate, Abel Tasman National Park, Walks, cycle ways, Nelson Lakes National Park and skiing. A brief review of the websites for Nelson Tasman Tourism, Nelson City Council, Tasman District Council and the Economic Development Association do not appear to reflect the unified tourism proposition Air New Zealand seek.[12]

Issues addressed in *Nelson 2060* that were echoed in the Focus group were:

- The scope for Nelson to develop a reputation 'as a champion of natural advantages and environmental worthiness'.
- Nelson's warmth and care
- Facilitating forums to encourage collaboration on topics that have multiple interests eg active transport forum, biodiversity forum (p. 37)
  Professor Bob Evans a member of *Nelson 2060*'s expert panel that reviewed its findings is quoted as stating, "A two-way process of civic engagement – not just participation or consultation – over a long protracted term is likely to be

[12] Phone conversation with Ian Collier 19th May 2016.

necessary if these changes are going to be delivered" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 16).

The position of *Nelson 2060* vis-a-vis the questions asked in the survey.

Question 1: The value of further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies.

Nelson 2060 recognised the "need to understand and plan for challenges and opportunities that global trends such as climate change, energy availability, population change and growing income gaps might cause" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 7).

The value of further exploring the merits of implementing self-reliant policies is reflected in the recognition that "we can protect livelihoods and be better able to withstand shocks by producing and supplying more of our basic requirements such as food, energy, building materials and at the same time support our local economy" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 8).

We will know that we are able to rapidly adapt to change – one of *Nelson 2060*'s goals - when we have strengthened the region by having more locally produced renewable energy (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 23).

On page 33 the value of importing less and producing more essentials locally is recognised (Nelson City Council, 2013a).

Question 3: The development of a regional identity.

While the *Nelson 2060* document acknowledges that realising its vision will require a wider regional response and that "working with our neighbours is essential", it does not explicitly address the issue of regional governance and coherence. However it is significant that Nelson's mayor in the foreword to the City's Long term plan 2015-25 states

> The divisions between Nelson City and Tasman District Councils only makes sense on paper and not to our people who move across the dividing line every day. To create the future both Nelson and Tasman needs we must think, work

and plan as one region. That connected approach will evolve over the life of this plan.

Question 4: The regional community is a lifestyle, creativity and sustainability role model.

The effort that went into creating *Nelson 2060 Framing our Future* can be seen as an example of role modelling how to achieve desired lifestyle, creativity and sustainability goals.

Question 5: Engaging the community through community forums

A suggestion from one the forums held in 2011 to help realise the vision was that "the Nelson City Council hosts regular immigrants forums". While the council facilitates forums to encourage collaboration on topics that have multiple interests, such as the active transport forum and the biodiversity forum, hosting forums that were specifically designed with the *Nelson 2060* process in mind, would help ensure that *Nelson 2060 Framing our Future* is the "living document" it claims to be.

7

Findings

Chapter Two in this thesis concluded by asking the following four questions.

- How is the Nelson region's current town and country divide likely to impact on consideration of any recommendations regarding self-reliance policies?
- In light of the principle of social equality, how do existing levels of inequality affect the scope for Nelson's regional economy becoming more self-reliant?
- To what extent does existing regional policy making incorporate multiple bottom lines, including economic, social equity, environment and spiritual aspects?
- Are basic needs in relation to food, clothing, housing, education and health, being met?

This chapter seeks to address these questions. It also proposes two scenarios, one reflecting business-as-usual and one that adopts a more holistic approach. Finally the study's findings are considered in relation to the five pillars of PROUT, also presented in Chapter Two.

The first question asked:

> How is the Nelson region's current town and country divide likely to impact on consideration of any recommendations regarding self-reliance policies?

In 2010, when the Local Government Commission considered the proposal that the Nelson and Tasman regions amalgamate, a review of the 450 submissions it generated, revealed that most of the Tasman residents who wrote repeated the Tasman District Council's claims that a single council would be dominated by Nelson City, and that

Tasman people's rates would rise relative to Nelsons (Nelson Mail, 2010). Having lived in the overall region for most of the past 45 years, I have gained the impression that in contrast with the broadened outlook encouraged by neo-humanism, Tasman residents see their region's interests outweighing the benefits of working together as a whole through amalgamation.

Responding to the survey following the focus group, Martine Bouillir, at that time a TDC councillor, wrote about "the insecurity Tasman has about considering itself part of the Nelson region". It is possible that the insecurity she identified is linked to an underlying recognition that there being two councils in a region that forms a geographical whole, is entirely artificial and that at some stage will need to be addressed.

Another focus group participant linked self-reliance with having some sense of self awareness.

> It is hard to be self-reliant unless you have some sense of self awareness. Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity. If we could actually just be Nelson that would help us in terms of our identity which will then help us in terms of our self-reliance because we'll know what we're about.

Meantime consideration of any recommendations regarding self-reliance policies is likely to be hampered by having to get two Councils on board with any proposals impacting the wider region.

The second question asked:

> In light of the principle of social equality, how do existing levels of inequality affect the scope for Nelson's regional economy becoming more self-reliant?

The answer to this question is related to whether the wider region chooses to stay with a business-as- usual approach or whether it actively seeks to implement the sort of collective vision contained in *Nelson 2060: Framing our Future.*

Evidence of inequality in the region is provided by Gini coefficient of inequality cited in Chapter Four and the unmet food and housing needs cited below. With regard to the

fishing industry's quota management system, Mc Cormack (2016) drew attention to sustainability meaning sustaining the prevailing neoliberal economic paradigm, with the social being neglected in favour of the potential to increase wealth through quota holdings. That is, those in the Nelson region holding quota get richer and inequality worsens, a scenario that speaks of division rather than inclusion.

