

IDENTITY, THREAT AND TRUST IN NORTHERN IRELAND

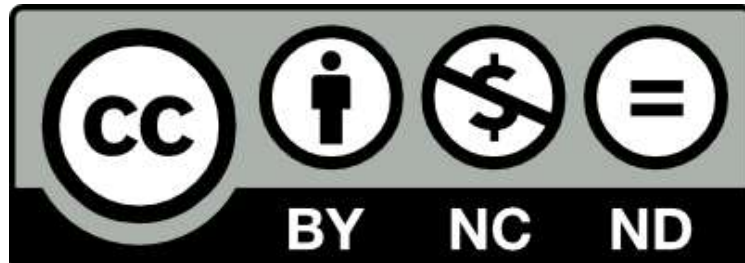
by

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ABSTRACT

This political psychology study explored how trust in a conflict-affected context is affected by identity and threat, through examining conceptualisations and lived experiences of identity, threat and trust, how trust changes and how identity and threat influence trust. Drawing on thematic, phenomenological and discourse analysis, themes were developed from 50 semi-structured interviews in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland in 2017. Identity is felt as fluid and multifaceted. Some identities intersect, transgress traditional boundaries, and are shaped by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Plural identity conceptualisations are held concurrently with conceptualisations associated with theoretical frameworks different to Social Identity Theory. Threats alluded to were cultural, identity, and physical; some felt more threatened than others. Threat themes sometimes overlapped with, but did not fully capture, Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice and Intergroup Threat Theory constructs. Trust was defined as a 'safe space', a performance, a shared commonality, a negotiated workaround, a group trust management process, and a disposition. Trust themes overlapped with some trust conceptualisations in the literature but the findings support context-specific trust conceptualisations. Trust change sources were social influence, contact, events/experiences, and agency. Despite initial, literature-informed expectations, a relationship between identity, threat and trust is not axiomatic and there are context-specific variations.

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All my love to you, Becks xxx

ACRONYMS AND LOCAL TERMS

Ceilidh — a traditional Scottish or Irish social gathering (though in contemporary usage, it usually refers to a social event involving Gaelic folk music and dancing)

CNR — Catholic, nationalist, and/or republican

CSO — civil society organisation

DUP — Democratic Unionist Party

Fleadh Cheoil (or Fleadh) — a competition and festival of traditional Irish music

IRA — Irish Republican Army — the name of several armed movements dedicated to Irish republicanism, though in the context of the Troubles this tends to relate to the PIRA

MLA — Member of the Legislative Assembly (of Northern Ireland)

PUL — Protestant, unionist, and/or loyalist

PIRA (or ‘Provos’) — Provisional Irish Republican Army — the biggest and most active republican paramilitary group during the ‘Troubles’ (or the group’s members)

PSNI — Police Service of Northern Ireland — the police force of Northern Ireland from 2001

RUC — Royal Ulster Constabulary — the police force of Northern Ireland between 1922 to 2001

UUP — Ulster Unionist Party

wain — a baby, child or young person. Possibly a contraction of “wee one” (i.e. “small one”)

wee — little, small

yous — you (more than one person)

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“Someone or a body of men killed a body of men a thousand miles away and the result was that they repeated the evil here and wreaked their vengeance on those around. It was an absurd state of affairs. But there it was: a good action in a far-off place did not find an echo, but an evil one did possess that power.”

Narayan, R. K. (1956). Another Community. In *Lawley Road and Other Stories*. New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks.

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

This study looks at how in a conflict-affected context, trust can be affected by issues of identity and threat. This is through firstly, looking at how identity, threat and trust are experienced and conceptualised, and secondly, how trust changes and how this is influenced by identity and threat. The following sections outline the background literature around intergroup trust and the links to identity and threat; the existing literature on conceptualisation of trust, identity, and threat; the case study of trust in a conflict-affected context, focusing on Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland; the focus of the study including the research question; and finally, the overall structure of the thesis.

Background: Identity, threat and trust

An absence of trust is often cited as a reason for the persistence of intergroup conflict (Kappmeier et al., 2021). One could assume that such lack of trust is an inevitable outcome of differentiating individuals into groups and the resulting ingroup favouritism¹. Such an assumption, that group differentiation automatically leads to ingroup bias, can come from reading much contemporary work in the social identity tradition² that Reicher (2004) argues

¹ Ingroup favouritism refers to “any tendency to favour the ingroup over the outgroup, in behaviour, attitudes, preferences or perception” (Turner et al., 1979, p.187).

² The social identity tradition is the research and approach largely founded on Social Identity Theory (SIT) (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Self-Categorisation theory (SCT) (e.g. Turner & Reynolds, 2003).

involves a distortion and “reduction of the tradition to a claim that mere division into groups necessarily leads to intergroup discrimination” (Reicher, 2004, p. 922). The literature on trust, however, suggests that there is not always a direct relationship between group membership and trust.

While there is a significant body of literature, largely experimental and survey-based, which finds a relation between i) the dyad of trust and cooperation (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013), and ii) the dyad of social identity and cooperation (Balliet et al., 2014; Bouas & Komorita, 1996; Buchan et al., 2002, 2011; Espinoza & Garza, 1985; Gaertner et al., 1996; Simpson, 2006; Tanis & Postmes, 2005; Tyler & Blader, 2001; Wit & Wilke, 1992), this is less so in iii) the social identity and trust dyad. One of the few studies that found a direct relationship between social identity and trust found that rather than ingroup membership leading to more trust, it is that trust standards are different for ingroup individuals than outgroup individuals: between ingroup members trust is harder to gain, easier to lose, and once an ingroup member had been deemed to be untrustworthy this was difficult to overturn (Hewstone et al., 2008). Many studies look specifically at intergroup trust (i.e. trust between members of different groups) and the research suggests that intergroup trust is not simply a function of group membership, but rather certain factors mediate this relationship between social identity and intergroup trust. In particular, there are the factors of contact and threat.

Starting with contact, the ‘contact hypothesis’ postulates that “positive interaction between members of different groups tends to reduce intergroup prejudice” (McKeown & Dixon,

2017, p.1) and the research suggests that contact has a positive effect on trust. Studies on contact show that more intergroup contact (i.e. contact between members of different groups) seems to improve intergroup trust (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007; Hewstone et al., 2014); that the perception of the outgroup as homogenous mediates this positive relationship between intergroup contact and intergroup trust (Hewstone et al., 2005; Kenworthy et al., 2004 cited in Hewstone et al., 2008); and that intergroup contact in school is linked to the same level of intergroup contact after one has left school, which is linked to higher intergroup trust (Hargie et al., 2008).

In relation to threat, contact is a potential antecedent to it, and it has been suggested that positive contact improves relations between groups by reducing perceptions of threat (Stephan et al., 2000). Intergroup threat relates to the belief that a given outgroup is in some way detrimental to one's ingroup (Schmid & Muldoon, 2015). Studies on threat and trust highlight the role of specific types of threats to one's ingroup including realistic threats – threats to the ingroup's existence, power and well-being; symbolic threats – threats to the ingroup's worldview based on perceived group differences in values, beliefs, and attitudes; and intergroup anxiety – the sense of threat from intergroup interactions (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Studies find that realistic threats, symbolic threats and intergroup anxiety reduce intergroup trust (Voci, 2006; Hewstone et al., 2005; Kenworthy et al., 2004 cited in Hewstone et al., 2008; Tam et al., 2009) and that this effect is strongest amongst those who identify themselves strongly with their ingroup (Tam et al., 2009; Myers et al., 2005 cited in Hewstone et al., 2008). Other studies find that intergroup threat mediates positive contact effects on intergroup trust (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007) and that when individuals implicitly

associated outgroup members with outgroup extremist groups there was less intergroup trust (Tam et al., 2008).

Whereas intergroup contact is an intensively studied area (Pettigrew et al., 2011), with work that has grown exponentially in the last decade (McKeown & Dixon, 2017), the research on intergroup threat is notably less. Consequently, it is arguably best to focus on threat, rather than contact, in relation to how identity affects trust.

Even having identified the three key components of note – identity, threat, and trust – there are questions just to what these concepts mean. The studies above, focus on identity as social identity, threat as defined by intergroup threat approaches, and trust using varying conceptualisations. Therefore, to understand just how these components relate, it is important to understand just how these components are conceptualised. Consequently, the next section outlines extant work on conceptualising identity, threat and trust. The first concept to be explored is trust; it is worth noting that while drawing on intergroup trust research as a starting point, the focus includes trust as a wider concept.

Concepts

Trust

In terms of defining trust, there is no universally accepted definition (Möllering, 2006) and it is often regarded as an elusive concept (Gambetta, 1988). Developments across disciplines have generated diverse conceptualisations of trust and even within the discipline of psychology, trust has multiple definitions (Balliet & Van Lange, 2013).

In the studies cited earlier, several different approaches have been used. Tam et al. (2009) conceptualise trust, in relation to intergroup trust, as “a positive bias in processing information about an outgroup [...] and a confident expectation of the outgroup’s behavior toward the ingroup” that they “will not exploit one’s vulnerability and [...] will attempt to cooperate” (p.46). This is similar to the most frequently cited definitions of trust in academic literature on trust which have the same two primary components: positive expectations (in relation to the outgroup or the other), and an intention to accept vulnerability (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016; Colquitt et al., 2007).

Several studies have survey measures with trust items that question whether participants feel they can or cannot trust the outgroup in relation to certain issues (e.g. peace, wanting revenge, policing, education) or certain people (e.g. outgroup politicians, outgroup members in general) (Tam et al., 2009; Hewstone et al., 2005, 2008; Kenworthy et al., 2004 cited in Hewstone et al., 2008; Tausch et al., 2007). In addition to survey items, there are studies that involve trust being manipulated experimentally, for example, by depicting a “community leader either extending trust to the outgroup as a strategy for dealing with a community conflict, or showing distrust” (Myers et al., 2005, p. 213) or involving

experimental games such as the ‘trust game’, which is a two-player investment game that bases trust on the amount one player gives to the other player as a first move (Berg et al., 1995).

Beyond this, there are many conceptualisations and approaches to trust (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). These can vary by a specific aspect of focus, for example, social bond (Tropp, 2008), assumptions (Kramer & Carnevale, 2003), or absence of perceived threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Others can vary on the source of trust — for example, identification-based trust, where trust is based on identification with others’ wants (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Saporito & Colwell, 2010) and others still, look to provide comprehensive approaches that include multiple aspects (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). In relation to conflict, there are several conceptualisations such as forms of working trust between parties in conflict (Kelman, 2010, 2005) and multidimensional frameworks (Kappmeier, 2016; Kappmeier et al., 2021).

There is not a paucity of conceptualisations and measures, but there is a question of external validity: how much do these conceptualisations and measures represent trust in the real world? Trust games, and other experimental social preference games have been found to lack external validity and fail to accurately explain concurrent and past social behaviours (Galizzi & Navarro-Martínez, 2018). Studies find a low correlation between survey measures of trust and behavioural measures of trust at an individual level (Glaeser et al., 2000; Lazzarini et al., 2004). Thus, a study in real world trust is warranted, one which explores how

trust is experienced and understood from a day-to-day perspective.

Identity

By far, the predominant approach used in psychology studies on identity, and in the behavioural sciences generally, is based on Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT), often grouped together as the Social Identity Approach (SIA) (Reicher et al., 2010). Developed in the 1970s and 1980s, primarily by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, SIT centres on three mental processes: assigning categories for things and by extension, social categories for people; adopting the identity of a group we categorise ourselves as belonging to; and comparing our group to others, combined with an internal drive to maintain positive distinctiveness (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). As different social groups or categories are associated with positive and negative connotations, individuals will either associate with groups with positive connotations (individual mobility), alter the parameters through which they mentally compare groups (social creativity), or engage in activity to improve their group's connotations (social competition). This process results in differentiation between an ingroup and an outgroup, at an individual cognitive level, with the ingroup being the social group to which a person psychologically identifies as being a member of, at a particular time.

Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) aims to complement, rather than replace, SIT (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). SCT assumes people can categorise themselves at different levels of

abstraction – e.g. self as an individual, self as a team member, self as a member of an organisation, self as a human being – with each level contributing to self-identity. There is a process of depersonalisation and self-stereotyping where people come to see themselves as an example of a social category rather than as a unique personality based on differences from others (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). The theory also outlines the determinants of categorisation, specifically a perceiver's readiness to fit someone into the categorisation, and the fit between the category and the stimulus.

The SIT and SCT approach to identity has been used to understand, for example, political as well as social identities (Huddy, 2001, 2013) but there are other approaches which can be valid to understand identity. SIT and SCT do not explicitly define identity but instead focus on the *process* of identifying and categorising (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). In contrast to this approach, is the idea of the self based on the *roles* one undertakes – i.e. what one does rather than who one is – and this is the approach of Identity Theory (Stets & Burke, 2000, 2014). There is the concept of identity as that which is *performed* from Irving Goffman's 'Presented Self' approach (Goffman, 1956) and the concept of the '*relational self*' where the self is based on the multiple relationships one holds (Gergen, 2008). Each of these theories provide alternatives to looking at identity as a process and as such one could argue that there is a need to go back to identity as it is experienced and question the validity of SIT and SCT, despite their predominance in psychology and the behavioural sciences (Reicher et al., 2010).

Threat

The final concept is threat. In relation to intergroup threat, the overall concept is the belief that a given outgroup is detrimental to one's ingroup (Schmid & Muldoon, 2015). The literature on intergroup threat disambiguates between different types of threat and there remains a debate over which types of threat are valid and comprehensive (Riek et al., 2006). Stephan & Stephan (2002) looked to develop a holistic model, which they termed as the Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice (ITTP) with four types of threat: realistic threats (i.e. threats to power and well-being), symbolic threats (i.e. threats to worldview), intergroup anxiety (i.e. concerns about negative outcomes from intergroup interactions) and negative stereotypes (i.e. fear of negative consequences based on expectations about the outgroup). This model was then revised and renamed the Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) model (Stephan & Renfro, 2002; Stephan et al., 2009) which dropped intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes as threats but bifurcated the remaining two threats between a group and individual focus. The final model had four components: realistic group threats, symbolic group threats, realistic individual threats, and symbolic individual threats.

A meta-analytic review of intergroup threat literature found five types of threats that had a statistically significant relationship with negative outgroup attitudes; these were the four from ITTP but also group esteem threat which relates to when outgroup behaviour is perceived to decrease an ingroup's esteem, value or prestige (Riek et al., 2006).

Based on this, it would be worthwhile to focus on how relevant these conceptualisations are with respect to the lived experience of threat. Furthermore, Stephan et al. (2016) argue that there needs to be further research, in particular, on the subjective experience of threat. Thus, a study looking at lived experiences of threat would be arguably valid.

To summarise the concepts section, there are several conceptualisations of identity, threat and trust, and with them a range of associated theoretical frameworks. In relation to each of these concepts, there is a need to better understand the concepts as experienced in a real-world context. As such, the next section outlines a potential case study from which to contextualise these concepts.

Case study: Identity, threat and trust in a conflict-affected context

As noted at the start of the chapter, the interest in trust relates to how it is linked to the persistence of intergroup conflict (Kappmeier et al., 2021). Though trust has been examined in intergroup contexts, there is almost no literature examining trust in a real intergroup conflict context, even though it is crucial to understand trust development so as to promote lasting harmony (Kenworthy et al., 2015). Hence, there is a need to study trust in relation to intergroup conflict and therefore a potential case study for such research is Northern Ireland

and within it, the city of Derry/Londonderry³.

Northern Ireland and Derry/Londonderry

Northern Ireland seems a natural choice in part due to the abundance of existing literature that employs survey and experimental measures to look at identity, threat or trust in Northern Ireland (e.g. Ferguson et al., 2014, Schmid & Muldoon, 2015, Tam et al., 2009) but at the same time there being a lack of research that focuses on lived experience or the underlying dynamics between identity, threat, and trust. Indeed, Tam et al. (2009), in their study on intergroup trust in Northern Ireland, argue that that “an understanding of the factors that promote outgroup trust is [...] imperative” and that “[f]uture research should focus on the mechanisms underlying this process” (p.58).

Consequently, Northern Ireland would seem an ideal context for such study. For the specific location of such research, the city of Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland would work well. There seems to be a tendency in the Northern Irish conflict literature to focus on Belfast which may not be representative of Northern Ireland in general. By focusing such study instead on Derry/Londonderry, the second-largest city in Northern Ireland, there is

³ “The names of the city and county of Derry or Londonderry in Northern Ireland are the subject of a naming dispute between Irish nationalists and unionists. Generally, although not always, nationalists favour using the name Derry, and unionists Londonderry” (‘Derry/Londonderry Name Dispute’, 2021). ‘Derry/Londonderry’ can be seen as a compromise dual name (‘Derry/Londonderry Name Dispute’, 2021).

arguably a greater contribution to the wider conflict literature. Furthermore, Derry/Londonderry has a unique history, culture and geography, and this helps to contextualise the issues of identity, threat and trust.

Inevitably, the choice of Derry/Londonderry will affect the findings in comparison to a different city or region in Northern Ireland. Notably, the city has a higher proportion of people brought up in a Catholic background than a Protestant (or other Christian) background (NISRA, 2011), the city was a prominent locus for events related to the period of conflict known as Troubles (see the next sub-section for details), and the city is very close to the British-Irish border. In contrast to studies that focus on Belfast (e.g. Halliday & Ferguson, 2015) or use survey data from across Northern Ireland (e.g. Mac Ginty & Du Toit, 2007), the option of Derry/Londonderry provides an alternative but contemporary perspective to contextualise identity, threat and trust.

In relation to this contextualisation, it would be important to provide sufficient background, in particular of the period of conflict known as the Troubles.

Background to the Troubles

The Troubles is often seen as an ethno-nationalist conflict (O'Duffy, 1995), in that it has an ethnic or sectarian dimension, and it is related to the determination of Northern Ireland as

part of the Republic of Ireland or the United Kingdom, but it was not a religious conflict: it has its roots in historic social tensions (McKittrick & McVea, 2012).

The origins of conflict arguably date back to 1609, when Scottish and English settlers were given land confiscated from the native Irish (Stewart, 1989). Since that time there has continued to be religious, social and economic divisions between those associated with the ancestry of the Scottish and English settlers and who were mostly Protestant, on the one hand, and those associated with the ancestry of the native Irish and who were mostly Catholic, on the other (McKittrick & McVea, 2012). The creation of Northern Ireland in 1921, following the independence of the Irish Free state, now the Republic of Ireland, resulted in a two-thirds majority Protestant Northern Ireland. Protestants in Northern Ireland consolidated control of Northern Ireland in the succeeding decades, led by the Unionist party, which advocated for the maintenance of the union with Great Britain. This consolidation was through revising the voting system, and gerrymandering (McKittrick & McVea, 2012). Northern Ireland's second city Derry/Londonderry moved to unionist control even though it had a nationalist majority population (i.e. a population that preferred their area to be part of the Irish Free State/ Republic of Ireland) (McKittrick & McVea, 2012).

The term unionism is often used interchangeably with loyalism, in that they both advocate union with Britain, but for some, the term loyalism is used to refer to hard-line unionism and the support or use of violence (Melaugh & Lynn, 2021). Likewise, the term republicanism is used interchangeably with nationalism to mean advocating union with the Republic of

Ireland, but also is often used to refer to hard-line nationalism and support for, or use of, violence (Melaugh & Lynn, 2021).

There is no one agreed event that is considered to be the start of the Troubles, though the general consensus is that it was around the end of the 1960s (Melaugh, 2006). That period saw the formation of the loyalist paramilitary group the Ulster Volunteer Force, civil rights marches, communal riots and the deployment of British troops. During the Troubles, more than 3,500 people were killed in the conflict, with the key participants being republican paramilitaries (e.g. PIRA, Irish National Liberation Army), loyalist paramilitaries (e.g. Ulster Volunteer Force, Ulster Defence Association), and British state security forces (e.g. British Army, Royal Ulster Constabulary) (Sutton, 1994). There is likewise no agreed event for the end of the Troubles, but many (e.g. Rowley, 2015) consider it to be the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA) or Belfast Agreement – an international agreement between the British and Irish governments as well as a multi-party agreement by most of Northern Ireland's political parties.

Since the end of the Troubles there continues to be violence, though on a much smaller scale. For example, between 1999 and 2001 there were approximately 38 deaths in comparison to the peak of 1972 where there were 497 deaths in one year (McKittrick & McVea, 2012). There have been a lot of changes in the social and political landscape of Northern Ireland, many of which signify a move away from violent conflict (McKittrick & McVea, 2012). There has been widescale disarmament of paramilitary groups, the creation

of a Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) which aims to ensure ethnic parity in staffing, and the resumption of the Northern Irish assembly in Stormont. Nonetheless, there have been a number of recurring and new issues which indicate ongoing tensions between communities. There also continues to be a degree of separation and mistrust between the different communities (Tam et al., 2008).

Contemporary Northern Ireland

In contemporary Northern Ireland, identities are not limited to religious and national identities, but these identities are the most prevalent in relation to the conflict and consequently in the literature. Unlike other post-conflict environments, group differences in Northern Ireland are not physiognomic and individuals categorise others based on social cues (McKeown, 2013). The categorisations most used when researching identity in Northern Ireland are religious identity and national identity. A notable example is from the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey which is a prominent survey run (mostly) annually since 1998 to monitor attitudes and behaviour in Northern Ireland. Under religious identity, the main categories are Catholic, Protestant and No religion, and for national identity, the key categories are British, Irish, Ulster, Northern Irish, and Other. Other studies tend to use these or similar categories, often limiting categories to Catholic and Protestants (e.g. Tam et al., 2009) even though there are concerns that this ignores the heterogeneity in the two communities (Ferguson et al., 2014).

There are events and occurrences in Northern Ireland that constantly raise issues of identity, threat and trust. In 2017, there were several key political events such as 'Brexit', the Renewable Heat Initiative scandal, and the Northern Ireland Assembly elections. 'Brexit', which is the process of the UK's departure from the European Union (EU) following the June 2016 referendum, became a key political moment and of special relevance to Northern Ireland (Culkin et al., 2018). The voting itself mostly went along the lines of unionists pursuing a 'British' identity by voting to leave the EU and nationalists pursuing an Irish one by voting Remain, and concerns about the border between the UK and Republic of Ireland raised further questions of identity (Gormley-Heenan & Aughey, 2017). The Renewable Heat Incentive scandal is about a renewable energy incentive scheme that raised concerns about fraud and the involvement of the First Minister Arlene Foster who originally oversaw the scheme, which impacted on public trust ('Renewable Heat Incentive Scandal', 2019). The scandal led to the deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness resigning, which led to the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Assembly and elections on 2 March 2017. Following the election, the Assembly did not reconvene for at least two years as the main parties were unable to agree to form a coalition government.

In summary then, Northern Ireland and within it, the city of Derry/Londonderry, would provide an excellent location to contextualise issues of identity, threat and trust.

Focus of this study

Bringing this all together: there is a theoretical link between identity, threat and trust but there is a need to better understand these concepts and their relation, for example, through the study of lived experience in context. For this, the region of Northern Ireland and the city of Derry/Londonderry would provide an appropriate context. This study then will look into this theoretical link, by exploring the lived experiences, the conceptualisations and the underlying dynamics, through an in-depth study in Northern Ireland. The following subsections outline the research question, the approach this study takes, and the contribution it makes.

Research question

To recap: noting that trust is important in conflict-affected contexts, the overall research puzzle is how trust changes in a conflict-affected context and if people do not trust the ingroup more, then what is the role of social identity. If social identity by itself does not lead to greater trust what are the intervening variables that do, and of these what is the role of threat. This raised further questions in terms of what we now mean by identity, threat and trust, and how these relate to conceptualisations that are established in the literature.

Before continuing, it is important to note that there is an inherent tension here between two possible research puzzles. On the one hand, there is the theoretical puzzle of linking the three concepts of identity, threat, and trust. On the other hand, there is the practical or empirical puzzle on trust and Northern Ireland. This study focuses on the theoretical puzzle

but looks to address this by contextualising the concepts of identity, threat and trust, including bringing in the social, historical and cultural background of Northern Ireland and the city of Derry/Londonderry where the research is undertaken. The inclusion of contextualisation should not be misunderstood as a deviation from the theoretical puzzle.

Therefore, emphasising the original theoretical research puzzle, of linking the three concepts of identity, threat, and trust, the overall research question is:

- *In a conflict-affected context, how is trust affected by issues of identity and threat?*

This research question is broken down into exploring the concepts of identity, threat and trust, and the interactions between these. These are posited as four research sub-questions with each sub-questions having two parts:

1. *What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of identity?*
2. *What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of threat?*
3. *What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of trust?*
4. *i) How does trust change and ii) how is this influenced by identity and threat?*

Approach

To address these four research sub-questions, this study employs a qualitative approach based on interviews. A qualitative approach would provide the most insightful data on conceptualisations and lived experiences, it would be greatly beneficial in understanding how trust changes in context and finding where identity and threat play a part in this, and it would complement the extant, primarily quantitative, literature.

In this study, 50 participants were interviewed. This study used a pluralist approach, employing a thematic analysis procedure to process the data with a phenomenological and discourse analysis approach used to analyse and understand the data in-depth. The thematic analysis procedure outlined how to identify, analyse and interpret the data, while a phenomenological lens allowed greater understanding of lived experiences, and a discourse analysis lens was used to understand how language is used for a social or psychological effect.

Contribution

In terms of contribution, this study looks at trust in an environment affected by intergroup violence and how aspects of identity and perceptions of threat could impact this. As noted earlier, trust in intergroup conflict is important yet insufficiently researched (Kenworthy et al., 2015), and this study explores trust in intergroup conflict, taking local-level data and analysing this with regard to the interdisciplinary trust literature and the social psychology literature around identity, threat and trust.

This study helps to better understand how identity, threat and trust are conceptualised and experienced in a real-world, conflict-affected context and how trust change happens and its influences. This contextualisation is an especially relevant contribution to the social identity tradition where there is a tendency to decontextualise social identities despite SIT's explicitly interactionist framework (Reicher, 2004). This study also explores identity in conflict beyond the social identity conceptualisations that are commonly employed, exploring alternative frameworks and conceptualisations to give a clearer understanding of how identity is understood and experienced *in situ*. The analysis of threat through a qualitative and phenomenological approach allows an opportunity to reflect and critique extant frameworks for threat and see how closely they match lived experience. Concerning trust in conflict, the study develops conflict-relevant conceptualisations that go beyond trust as simply a claim to trust another, as is the measure used in many studies. This builds on existing interdisciplinary trust work by developing a phenomenological conceptualisation of trust in conflict.

Furthermore, the findings (which are summarised in the next section) are insightful for developing further research and policy in peacebuilding and conflict. For example, the conceptualisation of 'safe space' trust (see chapter 9) could be used to develop a revised construct and survey measure on trust. The proposition that cultural threats are a manifestation of threat to group entitativity and/or social capital (see chapter 8) is arguably a novel hypothesis, to be tested in subsequent research. And a final example: the finding

about non-genuine trust (see Chapter 9) highlights the importance of disincentivising trust performances in trust-building programmes.

Structure of the thesis

The rest of the thesis is broken down into four sections: theoretical background (chapters 2-5), approach (chapter 6), empirical analysis (chapters 7-10) and finally conclusion (chapter 11). The chapter breakdown is as follows:

Theoretical background: Chapters 2-5

With the theoretical background chapters, it is important to note the Critical Realist meta-stance that this study takes (see chapter 6 for more information). As such, this study employs an approach of abduction (inference to the best explanation) and retroduction (identifying the causes and conditions of one's findings) that involves researcher's sensitisation to existing theories (Edwards et al., 2014). Therefore, the theoretical background chapters lay out the theories that the researcher has been sensitised to, and set out expectations, but theory is not employed to generate hypothesis for testing.

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical background to identity. This chapter starts with SIT, SCT and the related SIA research and debate. Alternative theories to SIT and SCT are then

explored, plus the issue of identity development. The final section outlines the identity component of the focus of this study.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical background to threat. This chapter outlines the key theories of ITTP and ITT before moving on to notable debates around intergroup threat: how is intergroup threat processed, is intergroup threat an individually- or socially-driven phenomenon, what is the role of intergroup threat narratives, and does diversity necessarily mean threat. The final section looks at the focus of research in relation to threat.

Chapter 4 provides the theoretical background to trust. The chapter explores varying definitions of trust, focusing on popular conceptualisations, comprehensive conceptualisations, and conflict-related trust conceptualisations. The rest of the chapter looks at the debate around trust issues, finishing with a section outlining the trust conceptualisation component of this study.

Chapter 5 provides the theoretical background on the intersection between identity, threat and trust. The chapter starts with the potential options for a theoretical framework for understanding intergroup trust before exploring the research and theory on factors that influence trust, including a section focused on research relating to intergroup threat and intergroup trust. As with the other chapters, the final section outlines the intersection component of the study.

Approach: Chapter 6

Chapter 6 outlines the methodology and methods. In particular, the chapter outlines the study's epistemological and ontological grounding in Critical Realism; the use of semi-structured interviews for the data; and the approach of mixed methods case study/ pluralistic qualitative research approach, drawing from several methods (i.e. thematic analysis, phenomenology, and discourse analysis).

Empirical Analysis: Chapters 7-10

Chapter 7 explores the concept of identity, as understood by participants. Identity is experienced as fluid and multifaceted, with facets and identities that in some cases intersect, and in others, remain independent. These identities arise from intrinsic and extrinsic factors. In some cases, the subsequent identities transgress traditional social boundaries.

Chapter 8 looks at the concept of threat, as understood by participants. Threat experiences are usually focused on physical threats but include threats to identity and culture. The chapter explores how threat is experienced and processed. There is also a distinct social level of threat which can obscure heterogeneity in threat as experienced at the individual

level.

Chapter 9 explores participants' understandings of trust. Trust is variously defined as a 'safe space', where anxiety about physical and psychic harm is contained; as performance for financial, social or political gain; as a shared commonality; as a negotiated 'workaround' process; as a process through which individuals or institutions manage wider group trust; and as a general disposition. Trust seems to have multiple, overlapping meanings, many of which are held simultaneously.

Chapter 10 looks at the patterns between identity, threat and trust. Trust change can relate to issues of identity and threat, but this is not always the case. The dynamics of trust change can be grouped around what can be termed as sources: i) social – parents, social narratives (tradition, history, stereotypes), leaders and politicians; ii) contact – direct outgroup contact, extended outgroup contact, and dispositional change through contact; iii) events and experiences – violent incidents and betrayal; and iv) agency – building trust. Trust, as well as being a number of different conceptual constructs, is also influenced by several sources.

Conclusion: Chapter 11

Chapter 11 is the conclusion. The chapter covers the key findings of this study, contribution to knowledge, practical recommendations, and limitations.

Summary

This chapter introduces this thesis. It outlines the background literature around intergroup trust and the links to identity and threat and the existing literature on conceptualisation of trust, identity, and threat. This is followed by the proposed case study of trust in a conflict-affected context focusing on Derry/Londonderry in Northern Ireland. The chapter concludes by outlining the research question and approach, and the structure of the overall thesis. The next chapter investigates the literature, starting with the theories around identity that sensitised the analysis.

Chapter 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: IDENTITY

Introduction

The overall research question for this study is: in a conflict-affected context, how is trust affected by issues of identity and threat? To understand this, it is necessary to explore the identity component that makes up groupings (in addition to threat and trust) before looking at the relationships amongst identity, threat and trust. Thus, one component of this study is exploring identity, and the research sub-questions of what are i) the conceptualisations of, and ii) the lived experiences of identity. These are best interpreted in relation to existing conceptualisations and theories, and this chapter reviews those psychological theories and concepts with the greatest resonance to the sub-questions, in particular, Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT).

This chapter starts with SIT, SCT and the related Social Identity Approach (SIA) research and debate. Alternative theories to SIT and SCT are then explored, plus the issue of identity development. The final section outlines the starting expectations, and the lacuna that the identity component of the focus of this study looks to address.

As noted at the end of chapter 1, this doctoral study takes a Critical Realist meta-stance (see

chapter 6 for more details) and employs an approach of abduction (inference to the best explanation) and retroduction (identifying the causes and conditions of one's findings) (Edwards et al., 2014). Therefore, this and the following three chapters lay out the theories that the researcher has been sensitised to and set out expectations but do not employ theory to generate hypothesis for testing.

Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory

In the behavioural sciences, the still-dominant approach to social identity is that developed in the 1970s and 1980s primarily by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, and in particular their Social Identity Theory (SIT) (e.g. Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

SIT starts with the concept that social behaviour will be simultaneously interpersonal and intergroup, based on the cognitive foundations of personal identities, social identities, and the interplay between them. Tajfel and Turner (1979) outline three mental processes:

1. **Categorisation:** Assigning categories for things and, by extension, social categories for people.
2. **Social identification:** Adopting the identity of a group we categorise ourselves as belonging to.
3. **Social comparison:** Comparing our group to others combined with an internal drive to maintain positive distinctiveness.

The core argument is that individuals strive to maintain or enhance their self-esteem and a sense of positive distinctiveness between one's ingroup and certain outgroups. When this is not achieved, individuals employ three main coping strategies: individual mobility, social creativity and social competition. Different social groups or categories are associated with positive and negative connotations and individuals will either associate with groups with positive connotations (individual mobility), alter the parameters through which they mentally compare groups (social creativity), or engage in activity to improve their group's connotations (social competition). This process results in differentiation between an ingroup and an outgroup, at an individual cognitive level, with the ingroup being the social group to which a person psychologically identifies as being a member of, at a particular time. This is based on the factors that the individual considers important, possibly subconsciously, for differentiating people.

Self-categorisation theory (SCT) aims to complement, rather than replace, SIT (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). SCT assumes people can categorise themselves at different levels of abstraction – e.g. self as an individual, self as a team member, self as a member of an organisation, self as a human being – with each level contributing to self-identity. There is a process of depersonalisation and self-stereotyping where people come to see themselves as an example of a social category than as a unique personality based on differences from others. The theory also outlines the determinants of categorisation, specifically a perceiver's readiness to fit someone into the fit, and the fit between the category and the stimulus.

SIT (and the related SCT) has become social psychology's pre-eminent theoretical perspectives, and social identity concepts are now widely used and employed as explanatory tools (Brown, 2000). SIT and SCT are often treated together as Social Identity Theory (e.g. Huddy, 2001) though they were conceptualised to be distinct theories (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). This thesis uses the term Social Identity Approach (SIA) in the same way as Reicher et al. (2010) does to refer to SIT, SCT and the large body of research that has been undertaken based on these theories.

Understanding identity through the Social Identity Approach

In this project, neither SIT, nor SCT are tested in a hypothetico-deductive⁴ way, but rather they are the starting point of this research and inform this abductive⁵ study (see chapter 6 for reasons for this abductive approach). This was also the starting expectation of how identity would be seen: as a social identity in keeping with SIT and SCT. The choice of SIT and SCT, as well as the SIA literature, is based on three key reasons: the theoretical dominance of SIT and SCT in social psychology for understanding intergroup behaviour, the argument that

⁴ "The hypothetico-deductive model or method is a proposed description of the scientific method. According to it, scientific inquiry proceeds by formulating a hypothesis in a form that can be falsifiable, using a test on observable data where the outcome is not yet known." ('Hypothetico-Deductive Model', 2021)

⁵ Abduction "involves combining observations, often in tandem with theory identified in the literature review, to produce the most plausible explanation of the mechanisms that caused the events." (Edwards et al., 2014, p.17)

SIT and SCT hold the most promise for political identities, and the extensive application of SIT and SCT to the Northern Ireland context.

The dominance of SIT and SCT in social psychology for understanding intergroup behaviour

SIA is one of the most widely used perspectives in contemporary social psychology (Brown, 2020), with an extensive, extant literature. For example, a reference search for the two of the most common SIT citations (i.e. Tajfel & Turner [1979] and Tajfel [1974]) in December 2018 returned 13,200 records (Brown, 2020). Reicher et al. (2010) argue that the impact of SIA has been enormous, not just on social psychology where much of the interest has been and where it has become the dominant way of addressing group processes, but also in the other social sciences, including political science. SIA literature's main contributions have been towards understanding intergroup relations, and, in particular, identifying and explaining bias towards one's ingroup, understanding how people respond to status inequality between one's ingroup and outgroups, perceptions of outgroup homogeneity and stereotyping of outgroup members, and how intergroup attitudes can change through contact (Brown, 2000). Since its original formulation, the application of SIT and SCT has expanded to social phenomena that are well beyond that which it was originally intended to explain (Brown, 2020). This has not been without concern: Reicher et al. (2010) argue that within the SIA tradition there is a tendency to produce work that contradicts the foundational premises as well as overstates its contribution, explaining everything in terms of social psychology. In the end, these theories still serve as a useful starting point in understanding identity in this context.

The promise of SIT and SCT for understanding political identities

As much of politics relates to groups and relations between individuals and groups, psychological literature can augment analysis in political science (Monroe et al., 2000) and there is already a voluminous literature where SIA is applied to political phenomena, including work on: leadership, nationalism, persuasion, influence, the development of consensus, collective behaviour, social protest, cooperation, impression formation, stereotyping, prejudice, racism and public opinion (Oakes, 2002). Yet, there is a debate about the application of SIT and SCT to the real-world context and specifically to what can be defined as political identities (Huddy, 2001, 2002; Oakes, 2002), where a political identity is conceptualised as “a social identity with political relevance” (Huddy, 2013, p. 2). Huddy (2001) argues that SIT (and SCT which Huddy sees as an offshoot of SIT) holds the most promise for understanding political identity, but that SIT has had limited impact on political psychology because of SIT theorists’ reluctance to examine the sources of real-world social identities that are complicated by history and culture. Huddy (2001) has argued that four key issues prevent the successful application of SIT to political phenomena:

- **Identity choice:** SIT researchers typically overlook individual group members’ decisions to identify as a group member. This is because SIT researchers tend to use the minimal group experimental paradigm which assigns group membership and assumes a uniformity of group identity uptake.

- **Subjective meaning of identities:** Research on ethnic and national identities finds that identity formation cannot be simply explained by the salience of a group designation but instead by the subjective meaning of identity. This issue is critical for SIT to be applied to political phenomena.
- **Gradations in identity strength:** SIT theorists often consider social identity as an “all-or-none phenomenon” (Huddy, 2001, p.131) which fails to account for identities that are persistent but can vary in strength.
- **Stability of identities:** Huddy’s work on feminist identity (e.g. Huddy, 1997, 1998) finds stability in feminist identity which is in contrast to SCT’s perspective as social identities being highly changeable.

Oakes (2002) has critiqued these assertions with Huddy (2002) responding to some of the points raised. In the end, these issues remain contested and an area in which SIA research arguably needs to be furthered to better apply the theories to political psychology issues. An exploration of *in situ* identities may help address the extent to which these four issues impede the application of SIT to political phenomena.

The application of SIT and SCT to the Northern Ireland context

SIT and SCT have been extensively applied in research relating to the Northern Ireland conflict (Ferguson et al., 2014), with initial studies conducted quite soon after the theory was first articulated (e.g. Cairns, 1982). Indeed, Tajfel (1982) remarks that Cairns’ (1982) work on Northern Ireland illustrates SIT well and in particular the importance of “people’s search for

a positive and distinctive identity [...] from their respective group memberships” (Tajfel, 1982, p.9).

Northern Ireland SIA studies often look at how social identity affects behaviour and attitudes, usually through a survey-based, quantitative approach. Such studies find that Protestants and Catholics demonstrate an ingroup bias, with those who strongly identify with their ingroup (i.e. strong ingroup identifiers) showing a stronger bias (Cairns et al., 2006). Strong ingroup identifiers also rely more on solutions that focus on moral obligations to the ingroup, in comparison to weak ingroup identifiers (Ferguson, 2009). Strong ingroup identification can be seen as ingroup ‘pride’ with the ‘proudest’ demonstrating a higher level of prejudice towards the outgroup (Cairns & Hewstone, 2005).

There have also been qualitative studies that explore the impact of social identification on intergroup behaviour. One study finds that a key factor in motivating engagement in paramilitary violence were social identification explanations, specifically a sense of group loyalty, a desire to assert one’s national identity, a desire to assert the superiority of one’s group over others, perceived injustice against one’s group, and allowing one’s group to be ‘heard’ (Muldoon et al., 2008). Other studies of those who have engaged in political violence similarly find that ingroup identification is a key contributing factor (Burgess et al., 2005a, 2005b), though Ferguson et al. (2014) note that only a small minority of the Northern Irish population engage in violence despite high levels of ingroup identification.

Models have been developed based on SIT and SCT, such as the Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) that looks at changes in bias and discrimination following changes in group boundaries (Gaertner et al., 1993; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). This model posits that intergroup bias can be reduced if members of separate groups can re-categorise themselves to be part of the same group – i.e. by transforming member’s perceptions of group boundaries from “us” and them to an inclusive “we” — into a superordinate identity (Gaertner et al., 1993). Further research links this superordinate identity with reduced threat (Riek et al., 2010) and intergroup forgiveness (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). In the context of Northern Ireland, the ‘Northern Ireland’ or ‘Northern Irish’ identity is what is most commonly posited as a superordinate identity (e.g. Lowe & Muldoon, 2014; McKeown, 2014; McNicholl et al., 2019; Noor et al., 2010) and has been linked to more conciliatory social attitudes (Furey et al., 2017; Hayes et al., 2007). However, whereas Northern Ireland/Northern Irish has been seen by inhabitants there to be a superordinate category (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008), it is not seen universally as an inclusive identity, with Protestants rather than Catholics perceiving overlap between the superordinate Northern Ireland identity and the subordinate British identity (McKeown, 2014; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). McNicholl et al.’s (2019) in-depth analysis of the Northern Irish identity find a much more complex and diverse picture, noting it can be understood as a superordinate identity, as well as a subordinate identity (to British identity), and as a completely distinct identity (from British and Irish identities), but is often seen as a banal indicator of living in the Northern Ireland geographic place.

Another area of work situated in the social identity literature is on competitive victimhood (Young & Sullivan, 2016). Competitive victimhood manifests in intractable conflicts and involves “groups competing with each other for claims to relative victim status for their ingroup” (Young & Sullivan, 2016, p. 30). Competitive victimhood can be a strategy to highlight perceived injustice to the ingroup, it can legitimate retaliatory responses, and it can minimise ingroup responsibility for such actions (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). In the Northern Ireland context, the rights to the label of victim are highly contested; it can be a form of social competition between the PUL and CNR communities, and at one level, the victim label can offer strength and legitimacy (Ferguson et al., 2010).

One more area of note, situated in SIA is Social Identity Complexity (SIC), which is a theoretical construct that relates to an individual’s representations of the interrelationships amongst their multiple social identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). When the multiple social identities overlap from a subjective perspective, they converge to form a single ingroup identification; when they are perceived as divergent, the associated identity structure is more complex. SIC seems to be affected by stress and tolerance of outgroup members (Roccas & Brewer, 2002). A survey-based SIC study in Northern Ireland found that respondents with more complex identity structures reported more favourable outgroup attitudes (Schmid et al., 2009). Greater intergroup contact was associated with greater complexity; lower levels of distinctiveness threat was also associated with greater complexity (Schmid et al., 2009).

Overall, the social identification processes outlined in SIT and SCT have given rise to a large body of work that looks at the myriad ways in which ingroup identification affects processes in Northern Ireland, which further supports the use of SIT and SCT as a starting theoretical point for this research. This section of the chapter provides the theoretical background with which to analyse the themes developed on identity but there is also a subset of issues and debates related to SIT, SCT and SIA that are relevant to the themes: the tendency in SIA literature to see identities as static, singular and additive; the issue of negative identity and the SIA coping strategy of social creativity; the issue of superordinate identities and how identities are more nuanced and can be perceived as superordinate in some way; and the issue of choice and gradation in identity as seen in the SIA literature. This specific subset of related issues and debates are explored in greater detail in chapter 7 where they are employed in interpretation of the themes related to identity.

Understanding identity through alternative theories

While SIT and SCT are the theoretical starting point for identity in this thesis, it is relevant to the findings to also have explored alternative approaches, so as to situate the understandings and experiences of identity that are found in this study into a theoretical framework.

In addition to SIT and SCT, there is a range of social psychological theories that are important

for political identity and group behaviour (Monroe et al., 2000), and this section explores some of these theories — symbolic interactionism, social constructionism and social representations. Linked to these theories are underlying conceptualisations of identity.

Huddy (2001) argues that whereas social psychologists have largely focused on the situationally contingent and multifaceted aspects of identity, postmodern theorists have in contrast argued for a conceptualisation of identity that is fluid and socially constructed. Analogous to this, are the epistemologies that these theories are situated in. SIT and SCT sit between traditional psychological (i.e. modernist and positivist) approaches and more postmodern sociological approaches (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005), whereas most of the theories in this section of the chapter are situated in a postmodern epistemology and largely associated with the field of sociology.

The following section starts with the conceptualisations of identity on which the theories are based, outlines the theories and concludes with a final part that looks at the issue of identity development.

Starting with conceptualising identity: SIT and SCT do not explicitly define identity but rather focus on the *process* of identifying and categorising, though in much SIA literature there is a tendency to see it as a set entity despite being based on these theories (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). In contrast, alternative theories on identity often have a set conceptualisation of identity that is drawn upon.

Monroe et al. (2000) argue that most contemporary psychologists use the Lockean aspect of identity: “a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places” (p.420) and links this conceptualisation to those by William James (e.g. James, 1890) and George Herbert Mead (e.g. Mead, 1934).

James defined identity as a “consciousness of personal sameness” (James, 1890, p. 331), emphasising the perception of continuity and unity in the mind (Hammack, 2015). Of note is James’s “one-in-many-selves paradox” (p.420) that involves a contradiction between individuals maintaining continuity of the self over time while, at the same time, acting out different roles and changing personalities in each situation (Monroe et al., 2000). Or as James (1890) puts it: “a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind” (p. 294).

In contrast to the theoretical emphasis on the interior experience of continuity and sameness, Mead’s perspective emphasises the exterior world of social meaning, providing one of the earliest conceptualisations of identity as socially constructed (Hammack, 2015). Here, “the self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity” (Mead, 1934, p. 135).

Both these conceptualisations have been drawn on for identity theories. Hammack (2015)

argues that SIT and SCT can be viewed as descended from Mead's theoretical emphasis on the development of the self in regard to social interaction, with primacy on how social categorisation influences behaviour. To my knowledge, Henri Tajfel and John Turner have never linked their work to Mead, and other theorists note the different theoretical origins, arguing instead that SIT and theories that are explicitly based on Mead, such as Identity Theory (see below), "occupy parallel but separate universes" (Hogg et al., 1995, p. 255).

Symbolic Interactionism

Mead is considered an early scholar of symbolic interactionism (Hammack & Pilecki, 2014). Mead (1934) argues that the mind and self arise through what he terms the 'conversation of gestures' where communication is seen as vocal gestures. Thus, symbolic interactionists, in the tradition of Mead, perceive all social interaction, including communication in all its forms, as loci of mediation and reconstruction of realities (Hammack & Pilecki, 2014). There is an emphasis on how individuals are always 'enmeshed' in social networks and cannot survive outside these organised social relationships (Stets & Burke, 2014). Social interaction is always generated in regard to a community of shared understandings and symbolic forms (Hammack & Pilecki, 2014). Hence, symbolic interactionism can be understood as the way in which individuals interact to construct shared symbolic worlds and how this affects behaviour.

Social Roles: Stryker's Identity Theory

Identity Theory (IT), developed primarily by Sheldon Stryker, takes this core idea from Mead that society shapes the self and the self shapes social behaviour (Stets & Burke, 2014). With IT, the analysis is focused on the networks, where identities are embedded, and the social structuring that affects how people with different identities enter networks (Stets & Burke, 2014). Stets & Burke (2000) see substantial similarities and overlap between SIT with IT, but do note some differences: with SIT, identity is derived from categories or groups and there is a process of depersonalisation, motivated by self-esteem; with IT, identity is derived from roles, there is a process of self-verification and this is motivated by self-efficacy (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Monroe et al. (2000) categorise IT as a form of social role theory where the following propositions hold: that society is differentiated into social roles, that these social roles prescribe behaviour, and that identity can be defined as the internalisation of these roles (p.426). This difference between SIT and IT — identity as who one is versus what one does, or identity as being versus doing — allows a different perspective to approach identity and one relevant to the understandings and experiences of identity.

Performance: Goffman 's Presented Self

This approach, and Erving Goffman himself, are strongly associated with symbolic interactionism (Scott, 2015) though it is not an approach that he, himself, identified with (Edgley, 2016). In this approach, Goffman (1956) employs a metaphor of a theatrical performance, drawing comparisons with how actors perform in theatre and how individuals

do likewise in their daily life, arguing that one should note how an individual “presents himself and his activity to others, the ways in which he guides and controls the impression they form of him, and the kinds of things he may and may not do while sustaining his performance before them” (p. xi). Within this conceptualisation, identity is performed in certain contexts and as a result, the performer, the context, and the audience produce together a certain self (Monroe et al., 2000).

This idea of identity performance is similar to Klein et al.’s (2007) concept of social identity performance which they define as “the purposeful expression (or suppression) of behaviors relevant to those norms conventionally associated with a salient social identity” (p.30). They argue that social identity has two functions: an identity consolidation function and a mobilisation function. The identity consolidation function relates to affirming or strengthening identity whereas the mobilisation function relates to convincing audiences to take up certain behaviours (Klein et al., 2007).

This concept of identity as performance, whether motivated by a desire to control the impression formed, affirming one’s identity, persuading others to act differently or for a different motivation, provides another dimension with which to understand identity.

Social labels: Labeling theory

This is not an approach to identity *per se* but rather a dynamic related to identity. Labeling

theory is a broad, piecemeal body of work, encompassing different traditions including insights from the symbolic interactionist perspective (Berk, 2015). The core concept is that “the labeling or appraising of individuals by social groups affects the individuals’ identities or social selves” (Matsueda, 2014, p. 16). For example, if adults label a youth as a ‘troublemaker,’ that labelled person could come to see themselves as a ‘troublemaker’ and adopt that identity (Matsueda, 2014).

Labels have often been applied to the Northern Ireland context, often concerning defining people in terms of Catholic and Protestant (Cairns & Mercer, 1984) but also in relation to, for example, the label of victim (Ferguson et al., 2010). The approach of labelling theory could provide a useful perspective into how labels impact on identity.

Social Constructionism: Gergen’s Relational Being

Social constructionism has its roots in Mead (1934) and symbolic interactionism (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The difference between symbolic interactionism and social constructionism seems to be the focus on the micro versus macro: “symbolic interactionism emphasises making sense of self and social roles, whereas social constructionism focuses more broadly on making sense of the nature and structure of the social world” (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2006, p. 238).

Burr (2015) argues that there is no single feature to identify a social constructionist position but rather that it is a position that accepts one or more of the following key assumptions: a

critical stance toward taken-for-granted knowledge, the historical and cultural specificity of knowledge, that knowledge is sustained by social processes, and that knowledge and social action go together (i.e. a different knowledge construction invites a different kind of action). With identity, this approach dismisses the idea of a fixed identity or stable self-concept, in favour of an identity that is malleable and contingent on social context (Monroe et al., 2000). Identity is seen as a discursive performance with others in certain contexts (Monroe et al., 2000).

One proponent of a Social Constructionist approach to identity is Kenneth Gergen who advocates a 'relational' view of the self, in that we emerge from relational processes (Gergen, 2009). Even with "our private reveries", Gergen argues, "we are in relationship" and thus "what we call thinking, experience, memory, and creativity are actions in relationship" (Gergen, 2008, p. 62). Rather than bounded identities, we could be described as a 'multi-being', that is, as people "constituted within multiple relationships from which they emerge with multiple, incoherent, and often conflicting potentials" (Gergen, 2008, p. 335).

In addition to groups/categories, roles, and labels, relationships can be a source of identity, which this perspective can illuminate.

Social Representations: Moscovici

Jovchelovitch (2007) defines Social Representations Theory (SRT) as "the phenomenology of

everyday life seeking to understand how ordinary people, communities and institutions produce knowledge about themselves, others and the multitude of social objects that are relevant to them” (p.39). Similar to Social Constructionism, in SRT there is an emphasis on how different communities, in varying cultures and contexts, construct and transmit knowledge. Where they differ is in the nature of the construction: SRT, with its psychological roots, emphasises the perceptual-cognitive process in the theory of constructing knowledge, whereas Social Constructionism, with its sociological roots, emphasises the social aspect of how knowledge is constructed, established and/or undermined (Potter & Edwards, 1999).

Serge Moscovici is often seen as the founder of SRT and coined the term ‘social representation’ (Moscovici, 1961). Moscovici (1988) defines a process of ‘anchoring’, where meaning is attributed to new phenomena by integrating it into an existing social representation, and ‘objectification’ where abstract notions are turned into concrete realities. In SRT, social representations can be considered as ‘image reservoirs’, which people draw from to construct identities, including social identities (Moscovici, 1961, 2008; Zouhri & Rateau, 2015).

Marková (2007) argues a key difference between an SIT/SCT and an SRT approach relates to the content of social categories. With SIT/SCT the content of categories changes over time but categories are fixed and stable at the time of data collection, in particular in laboratories (Marková, 2007; Reicher, 2004). Conversely, the content in SRT are complex social phenomena, that are formed and maintained in diverse ways — they can be a constellation

of interdependent and interacting constituents rather than a set independent category (Marková, 2007). Thus, an SRT approach allows “a more contextual, dynamic, and discursive psychological model of identity” (Monroe et al., 2000, p. 425) and this may help understand complex social identities in this study and situate these understandings in theory.

Identity Development: Erikson

Identity development is not exactly a different approach to identity but rather, it is an important aspect of identity that provides a contrasting way of approaching identity with related insights. Hammack (2015) argues that the idea of identity as a developmental process, grounded at one point in physiological changes, contrasts to earlier perspectives which emphasised identity as a momentary cognitive experience (i.e. James, 1890) and as a product of social interaction (i.e. Mead, 1934).

The most prominent theorist in the development of identity is Erik Erikson (Hammack, 2015), who outlined a series of psychosocial development stages, the fifth of which is the development of identity which begins in adolescence (Erikson, 1950, 1959, 1968). During puberty, individuals undergo a ‘physiological revolution’ characterised by rapid body growth, genital maturity and sexual awareness, and as a result undergo a ‘psychological crisis’ around identity (Muuss, 1996). Erikson (1956) terms this period as a “*psychosocial moratorium*” during which the individual through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society, a niche which is firmly defined and yet seems to be uniquely

made for him” (p.66). Despite the emphasis on adolescence, Erikson (1959) affirms that “identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence: it is a lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and society” (p. 122). Appraising Erikson’s approach and subsequent research, Kroger (2015) argues that while the key period of identity development is during late adolescence and young adulthood, identity continues to develop through later adulthood, based on contextual factors, though there appears a dearth of research on identity development in later adulthood.

