The underlying meanings shaping Environmental Communication Campaigns (ECCs)

– an exploration of meta-discourse

Fanny Svenneke Åsberg

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Abstract

As previous research on environmental communication campaigns (ECCs) has focused primarily on the practical design, implementation and evaluation of ECCs, the theoretical basis of ECCs in regard to the underlying meanings shaping campaigns had not previously been explored to a satisfactory extent. The aim of this study was to address this gap in the research by exploring the perspectives of individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs and making sense of the underlying meanings embedded in these perspectives in order to yield insights into the underlying meanings shaping ECCs. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using a qualitative content analysis guided by the concept of "meta-discourse" as the theoretical framework. The result of this study was the development of conceptual descriptions about the meanings shaping ECCs, emerging from the participants' perspectives, in regard to concepts related to communication and behavioural change. The two concepts which were found to be attributed the most value by participants were "knowledge" and "emotions". This study contributes to the understanding of ECCs by exploring the underlying meanings which inherently shape campaigns and factor into their outcome by informing and guiding individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs. The findings of this study enhance both the theory and practice of environmental communication.

Keywords: Environmental Communication Campaigns (ECCs), environmental communication (EC), meta-discourse, behavioural change, sustainability

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1. Introduction

In this introductory chapter, the reader will be introduced to the background of the research and the research problem leading to the study. Subsequently, the research aim and research questions will be identified.

1.1. Background

The environment and sustainable development have gained greater importance in recent years due to the increasingly grave state of environmental degradation causing concern about the earth's continued ability to sustain humans and other species (McKenzie-Mohr 2000). Research shows that human activities such as consumption play a significant part in contributing to environmental degradation (Mont and Plepys 2008; Wells, Ponting, and Peattie 2011). As such, the human population must make changes and transition to a more sustainable way of life which demands widespread behavioural change (McKenzie-Mohr 2000). Through the contribution of individual behaviour and lifestyles, individuals play an important role in our ability to make the transition to a more sustainable future (Mont and Plepys 2008; Wells, Ponting, and Peattie 2011).

There are a wide range of actors involved in addressing the environmental impact of individual behaviour (Mont and Plepys 2008). One way that these actors attempt to address individual behaviour is through environmental communication. Environmental Communication (EC) applies communication approaches, principles, and strategies to the environmental field in order to communicate about the environment, environmental problems, our relationship to nature, and so on (Flor 2004; Cox and Pezzullo 2018). Environmental Communication Campaigns (ECCs) are one type of EC activity which are used by actors to focus on the role of individuals for the transition to a more sustainable future. ECCs are strategically designed communication activities attempting to shift individuals' knowledge, perceptions and/or behaviour in relation to environmental issues (Norton and Grecu 2015; Cox and Pezzullo 2018).

1.2. Research problem and aim

Previous research on ECCs focuses primarily on the practical design, implementation and evaluation of ECCs. As such, the theoretical basis of ECCs has not been explored to a satisfactory extent in relation to the underlying meanings about communication and behavioural change shaping campaigns. This gap in the research has been identified by researchers in the past (see Cox and Schwarze 2015). This aspect needs to be explored in order for understanding to be gained about ECCs.

The aim of this study was to explore the perspectives of individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs and to make sense of the meanings embedded in these perspectives through an exploration of the following research question.

RQ: Which underlying meanings and assumptions about communication and behavioural change are involved in shaping the planning and execution of ECCs?

The research aim and question were explored through semi-structured interviews and a qualitative content analysis of interview data guided by the concept of "meta-discourse" as the theoretical framework, which refers to the discourse used to talk about and reflexively comment on communication (Craig 2008; Craig 2016).

2. Select previous research on communication and behaviour

In this chapter, selected previous research on communication and behaviour will be introduced which was used to interpret and make sense of the perspectives and meta-discourse of the participants in regard to how meanings and assumptions are attributed to and established about communication and behavioural change.

Research on communication – Models of communication

Previous research on communication describes a wide range of communication models which can be used to conceptualise and understand the communication process in the design of ECCs. These models may help to understand the meanings and assumptions attributed to communication in the meta-discourse of the participants. In this study, two models will be used to represent a linear and interactive view on communication. The Transmission model represents a linear view on the communication process, describing the process of a sender encoding a message and transmitting it through a channel to a receiver (Flor 2004). In contrast, the Constitutive model represents an interactive view on communication, describing a process of interactants producing and reproducing shared meanings with the objective of mutual understanding (Craig 1999).

Research on communication – Approaches to EC

Previous research on communication proposes a range of frameworks available as approaches for environmental communication which can be used to interpret the participants meta-discourse in regard to how meanings and assumptions are attributed to concepts related to communication and how rationales reflect ideas about how behavioural change is achieved. Three frameworks are used in this thesis. The conventional approach is an information, education and communication (IEC) approach which envisions communication as an intervention for behaviour with information and education as primary resources (Flor 2004). Secondly, a social mobilisation approach is bottom-up and participatory with a focus on collective action, envisioning the individual as a participant in a mutual dialogue about the environment and proposing that individuals must be included in the development

of solutions (Flor 2004; Brulle). Lastly, a social marketing approach employs a marketing perspective to the promotion of specific behaviours (Flor 2004).

Research on behaviour – Variables determining environmental behaviour

Previous research within social psychology was of interest for making sense of the meta-discourse of the participants in regard to how meaning is attributed to concepts related to behavioural change such as the rationales about potential variables determining behaviour and how these can be targeted through ECC design in order to facilitate behavioural change. Rooted in behavioural science, social psychologists have presented a wide range of theories and models for understanding human behaviour, proposing various determinants and processes impacting behaviour. The meanings and assumptions proposed within this research area represent discourses on behaviour and behavioural change which can be compared with the meanings of the participants in this thesis. Notable research on this topic includes the Theory of Planned Behaviour (see Ajzen 1985) and the Norm Activation Model (see Schwartz 1977). In this thesis, Grob's (1995) contribution to this research area will be the primary framework used for making sense of the meta-discourse on behavioural change. Grob (1995) presents a model of environmental attitudes and behaviour which proposes four determinants.

1. Environmental awareness (composed of environmental knowledge and recognition): The model proposes that the more knowledge an individual has about the environment and the more they recognise environmental problems, the more appropriately they will behave.

2. Emotions: The model assumes that the more intense the emotional reaction of the individual is to the worsening state of environmental problems, the more appropriately they will behave.

3. Personal-philosophical values (composed of materialistic values and creative or open-minded thinking): The model proposes that the more materialistic an individual's values are, the less appropriately the individual will behave. Further, the model proposes that the more creative the individual is in solving problems and the more open-minded the individual is, the more appropriately they will behave.

4. Perceived control (composed of control attribution and belief in technology and science): The model proposes that individuals who attribute the causes of the environmental state to their own actions will act more appropriately than individuals who attribute the causes to external influences. Further, the model proposes that the less the individual believes in technological solutions for environmental problems, the more appropriately they will behave.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology of the study will be put forth in regard to methods used for data collection and analysis. Subsequently, the role of the researcher will be reflexively discussed and the ethical considerations of the study will be identified. Lastly, the validity and reliability of the study will be discussed.

This study employed a qualitative research approach due to the inherently exploratory and interpretative nature of qualitative research design which makes it useful for exploring and gaining understanding about social phenomena and the meanings others ascribe to social phenomena (Silverman 2015; Creswell and Creswell 2018). As such, this approach to research design was fitting for the nature of the research problem and aim concerned with an aspect of a phenomenon requiring exploration and meanings ascribed by individuals to the phenomenon.