Business-as-usual together with the significant inequality of incomes and wealth in the region, speaks of there being an entrenched elite that is likely to work against social equality and more specifically, against the regional economy becoming more self-reliant in the short to medium term. To the contrary, from producing New Zealand's 2013 Index of Deprivation Report, Professor Peter Crampton one of its authors, has warned that without a change in economic policies, the gap between the rich and poor will grow and New Zealand society will become increasingly divided (Knott, 2014).

On the other hand, a community that is seeking to implement a shared vision, is more likely to be moving together. We know from the work of Wilkinson and Picket, (2009) that more equal societies are more socially cohesive and have higher levels of trust which foster public-spiritedness.

The third question asked:

> To what extent does existing regional policy-making incorporate multiple bottom lines, including economic, social equity, environment and spiritual aspects?

In 2012, the Local Government Act (2002) was amended by deleting the promotion of the "social, economic, environmental, and cultural 'wellbeing' of communities, in the present and for the future" as one of the purposes of Councils. While the Tasman District Council's annual reports focus on performance outcomes of social, and environmental matters along with its financial performance, they cannot be considered as being akin to triple bottom line reporting.[13]

The Nelson City Council relies on its *Nelson 2060* vision as evidence of its holistic approach to environmental, social and financial sustainability. It has chosen not to

[13] Phone conversation with Russell Holden, TDC's Finance Manager 19.8.2016.

take the next step of utilising triple bottom line accounting and has no plans to incorporate such accounting measures.[14]

A search to establish how widely triple bottom line reporting has been adopted in the wider Nelson region suggests it is notable more for its absence than its observance. Commendable exceptions include Kidpower Teenpower Fullpower Trust (2016) and Landcare Research (2016). With the inclusion of social equity and environmental audits being the exception, the likelihood of spirituality being added as an additional bottom line would seem remote.

The final question asked:

> Are basic needs in relation to food, clothing, housing, education and health, being met?

Leaving aside clothing and education, the following seeks to answer whether basic needs in relation to food, housing and health are being met.

Food

At a seminar hosted in Nelson in June 2016 by the Child Poverty Action Group, the principal of Nelson's Stoke primary school, spoke of a boy coming to school without shoes and lunch and almost certainly without having had breakfast (Redmond, 2016). KidsCan (2016) advise that more than 25% of New Zealand's children are living without the basics, while the Office of the Children's Commissioner advise 28% of children are living under the poverty line (Email from Dr Kathleen Logan, 12.9.16). Stoke and Victory are two Nelson primary schools supplied with food by KidsCan. It includes food that can be eaten at breakfast or lunch time, or as snacks to top-up insufficient food coming from home. Both schools are feeding about 100 children (Personal communication from Amanda Farmilo, KidsCan Charitable Trust, 2.9.2016)

This backs up the evidence reflected in Food for Families' supplying children's lunches referred to earlier.

[14] Email from Rachel Gray, NCC, Team Leader Executive Assistants

Clearly not all Nelson's families are meeting their need for food.

Housing

In the nine years since peaking in 2007, house values have increased 21 per cent in Nelson and 14 per cent in Tasman, with the median house price in Nelson now standing at $450,000 and in Richmond and Motueka over $500,000. While first-home buyers make up 19% of house buyers in Nelson and 14% in Tasman (Carson, 2016), the demand has seen some including young, first-home buyers, being priced-out of the market (Carson (2), 2016). In both regions about a third of buyers are multiple property owners from within the overall region and other parts of the country other than Auckland. "Auckland multiple property owners - or investors - made up between one and three per cent of house buyers in Nelson-Tasman in the year to July 2016" (Carson, 2016).

It is internationally accepted that a good marker for housing affordability is a ratio of 3.0 or less between median house prices and median annual household income. In August 2016 with Nelson's median house prices at $450,000 and median household incomes at $77,696 the ratio stood at 5.79, close to double the 3.0 housing affordability marker (Chaston, 2016).

Some of the more challenging housing needs in the region include those of older single women, refugees, students and those with mental health needs.

Age Concern Nelson Tasman have advised it is seeing an increase in clients who are living in sub-standard accommodation. While they have 18 people on their books, they believe the figure is likely to be three times that number if they include those they don't know about. Health-associated costs take up a large portion of older people's pension and impacts the standard of housing they can afford. Associated side-effects include depression and isolation. It's likely the problem of getting older people into affordable accommodation will worsen as the over 65 demographic increases. In 2014, 14% of NZ's population were aged over 65. Statistics New Zealand has estimated that by 2061, the percentage of New Zealand's population over 65 will be between 22 and 30 per cent (O'Connell, 2016).

In 2015, two thirds of the Nelson Budget Advice Service's clients were female. For 60% of all their clients, the percentage of income spent on rent was between 50 and 70% (Emailed advice 22.8.2016 from Marina Godsell of Nelson Budget Advice Service). This compares with a wise range being somewhere around 30% of total income (Purnell, 2013).

Health

The population in the wider region "has generally good health compared to others in NZ and generally good health access to health and disability support services." However there is a large gap in the majority of health indicators between Māori and Non- Māori. Compared with New Zealand as a whole, the region's population has a lower proportion of Māori, Pacific and Asian people which may have contributed to the population being relatively less deprived than NZ average. Thirty percent of adults were obese.

While residents who are 75 years of age or more made up 8% of the population in 2013/14, they took up 26% of Nelson Marlborough DHB's medical, surgical and acute treatment and rehabilitation and 40% of its hospital bed days.