While there has been extensive research on identity development of the personal self, there has been little on the social self — developmental psychologists have focused on the personal self, whereas social psychologists have neglected the development of the social self (Bennett & Sani, 2004). Indeed, SIT and SCT do not say anything particular about cognitive abilities, nor their development (Nesdale, 2004; Rutland, 2004). While there has been some work on social identity development in adolescence (e.g. Albarello et al., 2018; Nesdale, 2004), we still know relatively little of how social identities and self-categorisations progress through life. The work that exists tends to focus on social rather than psychological factors — what Abrams (2004) terms social-contextual rather than cognitive-developmental accounts of social identity development. Nonetheless, the approach of identity and social identity as something that develops can help with understandings of identity that are formed over people’s lives.

In summary, this section explored alternative approaches to identity as opposed to SIA and

the theories of SIT and SCT. As before, while this chapter provides a broader theoretical background which situate this study's findings, there also issues related to these theoretical frameworks which are explored in more detail in chapter 7 and interpreted in relation to the findings.

Focus of this research

The previous sections provide a theoretical grounding, both as a starting point for the study, to outline initial expectations and to situate the findings. Bringing the previous sections together, this study arguably needs to understand how identity is understood and experienced. The following sections, outline the starting expectations, how understanding identity can benefit from lived experience, and finally how this comes together to identify what should be the focus of study, based on the research sub-questions and theoretical sensitisation.

Starting expectations

In terms of the theoretical basis of this study, SIT, SCT and the wider SIA are the starting point of this research on identity. As noted earlier, SIT and SCT do not explicitly define identity but rather focus on the *process* of identifying and categorising, though in much SIA literature there is a tendency to see it as a *set entity* (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). SIT and SCT inform this abductive study and the aim is to reflect on SIA and potentially augment it, while keeping in mind the alternative conceptualisations of, and approaches to, identity described

above. These are those found in symbolic interactionism such as where identity can be one's actions, one's performance, or labels placed on oneself; in social constructionism, where identity can be based on one's relationships; in social representations theory where identity can be seen as a perceptual-cognitive construction; and in an identity development approach where identity is a psychosocial development stage.

In terms of starting or *a priori* expectations, it was expected that identities would be described by participants as set entities and social (rather than individual) identities (e.g. Protestant, Catholic). Relatively simple, short answers were expected prior to the fieldwork.

Understanding identity through lived experiences

Jackson & Sherriff (2013) have argued that the dominance of (post)positivist research methods in SIA has limited the extent to understanding the complexities of intergroup relations and that qualitative data can add richness to understanding intergroup relations. There is a need therefore, to improve such understandings through rich qualitative data. Chapter 6 expounds in detail the methodology and methods but in this chapter, it is important to highlight the lacuna of research that approaches lived experiences of identity as a whole, through a phenomenological lens, and how that contributes better to our understandings of identity.

There is a large and growing body of work that uses a phenomenological perspective on

types of identity and transitions in identity. Much of this uses an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach and focuses on health-related issues. There is work looking at identity changes with dementia (Clare, 2003; Pearce et al., 2002), alcoholism (Shinebourne & Smith, 2009), and cancer (Reynolds & Prior, 2006). There is work on gendered identity (de Visser & Smith, 2006; Meisenbach, 2010), political identity (Chrysochoou, 2000; Dollarhide et al., 2016), occupational identity (Gill, 2015; Lavallee & Robinson, 2007; Vignoles et al., 2004), religious identity (Sinclair & Milner, 2005), sexual identity (Alexander & Clare, 2004) and in some cases religious and sexual identity (Coyle & Rafalin, 2001). There is work on key life events such as becoming homeless (Riggs & Coyle, 2002), migration (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000), and pregnancy and motherhood (Smith, 1994, 1999; Smith et al., 1999). There is however much less work on the phenomenology of identity in a conflict-affected context. An exception is a study on Greek-Cypriot teachers and national identity and gender in reference to the Cyprus conflict (Panteli & Zembylas, 2013).

In Northern Ireland, there have been several phenomenological studies. These have focused on engaging in politically motivated violence (Ferguson et al., 2008; Ferguson & McAuley, 2020), disengaging from politically motivated violence (Ferguson et al., 2015), the experience of social conditions in Post-Agreement Northern Ireland (Burgess et al., 2007) and the 2012-2013 Belfast flag protests (Halliday & Ferguson, 2015). But, to my knowledge, there has not been a study of identity as a whole, in a conflict-affected context, nor in Northern Ireland. There is arguably a need to build on existing work, take a phenomenological approach to identities but focus specifically on how identity — as a whole and not a specific identity — is understood and experienced in conflict-affected Northern

Ireland.

Research aims in relation to identity

Society in Northern Ireland is more complex than the Catholic-Protestant dichotomy and in the past, there has been a tendency to ignore the heterogeneity in the two communities (Ferguson et al., 2014). Such uni-dimensional explanations of difference conceal the dynamic interaction of economic, ethnic and political identities, and the social reality of identity in Northern Ireland (Ferguson et al., 2014). There is therefore a need to take a closer look at identity to move beyond that dichotomy, to better appreciate this heterogeneity and to gain a better understanding of the dynamic interplay.

Brown (2000) identifies five areas for further development of the SIA, in his critical review of SIT, of which two are of notable relevance: expanding the concept of identity and managing multiple identities simultaneously. Another weakness of SIT is one that Henri Tajfel's himself identified: the need to understand "another set of complex interactions: the interplay between the creation or diffusion of social myths and the processes of social influence as they operate in the setting of intergroup relations and group affiliations" (Tajfel, 1984, p. 713). To summarise these issues: there is a need to explore people's meanings and experiences of them, to investigate what identity means to people in Northern Ireland, what their concept of identity is and how they manage multiple identities, as well as the complex interaction of identity and social influence.

Through exploring how individuals understand and experience identity in a real-world politicised context, it may be possible to help resolve those issues — i.e. identity choice, subjective meaning of identities, gradations in identity strength, and stability of identities — that Huddy (2001) argues are preventing the successful application of SIT to political phenomena.

Thus, in looking to answer the research sub-questions — what are i) the conceptualisations and ii) the lived experiences of identity — the identity component of this study is to explore understandings and experiences of identity, situate these findings in existing theoretical frameworks on identity, and provide reflections and insights in connection with these theories. This understanding of identity in turn will help answer the overall research question of understanding how trust is affected by issues of identity and threat.

Summary

This chapter highlights numerous social psychological theories relevant to this study on identity. The main focus is on Social Identity Theory, Self-Categorisation Theory, plus the Social Identity Approach literature that is based on these two theories. The second part of the chapter focuses on key conceptualisations of identity and alternative theoretical approaches: symbolic interactionism, social constructionism, and social representations theory, finishing with a section on identity development. The final section of this chapter

concludes by outlining the focus of the identity component of this study. The following chapters outline the theoretical frameworks for threat, trust, and the relationship between identity, threat and trust.

Chapter 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: THREAT

Introduction

The second research sub-question is what are the i) conceptualisations of, and ii) lived experiences of threat. As with identity, these understandings are best interpreted in reference to existing conceptualisations and theories around threat. There is a sizable body of research on threats, and several conceptualisations and approaches to intergroup threat. The most notable theoretical framework on intergroup threat is what was initially titled as an Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice (ITTP) (Stephan et al., 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 2000), and later revised by the authors and renamed as Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) (Stephan et al., 2009, 2016). Many researchers treat ITTP and ITT as the same (see Stephan et al., 2016) but in this thesis, they are treated as distinct so as to explore the different constructs that the two iterations of the theory focus on.

This chapter outlines the key theories of ITTP and ITT that the researcher has been sensitised to before moving on to debates around intergroup threat: how is intergroup threat processed, is intergroup threat an individually- or socially-driven phenomenon, what is the role of intergroup threat narratives and does diversity necessarily mean threat. The final section looks at the starting expectations, and the lacuna that the threat component of the

focus of this study looks to address.

Conceptualising intergroup threat

Intergroup threat can be defined as the belief that a given outgroup is in some way detrimental to one's ingroup (Schmid & Muldoon, 2015). Much of the work on intergroup threat came out of the research on intergroup relations and prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). Bobo (1988) highlighted the issue of perceived threats as a way of reifying a key dynamic pertaining to Realistic Group Conflict Theory (also known as Realistic Conflict theory). First articulated by Campbell (1965) and developed with the Robbers Cave study (Sherif, 1966), Realistic Group Conflict Theory proposes that groups may be in competition for a real or perceived scarcity of resources, and "intergroup hostility is produced by the existence of conflicting goals (i.e. competition) and reduced by [...] mutually desired subordinate goals attainable only through intergroup cooperation" (Jackson, 1993, p. 397). Refinements of the theory emphasise that this does not require actual competition over resources but rather the perception of competition (Esses et al., 1998). Thus, a realistic threat can be understood as a perception of threat to scarce resources.

At the same time, the research on symbolic racism and symbolic beliefs has led to the conception of symbolic threats (Esses et al., 1993; Sears, 1988; Sidanius et al., 1992). The concept of symbolic racism came out of research during the late 1960s and early 1970s on antiblack racism in the US, finding a new form of racism that "blended some antiblack

feeling” with “traditional American values, particularly individualism” (Sears, 1988, p. 54). Based on the concept of symbolic racism, symbolic beliefs relate to “beliefs that social groups violate or uphold cherished values and norms” (Esses et al., 1993, p. 7) and thus symbolic threats are perceived threats to these ‘cherished values and norms’. Other work on intergroup threat is based on the work looking at the impact of anxiety in intergroup interactions (e.g. Stephan & Stephan, 1985) and negative stereotypes (e.g. Esses et al., 1993). Stephan & Stephan (2000) argue that “most of this research was occurring in isolation” where “each investigator was only examining a part of the picture” (p.53) and in response they contend that they tried to integrate this varied work “into a model that is more broadly applicable than most other approaches using threats or fear as antecedents of prejudice” (p.53). The following section outlines the model they developed and the research that has come out of it.

Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice and Intergroup Threat Theory

This model, that attempted to synthesise work on intergroup threats into a holistic model, was termed the Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice (ITTP) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and had four types of threats:

- **Realistic Threats:** “Threats to the very existence of the ingroup (e.g., through warfare), threats to the political and economic power of the ingroup, and threats to the physical or material well-being of the ingroup or its members (e.g., their health)”

(Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 54).

- **Symbolic Threats:** Based on “perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes”, these are “threats to the worldview of the ingroup” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 55).
- **Intergroup Anxiety:** This is where “people feel personally threatened in intergroup interactions because they are concerned about negative outcomes for the self, such as being embarrassed, rejected, or ridiculed” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 57).
- **Negative Stereotypes:** This is the “fear of negative consequences” based on the “expectations concerning the behavior of members of the stereotyped group” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 58).

Stephan & Stephan (2000) argue that the ITTP model arose because of their increasing dissatisfaction with the prevailing theories of prejudice which failed to address issues of fear and threat to people’s ways of life, and the growing interest in psychology of threat that was visible in the intergroup relations literature.

Stephan & Renfro (2002) revised the ITTP model. Whereas ITTP had 4 types of threat (i.e. realistic, symbolic, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes), the revised model, later termed Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) (Stephan et al., 2009), has two types of threat but relates them to either the ingroup as a whole or individuals due to their group membership. This gives four components overall (i.e. realistic group, symbolic group, realistic individual,

symbolic individual). The threats in ITT can be summarised as (Stephan et al., 2016, p. 258):

- **Realistic group threats:** “[T]hreats to the ingroup’s power, resources, and general welfare”.
- **Symbolic group threats:** “[T]hreats to the ingroup’s religion, values, belief system, ideology, philosophy, morality, or worldview”.
- **Realistic individual threats:** “[T]hreats of actual physical or material harm to an individual group member such as pain or death, as well as economic loss, deprivation of valued resources, and threats to health or personal security”.
- **Symbolic individual threats:** “[L]oss of face or honor or undermining an individual’s self-identity or self-esteem”.

Stephan et al. (2009) argue that in comparison to the originally formulated ITTP, they now see intergroup anxiety as a subtype of threat, and negative stereotypes as a cause and predictor of realistic and symbolic threats, rather than a distinct threat.

In some ways ITT is similar to intergroup contact theory (ICT) — the theory that under certain conditions interpersonal contact reduces prejudice between majority and minority group members (Allport, 1979). In both theories, the mediating variable (i.e. contact or threat) lead to perceptions that impact attitudes, emotion and behaviour, which in turn impact the mediating variable (Stephan et al., 2008). Whereas intergroup contact is

associated with improved outgroup attitudes, intergroup threat is associated with worsening attitudes.

ITTP and ITT have been applied extensively in studies of intergroup threat and, in particular, the relationship between intergroup threats and negative outgroup attitudes. The theories have been employed to look at threat and attitudes between (US) Americans and Mexicans (Stephan et al., 2000) and between Black and White US students (Stephan et al., 2002). The studies find explanatory power for the first three types of threat – realistic threat, symbolic threat, and intergroup anxiety.

The ITT threat variables have been linked to prejudice: a US study found that the four ITT threat variables were significant predictors of prejudicial attitudes towards Cuban, Mexican and Asian immigrants (Stephan et al., 1999). They have been found to predict negative political attitudes: a separate US study used ITT to look at individual's attitudes towards Republicans and Democrats, finding that party members do not have negative attitudes towards the opposing party members unless they see them as threatening (Osborne et al., 2008). They have also been found to affect political tolerance: a Dutch study found that perceived symbolic and safety threat (a type of realistic threat focused on safety concerns) were the determinants of political tolerance (Noll et al., 2010).

In terms of how well the model captures intergroup threat, a meta-analytic review of

intergroup threat research identified five threats that seemed to worsen outgroup attitudes (i.e. had a statistically significant positive relationship with negative outgroup attitudes): intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes, symbolic threat, realistic threat and group esteem (Riek et al., 2006). The last one – group esteem, relate to when outgroup actions are perceived to decrease an ingroup's esteem, value or prestige (Riek et al., 2006).

Some threat studies have involved Northern Irish participants. One study finds that intergroup threats strengthened ingroup identification and was associated with poorer psychological well-being (Schmid & Muldoon, 2015). Another study looked at antecedents of intergroup threat, finding that intergroup contact is associated with lower perceptions of intergroup threat, as well as reduced aggressive intergroup action tendencies (Schmid et al., 2014).

There have been studies that focused on people's narratives in Northern Ireland, for example, to understand how people disengage from politically-motivated violence (Ferguson et al., 2015), what motivated the 2012-2013 Belfast flag protests (Halliday & Ferguson, 2015), and how people experience victimhood in Northern Ireland (Ferguson et al., 2010). But there does not yet seem to be research that explores the phenomenon of intergroup threat as experienced by people in Northern Ireland. By exploring people's meanings and experiences of threat, one could investigate what intergroup threat feels like, and how the different forms of threat are experienced and understood.

In summary, ITTP and ITT are the starting points of this research and it is the constructs of these models, to which the themes developed in this study are contrasted.

Debates around intergroup threat

There are numerous debates around threat in the literature and this section identifies some that are of relevance in understanding meanings and experiences of threat.

How is intergroup threat processed?

In terms of how intergroup threat affects processing, it is unclear just how, at a psychological level, a threat is processed. Potentially, the best model for this is a dual process model. The idea that there are two distinct kinds of reasoning is historically long-standing but in recent years, cognitive scientists proposed that there are two quite separate cognitive systems that underly reasoning and thinking which evolved at different points (Evans, 2003). Different theorists use different terms but at the heart of this approach is the proposition that there are two processes of higher cognition, one which is fast, automatic, unconscious, and evolutionarily primitive, and a second which is slow, deliberative, conscious, and recently evolved (Evans & Stanovich, 2013). The first is what John Bargh (e.g. Bargh & Williams, 2006) refers to as automatic, what Daniel Kahneman (e.g. Kahneman, 2011) refers to as system 1, and what Jonathan Haidt (e.g. Haidt, 2013) refers to as the intuitive system. The second system is what Bargh would refer to as non-automatic, Kahneman refers to as system 2 and

Haidt as the reasoning system (Bargh & Williams, 2006; Haidt, 2013; Kahneman, 2011). Each theorist has a slightly different emphasis, description and application of this dual process reasoning approach. The key point is the argument that there is a rapid, intuitive system and a slower, reasoning system; that behaviour is based on both systems, with some behaviour being more automatic and some more reasoned. It may be that with threat (and in some cases trust), there is an interplay of both systems and that the theme of this study are analysed with respect to this contention.

Regarding threat, there is work on applying the dual-process approach to existing research on threat, positing a model with one process where threatening stimuli has a rapid and strong physiological response, that then influences a second, more controlled evaluative process (March et al., 2018). On the topic of prejudice, the authors argue that this can have a particular effect on outgroups, especially those associated with aggression (March et al., 2018). Beyond this, there is little work that explores the processing of intergroup threat and a question remains how intergroup threat is experienced and whether a dual process model is applicable.

Is intergroup threat an individually- or socially-driven phenomenon?

There is a question about how to conceptualise intergroup threat in terms of level — at the extremes of argument, whether it is a neurologically- or socially-constructed phenomenon.

Some theorists conceptualise intergroup threats as founded in biopsychological mechanisms. Neuberg & Schaller (2016) outline what they term an evolutionary threat-management approach to prejudice. The core proposition is that prejudice and related phenomena can be understood as products of evolutionary adaptation to threats and opportunities faced by ancestral populations. Humans evolved towards sociality as a defence against predation and to help secure resources. At the same time, social proximity to others increased risks of interpersonal violence, theft, and infectious disease. Consequently, as a tendency towards sociality become more pronounced, so too developed 'affordance-management systems', which were mechanisms to identify threat cues and which produced cue-based affective, cognitive and behavioural responses to mitigate these risks. These threat-detection mechanisms are what they argue causes the various prejudices against people who pose no actual threat. They argue that responding to certain cues may have provided an evolutionary advantage in terms of diagnosing risks in the past, but now are maladaptive responses.

The core argument is to understand intergroup threat through ancestrally-evolved mechanisms. They extend this model to sex differences and racism arguing that "because men were historically more likely than women to participate in violent conflicts" that "people are likely to be especially sensitive to the threat afforded by outgroup men (compared to outgroup women)" and that this leads to "fearful responses to outgroup men (relative to outgroup women)" which can "lead non-Black people to erroneously perceive anger in the faces of Black men but not in the faces of Black women"(Neuberg & Schaller, 2016, p. 2).

This can lead to concern that there is the risk of reductionism: conceptualising intergroup threat as an aggregate of individual psychologies, even individual neurologies, and side-lining social and historical factors. Rosenberg (2003), in his paper on theorising political psychology, defines this concern over reductionism succinctly, as where “collective phenomena are explained with reference to individual level phenomena” but that “there is no suggestion that basic psychological processes such as perception, cognition or decision-making may be significantly affected by socio-historical conditions” (p. 430). Instead, he advocates that “social life is dually structured, by both thinking, feeling individuals and by socially organized, discursively constituted” (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 431).

There remains a question as to what extent intergroup threat is driven primarily by individual-level phenomena versus social-level phenomena, and to what extent to include historical and cultural factors into understandings of intergroup threat.

What is the role of intergroup threat narratives?

Connected to the previous section is the question of historical narratives in threat. In intergroup conflict, historical narratives can be defined as “individuals’ mentally represented stories of their own group [...] or relevant outgroups” which are “typically essentialist stories about the history of the intergroup conflict and the role of the ingroup and outgroup in this trajectory” (Smeeke et al., 2017, p. 283). In a study with participants from Northern Ireland

and Cyprus, Smeekes et al. (2017) find that group members who feel threatened are more inclined to endorse the historical narratives of their ingroup. The study measured both realistic and symbolic threats, and the historical narratives relate to how the conflict is attributable to outgroups. Another study, using participants in Cyprus, Serbia and Croatia, found a reverse relationship — that internalising the ingroup’s historical narratives relating to conflict leads to viewing the outgroup as a threat (Psaltis et al., 2017).

While there seems to be a relationship between endorsement of certain historical narratives and a sense of threat, “claims for causality cannot really be made given the cross-sectional type of [the] data” (Psaltis et al., 2017, p. 113) and further work is required. Thus, there is a need for a deeper insight into just how intergroup threat and historical narratives interact.

Does the presence of diversity necessarily mean threat?

One debate, related to threat, is whether diversity itself leads to threat. Arguably the most relevant literature to this is from the large and growing body of work across several disciplines on diversity and social capital (Putnam & Goss, 2004).

Social capital has numerous definitions and conceptualisations but was popularised recently by Putnam (e.g. Putnam, 2000, 2007) who defines social capital as “social networks and the associated norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness” (Putnam, 2007, p. 137) and notes that these networks impact access to jobs, lifetime income and health. Another well-known

definition is by Bourdieu:⁶ “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). The key aspect of this social capital concept is, in fact, the social networks, the norms that underpin them, and that these improve resources for livelihood.

One of the distinctions made in the literature is between bonding capital that is between inward-looking and homogeneous (including ethnically homogeneous) groups, and bridging capital that involves outward-looking and more heterogeneous groups (Putnam, 2000). These different types of social capital can lead to different outcomes and many negative effects of one type of social capital may be ameliorated by the other type with arguably the most positive outcomes found when both bonding and bridging capital are present (Agnitsch et al., 2006).

Putnam (2007) has argued that, in the short run, ethnic diversity tends to reduce social solidarity and social capital, with residents in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods tending to ‘hunker down’ and trust people from ingroups more and outgroups less, in general.

Research on whether ethnic diversity reduces social capital is inconclusive (Fladmoe & Steen-Johnsen, 2018). A study of European countries did not find that ethnic diversity

⁶ Note that despite the common use of the word culture, this is not related to Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, which relates to a person's education (i.e. their intellectual skills and knowledge), that provide them a social advantage (Bourdieu, 1986).

reduces social capital but did find that perceived ethnic threat can reduce contact which in turn affects social capital (Savelkoul et al., 2011). A Northern Irish study found some support for Putnam's theory that mixed environments cause 'hunkering down' and comprise intergroup trust (Hughes et al., 2011). But the authors conclude that this such withdrawal from neighbourhood social activity was a calculated response at times of threat, usually to protect existing positive intergroup relations.

In essence, the link between diversity and social capital remains highly contested but an established argument. As such it would be interesting to note how diversity is perceived in the context of Northern Ireland and whether this is perceived as a threat to social capital.

In summary, there are a number of debates related to intergroup threat and this section highlights those debates relevant to this study's findings: how is intergroup threat processed, is intergroup threat an individually- or socially-driven phenomenon, what is the role of intergroup threat narratives and finally, does diversity necessarily mean threat. These debates are discussed in chapter 8 in relation to the themes developed on threat.

Focus of this research

Starting expectations

As noted earlier, the Critical Realist meta-stance of this study (see more detail about this in Chapter 6) means that neither ITTP nor ITT would be tested deductively but as with SIT and identity in the previous chapter, these theoretical frameworks were the starting point of this study. The starting expectations were based on these models and it was expected that threat would be in keeping with the ITTP and ITT models. It was expected that participants would talk about realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, and that participants may differentiate between group threats and individual threats.

Understanding threat through lived experiences

In the same way that there is a need to understand identity, there is a need to explore threat in terms of meaning and experiences of individuals in Northern Ireland. As noted in the previous chapter, Chapter 6 expounds in detail the methodology and methods but in this chapter, it is important to highlight the lacuna of research that approaches lived experiences of threat as a whole. This section highlights how exploring lived experiences, such as through a phenomenological approach, addresses a specific lacuna in understandings of threat.

In their paper outlining ITT, Stephan et al. (2016) outline areas relating to intergroup threat where there is a lack of studies and where further research is required. This includes, firstly, understanding “intergroup threats to individual ingroup members” as opposed to studying the ingroup as a whole, and secondly, “what is the subjective experience of threat beyond

the emotions” of fear, anger, and disgust (Stephan et al., 2016, p.273).

Firstly, most studies on intergroup threat use group-level data to understand intergroup threat. There is a need to disaggregate this and explore at a more granular level how intergroup threat is experienced and understood. Secondly, there is a need for an in-depth look at intergroup threat and doing so gets a clearer picture of the phenomenon beyond those negative emotions of fear, anger and disgust. There does not seem to be research that focuses on the phenomenology of intergroup threat.

Research aims in relation to threat

To summarise, in looking to answer the research sub-question — what are the i) conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of threat — the threat component is to explore experiences and understandings of threat, situate these findings in existing theoretical frameworks of intergroup threat and provide insights while reflecting on these. As with identity, this understanding of threat will, in turn, help to answer the overall research question of understanding how trust is affected by issues of identity and threat.

Summary

This chapter highlights key intergroup threat theories and debates relevant to this study’s exploration of intergroup threat. The main focus is on the Integrated Threat Theory of

Prejudice, which was later revised and renamed Integrated Threat Theory. The second part of this chapter focuses on debates around threat: how is intergroup threat processed, is intergroup threat an individually- or socially-driven phenomenon, what is the role of intergroup threat narratives and does diversity necessarily mean threat. The final section of this chapter concludes by outlining the threat component of this study. The following chapters outline the theoretical frameworks for trust, and for the relationship between identity, threat and trust.

Chapter 4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: TRUST

Introduction

Continuing from the previous chapters which looked at identity and threat, this chapter looks at understandings and conceptualisations of trust as a background to the component of this study focused on these research sub-questions: what are i) the conceptualisations and ii) the lived experiences of trust?

Despite trust being important and pervasive, it remains elusive, often being alluded to rather than routinely examined in the social sciences (Gambetta, 1988). There is no single, universally applicable and generally accepted definition of trust (Möllering, 2006). Thus, this chapter explores varying definitions of trust before moving on to the debate around trust issues, finishing with a section outlining the starting expectations, and the lacuna that the trust component of the focus of this study looks to address. As with previous chapters, these are the definitions and conceptualisations the researcher has been sensitised through and give a set of starting expectations rather than hypothesis to be tested.

Defining trust

Defining trust can be contentious, with each definition arguably incomplete in some way.

Definitions of trust can centre around one particular defining aspect, for example:

- **Positive bias:** Trust is a positive psychological bias towards others (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994).
- **Social bond:** Trust is a social bond, that grows from one's life experiences, and is characterised by feelings of security and confidence in others' intentions and good will (Tropp, 2008).
- **Absence of threat:** Trust is an absence of perceived threat (Stephan & Stephan, 2000).
- **Confidence:** Trust is a state of confident, positive expectations about another's motives concerning oneself, in a situation involving risk (Lewicki & Bunker, 1995).
- **Assumptions:** Trust is a set of assumptions, beliefs, and expectations about the likelihood of another's actions being favourable (Kramer & Carnevale, 2003).

As well as varying definitions of trust, some differentiate between types of trust:

- **Social trust (or general trust):** This is the "belief in the benevolence of human nature in general" (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 139), "the disposition to trust unknown others by default" (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018, p. 176) or whether people are

“generally trustworthy or untrustworthy” (Glanville & Paxton, 2007, p. 230).

- **Political trust:** This is the “confidence people have in their government and institutions” (Schoon & Cheng, 2011, p. 619).
- **Individualised trust:** This can be termed as ‘knowledge-based trust’ which is “limited to particular objects (people or organizations)” (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p. 139). Some definitions restrict this to their ingroup: ‘particularized trust’ is “faith only in your own kind” (Uslaner, 2000, p. 573), whereas ‘particular trust’ is trust in a “specific people or groups of people, whether known or in-group others” (Newton & Zmerli, 2011, p. 171).

Some also combine these different types. For example, Newton & Zmerli (2011) differentiate within social trust, between ‘particular social trust’ (i.e. towards an individual) and ‘general social trust’ (i.e. towards a group).

Other definitions focus on a basis or source of trust: ‘identification-based trust’, where trust is based on identification with others’ wants (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Saporito & Colwell, 2010) or ‘compatibility-based trust’ where the outgroup shares the ingroup's values and beliefs (Kappmeier et al., 2019).

Möllering (2006) argues that trust is ultimately an abstract and elusive concept, similar to freedom, justice or truth, but also that the lack of narrow definition is the reason for its popularity and why many social science disciplines can connect to it. At the same time this 'elusive' nature of trust and the lack of fixed definition can be "self-serving and misleading" (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2006, p.41) in that they "serve as rhetorical devices to underscore the importance and difficulty of one's topic of study, while at the same time providing authors with full license to define trust however they like" (Möllering, cited in PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2006, p.41).

Popular conceptualisations of trust

One way of looking at trust is to see which definitions are most widely accepted. PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that the most frequently cited definitions of trust are as:

- "[A] psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another" (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395).
- "[T]he willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other part" (Mayer et al., 1995, p. 712).

The two articles from which these definitions originate, attempted to provide a multidisciplinary synthesis of trust, and notably have definitions with the same two primary components: i) the intention to accept vulnerability and ii) positive expectations (Colquitt et al., 2007). Rousseau et al. (1998) base their definition on a “contemporary, cross-disciplinary collection of scholarly writing”, presenting what they believe to be the “widely held definition of trust” (p. 394). Mayer et al.’s (1995) definition was part of a model looking to address “problems with the definition of trust itself; lack of clarity in the relationship between risk and trust; confusion between trust and its antecedents and outcomes; lack of specificity of trust referents leading to confusion in levels of analysis; and a failure to consider both the trusting party and the party to be trusted” (p.709). The model also separates trust from trustworthiness, defining trustworthiness as a perceived characteristic of the trustee (i.e. the party being trusted) and based on perceived ability, benevolence and integrity (Mayer et al., 1995). The model is notable as it distinguishes between situational trust and the propensity to trust (Colquitt et al., 2007).

Comprehensive conceptualisations of trust

In addition to the work by Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau et al. (1998), there have been attempts to provide comprehensive approaches to trust, variously described as typologies, frameworks, integrative models and thematic maps (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that these approaches converge, firstly, on the idea that a comprehensive understanding of trust requires attentiveness to multiple aspects:

“dispositions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, expectations, and intentions of the trustor; characteristics of the trustee; and features of the context or situation in which the trustor and trustee are embedded” (p. 37), and secondly, on a focus on “trust concepts within a process, or even ‘trust-as-process’” (p. 40), that situates these multiple aspects within a set process of trust. This ‘trust-as-process’ conceptualisation outlines a multidimensional construct with a configuration of differing components along this trust process, and this configuration varies across different contexts (Li, 2017). The benefits of the trust-as-process view are that it includes trust as used in everyday conversation as well as different literatures into an overarching process, that it moves past staid debates over defining trust into exploring aspects of the trust process (e.g. into how beliefs or behaviours emerge and decline), and that rather than stretch trust to cover all conceptualisations it ‘partitions’ trust (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

Intergroup conflict and trust conceptualisations

There are numerous definitions of trust specific to the conflict literature. A notable definition is from Kelman (2005, 2010) who defines a ‘working trust’ between parties in situations of conflict as a pragmatic trust based on the other’s seriousness about peace based on their own interests. This is as opposed to interpersonal trust that is based on good will (Kelman, 2005). In this conceptualisation, there is an existing assumption that accepting too readily an enemy’s claims of good will is naive and a potential violation of existing norms; working trust thus increases only to the extent that each party is convinced that conciliation is based on the other party’s self-interest (Kelman, 2005).

In addition to types of trust within conflict, there is work to provide a more holistic framework for trust in conflict. The idea of trust being made up of different concepts (e.g. attitudes, disposition, behaviour, choice), as noted in the previous section with ‘trust-as-process’ conceptualisations, is similar to an argument made in one of the few studies on conceptualising trust in intergroup conflict, which argues for trust as multidimensional (Kappmeier, 2016). The study found 20 dimensions that could constitute trust in intergroup conflict, which were organised into 7 superordinate dimensions: competence, integrity, predictability, compassion, compatibility, collaboration, and security (Kappmeier, 2016). A subsequent 2019 study reduced this to five dimensions for a posited intergroup trust model: competence, integrity, compassion, compatibility and security (thus dropping predictability and collaboration as dimensions) (Kappmeier et al., 2021). These five dimensions of their model were explained as follows (Kappmeier et al., 2019, p. 98):

- **Competence:** “The outgroup does things well”.
- **Integrity:** “The outgroup is honest and acts morally toward the ingroup”.
- **Compassion:** “The outgroup is helpful and compassionate towards the ingroup”.
- **Compatibility:** “The outgroup shares the ingroup’s background, values, interests and/or beliefs”.
- **Security:** “The outgroup will not hurt the ingroup physically or emotionally”.

In summary, this section outlined a number of conceptualisations of trust: the most cited conceptualisations in the literature, attempts at creating comprehensive conceptualisations of trust, and those conceptualisations that are focused on trust in intergroup conflict. These are the starting points in relation to conceptualising trust and the themes developed on trust from the findings, which appear in chapter 9, are contrasted to this.

Debates around trust definitions

While there may be some commonalities amongst theorists as to how trust can and should be defined, there remain some key debates. This section explores the following questions relating to trust: is there a consensus on defining trust, is trust always relational (i.e. with a trustor and trustee), is trust a psychological or behavioural construct, is trust affective (i.e. emotion-related) or cognitive, must trust be based on certain sources, and what is the relationship between ontological security and trust.

Is there a consensus on the definition of trust?

Opinions differ on the degree to which there is a consensus on defining trust. Gambetta (1988) argues that “there is a degree of convergence on the definition of trust” relating to a “particular level of subjective probability” (p. 217) that an action will be performed. A more substantial interdisciplinary review of conceptualisations and definitions of trust was undertaken by PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) who conclude that “despite the disagreements [...] we might be closer than the long-standing complaints make it seem—but

that consensus is not quite complete” (p.18). In their analysis, they note a convergence on the following: the idea that trust involves a trustor and trustee who are interdependent; that there is a situation of risk for the trustor; that there is a sense of agency, autonomy and intrinsic motivation so that the trust is voluntary; and that it must include (or exclude) certain types, forms, or sources of trust (though the specifics vary amongst definitions) (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). They also note that despite the lack of consensus, the most frequently cited definitions of trust are those offered by Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau et al. (1998), as noted in the previous section.

Is trust always relational?

As specified above, PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that it is nearly ubiquitous for trust to require a trustor and trustee in a relationship. Levi & Stoker (2000) concur: “trust is relational; it involves an individual making herself vulnerable to another individual group or institution” (p. 476). Yet, there are some conceptualisations of trust where the relational component is in question. Li (2007) differentiates ‘trust-as-attitude’ from ‘trust-as-choice’ where the former is defined as “a psychological state of passively accepting a given risk, rather than an initiative to take risk” (p. 435). This can be, in part, a personality trait or a generalised willingness to trust all others (Li, 2015). Li (2015) argues that such trust-as-attitude may not require a particular relationship and may just be a relationship-free personality trait. This is similar to when Möllering (2006) notes that trust can be a matter of routine: “we trust countless others without being able or required to perform any detailed reasoning about whether or not this is justified” (p.51). When trust is an attitude or routine,

it is ambiguous as to whether there is actually a trustee, and thus how relational such trust is.

Is trust a psychological or behavioural construct?

Several definitions of trust, including the most widely cited (i.e. Mayer et al., 1995 and Rousseau et al., 1998) conceptualise trust as a psychological state. Indeed, some note that it is possible to trust someone without committing an action and argue that trust should remain “in the category of knowledge and belief rather than in the category of action and behavior” (Hardin, 2002, p. 59). Conversely, some argue that one can believe they trust someone but hesitate to truly act on it and that “the only true evidence for trust is the act of trust” (Hassell, 2005, p. 132). PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) note a disciplinary division, with many psychologically-oriented researchers looking to limit trust to being a psychological construct and those taking an economic perspective and mathematical trust modelling approach wanting trust to be conceptualised as a behaviour or action. Some argue that trust can be both psychological and behavioural and have different constructs for each — e.g. ‘trust-as-attitude’ and ‘trust-as-choice’ with the latter defined as “a behavioural decision” (Li, 2015, p. 41). In summary, whether trust, is psychological, behavioural or both, remains an ongoing debate.

To what extent is trust based in affect?

There is another debate amongst trust theorists around the extent to which trust is affective

or emotion-related, rather than purely cognitive (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). For example, Hardin (2006, p.25) notes that “[i]n some accounts, trust is held to be founded in emotions or in virtually hard-wired dispositions” and while he notes that “[m]any of these accounts seem likely to fit instances of trust”, he dismisses these as “idiosyncratic” and lacking explanatory power. PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that Hardin’s approach to trust is particularly cognitive, based on Hardin’s (2006) argument that all major theories of trust are cognitive in nature. Likewise, Mayer et al’s (1995) model of trust can be considered a cognitive account with its emphasis on evaluation and judgement (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

Conversely, Möllering (2006) argues that “trust should be conceptualized as having a rational and an emotional dimension” (p.44) and that “trustworthiness always has both affective and cognitive elements” (p.46). Möllering (2006) critiques the rational choice perspectives on trust in their reliance on cognition, noting Lewis & Weigert’s (1985) comment that “[t]rust in everyday life is a mix of feeling and rational thinking” (p.972). Möllering’s approach posits that trust involves affect and cognition, that it is rational that our emotion informs trust, and that affect is essential for cognition and decision-making (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

The question to which trust is affective thus remains in debate with some arguing that trust is either not at all affective, differentiating between cognitive- and affect-based trust, or note specific domains of trust (e.g. political trust) which centre exclusively on either cognition or affect (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

Must trust be based on certain sources?

Trust can be rooted in different sources or bases and there is a debate around whether trust must derive from or include certain sources, but not others (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). There are typologies of trust centred on different sources, such as identification-based trust (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996) or compatibility-based trust (Kappmeier et al., 2019), as noted earlier in this chapter. Some have argued that the distinctions between sources of trust do not mean that trust itself is different (Schoorman et al., 2015). Others have argued that by definition, trust that is based on differing sources must be different. For example, some definitions of trust focus on the 'willingness to be vulnerable' (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995) whereas others focus on the intention to act on this (e.g. Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). There is a difference between willingness and the decision to act — one 'can' versus one 'will'. Thus, it could be argued that the trust itself is qualitatively different and that source is important because certain theories of trust differentiate themselves by a specific aspect and are thus distinguishable by these (Lane, 1998).

Are ontological security and trust related?

Ontological security "refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action" (Giddens, 1990, p. 92). Giddens (1990) argues that ontological security and trust are psychologically closely related as they are both dependent on a sense

of the reliability of things and persons. Trust is linked to achieving an early sense of ontological security during childhood which guards the self against threats in everyday reality, and without which there would be a “paralysis of the will” or “feelings of engulfment” (Giddens, 1991, p. 3).

Others seem to suggest a stronger overlap between ontological security and trust. For example, Korczynski (2000) argues that the “opposite of trust is ontological insecurity” (p. 18), seeming to equate an absence of trust with an absence of ontological security. Others differentiate between basic trust which is established in early childhood development, and active trust which is created and built by actors, contending that active trust is only possible through sufficient basic trust plus ontological security (Beckert, 2002; Möllering, 2006). Thus, trust is posited as both a cause and outcome of ontological security. In any case, there remains a debate as to how entwined the concept of ontological security and trust are.

In summary, this section outlines the debates around trust of most relevance to this study and its findings: is there a consensus on defining trust, whether trust must be relational, whether trust is a psychological or behavioural construct, whether trust is affective or cognitive, whether trust must be based on certain sources, and the relationship between ontological security and trust. These debates are drawn on in relation to the themes developed and outlined in chapter 9.

Focus of this research

Starting expectations

In terms of a starting point, in terms of theoretical sensitisation of trust conceptualisation, these were the popular conceptualisations (i.e. Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), the comprehensive conceptualisations (i.e. PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) and the intergroup conflict model (i.e. Kappmeier, 2016; Kappmeier et al., 2019; Kappmeier et al., 2021), which are expounded in the first part of this chapter. In relation to starting expectations, they were very much centred on the popular conceptualisations, as they seemed to be the most frequently used, but there was an awareness that trust was implicitly understood but challenging to define explicitly and so participants definitions may be quite idiosyncratic in their experiences and definitions.

Understanding trust through lived experiences

In addition to looking at identity and threat, there is a need to look at people's meanings and experiences of trust in Northern Ireland. As with identity and threat, a primarily phenomenological approach is what is most needed.

The phenomenological tradition in the social sciences has paid little attention thus far to the issue of trust (Frederiksen, 2014). Frederiksen (2014) highlights the contribution of the Danish philosopher and theologian K. E. Løgstrup in developing a phenomenology of trust. Løgstrup (1997) argues that “[o]ur life is so constituted that it cannot be lived except as one

person lays him or herself open to another person and puts him or herself into that person's hands either by showing or claiming trust" and thus "[t]rust is not of our own making; it is given" (p. 18). Frederiksen (2014) thus sums up Løgstrup's (1997) phenomenological concept of trust as "self-surrender – laying oneself open – to the other in interaction" (Frederiksen, 2014, p. 36). Möllering (2006) also draws on phenomenology somewhat, arguing that "at the heart of the concept of trust is the suspension of vulnerability and uncertainty (the leap of faith)" (p. 191). Möllering (2006) notes the concept of bracketing from phenomenology and that "in trust uncertainty and vulnerability are bracketed" (p. 111).

Despite this conceptual work of phenomenology of trust, there has been little work in applying this lens to trust in real life. There are a handful of studies on the phenomenology of trust, for example, on healthcare (Brown, 2009) and teaching (Young & Tseng, 2008). Brown (2009) highlights how a phenomenological perspective identified the primacy of interpersonal communication to help cervical cancer patients integrate knowledge, which thus overcomes issues of complexity and uncertainty so as to develop trust. Young & Tseng (2008) used a phenomenological approach to identify barriers to online trust formation in teaching, specifically issues of embarrassment relating to teachers making errors or lacking knowledge in certain areas.

Similarly, applying a phenomenological approach to trust in a conflict-affected context is needed for a much clearer understanding of how trust is understood in context and therefore how trust can be developed, maintained or undermined. While a number of trust

conceptualisations have been developed, they rarely draw on lived experience. Just as the studies on healthcare healthcare (Brown, 2009) and teaching (Young & Tseng, 2008) give a clearer picture of what trust is, in that context, and the barriers to it, there is a need to do so with trust in a conflict-affected context. There seem to be no phenomenological studies of trust in conflict so far.

A qualitative approach would also be beneficial to provide an insightful addition to existing quantitative work on trust. Kramer (2015) argues that while experimental studies on trust are insightful, they omit social and contextual variables, and that additional insights through qualitative studies can improve the ecological validity of trust research. Attentiveness to the subtle distinctions of trust in differing contexts can provide beneficial insights for theory and practice (Fulmer & Dirks, 2018). Furthermore, a qualitative approach “helps to avoid imposing definitions and frameworks on the research subjects, since it allows respondents to define what they mean by trust” (Lyon et al., 2015, p. 11). Thus, a qualitative approach exploring trust *in situ* would provide valuable insights to contrast with extant research.

Research aims in relation to trust

To summarise then, in looking to answer the research sub-questions — what are i) the conceptualisations and ii) the lived experiences of trust — the trust component of this study is to explore understandings and experiences of trust, situate these findings in existing conceptual frameworks on trust, and provide reflections and insights concerning extant

definitions and debates around trust. As with the other components of this study, this understanding of trust, in turn, will help address the overall research question of understanding how trust is affected by issues of identity and threat.

Summary

This chapter explores conceptual frameworks for trust and highlights issues of debate around trust. The trust conceptualisations focused on in this chapter were the most cited, the comprehensive conceptualisations and those focused on trust in intergroup conflict. The key issues of debate centre around consensus on defining trust, whether trust must be relational, whether trust is a psychological or behavioural construct, whether trust is affective or cognitive, whether trust must be based on certain sources, and the relationship between ontological security and trust. The final section of this chapter concludes by setting out the trust conceptualisation component of this study. The next chapter moves on to the theoretical frameworks for understanding how trust changes and how this could be influenced by identity and threat.

Chapter 5. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: INTERSECTION

Introduction

The final theoretical background chapter focuses on the last research sub-questions: i) how does trust change and ii) how is this influenced by identity and threat. Intergroup trust itself has limited literature and theorising on its own and much of the relevant work draws on other literatures. As such, this chapter looks to draw out key theories and findings of relevance to intergroup trust, starting with the potential options for a theoretical framework for understanding intergroup trust before exploring the research and theory on factors that influence trust, including a section focused on research relating to intergroup threat and intergroup trust. As with previous chapter, the final section outlines the starting expectations, and the lacuna that the intersection component of the focus of this study looks to address.

Conceptualising and contextualising intergroup trust

Whereas the last chapter focused on trust conceptualisations, this chapter focuses on conceptualising intergroup trust, as well as understanding the factors that affect intergroup trust and in particular the role of identity and threat. In terms of conceptualisation, the key difference relates to the application of trust concepts to real-world settings. While

intergroup trust has been conceptualised in laboratory settings there is a challenge of contextualising this in real-world settings and situating intergroup trust in the wider trust literature.

One approach to understand intergroup trust can be to use Newton et al.'s (2018) categorisation that regarding trust, there are 'bottom-up and 'top-down' theoretical approaches to trust. The 'bottom-up' approach argues that "trust or distrust is learned in early childhood and modified in later life only by hard experience and trauma" (Newton et al., 2018, p. 38). The key aspects are a psychological emphasis, positing trust as an individual characteristic derived from early life experiences and genetic makeup leaving individuals, at its extremes, as trusting with "a sunny and optimistic disposition and [belief] in the possibility of cooperation with others" or as distrusting and thus "misanthropic, pessimistic, and suspicious of others" (Newton et al., 2018, p. 38). Glanville and Paxton (2007) term this as "the psychological propensity model".

In contrast to this is the 'top-down' approaches where trust "cannot be reduced to the properties of individuals but are the collective properties of social contexts, national institutions, and systems of government" (Newton et al., 2018, p. 39). There is much more emphasis on social rather than psychological factors, which includes types of social structures and factors such as social homogeneity and income equality. Glanville and Paxton (2007) term this as the 'social learning model' noting that "the psychological propensity model views trust in the domains of family, neighbors, co-members of voluntary

associations, etc. as *reflective indicators* [emphasis added]" whereas "[the] social learning model views trust in these domains as *causal indicators* [emphasis added]" of trust (Glanville & Paxton, 2007, p. 234).

There is also a model that arguably would be in between these two, which draws on psychological factors, though without trust being "modified in later life only by hard experience and trauma" (Newton et al., 2018, p. 38), and social factors but without being reduced to the "collective properties of social contexts" (Newton et al., 2018, p. 39). This model is from the work on intergroup attitudes as part of the research body on prejudice. For example, Brown (2010) argues that the acquisition of negative intergroup attitudes is not consistent and unidirectional. This conclusion is based on the non-linear growth of prejudice in children, the marked changes in adult prejudice not matching that of children, and the low correlation between parental and child intergroup attitudes (Brown, 2010). Brown (2010) argues that instead, there is a "dynamic developmental process in which children, just like their parents, are actively seeking to understand, evaluate and control their social world" and the acquisition of intergroup attitudes and prejudice is "not the result of some passive indoctrination [...] but the natural outgrowth of an interaction between that world and the psychological processes of categorisation, identification and comparison" (p.141). One could argue that intergroup trust (or at least the attitudinal component of trust) is still an intergroup attitude and thus, an appropriate framework for conceptualising intergroup trust is as a dynamic developmental process involving the interaction of psychological and social processes.

While these models identify influences on trust attitudes, the decision or action to trust can be looked at differently — something that is taken passively, actively, and thirdly, what could be argued is a separate, agentic way. This is worth expanding on in detail. Starting with seeing trust as passive: Möllering (2006) highlights a conceptualisation of trust where “trusting and being trustful appear to resemble a routine that people follow habitually, rather than a conscious choice” (p.10). This has similarities to Li’s (2007) conceptualisation of ‘trust-as-attitude’ defined as “a psychological state with an expectation of other’s trustworthiness and a willingness of one’s trustfulness” (Li, 2008, p. 414) which has an emphasis on “passively accepting a given risk, rather than an initiative to take risk” (Li, 2007, p. 435). The key element of this is that there is a mode of psychological thinking, which can be expressed as an attitude or something unconscious. This does not exclude entirely any action as it necessitates a degree of learning and experience in addition to, or separate from, any psychological propensity to trust.

Another way of looking at trust is as an active process. Möllering (2006) highlights trust as a matter of reason and as a matter of reflexivity, where the emphasis is either as an immediate calculation or as an ongoing reflective practice. Uslaner (2002) talks about strategic trust which is built gradually and develops with knowledge, and Li (2007, 2008) talks about ‘trust-as-choice’ which is “a behavioural decision of trustfulness as a self-initiated and self-regulated commitment to trust building” (Li, 2008, p. 414). In all of these, there is an element of calculation and thinking to know who is trustworthy or not.

The last of these three ways of looking at trust is one termed here as agentic. This is what Möllering (2006) sees as the “essence of trust” which is beyond “trust as a form of rational choice, routine behaviour or reflexive enforcement” (p.105-106) and that is trust as a ‘leap of faith’ — a suspension of uncertainty and vulnerability. Möllering (2006) draws on Søren Kierkegaard’s (i.e. Kierkegaard, [1843]1985) use of the biblical story of Abraham’s decision to sacrifice his son Isaac⁷ as an example of leap-of-faith trust. This is quite a drastic example, as Möllering (2006) himself notes, but this example shows that individuals can trust in incomprehensible ways, motivated by what they believe is a higher purpose. A ‘leap of faith’ “connotes agency without suggesting perfect control or certainty” (Möllering, 2006, p. 110) and therefore trust is where an “actor exercises agency through his will to either suspend uncertainty and vulnerability or not” (Möllering, 2006, p. 119). A key element of this, as Möllering (2006) notes, is that this suspension involves “a further element of social–psychological quasi-religious faith” (Simmel, 2011, p. 192). It is not that there is a lack of uncertainty or vulnerability, just that an individual chooses to trust despite this, driven by a certain faith. Whereas current social psychological literature can give the impression that people lack agency (Swann & Jetten, 2017), most trust scholars would say a key aspect of trust is agency — that it is not externally coerced or inconsistent with one’s intrinsic will and desire (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). In contrast to the situationist approach predominant

⁷ This relates to a story “from the Hebrew Bible found in Genesis 22” where “God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac, on Moriah. Abraham begins to comply, when a messenger from God interrupts him. Abraham then sees a ram and sacrifices it instead” (‘Binding of Isaac’, 2019).

in the social psychology literature (Swann & Jetten, 2017), the ‘leap of faith’ in trust seems to be something agentic. This can be challenging to explain through deliberative or calculative accounts.

Whereas the passive perspective highlights the learned nature of trust and how attitudes are formed, and the active perspective highlights how trust is, in part, a calculative process, the agentic perspective highlights an element independent of that which can defy rational or systemic explanations. Möllering (2006) argues that this element “may be identified and described, but not explained or justified” (p.118) and thus it is important to understand that some incidents of trust will be identifiable but not necessarily explicable. This is one larger goal of trust research — to identify these ‘leap-of-faith’ accounts of trust.

Bringing this together, trust is “subject to a host of influences across levels of analysis, ranging from dispositions at the individual level and history at the relationship level to norms at the network level and values at the institutional and societal levels” (Fulmer & Dirks, 2018, p. 137). It can also be thought of as something that arises in a passive or routine way, in an active or calculative way, or in an agentic way as an ‘act of faith’. Regarding intergroup trust, like trust in general, it is influenced by a host of factors and numerous processes go on during trusting. The rest of this chapter outlines some of the key literature around these factors.

In summary, this section outlined different ways to contextualise intergroup trust and situate intergroup trust in the wider trust literature. These are reflected on in chapter 10, where the themes that are developed are analysed in relation to these approaches.

Factors that influence trust

There is a broad literature on trust exploring how trust attitudes and behaviour are influenced. This section highlights the key areas of relevance, starting with the more ‘bottom-up’ (i.e. personal and psychological) factors and moving towards the more ‘top-down’ (i.e. social and environmental) factors, though noting that many are in between these extremes.

One key body of work to draw insights in trust from is the intergroup contact literature, which explores a link between positive intergroup contact and greater trust. Studies have shown greater general trust from positive interactions with neighbours and store workers (Glanville & Paxton, 2007), general informal social connections (Glanville et al., 2013), living in sociable neighbourhoods (Marschall & Stolle, 2004), participating in voluntary associations (Stolle, 1998), and having a racially and ethnically diverse friendship network (Stolle & Harell, 2013).

Other studies have looked specifically at intergroup trust, finding a positive relationship between contact and intergroup trust amongst Northern and Southern Italians (Capozza et

al., 2013), Turkish and Greek Cypriots (Husnu et al., 2018), and heterosexuals and homosexuals (Capozza et al., 2014). However, the most substantial body of work looking at the relationship between intergroup contact and intergroup trust relates to Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, finding that intergroup contact improves trusting attitudes (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone et al., 2006, 2014; Hughes et al., 2011; Kenworthy et al., 2015; McKeown & Psaltis, 2017; Paolini et al., 2007; Tam et al., 2009). While the effects may not have been as strong as with direct contact, there was also an improvement of trust with extended or indirect contact (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Hewstone et al., 2014; Paolini et al., 2007; Tam et al., 2009; Tausch et al., 2011).

Many reasons have been attributed to this. Intergroup contact was associated with further intergroup mixing which was linked to greater trust (Hewstone et al., 2006). There can be an element of group re-categorisation (Brown & Hewstone, 2005), inclusion of the outgroup as one's self (Capozza et al., 2013) and/or a general liking of the outgroup which leads to acceptance and trust (Pettigrew et al., 2011). Intergroup contact can allow empathy, perspective-taking and mutual self-disclosure which leads to trust (Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008), while also restraining levels of inhumanisation⁸ (Brown et al., 2007; Tam et al., 2007). It is important that the contact is of a positive quality, rather than quantity, to improve trust (McKeown & Psaltis, 2017).

⁸ Inhumanisation is "perceiving an out-group as lacking uniquely human attributes relative to an in-group" (Haslam & Loughnan, 2014, p. 401).