3.1. Data collection

Interviewing was chosen as the data collection method due to the concern of the study being to make sense of the meanings and perspectives of individuals involved in ECCs. Interviews are useful when the type of knowledge we are interested in gaining is how the participants actively create meaning (Silverman 2015). A semi-structured approach to the interview was chosen in order to allow for both structure and flexibility simultaneously. The questions developed for the interviews were designed to be open-ended and broad as these kinds of questions allow participants to construct free interpretations and provide better access to the participants' perspectives and meanings (Silverman 2015; Creswell and Creswell 2018).[1]

The participants in this study were individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs. Participant recruitment began with a mapping out of ECCs in Sweden with a scope limited to campaigns being executed by organisations located in Uppsala or Stockholm so that there would be the opportunity to conduct in-person interviews. The outcome of this process was a list of thirty campaigns and recruitment then occurred through contacting the listed contact person for fifteen of

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[1] see Appendix 1 for interview guide

these campaigns. A broad sampling procedure was used for deciding which individuals to contact with criteria based on the main goal of understanding the phenomenon. The first criterion was to select cases which seemed to be rich in the information needed to explore the research questions. This was achieved by sampling campaigns which had a clear goal and targeted the individual in some way. The second criterion was related to the type of organisation leading the ECC. The sample was based on organisations which were larger and more well-known and organisations were broadly sampled across the spectrum of types of organisations executing ECCs. In other words, I wanted to include a variety of types of organisations including governmental authorities, NGOs and businesses in order to achieve results without association to any particular type of organisation. The nine individuals who responded positively to my request for their participation make up the sample of participants for this study.[2]

Data was collected through interviews with these individuals during March 2020. Interviews were held in whatever manner the participant found most comfortable and convenient which resulted in two in-person interviews, two telephone interviews and four video-chat interviews. Interview lasted between 45 minutes and 2 hours and were held in Swedish. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. Indicators of body language were only included when this was necessary for interpreting the meaning of the participants words, for example if a certain hand gesture was used. Transcriptions were stripped of all information which could have been used to identify the person, organisation or campaign.

3.2. Data analysis

3.2.1. Qualitative content analysis

This study employed a qualitative content analysis of the interview data.[3] Content analysis is a systematic approach used for analysing the informational content of textual data through description and interpretation of themes and patterns of meanings in the content of the data (Forman and Damschroder 2007). A qualitative approach to content analysis entails the use of qualitative techniques focusing on an inductive approach where themes and patterns of meaning emerge from the data (Forman and Damschroder 2007; Creswell and Creswell 2018). This data analysis method was chosen as it is considered useful for exploring participants' meanings behind statements and facilitating a higher degree of analytical inference as researchers can interpret data with a focus on more abstract concepts (Forman and

[2] See Appendix 2 for description of the sample of participants
[3] See Appendix 3 for detailed description of the data analysis process

Damschroder 2007). As such, using a qualitative content analysis of the interview data facilitated an in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives and more abstract and inferential interpretations of the patterns of meaning.

3.2.2. Theoretical framework of "Meta-discourse"

The concept of "meta-discourse" was used as the guiding theoretical framework for analysis to facilitate an exploration of the meanings underlying the participants' perspectives. "Meta-discourse" is a concept which refers to the discourse used to talk about and reflexively comment on communication with a focus on how this discourse reflects and influences meaning and behaviour (Craig 2008; Craig 2016). Within this concept, distinction is made between practical meta-discourse and theoretical meta-discourse. Practical meta-discourse is the everyday ways of talking about and reflexively commenting on communication (Craig 1999). Specific cultures are assumed to have distinctive vocabularies and practices which are reflected within the practical meta-discourse (Craig 2008). Theoretical meta-discourse is the underlying theoretical disposition guiding the meta-discourse (Craig 1999). Theoretical and practical meta-discourses are mutually constitutive, simultaneously emerging from and reproducing each other (Craig 1999). The embedded theoretical meta-discourse is internalised by social actors and used in the practical meta-discourse to describe, interpret, justify or criticise communicative acts and conduct (Craig 2008; Craig 2016). Research suggests that meta-discourse plays an important role for the theory and practice of communication through shaping normative beliefs and social practices about communication (Craig 2008; Craig 2016). Due to the reflexivity or mutual influence between communication theory and practice, communication theory can be constructed inductively by exploring the meta-discursive construction of everyday communication practices described by the individuals who engage in these practices (Craig 1999). The theoretical meta-discourse of individuals within a culture can be explored through their practical meta-discourse, i.e. their meta-discursive vocabularies and practices, in order to reveal and understand the embedded discourses, ideologies and assumptions (Craig 2008).

The perspectives of the participants were placed within the theoretical framework of "meta-discourse" and explored and interpreted. The interview data gives access to the participants' practical meta-discourse, allowing the theoretical meta-discourse to be explored. The proposal is that the practical meta-discourse on ECC practices are materialisations of the underlying theoretical meta-discourses on communication and behavioural change. The patterns of meaning in the participants' perspectives were explored in relation to the research questions with a focus on meta-discursive practices and vocabulary. By exploring how participants' talk about and reflexively comment on ECC practices, a window is

provided to something which lies beneath it, allowing us to explore and interpret how meanings are attributed to concepts related to communication and behavioural change and how assumptions are established about these concepts. Using the concept of meta-discourse in the analysis, this research explored and generated conceptual descriptions about the meanings embedded in the participants' perspectives.

3.2.3. Theoretical framework of Grob's (1995) model

Grob's (1995) model of environmental attitudes and behaviour was used to structure and guide the analysis of participants' meta-discourse on behavioural change. As such, the "Analysis and discussion" chapter begins with an analysis of the meta-discourse on "behaviour" and "attitude" which are the variables which Grob proposes to predict with the model. Within this section, analysis is structured using the determinants of environmental attitude and behaviour put forth by Grob: environmental awareness (called knowledge in this report due to the wording of the participants), emotions, personal-philosophical values (called values in this report as participants' meanings were not as specific as the ideas described by Grob) and perceived control. Using Grob's model as a theoretical framework facilitated data analysis by helping to make sense of the meanings embedded in the participants' descriptions through comparison with the meanings described by Grob. This was especially useful when it proved difficult to find appropriate descriptive terminology to encompass the meanings described by the participants. Further, this model was useful for the function it played in structuring a portion of the report.

3.3. Role of the researcher

In my position as a qualitative researcher studying a social world, it is inevitable that I will have some form of influence on the research especially considering that my role as a researcher included the role of interviewer in this study. As such, some strategies were used to minimise my influence on interview responses in order to ensure validity of the data collected. For example, it was of importance for participants to be given ample time to reflect upon questions and to be given the opportunity to interpret questions freely. As such, I made sure to resist the urge to fill awkward silences and to refrain from making suggestions or giving possible alternatives if the participants seemed unsure or hesitant. Further, I aimed to remain 'neutral' in my language use and my reaction to responses during interviews so that participants would not perceive me as favouring any particular ideas over others.

In terms of factors shaping data interpretations, there are three main factors which may have biased my interpretations. Firstly, my academic background in

environmental communication reflects a culture which favours a more interactive perspective on communication and emphasises the value of dialogue. This may have biased my interpretation of data by leading me to have a more critical view on perspectives reflecting a linear view on communication. Secondly, my personal background in environmental communication and my potential future as an environmental communication practitioner in Sweden may have led me to want to portray other environmental communication practitioners in a positive way especially considering the fact that I will probably apply to positions at some of these organisations in the future and would therefore not want them to have an unfavourable image of me. Further, this may have influenced my interactions with the participants during interviews as I may have inadvertently felt the need to show off my knowledge in order to impress them, which would not promote quality data. Lastly, I have a past experience with one of the organisations involved in the thesis as I spent my internship period at the organisation, within the same department as one of the participants from the organisation. This past experience may have influenced my interpretation of data derived from interviews with the two participants from this organisation.

The hope was to address these possible sources of influence by extending total anonymity to the participants involved and their organisations so that there would be no reason to portray the participants or organisations in any particular way through a certain interpretation of the data. Further, since the aim was to explore the underlying meanings shaping ECCs within the overall culture of the social phenomenon, there is not necessarily any reflection on the individual participants or the organisations.