Almost half of Māori (46%) live in the most deprived areas of the Nelson Marlborough region and are around 40% more likely to be living in the region's most deprived areas than their non-Māori counterparts. Furthermore they are more likely to be unemployed than Non- Māori, although 50% more likely to have work, than Māori across NZ (Nelson Marlborough DHB., 2015).[15]

[15] The District Health Board covers the Nelson, Tasman and Marlborough regions

Possible Scenarios Going Forward

Going forward we can anticipate at least two scenarios. The first could be described as business as usual, with increasing concentration of wealth leading in due course to displays of social unrest, younger people continuing to leave in search of work and community processes being predominantly top down.

The second scenario in contrast is more dynamic with *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* expanded to engage the wider regional community through bottom up forums run using the appreciative inquiry process. In addition to its climate and beautiful environment, people are attracted to the region by it being a lifestyle, creativity and self-reliance role model.

Overall the region is innovative with an enhanced cycling network, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology providing training for worker co-operatives courses and as with Māori kaumatua, the wisdom of the region's elders being called upon, for example to monitor the *Nelson 2060 – Framing our Future* process. A conscious effort is being made to maximise the processing of local products and to address issues of equity.

Inayatullah's (2004) theory of causal layered analysis assists in identifying what is happening and providing a framework to help organise our thinking for the future. Using this analysis, the two scenarios could appear as described in Table 7 below.

Table 7: *Two Possible Scenarios Going Forward*

	Scenario One	Scenario Two
Litany (the way things appear from day to day)	Maximising GDP is what it's all about	Triple bottom line accounting widely adopted
Systemic (the features of the system)	Top down economic power is dominant (not worker, regulatory or intellectual power). Neo-liberal mind set - profit driven, privately owned, hierarchical, market-led with the ascendancy of large businesses that are commonly overseas owned. Divided governance.	Overall region-wide bottom-up collective participation. Council utilising its position to enable desired social outcomes such as contracting with co-operatives to provide services. Enabling the establish-ment of housing and worker co-operatives. Concern for equity. Use of an alternative measure of economic performance such as genuine progress indicators.
Worldview (the interest and perspectives of stakeholders)	Capitalism for ever and ever….	PROUT
Myth/Metaphor (that provides meaning to the framework)	a bit player	Game changer

Consideration of the Study's Findings in Relation to the Five Pillars of PROUT Described in Chapter Two.

In Chapter Two it was proposed that the significance and scope of PROUT, is helped by seeing it as being built on five pillars: Neo-Humanism, the Social Cycle, Spiritual Practice, Governance and Political Economy. The following discusses the findings by taking each of these in turn.

Neo-humanism

Neo-humanism's underlying principle of *social equality* promotes the welfare of all. Under present policies, the gap between the Nelson region's rich and poor and especially Māori poor is expected to widen. As already mentioned the region's existing levels of inequality are likely to work against it becoming more self-reliant in the short to medium term. They also challenge the vision of it being an inclusive community.

The absence of widespread triple bottom line reporting, suggests that there is scope for heightened levels of responsibility within local authorities and among community leaders generally for social equity and environmental concerns.

Social cycle

Of the social cycle's four classes, New Zealand as with the rest of the world is dominated by neo-liberal capitalism, characterised by a globalised network of agreements and institutions promoting the deregulation of trade, financial exchange and social policy at national, regional and global levels. Neo-liberal capitalism also led to the transfer from public to private ownership of US$1.2 trillion worth of assets between 1977 and 2003 (Small, 2011).

A study by Ray & Anderson, (2000) revealed that 26% of the American population were what they called cultural creatives, people who are concerned about and focussed on ecology, community, consciousness, peace, justice and empowerment. Sarkar asserted that a shift in the social cycle would eventuate when sufficient numbers of people resisted being exploited by the class in power. The emergence of cultural creatives both in the USA and worldwide along with events such as the Occupy movement could be seen as presaging such a shift.

The wider Nelson region's population has long been recognised as attracting alternatively-minded people including those concerned about 'ecology, community, consciousness, peace, justice and empowerment'.

Spirituality

This thesis has contended that there is a rational case for serious consideration of the implementation of self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. It is a case that is not predicated on the acceptance of PROUT's socio-economic vision. Be that as it may, the following gives reason to believe that the Nelson region could become sympathetic to PROUT's holistic vision.

Written about Nelson, an article in the Nelson Mail in 2004 entitled "The Spiritual Centre" refers to the book *Warm Heart Open Mind: Discussions with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.* In the book, a high-ranking rinpoche [teacher of Buddhism] was asked where he thinks the best place in the world to study and practise dharma is. The book says: ''His answer was immediate and forthright, 'New Zealand, particularly around Nelson' ''(cited in Manning, 2004).

Wākatu Incorportion's website makes clear that spirituality is a living part of reality for Māori and *Nelson 2060* acknowledges that "religion and spiritual diversity are celebrated for their contribution to our community's social wellbeing" (Nelson City Council, 2013a p. 51).

One of the focus group participants expressed its relevance for her by saying

> I have no doubt the whole of humanity is in a paradigm shift at the moment, where one old way of being is crumbling and falling and a new whole paradigm is coming in. We are spiritual beings, there's no doubt about that. We're souls who have a body and everything is energetic and vibrational alignment. We're creating the new paradigm so we're bringing it in. So I am very hopeful.

Spiritual practice helps in developing a sense of the interconnectedness of all things. This is invaluable given that it is only when we are able to perceive ourselves as part of

one grand scheme, can we individually and unitedly apply our intellectual resources to bring about all round wellbeing.[16]

Governance

As proposed earlier, a unified region would be better placed to confront the challenges likely to arise from climate change, income inequality and the instability of the global economy. A unified region would also be better able both to implement any recommendations regarding self-reliant policies and to engage "with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength" (Alperovitz and Shuman, 2014, p. 40).