Another factor that influences trust is parents who have a notable influence in teaching children to distrust in general. Some studies find that an increasing prevalence of parents teaching their children general distrust, in part due to issues such as stranger abduction and child crime (Nishikawa & Stolle, 2012; Stolle & Nishikawa, 2011). Concerning intergroup attitudes, a meta-analysis found similarity in intergroup attitudes between parents and their children, but it was not clear whether this was because of the parent's influence or confounding factors (Degner & Dalege, 2013). A follow-up study focused on Eastern Germany found that parents have a modest influence on their children's intergroup attitudes, and this was moderated by parental style (Jugert et al., 2016). A Swedish study found significant effects of parents on children's anti-immigrant attitudes, but this effect was moderated with children with immigrant friends (Miklikowska, 2017). There seems to be no specific studies on parents and intergroup trust but the studies just cited which are on trust and intergroup attitudes suggest that parents can have an influence but children do not always strictly follow their parents approach to trust.

Beyond parents, there are social cues. One is stereotypes, which could provide relatively accurate information (Jussim et al., 2009, 2015) but also can serve an ideological function, justifying and rationalising a social and political system, and endorsing privilege (Brown, 2010), or as a historical and discursive practice (Dixon, 2017). Such stereotypes have been found to contribute towards what has been termed a culture of mistrust (Terrell et al., 1993; Watkins et al., 1989), which may not reflect attitudes that the outgroup should be mistrusted but does create a social pressure to avoid trusting behaviour. Social cues such as stereotypes thus serve as one source of influence, but much like parents, the relationship

does not seem to be determinative of attitudes towards intergroup trust.

As noted in the previous chapter, intergroup trust is different from social trust, political trust and particular trust, but research on how some forms of trust affect others can be indicative of how intergroup trust may be influenced by other trust types. High general trust in countries is associated with ethnic homogeneity, religious traditions, good government, wealth (as measured by GDP per capita) and income equality (Delhey & Newton, 2005). It is hypothesised that high general trust has a 'rainmaker effect'. This is the idea "that a culture of trust will have an impact on all individuals whatever their individual inclinations towards trust or distrust may be" in the same way that "rain from heaven, falls upon the just and the unjust alike and so creates social climates of trust that affect the whole society" (Zmerli & Newton, 2017, p. 108).

One study on particular trust, general trust and political trust finds a strong set of triangular relations between the three types of trust, and a 'rainmaker effect' where general trust (but not political trust) has an impact on particular trust (Newton & Zmerli, 2011). Returning to the idea of trust as a multilevel phenomenon, the study highlights the importance of "micro theories of a bottom-up, social-psychological and individual nature" as well as "top-down theories that focus on government, social institutions, and aggregate levels of trust" (Newton & Zmerli, 2011, p.169-170).

Another study explored the determinants of general trust using a social trust survey in the

US, finding that general trust is based on one's experiences with different groups of people in certain localised settings, which is then generalised. For example, positive interactions with neighbours and store workers lead to specific trust in those groups which further improves levels of general trust (Glanville & Paxton, 2007).

Such studies suggest that there may be 'rainmaker effect' of general trust on other forms of trust as well as a generalisation effect of localised trust on other forms of trust. These could potentially impact intergroup trust, though there does not seem to be a specific study that links general or localised trust to intergroup trust.

It is important to note that a history of recent violent conflict itself does not seem to lead to distrust. While a 'security dilemma'⁹ paradigm would suggest that violence erodes trust (Gilligan et al., 2014), the research on social (i.e. general) trust after conflict is surprisingly contradictory. Several studies find that exposure to violence during conflict increases trust (Becchetti et al., 2014; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Gilligan et al., 2014) as well as other prosocial behaviour (Bauer et al., 2014; Gilligan et al., 2014), whereas others find that conflict-related violence undermines trust (Cassar et al., 2013; Conzo & Salustri, 2019; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018; Rohner et al., 2013) or that the effects are heterogeneous (El-Bialy

⁹ "The security dilemma [...] refers to a situation in which, under anarchy, actions by a state intended to heighten its security, such as increasing its military strength, committing to use weapons or making alliances, can lead other states to respond with similar measures, producing increased tensions that create conflict, even when no side really desires it" ('Security Dilemma', 2019).

et al., 2017). A possible explanation for this variation, as some have speculated, is that the long-term effect of conflict on trust comes down to the specificity of the conflict itself and its effect on local institutions (Cassar et al., 2013). It is thus likely that it is the context-specific factors relating to the conflict and its resolution rather than the presence of conflict itself that determines trust.

In terms of intergroup trust, one of the most significant bodies of work to draw on relates to ethnic diversity and trust. Arguably, much of this work has arisen from Robert Putnam's research and contention that in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods "[t]rust (even of one's own race) is lower, altruism and community cooperation rarer, friends fewer" (Putnam, 2007, p. 137). This research has often focused on general trust. A 2018 meta-analysis found that "most evidence points toward a negative relationship" between ethnic diversity and general trust "but oftentimes without the desired statistical certainty" (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018, p. 198). This meta-analysis did not look at intergroup trust.

Some studies have looked specifically at intergroup trust. Gundelach (2014), using global data, finds that ethnic diversity can reduce general trust (though not to a statistically significant level) but conversely that it improves intergroup trust, in this case, trust in those of a different nationality or religion and to a statistically significant level. Abascal & Baldassarri (2015), in their US study, find that ethnic diversity does not affect outgroup trust, except for whites living in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods where there is lower outgroup trust. Another US study of interracial trust finds that racial heterogeneity does reduce

interracial trust but that this effect is mediated by levels of minority empowerment, seen through income inequalities (Rudolph & Popp, 2010).

In a European study, a larger presence of specific outgroups is linked with less outgroup trust – the presence of other European people did not have a negative effect whereas culturally different people, assessed by religious and language distance, did (Gerritsen & Lubbers, 2010). A Kenyan study finds that in general people living in ethnically diverse areas have higher levels of intergroup trust except for those who are residentially segregated who have less trust in ethnic outgroups (Kasara, 2013).

The overall picture from these studies is there is no axiomatic relationship between group heterogeneity (e.g. ethnic diversity) and intergroup trust. While heterogeneity can be linked to a deleterious effect on intergroup trust there are mediating factors, such as segregation, cultural distance, and income inequality. Hence, it is contextual specificities of each situation that can be attributed to less intergroup trust.

The key explanations that have been proposed to explain lower general trust with ethnic diversity are: ethnic familiarity leads to higher empathy, norm enforcement and ease of communication; exposure to outgroups leads to conflict and competition over scarce resources; ethnic diversity leads to social isolation (or ‘hunkering down’ as Putnam [2007] puts it); the distrusted ethnic group become perceived as the prototypical other; and ethnic segregation (Dinesen & Sønderskov, 2018). Dinesen & Sønderskov (2018) argue that these

explanations are “rather weakly theorized, and various theoretical conjectures are rarely tested empirically”.

Somewhere between direct/indirect contact and general trust is what could be described as a wider network for trust which has additional dynamics. One can use such a network to enquire about someone’s trustworthiness and take action in situations of failed trust (Cook, 2005). The result of this network is what Glückler & Armbrüster (2003) term as 'networked reputation', which they differentiate from both public reputation and experience-based trust. Unlike public reputation, networked reputation conveys greater credibility as word-of-mouth discloses ‘thick information’ about potential trustees that have been filtered through trusted social networks (Glückler & Armbrüster, 2003). Through embedding trust in a network of social relations, Cook (2001) argues that this further reduces vulnerability and uncertainty. A systematic review of trust finds support for this idea of networked trust and ‘networked reputation’ in leading to increased intergroup trust, noting that this is attributable to embeddedness and certain network characteristics (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

Leaders can, in theory, play a role in trust. From social psychology literature, leaders can be defined as “the individual who best embodies the context-relevant norms of the group and is able to ensure optimal group functioning to fulfil these norms” (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p.99). In contrast to the concept of leaders as an individual who embodies the context-relevant norms (Abrams & Hogg, 1998), there is the alternative approach which Haslam et al. (2011) term a ‘new psychology of leadership’. This is leadership as a dynamic interaction

between leaders and followers (Haslam et al., 2011) where there is constituent cooperation and support rather than exclusively top-down leadership (Reicher et al., 2007). This argument that a leader is someone who embodies norms versus someone who is involved in an interaction with followers to change those norms is analogous to work on trust which applies an institutional approach. The argument is that there can be some actors who play a role in creating, changing, or preserving specific institutions (such as trust) (Möllering, 2006) — what some term as 'institutional entrepreneurs' (DiMaggio, 1988). Institutions, in this body of work, can be defined as “socially constructed, routine-reproduced (*ceteris paribus*), program or rule systems” that “operate as relative fixtures of constraining environments and are accompanied by taken-for-granted accounts” (Jepperson, 1991, p. 149). Similar to the question of whether a leader follows or changes norms is the question over the capacity for institutional entrepreneurs to change institutions, captured through the ‘paradox of embedded agency’. This is where an institutional entrepreneur is both embedded in an institutional field (e.g. a social situation dictating trust levels) and somehow able to envision new practices and also get others to adopt them (e.g. promoting either trust or distrust) (Hardy & Maguire, 2008).

In situations of intergroup conflict, it is argued that leaders can improve trust by eliciting outgroup cooperation and signalling their own trustworthiness and willingness to cooperate (Pittinsky & Simon, 2007). Extant research suggests a range of strategies and tactics such leaders can employ to improve trust (Kramer, 2009). In terms of research in intergroup conflict contexts, there is a notable study on the impact of a media intervention on intergroup outcomes in Burundi which found that obedience towards leaders did not affect

the outcome (Bilali et al., 2016). The media intervention was focused on preventing violence and intergroup reconciliation and the measured intergroup outcomes included intergroup trust. The authors note that “the intervention did not influence dissent or obedience to leaders, even though this was an important goal of the intervention” and this may be attributable to “the influence of existing, institutional and societal norms that support or counter certain goals of the intervention” (Bilali et al., 2016, p. 231). Thus, there is an overall picture that like parents, leaders can influence trust, but this depends on the strategy they employ and there may be other factors that can counteract their efforts. Notably, leaders can be somewhat constrained in their actions in that they may look to change norms towards trusting but moving too far beyond certain norms can undermine their position as leaders.

Finally, there is an argument that it is the ‘winners’ in society — those who are doing well, that trust more (Newton et al., 2018). In their review of trust literature, Zmerli & Newton (2011) find that those who trust more are those who are a) “with money, socio-economic status and education”, b) are “happy and satisfied with their life and claim to be in good health”, and c) are “on the winning side of party competition for political power or who view the political system as giving them a chance of being on the winning side” (Zmerli & Newton, 2011, p. 84). This may feed into an individual’s propensity to trust in general, but it is unclear how this would affect an individual’s trust processing including with decisions relating to intergroup trust.

In summary, there are a number of factors that can influence trust and this section highlights a number of those that can help understand how trust changes in a conflict-affected context and what the potential role is of social identity. These are reflected on in the themes developed in chapter 10.

Intergroup threat and intergroup trust

The focus of the research sub-question is how trust changes and how this is influenced by identity and threat. Some studies explore this relationship and while this literature is far from conclusive, it is suggestive of less trust under conditions of threat, and that this is stronger with those who identify strongly with the ingroup. It is worth going into some detail for these studies as they are the most relevant studies for this component of linking intergroup threat to intergroup trust.

On the relation between social identity and trust, it is notable that several studies suggest that trust is not always higher for ingroup members. In a survey-based study, Betts & Elder (2011) find that ingroup members are only trusted more for some types of trust — ingroup members are more trusted to maintain confidentiality and avoid embarrassing others, but not more trusted to keep promises and commitments, nor to have more integrity and authenticity.

In an experimental study, participants trusted¹⁰ anonymous ingroup members more than anonymous outgroup members (Tanis & Postmes, 2005). But when the individual's identity was known, whether the other person was an ingroup member or outgroup member made no difference – the decision to trust was based on the individual, not their group membership.

One notable survey-based study, involving Northern Irish participants, looked at how realistic threats, symbolic threats and intergroup anxiety mediated the relationship between intergroup contact and trust (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007). According to the findings, intergroup anxiety reduced¹¹ outgroup trust with everybody¹², symbolic threats only affected those people who identify strongly with their ingroup, and realistic threats affected nobody (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007).

An Italian study found that under value threat (i.e. a symbolic threat) conditions, there was a fall in outgroup trust and outgroup evaluation, which led to the presence of active distrust, suspicion and out-group derogation (Voci, 2006).

Another study links higher ingroup identification to lower outgroup trust, but this time in a situation of constant intergroup threat. A questionnaire-based study on the Turkish-Kurdish

¹⁰ Based on expectations of reciprocity as a measure of trust.

¹¹ In terms of mediating the relationship between quality of contact and outgroup trust.

¹² Both those who identify strongly with the ingroup and those who do not.

conflict found that for both the Turks and Kurds, stronger ethnic identification was associated with lower trust (Çelebi et al., 2014). The authors conclude that this is consistent with research that shows that under conditions of threat and conflict, higher ingroup identifiers tend to reject and derogate relevant outgroups.

A British study found that perceived intergroup threat was associated with distrust in general – ingroup, outgroup and neighbourhood distrust (Schmid, Ramiah, et al., 2014). This seems to be similar to the issue of dispositional change where individuals saw outgroups as more threatening and then trusted everyone less.

A Northern Irish study looked at the impact of trust and distrust on threat perceptions (Kenworthy et al., 2013). The study looked at perceptions, including threat, in an imagined scenario where a community leader decides whether or not to extend trust or distrust to the outgroup, in the Northern Ireland context. The study finds the extension of distrust and strong ingroup identification was associated with greater symbolic and realistic threat. The authors conclude that the extension of distrust is perceived as costly, likely because it is seen to worsen community relations and risk sectarian violence. And those who strongly identify with their ingroup (i.e. their religious community) feel a stronger sense of threat following this distrust. The study also concludes that it is too simplistic to assume there is a universal tendency to distrust outgroups.

To summarise, there are a number of studies which suggest less trust under conditions of

threat, and that this relationship is stronger with those who identify more with the ingroup. However, this is far from conclusive but instead, provides a literature on which to draw and reflect on with the themes developed on in chapter 10.

Focus of this research

Starting expectations

In terms of starting expectations, they were very much that participants would have a strong sense of intergroup threat and commensurate with it a sense of distrust. It was expected that the identity-threat pathway to distrust would be prominent in the data.

Understanding trust change and influence through lived experiences

As noted in the previous chapter, the phenomenological tradition in social sciences has paid little attention so far to trust (Frederiksen, 2014). In addition to employing a primarily phenomenological approach to understand conceptualisations of trust, which is the focus of the last chapter, a phenomenological approach will be beneficial to understand the experiences of trust being built, maintained, or undermined — essentially how trust happens and how that is understood and experienced.

As with the other components of this doctoral study, a qualitative approach is arguably most beneficial. Much work on intergroup trust has “relied on experimental paradigms using

minimal groups and prisoner's dilemma games" (Tam et al., 2009, p.49). A qualitative approach is beneficial in this case as it allows "more open and less structured data collection methods that might enable new concepts to emerge that were not previously found in the literature" on trust (Lyon et al., 2015, p. 11). Furthermore, an abductive approach in researching trust "offers a way to elaborate theory based on empirical data and an amalgam of existing and new conceptualizations" and "build bridges between empirical observations and existing theories" (Le Gall & Langley, 2015, p. 42). Thus, a qualitative and abductive approach is arguably the best approach.

Research aims in relation to threat

Overall, the picture is that there is no axiomatic causal relationship between intergroup threat and intergroup trust. Rather, several factors come into play relating to attitudes and decisions to trust or not trust, which this chapter highlights. Some of these relate to aspects of identity and threat, such as issues of ethnic diversity and violent conflict. With others, the relationship is less clear: networked trust may be affected by how groups are differentiated, leaders may need to be ingroup members to be legitimate, parents would have to hold negative intergroup trust attitudes and stereotypes of outgroups would need to be of them as threatening. The impact of other types of trust and being society's winners may have less connection with identity and trust but can interact with, or counteract, trust dynamics that are associated with identity and threat. The final factor is intergroup contact, which is almost the converse of intergroup threat, as noted in chapter 1, in that it can result in an opposing dynamic. What is important to understand here is that identity and threat do not impact

trust in isolation and what is needed is to focus on how issues of identity and threat impact trust but also how other factors provide competing dynamics, so as to provide a holistic picture.

Thus, there is a need to see how identity, threat and intergroup threat play a part in trust but also to understand better how this works in a complex environment where there are myriad factors in play. Therefore, in looking to answer the research sub-questions — how does trust change and how is this influenced by identity and threat — this component of this study must explore key themes in trust and how identity and threat play one part in the entire context of trust.

To summarise, trust has many facets and levels (Rousseau et al., 1998) and despite its “inherently multilevel nature, research on trust incorporating multiple levels of analysis remains limited” (Fulmer & Dirks, 2018, p. 137). This final component of the study needs to explore how trust happens and how identity and threat play a part to answer the final research sub-questions: i) how does trust change and ii) how is this influenced by identity and threat.

Summary

This chapter highlights key areas of research from social psychology and interdisciplinary trust research to understand how trust changes and the potential connection to identity and

threat. The first part of the chapter is on conceptualising intergroup threat and potential frameworks to employ. The second and third sections look at the issues of contact and social cues, and ethnic diversity research in connection with trust. The fourth section looks at the extant research on trust and threat before a final section of this chapter concludes by outlining the intersection component of this study. The following chapter outlines the methodology and methods employed in this study.

Chapter 6. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Introduction

This chapter outlines the philosophy, approach, data collection and data analysis used, to address the research question and sub-questions outlined in the previous chapters. The first section on philosophy outlines the Critical Realist (CR) meta-stance, how that was formed and how it mandates a retroductive or abductive approach. The second section on approach outlines how the final methods used were arrived at by firstly, building on the CR meta-stance, secondly, by addressing the research question and sub-questions, and finally, by comparing and complimenting other approaches and methods. The next section, outlines the mixed-method or pluralist qualitative approach, drawing on thematic analysis, phenomenology and discourse analysis. The following section outlines the data collection procedure of 50 semi-structured interviews, which lasted between an hour and an hour and half, and were undertaken in the first half of 2017, as well as details about the participants, ethics, and data analysis method. The final section is the research account, with details the consideration of reflexivity and positivity, and the research quality criteria.

Philosophy

This thesis explicitly sets out to combine approaches that are drawn from competing traditions. As such, the philosophy of science most pertinent to this and the assumptions on which it is based is Critical Realism (CR), the philosophy largely developed from the work by Roy Bhaskar. CR combines two philosophies – one of physical science (transcendental realism) and the second of social science (critical naturalism) (Bhaskar, 2008, 2014). It refutes neither positivist nor interpretivist traditions, but “implies that the particular choices should depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it” (Sayer, 2000, p. 19). The CR approach was chosen as it repudiates a reductionist and deterministic approach, and instead allows for the openness, contingency and contextually variable character of social change, by combining naturalism with an acceptance of the need for an interpretive understanding of meaning in social life (Sayer, 2000). A core tenet is that a pre-social reality exists, but we can only ever partially know it (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

With application to psychology, Mackay & Petocz (2010) argue that the CR approach stresses that psychology can be scientific, that it is not to be limited to the positivist search for universal regularities and that it must also focus on identifying social structures that have causal powers to influence events.

Political psychology cannot fit neatly into positivist nor interpretivist paradigms. While core psychological functions, such as sight and hearing, may be amenable to purely positivist approaches that look for universal laws into how sight and sound are processed, this is not the case for complex social behaviour. Conversely, complex social behaviour is underpinned

by biological mechanisms that operate in common patterns, but that is not to say that behaviour can be reduced to these mechanisms. Behaviour, it could be argued, is best understood through a stratified set of actions, and hence researching behaviour is most appropriately undertaken through a pluralist approach to epistemology and an understanding that there are multiple ontologies.

As such, instead of looking for causal associations, this thesis identifies what is defined in the CR literature as 'demi-regularities'. These are different from causal links, in that they implicitly take into account the nature of ever-present emergence – “the unique and unceasing human capacity to change the circumstances in which they live” (Dalkin et al., 2015, p. 2) and thus the influence of context. This thesis focuses on the relationships as demi-regularities, pertaining to the issues of identity, threat, and trust.

Approach

The choice of approach and method was based on the CR meta-stance this study takes as well as a method appropriate for the question. The following section outlines how each of these influenced the choice of approach, and the other approaches that were considered.

Critical Realism and choice of approach

Fitting in with a CR philosophy are approaches based on abduction (inference to the best

explanation) and retroduction (identifying the causes and conditions of one's findings) (Edwards et al., 2014). Edwards et al. (2014) argue that abduction and retroduction take into account the researcher's sensitisation to existing theories (i.e. those theories outlined in Chapters 2 to 5); the emergent, adaptable nature of behaviour, and social science generally; and enables the researcher to identify 'demi-regularities', in this case, those relating to the issues of identity, threat, and trust.

A CR philosophy is not prescriptive in terms of employing quantitative or qualitative methods, nor those with origins of positivist or interpretivist traditions. That said, the focus on abduction and retroduction would rule out an explicitly deductive/ hypothetico-deductive¹³ method as well as a pure inductive method. A CR-compatible method implicitly acknowledges that a researcher has been 'sensitised to theory', which sits in-between methods which 'prove' a hypothesis and those that approach the data 'naively'.

As an explicit 'political psychology' research project, the method employed drew from both political science research guidance as well as guidance from the psychology discipline. These methods are in no way mutually exclusive and the rest of this section details the arrival at the method used for this research, and the disciplinary origins to give a clearer account of the approach used, and the justification for it.

¹³ "The hypothetico-deductive model or method is a proposed description of the scientific method. According to it, scientific inquiry proceeds by formulating a hypothesis in a form that can be falsifiable, using a test on observable data where the outcome is not yet known" ('Hypothetico-Deductive Model', 2021).

Research question and the choice of approach

The final method employed was designed to address the overall research question and the research sub-questions. The overall research question is in a conflict-affected context, how is trust affected by issues of identity and threat; and the research sub-questions focus on the conceptualisations and lived experiences of identity, threat and trust, and how trust changes and is influenced by identity and threat. Quantitative methods were initially investigated – specifically experimental methods and survey or *large-n* methods, before finally settling on a case study approach based on a qualitative method. The following section outlines this, framing it and employing both a psychology and political science disciplinary perspective and nomenclature.

When exploring options, an experimental or survey-based method to find a causal relationship between intergroup threats and trust was initially considered. Experimental and survey-based studies have shown that threat has measurable impacts on general outgroup attitudes, with threat manipulation (through experiments) producing stronger effects on outgroup attitudes than measuring threat (through surveys), at least with certain types of threats (Riek et al., 2006). There are also novel approaches to manipulating threat, including altering narratives in fictitious newspaper articles or speeches (Mols & Jetten, 2016). However, producing a valid, reliable, and ethically acceptable manipulation for threat, in relation to the Northern Ireland conflict, was ultimately not found to be feasible. This was despite an extensive literature review and discussions with psychologists working on the

issue. This does not rule out such manipulation being possible in future research. Indeed, a key motivation for the final approach taken in this study was to develop conceptualisations to refine constructs for threat for future experimental studies, as part of an overall approach of methodological triangulation.

In terms of the dependent variable trust, the trust game (Berg et al., 1995) seemed most promising. This would have involved creating a treatment group and control group, with a threat condition applied to the treatment group. Trust would be measured by monitoring the way each group's participants played against another group in the 'trust' game – a two-player investment game that bases trust on the amount one player give another as a first move. As with any potential threat manipulation there are questions as to the construct validity of these manipulations and measures: would the independent variable – the threat manipulation – really be an appropriate form of threat, and would the trust game be a valid measure of trust? It could be argued that the construct validity is dubious. Drawing a parallel with conflict-affected contexts was tenuous; trust in a conflict-affected context was not comparable or equivalent to the trusting behaviour in the trust game. Existing research supports such misgivings: experimental social preference games, including the trust game, lack external validity, and they do a poor job at explaining concurrent and past social behaviours (Galizzi & Navarro-Martínez, 2018). Furthermore, an experimental approach would fail to get a clearer understanding of what identity, threat and trust mean to people in context. Thus, it was concluded that a qualitative approach was more appropriate and in the same way as with threat, that this may help develop a trust construct with greater external validity for future experimental studies.

To understand what identity, threat and trust are, and to allow theory to emerge from the data, a mixed methods case study seemed most appropriate. The following sections outline how this approach was developed and why it is appropriate.

Before exploring the method used, it is important to situate this in political science and psychology disciplines, starting with political science. In the political science research guidance literature, the alternative approach to experimentation for testing theory is observation – the investigator observes the data without imposing an external stimulus to see if observations are congruent with predictions (Van Evera, 1997). This can be done through a large-*n* or case study analysis.

A large-*n* study, through a Qualtrics¹⁴-based survey was, incidentally, also an option that was explored. This would build on similar Northern Ireland studies that found a relationship between threats and trust (Hewstone et al., 2005; Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007) but this would not help in developing an understanding of the identities, threats and trust in context, and would raise the same concerns about construct validity for the survey measures of intergroup threats and trust. Survey measures regarding identity, threat and trust, that were reviewed when developing this study's approach were deemed too broad and failed to capture the intricacies of the phenomena. This impression is corroborated in the literature.

¹⁴ Qualtrics is an online data collection and analysis software tool which can be used to conduct survey studies.

With identity, Muldoon et al., (2007) argue that “[i]t is now increasingly acknowledged within both the psychological literature [and the Northern Ireland identity literature] that the previous explicitly quantitative orientation has meant the bases of self-categorizations have not received the attention they merit” (Muldoon et al., 2007, p. 92). There is a tendency to ignore the heterogeneity within the communities in Northern Ireland (Ferguson et al., 2014) and it is argued that identification of self and other should become more complex over time since the end of the Troubles (Williams & Jesse, 2001) even while survey measures adopt a limited range of options, usually Protestant, Catholic or other (e.g. Cassidy & Trew, 2004). In intergroup threat research, the shift towards more integrated approaches has meant a move towards survey and questionnaire measures centred around a narrow typology of intergroup threats (Riek et al., 2006). With trust, typical survey questions used to measure trust fail to predict trust behaviour (Ermisch et al., 2009).

An in-depth case-study approach seemed most appropriate and beneficial. Ostensible strengths of a case study approach are conceptual validity, deriving new hypotheses, exploring causal mechanisms, and modelling and assessing complex causal relations (George & Bennett, 2005). In this study, a case study approach provided all of these advantages, in some way. It allowed participants to define the concepts of identity, threat, and trust, as they understood them; it allowed novel hypotheses to emerge from the data; it provided an avenue in which to explore any causal mechanisms between intergroup threats and trust; and it helped work towards a model of the complex relationship between the varying types of identities, threats and trust.

It is worth re-iterating that while a qualitative approach was employed in this study, this does not mean that a quantitative study looking at the same issues would not provide insights. Much as Campbell & Fiske (1959) have advocated, this author supports the use of “a methodological triangulation” that is “[i]n contrast with the single operationalism [that has been] dominant in psychology” (Campbell & Fiske, 1959, p. 101). Yet, as Denzin (1978) notes, with methodological triangulation difficulties can arise when “many different approaches [...] are combined in a single study” (Denzin, 1978, p. 305) and it may be that “restrictions of time and money make it impossible” (Denzin, 1978, p. 306). This was indeed the case here. Time and resource constraints meant that a fully methodological triangulation approach was not feasible for this doctoral study — it was not possible to undertake an adequately in-depth qualitative study, interpret these results, generate suitable constructs and test those through a quantitative study (i.e. survey-based or experimental) in the time-frame and with the resources available in a single doctoral study. Instead, this study looked to produce findings that compliment extant qualitative research and help develop novel hypothesis and survey/experimental measures (which this author in particular hopes to use) for further research as part of an overall research orientation of methodological triangulation.

Turning to method: this research needed to look at perceptions, and understandings, of identity, threat and trust. As such the best source of data would be the people themselves, focusing on their ‘lived’ experiences — hearing them first-hand. Even having established this,

there is still a range of different options for the method, which the psychology guidance literature disambiguates quite precisely.

The political science methods of experimentation and large-*n* studies would correspond quite closely to the quantitative tradition in psychology, whereas a case study would fit in well with the qualitative traditions within psychology. Qualitative psychology draws on several methods, most of which are found in political and other social sciences. This doctoral study employed a qualitative, pluralist approach to method and the following section outlines what that meant in practice.

Overall approach: Pluralistic Qualitative Research

This study used what can be termed a Pluralistic Qualitative Research (PQR) approach. PQR is not a set method as such, but instead describes a relatively recent initiative – a research project and a set of publications – to better integrate mixed methods qualitative analysis in psychology (Frost et al., 2010). As it stands, qualitative analytical pluralism remains relatively uncommon (Clarke et al., 2015; Frost & Nolas, 2011).

The key benefit of a pluralist approach is that it produces a rich, layered, multiple perspective analysis of the data (Dewe & Coyle, 2014). When studying a specific phenomenon, a pluralistic approach is said to enrich insight and provide a more holistic view, than one method by itself (Frost, 2011). It allows “a variety of ways of seeing and

interpreting in the pursuit of knowledge” (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 682) to produce a 'multiperspectival' (Kellner, 1995) analysis.

A PQR approach allows much-needed flexibility in analysis, to answer the research question, best illustrated through an example of a similar study. A pluralist qualitative study on smoking had the original intention of adopting a phenomenological stance, but after the initial familiarisation with the data, the authors found that this would not capture some important features (Dewe & Coyle, 2014). They found that a phenomenological stance would miss the “storied nature of the data” (Dewe & Coyle, 2014, p. 20), such as the accounts of participants’ initial engagement with smoking, stopping smoking or trying to stop. They thus employed a pluralist approach to analysis, and the data was re-examined from narrative and social constructionist perspectives.

This is not an ‘anything goes’ approach (Feyerabend, 1975), a criticism of qualitative approaches that is apparently common amongst quantitative researchers (Antaki et al., 2003). Rather, it is a tailored approach, requiring a compatible epistemological and ontological stance, which draws on methods so as to best answer the research question.

A pluralist approach is similar to bricolage – “a research approach that promotes interdisciplinarity as a way of drawing on many methods of inquiry” and pragmatism – “a means with which research questions can be addressed and an approach that does not take too much account of the underlying epistemologies” (Frost, 2011, p. 5). However, unlike

Frost's (2011) definition of pragmatism, this study does take into account the underlying epistemology quite seriously and adopts a stance of Critical Realism (CR). This stance is, incidentally, the same as that employed by Dewe & Coyle (2014) in their pluralist smoking study. A CR stance has the benefit of being compatible with a range of methods employable in a pluralist approach. In contrast, a strong positivist or interpretivist stance would make a pluralist approach difficult, if not impossible.

The pluralist approach is not the initial approach. Like Dewe & Coyle (2014), the initial approach was phenomenological, looking to use an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach (see below for further details on IPA). But as the data was analysed, it became clear that a phenomenological analysis failed to capture all that was sought after, and all that was there. Accordingly, other methods were brought in, to better work through the complex data and to capture more, and thus the study ended up pluralist. In some ways, it would be fitting to accuse me, at the start, of a touch of 'methodolatry' – the privileging of method concerns over the topic under study and the research questions (Chamberlain, 2000). IPA seemed appealing in that it had a clearly defined method that worked well in similar types of study. Nonetheless, it was not the most appropriate for this study. In due course, the research question was re-prioritised, and the method evolved.

Method

This pluralist doctoral study draws on three, somewhat overlapping, methods: thematic

analysis, phenomenology, and discourse analysis.

Thematic Analysis

The first is thematic analysis, which this study broadly followed the conventions of, at least initially. According to Braun & Clarke (2006), whose approach to thematic analysis is the most prominent in psychology, thematic analysis is compatible with both essentialist and constructionist paradigms. It involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning. Braun & Clarke (2006) outline a set of guidelines, noting that the guidelines are not rules, but basic precepts that should be applied flexibly to fit the research questions. They outline six broad steps: familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Through these broad steps, analysis of this study's data produced themes and this report. As in thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the 'keyness' of the theme did not depend on quantifiable measures (though the frequency of responses was noted) but instead, whether it captured something important in regard to the research question. As the data was gone over, themes emerged, and these acted as a focal point or anchor for the analysis. Thematic analysis was drawn on, in that it was a remarkably straightforward way, in comparison to other methods, to work through the rich, complex data obtained. From there, there was a process of drilling down into the text using a phenomenological and discourse analysis

approach, to provide a richer analysis.

Phenomenology

The second method then, is phenomenology. Phenomenology is based on the study of experiences and consciousness, and methods based on this, focus on subjective experiences and detailed experiential accounts of the person's involvement in the context. There is an emphasis on 'qualia' – the experiential content of consciousness — and that we 'go back to the things themselves' (Husserl et al., 2001).

The most widely known approach to phenomenological psychology, among UK psychologists, is Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Langdrige, 2007). IPA looks to explore individuals' subjective experiences, taking into account that research is a dynamic process with an active role for the researcher in that process of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2007). IPA focuses quite intensely on individuals, and their unique subjective experiences. The approach takes into account what is termed 'double hermeneutics' that is inherent in the approach (Smith et al., 2009). This relates to, firstly, how the participant interprets the world (single hermeneutic), but also how the researcher makes sense of the participants' accounts with respect to their own personal and social world (double hermeneutics). In essence, the researcher looks to make sense of the participant, who is looking to make sense of what is happening to them (Smith et al., 2009). This, therefore, requires an attempt by the researcher to 'bracket' their own preconceptions while being attentive and engaging with the participant in the interview, before going to a

'home location' to analyse the material influenced by prior conceptions and experience (Smith, 2007).

Despite its origins in health psychology, IPA, and phenomenology in general, has been effectively used in researching issues such as life transitions and identity (Smith et al., 2009). It has also been applied to the Northern Ireland context, to issues such as victimhood experiences in post-Good Friday Agreement (GFA) Northern Ireland (Ferguson et al., 2010) and young people's experiences of living in post-GFA Belfast, including during the 2012-2013 flag protests (Halliday & Ferguson, 2015).

For this study, phenomenology was drawn on to identify experiences and meanings of identity, trust and threats and to create a richer account of these phenomena in Northern Ireland. At the same time, one's own preconceptions were 'bracketed' during data collection (as best as possible) but brought back in during the analysis.

Discourse Analysis

In addition to a phenomenological analysis, the statements from the interviews lent themselves to a discourse analysis approach. Discourse analysis (DA) has been described as an ever-broadening church and as an umbrella term for a wide range of different analytical approaches (Edley, 2001). The focus can be on how sentences are put together (linguistics), how conversation is structured (conversational analysis), how statements constitute subjects

and objects (Foucauldian discourse analysis), or how discourse can be understood with reference to social issues and power (critical discourse analysis) (McMullen, 2011).

Braun and Clarke (2013) argue that in psychology there are two broad 'schools' of DA. One is focused on how social realities are shared, and how psychological subjectivities are produced; this has been designated as Foucauldian or poststructuralist. The second 'school' is focused more on the specifics of talk and constructs, like ideological dilemmas and identities, and designated with terms such as interpretative repertoires, rhetorical analysis, and discursive psychology. The approach used in this study is more in keeping with the latter 'school'. In this approach, the individuals are theorised as more agentic users of discourse (as opposed to the poststructuralist approach) with the focus on how language is used as a resource and how it is put to use in practice for social or psychological effect (Braun & Clarke, 2013). There is also an interest in how talk is used to construct particular versions of reality, which is another focus of DA (Potter & Wetherell, 1995).

In this study, the DA component of the analysis is very much on where participants use language for effect or to perform how they would like to be seen. As the data was worked through, the impression was that in some instances participants focused on describing their experience and meanings as best they could, in other instances it was clear that their comments were to provide a psychological impact – to change or reinforce the way the interviewer thought about them, and they thought about themselves. The DA lens helped analyse those comments.

One way of looking at the difference between the phenomenological analysis and the DA analysis is as 'giving voice' versus a more critical analysis. Josselson (2004) draws on Paul Ricoeur's concepts (e.g. Ricoeur, 1970) of two forms of hermeneutics. On the one hand, there is the 'hermeneutics of faith', which looks to take on the messages in the text, and on the other hand is the 'hermeneutics of suspicion', which problematises the text and looks to decode disguised meanings (Josselson, 2004). In this study the interview data sometimes depicts an experience or concept, with minimal bias from the participant, to be understood with the hermeneutics of faith. In other cases, the comments are best understood as a reflection of wider social dynamics, and even as a performance, to be understood with the hermeneutics of suspicion. The interpretation thus varies from the 'empathic-descriptive' to the 'critical-hermeneutic' (Frost et al., 2010). Now, an IPA approach does not exclude switching between these type of approaches (Frost et al., 2010). It is simply that a pluralist approach that explicitly embraces several methods, including phenomenological and DA approaches, allows myself, the researcher, to move freely and explicitly between positions as is seen fit, depending on the data.

Data collection

Having established the PQR approach overall, the next step is identifying the data collection method. The following sections outline the choice of location for the interviews, the approach to sampling, interview procedure, participants, ethical considerations and analysis,

as well as an account of how the research went.

Data collection method

The literature on thematic analysis (e.g. Braun & Clarke, 2006) does not outline a data collection approach as such; it is instead an approach to analysis. The literature on phenomenological and DA approaches does, and there are several similarities between them (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

The interviewing strategy for phenomenology and DA is for participants to describe their experiences while the interviewer probes for detail and clarity, whereas with DA the interviewer and interviewee are to engage in dialogue with the interviewer probing for intellectual meaning (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Starks & Trinidad (2007) argue a phenomenological approach requires 'bracketing' and DA requires one where the analyst examines their place in the discourse. In the final approach, the interviewer (i.e. myself) looked to 'bracket', as best as possible, when questioning; the interviewer looked to set aside assumptions as a researcher so as to examine how the phenomena are interpreted and experienced by the participants. During the analysis after the interviews, the interviewer also examined their place in the discourse as is common with DA (Starks & Trinidad, 2007).

One ostensible difference is the analysis. Phenomenology approaches, such as IPA, focus on specific statements, which are analysed and categorised into clusters of meaning, and the

researcher, through a process of writing and rewriting, composes a story that captures the important elements of the lived experience (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). With DA, the analysis is to examine how understanding is produced through a close look at the words, how the story is told, and what identities, activities, relationships, and shared meaning are created through language (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). These methods of analysis were looked to be combined using a thematic analysis framework: familiarising oneself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Essentially, the data was read over until themes emerged. And then, within each theme, an extract (sometimes called a meaning unit) was analysed from a phenomenological standpoint and a DA standpoint. This approach allowed both the emergence of themes and patterns, as well as analysis from a heuristic of faith and a heuristic of suspicion. After this, was an explicit process of considering theoretical explanations, moving between data and analysis to identify the most plausible explanation for the findings.

Case Study

As noted in chapter 1 the choice of case study was the city of Derry/Londonderry (LDY).

Much of the Northern Irish conflict literature has focused on Belfast which may not be truly representative of the rest of Northern Ireland. The focus of the study is instead on Derry/Londonderry, the second-largest city in Northern Ireland. The city itself is subject to a naming dispute with nationalists generally, but not always, favouring the name Derry and unionists generally, but not always, favouring Londonderry. Legally, the city and the county it

is in, are called Londonderry. In respect of the name dispute, in this thesis it is referred to as Derry/Londonderry, as 'the city', or in brief as LDY, which is taken from the city's airport code.

Derry/Londonderry is a city with a unique history and set of traditions, including in relation to the Troubles. Historically, the Northern Irish civil rights movement started in the 1960s and was largely focused in Derry/Londonderry. Around this period was the Battle of Bogside – a large communal riot in August 1969, and the 1972 Bloody Sunday incident, where British soldiers shot 28 unarmed civilians during an anti-internment march. These two events are largely seen as crucial catalysts for the Troubles, and many people in the city will have experienced these events or have grown up in an era where this was part of the wider social narrative. This includes most of the participants interviewed in this study. Though Protestants make up a majority in Northern Ireland as a whole, they represent a minority in LDY, and before the Troubles, had a much stronger political influence due to the structure of the political system.

Some prominent cultural events in the city are focused on one group (i.e. Protestants or Catholics) and have been perceived by some as sectarian. The Apprentice Boys of Derry, one of the Loyal Orders (i.e. Protestant fraternal organisations), have annual parades, which in the past have been seen to contribute to sectarian tension. There is an annual Maiden Festival, seen as a showcase for Protestant culture, but one with increasing efforts to be portrayed, and experienced, as non-sectarian. In addition, Derry/Londonderry was the 2013

UK City of Culture, a title held until 2017 when the next city took on the title. During 2013, the 'Fleadh Cheoil', also known as the 'Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann' and concisely as the Fleadh (pronounced 'fla'), took place in Derry/Londonderry. The Fleadh is a competition and festival of traditional Irish music. Having it take place in LDY attracted controversy, as it has been seen as a pro-republican/nationalist event, according to the participants interviewed.

Geographically, the city is made up of a walled centre built in the 17th century, and there have been historical sieges such as the 1689 Siege of Derry. This is notable as some participants say that this contributes towards a siege mentality of some of the city's inhabitants. Furthermore, being close to the border with the Republic of Ireland has meant that the issue of Brexit (i.e. the UK departure from the European Union) raised concerns in terms of daily impacts

The main reasons for the choice of LDY are therefore that there is a greater contribution through not choosing the more-researched city of Belfast and that there is a unique history, culture and geography which will better contextualise the issues of identity, threat and trust. There was also another more pragmatic benefit of LDY in that the interviewer (i.e. myself) had family who lived within driving distance of the city. This meant that it was possible to stay with them for several weeks at a time, which in turn allowed the building up of contacts through snowballing and provided a certain ethnographic insight by living and working there.

In the end, LDY was visited four times between January and May 2017 for 1-2 weeks each time. Between trips, the interviews were transcribed, and further interviews were arranged for the next trip.

Interviews

Fifty 50 one-to-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were arranged at a place and location amenable to each interviewee and the interviewer.

Interviews lasted usually between an hour and an hour and a half.

There was a strong rationale for focusing on semi-structured interviews as the main data source. The benefits of semi-structured interviews are that they facilitate rapport/empathy, allow greater flexibility in covering areas (including going into novel areas), and can produce richer data (Smith & Osborn, 2007). They also build upon the everyday experience of conversations and people may be pleased to have the opportunity to talk in a face-to-face situation with someone interested in them. On the other hand, the disadvantages are that they can reduce the control the interviewer has over the situation, they take longer to carry out, and are harder to analyse (Smith & Osborn, 2007). As regards these factors in this study: it was my impression that the interpersonal situation for interviews made participants more likely to respond than they would through surveys (though arranging interviews required more intense communication and follow-up); that participants provided comparatively richer information about identity, threat and trust, including how they define and

understand the concept; and that people were largely happy to talk to me, with many finding the conversation interesting and stimulating. That said, interviews did sometimes go off-topic, requiring a certain patience and assiduity to bring participants back on topic and keep them there. The interview data was substantial, which made it more time consuming to carry out, process and analyse, but in return, the data was much richer.

Each interview started with an information sheet explaining that the study was on identity, threat and trust. While the question of threats and feeling threatened only came after the question on trust, it may be that the information sheet primed a response or a perspective towards threat. That said, the evidence in psychology that there is a priming effect is highly contested (Ulrich et al., 2017).

Participants and sampling

The choice of participants was based on purposeful and snowball sampling (Patton, 1990). People were looked for simply on the basis that they were willing and able to describe their experiences and meanings, and everyone who was interviewed was found through a referral of some kind.

In terms of numbers of interviews, the 'gold standard' to determine the sample size for qualitative inquiry is saturation which can be defined as "the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change to the codebook" (Guest et al.,

2006, p. 65). This cannot be determined in advance and there was a risk that during the analysis it would be found that the numbers interviewed were insufficient for clear themes to emerge. Consequently, at least 50 participants were looked to be recruited, which seemed more than sufficient.

The participants were all of adult age and lived or worked in and around LDY. Participants were found through personal contacts, word-of-mouth, and other forms of referrals. A heterogeneous sample was aimed for and at one point when it was noticed that participants were disproportionately male, there was intentional action to recruit female participants. The final make-up of the sample was pleasingly balanced and diverse. There were 50 interviews of which: 26 were male, 24 were female; 23 were (ostensibly¹⁵) from a Catholic/nationalist/republican (CNR) background, 23 (ostensibly) from a Protestant/unionist/loyalist (PUL) background, and 4 who would be considered as coming from neither (i.e. moved into the area from outside Northern Ireland). Within each category there was quite an even split — half the men were from a CNR background, the other half from a PUL background, and likewise amongst the women. In terms of representativeness, this is comparable to the Northern Ireland demographic breakdown based on the 2011 census: male 49% and female 51%; Catholic 45%, Protestant (and other Christian) 48%, Other religions and none 7% (NISRA, 2012). Other characteristics of the participants: 1 was from an ethnic minority background, 1 identified as being LGBT, and 1 was a foreign national

¹⁵ In the sense that they would be likely to be classed by an external researcher such as myself as such. This does not reflect how the participants identified themselves.

who had become a permanent resident. In relation to wider Northern Ireland demographics this too is broadly representative: 98% white, 2% non-white and other; 97% heterosexual, 3% other; UK- and/or Ireland-born 95%, born outside the UK and Ireland 5% (NISRA, 2012; NILT 2017).

Research ethics

The project was designed with minimal risks for participants and the researcher. The questions focused on their perspectives and experiences of living in Northern Ireland, during and after the Troubles. The questions did not elicit information liable to put them at risk of prosecution or retribution. Only adults were involved in the study, and questions and the setting were chosen in coordination with each participant, to be respectful and neutral, so that participants could speak freely.

No individual or group faced more risks than benefits by participating in the study. Indeed, several participants that were interviewed found the process interesting and appreciated the opportunity to share their experiences.

Participants were given an information sheet and consent form, to read and sign, before the questions. Participants were informed that though their responses are being recorded for better analysing their responses, research or output coming from the research will not use their real names, nor include details that can be used to identify them. Their details are kept

confidential and limited to myself. All but one participant agreed to be recorded and notes were made for that participant.

Participants were free to decline to participate or withdraw from the study without inducement or retribution. Withdrawal could either be by refusing to take part or asking to have their interviews withdrawn from the study within 30 days of the interview taking place. There were some instances during the recruitment stage where participants eventually decided not to take part in the study, with the reason usually given as lack of available time. In other cases, individuals did not reply to either calls or emails as to whether they would be interested in participating and did not give reasons.

Participants were not rewarded financially for taking part though tea, coffee, and biscuits were provided in some cases. Participants were provided with my contact details should they have any questions or concerns after the data collection process.

Ethical approval was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee of the University of Birmingham (project number: ERN_16-0407).

Data analysis method

The interviews were recorded with an MP3 recorder (except for the one interview where

only hand-written notes were used). During all interviews, hand-written notes were made to provide ongoing understandings, thoughts, reflections, and to provide points to return to during the interview.

Using NVIVO the set of transcripts were coded. The interviewees were pseudonymised (i.e. provided with fictional names) during the analysis and write-up. Through reading and re-reading an initial series of codes was identified which were grouped into four categories: identity, threat, intergroup threat, and trust (see Appendix D). Threat provided a large number of potential codes. So, those codes were divided between 'intergroup threat' and 'threat'. Threat focused more on the experience of threat and in particular, the emotion, the triggers and the cognitive response. Intergroup threat was a broader category including issues of behaviour and perception. NVIVO was then used to retrieve the relevant sections of the interviews, under each category, to read and re-read until themes were developed.

NVIVO was used for memo-writing and to create a journal of the research process, which Smith et al. (2009) argue, in their guidance of IPA, is beneficial in that they provide an additional data source with which to help contextualise and develop the analysis.

Research account

During the data collection process, it seemed important to consider reflexivity and positionality in advance. After the interviews, the experience was looked back upon in light

of original expectations.

Reflexivity and positionality

Considering reflexivity and positionality is crucial to provide a credible and plausible analysis of participants' phenomenological accounts (Clancy, 2013). This involved questioning my attitudes, thoughts, reactions and habitual actions to be aware of the limits of my knowledge and how my behaviour can influence or affect others, but also issues such as ethnicity, age, gender and accent.

I am a British Indian male who speaks with an English (i.e. not Northern Irish) accent. My ethnicity and minority status could have produced positive, sympathetic responses or negative antagonistic responses. My impression amongst those I interviewed was that there was little hostility. From my perspective, and I cannot verify this objectively, my position as an ethnic minority and British male seemed not to be a disadvantage. Where I thought my background may have had an impact, I included this in my analysis. People from CNR and PUL backgrounds, as well as those from neither, seemed happy and available to speak to me. I interpret this, in part, as a testament to the generosity of the people of the area.

I found participants relatively happy and open, but it may well be that those who were unhappy simply chose not to agree to an interview. I was introduced to participants through referral. This likely helped persuade participants to take part, more so than had I have

contacted them without such an introduction. In general, I found that presenting myself in a professional, yet friendly, manner and being respectful, yet probing, of the participants, ensured that the interviews went smoothly.

Concerning the position of my participants, while I looked for the most diverse range of participants for the study, my impression was that many participants worked in civil society organisations, and the others were active in, or connected (formally or informally) to, people who worked in civil society organisations (CSOs). There are several reasons for this.

Derry/Londonderry is a relatively small, close-knit society, which meant most people know someone connected to CSOs. It was through people linked to CSOs that I found participants, so they are more likely to be at least connected to such organisations. Not all individuals are able to devote time during the day for interviews and it tended to be individuals working with CSOs or a wider interest in civil society issues who were willing and able to give me their time.

I was keen to ensure that the participants and I were safe throughout. The snowballing method gave some degree of confidence that the participants I would meet would be safe, in that, in some way, they were vouched for by people who have regular contact with them. Nonetheless, I was aware that certain areas were dangerous, and that I may arouse suspicion. I was also aware that some, especially those with a loyalist paramilitary background were associated with far-right organisations, including overtly racist organisations such as Combat 18. Ultimately, it was my call that the people I met were safe,

and the locations I met in were safe. In the end, I came to no harm.

At the same time, I made a similar judgement over whether participants were safe in terms of their physical and mental safety. For example, I chose a peace and reconciliation centre to conduct a small number of interviews, having obtained permission from the managers to do so. This was particularly useful for certain physically vulnerable groups such as uniformed police officers, who continue to be targeted by dissident republicans. In terms of mental vulnerability, I avoided people who, based on their history and experiences, I felt might be traumatised by our conversations. I also remained attentive throughout the interviews, to ensure that the discussions were not upsetting the interviewees.

The interviews took place in the first half of 2017, during which time the outcome of the 2016 'Brexit' (i.e. UK decision to leave the European Union) referendum was being defined, and the March 2017 Northern Ireland Assembly elections took place. The context of the interviews was quite unique in that these two political events seemed to make issues of identity, threat and trust more salient. In several interviews, participants brought up these issues without being prompted by me. While such incidents are not typical or generalisable to other conflicts, they brought issues of identity, threat and trust to the fore in different ways, much as other political or social incidents might in other contexts. Where participants brought it up in terms of identity, threat and trust, I let participants expand on the issues and asked follow-up questions but only when I sensed that the issues would be relevant to my core research questions.

The responses during the interviews were more varied than I had expected. Participants rarely fitted neatly into CNR or PUL stereotypes. Responses also varied as to the degree in which they were phenomenological (i.e. recounting personal experiences), analytical (i.e. defining meanings and exploring concepts) or performative (i.e. saying things for social or psychological impact). As mentioned earlier, with phenomenological and discourse analysis methods there is a tension between employing 'empathy', where the interpreter tries to get inside the phenomenon to understand it, and 'suspicion', where appearances are not taken at face value and instead are clues towards a latent meaning (Flick, 2014). It seemed prudent to work with the two types of interpretation approach depending on the utterance.

Likewise, it was clear that some interviews uncovered latent meanings or conceptualisations from participants, whereas in other cases, the meanings were co-constructed, through the interaction between the participants and myself, during the interview.

While the eventual outcome was data that was somewhat unwieldy, it was rich in its insights and nuance.

Quality criteria

On assessing research quality, the standard quantitative research criteria of reliability, validity and generalisability, are largely inappropriate for qualitative research (Braun &

Clarke, 2013). Unlike quantitative research, there are less widely agreed criteria for qualitative research, but Braun & Clarke (2013) outline ten criteria that they argue are suitable: sensitivity to the context of existing research; sensitivity to participants' perspectives and the socio-cultural context; owning one's perspective; situating the sample; grounding in examples; a good balance between analytic narrative and data extracts; the researcher is positioned as active in the process; sensitivity and openness to the data; impact and importance; and finally, transferability. These criteria are subjective and ultimately it falls to the reader to assess whether this doctoral study meets these criteria but arguably this has been achieved.

This study is based on a thorough literature review to ensure the research question and sub-questions are sensitive to the research context. The interview procedure (see appendix B) allowed participants to provide their own perspectives and experiences including socio-cultural context. My position, status and perspective has been acknowledged in regard to the participants. Participants are from a range of backgrounds (as detailed above), thus situating the sample. Concrete quotes have been provided to elucidate the analysis, and a balance between data and analysis was sought after that is the most compelling. The data collection and analysis procedure has been outlined in clear detail to demonstrate that myself, as the researcher, is active in the process. The analysis was very open to capturing different accounts and thus sensitive to the data. In terms of importance, this research on identity, threat and trust is critical to accurately understand how those concepts function in a conflict-affected context. The impact is difficult to determine in advance of publication from my findings, but the informal feedback that has been received from academics and

practitioners suggests these findings are very welcome.

The final issue is transferability. This study is focused on Derry/Londonderry and Northern Ireland in a wider context. Some of the insights may well be very specific to the context — for example, the impact of Bloody Sunday as an event and experience that has changed people. However, the themes identified concerning identity, threat and trust are transferable to different contexts. The type and content of identities may be very different, but the way that they are complex and intersect, for example, is likely common in most conflict contexts. Likewise, and as another example, the concept of ‘safe space’ trust, which is felt (from a phenomenological standpoint), rather than deduced is likely a very widespread phenomenon, though the things that people worry about feeling safe from are specific to an area. As such, it can be argued that the findings from this study are transferable to other contexts and in particular conflict-affected contexts, though only further research would evidence this.

Summary

To investigate the research question – in a conflict-affected context, how is trust affected by issues of identity and threat – this research project employed a methodology and method which allowed examination of meanings and experiences of identity, threat and trust, and the patterns between them. This chapter outlined the study’s epistemological and ontological grounding in Critical Realism; the use of semi-structured interviews for the data;

and the approach of a mixed-method case study, or pluralistic qualitative research approach, drawing from several methods (i.e. thematic analysis, phenomenology, and discourse analysis). The following chapters provide the findings and analysis of the study looking to understand meanings of identity, threat and trust in LDY, and the patterns between them.