3.4. Ethical considerations

Due to the fact that this research studies people and their livelihood, ethical considerations needed to be made to protect participants. The participants may have been concerned about my intentions with the research or may have felt some degree of worry about their work being studied. Further, the information that I contacted participants with described the research aim in fairly vague terms which may raise ethical concerns.[4] The reason for this formulation was for participants to speak more freely without concern for speaking directly to the aspects stated in the aim in order to collect more valid data. In order to make the necessary considerations for these ethical concerns, complete anonymity was extended to participants. Before each interview, information was provided to participants regarding their anonymity, stating that I would not identify them, the organisation, or the campaign. Further, I

[4] see Appendix 1 for exact formulation

provided clear information to the participants about their participation and acquired appropriate consent from each participant.[5]

3.5. Validity and reliability

In this section, potential concerns for the validity and reliability of this study and procedures used to address these concerns will be identified and discussed.

One potential concern for this study was related to the interpretation of data in terms of the consistency of the data analysis process and the reliability of interpretations. The consistency of the data analysis process was strengthened using a systematic approach to data analysis, employing both an inductive and deductive approach, and relying upon a coding sheet for reference. These procedures were used to counteract a shift in the meaning of codes during data analysis as the data was constantly compared with the codes when analysis moved between inductive and deductive analysis throughout the process. For the purpose of transparency about how data was analysed and interpreted, the data analysis process has been described thoroughly in Appendix 3. Further, the findings were presented using rich, thick description in the "Descriptive results" chapter in order to provide detailed descriptions of results, multiple perspectives, any contradicting data and specific evidence in order to support subsequent interpretations. The data was presented in a thematic manner for organisational purposes, but the presentation was minimised from researcher influence with the aim to simply report the ideas of the participants. Lastly, reflexivity was used as a procedure through a reflexive discussion of factors shaping the research and data interpretations in the section "Role of the researcher" in order to increase transparency about interpretations.

Another concern for this research was "anecdotalism", a common criticism of qualitative research, which refers to researchers presenting limited examples as proof of a larger pattern of meaning, leading to weak soundness of the explanations offered for data (Silverman 2015). Another aspect of this criticism is a potential absence of any attempt to analyse or present less clear or contradictory data (Silverman 2015). The use of rich, thick description to present findings was used to address this concern with a focus on presenting the range of perspectives evident in the data with special attention paid to any data which may contradict themes and patterns of meaning. With the research aim to gain understanding of a phenomenon by exploring patterns of meaning within the participants' perspectives, it was especially important to present contradictory data in order to not discount any participants' perspective.

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[5] see Appendix 1 for exact information

Questions concerning the ability to uncover meaning from interview data was another potential concern for this study. Interview data is inherently researcher-provoked, meaning that it is actively created and would not exist without the intervention of the researcher, and as such, this type of data can be criticised as 'staged' or as a performance of sorts where responses are strategically calculated (Silverman 2015). As such, there may be concerns about the ability to uncover meaning from potentially 'inauthentic' data. However, this criticism of interview data refers to whether it can be taken as an accurate reflection of reality which is not the concern of the research problem and aim. The research problem and aim are not concerned with objectivity or accuracy. Instead, the interest is in exploring inherently subjective, personal perspectives and the meanings embedded in these perspectives.

Another concern related to the uncovering of meaning was the possibility of the participants taking on the role of representing their respective organisation, making it hard to distinguish between the perspective of the organisation and the personal perspective of the individual. In order to address this concern, total anonymity was ensured so that participants would be able to speak freely about their personal perspectives and experiences without concern for representing the organisation. Further, open-ended questions were asked in order to encourage them to interpret freely and the 'talk' surrounding their descriptions was of particular interest in order to explore underlying meanings which subconsciously shape this 'talk'. As such, I propose that the embedded meanings would be present even if participants were to take on a role of organisation representative.

Lastly, the translation of quotes from Swedish to English for the purpose of this report could be considered to be a factor of concern when exploring meanings as translation may change the intended meaning of the statement. However, I felt that conducting the interviews in the participants' native language would be beneficial for the validity by making participants more comfortable and leading to more free responses in comparison to the potential discomfort of speaking in English and the potential limitations which would be put on their ability to express themselves freely. Responses were analysed prior to translation and as such, all meaning was attributed to the statements in the original wording. Select quotes were translated after analysis for the purpose of providing illustrating evidence in this report.

4. Descriptive results

In this chapter, the perspectives of the participants will be reported in a descriptive manner, organised into themes which emerged during analysis.

Theme 1: Conceptualisations of communication

The first theme compiles participants' descriptions of the communication process in regard to two aspects: vocabulary used to describe communication throughout the interview and the response when directly asked "What does communication mean to you?"

Communication as conveying messages

The main perspective was communication as a linear process of conveying messages from sender to receiver, described using vocabulary depicting the act of 'reaching' out. Communication was described as a tool for persuasion used to 'get' someone to do something, either to understand some information or to engage or not engage in some behaviour. Participant 2 described that communication to her is *"to reach out with the right message at the right time"*. Participant 8 shared this perspective while emphasising the role of message tailoring, or *"the magic"* as she called it, for successfully conveying messages.

> To me, communication is simply adapting messages. Doing your utmost for the receiver or target group to be able to receive the message so that they get an understanding and acceptance for your message. So it's the classic line between sender and receiver, with the static in between/…/And the magic is what happens in between.

Participant 1 depicted the objective of getting the target group to change their behaviour as a guiding sentiment in the campaign planning process: *"What would actually get people to do it? Was it the environment or money? What is important to get them to change their behaviour?"* Further, participant 1 described communication as a tool used *"to get people to make changes and get people to understand that we cannot consume the way we do today"*.

Communication as dialogue

The less common perspective on communication was as process characterised by interaction and dialogue. Participant 5 placed emphasis on the importance of dialogue for the communication process: *"Communication, if it is to achieve results, needs to be allowed to take its time. Dialogue, in order to get people on your side, takes time. It's about building engagement and trust and relationships."* Further, participant 5 described communication as an interactive tool for closing the gap between knowledge, feelings and behaviour: *"When planning communication, we usually talk about 'knowing, feeling, doing' and I like to draw a person and say that you need to align the brain, heart and hands."*

Some contradiction can be seen in the data between the vocabulary used by participants to describe communication and the participants' descriptions of the meaning of communication. For example, when asked what communication means to her, participant 4 stated that *"/.../it's something interactive, that it's a dialogue"*. However, participant 4 uses vocabulary similar to that used by participants in the previous perspective on communication throughout the interview, reflecting a more linear process: *"We really need to think things through so that we reach the right group. You need to have a specified target group so that you know that this is the one that is the receiver."*

Theme 2: Perspectives on the use of EC

The second theme compiles participants' descriptions on the use of environmental communication for behavioural change.

Sub-theme 1: The role of EC

This sub-theme compiles the perspectives of participants on the role of environmental communication for creating behavioural change.

<u>Increasing knowledge</u>

The main perspective was the role of communication for increasing knowledge by spreading information and facts. Participant 4 exemplified this perspective, pointing to an apparent knowledge gap in the public about environmental problems and arguing for the importance of knowledge for achieving behavioural change.

> /.../you need to have knowledge in order to eventually be able to make a behavioural change/.../You need to understand why it's important to do this. In order to make a change, people want to understand and see connections and they want to see clearly why/.../we spread information because there are a lot of people who don't have this information.

In her description of the campaign communication planning process, participant 7 highlighted the role of environmental communication for increasing knowledge while simultaneously placing value on the role of emotions.

> I use a communication model which revolves around increasing knowledge in a group and increasing their awareness about a problem existing and then getting them to react to the information provided. There is a difference between reaction and action. So then when the group is reacting, experiencing emotions and thinking 'ok this is wrong, I have an opinion about this question', that's when you ask them to act…but we could not have asked them to do that without talking about the forest fires and providing all this information.