These suggest reasons for the amalgamation of Nelson and Tasman regions being revisited.

Political economy

The co-operative business model is probably the best model to foster self-reliance.

> Economically, co-operatives produce various types of goods locally, provide a range of local services, create employment, circulate money within the community, and make the community economically self-reliant. Because co-operative enterprises are owned by the members themselves, the profits they generate stay in the local area. Co-operatives thus build the wealth of the community (Alister, 2002).

Apart from those already mentioned, examples of communities that have prospered using the cooperative model are easily found including the Italian region of Emilia Romagna which has one of the highest concentrations of co-operatives in the industrialised world (Young and Dworkin, 2016).

The Queensland town of Maleny with a population of 7,500, has something like 17 co-operatives including a general store, a credit union, the Local Economic and Enterprise Development Co-operative (LEED), a film society and Hinterland community radio.

Cheticamp, Nova Scotia is a community of around 6,000. Its co-operatives include an Aquarium and Marine Station Co-operative and a very successful consumer co-

[16] I acknowledge the contribution of Dada Jitendrananda with the contents of this paragraph.

operative as well as those covering insurance, fishing, a hospital, housing, general store and a credit union.

The value of co-operatives is underscored by Buber's (1958) recognition that

> a society can be called structurally rich to the extent that it is built up of genuine societies … society is naturally composed not of disparate individuals but of associative units and the associations between them. Under capitalist economy … the constitution of society was being continually hollowed out, so that the modern individualising process finished up as a process of atomisation (pp. 13-14).

This chapter has acknowledged that the region's divided governance, levels of inequality and the limited implementation of triple bottom line accounting are likely to limit the adoption of self-reliant policies. It also noted the gaps in the extent to which the region's basic needs of food, health and housing are being met. That said, it also revealed scope to build on the work of those who reflect heightened levels of awareness around issues such as the economic, environmental, spiritual and social equity concerns not to mention the foundational work of *Nelson 2060.*

8

Conclusions

In responding to the thesis question "What are the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy?" one commentator wrote "Your question is very complicated; it would require a book to answer it." [17] To put the thesis question in context, is to acknowledge that it is necessarily exploratory. Thus in looking at aspects of the region's industry as well as food and energy, two of the areas in which greater degrees of self-reliance could be achieved, this thesis has sought to provide an overview rather than a comprehensive coverage of the regional economy.

The thesis sought to establish the merits of implementing self-reliant policies first by outlining the holistic alternatives provided by Māori, Canada's Nunuvut and Buddhism, and Sarkar's Progressive Utilisation Theory (PROUT), and secondly by exposing some of the shortcomings of the positivist methodology and the neo-liberal ideology that underlies the region's socio-economic system. Further arguments giving weight to the need for self-reliant policies were provided by discussing the risks facing the region, including climate change, inequality and the instability of the global economy, as well as from those calling for change. Finally we looked at instances where aspects of self-reliance are being implemented.

It is contended that overall, the negative considerations, on the one hand, and the positive reasons to change, on the other, have demonstrated the merits of implementing self-reliant policies and provide sufficient reason to give the implementation of self-reliant policies serious consideration.

[17] Prof Henk Folmer, University of Groningen 16.4.2016

Moreover Nelson City's *Nelson 2060 - Framing our Future* process that has been running for the past six years, together with the example of the region's Wakatū Incorporation, suggest that, rather than the thesis question being a wild dream, there are grounds for optimism that there is scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy.

This was also what could be deduced from the responses of members of the focus group. While the focus group per se did not have the time to fully engage with the question of "*the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy,*" in the follow-up survey, two responses in particular stood out:

> The focus group felt like a solid beginning. Under-standing the concept and the implications. There are many reasons to expand this conversation wider and [to] many [other] people who would be interested in being included.
>
> The group really only had time to scratch the surface… there is considerable merit in continuing this discussion to effect real change in the region.

These responses suggest community leaders saw the possibility of there being a greater degree of self-reliance in the regional economy.

Nelson 2060 - Framing our Future, the document that forms the basis of the vision contained in Nelson City's Long-term Plan 2015-25, states that it was "created because we need to think differently and work in a different way" (Nelson City Council, 2013a, p. 6). In this connection, and in contrast with prevailing methodology underlying the practice of contemporary economics, spirituality is explicitly recognised in both the appreciative inquiry and participatory action methodologies used in this thesis. Participatory action has a spiritual dimension. Reason (1998) suggested that one of the primary purposes of human inquiry is to heal the splits that characterise Western consciousness. Similarly, appreciative inquiry has been found to create a spiritual resonance described as collective wisdom, a palpable sense of connection to one another and to larger forces and as such is more than just collaboration (Briskin, Erickson, Ott and Callanan, as cited in Whitney, 2010).

Spirituality is an integral part of Wakatū Incorporation's kaupapa. It constitutes the foundation of PROUT, the socio-economic theory that provides the philosophical and

theoretical underpinning to this research. Insofar as incorporating spirituality represents a new way of thinking, we can have heightened confidence that the outcomes will facilitate thinking and working in a different way.

Issues that emerged from the research include:

Inequality

New Zealand's system of fishing quota privileges those holding quota and contributes to the social inequality existing in the region. Given that fish represent a common pool resource, there is reason for the quota management system to be reviewed to mandate community ownership of at least some percentage of all quota. One of the authors of New Zealand's 2013 Deprivation Index believes that under current economic policies, there is no stopping the widening of the gap between the rich and the poor.

Industry

As it is presently structured, the largest processor in the region's forestry industry is 100 percent foreign owned. Apart from profits being lost to the region, this could present problems were the Japanese owners to mothball the operation for whatever reason. In addition, unless exports exclude unprocessed raw materials, the opportunity to add value and reap the resulting economic benefit is being lost.