Chapter 7. THEMES: IDENTITY

After some phatic communication (i.e. small talk) and a discussion asking people about their background, the participants were asked this question: “People talk about identity in Northern Ireland; what does that mean to you?” This chapter explores the key themes that were developed from the interviews: identity as fluid, identity as multifaceted, the intersection of identities, extrinsic factors that affect identity, intrinsic factors that affect identity, and transgressive identities.

Introduction

This chapter touches on a wide range of issues and debates around identity. Firstly, there are debates around the Social Identity Approach (SIA) literature, which is the main theoretical comparison point of this chapter on identity. Secondly, are the alternative approaches to identity, in particular the work of symbolic interactionism and social constructionism. Thirdly, the issue of identity development.

Social Identity Approach

As noted in chapter 2, Social Identity Approach (SIA) literature, meaning the literature that draws on both Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Self-Categorisation Theory (SCT) (e.g. Reicher et al., 2010), is incredibly broad. This chapter focuses on a subset of issues and debates

related to SIA.

Firstly, there is an issue around the tendency in SIA literature to see identities as static, singular and additive. Paradoxically, John Turner, who developed SIT and SCT, argues the opposite — that the self should not be thought of as “a relatively fixed mental structure” but rather as the product of a “flexible, constructive process of judgment and meaningful inference” (Turner et al., 1994, p. 458). In a study focused on whether the “self is a fluid or stable entity” (Onorato & Turner, 2004, p. 1), Onorato & Turner (2004) compare self-schema theory (where the self is a relatively stable cognitive representation or schema) with SCT, finding for a fluid self-perception that is variable and context-dependent.

Despite this, and arguably as a result of minimal group experiments and studying single identities in isolation, SIA research tends to approach social identities as singular and additive (Greenwood, 2012). In the same way that much of psychology tends to assume that individuals are relatively stable and fixed (Haslam et al., 2010), SIA literature does likewise. Where researchers do deal with multiple identities, they are usually treated as running concurrently, in levels or as nested within each other (e.g. Brewer, 1993, 1999; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Calhoun, 1994). There is a nascent body of work on how individuals experience and manage multiple identities, but this work focuses on single types of identity (e.g. cultural identities, racial identities), rather than different types (Jones & Hynie, 2017). There has not been a systematic attempt to evaluate SIA research through an intersectional lens (Greenwood, 2012).

In contrast to the perspective of identity as static, singular and additive, this chapter finds identity to be experienced as fluid (theme 1), multifaceted (theme 2), and prone to intersect (theme 3).

Secondly, in connection with SIA is the issue of negative identity and the SIA coping strategy of social creativity. Research within the SIA tradition suggests that when an individual makes a comparison with their group and finds their ingroup in a disadvantaged position, that individual will have a negative social identity (Mummendey et al., 1999). One coping strategy for this is social creativity where “group members may seek positive distinctiveness for the in-group by redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situation”, such as “changing the values assigned to the attributes of the group, so that comparisons which were previously negative are now perceived as positive” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 43). Theme 4 focuses on extrinsic factors that shape identity and the sub-theme on negative identity focuses on how participants portray these negative identities.

Thirdly, the issue of superordinate identities and how identities are more nuanced and can be perceived as superordinate in some way. As noted in chapter 2, the concept of a superordinate identity was popularised by the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). This model developed in the SIA tradition and is posited to reduce intergroup bias (Gaertner et al., 1993) and, in subsequent research, to reduce threat (Riek et al., 2010) and promote intergroup forgiveness (Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008). Theme 6 on

Transgressive identities draws somewhat on this, in that there are identities that can have a superordinate component to them but that such perceptions fluctuate.

Finally, there is the issue of choice and gradation in identity as seen in the SIA literature. As noted in chapter 2, Huddy (2001) argues that a limitation in the ability to apply SIA to political identities is that identity choice and gradations in identity strength have largely been ignored in the research. The key argument is that firstly, central to much SIA research is the experimental minimal group paradigm which involves assigning group membership to participants rather than involving choice, and secondly, that SIA theorists typically regard social identity as all-or-none, side-lining issues of identity strength (Huddy, 2001). Theme 5 on Intrinsic Factors of identity has a sub-theme on identity desirability where excerpts highlight a level of agency in choosing identities and how people can, for example, gradually identify away from identities as their appeal diminishes.

Alternative approaches to identity

As noted in chapter 2, two popular conceptualisations of identity can be traced back to psychologists operating around a century ago: James's (1890) one-in-many selves paradox, where individuals maintain a continuous self while acting out different roles and personalities according to the situation; and Mead's (1934) "I" as the subject self, and "me" as the socially considered object. Theme 2 in this chapter argues for identity as multifaceted, which is somewhat similar to these conceptualisations. Monroe et al. (2000) argue that the "self as a complex and multifaceted identity" (p. 420) is comparable to James's (1890) and

Mead's (1934) conceptualisations. Stryker & Burke (2000, p.286) argues that Mead's (1934) conceptualisation implies "the self is multifaceted" and that James's (1890) conceptualisation is of people possessing "many selves". The idea of identity as multifaceted is explored further in theme 2.

In addition to SIA, this chapter draws on symbolic interactionist and social constructionist approaches to identity. Identity theory (e.g. Stryker & Burke, 2000), explicitly draws on the work of James and Mead where "the self should be regarded as a multifaceted [...] construct" (Hogg et al., 1995, p.256). The approach by Kenneth Gergen, rooted in social constructionism is a concept of 'multi-being' — of people "constituted within multiple relationships from which they emerge with multiple, incoherent, and often conflicting potentials" (Gergen, 2008, p. 335). While Identity theory is rooted in symbolic interactionism and Gergen's approach in social constructionism (Monroe et al., 2000), both these approaches have their roots in a sociological perspective with an emphasis on the social rather than psychological origins of identity. These somewhat contrast with SIA which has its foundations in individual psychology and is a nonreductionist, cognitive model (Monroe et al., 2000) but which Rattansi & Phoenix (2005) argue sits in a middle position between traditional psychology and postmodern sociological approaches. Theme 2 on multifaceted identities looks at how these approaches contrast and explores why the more sociological perspectives resonate with the interview excerpts in this study.

This study draws on the concept of labelling which has come out of the work on labelling

theory (see Berk, 2015). Returning to Mead's (1934) conceptualisation of self as in part "viewing one's self from the perspective of the other" (Matsueda, 2014, p. 14), this conceptualisation (and the work of other symbolic interactionists) has been used by theorists to observe how these perspectives act as labels and that individuals may come to see themselves as the labels, particularly negative labels (Matsueda, 2014). Theme 4 on extrinsic factors has a sub-theme that focuses on labels and how individuals interact with them.

Finally, a body of work of relevance is on competitive victimhood. Competitive victimhood relates to group competition for claims of victimhood (Young & Sullivan, 2016). In the Northern Ireland context, Ferguson et al. (2010) argue that victimhood can be a form of social competition between the PUL and CNR communities and that the victimhood label can offer strength and legitimacy. This issue is drawn on, in theme 4, on the sub-theme of negative identities.

Identity development

Before moving on to the themes, one more topic of relevance is identity development. As noted in chapter 2, the most prominent theorist in the development of identity is Erik Erikson who outlined a series of psychosocial development stages, the fifth of which is the development of identity which begins in adolescence (Erikson, 1950, 1959, 1968). The identity development process is centred on the period of adolescence — due to the emergence of necessary cognitive abilities, increased choices and responsibilities plus the

accumulation of experiences — but continues throughout adulthood (McLean & Syed, 2015). Furthermore, there has been a lack of research focused on social identity development as opposed to personal identity development (Bennett & Sani, 2004). Theme 5 on intrinsic factors has a sub-theme on developmental processes that focuses on that development of social identity as experienced and expounded by the participants.

Moving on to how the themes were developed: as with the other topics the transcripts were read and re-read to develop an initial series of codes. The relevant sections of the interviews were then retrieved (using NVIVO), under each category, to read and re-read them until themes took shape. As with the other themes, the themes were developed having been sensitised to existing theory on threat but were not based on theory.

In the interviews, by far the most common response,¹⁶ when asked about identity in Northern Ireland, was for participants to talk about themselves and their identities in some way as fluid, multifaceted and/or complex; usually a combination of all three. These overlapping concepts are broken down into the first two themes of this chapter: i) fluidity and ii) multifaceted and complex. The first theme is specifically centred on how participants experience their identity as fluid, meaning that it changes depending on the time and context. The second theme is the way that identity is experienced as made up of multiple

¹⁶ 11 of the 50 respondents responded by saying their identity was fluid, complex and/or multifaceted. The next most common response was simply 'Irish', which was the response of 4 participants.

facets, and how these facets can be interpreted as identities in their own rights. The third theme looks at the ways that these identity facets, or identities, intersect in notable ways. The fourth and fifth themes look, respectively, at the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that participants determine as influential on identity. The final, sixth theme looks at identities that seem to transgress traditional or stereotypical identities.

Theme 1. Identity feels fluid

Though some participants spoke with strong assertive statements¹⁷ about who they are, with several participants the first thing they said when asked what identity in Northern Ireland means to them is that it was fluid^{18 19 20 21}. The emphasis was that identity is perceived as dynamic, it changes depending on the time and context, and this is irrespective of how fluid it may not seem by external observers.

As noted earlier, SIA research tends to portray identity as relatively fixed and stable, as much of psychology does (Haslam et al., 2010) even though in their original formulations, SIT and

¹⁷ **Stefania, CNR, female:** “See identity. My identity is that I'm Irish. It's, you know. You know it's just I'm Irish. That's it.”

¹⁸ **Jeremy, CNR, male:** “Identity is a fluid thing”

¹⁹ **Dionna, PUL, female:** “I think your identity is fluid. It is not fixed.”

²⁰ **Dalene, CNR, female:** “I guess everybody's identity changes over time. I think it's... I don't think it is static. I think it is quite a fluid thing now.”

²¹ **Sanah, PUL, female:** “Identity to me is the core of who you are. Basically. I try to be quite fluid and flexible in that.”

SCT emphasised identity as flexible and fluid (Onorato & Turner, 2004; Turner, 1999; Turner et al., 1994). This idea of self as flexible and a perception of fluidity is what is found in this study. Study participants emphasised how identity changes in context but also how it changes over time.

To get a better understanding of the lived experience, here is an illustrative excerpt:

Dalene, CNR, female: "Everybody's identity changes over time [...] I don't think it is static. I think it is quite a fluid thing now. I mean when your opinions change [...] I suppose my core beliefs are probably the same [...] It is like I don't identify as one thing [...] It is very much about context. I can't just say oh yeah grand, I am a Catholic, nationalist or I am a woman. I am a single parent. Or whatever. I am all of those things, all mixed together. And to different varying degrees in different times of my life. So I can't see identity is being that solid. Do you know there is context and there is fluidity there. I think is the best way to answer it."

Dalene notes that identity is fluid; she cannot see it as being static. At the same time, she perceives her core beliefs are the same. The concurrence of a dynamic identity and static beliefs or values was a common perception amongst participants in this study. The understanding that comes out of such comments is that participants feel that beliefs or values are essential to who one is – i.e. core and static. This contrasts with identity, which is linked to the 'world outside' and the social constructions of identity components, and is thus

dynamic. An example of the dynamic of identity transformation is Dalene's change in perspective following the Catholic Church abuse scandals, which is explored in theme 5 on intrinsic factors under the sub-theme of identity desirability.

This excerpt makes clear that Dalene's identity is mixed – Catholic, nationalist, woman, single parent. It varies throughout her life and with context. Even when social identity groups remain relatively stable, from an external perspective, there is a sense of churn from an internal perspective. Effectively, identity can change without a change to one's core beliefs and values, as far as one perceives it.

There also seems to be a positive value associated with fluidity, in contrast to a term that came about frequently which is 'staunch'. For example:

Sanah, PUL, female: "Identity to me is the core of who you are. Basically. I try to be quite fluid and flexible in that. I don't really see myself staunchly as anything."

Participants would describe others, never themselves, as staunch. Being staunch is portrayed in the negative, whereas fluidity is characterised as positive. In the case of Sanah, it is notable that she says that she 'tries' to be fluid and flexible. Whereas others describe their identity as fluid, Sanah presents fluidity and flexibility as an ideal to work towards.

There may well be a performance aspect of these ‘fluid, not staunch’ affirmations. My impression from participants was that they feel there is an external perception of people in Northern Ireland and potentially themselves as sectarian, and affirming that one is ‘fluid, not staunch’ is a way of distancing oneself from that. This ‘fluid, not staunch’ identity could be seen as an identity within itself, and one that has a certain level of desirability.

Theme 1 Discussion

This theme focuses on how identity is experienced as fluid, rather than static, in that it varies over time and context. In contrast to a fluid identity, individuals’ core beliefs and values are often perceived as more static. A fluid identity seems to be seen as a positive in the context of Northern Ireland, contrasting with a ‘staunch’ identity which is seen in the negative.

Huddy (2002) argues that within SCT there is a tension between whether identities are fluid or stable in meaning. This theme, finding identity as fluid, is similar to the conclusion by Onorato & Turner (2004) that the self is fluid and that “self-perception is a context-dependent process, rather than the manifestation of enduring personality traits or self-schemas” (p. 275-276). Yet, finding identity as fluid contrasts with much SIA research which is often based on the minimal group paradigm and looks to strip away real-world identity to better understand single-identity processes (Greenwood, 2012). Indeed, it seems that by focusing on such single-identity processes there is a gap between the insights from this approach and real-world identities. Thus, to build on the existing minimal group paradigm to make it relevant to the real world will need an approach that allows identity to fluctuate

over time, rather than be assigned.

This finding of fluidity also seems to contrast with Huddy's (2001) assertion that political identities are relatively stable, based on her research on feminist identity (Huddy, 1997, 1998). Yet on closer inspection, this seems to be explained by a differing focus: how identity is experienced as a whole, as opposed to individual political identities. For the participants in this study, their political identities may be fluid or stable, but overall, their sense of identity is of being in flux. Furthermore, what makes up these political identities themselves could change, so that individuals could identify consistently with a certain identity while seeing what makes up that identity as changeable.

In a broader context, one could interpret these fluid identities to be positive in terms of peace, as some have argued that the fluidity of identities plays a key role in peacemaking (Richmond & Mac Ginty, 2019). As such this fluidity may prevent the worsening of conflict. There seems to be a positive association of identity as fluid (in contrast to a 'staunch' identity) and this may suggest a shift towards norms that facilitate peace, though further research would be needed to validate this.

In terms of further research, one approach could be extending the minimal group paradigm approach to involve more fluidity, potentially by assessing participants' identification with identities over an extended timeframe and in varying contexts. Another point of interest would be to explore the meanings of identity as 'fluid' and 'staunch'. As noted earlier, the

posited superordinate Northern Ireland/Irish identity is not universally seen as a positive, inclusive identity (McKeown, 2014; McNicholl et al., 2019). Thus, being fluid may potentially be a better candidate for such a unifying identity.

Theme 2. Identity is multifaceted

In addition to fluidity, participants described their identity as multifaceted and complex.

As noted in the introduction, the idea of one's self and identity as multifaceted and complex can be traced back to theorists such as George Herbert Mead and William James (Monroe et al., 2000; Stryker & Burke, 2000). This contrasts with SIT which does not conceptualise identity *per se*, but rather defines social identity as “those aspects of an individual's self-image that derive from the social categories to which he perceives himself as belonging” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 40). The same is true of SCT which focuses on categorisation rather than conceptualising identity (Turner & Reynolds, 2003). Thus, the idea of identity as multifaceted and complex, as this theme expounds, finds greater similarity to the Mead-James conceptualisation and approaches aligned with this such as symbolic interactionism (e.g. Stryker & Burke, 2000) and social constructionism (e.g. Gergen's, 2008, approach of a 'multi-being').

There is a contrast to how one is seen by others as a group member or category, as compared to how one sees themselves as multifaceted. This is illustrated by the following

excerpt from Emmanuel:

Emmanuel, PUL, male: “Well I'm a unionist. I am probably a nominal Protestant. I am an Orangeman, I'm an Apprentice boy. But I suppose it is multifaceted, identity. On the whole I'm a unionist and I am a Protestant.”

What is notable about this is that though Emmanuel seems to almost represent the archetypal PUL male — calling oneself a Protestant and unionist, and taking part in Protestant fraternal organisations — he, nonetheless, describes this as multifaceted. This suggests a tendency to see one's identity as more complex as external observers may perceive it.

As an aside, it may be worth remarking that Emmanuel does not describe himself as a loyalist. This may be because of the association of the term loyalism with loyalist paramilitarism, and indeed Emmanuel had been associated with loyalist paramilitaries. The omission of the term was interpreted as a way to distance himself from that past.

In some cases, participants felt that identity should be multifaceted, but this is being denied to them. Clay discusses how identity is a label, and then goes on to say:

Clay, CNR, male: “And that is what identities here boil down to. In the simplest form.

But it shouldn't. Because identity should be multifaceted. It should be am I a father, am I a son or whatever. I shouldn't be defined by how I want to be governed. But we are. But that is how we get chosen to identify ourselves, apart from anything else.”

Clay posits the environment as one where politics (i.e. ‘how I want to be governed’) defines identity, and instead how he would like to see himself (e.g. as a father, son). Working with the two analytical lenses: a phenomenological lens would see Clay experiencing that an identity is imposed on him and a different, multifaceted identity being denied from him; a discourse analysis lens would suggest Clay claiming a desire to have this multifaceted identity. In either case, a multifaceted identity is portrayed as desirable, and something Clay seemingly wants but is not allowed.

A final, detailed excerpt is from Joaquin who expounds the facets, or layers as he puts it:

Joaquin, CNR, male: “I see identity as multi-layered. Multiple things. And by seeing the problem here as the singling out of a dimension of identity and exaggerating it, way out of proportion to its dimensions. Insofar as our sectarian identities have their roots in religion [...] I come from a Catholic tradition, I would have some respect for that tradition, but I don't belong to it. [...] I'm an agnostic believer. So therefore, the identities imposed upon me here around the sectarian roots of our identities. I cannot identify with it. My privileged engagement with ethnic diversity, cultural diversity throughout the world makes it not possible for me to subscribe to

distinctions in terms of ethnicity. Other than to say: isn't it beautiful, not a bad, but isn't it nourishing? I have been talked by people who never often darken the door of this classroom but who taught me multiple things on the back of their culture.”

There are several insights from Joaquin’s excerpt. Firstly, Joaquin has considered and reflected on his identity and is keen to affirm his identity as multi-layered and nuanced. He portrays an environment of polarised identities, as other participants have in their interviews, but still calls it ‘our’ identities. So, he accepts that he is part of this environment and these identities. Thus, each layer of his identity is understood with respect to, and part of, this environment. He identifies with faith communities but describes himself as an agnostic believer. So, not aligned with Catholicism traditionally. The final section reaffirms a sense of openness, but, notably, he uses the word privilege, which suggests that his contact with diversity is a matter of good fortune rather than agency, and something he feels grateful for.

Joaquin’s identity is indeed complex and multi-layered. He takes pain to discuss the nuance, as he experiences and understands it. While he may be perceived by others as Catholic/nationalist/republican, he himself sees a much more intricate identity. This asymmetry in perspective is a recurring theme throughout the interviews. People perceive their own identity as complex, whereas they are perceived by others and perceive others as having simple identities.

Theme 2 Discussion

In contrast to my expectation, prior to the study, that individuals will respond with simple identities, participants mostly described their own identities as fluid and multifaceted (or in some cases that they wanted them to be). Rather than individuals having several identities nested within each other, there is instead several competing identities, some of which contrast with others, some which are independent, and some which impact on others. Occasionally these identities intersect with each other (which is the subject of the next theme).

Relating this theme to the literature on identity, it seems that from a phenomenological perspective, experiences of identity are more akin to sociologically-rooted approaches to identity, in that they are multifaceted and constituted from social relations and roles (e.g. Gergen, 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000), as opposed to the more social psychologically-rooted approaches such as SIA which focus on groupings and categorisations (i.e. Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Similar arguments have been made before in relating the theories of SIA to the real world. Abrams & Hogg (2004) argue that theories derived from a symbolic interactionist perspective can, in some cases, better capture the complexities and nature of intergroup encounters than SCT can, say, with the principle of functional antagonism²². Furthermore, SCT tends to obscure elements to which ingroup members embrace or tolerate ingroup

²² Functional antagonism relates to the “antagonism between the different levels of self-categorization in terms of their ‘salience’ (the degree to which they are functionally pre-potent in determining self-perception) in any given situation” (Turner & Oakes, 1986, p. 241).

heterogeneity and dissent, in favour of a focus on issues such as uncertainty reduction and depersonalisation (Hornsey, 2006, 2008). There is also the argument that SIT and SCT have been misunderstood, that social identity should be seen as a process underpinning multiple social phenomena rather than a 'thing' and that SIT and SCT should be seen in more narrow terms: SIT is a theory on macrosocial strategies and SCT specifies cognitive processes (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). In any case, SIT and SCT are insufficient to deal with complex, multifaceted identities; arguably that is not what they were intended to do.

Building on this finding, there needs to be an approach that can work with multifaceted identities. As noted in theme 1, SIA studies would benefit from approaches that incorporate identity as fluid. In the same way, future SIA studies would benefit by studying richer, multifaceted identities. While there has been work on social identity complexity (e.g. Roccas & Brewer, 2002), this looks to examine how complicated identities are, rather than explore the impact of complex, multifaceted identities. SIA research would benefit from such research to provide insights that are closer to the real world and potentially have greater external validity.

Theme 3. Intersectional identity

The picture so far is of individuals who have multiple identities or multiple facets of their identity, or at least perceive themselves to have this multiplicity. While in many cases these are separate or have some overlap, in some cases they intersect and result in notable

combinations.

In contrast to SIA research which tends to approach identities as singular and additive (Greenwood, 2012) and often treat multiple identities as nested or in levels (e.g. Brewer, 1993, 1999; Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Calhoun, 1994), this study finds identities are concurrent, collapsible and can combine to form a variety of different configurations.

The term intersectionality was popularised by Crenshaw (1989) who looked at the intersection of race and gender and it is noteworthy that the strongest example of intersection in this study relates to gender with other identities. Gender can unify and separate other identities — being a woman can be more compatible with CNR identities (e.g. Sinn Fein supporter) than PUL identities (e.g. Apprentice boy). Identities can compete or complement each other.

The richest discussion²³ on intersection is from Dalene who discusses how gender intersects with her other identities. The first part of the discussion is in response to being asked what identity in Northern Ireland means to her:

Dalene, CNR, female: “Identity? I suppose your immediate thought when people talk

²³ While other participants do discuss how identities intersect and, in some cases, specifically use the term 'intersectional' (e.g. Leonara, neutral, female), Dalene's discussion is the most lucid, which is why it is the focus of this theme.

about identity here is you automatically go to green and orange, as they say. But I don't suppose that's what I would identify myself as first anymore. I suppose I'm a parent now more than anything else [...] It depends on context you are asked as well, you know. If somebody is talking about the Troubles, then you would identify as a Catholic or nationalist. But if you are talking about gender issues then you would identify as a woman, as a working single parent, you know. It really does depend on the context.”

There is a common perception amongst participants that if someone asks about identity this is in relation to PUL/CNR identities, also described as orange (PUL) and green (CNR). But often, after the initial thought of PUL/CNR, other identities come up. In the above excerpt, Dalene shows awareness of the issues but, nonetheless, chooses to identify as a parent first and foremost. She then expands on how context affects this: in some contexts, being PUL/CNR is more salient, in others, gender is more salient, and in yet others, being a parent. This highlights the way simultaneous identities are held and there are differences in identity saliency.

The second time that the issue of gender gets brought up is at the end of my interview when Dalene was asked if there is anything that has been missed in our conversation. Dalene says that it was quite focused on green and orange, and not enough on gender. She was asked to expand. She initially talks about feeling threatened as a woman, an issue covered in the next chapter, before talking about how being a woman is a more critical issue:

Dalene, CNR, female: “Like, so many women will have that experience of speaking up in a meeting and five minutes later a man saying maybe exactly the same thing. That has literally happened to me [...] Either you're not listening to me, to what I am saying, or else you just thought it was a good idea. So, we are just going to roll with it and pretend that I never said it. Either way it is incredibly rude and incredibly insulting. So that is much more prevalent to me than anything political or religious.”

Whereas earlier in the interview Dalene discussed her previous experiences in relation to her CNR identity, Dalene talks about her gender identity as a more recent event. This was interpreted to mean that whereas previously her CNR identity was more prominent in her mind, now it is gender. She described the meeting experience, where her idea was disregarded when given by her, but accepted when repeated by a man. This experience angered her, and this was commensurate with gender identity issues becoming more salient, in comparison to religious or political identity issues.

Continuing, she was asked whether this (i.e. gender) has been always so prevalent:

Dalene, CNR, female: “As I got older I have noticed it more. I suppose I grew up in a very male-dominated house as well. I have five brothers so though they are not... They are good lads like but they are still got their shoulders (laughs) (unintelligible) as all men do. But definitely as I got older, definitely I felt it much more and more

deeply. And I suppose you see a lot more of. I suppose with the Internet and stuff you see a lot more of what is happening in the rest of the world, you know. So, it's like you read about these college campus rapes and stuff. And it's just there is always this dimension of what was she wearing and how much did you have to drink and it's like fuck off. (Laughs) It just infuriates me beyond belief. So that is more prevalent as I say to me than anything else is, what you face on a daily basis as a woman. I'm a single parent. Particularly in Northern Ireland there can be quite early mindsets here you know. So, I guess that is the one thing I would say is missing it is very much a gender perspective on it."

She notes that this has been a transitional process. She was aware of this when she was young (i.e. in a male-dominated household with five brothers) but as she got older this became more salient, in part through being aware of global issues concerning women. Lastly, she points out that she's a single parent which apparently can be taboo in Northern Ireland. This is linked to her identity as a woman.

Essentially, her anger about her treatment in meetings, and other women's treatment in the world that she has learned about, has increased the saliency of her gender identity. It should be noted that her work in a CSO is often focused on women and women's organisations. This may further contribute to the saliency of her gender.

Carrying on, Dalene was asked more about this gender perspective that she brought up:

Dalene, CNR, female: “I suppose again when you think of the nationalist community again it is a wee more progressive. It is. Well, Sinn Fein they are a more progressive party. And you have the likes of Bernadette Devlin back in the day. Walking across the floor of the commons and slapping your man. What is his name? I can't remember his name now. And you have had a female element to it. And sometimes it feels a wee bit like it has been written out.”

When analysing Dalene's comments about gender it is in the above excerpt where the intersectionality of identities – in this case, CNR and gender – are clearest. From the context, Dalene's comments about being progressive were interpreted to mean as catering better towards gender and other social issues. She sees the nationalists and Sinn Fein as more progressive; assumably in comparison to the unionists and the unionist parties (e.g. DUP, UUP). This was interpreted as one way in which her gender identity, and concerns about gender issues, are reinforced by her CNR-related identities. While identifying predominantly by gender is not something that people from the PUL community are excluded from — Ilene in the next theme (theme 4 on extrinsic factors) expressed her identity as a 'Derry girl' for example — there can be restrictions such as Rana who in theme 5 on intrinsic factors vents her frustration²⁴ that she is restricted from certain Protestant fraternal organisations as they

²⁴ **Rana, PUL, female:** “I'm not involved in the Orange Order. Obviously, the Apprentice Boys because they won't let any women in. I would be if they would. I would definitely be involved in the Apprentice Boys if they would let women in, but they bloody well won't. Because they're so backward.

exclude women. In contrast, the CNR-related political identity with its relation to progressive movements, as Dalene sees it, seems to be more able to intersect with gender identity, which in turn can help reinforce both identities. Essentially, each identity or each facet of identity is not an 'island'. Rather, these facets can work with each other reinforcing or undermining each other in turn.

This conversation with Dalene shows ways in which gender intersects with parenthood, politics, and wider social behaviour. Being a working single parent, as she sees herself, is an identity that is essentially an amalgam of three other identities that are compatible with each other, to some extent. While this seems a more static identity, global gender issues have increased the salience of gender in her multiple identities and can strengthen or weaken the combined identities, depending on the fit with other identities. For example, her political affiliation would be compatible with her concern for gender issues, as she sees the CNR community and CNR parties as progressive. Not all such identities are compatible.

Theme 3 Discussion

Following on from the last two themes, that identities are fluid and multifaceted, this theme focuses on the way that identities intersect and can form novel and changeable configurations. This was illustrated with one participant who discussed how her gender intersects with certain identities that are compatible with them, and that these intersecting identities can strengthen or weaken each other.

In social psychology, there is growing attention to more complex identities (Hornsey, 2008) and how individuals experience and manage these multiple identities (Jones & Hynie, 2017). This theme extends that work. It highlights how the identities themselves have varying levels of compatibility that can allow these identities to intersect and interdepend in different ways. Understanding identity may be helped by conceptualising it as multiple configurations, with pivotal identities that make them up being the focus, but with the understanding that these can impact others. A relational conceptualisation may help. Participants seemed to see themselves in a way similar to Gergen's (2008) concept of 'multi-being'. This rich, complex identity, as experienced from the inside by people, can contrast with how they are seen as having simple identities that are ascribed to others.

Further research can focus on how these intersecting identities are constructed and their compatibility. This could be through a social representations approach (e.g. Moscovici, 2001). Understanding how such social representations shape understandings of identities can give an idea of how identities can intersect. On a more basic level, exploring contextual identities and the social structures around them can give an indication. For example, identities such as those connected with fraternal Protestant organisations would inherently exclude women (by virtue of not being sororal organisations), and thus, those are identities that would not intersect with gender. Using such methods to focus on the social characteristics of these identities would help map out how certain identities intersect to provide novel configurations and how such identities develop over time.

Theme 4. Extrinsic factors

Participants described how factors shape their identity, and how in turn their identities shape these factors. These factors can come from within people – their agency, their desires, their thoughts, their feelings, etc. Or they can come from without – social narratives, pressures to conform, etc. In many ways, these factors, from within and without, interact and can become somewhat inseparable. Bearing this in mind, the next two sections focus on firstly, those issues that were deemed to be primarily outside the person and thus extrinsic factors, and secondly, those that were deemed are mainly from within the person, which are termed intrinsic factors.

Rather than focus on the origin and nature of these processes, these sections, starting with extrinsic factors, identify how these phenomena are experienced and understood. There are three sub-themes: one which focuses on labelling by others, a second which focuses on identity in the negative, and a final sub-section which focuses on identities being imposed on others.

Labels

Several participants talked about labels placed on them or being put into boxes, and these being identities, in a way. This is somewhat like the concept of labelling from the body of work known as 'labeling theory' where the labelling of individuals affects the individuals'

identities (Matsueda, 2014). Similarly, this study finds that labelling does not lead to individuals simply accepting or rejecting the label, it instead seems to cause an element of exploring the label and self-reflection, which in turn impacts on identity.

In an illustrative excerpt, Brigitte regards identity as something that one carries — a label that has been placed on them, unbeknownst to them. Then at some point people become conscious of this and evaluate it:

Brigitte, neutral, female: “I think identity is really important. I don't know that people realise how important it is until they are a little bit older. And you look back and you try and find your place in the world. Identity, when you were little, is a bit like a label that you carry around. You don't really think much of it. It's about whether that label is a positive label or negative label.”

Clay says something similar when asked what identity in Northern Ireland means to him:

Clay, CNR, male: “It is a, it is a ... Here it is a handy label. It is a way of just saying ... Well it is about nationalism first of all, it's about the constitutional issue ... Whether or not you're British or Irish is what it comes down to. And then I suppose the labels that they hang on that then are associated with religion. In my mind that is just shorthand for, what your general, overall political opinion is. About whether or not you want a united Ireland or to stay as part of Britain. And that is what identities here

boil down to. In the simplest form.”

Labelling seems to be passive: it is something that one is tagged with and relates to religion and political beliefs. As with Brigitte, Clay defines identity as something externally placed on you — as a label by others.

Bernardina expands further on the idea that one has a label passively put on them and this label is then explored at some point later in life. Bernardina emphasises her active struggle with these labels:

Bernardina, PUL, female: “Well, I think here frustration is that you get labelled. You are born into this label. And I used to say I’ve spent my life trying to get rid of it. And now that I am working in peacebuilding I feel like it is even more concrete. Actually, you are labelled even more as a Protestant because you're working in this field. So I rejected that label for a long time. I hated it. I was like my identity is, you know. I am a young woman, I am a mother. I am... You know, look at all the other elements that are, I think are very important to me. I like the outdoors, water... So, but this other notion of identity is just continually stuck on you.

But I think there was something unhealthy in my rejection of that because I suppose I came to really [...] hate what was labelled as Protestant culture [...] — hated marching bands, I hated territorialism, I hated flags, I hated Lambeg drums. I think

there is something a wee bit harmful in that because you feel like you're hating part of yourself. You are hating the fact that you came from this group of people who are now blamed for so many things. I often wonder is it the same for like Israeli Jews, working in peacebuilding, feeling complicit and you know the guilt and you know the type of... It is easy to blame this group of people for the ... I suppose the Troubles and the issues that have happened here. So I felt like part of me, by rejecting that I was kind of saying look, I am not one of them. You know, you could work with me (laughs). Almost like an inverted type of sectarianism.”

The excerpt shows the intricacy of dealing with these labels. She feels a pressure to identify with a label but sees the Protestant label as being culpable. She looks to identify away from that label but feels a tension that it is still a part of her and that such rejection is unhealthy. In this context, these labels have complicated interpretations and so, individuals can have tortuous relations with them.

Ilene, likewise, has negative feelings towards the labels placed on her. When asked what identity in Northern Ireland means, she recalled the time she spoke with a radio presenter and her opposition to being boxed into simple identities:

Ilene, PUL, female: “So what are you? British, Irish, you know. Protestant, Catholic de de duh de duh. And I hate that, hate those boxes and that's what it means here. It's

which wee²⁵ box, which wee boxes do you fit into. Where I think your identity is much more fluid [...] I thought about it a lot after he asked and I really, I really resented him trying to box me off and I said to him 'To be honest [Radio presenter's name], I'm a woman and I'm a Derry girl. You know. What more do you want me to say really.' But... So, for me here when they try to box you off. Where do you fit in."

When asked who 'they' refers to in relation to 'they give you these boxes', she responds:

Ilene, PUL, female: "Gove-, certainly government you know like which box do you fit in. Anybody that's to do with you know, councils, peace groups, your family, your community. If you meet someone, oh, what school did you go to? What's your name? You know. You can kind of tell from someone's name, what school they went to, what their religion is. And your identity is your religion or your community you went from, your politics. It's never about what music do you like what sports you're into, what your hobbies are you know. So that's what it means here like. Are you green or are you orange?"

In some ways, this continues from the previous section's example with Dalene. Ilene identifies as a woman and a 'Derry girl'. She sees these, or wants these to be seen, in preference to being seen as either British, Irish, Protestant, and/or Catholic. She sees her

²⁵ wee - little, small

identity as fluid but instead feels external pressure to be assigned into groups. This pressure is from institutions, individuals, and groups. She describes how it takes place in one-to-one interactions – people ask your name and school, and from this surmise your religion and politics. This is apparently a common approach to meeting people, as opposed to a focus on their interests.

My interpretation of this is that Ilene is aware of these pressures and chooses to have, or perform, an identity in opposition to these pressures. The issue of agency is covered in more depth in the next theme, but in this example, it seems Ilene chooses to identify as someone who does not conform with this boxing and labelling.

Negative identities

This study found identities in the negative, specifically, there was the portrayal of victimhood — of being discriminated against, of being wronged, of having lost something.

The excerpts in this sub-theme are reminiscent of the concept of competitive victimhood (e.g. Ferguson et al., 2010; Noor, Brown, Gonzalez, et al., 2008; Young & Sullivan, 2016) in that they highlight negative experiences and identities. However, it could be argued that these excerpts could also be seen as a form of social creativity, in that individuals “seek positive distinctiveness for the in-group by redefining or altering the elements of the comparative situation”, in this case by “comparing the in-group to the out-group on some

new dimension” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p.43). It could be suggested that this dimension is victimhood, and a sense of righteousness associated with it.

Abel was one example. When asked what identity in Northern Ireland means to him, he replies:

Abel, CNR, male: “Well put it like this I can only explain this to you. I knew who I wasn't rather than who I was [...] I wasn't a Protestant. I was one of those people who were caught up being discriminated against and feeling discriminated against because of the housing.”

Abel's initial response to the question of identity was of 'not being a Protestant' and with that an experience of being discriminated against. In contrast to labels that are placed by others, the 'who I am not' perspective was experienced by people themselves. There is a notable sense of deprivation – of being without. This is put forward as a direct response to a question on what identity means.

In another interview, Richard talks further about the sense of being wronged and deprived:

Richard, CNR, male: “Well identity is as much about what you are, than it is about what you aren't, particularly in a divided society. So we grew up knowing, knowing

what we were, but also knowing what we weren't. We grew up feeling a very profound sense of Irishness. We grew up with a very profound sense of having been wronged historically. And actually. By recent events. That was, that was part of our culture growing up. So, there was a definite sense of wrongdoing in the air. As we grow up and as we became teenagers. That didn't abate or ebb to any extent. As a matter of fact, it had deepened."

Richard sees identity in a divided society as having two sides. He puts forward identity as a positive (i.e. 'a profound sense of Irishness') and a negative (i.e. 'a very profound sense of having been wronged historically'). He talks about a sense of wrongdoing in the air. These senses are connected to form an identity – being wronged and Irish. He experiences this culture growing up, with one aspect of it as a 'sense of wrongdoing', with it becoming stronger as a teenager. Thus, one facet of identity, or one identity is in the negative for Richard.

This sense of 'who I am not' was more common across participants from a CNR background but was not exclusive to them. Domingo, who is from a PUL background, talks about how Irishness was taken away from him:

Domingo, PUL, male: "So Irish, the notion of being Irish was taken away from us in many ways [...] You just couldn't turn around and say hey by the way I am Irish, because Irish was, was Provo. And I think that's been one of the big, that's been one

of the worst things[...] I mean my father [...] he went away to what they would call ceilidhs²⁶ and [...] we had fiddle players in the Protestant community. I mean that disappeared. Traditional, traditional music in the Protestant community just seemed to disappear because it was more associated with Irish people. Just didn't want to be associated [...] So there is, there is some Irish in us I think it was because Irish... I believe the Irish was taken away with the Troubles, took that away from us.”

Domingo connects Irishness to Irish music, which in the conversation he makes clear he is fond of. At the same time, he is aware of the association, socially, of Irishness with the ‘Provos’ (i.e. the Provisional IRA). Whereas the generation before, such as his father, was involved with Irish traditional music, the Troubles meant that this was ‘taken from him’, as he put it. My impression is that he has a sense of Irishness that was denied to him, coming from a PUL background, and living in that environment.

Looking over these examples from Abel, Richard and Domingo, while not all their identities are exclusively in the negative, one of their identities is. The concept of social creativity is one of the strategies for coping with a negative identity (Mummendey et al., 1999), and this seems to be what is happening based on these excerpts which assert loss and victimhood.

Not imposing one’s identity on others

²⁶ Ceilidh - a social event involving Gaelic folk music and dancing.

The final sub-theme is difficult to situate within the identity literature. A surprising number of participants talked about oppressing identities, using phrases like 'stuffing' or 'ramming down people's throats' these identities. One interpretation may be that not imposing their identity is a type of non-sectarian identity. In the context of Northern Ireland, such non-sectarianism would not be a given.

One example is from Dionna:

Dionna, PUL, female: "My identity is that I am female. I belong to Church of Ireland. I go to church quite regularly. I get something out of going to church so I don't stuff my identity down anybody else's throat. I don't wear it on my sleeve. You know I have no tattoos or I don't wear things that tell you who are, who I am, what I am. You know in that kind of way."

Dionna is clear about her Protestant identity. However, she feels that she is in an environment where others impose their identities through outward displays in what feels like an oppressive manner. Consequently, she stresses that she does not oppress her identity on others, including not having any visible signs. From this excerpt, it was interpreted that one part of her identity is that of not being oppressive to others.

Similarly, Jeremy talks about 'ramming [identity] down people's throats', which he attributes to insecurity:

Jeremy, CNR, male: "It's not something I obsess over to be honest. I know what my identity is. I'm Irish, republican, I feel perfectly comfortable in that. I don't, I don't feel the need to be constantly ramming it down people's throats. Or to be constantly reassured about it either. I think for some people there is an insecurity in their identity which leads to overcompensation."

Jeremy is aware of the way that others feel threatened by alternative identities. His perspective is that identity insecurity, in others, is what leads to overcompensation; that their insecurity is the problem, not necessarily that they are being oppressed. His identity is something that can be seen as positive and independent of the environment around him.

Theme 4 Discussion

This theme focused on those issues that are loosely defined as extrinsic factors, in that they relate to the wider social and global narratives linked to identities. Firstly, participants seem attuned to the social process of putting people into boxes and being labelled. They often have a conflicted response to this: even if they reject these labels, they can feel troubled about this rejection. This labelling and boxing dynamic has a powerful effect on identity, especially in the context of Northern Ireland.

Secondly, there was a sense of identity in the negative; a sense of deprivation as a result of the social and political situation at the time. Abel felt he was not a Protestant, Richard felt he was Irish but wronged, and Domingo felt he was not allowed to be Irish. This sense of deprivation seems to form an identity in and of itself.

Thirdly, was the idea of not imposing one's identity on others. Dionna and Jeremy were confident and assertive with their identity but take pains to insist that they do not force their identity on others. This highlights a perceived dynamic of having identities imposed on oneself, and not participating in such imposition. This may be a type of explicitly anti-sectarian identity.

On labelling, the existing body of work on labeling theory has largely focused on crime and deviance (Berk, 2015) but there is relevance to understanding this labelling outside of those issues. This study finds several examples of people experiencing being labelled, developing complicated relationships with these labels, and this being critical in defining their identities. It is not simply that one accepts or refuses a label — choosing if “are you green or are you orange” as Ilene often feels it is put to her, but it involves navigating aspects of this label, such as how Bernardina does with Protestant culture. This issue of labelling seems ubiquitous in the Northern Ireland context, as evidenced by the number of participants who brought it up. It is an area that warrants further research into how individuals negotiate these complex labels and whether this dynamic can be understood in greater depth.

On negative identities, in the context of social creativity, being deprived seems an odd way to achieve positive distinctiveness, but victimhood can provide a positive identity of sorts. As noted before, in Northern Ireland the rights to the label of victim are highly contested and can provide social and psychological benefits (Ferguson et al., 2010). Thus, talking about negative identities is a way of projecting oneself in the positive in this context. This seems a strategy linked to Northern Ireland's context and history. Yet, it would be interesting to note whether in other conflict contexts this projection of victimhood occurs and whether it is a common strategy for positive distinctiveness.

On the final sub-theme of not imposing one's identity on others, this is difficult to situate in the literature. The sub-theme speaks of a dynamic that contrasts with labelling — that there is an environment of imposing identities, and one does not participate in that. This suggests an awareness that identities carry an effect beyond the individual. This could be read from a phenomenological perspective in that these individuals consciously make sure not to display their identity. The other reading is performative in that they are communicating to me that their belief in their own identity is appropriate and that should others feel oppressed that it is not because of any effort on their part. This latter interpretation would be a display of a non-sectarian identity, suggesting that though identity in Northern Ireland is often interpreted through a sectarian lens that they wish to assert their identity and then ensure such assertion is independent of any accusation of sectarianism. Much in the way that individuals have difficult relationships with labels, individuals seem to have concerns about

expressing their own identity. Identity expression is not a neutral process, and the participants seem to signal how they negotiate this process.

In terms of further research, it would be worthwhile to investigate this labelling dynamic as to how individuals process and deal with these labels, especially in settings where identity is as polarised as it is in Northern Ireland. A symbolic interactionist theoretical approach would be most useful here focusing on analysing how labels are constructed and interpreted, and how this relates to individuals' other behaviours. Another area would be exploring whether not imposing one's identity is a strategy for asserting one's identity in contested contexts and whether there are similar strategies, for example, whether saying one is 'not staunch'. Such a study would potentially identify the discursive practices that allow displays of identity, including potentially oppressive displays of identity, while distancing oneself from this environment of contention.

Theme 5. Intrinsic factors

Identity formation is not experienced as an entirely passive, externally-driven process. Rather there are perceptions of agency, where individuals help form their own identities or move between different identities based on how these identities become more or less desirable and as individuals change as they age. This section of the chapter focuses on those aspects of identity desirability, agency, and developmental processes.

Identity desirability

Huddy (2001) argues that issues of identity choice and gradations in identity strength have largely been ignored in SIA research. This sub-theme of identity desirability, in contrast, helps address this issue by illustrating and exploring accounts of choice and identity strength through nuanced accounts provided by study participants. Of note was how the appeal of different identities can change over time. Participants highlighted cases of how identities' appeals have changed and with that change how they associate with them. There is also a perception of agency in choosing their identity, which is the focus of the next sub-theme.

Huddy (2002) argues that meanings of group characteristics are more complex than implied in the SIA approach and that such meaning can differ among individual group members and develop differently over time in response to certain external events. An excerpt from Dalene helps to illustrate this complexity. She regards herself as a nominal Catholic but found herself looking to disassociate herself following the Catholic Church scandals:

Dalene, CNR, female: "I still see myself as a Catholic, but I don't go to mass. My wain²⁷ goes to mass. My mum and dad take him to mass. And I'm like if you wanna take him to mass go ahead. I took him to mass for a while after he was born. And then I suppose the scandals in the Catholic Church did not help. That was very... That was difficult as a Catholic. But it is very important to my mum and dad [...]. Quite

²⁷ wain - a baby, child or young person. Possibly a contraction of "wee one" (i.e. "small one")

separate from anything to do with Northern Ireland or the Troubles. It is just as a Catholic you hear about paedophilia and the church covering it up. I suppose it is almost the worst part of it. Because you are thinking an organisation like that should be protecting children and vulnerable. And they obviously didn't. And it is, it kind of put me off again because I sort of started going back for the wain and stuff. But that just put me right off again and like I don't know... I don't know, I don't know. Maybe I will end up going back I don't know. Because (sigh) we are all spiritual. Well, well I think we are, we are all spiritual beings. And I suppose the most natural leaning for me, simply because I was raised, and it would be towards Catholicism. But I don't know. I don't know. I do sort of identify as a Catholic. If I was asked to tick something in a wee box as you are sometimes.”

Dalene disassociates herself from the elements of the Catholic identity (e.g. through actions such as going to mass herself) but still regards herself as Catholic, and this is directly in response to external events — the Catholic Church scandals. As such, the all-or-nothing identity approach which Huddy (2001) argues SIA theorists employ, fails to take into account the graded change in identity. Furthermore, the concept of an ‘identity continuum’ which Oakes (2002) argues is truer to how SIT/SCT originally conceptualises identity gradation, is insufficient. An identity continuum does not quite capture the material change in Dalene’s Catholic identity. On the one hand, she considers herself (and others) as spiritual. That combined with an upbringing of Catholicism would make being a Catholic appealing. On the other hand, the association of Catholicism with the Catholic Church scandals, involving abuse

of children and the vulnerable, repels her. One could argue that she remains a Catholic and that is her identity but quite what that means in terms of her association with it and her behaviour has changed, which is difficult to position on a linear continuum.

In contrast to Dalene's example of someone with an identity that is losing its appeal, there can be some identities that have appeal but, for various reasons, people cannot identify with. Rana discusses how she is Methodist, sits on the church council and is involved in related charity work, specifically a men's hostel for homeless men. She goes on to describe how she would like to be involved with the Apprentice Boys but is restricted from doing so:

Rana, PUL, female: "I'm not involved in the Orange Order. Obviously, the Apprentice Boys because they won't let any women in. I would be if they would. I would definitely be involved in the Apprentice Boys if they would let women in, but they bloody well won't. Because they're so backward. [...] I see the Siege of Derry as being instrumental in democracy in Europe. You know, we were so, we were, we're right on the periphery of Europe and we're not recognised as, as being there. As being a safe city that done so much to keep King James and his armies out. You know, and we would be all speaking French now maybe. If we hadn't... You know if King William hadn't have won."

Essentially, this extract gives another example of a conflicted identity. It is almost in opposition to Dalene, in that the identity has appeal but she is excluded from it. Rana's

values are in accordance with how she sees the Apprentice Boys, in that they celebrate tradition and democratic values. To date, the Apprentice Boys do not let in women, but should that policy change she would be likely to join them and identify with them. This is because of an intrinsic appeal for Rana of such Protestant fraternal organisations.

There may also be an element of performance in her description. I found, during my interviews, that there was a common perception amongst people from the PUL community, that their culture is portrayed as backward and primitive to those outside. Part of her comments may be motivated by Rana wanting to present Protestant culture in a progressive way. Her comments can thus be understood both as an effort to valorise Protestant culture as well as a description of her appreciation of it.

Identity agency

Reicher (2004) emphasises the role of agency within the SIT and SCT frameworks, arguing that we are not simply “passive processors of contextual information” and that identities are not simply “impressed upon us from an external reality” (p.935). Rather, in the SIA tradition, identity is best seen as projects: individuals with different projects, proposing different versions of their own identity and potentially becoming entrepreneurs of identity (Reicher, 2004).

Several participants talked about their sense of agency. One example is Theodore who when asked how what identity in Northern Ireland means to him, he responds:

Theodore, PUL, Male: “It’s background and it’s what you determine for yourself. And it’s what’s self-determined. So you can pick parts out of your background that you might identify with. You can also discard parts if you feel no this doesn’t reflect who I am as a person. And both comprise your identity because even though I don’t identify as being a Protestant or I don’t identify as a unionist or anything like that it still shapes my upbringing. It still shapes my attitude to, you know, politics that goes on, on the other side of the community.”

Theodore feels a notable sense of his own agency in the choice of his identity. However, it has been argued that “agency always operates within and through a social structure” (Ratner, 2000, p.421) and this seems to be reflected in his comment about background. He is aware that these two forces shape his identity.

Such agency is also illustrated in the excerpts above by Dalene and Rana. With Dalene, she feels conflicted by her sense of spirituality, Catholic upbringing, and learning about the Catholic Church scandals. Around these issues is a degree of indecision and, thus, agency. With Rana’s excerpt, her desire to identify with the Orange Order and Apprentice Boys is restricted by a more tangible element of social structure — these organisations’ prohibition of female members.

Returning to Reicher’s (2004) conceptualisation of agency in the SIA tradition: Theodore

represents this idea of identity as a project, Dalene (re)develops her own identity, and Rana is promoting and acting as an entrepreneur of her identity.

Developmental processes of identity

While identity development is said to be focused on adolescence, identity development continues into adulthood (McLean & Syed, 2015). This sub-theme focuses on that development of identity as experienced and expounded by the participants.

As noted in chapter 2, while there is work on personal identity development there is limited work on social identity development in the same way (Bennett & Sani, 2004). The limited work that exists can be divided between what Abrams (2004) terms social-contextual and cognitive-developmental accounts, with the former emphasising the extrinsic factors and the latter the more intrinsic factors.

Sherry helps to illustrate this cognitive-developmental aspect of social identity change in adolescence:

Sherry, CNR, female: “Identity as a under-ten would have been very much you did what your mum told you, you did what your granny told you. They created your identity for you. But once I passed the age of ten, twelve, I very much, very actively sought my own because I didn't agree and didn't like what was going on around me

[...] I was about twelve when I started non-conforming [...] I was angry at the way, at the possibility of how my friends are being treated. I was angry that we were told one side was good, one side was bad. I was also angry at the regimes that were in town. From British forces and the police. It was an awful lot of terrible things happening to very innocent people. And that created anger. And it also helped create identity too because whilst you were taught to affiliate to certain organisations, a big part of my heart said this is not for me. So whilst I empathised I didn't contribute or participate. But I did do community voluntary work.”

This conversation gives a perspective of how Sherry's identity changed, using a phenomenological perspective. When she was very young her identity was based on her mum and grandmother – they 'created' her identity. And then emotional changes, around the age of 10 and 12, changed how she felt, and she developed her own identity. These emotions were empathy and anger. She empathised with those people who were being treated badly by 'the regimes', which seems to be the British forces and the police, and she felt angry about this.

Erikson (1950) defines the adolescent mind as “a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult” (p. 236). This is very much illustrated in this section of the interview. For Sherry, that understanding started off as limited to the 'morality learned by the child', but with age, it extended beyond that, and she formed an identity associated with the empathy and anger

that she felt in relation to others — the ‘ethics of an adult’.

While this is a cognitive-developmental account of social identity development, social-contextual factors are relevant. Sherry came of age during the Troubles and from her account, it was the aggrieved people that she related to. She empathised with them and felt anger for them. That formed her identity. One could hypothesise that if she was born, say 20 years earlier or 20 years later, she would not relate to these people in the same way and thus would have a different identity. This is not to say that she would not have related to these people at all. Simply that historical events coinciding with key emotional and cognitive developmental changes may well have a disproportionately profound impact on identity formation.

Another example is from Dirk which has more emphasis on the social-contextual factors. He discussed how Irishness and the Irish language did not appeal to him in school but how it eventually ‘crept into’ his life:

Dirk, CNR, male: “I went to the Christian Brothers who were apart from being psychopaths, were quite, quite nationalistic. And would've had you singing rebel songs which we didn't understand. And would have had you saying phrases in Irish which we didn't understand. We could parrot them by rote, but we didn't have any sense of it. I went to college where they taught Irish, but they taught it with even more violence than they taught most other things. So, I didn't learn Irish at school.

And I suppose ... Identity. I don't think it crept into my life until early 70s, mid 70s. I ended up in jail in '73 and we started doing a wee bit of Irish. Probably around that time the whole Irish thing started to come to the forefront."

He then discusses the examples of where people he knew would demarcate themselves by speaking Irish to British soldiers, before he returns to how he set out to learn Irish:

Dirk, CNR, male: "So I set out to learn Irish and I made that decision around about '73, '74. I started trying it in jail. I come out of jail and I was trying night classes and ... It was actually difficult to get a night class and... I ended up by about 1978, '79, I thought to myself I am going to go to university and do a degree in Irish. Which everybody thought was mad because my mother and father and everybody else I knew almost, apart from political comrades and colleagues. (Unintelligible) a degree in Irish (unintelligible). And it was regarded as a very foolhardy, nationalistic, kind of patriotism driven choice, you know, which it was. But I went and did a degree in Irish."