Changing attitudes

Another perspective was the role of communication for changing attitudes by creating certain thoughts and feelings in the target group. Participant 5 exemplified this perspective, describing the importance of their campaign for changing attitudes: *"We can help change attitudes on second hand, that it doesn't need to be dirty or ugly/.../we need to make the change to actually replacing the act of buying new with buying second hand."* Participant 6 described the role of communication as two-fold, increasing knowledge and changing attitudes.

> What do they need to know? What do we want them to think or feel? What do we want them to do? We communicate to individuals what they need to know, in other words, we spread information. We create thoughts and feelings in people which starts a process which can lead to behavioural change.

Building engagement

Another perspective was the role of communication for building engagement by informing, invoking an emotional reaction, and so on. Participant 2 highlighted the value of using communication to build engagement: *"The concept was to all together surf, swim, dive for cleaner oceans/.../To fight together against plastic."* Further, participant 2 illustrated the role of environmental communication for both increasing knowledge and building engagement.

> /.../it has to be something that moves you so that you become engaged and feel that you want to change/.../So you inform, build engagement, get people to react/…/The knowledge of what you find out has to be enough to build engagement.

Starting dialogue

Another perspective was the role of communication for starting dialogue, often referred to as getting the topic on the 'agenda' or getting people talking. Participant 9 described that getting the topic on the agenda was one of the campaign objectives: *"We want to get biodiversity on the agenda and get people to keep talking about*

climate." Participant 7 explained that the reason why the campaign was initiated was the absence of dialogue about the question.

> It was only a few months before the election year and before the campaign, we felt that in the general discourse, people were not talking about the climate and it was crazy/.../So what we did was decide that we need to get the climate question on to the agenda/.../the climate needs to be the number one thing on the agenda, everything else is secondary.

Participant 5 highlighted the importance of dialogue for bringing about change, stating that *"we need to create space for discussions of difficult environmental questions in order to find common solutions, to create our future somehow"*.

Sub-theme 2: The potential impact of EC

This sub-theme reports participants' perspectives on the potential impact of environmental communication on behaviour.

<u>Huge potential impact</u>

One perspective on the potential impact of communication was that communication can result in both individual behavioural change and societal change. Participant 9 illustrated this perspective, arguing the importance of *"communication that is clear, straightforward and engaging in order to get people to understand how serious the situation is and to make sustainable choices to preserve our planet"*. Participant 7 argued that communication has a huge capacity for achieving change at a societal level by inducing individual behavioural change.

> In a bigger perspective everything is connected because if you don't purchase that cheese or that sausage, will it lead to the company stopping production? You need a collective, which requires big changes, but that collective is built up by every individual taking that responsibility.

<u>Limited potential impact</u>

Another perspective was that communication alone has a limited impact and is not enough to achieve behavioural change. Participant 5 illustrated this perspective in the following two quotes: *"Communication is important but communication alone cannot do it."*; *"Coaching is often more effective than communication because coaching helps people. They have also seen in research that communication alone is not very strong but communication paired with some kind of instrument is stronger."*

Theme 3: Barriers for achieving behavioural change

The third theme compiles participants' descriptions of potential factors hindering communication or achieving behavioural change.

<u>The "static"</u>

The "static" is a term used by participants to explain the constant stream of messaging that stands between the communicator and the target group. Participant 4 described this as one of the main barriers for communication: *"There are loads of messages coming from different senders/.../and many marketing measures from companies too. So it's a challenge to cut through the static."* Participant 1 highlighted the negative impact of the static on individuals.

> There are many actors wanting to reach out through the static. Obviously, it will be harder to take it in or you might not even be able to. Just look at yourself and you will see that you do not have the energy to cope with taking it all in.

<u>The abstract and distant nature of the problem</u>

The abstract and distant nature of environmental problems is described as a barrier due to the result of individuals having a difficult time understanding and grasping the problem. Participant 9 gave the example of global warming, with temperatures rising 1,5 degrees as an abstract consequence: *"1,5 degrees - people don't understand that, what does it even mean? We have fluctuations of degrees every day. People don't understand."* Participant 8 argued that certain topics are still very distant which makes people ignore or deny connections between the environmental problem and the consequences: *"In Sweden we maybe can't see the consequences all too clearly, like for the average person yet, not like they do in other countries, that's why we have climate change deniers."*

<u>Perceived lack of personal significance</u>

Another barrier is a perceived lack of personal significance on the part of the individual where they feel too small, insignificant or powerless to make a difference. Participant 7 explained that with the *"climate crisis people feel that the question is too big 'I don't know what I can do because it's too much'"*. Participant 4 argued that this perception may stem from a knowledge gap.

> Making the connection between what I as a person use and how my lifestyle impacts the environment/.../This connection, how everything is interrelated/.../If I don't make that connection, how am I supposed to know if something gets disturbed or destroyed because of my behaviour?

<u>Personal sacrifice associated with the behaviour</u>

The final barrier relates to individuals being less likely to engage in behaviours which entail some kind of personal cost or sacrifice such as inconvenience, discomfort, extra effort or an economic cost. Participant 8 explained that whether people are motivated to make the change you suggest varies depending on the extent of the change and the perceived personal cost.

> It's easier to achieve a behavioural change in relation to things other than maybe changing their lifestyle/.../we are communicating that you should change your whole lifestyle and it's very difficult to make people realise that what they perceive as sacrifices, that's not actually what it is/.../you can do the exact same thing as before but in a different way.

Participant 5 described that it makes a big difference for motivation if the encouraged behaviour is associated with a personal cost: *"It makes a big difference if people experience a loss and if it's an economic loss then of course, but even if it's just a loss."*

Theme 4: Guidelines for EC

The fourth theme compiles various guidelines described by participants for communication about environmental problems.

<u>Basis of facts and data</u>

Participants described the importance of basing communication upon facts and data. Participant 4 illustrated this guideline: *"We are going to convey facts and data which are correct and reliable, so we have carried out data and fact collection and we really have verified that we have clear sources for all statements."* Similarly, participant 2 described a process of data collection evidence before the campaign launch in order to ensure all communication was based on facts.

> The aim was to highlight the threats which face our oceans so we gathered evidence in terms of plastic in the ocean, pollution, how climate change is having an impact/.../we travel the world with independent researchers, documenting threats that our oceans our facing and show that this is a state of emergency.

Participant 4 reasoned that the importance of this guideline stems from a demand from the public for neutral facts.

> I think it's about the fact that sometimes, to get through the static, it's almost like fear propaganda or horror scenarios/.../They really want 'Do you know that it takes 11 thousand litres of water? That's what is consumed to produce your jeans.'/.../It's those kinds of facts they want, that's how they want to absorb it.

<u>Positive tone and solutions-orientation</u>

One perspective on message framing for environmental communication was to use a positive tone and a solutions-orientation. Participant 4 illustrated this guideline.

> There are solutions for everyone/.../and I think that's important to consider, that you present a variety of possibilities so that I as an individual can customise depending on what actually suits me/.../That's what our consumer survey showed, that they don't want any blame being assigned, they just want to be shown the possibilities. And I believe this touch of positivity is important.

Participant 8 explained that the aim was for their campaign communication *"to be encouraging and spread inspiration and you should think it's fun to adjust your life to be more sustainable, it's not hard...'come on now, let's take action for the planet!'"*.

Fear or urgency appeals

Another perspective on message framing was to use fear or urgency appeals balanced with a hopeful tone and a solutions-orientation. Participant 2 illustrated this: *"You need to mix tones, in other words show reality as it is, which can be really depressing, but in the same context you need to present solutions/.../So you need to/.../ have this urgency and also this solutions-orientation."* Participant 5 similarly argued for this approach.

> It has been like a truth that we cannot cause panic and that we shouldn't communicate too much negativity but/.../this assumption is based on the most sceptical people. If we look at Greta as a phenomenon, because she talks a lot about panic. Young people want to hear how things actually are.

Theme 5: Strategies for EC

The final theme compiles the communication strategies described by participants.

Sub-theme 1: Message tailoring strategies

The strategies within this sub-theme relate to message tailoring in order to get the individual to identify with and relate to your communication.