Co-operatives

While not raised in the focus group and only peripherally in *Nelson 2060,* co-operatives and in particular worker co-operatives, represent a way to help create stable employment in the region and to democratise wealth. The history of Mondragon and the development of Ohio's Evergreen co-operatives reveals scope to build on the co-operatives already existing in the Nelson regional economy.

In addition, while Massey University offers a post-graduate paper in co-operative governance and management involving advanced study of theory and the practice of

co-operatives and mutuals,[18] there could well be scope for co-operative education to be fostered in the region through the Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology.

Governance of the regional community

The governance of the Golden and Tasman Bays, and in particular the artificial split between town (Nelson City) and country (Tasman District), was identified in the focus group as an obstacle to self-reliance: "Hard to be self-reliant unless you have some sense of self-awareness. Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity".

Nelson as a role model

The *Nelson 2060* vision sees Nelson developing a reputation and as a result, a destination 'as a champion of natural advantages and environmental worthiness'. This was echoed by focus group members who saw the scope for the Nelson region to role model – "lifestyle, creativity, sustainability," (although one focus group member considered that "the sustainability aspect has a long way to go"). While not raised in the focus group, the region could also model self-reliance.

Input from Māori

The values espoused by the Wakatū Incorporation, set an example for the region especially in their concept of manaakitanga – respect, nurture and support for one another, and Kaitiakitanga - "having been entrusted with the well-being of our people, lands and waters, we are honour-bound to protect them for future generations" Wakatū Incorporation, (2015g), and in esteeming their elders by always having "a place for our kaumātua in governance roles within our organisation" (Wakatū Incorporation, (2015h).

Much of *Nelson 2060* is relevant for this study

In line with the thesis question, *Nelson 2060* stated, *"We can protect our livelihoods and will be able to withstand shocks better by producing and supplying more of our own basic requirements such as food, building materials and local energy and at the same time support our local economy"* (p. 8). *Nelson 2060* was the result of mobilising the talents and energies of large numbers of people. In light of the *Nelson 2060* process giving the

[18] The paper emphasises ownership and governance of co-operatives and their subsequent performance in meeting the conflicting demands placed on them through shareholder/supply or shareholder/buyer complexities (Massey University, n.d).

appearance of having plateaued, there is a need for council to reinvigorate the process, for example by appointing a monitoring group.

This thesis has been inspired by the vision of a world comprised of increasingly self-reliant yet inter-related regional economies, with each, as with all human beings, constituting a centre in its own right. In addressing the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy, Chapter Four sought to establish the grounds for their implementation being given serious consideration.

Regarding the scope for implementing self-reliant policies, the thesis has shown that the region has much to build on including Nelson's intergenerational visioning process, the strength of Māori economic and cultural wisdom, the region's co-operative potential, the active interest in becoming more self-reliant in the production of food, the scope and need for the region to become self-reliant in energy and the merit in creating community ownership for common pool resources such as fishing.

These provide grounds for optimism that in addition to its sunshine, lifestyle and creativity, in time the region will come to be known for role modelling self-reliant resilience.

Recommendations

The following recommendations arising from the research are seen as ways to heighten the regional economy's self-reliance.

That the Nelson Regional Development Agency's

- regional prosperity reviews include discussion about external events such as climate change, resource depletion and economic circumstances that will inevitably impact the region, and
- future economic summits are restructured to become bottom-up rather than top-down events.

That Nelson City Council's *Nelson 2060* process be reinvigorated for example by appointing a group to monitor its development and by holding community forums using processes such as appreciative inquiry to widen this conversation. There is considerable merit in continuing this discussion to effect real change in the region. Indeed in Galtung's (1976, p. 17) view "The term self-reliance should not be used unless there is genuine mass involvement".

That a comprehensive plan be initiated to produce a robust, collaborative, sustainable and equitable food system, including fully utilising the excess produce from orchards in the region. In line with a focus group suggestion, we could source more locally grown food, thereby contributing to the region becoming more self-reliant.

That the local multiplier methodology be utilised to establish the relative value of buying local rather than from businesses that are not locally based, thereby increasing support for buying locally produced goods and services including banking.

That a study be made of how the reduction of manufacturing as a percentage of all GDP is impacting the economy.

That a commitment be made to achieve renewable energy goals.

That the Tasman District & Nelson City Councils consider using a New Zealand rather than an Australian bank.

That the scope to build on the co-operatives already existing in the Nelson regional economy and for co-operative education to be fostered through NMIT be explored.

That the issue of the Nelson and Tasman regions' governance to facilitate the regional economy achieve greater levels of self-reliance be reconsidered.

That a review of the fish quota management system be undertaken with a view to mandating community ownership of at least some percentage of all quota in addition to that held by Maori.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approvals

A U T E C

S E C R E T A R I A T

1.1.1.1

12 May 2015

Marilyn Waring

Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Marilyn

Re Ethics Application: **15/141 The merits of and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Subcommittee (AUTEC).
Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 12 May 2018.
As part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 12 May 2018;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 12 May 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor

Executive Secretary

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: Bruce Dyer bdyer@ts.co.nz

29 October 2015

Marilyn Waring
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Marilyn

Re: Ethics Application: **15/141 The merits of and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy.**

Thank you for your request for approval of an amendment to your ethics application.

I have approved the minor amendment to your ethics application allowing a change to the data collection protocols to include a follow up questionnaire.

I remind you that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC):

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 12 May 2018;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 12 May 2018 or on completion of the project.