Reading these extracts, it is interesting to note Dirk's transition concerning Irishness. At the Christian Brothers school, there was a sense of Irish nationalism that Dirk felt alienated by. It was not until the early '70s where the sense of Irishness, and with it, the Irish language became of interest and Dirk became attached to it as part of his identity.

During his life, Irishness and the Irish language went from something he rejected to something he accepted as part of him. This is attributable both to the schooling he received, which led to rejection, and the political and social changes, which led to Irishness and the Irish language being appealing and eventually a part of his life and identity. He notes how people used the Irish language with British soldiers as a way of demarcating themselves. As Dirk got older and more involved with the issues, it seems he felt a greater need for demarcation, which Irishness and the Irish language provided.

As he grew older, Irish became more appealing as it represented something different – his own drive for identity, and arguably a desire to distance himself from English/British culture and institutions. Learning Irish became a choice for him and a way to represent himself in an environment where identity and culture became more prominent.

In contrast to Dirk, who is of CNR background and finds that the Irish language reinforces his identity, Bernardina who is from a PUL background determines that it can be part of healing:

Bernardina, PUL, female: “I always wanted to connect with that sort of Irishness, but it sort of felt like I would be lying. I wouldn't be telling the truth if I said that was my culture. So it didn't... And it's funny then learning Irish [...] there was something, I felt there was something healing in it. There is something like an acceptance, you know, that you don't have, I don't think in Protestant culture because I think Protestant culture is seen as the problem. It is seen as a problem that perpetuates sectarianism

and division. And so there is something with the Irish language when it's obviously not being used for political gains. But as a language it is beautiful and has a lot of history and heritage. And for me that was really quite peaceful and healing.”

Bernardina presents identity change as healing. In this case, learning Irish, and connecting with that Irishness, seems to detoxify the sectarian aspects she associates with Protestant culture. Learning Irish and connecting with Irishness was a somewhat conflictual process – Bernardina felt that she would be ‘lying’, one would assume, to herself and others.

Overcoming that sense of lying and appreciating the aesthetic of the Irish language, outside of the politicisation of the Irish language, was an important process for her.

In this context, certain identities and identity facets such as the Irish language can support emotional development and personal growth. This is not just during adolescence. For Dirk, it reinforced his identity, which was something he seemed to need. For Bernardina, it represented a healing process – connecting her to a sense of Irishness that she felt she wanted but could not access. In these examples, and with Sherry, the changing of identity and incorporating other identity facets become part of a life process – of coming to terms with oneself and developing as an adult.

Theme 5 Discussion

This theme focused on those factors that are loosely defined as intrinsic factors, in that they arise from the individuals. Firstly, the desirability or appeal of identity changes and with it

the extent to which individuals identify with that identity. External events can mean a change in identity strength. Rather than a linear change — coming towards or away from identifying in a certain way — there is a qualitative change in how one identifies and what the meaning that identity has for someone.

Secondly, participants highlighted their experiences of agency with identity. They felt an element of choice in that while there were social factors (e.g. their background, social structures) that formed part of their identity, there was an identity-making process that they were active in, to some extent.

Thirdly, the idea of identity as part of a development process. Work on identity development often focuses on adolescence and there were examples of this suggesting these are largely attributable to cognitive changes. But there are also changes of a more social and contextual level. Notably, there are examples where identity change can become part of a process of emotional and personal development.

On identity desirability, it is worth returning to the argument made earlier that SIA research ignores issues of identity choice and identity strength gradation (Huddy, 2001) and that the SIA approach cannot capture the complexity of the meaning of group characteristics (Huddy, 2002). Oakes (2002) has critiqued these arguments, following which Huddy (2002) has responded, indicating a vibrant debate about these issues. It has been argued that SIA approaches do not capture the complexity of these identity changes, but a more pertinent

question is whether these should. As noted in theme 2 discussion, SIT is a theory on macrosocial strategies and SCT specifies cognitive processes (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). Consequently, it would be better to turn to other approaches to explore these complex and often subtle changes to identity and self-identification. While a social representations approach (e.g. Moscovici, 2001) can help understand the meanings ascribed to aspects of identity, a different approach would be needed to explore how these meanings are desirable or not.

On identity agency, this study finds a strong subjective perception of agency. An appropriate conceptual approach to agency is essential for this. Rather than a binary distinction between social determination and individual agency, a more appropriate approach would be one such as Mead who distinguished 'I' to mark out agency but recognising that there is a 'me' component of internalised attitudes, with a process of synthesis and accommodation (Wetherell, 2010). Participants seem to exemplify this approach of limited or bounded agency. This raises questions about how individuals perceive the extent of their agency in identity and what strategies they feel are available to them. This could be an area worth exploring further.

On the issue of developmental processes of identity, there is limited work that looks at the cognitive-developmental factors of social identity past adolescence. This may be important. In this study, several participants' life stories illustrate a shift, for example, from involvement or acceptance of violence (e.g. Dirk [CNR, male], Emmanuel [PUL, male], Richard [CNR,

male]). While it may be that these changes are attributable to social-contextual factors, cognitive-developmental factors should not, arguably, be discounted. There is research that looks at linking biological changes to changes in violent tendencies²⁸, so it is likely that the appeal of identities that are related to violence will change with ageing. There may also be changes in cognitive processes as a result of ageing which in turn change how individuals relate to certain identities. This is arguably an area that would be worth investigating further— specifically, can changes in social identity be attributable to biological and related cognitive changes.

In terms of recommendations, there is a greater need to conceptualise the desirability of identity and to understand how aspects of identity can become more or less desirable over time and how this impacts on the social identification process. Secondly, while there is some work on understanding agency in reference to SIA (e.g. Reicher, 2004), the bulk of the work arguably takes a more social deterministic perspective. There are important questions as to what agency means in identity, and how individuals perceive the degree of agency they have, especially in a conflict-affected context where identities can be controversial. Finally, there is a need to approach social identity development from a cognitive-developmental perspective, integrating these insights into the rich work on social-contextual factors of social identity development.

²⁸ For example, there is research which finds that hormonal changes in adolescence are linked to greater aggression and violence (Ramirez, 2003) but that high-risk, physically demanding deviant behaviour reduces as people reach their late twenties and early thirties (Rossi, 2018).

Theme 6. Transgressive identities

In this study, there were identities that moved beyond or implicitly rejected the PUL/CNR boxes. These have been termed 'transgressive identities' as they transgress these stereotypical identity boundaries.

There are some similarities in this theme to the concept of superordinate identity, as enunciated in the Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). Most work on superordinate identity in this region has focused on the Northern Ireland/Irish identity (e.g. Lowe & Muldoon, 2014; McKeown, 2014; McNicholl et al., 2019; Noor et al., 2010). This theme, by contrast, focuses on identities that could be perceived as superordinate to existing PUL/CNR-related identities, subordinate to PUL/CNR-related identities or independent of them. Rather than an identity being all-or-nothing in one of these categories, the excerpts suggest that these identities can exhibit superordinate qualities at certain times.

An insightful example of this transgressive identity is from Chas. He discussed how being a firefighter meant he was perceived in a certain way:

Chas, CNR, male: "1979 I joined the fire service. I was a firefighter then for 20 years
[...] Some people will have seen me as if I crossed over to the other side because fire

service was seen as part of the establishment, and all the rest, but it wasn't. We were there to save life. That was what our primary duty was.”

He goes on to describe how violent incidences during the Troubles caused tensions amongst the mixed- (though predominately PUL-) background team of firefighters:

Chas, CNR, male: “If there was an attack against the British or the police or against one community or the other, then that would have created tension amongst the workers. Now it wouldn't have been tension whereby every day you're going to work there was a tense atmosphere or fear. But there had been things happening and you would have seen it on the TV and people at work all of a sudden you would have had a group of people who would've worked as a team and were very close to each other. Then all of a sudden conversation suddenly stop. And people wouldn't want to talk about it. So that in itself created a wee bit of... tension is probably the wrong word but certainly a bit of a unease, a bit of unease. “

He later talks about the emotional trauma and coping through his experience as a firefighter:

Chas, CNR, male: “I learned an awful lot about pain and hurt. And the brutality of conflicts and war. The pain of losing loved ones. The pain of dealing with children who died. Body parts. All the stuff that you want to associate with death and injury and hurt. And you still live within that community. And you go home and are

expected to deal with this. [...] So and the best way that we dealt with it usually, if we had a bad day at work and people died or whatever, went to the bar and got drunk. That is typical for a lot of different Fire Brigades throughout the UK but certainly here, that was a wee bit different because it was not normal circumstances. A lot of deaths would have been brought about through conflict and attack.”

A final excerpt of note is how his work meant that he would have seen soldiers and police differently to how other CNR-background people would have:

Chas, CNR, male: “I would have seen soldiers different like then because within the station we would have soldiers calling up for a cup of tea with a police officer coming in for a cup of tea. We would have had when we are out in bomb incidents, we would have been working very closely with army technical officers. So, all of a sudden, I was exposed to things that open my eyes to a different way of looking at things. And probably gave me a more rounded perspective of where we are. Doesn't change anything about how I felt about what happened in my younger years as I have said. But certainly, it made me look upon things differently at that time.”

There are four excerpts from Chas. In the first excerpt he discusses how being part of the fire service would mean some in the CNR community feel he had ‘crossed over’ to the other side and was working for the British state. He affirms that his ‘primary duty’ was to save lives, thus rejecting their assertion. Nonetheless, the second excerpt highlights how there would

have been political tension or unease following violent incidents. This suggests that this common fire service identity was to some extent fragile and affected by external pressures. The third excerpt highlights a common traumatising experience, which brought the firefighters together, ostensibly through drinking as a bonding experience and as a way to deal with the trauma. The fourth excerpt talks about contact with soldiers and police, which would have been a relatively rare experience for someone from a CNR background during the Troubles. He says this 'opened his eyes', which was interpreted as helping to humanise soldiers and police and reduce a perception of them as the enemy.

These excerpts highlight the complexity of this firefighter identity. He notes how he sees it as an identity superordinate to the PUL/CNR divide but how he could be seen as being part of the British state from some. He goes on to note that there was a camaraderie amongst the mixed-community group of firefighters, but community identities became more salient following violent incidents. There was a common trauma and way of dealing with it. And finally, his firefighter identity meant he was viewed differently and in turn came to view soldiers and police differently but, as he emphasises, within the confines of how he felt originally.

It would be a generalisation to say that the firefighter identity was simply a superordinate identity. It was not universally perceived as one, though Chas saw that identity as somewhat superordinate. Rather than arguing for a binary superordinate versus not superordinate identity, these excerpts highlight how 'superordinacy' — if one was to create a noun from

the superordinate adjective — is a potential characteristic of identities. Identities and perceptions of them remain in flux and so can take on characteristics which position themselves in ways to existing identities. This seems to be a characteristic of these transgressive identities.

Another example of a transgressive identity is as a police officer with excerpts from two officers interviewed in this study: Galen and Shavonne.

In the first excerpt, Galen differentiates his identity from others with a different culture and set of rules. When asked what identity in Northern Ireland means to him, he responds:

Galen, PUL, male: “Well, it could come down to the basic three, which is Catholic, Protestant and police officers [...] I find that, if you're a member of an organisation like that, the identity is police. And your secondary community identity: Protestant, Catholic, other whatever you know, sexual orientation. All of that comes second to being a police officer. And again with that culture becomes, comes all the rules. But with that culture comes all the perceptions where other people have other identities, have stereotypes or have beliefs about what they see in that uniform, what it stands for, what it does, what it did. What it will do in the future.”

In other parts of the interview, Galen discusses how he and the police are seen negatively by many members of both CNR and PUL communities. This creates a sense of a distinct

identity that transgresses traditional PUL/CNR distinctions.

To see if this is a common perception, Shavonne, another serving police officer, was asked whether this phrase is true that there are three types of people in Northern Ireland: the Catholics, Protestants and the police. She laughs and agrees. She goes on to say:

Shavonne, PUL, female: “Well, I suppose [...] you have all the different areas and then there is that common hatred of us because you could be standing, like I've stood in the middle sometimes. You're getting it from both sides. Stuff threw at you. Like we're a common enemy, you know. There's just that hatred completely. It's strange growing up because I wouldn't have realised that, growing up. You were always taught just to respect the police, and you were scared, you were scared of them. You know that way, whereas there's no fear of us now and there is just that common hatred.”

Shavonne expands on the point that Galen brings up in facing animosity from ‘both sides’, which is interpreted as both PUL and CNR communities. This sense of being a ‘common enemy’ and experiencing ‘hatred completely’ reinforces this police identity.

The comments from Galen and Shavonne were interpreted to suggest a separate police identity. Based on Shavonne’s comments, police officers encounter people who hate and attack police. Being caught ‘in the middle’ means they feel they cannot side with their

community anymore. People seem to think of the police as a distinct group with some people treating them negatively — Shavonne talked about people throwing stuff at her. Beyond these extracts that Galen discussed in this section of the interview, there is a more threatening experience of him finding a bomb planted under his car, which is covered in chapter 8 on threat. Thus, such experiences of threat, anger, and hatred are likely to reinforce this identity. It seems to be an identity that Shavonne seems less keen to embrace. In particular, she seems surprised by the animosity and lack of fear and respect for them.

Theme 6 Discussion

This theme focused on those identities which transgress stereotypical identities. They have an element that is somewhat superordinate but would not be seen universally as superordinate identities.

The theme of transgressive identities highlights identities that have a certain separateness from other identities and also a dynamic with them. In some cases, this dynamic is reminiscent of the concept of superordinate identity which has been posited as an inclusive identity that reduces intergroup bias (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000). The difference being that this superordinate property (as opposed to a superordinate identity) is fluctuating and contestable. Chas discusses how as a firefighter he experienced the group coming together at times and feeling separate at other times. Furthermore, he notes some people see him as part of the British state — essentially as an outgroup member — but that this was not universal. Galen and Shavonne's police identity is more contested. Where historically there

has been strong antagonism between the police and people from a CNR-background (Ellison, 2001), the accounts in this study suggest antagonism from both PUL- and CNR-background people and that the police officer identity is perceived as distinct from other identities, with its own culture and rules. That some identities have such a dynamic is an area worth investigating, as it may be able to extend this concept of a superordinate dynamic into real-world settings, including in a conflict-affected context.

In terms of researching these transgressive identities further, an approach could be documenting the dynamics of identities with respect to each other. Rather than there being identities that are superordinate or not, looking at ways in which certain identities have that capacity would help contextualise this dynamic.

Chapter discussion

The question 'people talk about identity in Northern Ireland, what does that mean to you' elicited a range of responses, clustered around the themes above. Prior to the interviews, the starting expectations were that identities would be described by participants as set entities; as social, rather than individual, identities; and would give relatively simple, short answers such as Protestant or Catholic. Yet most participants responded in ways that were complex and nuanced. In particular, they spoke of identity as fluid and multifaceted.

Analysing the data brought forward further themes: that identity intersects, that there are certain factors extrinsic and intrinsic of people, and that certain identities in some way

transgressed existing boundaries.

At this point, it is worth emphasising that this chapter explores how individuals in Northern Ireland experience and understand identity, and not what identity is. For example, the findings are not that identity necessarily *is* fluid, multifaceted and complex, rather that is *how it is experienced*. This is in contrast to literature which can look at how to conceptualise identity with contrasting definitions (see summary in Stryker & Burke, 2000). It is also worth pointing out that this chapter and the framing of the question is about identity, though the core theoretical comparison relates to social identity. The framing of the question as identity, rather than social identity was intended to keep the interview discussion open and see just how participants conceptualised and experienced identity. It was also to avoid pushing individuals to only focus on social identities and stereotypical PUL or CNR identities.

One of the main challenges that was found is that during the interviews it was not clear whether people were talking about identities *en bloc*, as individual identities, or facets of identity. Participants moved between talking about single identities, things that could be understood as identities, and then to factors that make up identities, often without disambiguating. It could seem that participants are just not answering the question. My interpretation from the interviews is, instead, that identity feels nebulous from an individual's perspective. In contrast to the single identities, often ascribed to people in Northern Ireland such as being PUL or CNR, people themselves understand their identities in less delineated ways.

Moreover, the process of asking about identity in these interviews and the participants responding gave the impression that many were developing their understanding of their own identity. People have an awareness about themselves to some extent, but the process of discussing identity involves both examining oneself and in some cases an act of performing an identity. Whereas some participants had already thought-through and decided on an (often succinct) identity, most participants came across somewhat as if they were working it out as we spoke. Identity seems to be in constant flux with greater saliency at different times, in part due to different situations but also variable by mood. The take-away point is that while it is convenient to talk about single identities, this masks a rich, dynamic process and the subsequent effects of it.

Ironically, participants often failed to adequately mentalise others' identity, despite many of them having rich identities themselves that they could mentalise. This asymmetry between how one perceives their own identity and how one perceives others, was striking. This is reminiscent of another concept of 'outgroup homogeneity' where outgroup members are seen as more homogeneous and similar to one another in comparison to ingroup members' perceptions (Park, 1996). From the first-person perspective, identities are fluid and multifaceted, but when dealing with the identity of outgroup members (i.e. those with different identities), a nuanced, complex identity is not ascribed to them.

Dealing with intersecting identities was challenging. As noted earlier, the SIA literature on

identity largely deals with identities as siloed and somewhat independent. Yet, real-world identities often impact on other identities. This raised the question of whether each aspect (e.g. gender, Catholic) was best conceptualised as an individual identity or part of a multi-faceted identity. In any case, the key insight was this question about how best to conceptualise it and whether identity should be thought of as a discrete unit, a series of relationships or as SIT/SCT conceptualises it, according to Abrams & Hogg (2004), as a process.

Also challenging were the themes on extrinsic and intrinsic factors. These were prominent issues with the emphasis on whether they were experienced as coming from outside oneself or from inside. This, of course, varied amongst participants and many such factors were an interaction of external and internal. Thus, what could be defined as extrinsic or intrinsic is disputable.

Moving on to the implications of this chapter's themes, rather than a singular conceptualisation, this chapter finds multiple conceptualisations for identity: a 'thing' (or set entity), a process, a set of relationships, a dynamic, and a performance. As noted before, Abrams & Hogg (2004) argues that social identity (within the SIA tradition) is best seen as a process underpinning social phenomenon rather than a 'thing'. Yet, participants in this study seem to see it as both. A relational conceptualisation to identity, such as Gergen's (2008) concept of multi-being seems valid too, especially with complex identities. Identity can be embodied in the dynamic of identifying. There is a process of laying claim to identity, of self-

identifying and identifying others, and there can be a dynamic between these two processes. For example, there can be a dynamic between the processes of how one identifies themselves and how one is identified by others, such as in the case of the police officers and firefighter in this chapter. Finally, there is the idea of identity as a performance, as in Goffman's (e.g. Goffman, 1956) theatrical metaphor, where an individual performs to present oneself in such a way, say as non-sectarian. Rather than one way of conceptualising identity, it may be best to hold several conceptualisations concurrently.

Identity researchers have critiqued conceptualisations of identity that lack multidimensionality, stressing that there are multiple uses of the term 'identity' with different meanings at different levels of analysis (e.g. psychological, societal, interactional) and arguing that such research fails to advance the field of identity studies (Côté, 2015). A pluralist conceptualisation of identity is also supported by recent research on identity in Northern Ireland. This finds that the 'Northern Irish' identity is understood using a variety of modes, including simply as a banal indicator of geographical place — “an ostensibly apolitical form of Northern Irishness that relates only to one's location of residence” (McNicholl et al., 2019, p.495). Thus, limiting a discussion of identity to social identity would fail to capture the complexity of identity and identifying in the region. Living in an area with historical intergroup tensions does not nullify the effect of identifying oneself in terms of individuals rather than as group members, and it may be that the openness of the interview is what resulted in discussions that resonated with identity theories (e.g. Identity theory [Stryker & Burke, 2000]) as much as social identity theories.

In general, this study suggests a new way of looking at identity. Identity is often understood identity based on their identity content — e.g. Protestant, Catholic, or female. However, different from this are identities that speak of the dynamic, which, for want of a better term, are termed here as meta-identities. The concept of meta-identities is not linked to a particular theoretical framework or extant literature, as such, but is employed here as a suggested alternative approach to identity. One such meta-identity is ‘fluid’, which seems to contrast with ‘staunch’. Another is one of not oppressing your identity, which participants termed ‘not ramming down people’s throat’. These meta-identities do not replace PUL or CNR identities but are additional to them.

Meta-identities describe an overall approach to identity, which arguably is, in turn, an identity in itself. The fluid meta-identity is implicitly anti-sectarian. This can be in performance at least, if not in content. One can affirm that they are anti-sectarian whilst being sectarian at a conscious and/or unconscious level (e.g. through implicit bias). By saying one is fluid or does not ram their identity, one affirms their anti-sectarian nature. These meta-identities could be related to a tolerance and acceptance of other identities. In addition to the behaviour of tolerance and acceptance, there is the designation of oneself, at a cognitive level, to be in this manner, which helps build this separate identity.

Though police and firefighter could be seen as a type of meta-identity, they are somewhat different. The police participants in this study see police as a distinct identity from PUL and

CNR. The firefighter identity created a common bond and a bridging identity. A little like gender, the firefighter identity can bring people together from different backgrounds, even if the effects are ephemeral.

Perhaps it would be helpful to conceptualise these identities as such: content identities (e.g. PUL, CNR, police), meta-identities (e.g. fluid, staunch) and bridging identities (e.g. gender, firefighter). Furthermore, while it may be easier to talk of simple (content) identities, a better understanding of identity in a conflict-affected context requires the use of multiple lenses and the understanding that people are mosaic configurations of identities and facets.

Another issue that came up is history and culture. Reicher (2004) argues that SIA research often neglects the interplay of the cultural and structural settings where identities occur, in favour of seeing human social action purely as a reference to psychological processes, arguably due to reductionist misreadings of SIT and SCT. In contrast to such neglect, this study finds that identity is very much an interplay of psychological and social processes. On the one hand, there are psychological processes such as identity development and on the other, there are social processes such as labelling. There is a link between these processes and subsequently wider questions of epistemology. While the theories of SIT and SCT sit in a middle position between modernist (i.e. more traditional psychology) and postmodern (i.e. more sociologically-rooted) approaches, SIA research is largely based on modernist approaches such as laboratory experiments (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005). Thus, at this current point in time, SIA research has most to benefit from insights that employ postmodern

approaches. For example, SIA research would greatly benefit from insights through approaches such as symbolic interactionism and social representations approaches, to fully flesh out this interplay from both the psychological and social dimensions.

Beyond the content of identities themselves, there are insightful identity dynamics, in particular those highlighted by transgressive identities. These identities have qualities that speak to dynamics in reference to other identities. The existence of a truly superordinate identity in Northern Ireland is highly contested, with research finding a lack of unanimity for the Northern Ireland/ Northern Irish identity as superordinate identity (McKeown, 2014; McNicholl et al., 2019). Yet, there are identities that are considered, even for a short period by only some people, as superordinate — as identities where people from two distinct groups categorise themselves as an inclusive group. Therefore, it may be best to see being superordinate as a property rather than an enduring identity, and for further research to look at how real-world identities can gain and lose this property, as well as the way in which these are contested.

According to SCT, there is a process of depersonalisation where “people come to see themselves more as the interchangeable exemplars of a social category than as unique personalities defined by their differences from others” (Turner, 1985, p. 122). In this study, it was striking that there was a lack of depersonalisation found. During the interviews, participants stressed their individualities and lack of interchangeability. While it could be argued that the police participants depersonalised from an individual identity into a police

social identity, the emphasis in the interviews was on identifying one social identity (i.e. police) instead of another social identity (i.e. PUL or CNR). The interviews suggested that rather than people depersonalise into social identities, participants carried these multiple identities with them. These identities were brought forward at different times. The significance here is that they never shifted their “self-perception so that the self is seen as interchangeable with other members of a given social category” (McGarty, 1999, p.124) but instead remained complex, personalised individuals.

As noted earlier, there is growing attention towards complex identities (Hornsey, 2008) and how individuals experience and manage multiple identities (Jones & Hynie, 2017). This chapter contributes to this growing area of work by exploring identity in Northern Ireland, finding just how identities are complex, experienced and managed. The themes developed highlight that various conceptualisations of identity can exist concurrently, that identity is experienced and complex and fluid, and that individuals have a degree of agency amongst the extrinsic and intrinsic factors that influence identity.

The limitations of this chapter are that the identities are focused around one city in Northern Ireland at a certain period and may not be generalisable to the rest of the area or at other times. Furthermore, there is the question of whether these themes are relevant to others in conflict-affected contexts. One response would be to suggest a need for further research to validate these findings, using the same approach of having people define identity as they see it, in the rest of Northern Ireland, at a different time, or in different conflict-affected

contexts. One would expect people to hold multifaceted identities, though they may not use identical terms such as 'fluid'. One would also expect threat to be primarily about violence and physical safety in other conflict-affected contexts, but threats to identity and culture would still be relevant as well. Another, more critical response, would be to question the concept of generalisability itself and instead, to emphasise the historicity of findings — that Derry/Londonderry has a unique history and in 2017, a unique reality, and that the findings represent that. As Deutsch and Kinnvall (2002) note in their chapter defining political psychology, human action is rooted in “practices and forces of life that have distinctive historical origins” (p. 35). Thus, one can argue that these findings have relevance to a population with a distinct history and by this measure, the findings may not be generalisable but are sufficiently transferable for the field of political psychology. And as argued in chapter 6, it is transferability rather than generalisability that is defined as the research quality criteria for this work.

In terms of recommendations for further research, these are at a theoretical or conceptual level as well as at an empirical level. Theoretically and conceptually, there is a need for more work on agency in identity. While this study focuses on psychological and social drivers of identity, there is a distinct element of choice. People make decisions about their identity, with some having greater degrees of freedom to choose their identity than others. But what does it mean to have agency in these situations and how do people process and prioritise the often-contradictory factors that feed into decisions? There is also a need to better conceptualise inter-identity dynamics. For example, rather than there being identities that are superordinate or not, looking at ways in which certain identities have that capacity to be

superordinate in some way. Another example would be to understand how identities intersect, and how they can build or take away from each other.

At an empirical level, further research should employ both traditional psychology (i.e. modernist) and sociologically-rooted (i.e. more postmodernist) approaches. One suggestion is extending current experimental and quasi-experimental approaches, for example, by extending the minimal group paradigm to include fluid and multifaceted identities. This can be through manipulating identities over an extended timeframe and varying contexts. Another suggestion is exploring neurological and cognitive changes beyond adolescence, that impact on social identity. Other areas and approaches are: a social representations approach for intersecting identities, a symbolic interactionist approach to explore how labels are constructed and interpreted, and dramaturgical and discourse analysis to understand how identities are performed, in particular on being 'staunch and not fluid, and 'not imposing identities'.

This study finds for a pluralist conceptualisation of identity, with identity variously as a 'thing' (or set entity), a process, a set of relationships, a dynamic, and a performance. Further research could focus on investigating the conditions or patterns that determine how identity is experienced as, at a given time, (e.g. through a narrative analysis study) and also on constructing a theoretical framework which would be able encompass the underlying theoretical approaches for each of these conceptualisations.

Summary

This chapter explored 50 interview discussions on identity in Northern Ireland, as understood by the participants, and quoted 21 participants in particular. There was a wide range of responses from simple one-word answers to more intricate discussions. The themes, identified in this study, depict identity in Northern Ireland by those who live there as a complex phenomenon. This is in stark contrast to the common assignations of the population of Northern Ireland as Catholics and Protestants. Instead, identity is experienced as a myriad of facets and subsistent identities, which in some cases intersect, and in others, remain independent. These identities arise from social and environmental factors on the one hand, and physiological and biopsychological factors on the other, with agency playing a critical role. In some cases, the subsequent identities transgress traditional social boundaries.

Identity in Northern Ireland is rarely simple. And this chapter, through a phenomenological and discourse analysis lens, helps portray the rich nature of it. It provides insights relevant for understanding the patterns between identity, threat and trust, which is the focus of chapter 10. Taking into account this nature of identities, the next chapter looks at how identity is interpreted by others, and how people feel threatened by others that they feel do not share their identity.

Chapter 8. THEMES: THREAT

My final question in each semi-structured interview was: “People talk about feeling threatened; what does that mean to you?”. This chapter explores the key themes that emerge from the interviews: the threat of violence or feeling physically unsafe, the threat to identity, the threat to culture, and the heterogeneity in threat responses.

Introduction

As noted in chapter 3, the most prominent body of work in social psychology on threat is that based on what was initially titled as an Integrated Threat Theory of Prejudice (ITTP) (Stephan & Stephan, 2000), and later revised by the authors and renamed as Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) (Stephan et al., 2009, 2016). Many researchers treat ITTP and ITT as the same (see Stephan et al., 2016) but in this chapter, they are treated as distinct so as to explore the different constructs that the two iterations of the theory focus on.

This chapter focuses primarily on the experiential aspects of threat but ITT and ITTP are the main theoretical comparative points. Other areas of research that this chapter draws on are dual process accounts of reasoning (e.g. Bargh & Williams, 2006; Haidt, 2013; Kahneman, 2011), the debates around social capital (e.g. Putnam, 2007), and finally on reductionism in social and political psychology (Rosenberg, 2003).

Turning firstly to ITTP and ITT: whereas ITTP had 4 types of threat (i.e. realistic, symbolic, intergroup anxiety, negative stereotypes), ITT has two types of threat but relates them to either the ingroup as a whole or individuals due to their group membership, to give four components overall (i.e. realistic group, symbolic group, realistic individual, symbolic individual).

In relation to ITTP, realistic and symbolic threats seemed to be clearest amongst participant's discussions. Theme 1 is in keeping with realistic threats and themes 2 and 3, with symbolic threats. In some cases, participants talked about intergroup anxiety. However, negative stereotyping expectations were not admitted to in the interviews, in part, assumably, because participants were keen not to seem sectarian. Participants did point out examples of the negative stereotyping that is prevalent in Northern Ireland; an example of this is with Dirk in Chapter 9 Theme 1.

In reference to ITT, theme 1 on violence and physical threats is in keeping with realistic individual threats, theme 2 on identity threat is in keeping with symbolic individual threats, and theme 3 on culture is in keeping with symbolic group threats. None of the themes matches closely with realistic group threats.

When understanding these threats at an experiential level, the dual process accounts of reasoning are helpful. As noted in chapter 3 this is the proposition that there are two processes of higher cognition, one which is fast, automatic and unconscious, and a second

which is slow, deliberative and conscious (Evans & Stanovich, 2013). Different theorists use slightly different terminology. The first system has been described as automatic (Bargh & Williams, 2006), system 1 (Kahneman, 2011), and intuitive (Haidt, 2013). The second system is referred to as non-automatic (Bargh & Williams, 2006), system 2 (Kahneman, 2011) and as the reasoning system (Haidt, 2013). Theme 1 on violence and physical threat includes examples that seem to illustrate a dual process processing of threat.

The issue of social capital came up in the interviews. As noted in chapter 3, one of the distinctions made in the literature is between bonding capital which is between inward-looking and homogeneous (including ethnically homogeneous) groups, and bridging capital which involves outward-looking and more heterogeneous groups (Putnam, 2000). These different types of social capital can result in different outcomes and many negative effects of one type of social capital may be improved by the other type; arguably the most positive outcomes are found when there is both bonding and bridging capital (Agnitsch et al., 2006).

This study does not test these assumptions, but it is worth noting that social capital can exist in ethnically heterogeneous groups (i.e. binding capital) and be beneficial in ways that homogeneous group social capital (i.e. bonding capital) cannot (Agnitsch et al., 2006). Nonetheless, one of the arguments put forward by a participant in theme 3 links perceived threat to culture and loss of social capital. This argument is explored in the theme and is illustrative of a social narrative that looks to rationalise and justify perceived threat to culture.

A final debate, that is relevant to this chapter, is about reductionism in social and political psychology. Concerning threat, this is the question of to what extent intergroup threat is driven by individual- versus social-level phenomena, and the inclusion of historical and cultural factors into understandings of intergroup threat. This relates to the assertion that “social life is dually structured, by both thinking, feeling individuals and by socially organized, discursively constituted” (Rosenberg, 2003, p.431) — that intergroup threat is not simply the aggregate of individuals threat perceptions. The theme 3 excerpt from Ilene and theme 4 on the heterogeneity of threat supports this argument somewhat. Excerpts in these themes illustrate how collective threat may be present even when many people, even perhaps a majority of people, do not experience such threat. Furthermore, it provides an example where socio-historical factors impact on threat perception.

Moving on to how the themes were developed. As with the other topics the transcripts were read and re-read to develop an initial series of codes but with threat, there was a large number of potential codes. Therefore, the codes were divided between ‘intergroup threat’ and ‘threat’. Threat focused more on the experience of threat and in particular, the emotion, the triggers and the cognitive response. Intergroup threat became a broader category including issues of behaviour and perception. Then the relevant sections of the interviews (using NVIVO) under each category were retrieved to read and re-read them until themes were developed. As with the other themes, the themes were developed having been sensitised to existing theory on threat but were not based on theory. That said, the final

themes did show overlap with ITTP's concepts of realistic and symbolic threat but not ITTP's concepts of intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes, nor ITT's concept of realistic group threat.

In terms of findings, the main threats, discussed by participants, were about physical violence, identity and culture. Often there was an overlap between these three issues with participants moving between them, almost interchangeably at times, in their discussion. There was also a strong level of heterogeneity in threat response. Different people felt threatened to different degrees and felt threats on varying issues. Some felt no threat at all.

The final themes developed are theme 1 on violence and physical threat, theme 2 on identity, theme 3 on culture, and theme 4 on the heterogeneity of threat response.

Theme 1. Violence and physical safety

By far the most common response²⁹ when being asked about feeling threatened was in reference to feeling safe in relation to violence. This is unsurprising, given that whilst the region saw the end of large-scale violence at the end of the Troubles there continues to be lower-level violence and somewhat frequent killings³⁰.

²⁹ Out of the 50 participants, 10 brought up the concept of violence: Ahmad, Artie, Dionna, Dirk, Domingo, Edmond, Hal, Jeremy, Lashay and Shavonne.

³⁰ There were 158 security-related killings between 1998 and 2008 (Nolan, 2018) as opposed to 3,532 people killed between 1969 and 2001 (Sutton, 1994).

During the interviews, several participants, principally those who were active during the Troubles, discussed the threat of violence they had faced. However, the threat of violence is not limited to the Troubles and sectarian violence, and participants focused on the other sources of the threat of violence. This theme focuses on those accounts which illustrate the complexities of the phenomenon of physical threat for those in and around Derry/Londonderry.

This theme illustrates that the threat of violence is felt, thought-through, or both. This sense of threat can be when in outgroup areas, as well as when in what could be considered ingroup areas. The threat from intergroup violence is not just between those from a CNR background and those from a PUL background but can be between groups formed along territorial lines, which are in some cases linked with paramilitary groups. This includes those who do not consider themselves involved in such groups or groupings. At an experiential level, threat from intergroup violence is often entwined with the threat from general violence or crime; intergroup threat is rarely experienced in isolation.

This theme is very much in keeping with 'realistic threat' in ITTP (Stephan & Stephan, 2000). As ITT bifurcates individual and group threats, this theme is in keeping with 'realistic individual threats' (Stephan et al., 2016). Participants in this study focused on individual rather than group threat, and on physical harm and personal security rather than economic loss.

In terms of how violence and physical threat is experienced, the language of dual process approaches is beneficial here. Using Kahneman's (2011) nomenclature, participants described both a 'system 1' response categorised as fast, unconscious, automatic and error-prone, and a 'system 2' response categorised as slow, conscious, effortful and more reliable.

An illustrative excerpt is from Artie, who, being from a PUL background, felt physically unsafe when she found herself in a republican rally in Dublin, after leaving the bus station. What is notable about this account is how she talks about the sense of threat, but also that she believes there was no real risk of physical violence. Rather, she felt intimidated.

Artie, PUL, female: "There are times where I felt physically unsafe, I have definitely felt physically unsafe [...] I can remember going into a concert in Dublin with a friend and getting off the bus in the O'Connell bus depot [...] I walk outside and there is this massive republican protest outside of the bus station. And they were protesting against, I don't know, the RUC or something. They had all the chants going SS RUC and all this kind of stuff. And I can remember thinking I, I was completely terrified. I was like, they are going to know, they are going to know I just got off the bus from Derry. And I just felt so... I mean I, I didn't think any, not necessarily the threat is something, some physical violence, but I just felt so intimidated immediately, you know."

Artie's excerpt highlights the difference between threat as felt and threat as deduced. On the one hand, is the sense of intimidation Artie felt – very much a system 1 response. She experienced this threat as a physiological response, with a strong urge to get away, to run away. On the other hand, is the thought-through analysis which is more system 2. This deduction could have taken place partly at the time, though it is likely that it was mostly thought through with hindsight. This deduction led her to believe that there was no real objective threat – why would people know who she was, and even then, would they have attacked her.

The psychological process of threat of violence is a more complex and nuanced process than at first glance. There may be an immediate sense of threat, whereas a more deduced analysis would suggest there is not. This deduction requires effort and it allows people a degree of freedom in their analysis of it. In the above example, Artie came around to thinking that there was no genuine threat; this is similar to a case that Galen discusses about a victim of hate crime in theme 4 of this chapter (see below). It is also possible that individuals instead rationalise these intuited erroneous threats— what Haidt (2013) terms as *post-hoc* rationalisation, thus justifying their physiological and immediate response as legitimate. That threat is a range of different inputs, which can be in conflict or in concord, allows a great deal of individual variation in threat perception. It also means that threat perceptions can be flawed, even when they are rationalised *post-hoc*.

Stephan et al. (2016) define realistic individual threats as “threats to individual members *due*

[emphasis added] to their membership in a particular ingroup” (p.258). Yet, in many cases, it is the *perceived* membership to a group from which the threat arises. Artie, who as noted above is from a PUL background, describes an insightful account about her daughter. Her daughter is likewise from a PUL background but goes to a Catholic school. Artie describes how threatened her daughter feels wearing the Catholic school uniform when visiting her grandparents:

Artie, PUL, female: “Her grandparents live in a loyalist area [...] And she says she wouldn't feel comfortable walking through that area in her school uniform now. So even though she's from a Protestant background she is identified as being Catholic because she goes to a certain school. It's I can't get off the bus and go and see my granny because I don't want to walk through that area feeling that way. Because somebody could say something to me. Or somebody could, you know.”

Her daughter senses an intergroup threat from PUL people, despite being from a PUL background herself. In an environment of intergroup violence, there is a risk of violence from one's own ingroup as well as from the outgroup. This excerpt about Artie's daughter is one example. It highlights that ingroup members must be vigilant about outgroup symbols and must adjust their behaviour accordingly.

Ingroup members can experience the threat of intergroup violence in much the same way as outgroup members do, due to the risk of misperception. Ultimately, intergroup threat is not

just from the outgroup.

This aspect of being a perceived member of an outgroup manifests in different ways with threat being commensurate with it. Dionna provides an account where she is perceived as having been associated with a rival paramilitary group:

Dionna, PUL, female: “I remember a loyalist paramilitary wouldn't let us move into an area [...] Like you have the UVF and the UDA. There are two separate factions within the loyalist community and I remember quite a few years ago a relation of my husband died and left us the property. And the property was in a mainly UDA stronghold. Where we live... The fact that we are not in anything doesn't count. It is the fact that you come from a community that is aligned or seen to be aligned under territorial issues to a paramilitary grouping, would've been perceived as being UVF territory. And they put every window in the house and told us if we moved into it they would burn us out. So this is Protestants going on doing this on to Protestants. So there is, there is complexities.”

As Dionna highlights, the nature of intergroup threat is more complex than simply between PUL and CNR communities. This excerpt makes clear that there are cleavages within the community: Dionna lives in a community that is perceived to be UVF territory and as such there are tensions with the UDA in UDA-controlled area. In this case, those in the UDA-controlled area perceive Dionna to be part of an outgroup.

It is worth returning to points made in the last chapter, chapter 7, on identity. In that chapter, there is the theme on identity being multifaceted, and the issues of labelling as part of the theme on extrinsic factors. Bringing those concepts into this context: Dionna's identity is multifaceted, and she is labelled by others in ways she does not see herself. In chapter 7, in the section on the extrinsic factors theme, she describes her identity as female and how she belongs to the (Protestant) Church of Ireland. Yet, she is labelled as being UVF-linked, perceived as being a member of that grouping, and consequently faces a form of intergroup threat.

It is also notable that based on participants' accounts, intergroup threat is not experienced in isolation. There is an intersectionality of threats from outgroups but also from crime. One example is from Dalene who describes how she feels threatened in PUL areas but also CNR areas, despite being from a CNR background herself.

Dalene, CNR, female: "I suppose you feel threatened sometimes if you are walking through an area that is all Union Jacks and red and white paving stones, and you don't particularly know the area as well, that could be quite threatening [...], there is a slightly ominous sense and just slightly threatening sense whereas if I was walking through somewhere that was all green, white and gold I wouldn't like it but I probably wouldn't feel the same threat because I would know that they are Catholics [...] So you wouldn't feel the same sense of threat probably but I still wouldn't be

particularly happy. I would rather avoid areas like that.”

Dalene was asked why that is.

Dalene, CNR, female: “It is another class element to it isn't there [...] A lot of crime is going to generate from working-class areas because crime is driven by need and want and lack of things [...] So when you see all that regalia up you are kind of thinking this area is probably a bit rough so probably not to hang around here too much, just avoid it. But it would be doubly so if it was a red, white and blue area because everything about you and all of them.”

In these excerpts, Dalene signifies areas as predominantly PUL areas by having ‘Union Jacks and red and white paving stones’ or the ‘red, white and blue’ colours; she signifies CNR areas as having ‘green, white and gold’ colours. Her comments indicate the way in which ingroup and outgroup markers provide one level of threat but markers associated with the class of an area could create an additional or alternative sense of threat, through the perceived threat of crime.

Lashay gives an experiential account, predominantly about how she felt afraid during an incident late at night:

Lashay, CNR, female: “I'm very seldom in the city centre at night. I was recently, and I was walking through the Guildhall Square and on down the Strand. And it was from... Now, I have no idea but those youths behind me and one of them threw a bottle, which I know broke kind of very close to my heels. And I, I just continued on. I didn't stop or anything. They actually never did anything to me, but I did feel threatened. But I mean that wasn't a Catholic/ Protestant. I have no idea. Now I suspect given the area that it wasn't probably Catholics. But I could have been somewhere else and it happened too. So, and I didn't think about... That never entered my mind. It was just, it was a threatening situation. And it was a crowd of drunk young men.”

What is notable about this excerpt is that though it is primarily about the fear when youths threw a bottle at her, it is not distinct from an intergroup threat — she says that she suspects that it was not Catholics. The consideration of intergroup threat is mixed with other threats of violence at an experiential level.

Theme 1 Discussion

Unsurprisingly, the primary type of threat described by participants is violence and threat to physical safety. What is surprising is the extent to which individuals experience what would be described as intergroup threat but from ingroup members.

The intergroup threat literature mostly delineates intergroup threat from wider threat, mainly as those studies employ specific survey items for intergroup threat. However, the

excerpts in this theme suggest that the experience of violence and physical safety threat mean that there are no such clear lines. Firstly, individuals may have little or no control over whether they are perceived as an outgroup member and, commensurate with that, they sense a form of intergroup threat. Secondly, such threat experiences can be entwined with general physical threat from violence and crime.

This fluidity of perceived group membership and complexity of groups is somewhat problematic for ITT. If ITT is based on a “tribal psychology mindset” (Stephan et al., 2016, p.256) then these tribes need to be clearly defined. This study highlights that it is not one’s membership to a group, but rather one’s *perceived* membership to a group from which the threat arises. This would be something that ITT should be revised to incorporate.

That group membership is so contested means it can be difficult to differentiate ITT’s realistic threat from wider violence and physical safety threat, at an experiential level. Furthermore, what constitutes realistic threats in ITT is broad. ITT's realistic threats include, *inter alia*, “bullying”, “harassment”, “theft” and “destruction of property” (Stephan et al., 2016, p.257). It can be questionable to the degree to which these are caused by intergroup factors as opposed to other motivations. In essence, intergroup threat can add to, or be inseparable from, a general level of physical threat.

It is worth noting that other aspects of ITT’s realistic individual threat were largely absent in the interviews, that is “economic loss, deprivation of valued resources” (Stephan et al., 2016,

p.258). The exception to this would be when interviewees spoke about deprivation of resources and support for cultural activities, an issue covered in theme 3 on threat to culture. This would suggest that while there is some overlap with this theme on violence and physical safety, it does not map exactly on to ITT's realistic individual threat construct.

On another note is the dual process approach. There is a system 1, immediate response, tempered with a system 2, slower thinking process. Beyond this, there is a social learning component of threat, something discussed further in theme 4 on heterogeneity of threat. The key point is that threat is not a simple system 1 response, but different levels with their own dynamics and which intersect — a culmination of system 1, system 2 and social constructions of threat.

Suggestions for building on these findings include exploring at what point and under what conditions violence and physical threats are perceived as intergroup threats. At what point, for example, are the threats posed by an individual or group of individuals considered as a physical threat rather than an intergroup threat. It would also be interesting to see how individuals manage threat by looking to change the perception by others as an outgroup member, specifically the behaviour employed. These could help understand how groups are policed in terms of what they do to show group membership.

Theme 2. Identity

The second prominent theme in this chapter is identity. Identity threat is very much a part of life for the participants in this study, including for those who grew up post-GFA. This can mean a change in behaviour in response to this threat. There is a threat to identity (i.e. fear of loss, dilution, and alienation) as well as a threat from identity (i.e. from outgroup members if one's identity is known). Threatened identities can include conflict identities; in the post-GFA era, this can mean a loss of desirable identities — for example, as a victim or as a fighter. What is also clear is that identity and culture have a certain degree of overlap, so threat to identity can also be threat to culture (which is the next theme).

This theme is very much in keeping with ITTP's 'symbolic threat' (Stephan & Stephan, 2000) and ITT's 'symbolic individual threats', specifically "undermining an individual's self-identity or self-esteem." (Stephan et al., 2016, p.258).

Turning to examples of the experience of threat to identity, one is from Lamont. Lamont lived throughout the Troubles, and now continues to live in, an area called the Fountain, which is an interface area³¹ that has been described as "Londonderry's last unionist enclave" (O'Neill, 2017). He describes a fear, which is more common amongst the PUL participants than CNR participants in the interviews, of losing one's identity:

Lamont, PUL, male: "To me threatened would be loss of my British identity. That's

³¹ An interface area is the point where segregated PUL and CNR residential areas come together.

about the only thing that would, I see a threat. At the moment that's the only threat, that I would, I would be conscious of [...] It's the same as from I was a youngster.

There was always the threat that sometime we will be subsumed into a regime that is alien to our identity.”

Lamont's phrasing is noteworthy here. He talks about being 'subsumed into a regime that is alien to our identity'. Subsume suggests the idea of losing one's group identity in a larger group; being diluted. The use of the word 'regime' is interpreted to mean not just culture but an organising system, an oppressive one. Finally, he uses the word alien to emphasise how incongruous it is to what he defines as his identity.

These comments depict the lived experience of identity threat: fear of loss, dilution, and alienation. Many participants share this experience and a profound sense of identity threat. Furthermore, living in areas such as Lamont does, which is an isolated PUL area and an interface area, may well further foster that sense of threat.

In line with the previous chapter's emphasis on complex and multifaceted identities, the identities that were threatened, according to the participants, were not simply PUL or CNR identities.

Stefania highlights a threat of identity for young dissidents, which is understood to mean dissident republicans. In the following excerpt, Stefania describes how the GFA meant that

republican paramilitaries would no longer have a cause to fight for; that they were no longer the victims and no longer have their victimhood:

Stefania, CNR, female: “People probably feel threatened by, you would see in some of the communities by young dissidents [...] People feel threatened by not wanting to move on. Threatened in case they're not going to be a victim anymore. You can be stealing somebody's identity. And take away the fact, of their victimhood.”

While sectarian conflict can provide a threat to individuals' identities, this account suggests the absence of conflict also provides an identity threat. The end of the Troubles took away, or diminished conflict identities. These conflict identities can be desirable: being seen as someone fighting for a cause supported by one's peers and community. As well as those who were active in the Troubles losing their conflict identities, it is also that a new generation of young people is not able to access those conflict identities. They feel, as Stefania puts it, 'threatened by not wanting to move on'. Young dissident republicans thus feel a distinct identity threat in the post-GFA era.

A final account is from Rosaria who illustrates how identity can act as a source of threat. She would go to a dance class in a youth club with her PUL friend in what her father would tell her was a dangerous area. She describes the precautions she would take:

Rosaria, CNR, female: “Writing my name on the sign-in sheet. I have a double-

barrelled name – [Rosaria’s surname]. [First part of Rosaria’s surname] is a very Irish Catholic name. So I would have had to leave that out [...] There are precautions that you would take to kind of keep yourself right, but you would... Would you feel threatened? Aye, definitely you would.”

Rosaria is in her 20s which means she was born towards the end of the Troubles and grew up mostly in the post-GFA era. While many participants described experiences from the Troubles, this narrative from Rosaria is quite recent. The excerpt reaffirms that in the post-Troubles era, the issues of identity and identity-related threat remain very relevant.

Rosaria acts cautiously in the area. She thinks about the threat and adjusts her behaviour accordingly by not signing her full name. There is, therefore, a cognitive process by which people, such as Rosaria, regularly take threat into account, and behaviour is still adapted to deal with this. Rosaria has friends from PUL backgrounds, in particular one, who lives in what sounds like a loyalist area. Nonetheless, she is not immune from threat and adapts her thinking and behaviour accordingly. Identity-based threat continues post-GFA for a generation who grew up after the Troubles and this generation continues to adapt their behaviour in response to this.

Theme 2 Discussion

This theme focuses on how identity is a potent target and source of threat. The excerpts illustrate what that experience is like. There is the fear of losing one’s identity, of being

subsumed, of dilution and alienation. In line with identities being complex and multifaceted, as highlighted in Chapter 7, the nature of identity threat is also complex. There is the identity threat relating to CNR and PUL identities being threatened, but also identity threat from social changes. Furthermore, while the participants highlighted how individuals were able to form relationships across communities, they illustrated various ways in which they manage their disclosure of identity to ameliorate threat.

The implication from this is that there remains a distinct sense of identity threat that continues in the post-GFA era. Individuals interviewed suggest they remain cognisant of identity threat and it has impacts on their behaviour. The types of identity that are threatened, or can be a source of threat, are fluid and changing. As Chapter 7 on Identity highlights, identities are in constant flux, with greater saliency at different times. Likewise, the nature of identity threat changes in varying situations. Furthermore, as Stefania's excerpt illustrates, identities can be specific to a time as well as location, and therefore identity threat can be time-specific.

This theme is somewhat keeping in line with ITT's concept of 'symbolic individual threats' (Stephan et al., 2009, 2016; Stephan & Renfro, 2002). However, this theme emphasises identity can be a source of threat as well as being threatened in itself. Within the ITT literature, several studies find that strength of identity with the ingroup is positively correlated with symbolic threats (Riek et al., 2006; Stephan et al., 2002; Verkuyten, 2009), including in the context of Northern Ireland (Tausch, Hewstone, et al., 2007). While this

correlation was not tested in a quantitative way as in these cited studies, it is worth remarking that those interviewed in this doctoral study who expressed a strong sense of symbolic threat, either in terms of threat to identity (e.g. Lamont) or as threat to culture (e.g. Malcolm and Emmanuel in the next theme), seemed to strongly identify with their communities. This was illustrated by their involvement in community cultural activities as well as comments during their interviews. It may be that threat and community involvement create a positive spiral in that a sense of threat leads to involvement with activities where the social milieu may share this sense of threat and in turn strengthen the sense of threat. This could be an area warranting further investigation through, for example, a narrative study.

Stephan et al. (2016) note that facets of identity such as cross-cutting identities and distinctiveness have not been well-investigated, in relation to intergroup threat. Further research could look at such facets, for example how the narratives around identities interact and create this sense of threat. That the post-GFA period led to identities being threatened suggests there are identities that remain threatened through social change. Finally, individuals employ a range of techniques and skills to manage identity threat and it would be interesting to explore these further.

Theme 3. Threat to Culture

Continuing from, and overlapping with, identity is the discussion on culture. Participants

brought up threat to culture often at the same time as identity. In some cases, they used the terms interchangeably, and other times combined them together as cultural identity.

This theme highlights how threat to culture has become a more salient threat in the post-GFA era. This threat is often felt as a fear of cultural loss and participants noted how this fear was instrumentalised. Some participants go as far as calling it a cultural war, perceiving that others are trying to make their side weaker by undermining the culture that keeps them together. Even those who do not feel this cultural threat find that they must take into account the cultural threat of others.

Like theme 2 on identity threat, this theme is also in keeping with ITTP's 'symbolic threat'; indeed, a survey item used to test the ITTP model was "Mexican immigration is undermining American *culture* [emphasis added]" (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p.60). With respect to ITT, threat to culture seems to be in keeping with 'symbolic group threats' (Stephan et al., 2016).

Participants often discussed a change, over time, of mostly physical threats during the Troubles to threat predominantly being about culture. Jonna provides an example:

Jonna, PUL, female: "Whenever you say the word threat, it's considered [...] a threat to personal security. But I do think [...] it's kind of morphed in a way from there. Where people are seeing it as [...] a threat there that you are going to lose your British culture or your Irish culture. Or that cultural identity that people are very

latched onto. So, there are any number of threats that are peddled in this country at the minute. [...] During the Troubles [it] would have been something that was [...] personal well-being. It has changed [...] People think more in terms of what are you losing here? What are you going to lose?"

Participants in the study suggested that there is a greater salience of cultural threat, whereas during the Troubles the key threat of concern was physical threat. There is the mobilisation of these cultural threats (i.e. 'threats that are peddled'), which in turn exacerbates a growing fear of cultural loss. Jonna points out that as well as being felt and being part of a social narrative, threat can also be instrumentalised.

Malcolm provides a richer account of how he experiences this fear of losing culture and identity:

Malcolm, PUL, male: "You feel that your identity is under threat in the current cultural war that's ongoing. I suppose you feel threatened when you, you feel that your position or your way of life is changing in a way which you don't want it to change [...] I suppose for me at this stage it's the undermining of my ability to remain in the United Kingdom. And the sort of the peace process is the one that will have to take place. It's facilitating a cultural war where everything that I hold dear seems to be perceived as not acceptable. Or it needs to be removed to neutralise the space to allow other people their identity where the same doesn't seem to be applied to me.