Mirroring language and culture of target group

One strategy described by participants for message tailoring was to mirror the language and culture of the target group. Participant 3 described some rationales guiding the message tailoring process.

You may use different types of language depending on the platform it will be produced on and the texts may vary in length and whether or not smileys or symbols should be used. The language may depend on whether it is directed towards students or towards employees.

Participant 4 described that *"this relates to everything, not just how you formulate words, also how the picture is formulated or the context or even the music that is used"*. Further, participant 4 highlighted the importance of this strategy: *"You reach the target group you want by talking in a way that gets them to notice the message"*.

Making communication 'timely'

Another strategy described by participants was tailoring communication depending on where in the behavioural change process the target group is and targeting situations where they may be more open to changing. Participant 5 exemplified this strategy in her description of the campaign communication planning process.

We consider the situations in which consumers are receptive/.../People are varying degrees of receptive so for example when many young people are receptive is when they have children/.../So maybe that's when you start paying more attention to the chemical content in clothing/.../we have produced a little Instagram story that deals with children, clothing and chemicals.

Participant 9 described this strategy in similar terms.

We have developed some different personas where you can see where they are in the change process, some are far ahead and are receptive to our messages but can also become 'multipliers' that spread the message and engage others. And then we have those/.../whom are barely reachable. We always try to have a variety to reach these different personas.

Utilising values and motivators of target group

Participants described that an important strategy was tailoring communication to the values and motivators of the target group. Participant 1 exemplified this strategy, explaining that the research leading up to their campaign revealed one main motivator for their target group: *"They say that the environment is important/.../but if we can show that 'hey you can save money through this!', that's a bigger motivator. Your own wallet, that's something that really motivates the receivers, more than saving the earth."* Further, participant 1 described that campaign communication was tailored to this motivator.

So that's what we emphasise, that it's good for your wallet, beneficial for you, get rich/.../When we write posts about food waste and stuff like that we also write about how much money you save by not throwing away food.

Sub-theme 2: General strategies

The strategies within this sub-theme relate to more general ideas about how to communicate effectively.

<u>Repeating communication</u>

Participants described the strategy of repetition, highlighting that this increases the chances of the target group noticing and remembering the communication. Participant 4 illustrated this strategy: *"If you hear or see something one time you will not react but if you get the same information from different directions, the chances are greater that you will actually absorb it."* Participant 5 also stressed this idea.

> If you execute a big campaign that costs a lot of money for a few weeks, then people might see it during that time but then they have forgotten it again. You need to/.../return with messages and continuously remind them.

<u>Concretising individual impact</u>

Participants described the importance of concretising the impact of individual behaviour by relying on facts and data to clearly show the concrete difference individual behaviour makes. Participant 4 exemplified this strategy in her description of the communication planning process.

> We identified early on that the biggest part of the environmental impact occurs in the production phase. And what can I as a consumer do then?/.../The thing that has the biggest impact is if you can extend the lifetime and based on that, which is backed by data, if you double the total usage of a t-shirt which we on average use 30 times/.../A very clear message to the consumer: this is what you can do and then you reduce the environmental impact with almost 50%!

Participant 7 stressed the importance of this strategy in the following two quotes: *"There should always be target milestones in a campaign so that people don't tire of being involved/.../people that have been involved should feel that we have made a difference here."; "Why should I spend my time/.../if it doesn't make a difference?/.../We must be able to show that the work we do makes a difference or else they will lose their motivation to do it."*

<u>Communicating in a pedagogical and relatable way</u>

Participants described the importance of communicating in a way which concretises and simplifies the data behind environmental problems by bringing in pedagogical and relatable comparisons. Participant 5 explained the value of this: *"When using facts, we think it's important for communication planning to make it pedagogical.*

Because if you just say a number 'it's this much', that doesn't really do anything, you need to bring in comparisons." Participant 8 also illustrated this strategy.

> We must tailor what the experts are saying to the target group and package it in the right way so that it is understandable so that we reach through the static/.../So instead of saying 'it takes 783 thousand tons of water to produce this or that', for example, say instead 'to produce this, a pair of jeans, it takes this many bathtubs of water' for example.

Building a relationship with the target group

Participants described the importance of building some form of relationship with the target group so that they perceive you as reliable and trustworthy. Participant 5 illustrated this strategy: *"you need to establish a relationship/.../people want to be more involved and have this dialogue."* Further, participant 9 described that, to her, communication is the building of relationships.

> Communication is essentially building relationships. I don't think you can achieve good communication without building a relationship with the person who receives your message. And maybe you can't reciprocate but that the person gets a relationship to you and your message.

5. Analysis and discussion

In this chapter, the meta-discourse of the participants on communication, behavioural change, and related concepts, will be analysed and discussed using previous research for guidance.

5.1. Meta-discourse on "behaviour" and "attitude"

When participants talk about "behaviour", they describe the vital nature of behavioural change for achieving the transition to a more sustainable future. Participants depict the understanding that knowledge and attitude must be aligned in the individual in order to impact behaviour.

When participants talk about "attitude", they attribute a high value to attitudes for determining behaviour and establish the understanding that a certain environmental attitude is needed for individuals to be motivated to change their environmental behaviour. This attitude is described as primarily involving a certain knowledge level about the environment and a particular emotional orientation towards the environment. This meaning described about attitude coincides with Grob's (1995) proposal that the attitude an individual has towards the environment determines the environmental behaviour the individual engages in.

Participants emphasise that ECCs must target several determinants of attitude and behaviour and privilege knowledge and emotions as the primary determinants targeted in campaign communication.

5.1.1. Meta-discourse on "knowledge"

When participants talk about "knowledge", they describe environmental knowledge as an understanding of the environmental problem, the need for changes to be made, and so on. Participants emphasise the value of knowledge for determining behaviour and assert that a certain knowledge level is a prerequisite for behavioural change to be possible. Further, the participants describe that increasing knowledge is a prerequisite for measures targeting other determinants of behaviour. According to participants, the need for a campaign often stems from the identification of a

knowledge gap within a certain group about an environmental problem. The underlying assumption expressed is that this knowledge gap may be the explanation for individuals behaving unsustainably as they lack the necessary knowledge to change their behaviour. Participants emphasise the role of ECCs for spreading information with the objective of increasing knowledge and describe that by filling the knowledge gap through campaign communication, behavioural change will be possible.

Grob (1995) proposes that the more environmental awareness an individual has, i.e. the more knowledge they have about the environment and the more recognition they have for environmental problems, the more sustainably the individual will behave. The meta-discourse of the participants does not necessarily coincide with Grob's proposal due to tensions within the meta-discourse about the value of knowledge. Although knowledge is continuously emphasised and attributed a high value, participants simultaneously construct a meta-discourse about the limited value of knowledge, stressing that communication built upon increasing knowledge will be insufficient for achieving behavioural change. The meanings about the value of knowledge, and the tension between them, coincide with research suggesting that although knowledge has a limited impact on behaviour and may be insufficient for supporting long-term behaviour, it can be used to motivate an attitude change which may lead to behavioural change (Norton and Grecu 2015; Cox and Pezzullo 2018; McKenzie-Mohr 2000).

The main strategy described by participants for increasing knowledge is to base all communication on facts and data. The underlying assumption in this meta-discourse is that factual-based information will increase knowledge in the individuals. However, participants emphasise the value of message tailoring as a practice within campaign communication and extensively describe this process of 'packaging' communication in a certain way which appeals to individuals. Further, participants engage in rationales about successful communication not only entailing having communication 'reach' the individual, but also having the individual absorb the communication. These meanings suggest an understanding that increasing knowledge is more complex than simply providing information and that information needs to be provided in a particular way.

5.1.2. Meta-discourse on "emotions"

When participants talk about "emotions", they emphasise the need to incite an emotional reaction in order to align knowledge and attitude and to achieve behavioural change. Invoking emotions is described as important for moving beyond increasing knowledge in the individual. This meta-discourse coincides with Grob's (1995) proposal that the more intense the emotion with which individuals

react to a worsening state of the environment, the more sustainably they will behave.