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to obtain this. If your research is undertaken within a jurisdiction outside New Zealand, you will need to make the arrangements necessary to meet the legal and ethical requirements that apply there.

To enable us to provide you with efficient service, please use the application number and study title in all correspondence with us. If you have any enquiries about this application, or anything else, please do contact us at ethics@aut.ac.nz.

All the very best with your research,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
Cc: Bruce Dyer bdyer@ts.co.nz

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Project Title
"The merits of and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy."

Project Title
"The merits of and scope for implementing self-reliant

An Invitation
Kia Ora. I am Bruce Dyer and am writing to invite you to participate in a focus group comprising some of the Nelson region's community leaders. The research is being done to satisfy the requirements of an MPhil degree being done through the Auckland University of Technology (AUT). My principal supervisor is Professor Marilyn Waring. Participation is of course entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time prior to the completion of the focus group.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of my research is to explore the merits and scope for the Nelson region becoming more self-reliant. Being more self-reliant would enable the region to engage with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength as well as safe-guarding against the risks associated with climate change, the instability of the global economy and exacerbating levels of inequality. As one of Nelson's community leaders, you are being asked to participate in the hope that the research will have practical outcomes. Apart from contributing to the thesis the research will be written up as a journal article and available for presentation at conferences.

How were you identified & why are you being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited as someone seen to be among those who can be described as Nelson's community leaders. Your contact details have been obtained either through the phone book or the internet of from one of the other participants suggesting you as a possible participant.

What will happen in this research?

The project involves attending a focus group of around 10 people that will be facilitated by Peter Lawless of Phoenix Facilitation. An Appreciative Inquiry approach builds on the idea that what we focus on becomes our reality. It begins with a dialogue between individuals, expands to groups and builds to embrace and declare community-wide intentions and actions. If we ask questions about what works or what gives life to the community, we participate in constructing a reality of potential. As an example, one such question could be what do you experience as the core factors giving life to the Nelson region?

What are the discomforts and risks?

1.1.1.1.1 I don't anticipate you being faced with any discomfort or embarrassment. Also given that all those participating are being asked to agree that the identity of participants and the discussions in the focus group remain confidential to the group and that this information will be kept confidential, you are not likely to be at risk in this research.

Issues regarding the privacy of participants.

Those participating are being asked to agree that the identity of participants and the discussions in the focus group remain confidential to the group and that this information is kept confidential. However, in reality your participation as one of Nelson's community leaders may limit the extent

to which it will be possible to maintain strict confidentiality. If you wish, you are welcome to opt to be identified as a participant.

1.1.1.1.2 In what ways are the participants likely to experience risk or discomfort as a result of cultural, employment, financial or similar pressures?

You are unlikely to experience risk or discomfort as a result of cultural, employment, financial or similar pressures.

What are the benefits?

While it is hoped the outcome of the research being undertaken will be a Master's degree for me as the researcher, more significant outcomes would be it contributing to a positive debate around the scope for the self-reliance in the Nelson regional economy and as such, having practical significance.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

To be most effective, the focus group is likely to involve two 2 hour sessions with a lunch break in between.

What opportunity do you have to consider this invitation?

You will have two weeks to consider this invitation after you have been given the information about the study.

How do you agree to participate in this research?

You will need to complete a Consent Form to demonstrate you have agreed to participate in this research. I will ensure you receive a Consent Form when I speak to you about this research.

Will you receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes, you will be sent the URL enabling access to the completed research held by the AUT library.

What do you do if you have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Prof Marilyn Waring, ph. 09 921 9999 x 9661, email: mwaring@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, *ethics@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom can you contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Bruce Dyer
Ph. 03 548 7284 wk.
Email: bdyer@ts.co.nz

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Professor Marilyn Waring
09 921 9999 x 9661
mwaring@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 12th May 2015
AUTEC Reference number 15/141

Appendix C: Consent form

Consent Form

Project title: "The merits of and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy."
Project Supervisor: Professor Marilyn Waring
Researcher: Bruce Dyer

- ○ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 09 April 2015.
- ○ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ○ I understand that identity of my fellow participants and our discussions in the focus group is confidential to the group and I agree to keep this information confidential.
- ○ Notwithstanding the foregoing I wish to be identified as a participant (please tick one) Yes○ No○
- ○ I understand that notes will be taken during the focus group and that it will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ○ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ○ If I withdraw, I understand that while it may not be possible to destroy all records of the focus group discussion of which I was part, the relevant information about myself including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will not be used.
- ○ I agree to take part in this research.
- ○ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes○ No○

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

……..
……..
Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on: 12th May 2015
AUTEC Reference number: 15/141
Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

Appendix D: Design of the focus group

11.00am **Open**

Peter Lawless welcomes everyone, mihi and karakia if appropriate, outlines the day and housekeeping

11.10am **Discovery**

1. Finding out who is here – sociogram based on where you were born, introduction, name, role in the regional economy and how come you ended up in Nelson
2. Framing – Bruce says why he invited everyone and outlines key concepts – self-reliant, policies, economy, Nelson region
3. Appreciating – find the person with the most similar perspective to you, in pairs discuss **"*what gives life to the regional economy?*"**, write the result on a big sheet of paper so others can see it across the room
4. Commonality – discuss what was discovered, what is the common theme, name the theme

11.45am **Dreaming**

1. Form three random small groups
2. Bruce invokes creativity
3. Peter references the purpose and what was discovered
4. If you remove negative thinking and just come from the positive, ***what could the future be?***
5. Move people around amongst the groups
6. Whole group dialogue – what have we dreamed, what is common, what is different?

1.00pm **LUNCH**

1.30pm **Design**

1. Take five minutes to develop one provocative proposition about how our regional economy could be different with policies of self-reliance.
2. Dialogue in the affirmative mode on what could be.
3. What individuals could create.
4. What organisations and groups could create.
5. What the whole community could create together.