When you talk about equality, talk about a need for, for example, the Irish language act. That's for a very small minority of people. But these issues are pushed to the fore, to keep nationalism happy. And to keep it on a so-called peaceful footing.”

The focus of Malcolm’s comments is the threat when you feel that ‘your way of life is changing in a way which you don’t want it to change’ which he specifies as unionism (i.e. Northern Ireland being part of the UK), a cultural war, and capitulation to ‘keep nationalism happy’. This concept of a cultural war arising from the peace process is most striking. Whereas Jonna talks about the change in threat, Malcolm uses the word ‘war’. He sees the conflict itself has moved from physical violence to culture and identity. It is an issue he is clearly agitated about.

He brings up the Irish language act. This is a proposed piece of legislation to expand the official use of the Irish language, which has garnered controversy. Malcolm considers the Irish language act as part of the cultural war and justifies his opposition to it in that it is a small minority of people. Conversely, he feels that there has not been equality in dealing with his, and assumably by extension, unionists’ wishes. There is a clearer framing of cultural threats as part of a cultural war. Malcolm sees a need to defend one’s culture from depreciation.

To understand these sentiments, an earlier extract of the interview is illuminative. Here Malcolm talked at length about the issues of culture and identity, and how he feels his

cultural identity is being hijacked:

Malcolm, PUL, male: “Well there's a clear belief in the unionist community that Sinn Fein and the republican movement took on to cause trouble at parades [...] to attack our culture, because culture brings people together, and bonds people together. By breaking those bonds you make the other community weaker. And that to me seems to be the case. They deliberately targeted Orange, the Orange institution, and made it that it was toxic for some people. And a lot of the middle-class people left the institution, and you're left with a working-class institution then, that has no real social capital [...] Targeting the culture broke down that social capital and made the community slightly weaker. And easier to go in for attack.”

The objective of attacking PUL culture, for Malcolm, is to undermine social capital. Social capital is an interesting concept to bring up. When Malcolm invoked the concept of social capital in the interview, it did not seem like the first time he has discussed this, and my impression was that this is a common narrative in his community – ‘they’ are trying to undermine ‘our’ culture, undermine ‘our’ social capital, and make ‘us’ weaker.

Now, the research on the impact of diversity on social capital is mixed (see Portes & Vickstrom, 2011). As noted earlier, it is possible to build social capital across diverse groups (i.e. bridging capital) as well as within homogeneous groups (i.e. bonding capital) and some research suggests a combination of both may be ideal (Agnitsch et al., 2006). Nonetheless,

Malcolm seems of the opinion that other groups are undermining his social capital and it is this opinion that is worth probing further.

This opinion or 'belief' as Malcolm puts it, is according to him, common in the unionist community. Purportedly, it would justify that sense of threat to culture, in providing a more tangible threat, that is to social capital. It may present what Haidt (2013) terms as *post-hoc* rationalisation — there is a sense of threat and a rationalisation to account for it; that it represents a real threat in some ways. This provides a way in which social narratives and lived experiences can interact, and either undermine or reinforce each other. One could experience a perceived threat to culture and rationalise it away (see Theme 4 below where Galen discusses rationalising away the fear of hate crime). But instead, the narrative that social capital is under threat reinforces and legitimates the sense of threat, which can in turn legitimate the narrative.

This study does not claim that this 'belief' is true. To my knowledge, there is no research that validates a relationship between threat to culture and social capital, though there is literature that argues that threat to culture would lead to diminishing social capital in the Northern Ireland context (e.g. Laurence, 2011). There is thus an opportunity for further research to explore whether symbolic threat could act as a proxy for social capital threat, as Malcolm seems to suggest in this excerpt.

A final excerpt is from Ilene, who illustrates an element of social conformity to threat: she

does not feel threatened herself but must keep in mind others' sense of threat. Ilene is from a PUL background but is married to someone from a CNR background. She talks about the impact of Irish language learning on her relationships:

Ilene, PUL, female: "I find my relationships can be quite threatened. So my kind of interest in the Irish language has threatened my relationship with my mum and dad certainly. And certainly with his, my dad's family. My mom's family are kind of a lot more easy-going on but um, but they feel threatened, you know [...] I'm quite surprised at my mum actually. She um, she's very anti- the kids learning in an immersive Irish language environment. She doesn't understand why anybody would want to speak the language or protect it. I mean, I would be quite shocked at it because my mom's fairly liberal and would listen and you know, understand people's perspectives mostly. But my dad, I kind of knew, I was well prepared for that. But it's the one you're not prepared for that's quite difficult."

This excerpt illustrates that threat to culture can be experienced indirectly. Ilene does not experience this threat herself. She is from a PUL background but feels positive about the Irish language and her kids learning in an Irish language environment. Yet, her parents and extended family feel threatened, and that has an impact on her. She faces resistance and anger from them, and she has to navigate that threat. It is also clear that her parents are

facing pressure – a rumour³² that she mentioned at another point in the interview, that she spoke at a Sinn Fein event, indicates the hostility amongst her parents' wider network to what she does. It does not necessarily lead to her changing behaviour with regard to the threat (i.e. stopping Irish language learning) but requires her to take into account this threat and to mollify her parents.

This example shows how indirect cultural threat can influence and constrain behaviour even when the threat is not experienced directly. It also shows that despite heterogeneity in the experience of threat, there can still be an aggregate effect. People feel pressured to conform to other's experience of threat. This heterogeneity of threat, and response to it, is explored more in the next theme, theme 4 on the heterogeneity of threat.

Theme 3 Discussion

Threat to culture was a prominent issue, according to the participants interviewed, with some arguing that in the post-GFA era that it has become more so. Participants described the experience of threat to culture as a feeling that 'your way of life is changing in a way which you don't want it to change' and some saw it as a 'war'. Some participants noted that there was an instrumentalisation of this threat and indeed there were narratives around

³² **Ilene, PUL, female:** "So at the weekend then when she rang me to say you spoke at some Sinn Fein thing. And your dad's getting a hard time at work. It's like I've never spoken at a Sinn Fein thing in my life. I don't know why you're saying that to me because you know I don't support Sinn Fein and so, would you like to ask me what I spoke at, at the weekend, you know so it's that kind of thing."

these threats as ways of undermining social capital. That threat to culture was experienced and transmitted at a social level, rather than being solely something experienced at an individual level, means that even those who do not feel threatened may often have to behave in accordance with those who do feel threatened.

The interaction between individual experiences of threat and social transmission of threat is notable in these excerpts. Threat narratives at a social level provide a way in which to process individual experiences but could heighten the perception of, or attentiveness towards, threat. Social discussions around threat to culture could, for example, make individuals more perceptive to cultural threats than they may not have been. The social narratives around threat highlight that it is not a purely individual process, and that there is an element of social mediation and construction.

In terms of further research, a question would be whether individuals are more perceptive to cultural threats as a result of social narratives. In the same way that there has been, for example, research into how racial stereotypes affect attentional bias (Trawalter et al., 2008), an area could be to see how narratives around cultural threat affect attention towards cultural issues when presented. These narratives around social capital threat and culture war are worth exploring in their own right, as to how such narratives are generated, propagated and popularised. Potentially, a social representations theory approach (Moscovici, 2001) would be helpful here.

Theme 4. Heterogeneity of Threat

The final theme relates to the heterogeneity of threat responses and the factors that feed into it. This variation seems to be attributable to individual differences in threat responses as well as social learning and experience.

Threat response is highly variable, and therefore a common external sense of threat suggests that community-level threat is not simply an aggregation of individuals' threat.

There are additional social processes that ensure a community approach to certain threats.

Threat should thus be understood at these multiple levels.

Moving to examples, in response to the question about what does feeling threatened mean to you, several participants simply replied they just did not feel threatened ^{33 34 35 36}.

Frances is an example of someone who also says he struggles to understand why others feel

³³ **Shon, CNR, male:** "See, I don't feel threatened anymore. You know, I think there's opportunity here now. And I think it's incumbent on all of us to embrace that opportunity."

³⁴ **Joaquin, CNR, male:** "I don't, I don't have the experience of feeling threatened at the level of our socio-political thing. My life is safe. Wherever I go on this island. You know I feel safe."

³⁵ **Edmond, PUL, male:** "Well I don't know. Threatened to me is just... Physically. I mean it is just ... I don't come, I don't feel threatened as a Protestant or as a British citizen. I don't even feel physically threatened now. I don't think there is a single part of the city I couldn't walk through without you know. Feeling safe. I don't think my identity is threatened either."

³⁶ **Samuel, CNR, male:** "I don't, I, personally I don't feel threatened. But you see if someone tells you that they feel threatened you can't say no. It's what they, it's how they feel."

threatened³⁷. Despite this, he is aware of the narratives around threat such as what seems to be a commonly-used analogy – ‘dimmer-switch republicanism’:

Frances, PUL, male: “I think they see it as a diminution... As one person said to me, let me get this right: dimmer-switch, dimmer-switch republicanism. That they are gradually dimming down your British identity. So they see it as diminishing their identity and country. Whereas I don't.”

Frances’s excerpt accentuates the difference between threat as experienced individually and threat as a social narrative. Frances does not feel threat himself (or at least claims not to) but he is aware that there exists a narrative around this threat, which is quite detailed and well-articulated (i.e. ‘dimmer-switch republicanism’). In this environment, it would be likely that there is pressure to conform socially to a threat to identity even though at a personal level one does not feel it.

There was one point that came up repeatedly, including amongst people who state they do not feel threatened, and this is the difference between perceived threat and actual threat³⁸

³⁷ **Frances, PUL, male:** “To be honest I don't know why they feel, I don't know why they feel threatened. I think basically they lack confidence. They don't trust themselves. You know. I mean I trust myself to have my own beliefs and give expression to those beliefs. And only change them if somebody persuades me that I'm wrong and that they are inappropriate. I have a confidence about my own views. I trust my own views and I agree to disagree.”

³⁸ **Sanah, PUL, female:** “I think threat is quite often to do with the perception of the person who feels threatened rather than the presence of danger.”

The most illustrative comments concerning this heterogeneity of threat response come from Galen, a serving police officer. He breaks down in greater detail these concepts of perceived versus actual threat. He describes the presence of what are indisputable threats to life, which he does not feel threatened by, or claims not to be. He starts by responding to my question about what threat means to him:

Galen, PUL, male: "It's a very, very profound experience. If you've been in the job as long as I have and I speak from a personal point of view, you learn to live with a level of threat, that it's only recently that I realised is alien to most people. But if you do it for 30 years, it becomes normality so you can normalise threat.

18 months ago, it was about quarter to three in the morning and my wife woke up [...] and looked out our bedroom window and there was a guy putting a bomb under my car [...] Now my wife, was a serving officer, she's retired recently, but she was a late joiner. And she only served for about ten years. It has affected her profoundly. And having the house reinforced. All our, all our windows are now bulletproof. Our front door is blast-proof, cameras, movement sensors etc. It has really, really affected her. With me I sort of thought about well I knew this was a possibility thirty years ago

³⁹ **Jeremy, CNR, male:** "Sometime really there was real threat and perceived threat. Question is sometimes is there a difference."

when I signed on the dotted line and I been through twenty odd years of conflict, violence all of those sorts of things and whilst I acknowledge that it's a threat I still have this mental shrug of the shoulders. Well that's the way it is.

So my perception of threat isn't, doesn't impact as much on me, as it does on her.

And I think threat is relative to the way you think about something.”

This is a stunning account. The comments can be read with a phenomenological lens, as describing his understanding of the situation, as well as from a discourse analysis perspective, which sees these comments as performative. There could be an element of both.

Galen is aware of a verified physical threat to his life. In contrast to his wife who is upset by it, he has a ‘mental shrug of the shoulders’. In the face of an identical threat, he has a markedly different response to his wife. He attributes this to his 30-year experience of the force. From a performative perspective, it may be that he claims to not be afraid. There is undoubtedly something impressive about someone who faces mortal threats fearlessly and that may be the image he looks to project. My impression, however, was of someone who felt unthreatened at the time and is not entirely sure why this is the case.

What is clear from these comments is that there are strong differences at the core level of how threat is interpreted. Even in the face of the most extreme threats, a threat response

may not be proportionate.

Galen continues from his last comments, and brings out another insightful example, this time relating to hate crime:

Galen, PUL, male: “You can have a victim of hate crime where the crime itself isn't that serious. But the fear that it generates is huge. Until you, until you can rationalise it. So a couple of years ago, I have to go and deal with a victim of a hate, disorderly behaviour. And what's happened is that she is sitting in a car, waiting at a red traffic light, when a guy goes past, swore at her, she had her window down. She's black. Guy goes past on a bicycle, gives her a load of verbal abuse and pedals on. And she is distraught by this. And of course she should be. It's insulting. It's a horrific thing to happen, but the level of fear: do I have to reinforce my house, should I change my house locks? And I said OK. Do you know this guy? No. Do you think he knows you. No. Do you think he knows where you live. No. Do you see what the chances of him coming after you.

Right, OK. I'm not saying that it isn't important that deal with this. What I'm saying is you got to rationalise the threat realistically. If he doesn't know where to find you how is he ever going to... And that's when she said yes I've got it. You know, I understand that. So I think it's a lot in your perception.”

Galen accepts this incident had upset the hate crime victim and is sympathetic. At the same time, he feels a process of rationalisation would lessen the threat felt. Essentially, he posits that this is an emotional response that is disproportionate to threat. The victim suddenly feels vulnerable and that she will be attacked in her house. By reassessing the threat and the realistic chance of attack, the threat response is ameliorated.

This incident highlights the strong difference between perceived and actual threat. The perceived threat here was immediate and extended well beyond the context of threat. The incident created a wider sense of threat to the victim's person. At one moment she felt unsafe in her car, and this led to her feeling unsafe in her house, and in general. There was a level of threat contagion; the fear spread beyond the locus of threat.

So, whereas Galen's emotional threat response was less than the actual threat of the car bomb, the hate crimes victim's threat response was stronger than the actual threat and spread beyond it. This reinforces the notion that threat response is not always proportionate and there are strong individual differences.

Galen then goes on to discuss how threat perceptions are influenced by the context of community:

Galen, PUL, male: "But your perception will come from your community background and from your cultural background. I mean, if you've been oppressed for most of

your life, you, you, you will see oppression in everything. And I think that's one of the issues the police face. Certainly with policing a nationalist community. Nationalist community is used to seeing a dark green uniform and going oppressors, violence. They interrogate people using force. They breach human rights. That's them coming, that's them coming and seeing through their community lens.

And that's what policing a shared society was trying to address, is getting police officers to understand the lenses through which they're seen. The historical things that they've never been told because they were told not to talk about the war.”

This last comment highlights the strong socio-historical factors, in addition to individual variation. There is a social dimension of threat, distinct from individuals' processing of threats. This social dimension has distinct dynamics and is tied in with history and social changes. It illustrates how individuals' processing of threats can be informed by, and in turn impact on, social narratives around threats.

Theme 4 Discussion

This theme depicts what Rosenberg (2003) terms the individual structuring of the meaning and experience of threat as well as the collective structuring of the meaning and experience of threat. At an individual level, the experience of the car bomb was different from Galen and his wife, and the hate crime victim felt a level of threat disproportionate to the actual risk (at least in Galen's estimation). At the collective level, there is the perceived threat

amongst the PUL community from ‘dimmer-switch republicanism’ and amongst the CNR community from the police.

To reiterate: collective threat is not simply an aggregate of individual threat. At an individual level, there are individual differences in terms of physiology, cognition and perception, and at a collective level, there are social, historical and cultural constructions of threat. Threat, therefore, sits at the heart of a “reciprocal relationship between individual psychological and collective meaning-making” (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012, p.95). This speaks to Rosenberg’s (2003) concern about reductionism in political psychology — threat is “dually structured” (p.431) and thus to understand it, it requires attention to both the thinking and feeling components, as well as the socially organised and discursively constituted aspects.

This interplay between individual and collective meaning-making of threat is an area that would warrant further research. Extant work on threats, especially relating to ITT, tends to bracket out issues such as situational factors, prior and current intergroup relations, personal experiences with the outgroup, and instead, relates to them as antecedents to intergroup threat (Stephan et al., 2016). However, these issues are what makes up meanings of threats and the interplay of the individual and collective (studied with an epistemologically suitable approach — see chapter discussion below) would highlight how threat is both experienced and constructed. An in-depth narrative study, for example, into how threat is learned, experienced and constructed could help elucidate the individual and social components of threat and the “complex and dynamic relationship between context

and mind” (Hammack & Pilecki, 2012, p.1).

Chapter discussion

This chapter explored how participants experienced and understood threat. The first three themes were the focus of the threats: violence and physical safety, identity and culture. The fourth theme highlighted the heterogeneity of threat.

This study finds that intergroup physical threat is rarely experienced in isolation from wider physical threat. Furthermore, it is perceived group membership rather than one’s self-identification with a group that can lead to intergroup threat. This combined with the fact that an individual’s self-identified identities are complex and multifaceted, as noted in Chapter 7, means that intergroup threat can be much broader than, say, CNR- or PUL-related identities. Threat to culture was a prominent issue, more prominent, according to some, since the end of the Troubles and prone to being instrumentalised. Individuals did not always feel threatened, but even those who did not would have to conform to such threats. This highlights a dynamic of threat at a social level that is distinct from threat as experienced at an individual level.

Threat is specific to the context. This in-depth investigation of threat provides a more accurate, contextual understanding of types of threat in and around LDY in 2017. It may be possible from this to devise more accurate constructs of threat and potentially also survey

items.

The starting expectations, prior to the interviews, was that participants would discuss the full range of threats depicted in ITTP and ITT: realistic threats, symbolic threats, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, and that participants may differentiate between group threats and individual threats. In the end, there was partial, but no complete, overlap with the first three themes identified in this doctoral study and those constructs defined by ITTP and ITT. Even saying that, one could argue that the ITTP/ITT constructs are broader than what was found in this study. While the physical threat aspect of ITTP/ITT realistic threat was evident (i.e. theme 1), there was rarely discourse around political and economic power in the interviews. Likewise, it was issues of identity (theme 2) or culture (theme 3), rather than morals, values, standards, attitudes, ideology, or philosophy that came through in the interviews, that would come under symbolic threat. Indeed, identity and culture are not the key terms used in defining symbolic threat either in ITTP⁴⁰ or ITT⁴¹.

The fact that a subset of realistic and symbolic threats came through in the study is likely attributable to the context, as well as the interview approach used which focuses on lived

⁴⁰ “Symbolic threats primarily involve perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes. Symbolic threats are threats to the worldview of the ingroup. These threats arise, in part, because the ingroup believes in the moral rightness of its system of values.” (Stephan & Stephan, 2000, p. 55)

⁴¹ “Symbolic group threats are threats to the ingroup’s religion, values, belief system, ideology, philosophy, morality, or worldview [...] Symbolic individual threats concern loss of face or honor or undermining an individual’s self-identity or self-esteem.” (Stephan et al., 2016, p. 258)

experiences. Previous threat research on Northern Ireland has argued that key issues such as policing, fair employment, parading and display of cultural symbols illustrate that realistic and symbolic threat is prevalent in the society there (Tausch et al., 2007). This prevalence of certain types of issues, and threat associated with them, also emerges in this study's findings.

Another important insight is what could be described as levels of threat. One could talk about the dynamics of threat at the individual level and the social level, but even at the individual level the processes there could be differentiated.

At an individual level, the dual process approach can be beneficial. Threat was found to be a nuanced process, in that it is rarely system 1 or system 2, on its own but an interaction of the two. In the same way that chapter 7 on identity highlighted how identities intersect and build on (or weaken) others, the same is true of threat and these two systems interact with others — they can undermine each other or reinforce each other. There is also an element of agency, however small. This is at the rationalisation system 2 level, not the physiological system 1 level.

This understanding of threat as both system 1 and system 2 processes that are interrelated but somewhat separate, helps provide a clearer picture of threat processing. It is not true that people entirely react automatically to threat, nor is it true that threat is contemplated before a response. Rather it is a mix of the two: rapid response and thinking through, played

out sequentially and in parallel.

Then there is the social level — primarily historical and social narratives. The fourth theme highlights that there are individual differences to identical threat responses, but that there is a social dimension of threat and that collective threat at the social level is more complex than the aggregate of individual-level threat. There is a distinct structuring or meaning-making at the collective level as well as the individual level.

Threat is best understood as an interaction of these several systems. These levels interact but remain distinct and one must not reduce threat to either an individual phenomenon or social phenomenon, as argued in theme 4. Understanding threat comprehensively requires a methodological approach of triangulation. There is undoubtedly a physiological response to perceived threats, whether physical, identity and cultural. These can be investigated through methods that are more positivist in nature. Conversely, the social and historical factors would require a more interpretivist approach, which recognises that “social is an emergent reality with its own specific powers and properties” (Gorski, 2013, p. 659). Such investigation also requires a philosophical approach to investigation, such as critical realism which this study employs, that “accepts a perspectival theory of knowledge situated within a socially and historically relativist theory of science” (Madill, 2008, p. 734). Thus, threat research arguably needs investigating at these multiple levels, as well as finding ways to bring them together in a clear framework to produce what Rosenberg (2003) terms a ‘truly integrative social or political psychology’ in regards to threat.

Finally, on to social capital. The idea, according to some of this study's participants, is that identity and cultural threats (which could also be described as forms of symbolic threat) may be a manifestation of threat to social capital. The proposition could be that social capital is essential for survival so there would be psychological mechanisms for protecting social capital and the groups/networks from which these are based. And that cultural/ identity/ symbolic threat responses are part of those mechanisms. In the context of Northern Ireland, the social networks amongst the PUL community have historically played a role in helping secure employment. Some participants⁴² in this study, from PUL backgrounds, described how they got their first jobs through family and community connections. It would thus be quite conceivable that cultural activities and Protestant fraternal organisations help create and reinforce these social networks. Indeed, some of the stories centred around how, as boys (all the examples were from men), they had met their first employer at family social occasions. Such social networks are underpinned by norms and cultural/social practices. So, undermining these norms, practices, activities and organisations theoretically weaken these networks, which would affect access to jobs, and therefore to livelihood.

From an evolutionary psychology perspective, this threat to social networks could explain the presence of identity/cultural/symbolic threats. One can argue that psychological mechanisms evolved to protect the social norms and practices that helped build and

⁴² Rico (PUL, male), for example, got his first job at a joiner's, at the age of 16 through someone he knew at his 'Boys Brigade', which is a Protestant Christian Youth association.

strengthen the social networks essential for livelihood. It would also explain the reason that people are extraordinarily defensive over their identity and culture from perceived threat, an issue that has manifested itself frequently in Northern Ireland, for example, in the Belfast flag protests of 2012.

Another thing it may explain is the asymmetry in mentalising identity and cultural threat. One is attuned to threats to one's own network and attacks on ingroup culture and identity. But, at the same time, one would be relatively ignorant of the impact on outgroup networks, of culture and identity threats, and therefore feel that the outgroup hostility to such threats was disproportionate. Essentially, outgroup culture and identity does not feel as 'sacred', as ingroup culture and identity does.

It could also explain socio-economic differences in hostility to attacks on culture and identity: working-class people may depend more on those social networks for employment, than middle-class people, who have access to other resources, for livelihood and employment.

It is important to distinguish that this proposition is not a question of group competition for resources, as with Realistic Group Conflict theory (Sherif, 1966). Rather it is a step before that, in that it is about the threat to group entitativity.⁴³ While the ultimate aim could be to

⁴³ "Entitativity means the consideration of something as pure entity, i.e., the mental abstraction from attendant circumstances. In psychology, it typically refers to the perception

secure resources, the threat is to the cohesion of the group. It is thus not a result of scarce resources external to the group, but it is that the group is considered a resource within itself.

Now, this proposition is arguably a novel one but one that this study in no way claims to prove. It is, however, an enticing area of future research. This research can, for example, look to test how group or network entitativity is affected by attacks on culture and identity, and whether people are particularly sensitive to culture and identity attacks where they jeopardise entitativity. One of the aims of this doctoral study was to generate theories about threat and this hypothesis on culture and identity threats as threats to group entitativity and social networks is one that could be developed into a theory about culture and identity threats. Furthermore, one could explore whether the social belief and discursive practice that diversity undermines social capital itself, contributes to perceptions of threat.

In terms of other limitations, as threat is specific to the context, this study's findings may not be generalisable to other conflict contexts. Indeed, some of the threat narratives (e.g. dimmer-switch republicanism) are specific to Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, this study outlines a way, and arguably a need, for an in-depth localised investigation of threat.

Stephan et al. (2016) note in their review that there are relatively few studies of intergroup threats to individual ingroup members and studies that examine intergroup threats at both

of a group as pure entity (an entitative group), abstracted from its attendant individuals." ('Entitativity', 2016)

the group and individual level (p. 273). Further work could look at threat holistically, incorporating group and individual levels, but from the perspective of an individual. Furthermore, and as noted before, a greater understanding of how social narratives are generated and propagated, and how they affect the perception of threat would be an area worth further investigation. In the context of Northern Ireland, cultural threat, in particular, would be an interesting area to focus on.

Summary

This chapter explored 50 interview discussions on threat in Northern Ireland, as understood by the participants. Threat can mean many things to people but in the context of Northern Ireland, it usually relates to physical threats or threats to identity and culture. This study finds strong threat responses amongst most, but not all, of the participants. Threat is both a physiological and cognitive response, working through two mental systems that intersect but are different. There is also a distinct social level of threat. This chapter explored how threat is experienced and processed. Threat to identity and culture is felt by some as tantamount to a mortal threat. A posited explanation is that it may affect the social networks on which people depend and therefore psychological mechanisms exist to warn individuals about threats to those. In any case, threat and intergroup threat, in particular, remains a very important phenomenon in Northern Ireland. The next chapter looks to explore trust in this context, and how that is experienced and conceptualised by those who live there.

Chapter 9. THEMES: TRUST

“People talk about trust between communities. What does that mean to you?” This question, or an approximation of this, was asked to the 50 participants. There was a wide range of responses, but six themes were developed from these responses. Some of these themes centred on the subjective experiences of individuals – how they ‘feel’ trust. In other cases, the themes were about how trust was perceived when it is taking place between others. And then, there are themes about trust as a process, with those themes accounting for how this process takes place. The chapter concludes by relating these findings to extant literature.

Introduction

There are a large number of debates in relation to trust. As with chapter 4, this chapter focuses on the debate around a consensus for a concept of trust, whether trust is relational, whether trust is psychological or behavioural, whether trust is affective rather than cognitive, and whether trust must be based on certain sources. The issue of ontological security is also brought up, as well as key definitions of trust in the conflict literature.

As noted in chapter 4, in their interdisciplinary review of conceptualisations and definitions of trust, PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that the most frequently cited definitions of trust are those by Mayer et al. (1995) and Rousseau et al. (1998) which centre on the

willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on an expectation of the other party's behaviour. The review also highlights the proposed solution of trust as a process that is made up of different concepts (e.g. attitudes, disposition, behaviour, choice) (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). The Mayer/Rousseau definition is somewhat different to the themes developed for this chapter whereas the approach of trust-as-process finds resonance with theme 4 on trust as a 'workaround'.

There is a debate amongst trust theorists into whether trust is necessarily relational — i.e. that it involves a trustor (subject) and trustee (object). As noted in chapter 4, PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that it is nearly ubiquitous in the literature to require a trustor and trustee in a relationship. However, theme 1 on trust as a safe space posits a form of trust that is not strictly relational.

There is disagreement amongst trust researchers on whether trust should be conceptualised as a psychological or behavioural construct, with many psychologically-oriented researchers looking to limit trust to be a psychological construct and those taking an economic perspective and mathematical trust modelling approach wanting trust to be conceptualised as a behaviour or action (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). This chapter finds trust both as a psychological and behavioural construct with themes 1 (safe space), 3 (commonality), and 6 (dispositional distrust) as psychological, and themes 2 (performance), 4 (workaround) and 5 (trusting outgroups through individuals) as behavioural.

There is another debate amongst trust theorists around whether trust is affective in nature (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). For example, Hardin (2006) argues all major theories of trust are cognitive in nature, whereas Möllering (2006) argues all trust involves affect and cognition, that it is rational that our emotion informs trust, and that affect is essential for cognition and decision-making. Theme 1 on safe space trust seems to involve both affect and cognition.

There is also a debate around whether trust must derive from or include certain sources but not others (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). Some argue that the distinctions between the sources of trust do not change the trust itself as a willingness to be vulnerable (Schoorman et al., 2015), whereas others argue that source is important as certain theories are distinguishable based on that (Lane, 1998). In this chapter, theme 3 focuses on trust that is based on its source, relating this to identification-based trust, where trust is based on identification with others' wants (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Saporito & Colwell, 2010) and compatibility-based trust where the outgroup shares the ingroup's values and beliefs (Kappmeier et al., 2019).

The concept of ontological security is explored in this chapter, in connection with trust. Giddens (1990) argues that ontological security and trust are psychologically closely related as they are both dependent on a sense of reliability of things and persons, and that trust is linked to achieving an early sense of ontological security during childhood. Ontological security is an important concept to draw upon, as evidenced in theme 1 on safe space trust.

Turning to the conflict literature, a notable definition is from Kelman (2010) who defines 'working trust' between parties in situations of conflict as a pragmatic trust based on the other's seriousness about peace based on their own interests (Kelman, 2010, 2005). This concept of 'working trust' is invoked with theme 4 of trust as a 'workaround'.

The idea of trust being made up of different concepts (e.g. attitudes, disposition, behaviour, choice), as noted earlier, is similar to an argument made in one of the few studies on conceptualising trust in intergroup conflict which argues for trust as multidimensional (Kappmeier, 2016). The study found 20 dimensions that could constitute trust in intergroup conflict, which were organised into 7 superordinate dimensions: competence, integrity, predictability, compassion, compatibility, collaboration, and security (Kappmeier, 2016). A subsequent 2019 study reduced this to five dimensions for a posited intergroup trust model: competence, integrity, compassion, compatibility and security (thus dropping predictability and collaboration as dimensions) (Kappmeier et al., 2021).

It is primarily these conceptualisations of trust — the multidimensional concept of the intergroup trust model (Kappmeier, 2016; Kappmeier et al., 2019; Kappmeier et al., 2021), willingness to be vulnerable to another party (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), and trust as a process (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) — that were expected at the start of the study. These provide a comparative point to what was found and is reflected on in the chapter discussion.

Moving on to the findings: there were six themes that were developed relating to trust. As with the other chapters, a thematic analysis approach was employed where the transcripts were read and re-read to develop an initial series of codes for trust – 62 initially. Then, the relevant sections of the interviews (using NVIVO) under each category were retrieved, to read and re-read them until themes were developed. There was a sensitisation to the existing conceptualisations of trust as well as the existing theory and evidence of trust but the themes were developed based on how strongly they were supported in the interviews and the insight that they provided. With some themes, there were commonalities with existing conceptualisations in the trust literature (e.g. theme 3 on commonality and theme 4 on 'workaround') but with the other themes, they provided a different perspective into the nature of trust as experienced by the participants. These were included despite being different from common trust conceptualisations.

The final themes, therefore, were trust as a 'safe space', as a social performance, as a shared commonality, as a negotiated workaround, as a process through which individuals manage wider group trust, and as a general disposition.

Theme 1. Trust as a 'safe space'

The primary conceptualisation of trust was a sense or feeling that one is safe^{44 45 46} with some explicitly using the term safe space⁴⁷ which will serve as a label for this conceptualisation of trust.

Safe space trust is conceptualised as a psychological, rather than behavioural construct.

Participants, when asked what trust meant, outlined a concept relating to feelings, especially feeling safe while being in groups⁴⁸, speaking⁴⁹, or travelling⁵⁰. In contrast to theorists such as Hassell (2005) who find that “the only true evidence for trust is the act of trust” (p.132), the participants in this study see trust as the psychological sense of a safe space. While safe space trust can lead to trusting behaviours, such as speaking freely or travelling, it is the psychological component that represents trust.

This concept is somewhat akin to Möllering’s (2006) conceptualisation of trust as sometimes being ‘routine’ — taken-for-granted in many practical situations. However, Möllering (2006)

⁴⁴ **Dalene, CNR, female:** “I suppose trust is just knowing that you are safe I suppose.”

⁴⁵ **Clay, CNR, male:** “Feeling safe at home. And feeling safe and building relationships and partnerships.”

⁴⁶ **Malcolm, PUL, male:** “Well, I suppose trust, trust is a major thing. Trust that you're safe to engage with people.”

⁴⁷ **Artie, PUL, female:** “Trust to me is something that is a safe space.”

⁴⁸ **Domingo, PUL, male:** “I think there was like a notion that this is the sort of safe place for us as a Protestant.”

⁴⁹ **Artie, PUL, female:** “I think it is very important to have that idea of a safe space where what you say will be respected.”

⁵⁰ **Dionna, CNR, female:** “Well I can travel [...] I work with women from every community. And I have never been stopped going in and out of communities.”

argues that this is associated with identity and role acceptance whereas this is not quite the case for safe space trust. It is not that people have safe space trust “because their very social existence is defined by it” (Möllering, 2006, p.52). Instead, people get to a stage where they feel they can act in a routine, unthinking way because they are in a safe space, and that stage is trust.

Safe space trust resonates with the idea of ontological security. This comes out quite strongly in an excerpt by Domingo. As the ‘Troubles’ intensified, Domingo moved from a mixed area to a predominantly PUL, newly-built housing development. He comments on how people moved from various areas nearby, and his feeling of safety when playing with the flute and drum bands:

Domingo, PUL, male: “They were coming from the west bank, they were coming from Rosemount (unintelligible) wee small villages and because the Protestant community is sort of different churches and stuff, it didn't mean you knew people outside [...] Some people were really lost. And I just talked then that band sort of brought that whole sort of, a bit of an identity back. Identity to say this is who we are and we will support it. And people were comfortable with that [...] I think there was like a notion that this is the sort of safe place for us as a Protestant.”

As Domingo points out, some people were lost, and the band helped reduce that sense and potentially provide a sense of psychological well-being, of ontological security. There is the

feeling of being at ease in certain cultural groups with a shared identity — there was a ‘notion that this is a sort of safe place for us as a Protestant’. In contrast to the events that were going on, and the sense of dislocation from moving from various areas around Derry/Londonderry, being in a music band of people with similar background and experiences, provided a sense of being in a safe space.

However, it is not a given that being in an environment of people from the same community provides a sense of trust. Artie’s experience of alienation suggests that a sense of ontological security is not assured by being with others from the same background. Indeed, it sounded like the staunchly loyalist environment brought about questions of herself and others — a sense of ontological insecurity:

Artie, PUL, female: “I can remember being in Belfast at a time as well and... And being with friends and going onto the Shankhill Road. And even though it is, sort of symbolises all that is, working-class loyalism is, I felt so desperately uncomfortable there. Even as a Protestant, because it is such an insular community that anybody who is from the outside, I think, is looked at with mistrust.”

Artie felt quite alienated from the area despite being from a working-class loyalist background herself. Her surprise is notable in that it suggests a pre-existing belief that she would have a feeling of safe space because of a similar background. Instead, she found that others perceived her as a stranger and that she was looked at with the mistrust of ‘anybody

who is from the outside'. Relating this back to the concept of a safe space as somewhere you are in turn trusted by others: for Artie, this was not a safe space because she was not trusted.

With the concept of ontological security, Giddens (1990) argues that ontological security is rooted in the unconscious, that it is emotional rather than cognitive. This seems to be reflected in the quotes which talk about a sense or feeling, rather than a rational deduction. Relating this to the debate amongst trust theorists as to whether trust is affective or cognitive in nature (see PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016), safe space trust seems to involve both affect and cognition, as Möllering (2006), for example, has posited that all trust must involve.

An example of safe space trust being both cognition and affect is illustrated in another excerpt from Artie who describes how safe space trust is related to openness and speaking freely:

Artie, PUL, female: "I want to know that I can say things that might be challenging in a way that is not going to be threatening to that person who is on the other side of the conversation."

For discourse to not be threatening it would require: i) a conceptualisation of what is threatening language to the conversation partner, ii) a motivation or need to say things that

could be challenging and iii) a sense that these challenging comments will not make the conversation partner feel threatened. For Artie then, there is a feeling based on contextual understandings of appropriate (and inappropriate) discourse and a conversation partner's threat disposition. This contextual understanding is a result of a cognitive process of learning and understanding. Safe space trust is therefore affect and cognition; both felt and thought.

One can argue that safe space trust is somewhat like a heuristic — a 'rule of thumb' as Kahneman (2011) puts it. Kramer (2006) draws on the concepts of heuristics in his 'intuitive social auditor model' of trust where decision-makers adopt "intendedly adaptive orientations [...] when responding to the uncertainty intrinsic to trust dilemmas" (Kramer, 2006, p.69). There are some parallels with this model and safe space trust in that people employ simple judgement and decision rules but safe space trust seems to be about the feeling that one is in a space of trust rather than an approach itself to deducing whether to trust or not.

The 'safe space' trust concept is similar to Kappmeier's (2016) concept of 'security', which the author defines as "others will not hurt ingroup physically or emotionally" (p.140). Kappmeier's (2016) Moldova-Transdnestrian participants were concerned, for example, about losing the 'Moldovan language', as well as the fear of possible aggression. So, there was a fear of physical as well as psychic harm. However, amongst the Moldovan-Transdnestrian participants 'security' was the least frequent dimension of trust cited by the 33 interviews.

On a final note, in contrast to the argument that trust must be relational (e.g. Levi & Stoker, 2000; PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016), the trust-as-safe-space theme is not strictly relational. Participants gave an experiential account – a *sense* or *feeling* of safety or comfort – rather than a relational statement (e.g. ‘I feel that I can trust *them*’). While indeed, it may be that a physical space feels safe because of the perceived behaviour of others in that space, it is a sense of that space being safe that is in question. It is not a physical space that is the trustee, rather the sense of a safe space equals a sense of trust. One way of putting it is that individuals were predicting whether or not they would feel comfortable in a situation and being more comfortable would be seen in their minds as trust. One could even argue that the outgroup (and perceived behaviour or risk from them) acts as a moderating variable between an individual and what could be a safe space.

Theme 1 Discussion

The primary conceptualisation of trust that was developed from this study on trust in conflict-affected studies is one of feeling safe, or in a safe space. This is very different to the most frequently cited definitions (i.e. Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998) which focus on the willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on expectations of the other party’s behaviour. There is an element of vulnerability involved in safe space trust but it is rather the feeling of safety despite this vulnerability that is the element of trust.

Safe space trust is an outcome of the phenomenological approach in this study. This trust

feeling differs from much of the existing trust literature which tends to focus on trust as a process, cognition, or affect (though there are elements of cognition and affect in this phenomenological sense of trust). There is some theoretical work on the phenomenology of trust and this doctoral study's main trust theme of safe space trust resonates with Løgstrup's (1997) phenomenological concept of trust as "self-surrender – laying oneself open – to the other in interaction" (Frederiksen, 2014, p.36). One could equate the sense of safe space trust to that ability to 'lay oneself open to the other'.

There are some studies on the phenomenology of trust, for example on healthcare (Brown, 2009) and teaching (Young & Tseng, 2008), but, to my knowledge, this doctoral study is the first to explore the phenomenological conceptualisation of trust in a conflict-affected context. This theme, developed in this study, provides an alternative perspective on trust with the trust-as-safe-space theme being very entrenched in lived experience.

In terms of further improving understanding of trust, one could go on to develop this feeling of a safe space as a construct amenable to quantitative assessment. For example, this could be through revised survey questions such as "do you feel safe in intergroup contexts?", with the response measured either as a binary nominal variable (i.e. yes/no) or with a Likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).

As safe space trust is based on a sense or feeling, an individual's physiology would come into play. Being in an 'unsafe' space likely causes some physiological response, possibly a

hormonal (e.g. cortisol) response. One could assess physiological responses in different situations and with different triggers, perhaps to identify which cues are the strongest triggers. As these physiological responses may be affected by biological factors, age or gender, for example, an area to explore may be the effect of such factors indirectly on safe-space trust.

As noted earlier, the work on ontological security and heuristics is of potential relevance in reference to safe space trust: being in a safe space allows one to “bracket out questions about ourselves” (Giddens, 1991, p.37), and one identifies what a safe space is through rapid, intuitive heuristic-like judgements (see Kahneman, 2011). Thus, another area for further development would be to draw links within these research areas and build on them.

One potential suggestion to improve trust in a conflict-affected context is to help individuals manage their internal feelings to improve trust. The safe space trust finding highlights the physiological elements of trust and this can provide more alternatives to policy. In addition to making environmental changes to improve trust, another approach would be enabling individuals to consciously manage any threatening feelings⁵¹ that they feel in unsafe spaces.

⁵¹ One approach could be techniques such as that used in cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT is a form of talking therapy, primarily used to improve coping strategies by changing unhelpful thoughts, beliefs and behaviours. In relation to spaces which feel unsafe but are deduced to be safe, aspects of CBT can be taught to allow individuals to address and manage the sense of feeling unsafe, so as to allow them to enter those spaces.

Theme 2. Trust as performance

A conceptualisation of trust that came up frequently was trust as performance. This is where one behaves so as to give observers an appearance of trust, or indeed distrust. This can be for political benefits, such as displaying distrust to gain favour amongst followers⁵², for financial benefits, such as with peacebuilding and 'good relations' work⁵³, or for social benefits, such as in the form of politeness⁵⁴. The instrumentalisation of trust can provide important benefits such as different housing⁵⁵. Despite the appearance of trust, the

⁵² **Brigitte, neutral, female:** "One of the things I notice is that at ground level within the communities these things are changing. Changing amongst people, changing amongst communities. And I see changes, but in Stormont, up in government, people up in areas where people should know better, it is like a timewarp. It's like things haven't changed. Now some of that I know for a fact is just for show because on a one-to-one basis, when you meet some people individually they are not like that. In the experience that I have had."

⁵³ **Blair, neutral, male:** "There is an element of forced trust for funding. And it's bullshit if you ask me [...] The statutory bodies here, they will not give funding in certain communities for certain projects unless there's two perspectives. And occasionally for some more progressive projects, multiple perspectives. But that doesn't make trust."

Bernardina, PUL, female: "There's part of it is this forced good relations which a lot of interface work is. [...] You know, peacebuilding and good relations work is done to you because they need to sort you out (laughs)."

⁵⁴ **Edmond, PUL, male:** "It means that whenever you speak to them or wherever you ... You know they are genuine and vice versa [...] Because I have been part of programmes and projects where you know, particularly in hindsight that the trust wasn't there. Because there is a tendency for people to be polite in a room. And you know that once you leave the room that, that you haven't really progressed because people you know, if people are genuine or not."

⁵⁵ **Dirk, CNR, male:** "It was a couple. It was a girl who lived in our street who was going out with this guy and I think they were planning to get married. And on his way home from the pub one night he wrote a note which he slipped under the door of this family at the top of our street which was facing his mother-in-law. And the note said 24 hours to get out or something like that there, you know. So the son of the house came to me and said we are being told to get out by the IRA. And I said no you're not being told to get out by the IRA."

performance of trust does not necessarily have any relation to genuine trust as it is conventionally understood.

This trust as performance theme seems to represent what Möllering (2006) describes as “trust-like facades in discourse and behaviour” which are in contrast to what he terms “genuine trust” or “‘proper’ trust” (p.5). Hardy et al. (1998) also discussed trust facades arguing that “the aim is not to create trust *per se*, but to create an illusion that is instrumental in securing the goals of one or some of the partners at the expense of others” (p.78). Whereas Hardy et al. (1998) talk about trust facades as a way of disguising coercion as trust (i.e. that cooperation is based on power rather than generated trust), this theme of trust as performance may not mean any form of cooperation or genuine trusting behaviour.

The word performance in this concept draws on the idea of ‘social performance’ where “social actors, embedded in collective representations and working through symbolic and material means, implicitly orient towards others” so as to, for example, “perform in ways that will communicate that they are worthy, committed, and determined” or to create an “impression of sincerity and authenticity rather than one of calculation and artificiality”

That is not the IRA. They hadn't got a policy of doing things like that [...] So I said to him, I says look you have nothing to fear. In fact we will protect you if need. And he phoned his mother and father who were on holiday in Spain and he said to them we got a note under the door telling us that the IRA, telling us to get out. I have went and talked to the locals and the locals are telling me it's not, it is an individual. It's not the real McCoy. And the family said treat it as the real McCoy anyway and go to the housing executive. And he did and they got moved to a house in [a predominantly PUL area]. Which is what they wanted. If they had have really wanted to stay, they were being reassured that they had nothing to fear.”

(Alexander et al., 2006, p.1-2). Therefore, trust as performance is a way in which social actors perform to create a meaning or build an impression in others.

Others have drawn on this idea of social performance in a similar way. An illustrative example is by Rai (2015) who articulates a concept of political performance as an attempt to “seek to communicate to an audience meaning-making” so that it “mobilises political traction” (Rai, 2015, p.2). This idea of political performance resonates with some examples of trust as performance in the political sphere which has been observed and highlighted by participants in this study. Brigitte gives an account:

Brigitte, neutral, female: “One of the things I notice is that at ground level within the communities these things are changing. Changing amongst people, changing amongst communities. And I see changes, but in Stormont, up in government, people up in areas where people should know better, it is like a timewarp. It's like things haven't changed. Now some of that I know for a fact is just for show because on a one-to-one basis, when you meet some people individually they are not like that. In the experience that I have had.”

This excerpt is used in chapter 8 to introduce Brigitte’s comments on threats. Here it is used to highlight how trust can be performed. Brigitte talks about ‘just for show’ as part of a longer discussion on trust and mistrust. She talks about people being more personable and trustworthy at a one-to-one level, but with a need to show a more distrustful side on a

general basis.

There seems to be a benefit in performing trust and distrust in the political context with actors using displays of trust and distrust instrumentally. These performances of distrust are independent of genuine trust but act as a way to communicate a meaning (i.e. they should be trusted/not be trusted) or to create an impression (i.e. I share your suspicions) so as to potentially mobilise political traction.

Trust as performance can be for financial gain. An example is from Blair in relation to gaining funding from statutory bodies (i.e. government bodies often responsible for funding):

Blair, neutral, male: “There is an element of forced trust for funding. And it’s bullshit if you ask me [...] The statutory bodies here, they will not give funding in certain communities for certain projects unless there’s two perspectives. And occasionally for some more progressive projects, multiple perspectives. But that doesn’t make trust. Real conversations where you’re actually feeling comfortable to say or feeling uncomfortable to say what you want to say [...] When you are told you need to do this for funding, you know, people are smart, people get around that. Boxes are ticked, left right and centre. I have seen that from every angle here.”

Blair describes this as ‘forced trust’ – a demonstration of trust between two community perspectives so as to get funding. Blair differentiates this from what he considers genuine

trust, which is similar to the 'safe space' conceptualisation – feeling comfortable speaking and having a place to do that.

A similar example is provided regarding 'good relations work':

Bernardina, PUL, female: "There's part of it is this forced good relations which a lot of interface work is. Get the Protestants and Catholics together and put them on a bus. Take them shopping. And it is not to say that that is ... That is good, you can do that [...] You know, if they want to do it great but it wasn't something that you know is done to you. You know, peacebuilding and good relations work is done to you because they need to sort you out (laughs)."

This excerpt from Bernardina seems to illustrate what Blair mentions – the performance of trust, in this case as part of good relations work. Bernardina, like Blair, finds this approach unconvincing and fake, noting that people are being forced to do it. Both Blair and Bernardina witness this performed trust regularly. They accept it as part of their world, and in particular part of their jobs, but there is a shared cynicism about it.

An example of the benefits of this performance socially is from Edmond who talks about false politeness. In response to the question of what trust between communities means to him, Edmond responds:

Edmond, PUL, male: “It means that whenever you speak to them or wherever you ... You know they are genuine and vice versa [...] Because I have been part of programmes and projects where you know, particularly in hindsight that the trust wasn't there. Because there is a tendency for people to be polite in a room. And you know that once you leave the room that, that you haven't really progressed because people you know, if people are genuine or not.”

Edmond seems to be arguing that people routinely perform facades of trust, which he defines as being ‘polite in a room’ and which he contrasts to genuineness. This highlights the social function of trust facades — these performances have benefits at a social level.

Theme 2 Discussion

This theme identifies trust as a performance for political, financial and social benefits. It is somewhat problematic to relate this conceptualisation to the wider trust literature.

Irrespective of how trust is conceptualised, trust research tends to focus on genuine trust attitudes and/or behaviours (Hardin, 2002, 2006; Lewicki, 2006; Möllering, 2006). The performance of trust may not be commensurate with genuine trusting attitudes or behaviour, yet it is very much part of the social environment with potentially wide-ranging impacts.

Some existing studies do focus on performances or signalling between the trustor and trustee (e.g. Nikolova et al., 2015) but trust performances, as identified in this study, are for an audience beyond the trustor-trustee relationship — for example, voters, followers, or programme funders. The trust-as-performance theme underscores the importance of seeing trust as a social action — it creates meanings and positions actors and behaviours to an audience. The act of trusting is best viewed as part of a complex system rather than as isolated dyads. Even when trust is just between two people it will be in a social environment, which will have an impact on how that trust can appear publicly. In a conflict-affected context, this social environment factor has likely even more of an impact — there are arguably greater risks in making the wrong choice over appearing to trust or distrust certain others.

While the decision to trust can be influenced, even bounded, by social context, the action of trusting (or distrusting) can be a form of signalling to others. This signalling is a type of behaviour, which is relevant to the debate on whether trust is a psychological construct or behavioural construct. It is a type of behaviour but one that is different to how behaviour is conceptualised by trust theorists, as “a behavioral decision to accept, and even appreciate the vulnerability of relying on others” (Li, 2015, p.41). This signalling behaviour can be for others to trust but it can also have value by itself — politically, financially or socially. While there is research on trust discourses (e.g. Candlin & Crichton, 2013), these tend to focus on genuine trust. Furthermore, while there is research on trust behaviour, these are focused often around trust games and trust decisions, but never, to my knowledge on trust performances.

There are several implications for this theme. Firstly, trust researchers should also focus on non-genuine trust to understand genuine trust better. Reviews of trust conceptualisations (e.g. PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) do not include the social performance of trust, even though this study finds a common understanding amongst participants of trust as sometimes being a performance. Trust is thus a social action and even where there is genuine trust there is also a performance component, where an impression of meaning of some kind is created.

One way to explore this conceptualisation further would be to look at the relationship between performance aspects of trust and genuine trust. This could help contextualise trust decisions, to understand the social dynamics which permit or allow genuine trust. Secondly, there is a need to understand how the performance of trust operates specifically in conflict-affected environments. The examples here, relating to funding and politics, highlights how there are unique dynamics at play and a contextual understanding of the situation would help to understand when trust may be genuine or when it is performed, and potential obstacles or opportunities to build genuine trust.

Building on such research, a policy suggestion would be to look to disincentivise trust performances. In conflict-affected contexts, there are often programmes that look to build trust. It would be important to ensure that such programmes build genuine trust rather than look to elicit trust performances. Such change can be part of a wider initiative to align

incentives away from trust performances and toward genuine trust.

Theme 3. Trust as commonality

In this theme, trust is conceptualised as having a perceived commonality. This can be a commonality in having the same daily living issues or in knowing and understanding each other.

The type of trust defined in this theme is most similar to identification-based trust (IBT) (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Saporito & Colwell, 2010). This is “identification with the other's desires and intentions”, and therefore “trust exists because the parties effectively understand and appreciate the other's wants” (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996, p.122). It's worth pointing out that is not that individuals identify themselves in each other to the extent of forming an ingroup, but rather that they identify the others' desires and intentions.

This theme is also similar to the concept of compatibility-based trust (CBT) where the “outgroup shares the ingroup's background, values, interests and/or beliefs” (Kappmeier et al., 2019, p.98). Through either perceived commonality (a perception of shared values, interests and beliefs) and/or emotional accessibility (a perception that the groups can relate on an emotional level), trust is built through comparability, familiarity and a reduction in feeling estranged from outgroup members (Kappmeier, 2016). A number of excerpts illustrate this.

Chas provides an example of this, concerning living issues and them being common. In response to the question what does trust between communities mean to you, Chas replies:

Chas, CNR, male: "It's about understanding... They say that people who live in the other communities they have the same problems that I have. They have the same living issues that I have, they have the same health issues that I have. Same work issues that I have. They just have, there's a commonality of issues. And because we have common issues, then we have common trusts and mistrusts as well."

This conceptualisation of trust focuses on understanding and appreciation that the same issues are shared. It is similar to IBT in that "trust exists because each party effectively understands, agrees with, empathizes with, and takes on the other's values" (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996, p.119), and CBT in terms of perceived commonality.

Another example comes from Emmanuel:

Emmanuel, PUL, male: "I don't know. I think you have to know somebody to trust them. And that's part of the problem here in Northern Ireland that you don't. We don't know each other [...] There is a lot of relationships that people have on a personal level you know, but there is, the misconceptions that we have about each

other. I think that drives a lot of the mistrust.”

When asked what sort of misconceptions he replies:

Emmanuel, PUL, male: “Well. We discussed earlier about the misconceptions about the Orange Order. About perceived sectarianism and this desire to create division and conflict.”

It is worth contrasting a phenomenological reading with a more performative reading with these excerpts. Based on a phenomenological reading, an interpretation would be that Emmanuel feels a sense of mistrust towards himself and the Orange Order due to misconceptions and that knowing each other would improve this. This knowing-each-other idea is similar to the concept of trust that Chas describes. Knowing each other and perceiving commonality would reduce misconceptions and therefore mistrust. This is in keeping with the IBT and CBT conceptualisations of trust.

An alternative performative interpretation of Emmanuel’s comments can be made in that Emmanuel’s real concern is that he feels the Orange Order is being attacked. His response could be seen as a way of defending it and persuading the interviewer, in this case, myself, that it is not the negative institution that the interviewer may think it is. Earlier in the conversation, the discussion was how he felt that the Orange Order and Apprentice Boys, two fraternal Protestant organisations that he takes (or took) part in, are misunderstood. In

some ways, this can be seen as a continuation of an earlier discussion where he felt that these are misunderstood, and some of those people who misunderstand these organisations are out to create division. With this reading, trust would be a situation where the Orange Order was no longer attacked and conceptualisations of what the Orange Order is would be positive. Essentially, others would trust him and the Orange Order. This can be interpreted as Emmanuel putting the onus on others to understand and not misconceive himself and the Orange Order.