Participants establish an assumption that certain emotions are generally productive or counterproductive for environmental communication through rationales about the objective of invoking a productive emotional reaction in individuals through campaign communication. 'Productive' seems to be understood as yielding behavioural change or action by imparting an attitude towards the environment where the individual feels motivated to do something about the problem and feels able to contribute. Participants depict the understanding and assumption that emotions such as hope, motivation and engagement are productive to invoke and describe communication planning based on positivity, encouragement and inspiration in order to invoke these productive emotions.

"Engagement" is emphasised the most in the participants' meta-discourse on emotions. Although it is clear that engagement is a valued concept, it is unclear what it actually entails for the participants. The meaning attributed to engagement seems to depict some kind of attitude or emotional orientation towards the environment involving an individual feeling motivated to participate and take action. Participants attribute a high value to engagement and understand it to be a productive emotion not only for achieving individual behavioural change but also for achieving large-scale change at a societal level by mobilising individuals and inciting collective action. Further, the participants establish the assumption that engagement can be 'built' using campaign communication and attribute value to ECC design which incorporates measures for building engagement, highlighting strategies such as informing and making individuals feel important and empowered.

There are differing views among participants on whether fear or urgency appeals are productive in campaign communication. In general, there are contradicting ideas within research in regard to whether fear or urgency appeals are useful for achieving behavioural change (Brulle 2010; Stoknes 2015). Some participants attribute a low value to fear or urgency appeals and establish the assumption that invoking any kind of negative emotions in the target group such as fear or panic is counterproductive as this will result in individuals feeling powerless, numb or even depressed. As such, these participants assert that ECCs should avoid using fear or urgency appeals. Other participants hold the position that fear or urgency appeals are productive and important to employ as long as these are balanced with a tone of hope and a solutions-orientation. The sentiment is that this will impart an understanding in the individual that the state of environmental degradation is urgent but that there is hope if we act now.

5.1.3. Meta-discourse on "perceived control"

"Perceived control" is not a term directly used by participants. This term is adopted from Grob's (1995) model which proposes that individuals who attribute the causes of the environmental state to their own actions will engage in more sustainable behaviours than those who attribute the causes to external influences such as natural law, chance, society or peers. Participants depict the understanding that perceived control is an important factor for determining behaviour and attribute two meanings to the concept in their meta-discourse.

One meaning attributed to perceived control by participants is that an individual must first recognise and understand the connection between their behaviour and the state of the environment in order to be motivated to change their behaviour. Participants establish the assumption that lack of perceived control can be explained as the result of a knowledge gap about the environmental impact of individual behaviour. This idea supports the previously discussed meaning attributed to "knowledge" as a prerequisite for targeting other determinants of behaviour. This idea is in line with Grob's (1995) model which proposes that perceived control is connected to environmental awareness in the sense that individuals must first access relevant knowledge and recognise environmental problems before they can make control attributions. Participants assert that campaign communication can be used as a tool for increasing perceived control by addressing this knowledge gap through communicating facts and data which highlights connections between individual behaviour and the state of the environmental and concretises the environmental impact of individual behaviour. Through this rationale, participants establish the assumption that if individuals were to fully grasp the extent to which their behaviour impacts the environment, they would behave in a more sustainable manner.

Another meaning attributed to "perceived control" in this meta-discourse is that individuals feel insignificant, powerless and as though they cannot make a difference in relation to the state of the environment. Participants depict this emotional state as counterproductive as the individual will be unmotivated to take action or engage in sustainable behaviours. Participants describe that campaign communication can be used to make the individual feel more significant and capable of making a difference by concretising the impact of the individual. However, the participants assert that assigning blame for environmental degradation should be avoided in ECCs, highlighting this as counterproductive. Instead, a high value is attributed to a solutions-oriented approach to environmental communication for empowering individuals and facilitating behavioural change. The participants depict the importance of highlighting in communication that there is hope if we act now and presenting the individual with a path forward and a concrete solution to which they can contribute. These rationales coincide with the ideas about fear or urgency appeals in the previous section and with research which

highlights the importance of environmental communication presenting information about effective, meaningful actions which can be taken to combat environmental degradation (Brulle 2010).

5.1.4. Meta-discourse on "values"

When participants talk about "values", focus is on the process of identifying values and motivators within the target group and using these aspects of individuals' identity to tailor communication so that information and behaviours are framed in a way that appeals to and resonates personally with the target group. This rationale emphasises the value of identification as a motivating factor for individuals and the value of message tailoring as an ECC practice. Participants generally describe individuals as opposed to personal sacrifice and motivated by personal gain. Similarly, Grob (1995) proposes that individuals' environmental attitude and behaviour are influenced by personal-philosophical values including materialistic values and further, that the more materialistic an individual's values are, the less appropriately the individual will behave towards the environment. The rationales of the participants seem in line with this and they establish the assumption that communication must frame behaviours in a way which emphasises potential personal gains and de-emphasises personal costs. Participants highlight the need to envision and understand the individual in order to be able to emphasise the 'right' gains, further attributing value to the practice of message tailoring.

Research supports the benefits of message tailoring practices, suggesting that these practices may increase the chances of the communication yielding behavioural change (Norton and Grecu 2015). Despite the value attributed to message tailoring practices, extensive message tailoring was simply not an option for many of the participants involved due to the resource intensive nature of the practice, especially in regard to the research required on the target group, in comparison to the limited time and resources available for the campaigns. These participants often still employed the practices but without conducting research, choosing instead to envision these aspects of the target group through educated guesses.

5.2. Meta-discourse on "communication"

5.2.1. Conceptualisations of communication

The participants' meta-discursive vocabulary and practices in relation to the concept of "communication" primarily reflect a conceptualisation of communication which coincides with the Transmission model of communication (Flor 2004). The vocabulary used throughout the interviews reflects this model

through terminology which depicts the process of the communicator 'reaching out' through the 'static' to the 'receiver' and 'getting' them to do something. Further, the descriptions about concrete campaign practices reflect this conceptualisation, depicting a linear perspective on campaign communication with no reference to dialogue or interaction with the target group and emphasising the communicator's experience and process of message construction and message tailoring. This is consistent with the Transmission model's sender-oriented view on communication as a linear process of sending a message through a channel to a receiver with focus on the sender's process of encoding and transmitting a message (Flor 2004).

Tension can be seen between this conceptualisation which emphasises a linear, sender-oriented process of campaign communication and the emphasis placed on "emotions" throughout the meta-discourse. Participants attribute a high value to the practice of invoking certain emotions through campaign communication which assumes that communication can be designed to invoke specific feelings in individuals and that communicators can predict the reaction of individuals to specific communication. However, the ways with which the participants talk about the campaign communication process and the practices used in campaigns places emphasis on the communicators experience of message construction and largely ignores the experience for the individuals interacting with the communication. For example, in the meanings attributed to "engagement", the rationales about campaign practices for building engagement depict a fairly linear process of building engagement through campaign communication without much reflection about the experience of the individuals whom are meant to be "engaged". Further, these rationales depict informing as the most concrete strategy used for building engagement which is an inherently linear practice. These meanings do not seem to reflect the optimal circumstances for being able to 'predict' the emotions of the target group. If the outcome of the campaign is dependent upon the campaign producers being able to predict the emotions experienced by the individual when interacting with communication, it seems important to emphasise and make use of interaction, dialogue and mutual understanding in the campaign communication process and to place focus on the individuals experience.