3.00pm **Delivery**

1. Get a hot drink and a snack.
2. Get with the person with the most different perspective to you.
3. Work out one thing you could each do, or do differently after today.
4. Present back to the whole group.

3.30pm **Closing**

Bruce sums up what he has got from the day and where to from here.
Go round the group for positive affirmations and appreciation.
Peter Lawless closes with mihi and karakia

4.00pm **Finish**

Appendix E - Survey responses

	1) The Group came together to "Explore the merits of implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy." - There would be value in further exploring this question.	2) The best predictor of good health is feeling as though you are in control of your own life. - This has relevance at the community level.	3) "Christopher Luxon CEO of Air New Zealand mentioned recently "you don't really have a regional identity." "How can we develop a regional identity that's recognisable so we can say yes, this is who we are?" "Nelson hasn't really cracked its identity and what we're all about and what we want to project to the world." - Having unified governance could facilitate the development of a regional identity.	4) My community is a lifestyle, creativity and sustainability role model." - This is a proposition the regional community could aspire to.	5) The need to engage the entire community is important" - Community forums to discuss issues such as food security, housing and transport would help people become engaged.	6) Are there any other comments that you would like to make?
Richard Kempthorne	Disagree – I think we fairly well explored this on the day	Agree Of course this is only to the extent that we can practically manage ourselves. Some times there are factors that affect us outside of our control. It is important to not be immobilised because of this.	Disagree I presume this infers we unify through amalgamation which I personally see as unnecessary and potentially destructive. We can develop a sense of regional identity with two councils and with agencies collaborating together.	Not sure how to answer this one.	Agree It is good to have community forums, but I don't think they will be a panacea to answer all economic, social, environmental and cultural sustainability	Thank you for running the day. I appreciate your passion for our region.

Lesley McQue	For self-reliance in the widest sense I think that this is something that needs to be drip fed little by little until it becomes part of our way of doing things.	Agree	Agree We need clear regional identity. Agree It should be combined. Disagree That merging the two regions-councils is needed to achieve this. FYI the EDA has been engaged for some time in working with various people on this subject. A major project has been envisaged but not yet given the go-ahead. The project is for Nelson-Tasman as a combined region.	Agree. So much is already happening in the region, with our artists, craft brewers, lifestyle image etc and there are sustainability projects big (Brook Sanctuary Fence) and small (fruit & food plantings instead of ornamentals, in public places).	Agree initiatives work best when all sections of the community are engaged. Community forums can grow and develop into voices that can be heard by decision-makers. In terms of food security, there is the individual/family security - a poverty & education issue. There is also the community-region-country issue - if we keep building on farmland, where will we grow our food? This is an issue that ties food security into housing and town planning.	I enjoyed meeting everyone and found some interesting subject matter emerging from the discussions. Good luck with completing your work.
Kindra Douglas	Agree The focus group felt like a solid beginning. Under-standing the concept and the implications. There are many reasons to expand this conversation wider and many people who would be interested in being included.	Agree Perceptions of health and wellbeing are the key indicator, and the feeling of being in charge of your own destiny is predicated on that very need.	Agree We have long had divisions, competition for resources etc., and for such a small place, a truly regional perspective, identity and collective impact for wellbeing has to be based on a unified governance.	Agree The very first principle has to be that our region has a common ground on which to create a strategic goal - this would be a realistic start place. This statement is a good enough place to start.	Agree AND it would need a lot of promotion and creation of other avenues/portals for people to give feedback. Public forums are ok for some, and not for others who are more introvert, but have great input that needs to be received.	All power to regional development instead of parochial and limited thinking. We need to work together for the well-being of all, sharing our resources, and contributing in life-affirming ways for ourselves and our planet.

Annette Milligan	Agree The group really only had to time to scratch the surface… there is considerable merit in continuing this discussion to effect real change in the region.	Agree	Agree I think a regional identity is crucial for future development. I disagree with Luxton; I think some regions do have a very strong sense of regional identity….	Agree I think the lifestyle and creativity aspects are fairly mature in Nelson… but the sustainability aspect has a long way to go…	Agree And would help to develop a sense of community… which I think still needs work. There are some areas which do have a very strong sense of community (e.g. Victory), but generally most urban areas are not at all connected. I think community forums could go some way to effecting a culture shift in daily practice….in the way that re-cycling has.
David Armstrong	Agree	Disagree I don't know that I fully agree with the quote, so I can't really say I agree with the corollary. But a community being in control of its own destiny has many positive implications.	Agree	Agree	Agree Would help, but only to a small extent
Bill Findlater	Agree	Agree	Agree	These values are important but we need the ability to be able to afford them	Agree But… there are times our elected officials need to make decisions on behalf of the wider community

Participant X	Disagree I think the question-proposition needs better definition before there is an attempt to explore it further.	I don't have a view on this. I'm not sure if the metaphor holds.	Agree	Agree	Agree Food security? Probably not (because I don't think it is a serious issue in itself). Housing and transport, yes. Response to climate change? Possibly. Community forums will help *some* people to become engaged, but will probably not extend much beyond those in the forums. The bigger question of engaging the wider community would still remain.
Martine Bouillir	Agree	Agree	Agree The only thing might be the insecurity Tasman has about considering itself part of the Nelson region. So in order to engage them it might require the Nelson /Tasman moniker.	Agree	Agree I really would welcome such forums in our region
Matt Lawry	Agree	Agree	Agree I agree but, funnily enough, I've changed my mind about amalgamation. On the surface it makes lots of sense but I've come to the view that Nelson, the way it is now and the way it could be in the future, could seriously suffer under a unified council. You only need to take a quick look at Richmond to see that most of the TDC has a very different view on development to Nelson. Sadly amalgamation could lead to the Richmondisation of Nelson which would be something of a tragedy.	Agree	Disagree Unfortunately those sorts of things typically end up being talkfests that see a whole lot preaching going on to the converted.