It is important to contrast the two interpretations by Emmanuel. The conceptualisation, in either case, is in keeping with IBT and CBT. But the performative interpretation highlights how trust discourse could be used in an instrumental fashion to criticise others.

Theme 3 Discussion

This theme focused on trust as commonality, which is conceptually similar to IBT and CBT.

This third theme on trust as commonality is the first that is in keeping with a common conceptualisation of trust (e.g. PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016).

This type of trust was been noted by several participants when asked how they define trust, highlighting a focus on the source of trust rather than what it involved. Relating this back to the trust debate, this is in keeping with the argument that the source is important as certain theories are distinguishable based on that (Lane, 1998), but more notably, it is the focus of the definition rather than say a willingness to be vulnerable. Indeed, this conceptualisation

does not bring into consideration willingness to be vulnerable or expectations of the other party's behaviour.

Another insight is that in addition to participants talking about how they feel trust can be built in this way, that IBT/CBT can be used in a performative way as one reading of Emmanuel's excerpts allow. In areas where there are intergroup differences centred around culture and understanding, IBT/CBT trust can be used to blame others for their failure in understanding. Theme 2 highlights how what would be considered not genuine trust is prevalent enough to be a key theme in the analysis, and analysis in this theme on commonality provides further examples of how discourses around trust become an important part of the trust environment.

Keeping this in mind, it would be worth exploring further the discursive practices around trust, especially how they can be used to attribute trust failures to outgroup behaviour, or to build a sense that the outgroup is not trustworthy.

Theme 4. Trust as a 'workaround' process

When asked about trust, participants began to describe the negotiation process that takes place or has taken place. One participant used the term 'workaround', as in there was a lot

of 'workaround' for a successful event⁵⁶. This term 'workaround' seems an appropriate term for this conceptualisation of trust.

This theme of trust as a negotiated workaround emphasises trust as a process. This process involves being attuned to vulnerability and then working towards a joint outcome whilst keeping in mind those risks. This does not mean an absence of risk or vulnerability.

The conceptualisation of trust as a process is how most integrative frameworks on trust (i.e. those that look to bring together varying trust concepts and definitions), conceptualise trust (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue that the main benefit is that it's more comprehensive: it includes trust used in everyday conversations as well as that across research literatures; it includes trust as an attitude and as a behaviour.

That said, what aspects or components to include in a trust-as-process conceptualisation remains an ongoing debate (see PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). In this doctoral study, several participants discuss the idea of this 'workaround trust' but participants varied in which components make up this trust process.

One example is from Domingo where the process of trust is one of recognising vulnerability,

⁵⁶ **Domingo, PUL, male:** "And again what when you are talking about trust. I mean there was a lot of workaround. It was we had to. Both sides had to come to a sort of a notion of trust."

acting in spite of this vulnerability, a *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in perceptions of trustworthiness.

He talks about workaround with respect to the 2013 'Fleadh Cheoil'. The 'Fleadh Cheoil', also known as the 'Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann' and the Fleadh (pronounced 'fla'), is a competition and festival of traditional Irish music. While ostensibly an 'All-Ireland' festival, the event has always taken place in the Republic of Ireland, except for 2013 where it was held in Derry/Londonderry. This attracted controversy as it has been seen as a pro-republican/nationalist event, according to the participants interviewed. In 2013, several predominantly PUL marching bands took part, which was a highly contested decision. Domingo, as one of those from the bands, describes the apprehension before the event:

Domingo, PUL, male: "[The] Fleadh was coming here. We weren't really interested because we thought we are going to get nothing to do with that credit. Coming here and tricolours and shouting up the RA blah blah blah."

'Up the RA' refers to Irish republicanists shouting support for the (Irish) Republican Army (i.e. RA). Domingo, in this case, was not concerned about not getting any credit for supporting the Fleadh, but instead was concerned about the risks of PUL band members, being exposed to abuse from republicans. Despite this risk, the bands were involved. Domingo goes on to provide an account:

Domingo, PUL, male: “And then when we started then to look at it, and people who had been to different Fleadh’s, they were saying it's completely different. This is people who aren't republicanist. Ordinary people who love music. And I was saying that was the biggest, that was one of the biggest things to educate... And again, what when you are talking about trust. I mean there was a lot of workaround. It was, we had to. Both sides had to come to a sort of a notion of trust. We weren't being used. And we weren't... I suppose they were thinking jeez I hope these boys don't appear with Union Jacks and all in the middle of it. (Unintelligible). Because they didn't need that either.”

In this situation, Domingo notes the additional concern that PUL individuals will look to antagonise others with Union Jack flags — the flag of the UK, known to create unease and annoyance amongst CNR community members (Muldoon et al., 2010). In conclusion, Domingo argues the event was successful and developed trust. He digresses at one point before being brought back to the issue. The two sections below are before and after the digression:

Domingo, PUL, male: “So you know when you got people being straight I mean you get those things would've happened. And that's how I would say developing that trust was there, you know. And again that to me would be the biggest thing for ourselves...”

...But I thought it was, I thought it was good. That was more likely the biggest thing in trust. I don't think there is such a thing as... personally the whole thing in trust is ... (interruption) I have come to the conclusion that I need to take people as they find them.”

These excerpts are best analysed as a combined narrative. The narrative constructs trust as a process.

Firstly, there is a sense of the risks or vulnerabilities. Domingo is clear about the risks from both sides: republicanists antagonising PUL community members (e.g. shouting up the ‘RA’) and unionists/loyalists antagonising CNR community members (e.g. parading Union Jack flags). There was also the fear of being used. It is unclear from these excerpts and the wider interview what Domingo is referring to, but some interviewees expressed concern that the involvement of the predominantly PUL marching bands was seen as a token gesture. Others feared it was to neutralise the argument that the CNR community is hostile to the PUL community or that it was a way to undermine PUL-related culture.

Secondly, there was the ‘workaround’. As Domingo puts it: ‘Both sides had to come to a sort of a notion of trust’. Essentially, there is a recognition of risk but a desire to act despite the risks.

Thirdly, there are *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects. In this case, Domingo accepts

that people were 'being straight'. This helped to develop trust and for him was 'the biggest thing in trust'. Domingo's last comment is that it is important to take people as they are found, to adjust expectations to the situation.

Brought together, the process of trust 'workaround' is one of recognising vulnerability, acting despite this vulnerability, a *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in perceptions of trustworthiness.

The outcome is somewhat similar to what Kelman (2010) defines as 'working trust' between parties in situations of conflict — a pragmatic trust based on the other's seriousness about peace based on their own interests (Kelman, 2005, 2010). In this conceptualisation, there is an existing assumption that accepting too readily an enemy's claims of good will is naive and a potential violation of existing norms; working trust thus increases only to the extent that each party is convinced that conciliation is based on the other party's self-interest (Kelman, 2005).

Similar to this 'working trust' conceptualisation, Domingo notes that there were risks in relation to their own community, and a created understanding of mutual self-interest is what led to a form of working trust. The ongoing perception of trustworthiness exists because there is a belief that this helps both parties.

Dionna also talked about the Fleadh. Her main response to what trust is, was about safe

space trust and in particular the ability to move freely. However, at another point of the interview the Fleadh came up:

Dionna, PUL, female: “So, there are so many cultural differences and difficulties that until we begin to talk and engage and negotiate and understand. For instance, the main parade, the Apprentice Boys of Derry there is the negotiated, there is a negotiation in the city around the parades between all different sections of the community having had an issue with it. And everybody felt they had a win-win situation out of the situation. The Fleadh came to the city [...] Because of the bit of background work we got [...] the bands, the loyal or the marching band community on board. And they played at the Fleadh.”

The negotiations Dionna describes are similar to Domingo’s conceptualisation of trust.

Dionna describes negotiations around the Apprentice Boys⁵⁷ parade and the Fleadh. This process of negotiation and understanding of risks to achieve goals is similar to Domingo’s trust as workaround concept. However, she does not highlight, as clearly, the issues of recognising vulnerability, acting in spite of this vulnerability, a *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in perceptions of trustworthiness, as Domingo does.

This trust as a negotiated workaround seems relevant to Dirk’s story of his involvement with

⁵⁷ The Apprentice Boys of Derry is a Protestant fraternal organisation based in Derry/Londonderry.

the policing board:

Dirk, CNR, male: “I was appointed in 2007, Sinn Fein agreed to go on to the policing board. And I was one of the people who was asked to go on. It was regarded as a poisoned chalice. It was described to me as a poisoned chalice, and I felt that it was a poisoned chalice, but so I became a member of the policing board. Quite a surreal situation where I was actually sitting with senior members of the police who had been senior members of the RUC. And who had been my direct opponents in many days on the streets of the city and beyond. Interesting experience. And I became the vice-chair within two years. I did that role for about five years.”

This can be read from a phenomenological lens or from a performative lens. Reading from the phenomenological perspective, Dirk understood that the policing board role was harmful and disadvantageous despite being portrayed as positive, hence the idiom of ‘a poisoned chalice’. That said, he still took on the role. This suggests that despite a lack of trust and an expectation of a negative outcome he took it on and progressed with it, becoming vice-chair and then staying on for five years. The acceptance of risk despite a lack of trust brings one back to this concept of workaround. Trust was lacking, yet Dirk acted irrespective of this. Trust can therefore be an assessment of vulnerability and an acceptance of this risk, similar to Domingo’s conceptualisation of recognising vulnerability, acting in spite of this vulnerability, a *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in perceptions of trustworthiness.

A performative perspective would give a different reading. This story is told in the past tense and it serves to demonstrate to the interviewer, the degree to which Dirk was involved with something risky. Dirk presented himself as someone who worked within a range of risks – a somewhat heroic identity – and at the same time as someone who did not trust the enemy, as they are framed in the conversation. This allows Dirk to perform distrust – a position that protects his identity from accusations of complicity with the police. This is another example of the potential for trust and distrust to be performed as highlighted in theme 2.

Theme 4 Discussion

This theme conceptualises trust as a process of negotiation and ‘workaround’. This trust-as-process approach is similar to the one PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) argue represents a way of solving the definitional challenges of trust. The components highlighted include recognising vulnerability, acting despite this vulnerability, a *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in perceptions of trustworthiness, though different participants emphasised different aspects.

This theme highlights the potential of defining trust-as-process. At the same time, there are differences in what the components are of the process, and also a performative reading by Dirk illustrates how ostensibly trustful actions can be to present a positive self-image.

The variation in what components make up trust-as-process definitions shows that even if there becomes increasing consensus of a trust-as-process definition amongst trust

researchers, there would still be differences in what the exact components those are. Thus, even trust-as-process definitions may not be universal and may well be context-specific.

In developing an understanding of the application of the trust as 'workaround' or trust-as-process definition, it may be best to involve further questioning of what the key components are for trust. While this theme highlights those components that participants voluntarily brought up, further research focusing specifically on what makes up trust-as-process would help create a richer understanding of what this would mean in this context.

Theme 5. Trusting outgroups through individuals

The question on trust was framed as trust between communities. In response to this question, participants varied in how they conceptualised 'community' and how they differentiated what the 'outgroup' and 'other community' was. This theme explores how people link trusting groups to individuals.

Many studies that explore trust look at what trust is but not what individuals conceptualise when they think of a trustee. Some studies of trust in conflict ask participants specifically what they think about named ethnic outgroups (e.g. Çelebi et al., 2014), sometimes asking them to rate their trust on a Likert-type scale (e.g. Tam et al., 2009). Other studies of trust in conflict ask observers to identify examples of intergroup trust (e.g. Kappmeier, 2016) or employ trust games (e.g. Kappmeier et al., 2021). This doctoral study left the concept of

trustee open to participants to conceptualise however they chose to. This theme outlines how the trustee, as conceptualised by people, can vary but that it often tends towards specific individuals.

This individualisation manifests in several ways. In an excerpt from Dalene, she spontaneously transitions from talking about trusting communities, to individuals, to police.

Dalene, CNR, female: “I think it's far too broad a brushstroke to say I don't trust this community or I don't trust that community. I suppose it comes down to individuals then. To trust an individual, you have to know them. You can't just automatically trust someone. I suppose I would have more trust in the police now than I used to. I have more faith in the police than I did. Because I think it has changed as an organisation. It is not quite the organisation that it was. But I, you have that reticence within you because it's the way you grew up. So, it's kind of hard to shake that off. You know like we are supposed to be all open and encompassing now but even to this day. Like I wouldn't say it usually but I probably wouldn't want to go out with a policeman or anything because it is just within me somewhere.”

The transition from communities to individuals to police is interpreted as an implicit rejection of a nebulous outgroup community as the interviewer framed it in regards to a trust decision. Instead, her conceptualisation moves to individuals. The indication is that, in general, Dalene does not think about the outgroup as a whole and whether she can trust

them. Rather, she thinks about individuals and whether she can trust them. This would be based on 'knowing' them and would not be 'automatic'.

Tellingly, and without prompt, she moves onto the concept of trusting the police. Trust in the police is an important issue amongst both communities as it reflects the degree of safety and freedom individuals have in them. The police in Northern Ireland undertook a period of reform around 2001 when it was renamed the PSNI from the RUC. A common criticism was that the RUC were biased against the CNR community. Dalene here reflects that the reform process has meant that she has 'more faith'. Based on the history of the Troubles, this faith in the police would relate primarily to how safe she feels from the outgroup's negative actions (i.e. violence, harassment) and this is mediated by the police and their work.

As Dalene says, she has more faith but still reticence. This suggests that she holds two conflicting trust approaches simultaneously: one of a recent deductive approach to trusting the police, and an alternate one of intuition, from when she grew up. These two approaches combine to make her decision on trusting the police, and by extension her ability to trust the other communities. She describes the intuitive component as a 'tail end' and something she 'can't quite shake off'. This suggests she has a feeling about the police, which she attributes to her experience growing up and which is now at odds with her current perception, or what she would like to think now of them. Dalene is clear that this insight reluctantly shapes her opinion on trust now and that it is independent of a rational assessment.

A second excerpt outlines another way in which trust in individuals and groups are connected; that one-to-one trust can lead to one-to-many trust. Such individuals can thus act as gatekeepers to groups, in terms of a trust dynamic. Dionna discusses her work with building trust with 'gatekeepers':

Dionna, PUL, female: "We are very, we are in a very unique position as an organisation that we engage with all of these women. Because we work with the leaders that are the gatekeepers in their communities. We bring them along with us. They bring their women along with them. So that is in many ways how we reach out to the hard-to-reach women. But we don't have a hidden agenda."

Dionna sees the process of building trust with a community as identifying and building trust with specific community leaders. Once these gatekeepers have been identified, they can either bring 'their women' along with them if there is trust, or conversely act as barriers. Hence, communities can end up trusting Dionna and her organisation based on the trusting, even leadership, shown by their community leaders.

The last two sentences are particularly insightful. In the penultimate sentence, Dionna points out that the leader approach is an effective strategy for hard-to-reach women. There is, according to Dionna, a number of people who cannot be reached directly. These gatekeepers – leaders in their communities – provide a way to access these women as well as act as conduits for trust. The last comment about not having a hidden agenda illustrates

the importance of transparency and openness in interactions, but also that there may be other people looking to interact with them with a different agenda. The idea of hidden agendas suggests a hostile environment of sorts, and a need to differentiate between who to trust and who not to – or even whose agenda to trust and whose not to.

In sum, several ideas emerge. In this case, rather than a one-to-many approach for building trust between communities, there is a sequential approach: one-to-one (or dyadic) and then one-to-many. There are hard-to-reach people who can only be accessed by this approach. Gatekeepers can act as conduits (or barriers) to trust. Finally, there is an environment of 'hidden agendas' where trust decisions are important.

The former analysis was based on a more phenomenological or 'hermeneutics of faith' approach (Josselson, 2004). An alternative 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Josselson, 2004) interpretation would be that Dionna is performing this description to create a positive identity of herself, her work and her organisation. The work Dionna does requires a certain degree of self-promotion for funding and may often use such narratives to promote her and her work. One cannot exclude the possibility that rather than this being an account of how she perceives her relationship, this is an idealised way of creating trust between communities. She may be performing this as she would like the interviewer to perceive her work in this way.

This tendency to conceptualise an individual when thinking of intergroup trust may be linked

in some way to the discontinuity effect — the phenomenon observed in several studies which find that that interactions between groups are more competitive and less cooperative than interactions between individuals (Insko et al., 1990; Wildschut et al., 2003). It may be that when individuals either think about intergroup trust that they look to see trust or build trust between themselves and an outgroup individual. With Dionna’s gatekeeper approach this is explicit — she looks to build intergroup trust by building individual trust first.

Theme 5 Discussion

This theme on trusting outgroups through individuals suggests a level of individualisation of intergroup trust. Firstly, participants chose to individuate when they consider intergroup trust. Secondly, when looking to build intergroup trust they do so through individuals rather than appealing to a broader outgroup.

The first point raises questions about how individuals conceptualise the trustee when one talks about intergroup trust. As noted, in many studies participants are asked to conceptualise an outgroup as a whole, whereas this theme suggests a tendency for people to move away from that mode of thinking. Several theorists emphasise that trust is relational (e.g. Levi & Stoker, 2000; Schoorman et al., 2015) which means that there are implications if, at a cognitive level, the trustee is different to that being questioned — i.e. that participants think of prototypical outgroup individuals rather than an outgroup as a whole.

The second point illustrates a strategy for intergroup trust-building. It is worth noting, therefore, that when conceptualising trust, participants conceptualise it actively. This means that in addition to trust being an assignation (e.g. ‘someone is trustworthy’, ‘someone is trusted’) it is something that people have agency in — that they build. This idea of building trust is explored in greater detail in Chapter 10 Theme 4 on ‘Trust through agency – building trust’.

This question about whether there is a tendency towards thinking of a prototypical individual rather than a more amorphous outgroup and whether there is an element of choice or preference could be explored in further research. Explicitly questioning and analysing how people process the idea of trusting others would help elucidate the prevalence and nature of this tendency. Another thing to explore would be whether trusting outgroups through individuals is common in other intergroup contexts. Finally, it would be interesting to see if the discontinuity effect is in any way connected to this tendency to individuate when trusting outgroups.

Theme 6. Dispositional distrust

The sixth theme is individuals having a wider disposition to distrust.

The issue of trust disposition occurs frequently in the literature, primarily as one of many components of trust (PytklikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016), though rarely there are also what

Hardin (2006) terms “idiosyncratic conceptions” of trust where trust is found in “virtually hard-wired dispositions” (p.25). The theme here is of a disposition that is acquired rather than ‘hard-wired’.

In the integrative models of trust (i.e. those that look to bring together various aspects of trust into a comprehensive framework – see PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016), the disposition of the trustor is part of the model and disposition means an individual’s tendency to trust. This is distinct from the wider cultural tendency to trust (e.g. Burke et al., 2007; Harrison McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Li, 2015). Dispositional trust in this theme, however, incorporates social and cultural influence. This makes it more similar to Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of habitus in the way that psychologists have used it to describe “the internalisation of social structures, how the ‘outer’ becomes the ‘inner’” (Wagner & McLaughlin, 2015, p.202). The disposition is culturally induced — there are social pressures to distrust as well as actors who promote distrust, such as the British security services seem to have done in Dirk’s account below. Thus, theme 6 is centred around the result of the interplay between the outer and inner worlds, where the final individual disposition is how the individual feels about trust in the context of the cultures they operate in — both the wider local culture and the trust cultures of the organisations they operate in.

Several participants highlighted how they felt there was a wider social disposition of distrust

⁵⁸ ⁵⁹ but there was also a notable excerpt that provides a detailed and insightful narrative about how this disposition is experienced at an individual level.

In this case, Dirk, who described himself as an 'active republican', accounts how the conflict involved a greater perceived need for trust and a sense of betrayal by those who broke that trust. This betrayal seemed to lead to a disposition of distrust:

Dirk, CNR, male: "The slogan that you would've heard around times, I have probably used it myself: I don't trust anybody who wasn't with me in 1969. And people said that, they certainly said they meant it. People you could trust. And we were riddled with informers and agents and all sorts of stuff. So, trust became a big, big issue.

This guy here, I am being told that... I was waiting on funeral arrangements for a friend of mine who has died, quite young [...] He came in here from Dublin [...] under a false ID and ended up spending four, five years in jail under a false ID. And getting out. And it was only years later when he married a lady in this town who was a friend of mine [...] that I discovered his real name [...]

⁵⁸ **Napoleon, CNR, male:** "Trust doesn't exist. It's just, to me that's just a dream. Okay. I don't, just, I feel like there's so little trust in Northern Ireland. It'll be nice if there was trust. I think it'll be great. It's what Northern Ireland needs. But at the minute it's not there."

⁵⁹ **Lashay, CNR, female:** "Well it's something that I don't think exists. I'm not sure that I actually know what it means to me, because I don't really think it exists in Northern Ireland."

So, trust became [...] the camaraderie of people who, who are around you but even that became questionable. Because we had supergrasses and agents and informers. I actually had ... I had people, who I would've considered close friends, who either became agents or informers, or broke under interrogation, and agreed to work for them. I am not sure where the trust is now, you know, but I am talking about trust between people who are involved in struggle. [...] I don't think anything would shock me or surprise me at this stage of the game.”

This account shows how the particular experience of being ‘involved in struggle’ as Dirk puts it has undermined trust in general. This narrative raises the issue of dispositional trust – an individuals’ propensity to trust others generally. In this case, Dirk’s experience meant he has limits on the level he trusts people, irrespective of whether they were outgroup members or not. It may be that experiences such as Dirk’s are a contributing factor towards a general level of distrust. In any case, this shift to a generalised lack of trust is a concept cited by several participants.

Theme 6 Discussion

This theme relates to an individual’s tendency to trust or distrust, based on individual differences, an individual’s experience and extrinsic (i.e. social, cultural and historical) factors. Several participants outline a sense of a culture of distrust whereas Dirk provides an individual narrative of his arrival at a distrustful disposition.

This theme argues for a type of a conceptualisation of individual disposition that is not siloed from experience and extrinsic factors and that at a social level there can be a disposition around trust. There seems to be a perception that these feed into each other.

The implication is that disposition is not unchangeable but rather, it is a relatively persistent characteristic.

A limitation of this theme is that while there may be a perception that there is a culture of distrust, this does not guarantee that general or social trust is necessarily lower in Northern Ireland. It would be important to verify that trust at a social level is lower.

While there is some research that finds conflict-related violence undermines trust (e.g. Cassar et al., 2013; Conzo & Salustri, 2019; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018; Rohner et al., 2013), there is limited research on individuals' journeys to distrust during conflict, or more detailed analysis of how societies transition to a state of low trust through conflict. This could be an area for further research.

Chapter discussion

This chapter explored how participants conceptualised and experienced trust.

While starting expectations were that themes identified in this chapter would map onto existing trust conceptualisations, especially the popular conceptualisations of trust (i.e.

Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), it was surprising to see the degree to which the concepts were in contrast instead, and the degree to which there are many dimensions to conceptualising trust.

The first two themes in this chapter are in many ways not what trust researchers would consider as trust. Instead, these conceptualisations highlight how trust is experienced, in theme 1 as a sense of safety, and in theme 2 as a performance. Trust conceptualisation literature differs in this regard as, based on this study, people in conflict-affected contexts seem to primarily experience trust as a general sense, and then secondly, as a social performance. Theme 3 and 4 were more in keeping with extant academic definitions (i.e. identification based-trust/ compatibility-based trust — theme 3; trust as a process — theme 4). Themes 5 and 6 moved away from conceptualisations and more towards how trust is experienced — trusting outgroups through individuals, and as a disposition of distrust that is induced by culture and experience.

The trust explored in this study reflects the area that the participants live in, which is one affected by conflict. Amongst trust researchers, there is a strong desire for a consensus on how trust is conceptualised and defined (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). Yet this study highlights how variable trust is in everyday situations and how trust can be context-specific. Rather than move towards a consensus, this study's findings suggest that it would be more accurate to understand trust in all its forms and look for contextual, rather than universal, conceptualisations.

Relating this chapter's themes to the comparison point in terms of literature at the start of this chapter: there was some overlap with the multidimensional intergroup trust model (Kappmeier, 2016; Kappmeier et al., 2019; Kappmeier et al., 2021), no overlap with the most cited conceptualisation of willingness to be vulnerable to another party (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998), and some overlap with the trust as a process (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) conceptualisation.

With the multidimensional intergroup trust model, the dimension of 'security' was conceptually similar to theme 1 on safe space trust, and the dimension of 'compatibility' was similar to theme 3 on commonality. The overlap suggests there may be similarities in conflict-affected context but more so, there are differences specific to the context or the approach in which trust was explored (i.e. based on people's experiences as opposed to external opinions). In addition to contextual differences, conceptualisations of trust will depend on the method used to research this. A phenomenological lens was used in understanding these excerpts which arguably provides a relatively novel contribution to the literature on trust in conflict.

It was surprising that there were no conceptualisations that were similar to the idea of willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on positive expectations (Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). The absence of this conceptualisation amongst the six themes in this chapter is, arguably, further support for the idea of context-specific

conceptualisations of trust rather than a universal conceptualisation.

PytlikZillig & Kimbrough (2016) posit that trust-as-process could provide a commonly accepted conceptualisation of trust, and the presence of this concept in theme 4 of trust as a workaround suggests this has potential. However, at the same time, a trust-as-process approach would not encapsulate theme 2, trust as performance. In many ways, trust theorists often sideline “trust-like facades in discourse and behaviour” (Möllering, 2006, p.5) even though arguably they are an important, and widely observed phenomena at a social level.

This chapter and the themes developed provide a novel contribution to the literature on trust and trust in conflict. As noted, there are very few studies looking to conceptualise trust in conflict-affected contexts, Kappmeier’s work (i.e. Kappmeier, 2016; Kappmeier et al., 2019; Kappmeier et al., 2021) being a notable exception. This study differs from existing work in its pluralistic qualitative approach — thematic analysis, combined with a phenomenological and discourse analysis reading. This provides a perspective where trust is experienced and observed, and the conceptualisations as a safe space and performance are a break from orthodox conceptualisations, and certainly from the Mayer/Rousseau conceptualisation of trust.

In conflict-affected contexts, these ideas of trust may be beneficial in how to improve trust by helping ground practitioners in an accurate conceptualisation of what trust is in a conflict-

affected context. Whereas the trust conceptualisations may not be the same outside Northern Ireland or even outside the area around Derry-Londonderry, the ones defined in this study are a good starting point and this study's methodology suggests an approach for generating localised trust conceptualisations.

There are numerous suggestions for further research. The analysis of theme 1 on safe space trust includes a link between ontological security and trust, and between heuristics and trust. These could be explored further as could exploring the physiology of safe space trust — whether this type of trust could be assessed through physiological measures.

There is a greater need to understand the social performances of trust. As noted earlier, trusting is not an action isolated to an individual but a social action. There should be further research to understand how performances of trust or distrust are used instrumentally in situations of conflict and what impact they have, if any, on the social context and on genuine trust processes.

Another thing would be exploring how individuals conceptualise the trustee when discussing intergroup trust. This study illustrates when asked to reflect on trust between groups, participants would tend to focus on trust between individuals. As well as conceptualising the trust component in trust it would be beneficial to see how people visualise the relational component (i.e. trustor and trustee), for example, whether when thinking of outgroups, people visualise prototypical individuals, or instead those they have contact with.

Finally, the findings in this study do contrast with existing work of trust in conflict from other studies (e.g. Kappmeier, 2016). While the conceptualisations of trust in this study may well be useful in other conflict contexts, further research would be needed to understand why and how trust conceptualisations vary contextually.

In terms of potential policy recommendations, the safe space trust concept would suggest it may be possible for individuals to be taught to manage their feelings better to allow trust, and this could be a suggestion for future programming. Secondly, policy programmes looking to build genuine trust in conflict-affected contexts need to acknowledge the existence of and subsequently, disincentivise trust performances. Thirdly and finally, it is important to note how trust could be built sequentially: one to one, and then one to many. The understanding that one-to-one relationships could be key to building intergroup trust would help ensure trust-building programmes focus on those whilst noting that the one-to-one individuals involved should be chosen on whether they can bring others with them into trusting.

Summary

When people talk about trust, they can mean many things. Trust was variously defined as: a 'safe space', where anxiety about physical and psychic harm was contained; as performance for financial, social or political gain; as a shared commonality; as a 'workaround' process; as a process through which group trust is managed through individuals; and as a general

disposition. Trust had multiple, overlapping meanings, many of which are held simultaneously. In many ways, trust represents a shorthand for a range of feelings, concepts and processes. This chapter delved into some of these, noticeably identifying a novel, experiential 'safe space' approach to trust with potential new avenues to research and development of the conceptualisation of trust as an experiential phenomenon, as opposed to a more calculative concept. The next chapter looks to identify how trust changes and how issues of identity and threat could influence such changes.

Chapter 10. THEMES: INTERSECTION

So as to understand the relationship between intergroup threats and intergroup trust, the last research sub-question of this study is: i) how does trust change and ii) how is this influenced by identity and threat? This chapter outlines the key themes that were developed to represent the sources of trust change.

Introduction

In terms of background literature, the most relevant studies are focused on the impact of threat on trust, of which there are four notable ones. Firstly, there was a Northern Irish study that found a link between symbolic threat and outgroup trust, with those identifying strongly with the ingroup most affected (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007). Secondly, there was an Italian study that linked a form of symbolic threat to lower outgroup trust (Voci, 2006). The third study, on Turks and Kurds, found that identification with the ingroup, blaming the outgroup for the conflict, and a sense that ingroup violence is justified, was associated with lower outgroup trust (Çelebi et al., 2014). And the fourth study was a British study that found that perceived intergroup threat was associated with distrust in general – ingroup, outgroup and neighbourhood distrust (Schmid, Ramiah, et al., 2014).

This doctoral study did not look to test the findings from these four quantitative studies but the analysis remained open to the possibility of threat and trust being linked. The four

themes identified in this chapter do not demonstrate a clear link but there are some examples where greater threat was commensurate with lower trust (see themes 1 and 3). This observation is reflected on in the conclusion.

When developing the themes for this chapter it became clear that changes in individuals' trust were attributable to multiple levels. Even though the importance of cross-level and multilevel perspectives on trust has been increasingly gaining attention (Schoorman et al., 2007), research on trust which looks at these multiple levels remains limited (Fulmer & Dirks, 2018). This chapter, therefore, addresses the cross-level issue somewhat by looking at how trust is influenced by different levels, identifying four key themes which act as sources of influence: social influence, contact, events or experiences, and agency.

The key literatures that this chapter draws on is from within social psychology and from the (interdisciplinary) trust literature. The first two themes draw mainly on social psychology and the latter two on trust.

The first theme relates to the learning of intergroup trust attitudes. In the social psychology literature, there is limited research that looks in particular at the learning of intergroup trust (see chapter 5), whereas there is significant literature that looks at intergroup attitudes as part of the research body on prejudice (see Brown, 2010). This chapter frames intergroup trust as one type of intergroup attitude, exploring whether intergroup trust is like prejudice: "not the result of some passive indoctrination [...] but the natural outgrowth of an

interaction between that world and the psychological processes of categorisation, identification and comparison” (Brown, 2010, p.141). The acquisition of intergroup trust attitudes is an area that arguably needs to be researched further, and this chapter identifies sources and processes by which this acquisition happens.

The chapter draws on contact hypothesis literature for the second theme. McKeown & Dixon (2017) note the recent renaissance of contact hypothesis research following the highly influential Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) meta-analysis, but also argue for maintaining a critical perspective on the ‘contact hypothesis’. While not employing an experimental approach like much of the contact hypothesis literature, this chapter does find qualitative evidence which is supportive of existing literature while highlighting areas of weakness in the current corpus.

For the third theme, this chapter draws on the trust literature in conflict. While research suggests that exposure to violent conflict fosters post-conflict cooperative behaviour, there seems to be no conclusive effect on trust (Bauer et al., 2016). This chapter looks at individual narratives of how trust has changed following violent events and betrayal. This provides ways in which to understand how trust changes at an individual level following context-specific events and experiences.

The fourth and final theme is agency. Möllering (2006) argues that what makes trust possible is a suspension of uncertainty and vulnerability — a ‘leap of faith’ — and what makes this in turn possible is agency. In contrast to the situationist approach that is prevalent in the social

psychology literature (Swann & Jetten, 2017), the final theme explores trust as agentic experiences. These are as strategic trust which is built gradually and develops with knowledge (Uslaner, 2002) and as a suspension of uncertainty and vulnerability — what can be termed a ‘leap of faith’ (Möllering, 2006). The accounts in this theme frame trust not just as a passive experience but something individuals actively and consciously undertake, and highlight the contributions for such accounts to understand trust.

Moving onto the findings, to generate the themes outlined in this chapter, analysis was undertaken on participants’ answers to the question: “Are there events or experiences that have changed how you feel?”, as well as on other points of the interview where participants discussed changes in trust or related issues. There was also a revisiting of the meanings and experiences expounded in the earlier chapters on identity, threat, and trust; the theories highlighted by participants during interviews; and the theories and approaches on which this study was based. Through this analysis and reflection, themes were developed. These are grouped around key sources of change in trust: social influence, interpersonal contact, events and experiences, and agency.

Theme 1. Trust change through social influence

The first theme is that trust can change through social influence, with participants focusing on parents, leaders/politicians as well as types of social narrative. Parents seem to have a notable influence, teaching children who to trust and potentially providing pressure with

romantic relationships. Tradition, history and stereotypes play a part, providing social narratives on trusting. There is a reciprocal relation between leaders/politicians and the wider public: leaders and politicians can influence the wider public in terms of trust, but at the same time take their lead by reading the public.

Looking at the existing research on this area, and as noted in chapter 5, the literature specifically on the social influence of intergroup trust is limited. So instead, it is best to turn to firstly, what the trust literature says on social influence, and secondly, what the psychology literature of intergroup attitudes says on social influence.

Firstly, relating this study's findings to the trust literature: this theme of social influence supports the argument that social networks matter for trust as trustors and trustees are embedded in relationships with each other and with third parties (Möllering, 2006). But this study goes beyond the existing trust literature in highlighting mechanisms in which these social networks shape attitudes towards potential trustees in intergroup settings.

Related to the socialisation aspect is the literature on the socialisation of intergroup attitudes in general, often related to the study of prejudice. This doctoral study's findings suggest that trust attitudes are incorporated into an individual's thinking much the same way as research on prejudice finds: that it is a dynamic developmental process rather than people being 'empty vessels' into which prevailing social attitudes are poured into (Brown, 2010). This dynamic process is illustrated by Dalene in the parents sub-theme.

Parents

This study finds that parents have a notable influence in teaching children who to trust.

Despite this finding, the extant literature is scarce on how trust is influenced by parents and the family (Nishikawa & Stolle, 2012) and such literature tends to focus on how parental rearing affects generalised trust (Nishikawa & Stolle, 2012; Stolle & Nishikawa, 2011). This doctoral study is the first, to my knowledge, which focuses on how parents instil intergroup trust or distrust in conflict environments. There were several examples where through certain experiences parents teach their children to distrust certain groups of individuals.

Clay describes a formative experience from when he was young and living through the Troubles:

Clay, CNR, male: "Somebody's house is getting raided and the army are trying to befriend you. I remember one time there was a few children from the street, were like sitting with the helmets on, in the back of the Pig⁶⁰ or whatever else. And it was a severe scolding [...] Get the fuck away from there and never go near there. It is very much this is the enemy; these boys aren't your friends."

⁶⁰ "The Humber Pig is a lightly armoured truck used by the British Army from the 1950s until the early 1990s. The Pig saw service with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) from the late 1958 until early 1970. The Pig became particularly well known from its presence on the streets of Northern Ireland during the worst of the Troubles." ('Humber Pig', 2019)

This experience outlines three stages: firstly, the children initially trusted the soldiers, sitting with them and trying on the helmets; secondly, their parents scolded them, told them not to go near them, and that they are the enemy; and thirdly, a sense that the children had learned to see the soldiers as a group that they should distrust. As well as trust, they are taught that these people should be considered a threat and that they are different from 'us' (i.e. outgrouping). Prior to such instruction, it seems the children did not consider them a threat, and though they might have considered them as a separate outgroup (i.e. the army), this was not yet considered negatively by them. They are thus taught that these are a threatening outgroup who one should not trust, and this is reinforced with scolding. In this example, therefore, the issues of identity, threat and trust are linked.

While Clay's excerpt suggests that children take their parents' attitudes uncritically, other interviews make it clearer that this is a dynamic developmental process. Dalene provides an example showing how parents' attitudes do not determine their children's attitudes. Her account outlines an internal debate that individuals can have about conforming to prevalent parental and social attitudes, or not, with dating:

Dalene, CNR, female: "But the police were different, like you had joined the RUC.

And they were... They were almost the enemy. Without putting too strong a point on it. That just would have been (unintelligible). I just could not have gone out with a cop. I mean I don't think my parents would have stopped speaking to me or anything.

But it would not have gone down well.”

This excerpt continues from a discussion about how she felt about the army. While she had talked about having some sympathy for soldiers, as she had the impression that many did not want to be in Northern Ireland, she felt the police were serving out of choice. Thus, they were seen as the enemy. Her comments that her parents would have opposed her dating them but would still speak to her suggests that other parents would stop speaking to their children.

There seems to be strong parental pressure in terms of dating and who one should not date, as they are the ‘enemy’. The enemy is, by definition, a threatening outgroup (or outgroup member) and this is how certain parents want their children to see the police.

That her comments are indicative of an environment where some parents would stop speaking to their children gives an impression that there are young people who are not necessarily against dating police, whereas their parents may strongly condemn this to the extent of disowning their children. It may not be that the parents themselves hold such negative views, but the wider community does, and the parents feel that they should constrain their children in this way, perhaps to conform.

Essentially, there is some surveilling of children by their parents but despite parents’ attempts, the children may well still date people that their parents consider the enemy.

Parents' attitudes do not dictate trust but make up part of the social pressure that constrains actions. This includes building romantic relationships with others, something that inevitably would involve trust. There is a decision-making process here, into which parental influence provides a notable input. Further research into just how individuals experience and incorporate such attitudes is warranted.

Tradition, history and stereotypes

Beyond parents, there is the impact of tradition, history and stereotypes. While these could be understood as three distinct concepts, in the context of this study, the findings suggest a clear overlap.

Regarding the issue of tradition, history and identity, Ashmore et al. (2001) argue that in Northern Ireland, many families have a tradition that is central to them, and the history of one's family's involvement in this tradition can go on to become part of an individual's personal identity (Ashmore et al., 2001). This seems somewhat exemplified by Emmanuel's account, in which he seems to connect his personal story to a tradition that he associates more widely with Ulster Protestants in general:

Emanuel, PUL, male: "There always has been an identity here with the culture of ... Service to the British Armed Forces [...] Well it is quite important to the community I think. You know. It has just been a tradition here. It's always been a tradition of, sort of the Ulster Protestants and the British Armed Forces going back centuries. It was

just something I think that is carried on and will carry on.”

In other parts of the interview, Emmanuel highlights his appreciation of tradition. So, in general, it would make sense that he has respect and trust of the armed forces as this is the tradition.

The learning of trust develops from childhood onwards, where information on social customs and expectations are assimilated by individuals. One root of these social customs and expectations is from what Emmanuel understands as tradition – a set of beliefs or social narratives. Growing up in an environment with certain social narratives can mean that individuals take on these attitudes as default. In the above excerpt, Emmanuel has trust in the armed forces as part of his culture, rather than a decision he has made. Rather than explaining why they are trustworthy he simply says it is part of a long-standing tradition.

At an individual level, there is the question of why people accept traditional beliefs and narratives. Looking over his interview in depth, Emmanuel has a strong appreciation for PUL culture. In chapter 7 he talks about his involvement with the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys, which members of his family are also involved in. He also holds conservative views, at least concerning religion and what he sees as secularism. While he evidently grew up in an environment that promoted tradition, it seems clear that tradition has a personal appeal to Emmanuel. He, therefore, follows somewhat the tradition of supporting the British Armed forces.

In addition to the impact on an individual's identity, such tradition and history can influence trust — in this sense, one area of an individual's attitudes. This somewhat speaks to Möllering's (2006) conceptualisation of trust as sometimes being 'routine' — taken-for-granted in many practical situations. As Möllering (2006) notes, this "taken-for-grantedness is strongly associated with identity and role acceptance where 'such a person' will only do this or that [...] because their very social existence is defined by it" (p.52). Emmanuel's account suggests a social default of trusting the security forces where "it may be literally unthinkable to act otherwise" (Zucker, 1986, p.58).

Stereotypes provide information about people — some would argue relatively accurately (Jussim et al., 2009, 2015) — but stereotypes can also serve an ideological function, justifying and rationalising a social and political system, and endorsing privilege (Brown, 2010). Dirk provides examples of stereotypes of people from CNR backgrounds that seem to serve primarily as the latter ideological function:

Dirk, CNR, male: "Some of the Protestants in our street and some of their families would have made comments quite routinely about Fenians, about the Virgin Mary [...] They would have talked about lazy, dirty, breeding like rabbits. Don't want to work. You are getting fed... There was a constant drip which was then just parroting stuff that they obviously heard in the house which we knew."

In reference to trust, the use of the term Fenian is notable. It historically relates to the organisations of the 19th and early 20th centuries that were dedicated to the establishment of an independent Irish Republic but is more recently used in a derogatory way towards people from a CNR background ('Fenian', 2019). An interpretation of the use of the term suggests a sense of treachery — that they are disloyal to the UK and its institutions, and should not be trusted. In this sense, the use of terms such as Fenian may be a way of saying not to trust them.

Through the teaching and learning of stereotypes, individuals are socialised into who should or should not be trusted. From a phenomenological perspective, Dirk's story relates to his experiences with hearing or otherwise being on the receiving end of, these stereotypes, which among other things promote distrust of CNR-background people by PUL-background people. On the other hand, seeing the statement through a performative lens, one could say that this was an attempt to convince others of the discriminatory nature of Protestants. By stating that these people had these stereotypes, it justifies animosity and distrust towards them. Stereotypes and stereotyping thus play a role in defining outgroups and at the same time alienate those very outgroups through derogating them.

As Dixon (2017) argues, it may be best to look beyond 'objective' accuracy of characteristics of others and focus instead, on stereotypes as historical and discursive practices. In the context of this study, the examples of distrustful stereotypes (e.g. Dirk's examples of 'Fenians') can either be a reflection of attitudes of distrust, a discursive practice, or both.

Such stereotypes could help to create what has been termed a culture of mistrust (Terrell et al., 1993; Watkins et al., 1989) which may not reflect attitudes that the outgroup should be mistrusted but does create a social pressure to not undertake trusting behaviour. Ultimately, the use of stereotypes observed in this study align with the posited uses in the literature: as a way of conveying information, to serve an ideological function, and as a discursive practice.

Leaders and politicians

Leaders and politicians influence the wider public in terms of trust. One can look at leaders drawing from social psychology where one conceptualisation of a leader is “the individual who best embodies the context-relevant norms of the group and is able to ensure optimal group functioning to fulfil these norms” (Abrams & Hogg, 1998, p.99). Alternatively, from a trust literature perspective, one could draw on the idea of leaders as actors who play an exceptional role in creating, changing, or preserving specific institutions, in this case, trust (Möllering, 2006). Such actors are what some term as 'institutional entrepreneurs' (DiMaggio, 1988).

Indeed, there is an element of both of these in this study's findings. Leaders and politicians seem to embody norms of intergroup distrust as well as propagate them. Rana recounts an example from her experience where things that happen at Stormont government affected local programmes:

Rana, PUL, female: “If I was running a programme for ten weeks, and I, and I had

women together from both sides of the communities and they are getting on great. Something happening in Stormont would have an impact on that. It could change people's attitude straight away [...] Women stopping coming down to things [...] People stopped engaging with the other side. There is more animosity.”

The entanglement of high-level politics and local-level trust is noteworthy. According to Rana, people at the local level take their lead from the high level. The change could be that at the individual level, people themselves, no longer trust the outgroup as demonstrated by a reluctance to engage. The surrounding social level may change, where peers and other community members are more hostile towards the outgroup. In that environment, it would be prudent to distance oneself from intergroup action. Thus, it may be an individual's change in mood, how the individual perceives those around them have changed in mood or a combination of both that leads to a change in trusting behaviour.

However, what participants also made clear is the fluid nature of this influence. There is not a simple top-down relationship with high-level politics and local trust. Instead, there is an interdependence. At a theoretical level, this is best captured through the 'paradox of embedded agency' where an institutional entrepreneur, in this case a leader or politician, is both embedded in an institutional field (i.e. a social situation dictating trust levels) and somehow able to envision new practices and also get others to adopt them (i.e. promoting either trust or distrust) (Hardy & Maguire, 2008). An example from Edmond illustrates this well, in that leaders and politicians both influence but are influenced by the trust situation.

Edmond, PUL, male: “Like for a start, the political parties were very sceptical. Largely because they didn't know how the Protestant community were going to react to it. [...] So they stayed very much on the fence, like stayed out of it. What we did was we said to the Bands Forum members [...] this was the idea and take it back to your bands and see what you think. [...] And they were a bit sceptical to start but they listened to... Maybe less so myself. But the likes of [Name 1] and [Name 2] are hugely influential. Much more influential than the politicians are. So if they're saying it then people say well you know okay. And there was an element of that. And then so the bandmasters were all willing to lead, take a leadership, a strong leadership from [Name 1] and [Name 2] [...] You know so they, if they said to their band members right this is a good thing they tend to bring them with them as well [...] And they came back and we had conversations with the organisers of the Fleadh Cheoil who are largely Sinn Fein. And started that dialogue and that trust you're talking about.”

Throughout this comment and the interview in general, Edmond had a strong opinion about the leadership of the Bands Forum and invokes their involvement in the fleadh as an example. It is noticeable that the politicians sat on the fence ‘because they did not know how the Protestant community were going to react’. Politicians are not entirely free to set their own agenda and sometimes follow, rather than lead, the community they serve. Trust would be a political action. It seems that making the wrong call in relation to the involvement of the bands in the fleadh would have been detrimental to their support and

standing. The relationship between politicians and their supporters is reciprocal – politicians can lead but must keep in step somewhat with their supporters. Furthermore, this example makes clear there are multiple sources of leadership and politicians can find their influence superseded by others in the community.

In contrast to the concept of leaders as an individual who embodies the context-relevant norms (Abrams & Hogg, 1998), this study finds something closer to what Haslam et al. (2011) term a ‘new psychology of leadership’. This is leadership as a dynamic interaction between leaders and followers (Haslam et al., 2011) where there is constituent cooperation and support rather than exclusively top-down leadership (Reicher et al., 2007).

Theme 1 Discussion

This theme finds that social influence does matter for intergroup trust but that it is not solely determined by it. There is a decision-making process that people make, into which social influence is an input. Thus, intergroup trust is a social as well as an individual decision. This finding supports the argument that while experimental studies on trust are insightful, they omit social and contextual variables, and that additional insights through qualitative studies can improve the ecological validity of trust research (Kramer, 2015). In particular, further autobiographical narrative studies and longitudinal field studies will help to understand decision-making in complex social contexts including what factors people really pay attention to (Kramer, 2006; Lewicki & Brinsfield, 2006). Such studies can also shed light on how intergroup trust is learned through people’s lives.

The extent to which identity plays a part is notable, with several of the excerpts involving invocations of identity. Edmond's excerpt regarding the fleadh supports the argument that leaders do not simply adopt a group's identity but shape them as well (Reicher et al., 2007). Identity combined with threat can play a part in how social influence affects trust such as in Clay's example, but threat is not universally a factor. This theme finds a more complex relationship than that which is found in several studies, where greater ingroup identification and greater intergroup threat mean less outgroup trust (e.g. Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007; Voci, 2006; Çelebi et al., 2014; Schmid, Ramiah, et al., 2014).

Finally, this study's findings would support Möllering's (2006, p.197) assertion that a fruitful avenue for trust research would be employing social network analysis (SNA) methods. SNA uses both quantitative and qualitative data to map and measure the relationships and the changes between entities within the social network, often called nodes. This doctoral study highlights how parents, leaders and politicians could be potential nodes in these networks with further research exploring just how influential they are.

Theme 2. Trust change through contact

The second theme is contact, and how it affects trust. Direct or indirect contact can, but does not always, lead to greater intergroup trust. Any change brought about by contact is tempered by wider social and political dynamics, which can constrain an individual's

freedom in trusting. Indirect contact can be with a single intermediary between the trustee and trustor as well as expanded to a network. This network can create pressure to behave within that network's norms, as well as providing a way in which to assess whether others are trustworthy. Certain contact experiences can change individuals' general disposition to trust. It seems trust was built in certain situations, which affected how they saw others and how they trusted people in general.

The research on intergroup contact is substantial. In the 50 years since Allport (1954) first formally stated the intergroup contact hypothesis — that intergroup contact (under certain conditions) reduces prejudice — there has amassed a large body of research, with meta-analyses of this research finding a consistent positive effect of intergroup contact on prejudice (Pettigrew et al., 2011) and that this effect continues for at least a year after the contact intervention (Lemmer & Wagner, 2015). This positive effect of contact also seems to improve intergroup trust (Pettigrew et al., 2011) with several Northern Irish studies finding that contact improves trusting attitudes (Hewstone et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2011; J. Kenworthy et al., 2015; McKeown & Psaltis, 2017; Tam et al., 2009).

In line with this well-established effect, this study finds several excerpts which suggest that contact has improved intergroup trust amongst the study participants.

Direct contact

Several participants stated how that they felt that contact has improved intergroup trust for

them:

Edmond, PUL, male: “It was shown to me that most people are after the same thing which is a good quality of life for the next generation. And there is a trust being built up there that you know that you can't go back from.”

Edmond’s excerpt links to the idea that enhancing knowledge about the outgroup is how contact improves intergroup attitudes, which research suggests is one of the strongest mediators between contact and prejudice (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008).

A different excerpt by Chas speaks to another significant mediator — increasing empathy and perspective-taking (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008):

Chas, CNR, male: “I think the very essence of the word trust, is what it's about. It's about understanding ... They say that people who live in the other communities they have the same problems that I have.”

Others spoke of different processes for them — humanising others:

Portia, CNR, female: “I think experiences just of people I think. You know, and I do think it does come back to when you can humanise someone. Regardless of who they

are, what they've done or you know what their experiences are. If you can humanise them you're more likely to trust them.”

Portia’s excerpt calls to mind infrahumanisation theory — that people are inclined to see outgroup members as somewhat less human (Leyens et al., 2000, 2007). In this case, contact seems to reduce the infrahumanisation of outgroups, which in turn improves trust, as far as Portia is concerned. This is a similar conclusion to that of existing studies which find that intergroup contact restrains infrahumanisation (Brown et al., 2007; Tam et al., 2007).

Notably, several participants expressed how, in many ways, the contact effect was bounded by other factors. Bernadina and Blair, for example, expressed a general scepticism of the longer-lasting effect of intergroup contact from what they termed good relations work. Malcolm is more precise in how he sees intergroup contact effects can be limited. He first describes how trust changed for him and for the communities he works with:

Malcolm, PUL, male: “Being involved in community work and coming down and engaging in the role that I’m in, has changed how much I would trust other, the other community.”

He goes on to say that he sees the same happening for the people in the community through small projects but that there are political constraints:

Malcolm, PUL, male: “Most people see, see that their community, they have moved on. And that changes any sort of negative attitude. But that overall arching political problem, that our politics is based on, is always going to be a problem. And it's always going to make people feel apprehensive. Or it could make people feel distrustful in others.”

What is notable is how Malcolm first highlights the role of contact and the different levels of trust – individual, group, wider society. Malcolm’s sense is that contact with other communities on a regular basis improves trust. Secondly, and more markedly, is that he is clear of the complex context that he is in; that while his trust has improved, and that part of the local community’s trust has improved, it is still constrained and can be counteracted by the wider political problem. This complexity problematises intergroup contact theory – while one person or one group can improve intergroup relations through contact, the wider context can mean such improvement is curtailed or can be undone. The benefits of intergroup contact are thus bounded and part of a set of wider dynamics.

There are several extant critiques of contact theory. A relevant critique is by Forbes (2004) who argues that though intergroup contact can lower prejudice at the individual level, this would not operate at the group level. He attributes this to groups being rooted in their cultural differences and there being conflicting demands for recognition (Forbes, 2004). Dixon et al. (2005) note that contact theory research involves almost exclusively the study of

interactions occurring under rarefied conditions and that while interventions may create “islands of integration in a sea of intolerance” (p.700), such islands are divorced from wider processes. These criticisms go some way to situating intergroup contact in a wider context, but arguably not far enough. Intergroup contact must be understood as part of a complex system, with regards to the broader social and political dynamics.

Several participants highlighted the impact of high-level politics on local-level relations while also affirming that intergroup contact has had a positive effect on their attitudes towards outgroups. This points towards a contact effect that is part of a more dynamic process and that in many ways intergroup trust is a social rather than individual decision. In essence, as Forbes (2004) argues, individual effects may not aggregate to a broader level but not because of just cultural constraints, but that there are many more group dynamics in play — these wider processes Dixon et al. (2005) allude to. And while there is research that looks at for example, how social norms, can mediate the relationship between contact and intergroup attitudes (Ata et al., 2009) and how partisanship and elite cues can mediate the contact effect on policies that benefit outgroups (Dyck & Pearson-Merkowitz, 2014), there is, as yet, little research that looks at the social and political dynamics that mediate between contact and trust. Social and political systems can provide incentives and dynamics to counteract any positive effects from intergroup contact either on trusting attitudes or perhaps more likely, translating that attitude change to trusting behaviour.

Indirect contact

An extension of the intergroup contact hypothesis is the extended contact hypothesis — that knowledge that one's ingroup member has a close relationship with an outgroup member can lead to more positive intergroup attitudes (Wright et al., 1997). Since this hypothesis was first proposed, there has been a great number of studies exploring this, with a meta-analysis of 115 studies finding a consistent small-to-medium positive effect of extended contact on intergroup attitudes (Zhou et al., 2019).

One study, in particular, looked at extended contact and intergroup trust in Northern Ireland, finding that this trust effect was strongest when it was intimate ingroup relationships (i.e. friends and family) rather than less intimate ingroup relations (i.e. neighbours and work colleagues) who were the ones that were close to the outgroup individuals (Tausch et al., 2011). Such an extended contact effect was observed in the interviews for this doctoral study.