Another meaning attributed to "communication" depicts a more interactive process characterised by dialogue and building relationships, envisioning individuals as participants in a dialogue rather than as 'receivers' of a message. This conceptualisation reflects concepts from the Constitutive model which views communication as an ongoing, social process of interactants producing and reproducing shared meanings (Craig 1999). In general, the meaning attributed to this conceptualisation of communication are not very clear, well-developed or consistent. Within the portrayal of this perspective, tensions can be seen between the meanings described and the meta-discursive vocabulary used. While

participants emphasised the value of concepts consistent with the Constitutive model, meta-discursive vocabulary associated with the Transmission model was simultaneously used. Further, although participants' attribute a high value to concepts which coincide with the Constitutive model such as dialogue and building relationships, the actual meanings attributed to these kinds of concepts are unclear and descriptions of campaign practices reflecting and employing these kinds of concepts are limited and under-developed. For example, participants highlight the value of dialogue, depicting the role of ECCs for initiating dialogue and stressing that dialogue is essential for the transition to a more sustainable future. However, these meanings are not reflected in the descriptions of campaign practices and it is unclear if and how these meanings play a role in the campaign communication process as there is no indication of any dialogue being maintained with the target group. This suggests that the meanings and value attributed to the concept of dialogue are mainly theoretical and are not necessarily applied practically in campaign communication. Another example is the value attributed to building relationships with individuals within the target group which signals a more interactive campaign communication process. However, descriptions of this relationship-building are characterised solely as a linear process of the organisation trying to create a certain image of themselves as trustworthy so that individuals are more open to communication from the organisation. As such, interaction and dialogue are effectively de-emphasised.

In general, it is difficult to make sense of the conceptualisations of communication especially due to the abundance of tensions within the meta-discourse. One explanation for these tensions could simply be that the meanings which the participants attribute to communication are inherently complex and are better represented on a spectrum and as such, are not done justice through a linear versus interactive divide. Another explanation could be that participants prefer to portray their view on communication as interactive, valuing dialogue, as this may be considered a more 'modern' view on communication but that they are more comfortable with descriptions and practices coinciding with a linear view on communication. A third potential explanation could be that the professional vocabulary associated with the communication field remains stuck in a traditional, linear view of communication and has not yet caught up to the more modern, interactive perspectives available for communication and that this limits the meta-discursive vocabulary and practices available for the participants to describe their perspectives.

5.2.2. Approaches to campaign communication

Several approaches to campaign communication can be distinguished in the meta-discourse of the participants. The primary approaches which seem to be valued are

an information, education and communication (IEC) and a social mobilisation approach. There is also some evidence of a social marketing approach.

An IEC approach tends to envision communication as an intervention for altering behaviour with information and knowledge as the primary resources (Flor 2004). This approach assumes that changes in behaviour are brought about through increasing knowledge about an issue and by fostering attitudes that support the promoted behaviours (Flor 2004). This type of approach to campaign communication can be seen throughout the meta-discourse in the emphasis placed on the value of information and knowledge. The descriptions of campaign practices show that even when other determinants of behaviour are being targeted, providing information and promoting knowledge are still relied upon as the primary measures for achieving results. Further, the participants' conceptualisation of communication reflect characteristics of an IEC approach through a linear, sender-oriented view of communication as a process of encoding information and conveying messages which seemingly envisions communication as an intervention of sorts. These meanings and rationales suggest that information and knowledge are valued as the primarily resources for ECCs and that an IEC approach is favoured. Although an IEC approach is considered the conventional approach to communication, there may be concerns about the quality of this approach as research suggests that instruments reliant on information and increasing knowledge are relatively ineffective at stimulating societal change (Flor 2004; Mont and Plepys 2008).

A social mobilisation approach to EC is a bottom-up, participatory approach which focuses on collective action and envisions the individual as a participant in a mutual dialogue about the environment (Flor 2004; Brulle 2010). This approach to campaign communication can be seen reflected in the emphasis on the value of emotions throughout the meta-discourse, especially in the rationales about 'productive' versus 'counterproductive' emotions, which highlights the role of ECCs for facilitating the translation of emotional reactions into practical actions. Further, the meanings attributed to communication as a process of dialogue and the descriptions of the role of ECCs for building engagement and inciting dialogue reflect this approach through emphasis on participation and collective action. Lastly, the meaning portrayed about "perceived control" in relation to combating feelings of powerlessness suggest that campaign communication is valued for the effect of empowering individuals. These meanings and rationales emphasise the value of participation, mobilisation and collective action, thus reflecting a social mobilisation approach to campaign communication. Advocates for this approach argue that by building upon participation, engagement and dialogue, environmental communication is more likely to be able to initiate social change (Brulle 2010).

A social marketing approach focuses on promoting specific behaviours using a marketing perspective to attempt to 'sell' a behaviour (Flor 2004). Using this approach, the barriers for a specific behaviour are identified and a strategy is designed for overcoming these barriers using psychological knowledge regarding behavioural change (McKenzie-Mohr 2000). Some aspects of the meta-discourse point to concepts being used from this approach. This can be seen in the descriptions of the process of constructing and conveying messages with the objective of promoting behaviours and in rationales about message tailoring practices for framing behaviours in order to make the behaviours seem desirable or appealing.

5.2.3. Perspectives on the potential impact of communication

Two primary perspectives were distinguished in the meta-discourse on the potential impact of environmental communication on behaviour. The perspectives appear to depend on the approach to campaign communication employed by the participant.

One perspective attributes limited value to communication, describing communication as a relatively weak tool with limited potential for achieving behavioural change. Participants that describe this meaning use meta-discursive vocabulary reflecting a linear view on the communication process and use descriptions and rationales which reflect an IEC approach to campaign communication with emphasis placed on practices related to providing information and promoting knowledge. Simultaneously, a meaning is described about the limited value of knowledge. I propose that the tension between these parallel meanings is what causes this perspective of communication's limited impact to materialise. If there is an understanding about the limited value of knowledge, it seems contradicting for ECCs to be designed with emphasis on information and knowledge. It seems that this, by design, inherently limits the potential impact of the ECC. This is especially true considering the assertion by participants that the potential impact on behaviour would increase if complementary measures of a more interactive nature were used such as coaching or feedback.

The other perspective attributes a high value to communication, describing communication as a powerful tool with the potential to achieve large-scale change. The rationales used by participants emphasise concepts reflecting a social mobilisation approach such as collective action, engagement, dialogue and participation. However, participants describing this meaning simultaneously use meta-discursive vocabulary reflecting a linear view on communication which suggests that the conceptualisation of communication reflected in meta-discursive vocabulary may not necessarily influence the approach used for campaign communication. Further, participants describe the importance of information as a resource which coincides with the meanings described by participants within the

previous perspective. However, within this perspective, participants describe informing as a foundation for other measures to be initiated which aim to build engagement and encourage participation. This appears to be the main difference between these two perspectives, i.e. whether these kinds of interactive measures are seen as an inherent part of ECCs or as possible complements. The perspective on this aspect may be what dictates the participants' view on the impact of ECCs. A possible interpretation of this is that ECCs would be more successful at achieving behavioural change if interactive measures encouraging participation and building engagement were incorporated into campaign design.

5.3. Overall impressions

The exploration of participants' meta-discourse reveals an understanding of the need to align knowledge and attitude in order to create behavioural change. This is depicted as requiring ECCs to be designed as inherently dynamic activities with measures targeting several determinants of environmental attitude and behaviour. The two determinants which are attributed the most value by participants are "knowledge" and "emotions".

Participants highlight the value of emotions as resources for behavioural change through the facilitation of outcomes such as collective action, participation and mobilisation. Participants emphasise the role of campaign communication for invoking 'productive' emotions and depict a communication planning process driven by the delicate balance between emotions such as hope and fear, engagement and panic, and so on, in the hopes of creating change. However, these rationales fall short and do not seem to develop beyond the theoretical to translate into the actual campaign practices. This reveals a gap between the theoretical basis of ECCs and how these meanings are practically applied in ECCs.

Instead, the descriptions of practices involved in the planning and execution of ECCs emphasise the value of knowledge and privilege concepts related to the promotion of knowledge such as information, facts, message construction. Overall, while participant perspectives attribute value to a variety of concepts such as dialogue and participation, these meanings are not as clear, consistent or well-developed as the meanings attributed to information and knowledge. This indicates that information and knowledge are the primary resources relied upon for practical campaign work by individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs.