Mike Ward	Agree Self-reliance suggests independence, whereas inter-dependence is acknowledging our responsibility to the wider community and the planet	Agree There is considerable research around well-being to suggest this is so - longevity being the best indicator of good health. It is likely that the sense of well-being also enhances ones feeling of obligation to the community and willingness and ability to participate in activities for the greater good which is central to overcoming both the sense of entitlement and the victim mentality that works against reciprocity and achieving community engagement.	I would suggest that we most definitely have a regional identity. Perhaps the task is to identify what else we would like to be identified with... and to articulate that identity. (I would suggest that lifestyle, creativity and sustainability have considerable appeal)	Agree These qualities provide the aspirational vision, and the purpose of an economy. Sustainability advocates regularly suggest that growing the economy on a finite planet is neither possible nor desirable. I would suggest that there are many qualities and aspirations including the three mentioned plus wisdom, safety inclusiveness, beauty, sense of community, generosity, friendliness etc. which like lifestyle, creativity & sustainability all have the capacity to grow greatly and to provide business & employment opportunities and to shape the way we do things as well as what we do.	Agree There is nothing that we do that done with imagination and flair might not leave the world a better place. The way the issue is framed too often leads us to explore issues as problems to be solved rather than opportunities for expanding our aspirations. e.g. food security is about security of supply rather than how well we might eat and what are the opportunities around that. Nelson 2060 began that process but still has to expand the goals into a comprehensive vision which goes beyond identifying issues to be addressed and problems to be solved to spelling out how brilliant the future might be. e.g. The housing debate tends to focus on affordability. Affordability is an issue but housing is an important component in health, transport, energy, community, economy, lifestyle, aesthetics, infra-structure, energy, sustainability etc.

Appendix F – Backgrounder sent to Focus Group participants.

"What are the merits and the scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy"?

As with Helen Clark's 2013 Cawthron Lecture "*Bending without breaking: building resilience for sustainable development*," resilience is central to the question above.

The Nelson regional economy is at risk from climate change and as the global financial crisis revealed, from the instability of the global financial system.

Additionally regional and national economies alike are captive to the hegemonic power of multi-national capital. Their vulnerability reveals an underlying dependency.

Taking these considerations into account, a prudent approach would suggest the wisdom of exploring ways of heightening the resilience of the Nelson regional economy. In particular they warrant assessing the scope for the region to become more resilient by adopting bottom up strategies such as implementing self-reliant policies.

Modelling such an approach would provide the region with a positive point of difference that could well heighten the Nelson regions' profile nationally and internationally.

The Pembrokeshire region of Southwest Wales is notable for having explored the scope for innovation and improvement of local economic interdependence through greater self-reliance. Pembrokeshire is seen as having scope for tourism and agriculture to work together to develop a distinctive brand for the region and by increasing organic agriculture and renewable energy production, contributing to an external image of a 'green' economy (Midmore & Thomas, 2006). The organisation at the centre of it, Pembrokeshire's Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development offers an example of integrated community-led development that has been described as "unique in the United Kingdom and rare in Europe" (Sambeteanu & Dower, 2011)

Significantly, Alperovitz and Shuman suggest maximizing local self-reliance, not as a way of disengaging from the rest of the world, but as a way of engaging with the rest of the world from a position of greater strength (Alperovitz & Shuman, 2014).

The case being made for a system of self-reliant local economies is not uncommon.

- The US based Institute for Local Self Reliance has championed local self-reliance since 1974. It sees it as a strategy that underscores the need for humanly scaled institutions and economies and the widest possible distribution of ownership. http://www.ilsr.org/about-the-institute-for-local-self-reliance/

- Economists like Molly Scott Cato suggest the need to replace the globalised economy and its extended supply chains with a more 'local' economy – reconceiving the global economy as a system of largely self-sufficient local

economies (Cato, 2013).

- Sarkar argues that making socio-economic regions self-sufficient can be seen as economic planning based on the ideal of welfare of all rather than the current model that he sees as being based on individual or group interests. “To develop an area economically, planning must start at the grass roots level – the direction of economic development should be from the bottom to the top, not from the top to the bottom” (Sarkar, 1979).

Using Appreciative Inquiry methodology and a focus group of local community leader, it is proposed to collectively explore the merits and scope for implementing self-reliant policies in the Nelson regional economy. Appreciative Inquiry methodology, suggested by my supervisor Marilyn Waring, builds on the idea that what we focus on becomes our reality. If we focus on what is wrong or what is missing, we tend to see everything through that lens. On the other hand if we ask questions about what works or what a gives life to a person, group or community, we participate in the construction of a reality of potential. That is, it builds on the positive to envision how we can create a better future.

Cooperrider and Whitney pioneered Appreciative Inquiry (AI). They describe the 4 key phases of an AI process as

Discovery	– engage all stakeholders to identify strengths and best practices
Dream	– creating a results-oriented vision in relation to discovered potential and questions of higher purpose, such as “what is the world calling us to become?”
Design	– creating possibility propositions based on the positive core, &
Destiny	– strengthening the affirmative capability thereby enabling momentum to be sustained for ongoing positive change.

These phases have been found to enable members of a group or community to discover their shared foundation of strengths – the positive core of the group or community (Cooperrider and Whitney 2005).

The focus group will be professionally facilitated by Peter Lawless of Phoenix Facilitation.

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