6. Conclusion

As previous research on ECCs focuses primarily on the practical aspects of ECCs, the theoretical basis of ECCs in regard to the underlying meanings about communication and behavioural change which shape campaigns had not previously been explored to a satisfactory extent. The purpose of this study was to address this gap in the research by exploring the perspectives of individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs and to make sense of the underlying meanings embedded in these perspectives. The result of this study was the development of conceptual descriptions about the meanings shaping ECCs with focus on how meanings and assumptions were attributed to and established about concepts related to communication and behavioural change.

The value of this research is its contribution to furthering the understanding of ECCs. Through this study, insight was gained into the meanings embedded in the perspectives of individuals involved in the planning and execution of ECCs. This furthers our understanding of ECCs as these meanings inherently shape campaigns and factor into their outcome. As such, the findings of this study enhance both the theory and practice of environmental communication.

The findings have limited generalisability beyond the cases represented due to the context-specific nature of these descriptions and the small sample size. However, these findings can be used as a point of departure for future research on this aspect of ECCs. The understanding of this aspect would be furthered by research employing an ethnographic study of an ECC with a focus on exploring the culture of the group working with the campaign and the concrete communication planning situations involved in order to yield deeper insights into the underlying meanings shaping ECCs and how these meanings are manifested in social interaction and practical campaign work.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Intervjuguide (original language, Swedish)

<u>Information om arbetet</u>

Som jag skrev i mitt mail skriver jag just nu mitt examensarbete. Jag intervjuar personer som har erfarenhet av kommunikationskampanjer för att ta reda på hur det går till när en kampanj genomförs. Syftet med den här intervjun är att få höra om hur du har upplevt kampanjer som du har varit involverad i. Jag har valt just dig att intervjua på grund av ditt arbete med kampanjen XXX.

<u>Information gällande din medverkan</u>

Det går bra att avbryta intervjun närsomhelst. Du kan ångra din medverkan närsomhelst, även vid en senare tidpunkt. Du kommer vara helt anonym, inga namn kommer att användas i uppsatsen för att identifiera dig eller kampanjen. Du kommer att få en kopia på uppsatsen när den är färdig. Går det bra att jag spelar in intervjun? Har du några frågor innan vi börjar?

<u>Intervjufrågor</u>

Hur hamnade du här på XXX?

Kan du berätta om en kampanj som du har arbetat med?

Varför är denna kampanj viktig?

Vad hoppas ni på att kampanjen ska åstadkomma?

Hur gick det till när kampanjen växte fram?

Vad var viktigt för er när ni planerade kampanjen?

Vilken information sökte ni innan genomförandet?

Vilka aktiviteter genomfördes under planeringen av kampanjen?

Efter en kampanj är genomförd - Hur vet ni om den har haft den önskade effekten?

Hur tänker du kring hur man gör en bra kampanj?

Vad betyder kommunikation för dig?

Varför tror du att det är viktigt med kommunikation?

Interview guide (English translation)

<u>Information about the research</u>

As I wrote in my e-mail, I am currently doing my thesis. I am interviewing people who have experience of communication campaigns to find out more about the

process of executing campaigns. The aim of this interview is for me to hear about how you have experienced campaigns which you have been involved in. I have chosen to interview you due to your work on the campaign XXX.

<u>Information about your participation</u>
You may end this interview at any time. You can end your participation at any time, even at a later time. You will be completely anonymous; no names will be used in the thesis either identifying you or the campaign. You will receive a copy of the thesis when it is complete. Is it ok if I record this interview? Do you have any questions before we begin?

<u>Interview questions</u>
How did you end up here at XXX?
Can you tell me about a campaign you have worked with?
Why is this campaign important?
What did you hope to achieve with the campaign?
How did it happen when this campaign came to be?
What was important for you when planning the campaign?
Which information did you seek before execution?
Which activities were carried out during the planning of the campaign?
After the campaign was complete, how did you know if it had the desired impact?
What are your thoughts on how to execute a good campaign?
What does communication mean to you?
Why do you believe that communication is important?

Appendix 2: Sample of participants

Participant alias	Type of organisation	Role in ECC
Participant 1	Business	Communications officer
Participant 2	NGO	Campaign leader
Participant 3	Government authority	Campaign leader
Participant 4	Government authority	Campaign leader
Participant 5	Government authority	Communications officer
Participant 6	Government authority	Communications officer
Participant 7	NGO	Communications officer
Participant 8	NGO	Communications officer
Participant 9	NGO	Campaign leader

The make-up of the participants related to organisation types varied as follows: one participant from a campaign led by a business, four participants from campaigns led by NGOs, and four participants from campaigns led by a government authority.

The sample represents a total of six ECCs as three campaigns are represented by two participants from different perspectives, i.e. one participant was the communications officer of the campaign and one participant was the campaign leader. Participants 3 and 6, participants 4 and 5, and participants 8 and 9 represent the same campaign.

Appendix 3: Steps of data analysis process

The data analysis process entailed a number of steps which will be laid out below. This process was based on Creswell and Creswell's (2018) description of inductive data analysis where the researcher works back and forth between the data and themes until a comprehensive set of themes have emerged.

Step 1: Getting an overview, becoming familiar with data

During this initial phase, all data was read through with focus on familiarising myself with the data and getting a sense of the "big picture". The process concluded with a reflection on my impressions of the overall meaning of the data, i.e. considering what was being said in the interviews, and any preliminary analytical thoughts were recorded in the field diary. This included general thoughts or impressions of the data, interesting or recurring ideas expressed in interviews, and any preliminary categories or themes to keep an eye on.

Step 2: Coding interview data using a systematic approach

The interview data was studied using a systematic approach to coding where data was organised into increasingly more abstract units until categories, themes and patterns of meaning emerge. In order to ensure reliability of coding, a coding sheet was created which included the code name, an explanation, and an example. An inductive approach for coding was used meaning that the codes came from the data itself and named after the words of the participants. When this was completed for all interview transcripts, a list of all topics was compiled. Then, codes were reorganised into broader, more theoretical terms and sharpened, trying to get as close to the core topic or meaning as possible. The codes were finally winnowed to ten codes with more abstract categories which seemed to encompass the meaning of all highlighted data. Then, deductively, I looked back through the interview transcripts with a focus on the ten final codes to search for more evidence to support the theme and to search for any evidence which contradicted the theme.

Step 3: Compilation of analytical spreadsheet

The coded data was compiled in an analysis spreadsheet and the perspectives within each theme were explored in the search for patterns across participants. Different

perspectives within each category were identified and clustered with similar perspectives. This process resulted in five broader themes with multiple perspectives from participants.

<u>Step 4: Descriptive results</u>

Each theme and the perspectives within that theme were shaped into a general description using the raw data for each perspective and the relevant category descriptions. Participant wording was used as far as possible in these descriptions and context was provided where it seemed suitable. The goal of this step was to reassemble the data in order to enable a neutral, descriptive report of the perspectives of the participants organised thematically. The outcome of this process was the descriptive results of this study reporting five broader themes with relevant sub-themes using a format based on the portrayal of all perspectives identified in the data along with specific evidence in the form of illustrating quotes, and any contradicting evidence.

<u>Step 5: Interpretation and analysis of meta-discourse</u>

The final phase of data analysis was the process of exploring and interpreting the descriptive results, placing them within the theoretical framework. Using the concept of "meta-discourse" to guide analysis, interpretations were made about the meanings and assumptions underlying the perspectives of the participants'. An interpretative summary was written for each perspective which was then organised depending on the concepts emphasised in the meta-discourse and the meta-discursive vocabulary used. Here, patterns of meaning were explored in relation to the research questions with a focus on how the meta-discourse attributed meaning and value to concepts related to communication and behavioural change. At this stage, existing literature on ECCs was brought in for comparison in order to make sense of the meanings being portrayed by participants.