In Dionna's excerpt⁶¹, which appears in chapter 9, she points to the need for a sequential approach to building trust: a one-to-one (i.e. oneself-to-gatekeeper) then one-to-many (i.e. gatekeeper-to-outgroup) approach. This is as opposed to a direct one-to-many (i.e. dyadic or oneself-to-outgroup) approach. These gatekeepers are arguably a conduit for this extended contact effect.

⁶¹ **Dionna, PUL, female:** "...we work with the leaders that are the gatekeepers in their communities. We bring them along with us. They bring their women along with them. So that is in many ways how we reach out to the hard-to-reach women."

Artie provides another illustrative example where she talks about how her mother asks her about colleagues who are from a CNR background, and her manager, who was involved in the republican movement during the Troubles:

Artie, PUL, female: “See the ones you work with, what are they like? And I am going well they are all lovely people. They are not these like many-headed monsters. They are genuine, they're just like us, they're lovely people. And I thought to myself that's such a strange question, you know. And I am thinking her, her identity and who she is, is so very far removed from mine that she's kind of going what are those people like over there? And she said to me you work with that [Artie's manager's name] man and I said yes, I do. What is he like, is he alright? And I am going yes, yes, yes, he is lovely. He makes no bones about who he is and his background. And he is very open, and we'll talk about it. But he doesn't judge and I don't judge.”

Artie's mother seems to be exploring the outgroup by asking about Artie's colleagues and then a particularly concerning colleague, Artie's manager. Artie acts as an intermediate between her mum and the outgroup allowing Artie's mum to reflect on her trusting attitudes without needing to involve herself directly in a relationship — a situation likely to elicit less anxiety than direct contact and which might lower her anxiety of having direct contact. Such effects on intergroup anxiety is one of the posited benefits of extended contact and what is hypothesised to improve intergroup attitudes (Wright et al., 1997; Zhou

et al., 2019). In sum, Artie's excerpt, while not demonstrating increased intergroup trust, does provide a narrative as to how conversations happen in which there can be a change in intergroup trust through extended contact.

Beyond extended contact, there is what could be described as a wider network for trust which has additional dynamics. As noted in chapter 5, this network gives one a way to enquire specifically about someone's trustworthiness and take action in situations of failed trust which reduces vulnerability and uncertainty (Cook, 2005). Glückler & Armbrüster (2003) terms this as 'networked reputation', and argue that, unlike public reputation, networked reputation conveys greater credibility.

These dynamics seem evident in Brigitte's excerpt where she talks about how people in Derry/Londonderry use their networks to work out new people. Brigitte points out that local people tend to try and decipher what community someone is from by their name and the school they went to. She goes on to talk about it in the context of wider society and jobs:

Brigitte, neutral, female: "I mean there's two sides to this. There is the really good positive side where everybody knows everybody. Everyone has a link, and there is a strong community which I always think means that everybody has a responsibility. We kinda have an accountability to the community because somebody, somewhere is going to know you. So you kind of have almost like a invisible Big Brother watching over you. Because you know if you do something bad down here, your parents or

your family, someone is going to know you and stuff like that. So it is good.

But the other thing about that is that if they don't know you it is really hard to get into that community. And people get very suspicious and things like that. So when you go for job interviews and stuff I found that if people didn't know me they were less warm. But if I was at a job interview, and they do it automatically, they're not really supposed to. But alright okay. Where did you work and do you know such and such. As soon as you have a common link people changed, you know. Oh right okay so okay that's your mom is that. Yeah my auntie knows your auntie's mummy's sister's brother's uncle. [...] And that's the way the society has worked and does work.”

This excerpt, told from someone who came from outside the area, illustrates the way she sees trust is created through the community network. It emphasises the aspect where one can take action in situations of failed trust as posited by Cook et al. (2005). A distrustful action, a form of betrayal, can have repercussions beyond the dyadic relationship of the trustor and trustee. The wider community, such as parents or family, can get involved which can mean penalties from them (and indeed on them), such as negative approval, shaming, or anger.

As Brigitte notes, there are limitations and downsides to this approach. Someone who is out of the network will not be able to get the validation from the network, and when there are

people who come from outside it is not possible to use this network in trusting judgements. These networks will also have geographical and social limitations — networks inevitably are limited to individuals who can make regular contact with each other, and that may mean parochial networks restricted to those nearby who may well be from the same background. In any case, this demonstrates one way that people can get inputs into their decision to trust: if one's network trusts them then perhaps one can as well.

One can assume that the network can be used to find out information though this is not made explicit in Brigitte's excerpt. This aspect of networked trust was more explicit in Dionna's excerpt where she very much has created a 'networked reputation' (Glückler & Armbrüster, 2003), where her credibility is stronger having been filtered through a social network, via word-of-mouth.

Contact and dispositional change

There is a significant body of research that links forms of intergroup contact with greater generalised trust (Glanville et al., 2013; Glanville & Paxton, 2007; Marschall & Stolle, 2004; Stolle, 1998; Stolle & Harell, 2013), where generalised trust is defined as "a belief in the benevolence of human nature in general" (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994, p.139). Several participants made this connection themselves, linking their intergroup experiences with a wider trust in people.

Chas talks about his experience working as a firefighter:

Chas, CNR, male: “So I was so lucky that I was working in an environment where people who I knew when I ran into a burning building, the first they were going to save is me. It didn't matter what background they were from or what background I was from. That was a group of people at who I was working with. And it just puts your faith in people.”

Chas's experience suggested being regularly involved in life-and-death situations where there is a dependence on each other, builds trust in a way that either side-lines issues of group differentiation or creates a common ingroup against an external threat. For Chas, this had a wider effect of putting more 'faith in people', in general – a more trusting approach to humanity.

Another example is from Ilene who when asked about events and experiences that have changed how she feels about trust, Ilene replies:

Ilene, PUL, female: “Um. Raving. Drugs and raving probably. That kind of loved up buzz of being a student and you know, just meeting people from all arts and parts of the world and totally losing your inhibitions you know. And spending hours talking to some randomer on a sofa like just [...] I just think meeting people from not just your own wee bubble. Getting out of that but then like within my own wee bubble, raving and drugs was great as well because, like I still have friends for twenty years, because

of that kind of wee bubble. We all went away, got locked up at the weekend and came back and went back to our nine to fives on Monday and it was kind of so I guess that kind of changes it. It changes your perspective of people, life and you know.”

This excerpt was surprising — participants were not expected to say raving and drugs were what changed their take on trust. However, it may be best understood as an intense intergroup experience, where levels of intergroup anxiety were lower than usual, probably assisted by the drugs. Potentially, such experiences would enhance knowledge about outgroups, reduce anxiety about intergroup contact, and increase empathy and perspective-taking — three key mediational paths from contact to more positive intergroup attitudes (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2008). And this experience, even if drug-induced, would affect perspective; if one can feel trust in strangers in one context, why not others?

Supporting this interpretation is research that finds close social interactions with individuals from a broad range of society increases the likelihood that trust is transferred to a generalised level (Marschall & Stolle, 2004). Furthermore, this effect is more pronounced with younger (i.e. under 25) people (Stolle & Harell, 2013). Consequently, Ilene’s frequent exposure to a wide range of individuals when she was young, is likely what led to her greater levels of generalised trust.

Theme 2 Discussion

This theme focuses on contact and how participants have perceived contact to have affected

their levels of trust. This has been on how different types of direct and indirect contact have improved intergroup or even generalised trust towards others. The narratives in this theme support several claims of current contact theory literature — that contact improves intergroup attitudes including trust, that extended contact can work in much the same way as direct contact, and that contact can improve generalised trust. They also seem to support concepts within the trust literature pertaining to the idea of trust networks and how they allow a networked reputation and a means with which to take action from failed trust. What seems to be a gap in the literature is the involvement of social and political dynamics — contextual factors that limit or mediate contact effects.

Building on the idea in the previous theme that trust attitudes are part of a dynamic developmental process there is an element of dynamicity to ongoing trust attitudes and behaviours as well. People seem to incorporate social and political cues into their thinking with trust. While the argument that social norms mediate contact is not new (e.g. Ata et al., 2009), what is novel is the way that such norms are presented as more dynamic — distinct cues rather than prevailing attitudes. People seem to take in multiple inputs into whether they trust others, and in some cases, social and political dynamics may take precedence over any positive contact effects they have experienced.

Ultimately, there is an argument for situating contact effects as part of a complex system, with reference to the broader social and political dynamics. An avenue for further research would be to look at the outcome of competing contact, social and political dynamics on

attitudes and behaviours such as trust.

A limitation of this theme is that there is little in the way of contact experiences that have worsened intergroup trust. Participants did not openly talk about negative contact experiences even though having such experiences have been found to worsen intergroup attitudes (Barlow et al., 2012). Furthermore, there were no recounted experiences of a negative interaction effect — intergroup anxiety, heightened stress or outgroup avoidance, thought to be common in the short-term following initial intergroup contact (MacInnis & Page-Gould, 2015). It may be that participants refrained from discussing negative intergroup contact experiences or outcomes, potentially due to a social desirability bias towards presenting themselves in a favourable light by not voicing prejudicial opinions (Stark et al., 2019). How negative contact experience affects trust may be something worth following up in further research, with questions, in particular, focusing on negative contact experiences or on whether there were short-term interaction effects.

Theme 3. Trust change through events and experiences

The third theme is how discrete events and experiences have affected trust, mostly undermining it. Violent events, such as Bloody Sunday, had a direct effect on those who were there at the time, and indirect effects in changing social attitudes and perspectives. Participants described how it strengthened perceived group differentiation, enhanced a sense of threat, and reduced trust. At a social level, this seemed to be most visible amongst

those with amicable, but not close, relations, with a sense of distancing and distrust being visible at least in the short term. Betrayal has a profound effect, where actions that were felt as betrayal lead to distrust of individuals, distrust of a general outgroup, and in some cases a general disposition of distrust.

As noted in chapter 5 while a 'security dilemma' paradigm would suggest that violence erodes trust (Gilligan et al., 2014), the research on social trust after conflict is contradictory. Some studies finding that exposure to violence during conflict increases trust (Becchetti et al., 2014; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Gilligan et al., 2014), others find it undermines trust (Cassar et al., 2013; Conzo & Salustri, 2019; Kijewski & Freitag, 2018; Rohner et al., 2013), and others still, find that the effects are heterogeneous (El-Bialy et al., 2017). As noted before, some have speculated that this variance relates to the specificity of the conflict and its effect on local institutions (Cassar et al., 2013).

This doctoral study finds, firstly, that at least in the short term, conflict-related violent incidents lead people to temporarily withdraw, suggesting a short-term distrust.

Violent incidents and short-term distrust

Participants recounted how these violent events seemed to have a visible short-term effect on people's behaviour. Chas noticed this when working as a firefighter:

Chas, CNR, male: “But there had been things happening and you would have seen it on the TV and people at work all of a sudden. You would have had a group of people who would've worked as a team and were very close to each other, then all of a sudden conversation suddenly stop and people wouldn't want to talk about it. So that in itself created a wee bit of... tension is probably the wrong word but certainly a bit of a unease, a bit of unease. “

Brigitte describes a similar example but at a community level:

Brigitte, neutral female: “Well if there was a really bad incident like ... Like I was here through the Omagh bombing. I was here through the bombing out in Greysteel,⁶² and various things like that. And what I found then was that often neighbours, more so, neighbours or people that I have, acquaintances rather than friends. If I was chatting to them there was a level of animosity towards the other. So if they were Catholic it was towards Protestants or if it was the other ones it was against the IRA or the Catholics. That wasn't there during my everyday interaction with them, during normal conversation it didn't come up. So it heightened those kind of feelings of fear within people. People often say that when stuff happens people just go to the sides. And I, I witnessed that and heard that among people who I hadn't heard that prior,

⁶² I am not aware of there being any bombings in Greysteel. I would suggest this is a reference to the Greysteel massacre, where members of the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), a loyalist paramilitary group, opened fire on civilians in a crowded pub killing eight and wounding nineteen, on 30 October 1993.

previously to.”

Both these examples show a change in response following violent incidents such as bombings and shootings. In Chas’s excerpt, he notes how there was a strong sense of closeness as a team. Following a violent event, there was a change in mood, which Chas is keen to not define as tension but rather as unease. My impression is that Chas feels that his colleagues were close enough to not be significantly affected by it, but they were affected nonetheless. This manifested by pauses in conversation and a change in mood which Chas sensed.

Similarly, Brigitte notices the behaviour change, in particular with people who had amicable but not close relationships – neighbours, acquaintances. She calls this going ‘to the sides’. As she sees it, it had heightened that sense of fear and threat. At the same time, they demonstrated animosity to the outgroups in conversations, suggesting a stronger sense of group identity. This animus, and going ‘to the sides’, suggests a level of mistrust.

Essentially, it seems that violent events either brought forward or created antagonistic feelings. These events seem to activate latent identities and heighten the sense of threat. People became antagonistic towards the people they were not close to, or they had a slight sense of unease with the people that they were close to. Neither of the two excerpts above use the word trust. Instead, they suggest a change in interaction; a heightened sense of fear in some cases, unease in others. Linking this back to the concept of safe-space trust in

chapter 9, it seems people did not seem to feel that they had this safe space trust. As such, whilst it is unclear if this has changed opinions in the longer term, in the short term it seems to have led to defensive behaviour, a distrust of sorts.

One of the main events was Bloody Sunday, where British soldiers shot 28 unarmed civilians during a 1972 anti-internment march in Derry/Londonderry. Participants, mostly from a CNR background, felt the event caused a marked change in themselves and people around them. Chas described how his brothers returned from the march, having been hit by rubber bullets in the face and leg:

Chas, CNR, male: “And they describe what they remember went on. The shooting, how the army came in. And I always remember me daddy, the quiet man who worked for the MOD and had just been through major surgery say to my eldest brother who is there. Listen son if you want to go and join the IRA go ahead and do it. And I will not hold that against you if you feel as though that's what you want to do, go ahead and do it. That was a major, major statement coming out of the man who had worked in the War Office during the war, had worked for the British civil service all his life, and worked for the MOD here, worked in the Royal Naval base Sea Eagle. And that darkness that descended that day never, never lifted from that moment on.”

Chas highlights this story as a profound change in issues of identity and trust. As someone

who is strongly connected to the UK civil service and the UK military, Chas's father's comments show a clear shift. His tacit approval of his son joining the IRA suggests a lack of trust in the British military and instead, a faith in the republican paramilitaries. These comments are interpreted to also represent a change in identity. Whereas he may have had an identity connected with British institutions before, his identity now seems connected with republicans, seeing the republican paramilitaries as representing his and his family's best interests.

This had a deep impact on Chas too. Having once seen his father working for the British state, his change of opinion in support of the IRA would have likely supported a nascent sense, common among many people in that era, that the British Army and British State were the enemies. He describes this as a sense of 'darkness' that descended. My impression is that this event marked a change in how Chas felt and that for him the 'Troubles' really started then. This incident, more than others, brought the issues of identity, threat and trust to the fore. On that day there was a threat to life, by those he may have shared an identity with, and trusted. To put it succinctly: the sense that they are 'protecting us' becoming the sense that they are 'after us' would mean a loss or worsening of trust.

Sherry also talked about Bloody Sunday in the context of events and experiences that changed how she felt:

Sherry, CNR, female: "And then the other one, even though I was quite young, was

the, the day all the people were killed. Jesus, that was awful. It was truly awful [...]

The day of the civil rights march, my dad was at the march. Okay. And I remember him coming home and he had blood on him. And he's one, he's featured in one of the murals, in the Bogside, carrying one of the wee boys who died. He was just... My daddy wasn't affiliated to any paramilitary, anything. But he was civil-minded. He was keen on civil rights, like we all are in my family. And he was at the march. And he would have told, he would tell us on many occasion the exact things that happened on that day. And it does, it did leave an impact. And it will forever leave an impact. Because everywhere I go I see him in the mural [laughs].”

Despite Sherry laughing briefly at the end, this excerpt was delivered in a sombre tone. Thus, my impression during the conversations was that these were very sad and moving events for Sherry at a personal level. It may be that she would have thought her father could have been killed at the time, as he had blood on him. The loss of lives, such as the ‘wee’ (i.e. young) boy that was killed, could have made her think it could have been her; it sounds like the boy and Sherry would have been a similar age at the time. In any case, her father talking about it, as she says he did regularly, and the presence of the mural would have meant that Bloody Sunday would be a constant issue that she would be reminded of and that would affect her attitudes.

While violence was common during the Troubles, much of it was quite distant. Bloody Sunday would have brought an immediacy of the violence to Sherry. Her father being

covered in blood and the loss of people that she would have known. Social narratives of distrust are filtered through society, and individuals can accept or ignore them to some extent. Visual images, on the other hand, such as blood and images of the dead and dying, would have had an unmediated impact, especially as she was young. It may be that this incident, as it had for many other people, strengthened her identity, made the level of threat clear, and created a strong sense of distrust of the British Army and the British state.

Beyond the individual level, this would have affected their family and wider society. In Chas's case, it was his father's apparent shift in attitude in respect to the IRA that had a significant impact. In Sherry's case, it was her father's recounting of what happened, his carrying of a boy who was shot, and the murals surrounding her. Beyond immediate family, this event would have led to many people losing trust in the British security forces and the British state. This likely would have meant a family, and wider community, attitude of distrust, which would have in turn reinforced Chas's and Sherry's possibly inchoate attitudes of distrust.

Betrayal

One notable finding in the literature is that those victimised in conflict exhibit greater trust initially when undertaking trust games, but also a steeper drop in trust after experiencing opportunism from the trust game partner (Becchetti et al., 2014). This would suggest a much greater sensitivity to betrayal following conflict. Indeed, several excerpts from participants highlighted experiences of betrayal and how they lost trust, though it is not clear whether

they had a greater level of threat sensitivity as such.

Artie studied a subject at university where most other students were from a CNR background. During class, people would make sectarian comments, often assuming Artie's background was CNR too. She describes how she felt betrayed:

Artie, PUL, female: "I was disappointed because these are people I considered my friends. And I would always have thought that they were doing the course for the same reasons I was, for a wider understanding of history. Not so that they could bolster a political viewpoint, or something. I was disappointed and I thought, part of me thought, well now I'm seeing your true colours. Which is a very negative thing but it did sting slightly. I'd lie and say it didn't hurt. It definitely did hurt slightly."

In this excerpt, there is a clear set of expectations, a failure to meet those expectations, a reconsidering of opinion, and a worsening in trust. There are some relations to issues of identity and threat. Artie felt others did the course to 'bolster a political viewpoint', which was interpreted as relating to a CNR identity, and potentially republican and nationalist politics. The sectarian comments 'othered' her and made her part of an outgroup because of her PUL background, though this was unbeknown to them. The sectarian comments were also threatening in some way. Though she does not recount the actual comments, my impression from her account is that they were derogatory of PUL people, and Artie would feel that is an attack on her, hence a threat. That said, though there were some issues of

identity and threat, the betrayal here is mainly from failed expectations – she had a positive and trusting opinion of them, which changed following their sectarianism.

Another example of betrayal relates to Dirk who describes himself as having been an ‘active republican’ in the past. He talks initially about trust in the context of this:

Dirk, CNR, male: “So it was a funny sort of thing but ... I kind of ... the slogan that you would've heard around times I have probably used it myself: I don't trust anybody who wasn't with me in 1969. And people said that they certainly said they meant it. People you could trust. And we were riddled with informers and agents and all sorts of stuff. So trust became a big, big issue.”

He moves on to tell a story about a person he knew for a long period but only really found out his real name several decades later. He then moves on to talk about informers in this context:

Dirk, CNR, male: “So trust became ... In the early days the trust was the camaraderie of people who, who are around you but even that became questionable. Because we had supergrasses and agents and informers. I actually had ... I had people who I would've considered close friends. Who either became agents or informers, or broke under interrogation, and agreed to work for them. I am not sure where the trust is now you know, but I am talking about trust between people who are involved in

struggle. And I probably, you would probably ... I don't think you could shock me at this stage if you were to tell me, you know if you were to come along and say so-and-so has, is an informer. Because I don't think anything would shock me or surprise me at this stage of the game. So I think that attrition was probably eroded a lot of trust.”

Dirk started by limiting trust to those who were there in the beginning. But even then, some of those people ended up betraying him. In the end, he talks about an erosion of trust and how nothing would shock or surprise him. At the end of this series of betrayal experiences, my impression is of someone with chronic distrust in others — less generalised trust.

In what Dirk terms the ‘struggle’, trust was very important but at the same time opposing forces, likely the British security services, were looking to recruit agents and informers to work for them and to disrupt their activity, including by undermining trust. There was a constant sense of threat, being an ‘active republican’, and the betrayals from ingroup (republican) members who had been recruited by the outgroup (British security services) undermined ingroup solidarity. The final effect was to create a wider sense of distrust amongst republicans.

In both Artie’s and Dirk’s case, a lack of trust is related to incidents of betrayal by people they trusted. Artie’s excerpt suggests that the betrayal led to a loss of trust with certain individuals, whereas Dirk’s excerpt suggests a loss of generalised trust following repeated betrayals by fellow republicans. While this lack of trust was not caused by intergroup threat

directly, issues of identity did come up somewhat, more so regarding the sectarianism that Artie witnessed. In contrast to building trust, as discussed in the previous section of this chapter, betrayal seems to be powerful in undermining that trust.

Theme 3 Discussion

This theme highlighted how discrete events and experiences can undermine trust in specific ways. Rather than there being a universal relationship between conflict and trust, it seems that there are context-specific pathways between the two, which an idiographic approach, such as one undertaken in this study, can elucidate. One can consider two key pathways as violent events and betrayal.

It is notable that participants only cited events that worsened trust. It may be that trust is rarely improved by single events or experiences, but can be easily undermined by single events, or that events that improve trust are much less salient than those that worsen it. This could be an area for further research — fully cataloguing types of experiences (and pathways) that improve or worsen trust, and exploring the saliency and memory of trust-worsening versus trust-improving events.

It is worth noting that contrary to initial assumptions, trust change through events and experiences was not the most prominent theme identified in this study. Instead, it was social influence (theme 1) and contact (theme 2), which participants in this study, seemed to identify as what changed their levels of trust. Though trust in people can be punctuated by

significant events, this study finds this is only one path through which trust changes, and not the most significant.

Finally, this theme raises questions over just how conflict violence leads to changes in perceptions and processing of broader trust issues and, in particular, following betrayal. Several participants, such as Dick, noted how trust was important, both during the conflict and after. As noted earlier, Becchetti et al. (2014) found a more pronounced drop in trust following opportunism in the trust game. This suggests a difference in how people process trust issues compared to those in conflict. A further avenue of study would be to compare how trust processing, for example in personal or romantic relationships, changes through exposure to conflict violence. Looking at trust and betrayal beyond conflict-related issues such as sectarianism (Artie) or camaraderie (Dirk) could highlight localised changes to trust process beyond simply affecting individuals' generalised trust.

Theme 4. Trust through agency – building trust

The fourth theme is the agency that participants perceived they had with trust. In situations where there was no trust between parties, participants went on to build trust strategically with the other side. In other cases, there was a leap of faith where despite not having an attitude of trusting the other side, individuals still engaged in trusting actions, ostensibly for a higher purpose.

Whereas current social psychological literature can create the impression that people lack agency (Swann & Jetten, 2017), most trust scholars would say a key aspect of trust is agency — that it is not externally coerced or inconsistent with one’s intrinsic will and desire (PytklikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016). Indeed, participants in this study emphasised their agency in their trusting behaviour. Some spoke of it simply as a strategic decision, whereas others emphasised the way the trust was driven by their values or morals.

Uslaner (2002) differentiates between strategic and moralistic trust. Strategic trust develops gradually, as people gain knowledge about the others they are engaged with (Uslaner, 2002). This is somewhat like Li’s (2007) conceptualisation of trust behaviour as ‘trust-as-choice’. Trust-as-choice is a proactive and intrinsically motivated choice to build trust, rather than a passive acceptance of risk (Li, 2007). This aspect of intrinsic motivation to build trust strategically is emphasised in the excerpts in this theme.

In contrast to strategic trust, moralistic trust is not based on knowledge of specific others having been trustworthy, but on the belief that others share your moral values and should be treated as you would wish to be treated by them (Uslaner, 2002). Other scholars similarly focus on morals with the importance being on the morality of the trustee (e.g. Earle & Siegrist, 2010; Hardin, 2013). However, the emphasis that is looked to be made is on the morals or values of the trustor. As such, the concept arguably closest to this is the belief that makes ‘leap of faith’ trust possible. Möllering (2006) defines ‘leap of faith’ trust as where an “actor exercises agency through his will to either suspend uncertainty and vulnerability or

not” (Möllering, 2006, p.119). A key element of this, as Mööllering (2006) notes, is that this suspension involves “a further element of social–psychological quasi-religious faith” (Simmel, 2011, p.192). It is not that there is a lack of uncertainty or vulnerability, just that an individual chooses to trust in spite of this, driven by a certain faith. Examples of such faith are outlined in this theme.

Strategic trust

Concerning strategic trust, Brigitte gives an example of how she actively chooses to build trust:

Brigitte, neutral, female: “Trust is the place that we have had to start working from. When we are bringing... When I do my work when I am bringing people together. One of the biggest issues for me is gaining people’s trust. It’s about that. People making that relationship, making that... You know, get people to accept me for who I am. Without all the labels. Without all that sort of stuff. They, they associate the mistrust with the labels that are either superimposed on someone else or that they perceive to be there.”

Firstly, Brigitte is clear that trust is something that is gained. People get to know her, and this is how trust is built at an active level. Secondly, she associates labels with mistrust. Based on the rest of the interview, the labels are understood in this excerpt to mean identity labels, such as Catholic, Protestant, republican, etc. According to Brigitte’s understanding, people

must not see her with the labels that are associated with her. This is what builds trust.

Thirdly, gaining trust is work, and it is her work — building those relationships and overcoming those labels.

This conceptualisation of building trust is like the idea of trust as a negotiated workaround in chapter 9. It is included here as many participants feel that changes in trust are attributable to their actions and the building or gaining of knowledge that one is trustworthy. Trust is not simply caused by external factors but is a result of the effort to get that trust.

This interpretation so far is from a phenomenological perspective. From a discourse analysis perspective, one could argue that it is a performance that reinforces the nature of her work, in terms of trust-building. It presents an image of someone who actively builds trust, and as trust being something that can be built. One could argue that this, in turn, reinforces her self-esteem, gives her a perception of autonomy when dealing with these difficult relationships, and validates her employment. Rather than look to determine which is more accurate, one can find a conclusion through bringing these phenomenological and discourse analysis perspectives together: some people want to see that the factor that causes a change in trust is those who have sought to build it.

In contrast to Brigitte's experience of building trust with others, Johanne recounts an experience where a local politician had built trust with her:

Johanne, PUL, female: “Um. Trust, I think... I don't know. It's funny because we had a meeting last night about the primary school that's kind of in crisis. And myself and my friends sit on the board of governors. And we invited the local DUP MLA.⁶³ And I don't know whether he is just tuned into what actually matters in that room, but his language was completely different from what the DUP in the news and everybody else said. And I was actually thinking is this a wee change? Is this a turn? [...] So to be fair to him I do think I would trust him. But I, I think if it came down to it. Those people, or the people who put the flags up, said you need to not listen to her. You need to focus on flags. I still think he would go with them because he knows they're gonna vote for him.”

Here an individual built limited trust with Johanne. While she states she would trust him she is also clear that the MLA has other people who will be prioritised over her. This trusting relationship is one of expected reciprocation. The MLA serves people in return for political support and prioritises those where political support is most certain. Such trust is not a generalised trust but is specific to the context and bound to certain expectations.

This excerpt highlights how while one can feel they have built a robust trusting relationship, the other party may view it as a more ephemeral or narrow form of trust, and as a relationship that can be undone by external forces.

⁶³ MLA - Member of the Legislative Assembly (of Northern Ireland)

Leap-of-faith trust

The second sub-theme of agency is leap-of-faith trust. Several participants framed their trusting actions agentically highlighting how even though they lacked trust in terms of attitude, they still engaged in trusting behaviour, ostensibly because of intrinsic motivation. One example is with Dirk who acted in a trusting way (trust-behaviour), even though he did not have that trust in them (trust-attitude):

Dirk, CNR, male: “I was appointed in 2007, Sinn Fein agreed to go on to the policing board. And I was one of the people who was asked to go on. It was regarded as a poisoned chalice. It was described to me as a poisoned chalice. And I felt that it was a poisoned chalice but so I became a member of the policing board. Quite a surreal situation where I was actually sitting with senior members of the police who had been senior members of the RUC. And who had been my direct opponents in many days on the streets of the city and beyond. Interesting experience. And I became the vice-chair within two years. I did that role for about five years.”

This excerpt was included in the previous chapter as an example of trust as a workaround. Here it is being used to highlight the agency of actors, and that agency permits a leap of faith allowing trust-behaviour despite a lack of trust-attitude. Here Dirk has negative expectations but got involved; he trusted the outcome to others without trusting them. Dirk frames his action of trusting as a deliberate and considered choice.

This contradiction of trusting others where there is no trust seems to be based on higher values – his political and personal objectives to work to improve policing. The idea is that through abstraction one can employ agency to conduct trusting actions where there is no belief that the other can be trusted. Such excerpts as these highlights how trust-behaviour is not a purely passive process where social and biological factors determine what is done. Participants perceive an element of choice and do what they feel they should.

Another example of this agency, and doing things one feels they ought to, is with Bernardina entering unsafe spaces. In this case, she talks about attending events where many of those attending were hostile to people from a PUL background:

Bernardina, PUL, female: “And there is a discomfort with that. I think a really good discomfort with that, you know. And sometimes that's why I push myself into the spaces because I feel like I should be there.”

When asked about whether she actively approaches discomfoting situations, Bernardina replies:

Bernardina, PUL, female: “Yeah, yeah. Sometimes. If I feel like I can. If I am not feeling too vulnerable, you know. But because I think it's good that there is a range of

people in the room.”

Returning to the concept of ‘safe space’ trust from chapter 9 – a sense of being physically and/or psychologically safe – there are times when individuals intentionally enter unsafe spaces. Bernardina sees value in entering such spaces when she is not feeling too vulnerable. She pushes herself into environments where she feels like she ‘should be there’, unlike others who would avoid discomforting situations. This seems to be an example of an individual’s moral agency in trust.

The above interpretation is from a phenomenological perspective, where these trusting actions portray the narrators in a positive light. A performative lens on these excerpts could see these as ways in which to build for themselves, or to project onto others, a positive sense of self. As pointed out in chapter 9 on trust, such excerpts portray a somewhat heroic identity – as someone who took a risk. Bernardina sees her actions as morally good and takes credit for these as her decision. This could be a self-serving bias⁶⁴ and can help maintain self-esteem and a positive sense of self. A phenomenological lens, on the other hand, would see these as accurate descriptions of how they felt these things happened. In either case, there is a strong sense among many participants that they choose to trust, and that they make those decisions in the pursuit of higher goals.

⁶⁴ A self-serving bias is “the belief that individuals tend to ascribe success to their own abilities and efforts, but ascribe failure to external factors” (‘Self-serving bias’, 2018)

Theme 4 Discussion

This theme focuses on agency in trust, contrasting a phenomenological perspective of individuals actively building trust with a performative perspective that sees the recounting of these actions as a way of perceiving and projecting moral agency and a positive sense of self.

The strategic trust excerpts in this study very much put individuals as the driving force of trust. They are not passively buffered by external factors but engage in actions that build trust over time keeping the uncertainty and vulnerability. Such accounts are worth analysing further to see the decision-making process and the strategies involved to build trust between communities. One promising approach for this is the critical incident technique which can be used to focus on the behavioural sequences and collect detailed descriptions of 'critical incidents' that lead to trust being created, strengthened or destroyed (Münscher & Kühlmann, 2011).

Leap-of-faith trust is different in some ways from other conceptualisations of trust.

Möllering (2006) draws on Søren Kierkegaard's use of the biblical story of Abraham's decision to sacrifice his son Isaac as an example of leap-of-faith trust. As noted before, Möllering (2006) comments that this is quite a drastic example but that it illustrates that individuals can trust in incomprehensible ways, motivated by what they believe to be a higher purpose. Whereas issues like a higher purpose may not appear in quotidian transactions, in conflict-affected environments it is not unusual for individuals to believe in political values more than their own lives. Thus, this aspect of leap-of-faith trust may be

more pertinent in a conflict-affected context even whilst they are less amenable to study than other forms of trust — “it may be identified and described, but not explained or justified” (Möllering, 2006, p.118). Further research then, would have to focus on identifying and describing specific leap-of-faith trust events rather than looking to find antecedents that can be universally applied — arguably an idiographic approach as opposed to a nomothetic one.

The accounts in this theme also highlight how agency is limited in many situations. It is important not to overestimate the freedom that individuals have to trust. Individuals take into account external factors and carve out an area of agency within that. Individuals are not hostage to external forces, nor are they divorced from them — a comprehensive framework for understanding agency in trust must frame this in this way.

One final point of note: as noted in chapter 9, one approach to improving trust that was suggested is that individuals could be enabled to consciously manage any threatening feelings⁶⁵ that they feel in unsafe spaces. Johanne’s excerpt illustrates just how possible this is and how individuals do go on to manage those feelings so as to permit trust.

Chapter discussion

⁶⁵ In Chapter 9 I suggested cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) though any method would be effective that allows individuals to address and manage anxieties so as to build trust.

This chapter finds that changes in trust, however trust is defined, can happen through multiple pathways, and from various sources of influence. This finding is in contrast to my starting expectations that all participants would have a strong sense of intergroup threat and commensurate with it a sense of distrust, and that there would be a single, predominant causal pathway: i.e. identity → intergroup threat → trust. Issues of identity and threat came up, and there were examples where a sense of intergroup threat affected intergroup trust (e.g. Brigitte saying people 'just go to the sides' following a violent event) but there are many more examples that are not dependent on threat. Ultimately, trust change seems to be the final outcome of a number of processes; this can be gradual or sudden, from a single event or cumulatively.

The background trust literature, highlighted in chapter 5 of this thesis, focused on the impact of threat on trust. As noted at the start of the chapter there were four notable studies in particular with some of the findings of this doctoral study in keeping with them. Some participants felt that their culture was threatened (similar to a symbolic threat) by an outgroup and lacked trust. Emmanuel, for example, felt that Protestantism was under threat and had a lack of trust, though this seemed to not be specific to the outgroup. Similarly, Dirk is an Irish language activist, who discussed the recent negative political overtures relating to the Irish language act. He also seemed to have a general disposition to distrust. With these two examples, there was a generalised distrust. This is most similar to the finding of the British study that found that perceived intergroup threat was associated with generalised distrust (Schmid, Ramiah, et al., 2014). None of the participants suggested that it meant that the outgroup could not be trusted which was the finding in the other studies (i.e. Tausch,

Tam, et al., 2007; Voci, 2006; Çelebi, et al. 2014). The fact that participants did not single out the outgroup to distrust is not necessarily indicative of a lack of outgroup trust; there are many reasons that participants may not volunteer strong opinions of outgroup distrust such as to prevent creating the impression of sectarianism. Relating this study's findings to such literature must be done so cautiously – the approaches are different and this doctoral study did not set out to deductively test such findings. Overall, it would be best to conclude that a relationship between identity, threat and trust is not axiomatic and there are individual, context-specific variations.

This chapter's findings support the argument for a complex-systems conceptualisation of trust change. This is for several reasons. Looking at theme 1, changes in trust can come from outside the individual (e.g. society, parents, politics, networks), within the individual (e.g. contact, violent experiences, betrayal, disposition) and from agency. A complex systems model would better incorporate these multiple influences. It would also better model the (at least) two-way dynamic between parents and children in terms of social influence. Turning to theme 2, a complex systems approach could provide a contextualised model of intergroup contact that incorporates social and political dynamics into the overall effect.

In sum, rather than linear relationships between trust and antecedents, a more complex system-orientated approach to understanding trust would be better. This would be one that focused on the networks of trust around individuals, the individuals' processing of events, and issues of moral agency. While these three aspects – social, cognitive and agentic – can

be understood in isolation, a clearer picture of trust would emerge where these are understood as part of a complex system. For example, as opposed to focusing on how agentic factors would make someone trust or not, which is a somewhat reductionist approach, it would be better to understand how these agentic factors shift the state of the complex system. In contrast to seeing behaviour as caused by an antecedent, arguably it is best to see behaviour, including trust-related behaviour, as something that emerges out of the complex system, in which the antecedent is one of many factors. While prediction of behaviour is much harder, if not impossible, in a complex system, the system itself will be a more accurate representation of how behaviour works.

A multilevel and complex perspective would also be useful in drawing out policy lessons to improve trust in conflict-affected societies. This could be at an individual approach where, in addition to improving attitudes through contact activities, there could be support to help individuals navigate social and political factors. Furthermore, as agency is the crucial factor that allows the suspension required for that leap of faith, a policy suggestion would be building a sense of empowerment in individuals whilst avoiding deluding individuals into what is possible.

In terms of further research, there are questions that this chapter raises which arguably provide an avenue for further exploration. There are three questions in particular that would be interesting.

Firstly, exploring the individual variation in responses to violent events and betrayal. How is it that some people seemed to have a form of immunity or buffer when experiencing violent political events, which would change other people's opinions on trust? An area of future research could be finding what causes this variance – exploring in greater depth, say through personal narratives, the process that someone goes through from generalising from an individual experience to more widely.

Secondly, is the role of physiological factors. The psychological responses of anxiety, fear, and threat are grounded in physiology and there is little research, as yet, exploring the links between physiology and trust. Would an anxious predisposition preclude an individual from taking a leap of faith in trusting another, for example? This could be linked with the individual variation question: can such variation be accounted for in part through physiological differences?

The final question would be exploring the ideologies and beliefs that overcome social and individual factors that oppose trusting and lead to trust. Further research could explore the abstract, more philosophical, sources of trust. In the context of conflict, these may include ideas of righteousness and promoting peace. A psychological understanding of what leads to suspension and leap-of-faith trust would arguably be a rich area of further research and address the paucity in incorporating agency into current social psychology literature.

The qualitative approach that this doctoral study employed provides a complementary

perspective to existing work on trust, confirming how triangulation through different approaches provide a clearer picture of phenomena. In that vein, this chapter highlights how a broader range of approaches (i.e. autobiographical narrative studies, longitudinal field studies, social network analysis, critical incident technique) could provide greater insights. There are many aspects of trust which are yet to be understood fully.

Summary

The focus of this doctoral study is the relationship between identity, threat and trust, and the focus of this chapter is to look at the patterns between them. The key findings are that though there are instances of intergroup threat with intergroup distrust, this is not always the case. Even where a sense of threat would reduce trust, this change has to be understood in the context of other sources of trust change. The sources are: i) social – parents, social narratives (tradition, history, stereotypes), leaders/ politicians; ii) contact – direct outgroup contact, extended outgroup contact, and dispositional change through contact; iii) events and experiences – violent incidents, betrayal; and iv) agency – building trust. Trust, as well as being a number of different conceptual constructs, is also influenced by several sources. Regarding how to improve trust, the key message seems to be to identify what kind of trust it is, what the key sources of influence are for it, and how to get an optimal outcome through a complex system change.

Chapter 11. CONCLUSION

Introduction

The overall research question for this doctoral study is: in a conflict-affected context, how is trust affected by issues of identity and threat? To answer this, the study focused on a set of research sub-questions: what are the conceptualisations and lived experiences of identity, threat and trust; and how does trust change and how is this influenced by identity and threat. This final chapter of the thesis summarises the key findings, highlights the contribution to knowledge, practical recommendations and study limitations.

Overview of findings

Identity: What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of identity?

The study finds six key themes on identity. Firstly, identity is experienced as fluid in that it varies over time and context. This fluid identity accords with SIT and SCT as originally theorised, but contrasts with much of SIA research and research on political identities that finds identity as static and more stable. This contrast may be attributable to the predominance of the minimal group paradigm in SIA research, and the difference between distinct political identities and identity as a whole. A fluid identity seems to possess a positive connotation in the context of Northern Ireland and is contrasted with a 'staunch' identity that is often portrayed in the negative. Further research could be to extend the

minimal group paradigm to include fluid identities and to explore the meanings of identity as 'fluid' and 'staunch' in the context of Northern Ireland.

Secondly, identity is perceived to be multifaceted, with several identities or facets of identity that compete or contrast with each other, which can be independent or even intersect. This conceptualisation of identity is more akin to those sociologically-rooted approaches to identity where identity can be multifaceted and constituted from social relations and roles (e.g. Gergen, 2008; Stryker & Burke, 2000), rather than the social psychologically-rooted approaches such as SIA that focus on groupings and categorisations (i.e. Tajfel & Turner, 1979). In addition to fluid identities, research on identity would benefit from including identities that are multifaceted.

The third theme was intersectionality. The identities have a varying level of compatibility with each other which can allow intersection and interdependence. It may be better to conceptualise identity relationally, and/or as multiple configurations with pivotal identities at their centre. It is of note that though individuals see themselves as having rich, complex identities, others' identities are often seen in simple ways. Further research could look at how identities intersect, how they are constructed and how they are compatible. This could be through a social representations approach (e.g. Moscovici, 2001).

Fourth is extrinsic factors. People seem to be attuned to the social process of being labelled, and rather than simply accepting or rejecting these labels, they can form complicated

relationships with them. Further research could employ, for example, a symbolic interactionist approach to explore how labels are constructed and interpreted, and how this relates to other behaviours. There was an articulation of identity in the negative, as a sense of deprivation, and this could be seen as a way of achieving positive distinctiveness by projecting victimhood. Victimhood is a contested identity in Northern Ireland (Ferguson et al., 2010). There was also an emphasis amongst participants on not imposing one's identity on others which illustrates how individuals negotiate the process of identity expression in a way to project that they are not sectarian. This identity expression is worth researching further, in particular identifying the discursive practices that can be seen as oppressive or are designed not to appear oppressive.

Fifth is intrinsic factors. The desirability or appeal of identity can change and commensurately so does the extent to which individuals take on that identity. Arguably, the SIA approach has trouble dealing with these gradation and choice issues of identity, in contrast to approaches such as the Social Representations approach that may be more suitable to understand the meanings of identities and their desirability. Further research could employ such an approach to better conceptualise the desirability of identity and understand how aspects of identity can become more or less desirable over time and how that affects the social identification process.

Individuals perceived a sense of agency in forming their identity. This contrasts with the more deterministic framing of identity in much of the literature and there is a need to better

conceptualise and integrate agency in frameworks of identity. Identity was understood as part of a lifelong developmental process and while there is research on the cognitive-developmental factors involved in identity this is largely restricted to adolescence. Thus, further research on understandings of the post-adolescent cognitive-developmental impacts on identity would be beneficial as well as building on the growing work on social-contextual factors of identity development in later life.

The sixth and final theme was how identities can transgress traditional boundaries. This transgressive aspect of some identities mean they can possess certain properties, including seeming to be superordinate to other identities even if this quality is debatable and limited in terms of time and context. Further work could move from conceptualising identities as superordinate or not to identifying the potentially superordinate properties of existing identities and understanding their dynamics and contestation.

In sum, asking participants to talk about how they conceptualised and experienced identity led to several notable findings. Identity was experienced as fluid and multifaceted, with often little differentiation between identities as a whole, and facets of identity. The study finds for holding multiple conceptualisations concurrently rather than a single one — identity as a ‘thing’ (or set entity), a process, a set of relationships, a dynamic, and a performance. Each of these relate to conceptualisations associated with different literatures —for example, a process can be associated with the SIA tradition, a set of relationships can be linked to the social constructionist approach (e.g. Gergen, 2008), and a performance can

be connected to the symbolic interactionist approach (e.g. Goffman, 1956). These different literatures are also associated with different epistemologies: SIA research is largely based on modernist approaches, the theories of SIT and SCT sits between modernist (i.e. more traditional psychology) and postmodern (i.e. more sociologically-rooted) approaches, and social constructionism and symbolic interactionism are associated with postmodern approaches. Thinking of identity as a dynamic could also suggest a different range of identities, for example as content identities (e.g. PUL, CNR, police), meta-identities (e.g. fluid, staunch) and bridging identities (e.g. gender, firefighter).

Threat: What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of threat?

In relation to threat, four themes were developed. The first theme was violence and physical safety. Individuals experienced what could be seen as intergroup threat but from ingroup members as individuals have little or no control over how they are perceived by others. These intergroup threat experiences can be entwined with general physical threat from violence and crime. That group membership is so contested should be reflected in theories such as ITT (Stephan et al., 2009, 2016; Stephan & Renfro, 2002) so that it is perceived membership to an outgroup from which the threat arises, rather than actual membership. In reference to the dual process approach of reasoning, threat seems to be a culmination of system 1 and system 2, influenced by social constructions of threat. Further research should look to find the point in which a physical threat starts to be considered an intergroup threat and also how individuals look to manage their external perceptions to avoid being perceived as an outgroup member.

Secondly, there was identity threat. There is the fear of losing one's identity, of being subsumed, of dilution and of alienation. There are threats relating to CNR and PUL identities as well as identity threat from social changes. People manage their identity disclosure to ameliorate threat and this could be an area to research further. The types of identity that are threatened, or can be a source of threat, are fluid and changing, with greater saliency at different times and contexts, but there remains a distinct sense of identity threat in the post-GFA era. Those who seemed to strongly identify with their communities by being involved in community activity also seemed to express a strong sense of threat which is in keeping with the literature (e.g. Tausch, Hewstone, et al., 2007). This theme on identity threat is somewhat akin to ITT's concept of 'symbolic individual threats' though it differs in that this theme has identity as a source of threat as well as being threatened in itself. Further research could look at the narratives around identities, especially cross-cutting or intersecting identities, and how these contribute to the sense of threat.

The third theme (and one often overlapping with identity threat) was threat to culture. There is a perception that in the post-GFA era, threat to culture has become more salient and that there is a greater instrumentalisation of cultural threat which includes threat narratives. An example of such a narrative is the cultural threat to social capital. Threat to culture is experienced and transmitted at an individual and social level, which means individuals who do not feel personally threatened may need to comply with those who do feel threatened. There is an element of social mediation and construction to these threats

and social threat narratives could impact on the perception of, or attentiveness towards, threat to culture. Further research could explore such potential impacts. Narratives around cultural threat, such as social capital threat, could also be explored further, potentially through a social representations theory approach (e.g. Moscovici, 2001) to identify how such narratives are generated, propagated and popularised.

Fourthly, there is a clear heterogeneity of threat response. At an individual level, there are differences in terms of physiology, cognition and perception, and at a collective level, there are social, historical and cultural constructions of threat. At an individual level, people respond to an extent that can seem too strong or too weak in relation to an objective threat. Examples given related to hate crime and a car bomb. At the social level, there are perceptions around, for example, the threat from 'dimmer-switch republicanism' to the PUL community, and from the police to the CNR community. This reinforces the idea that there is a structuring of meaning and experience at the collective level in addition to the individual level, and that collective threat is not simply an aggregate of individual threat. Further research should pay attention to both the thinking and feeling components of threat, and the socially organised and discursively constituted aspects, as well as the interplay between them.

To summarise, this study finds threats relate to violence or physical safety, identity and culture, and that there is heterogeneity in threat perception. There was some degree of overlap between these themes and the constructs defined by ITTP and ITT, though arguably

the ITTP/ITT constructs are quite broad and not all aspects are captured in this study's themes. For example, the themes did not capture political and economic power which is part of the realistic threat construct, nor morals, values, and philosophy which are part of the symbolic threat construct. That only a subset of issues appeared in this study may reflect the specific Northern Irish context and the issues that are of significance there.

At an individual processing level, threat seems to be a mix of rapid response (i.e. system 1) and thinking through (i.e. system 2) processes that are played out sequentially and in parallel. At a social level, historical and social narratives play a part, highlighting distinct individual and collective dynamics. Threat is a culmination of these varying systems that interact but remain distinct. Studying threat requires a combination of more positivist methods to understand the individual and physiological responses to threat, plus more interpretivist methods to explore the social and historical factors. This needs to be situated in an appropriate epistemology such as critical realism to integrate this work and could help to produce a truly comprehensive, integrative framework for threat.

Trust: What are i) the conceptualisations and ii) lived experiences of trust?

Six key themes on trust were developed. Firstly, trust as a 'safe space' – a sense or feeling (rather than a deduction) of safety or comfort. This is different to the most cited definitions of trust (i.e. Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998) and though there is an element of vulnerability involved, it is rather the feeling of safety despite this vulnerability that is the

element of trust. This conceptualisation of trust differs from much of the extant trust literature that tends to focus on trust as a process, cognition, or affect, but is similar to a phenomenological conceptualisation of trust as ‘laying oneself open to the other’ (Frederiksen, 2014; Løgstrup, 1997). This type of trust may induce physiological responses which, and as noted in chapter 7 (p. 273), could be researched in different contexts and experimentally, as well as researching how physiological factors could affect this type of trust. This conceptualisation could be used to develop survey questions for quantitative analysis. One could look to relate this concept of trust to work on ontological security (Giddens, 1991) and heuristics (Kahneman, 2011). Finally, a suggested approach to addressing trust in a conflict-affected context could be helping individuals to manage threatening feelings to feel safer in spaces.

Secondly, there was the theme of trust as a performance. This conceptualisation contrasts with the trust literature that largely focuses on trust as a (genuine) attitude or behaviour and limits any analysis of performance as signalling within the trustor-trustee dyad. There is a need for trust researchers to focus more on non-genuine trust and in particular on how these performances of trust can impact on genuine trust, so as to better understand the social dynamics which constrain or allow genuine trust.

Thirdly, was the idea of trust as a commonality. This is similar to identification-based trust (IBT) (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996; Saporito & Colwell, 2010) and compatibility-based trust (CBT) (Kappmeier et al., 2019), but different to those trust conceptualisations that focus on

vulnerability and expectations. This form of trust can be actively built but also used in a performative way, much as the last theme highlights trust as performance. Further research could look at the discursive practices around these elements of commonality, as well as attributing trust failures and trustworthiness to outgroups and outgroup members.

The fourth theme was trust as a negotiated 'workaround'. The trust-as-process conceptualisation (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) shares some similarities to this theme. An example of the key components of this process are: recognising vulnerability, acting, *post hoc* assessment and knock-on effects in trust perceptions. Different participants chose different components when talking about this process which further highlights the need for context-specificity in this conceptualisation. The choice of components and some of the accounts illustrate that there could be a performative aspect in the recounting, and further research developing such conceptualisations should take this into account.

The fifth theme was trusting the outgroup through individuals. This highlights a process of individuation at a conceptual level when people think of intergroup trust, but also at a pragmatic level, looking to build outgroup trust through individuals first. This individuation process also illustrates that in the relational aspect of intergroup trust relations, the trustee can be conceptualised as an individual even when one is asked about how they trust a group. Just how individuals conceptualise the trustee in intergroup trust is something that merits further research. Also, the fact that individuals build intergroup trust by starting with individuals first, suggests a level of agency in trust-building.

The sixth theme was dispositional distrust. This is an individual's tendency to trust or distrust, based on individual differences, an individual's experience, as well as social, cultural and historical factors. This conceptualisation contrasts with the common definition of disposition (see PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) in that it includes wider social factors in addition to an individual's tendencies and is persistent over time rather than entirely unchanging. Further research could look to better document an individual's journey or social transition to a disposition of distrust.

To sum up, the themes developed either overlapped with common trust conceptualisations — such as the commonality theme being like IBT and CBT and the workaround theme being like trust-as-process, or the themes related to the experience of trust — as a sense of safety, as a performance, as trusting outgroups through individuals, and as a disposition of distrust. Contrary to the desire for a consensus on how trust is conceptualised and defined (PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016), this study finds for a pluralist, context-specific conceptualisation.

Relating these themes to the multidimensional intergroup trust model (Kappmeier et al., 2021), the safe space theme resonates with the dimension of 'security', and the commonality theme resonates with the dimension of 'compatibility'. It was surprising that there was no overlap with these themes and the most cited conceptualisation of willingness to be vulnerable and positive expectations (i.e. Mayer et al., 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998).

There are several avenues for further research. There could be further research on potential physiological measures of trust as a safe space and links between this type of trust and ontological security and heuristics. It is important to look into the idea of trust as a performance. This has largely been overlooked by trust researchers but is a commonly observed phenomenon, used instrumentally in conflict situations and which likely impacts on genuine trust attitudes and behaviour. Further work is needed to understand just how individuals conceptualise the trustee in trust relationships when thinking of outgroups. Finally, there needs to be more work to understand just how generalisable these trust findings are in other conflict contexts and why they vary contextually.

Intersection: i) How does trust change and ii) how is this influenced by identity and threat?

This study finds several patterns, best explained by grouping them by the source of the dynamics that influence decisions on trust. The first type of source is social influence, principally parents, social narratives, leaders and politicians. This theme finds for a decision-making process in trust where social influence has input. This contrasts with experimental studies on trust that tend to omit social and contextual variables. Identity and threat can play a part in trusting decisions but there is a more complex relationship than simply that greater ingroup identification and greater intergroup threat means less outgroup trust. For example, leaders adopt, as well as, shape group identity and parents can have an important input though children do not adopt their parents' opinions uncritically. Further research could look at autobiographical narrative studies and longitudinal field studies to understand

trust learning and decision-making in complex social contexts. Social network analysis has been suggested as a fruitful avenue for trust research (Möllering, 2006) and this approach would work well to understand social influence networks on trust.

The second type of source is contact. The theme highlights how contact, both direct and indirect contact, are perceived to improve intergroup trust and generalised trust. A limitation of this theme is that there was little insight into negative contact effects and short-term negative interaction effects. This theme aligns with existing findings in the contact literature (e.g. Tam et al., 2009) and also research on networked reputation of trust (Glückler & Armbrüster, 2003). However, the study also finds that social and political dynamics would mediate contact effects, which is an issue often overlooked in the contact research and is an area that needs further research. One proposition is to situate contact effects as part of a complex system incorporating broader social and political dynamics. Trust attitudes can be understood as a dynamic developmental process and trust decisions can require the processing of multiple, sometimes competing inputs.

Thirdly, trust change through events and experiences. In particular, this was how violent events and betrayal undermine trust. Trust seemed to be more prone to worsening following single events and experiences, than being improved. Further research could catalogue how certain types of experiences (and associated pathways) can improve or worsen trust, as well as exploring the saliency and memory of trust-worsening versus trust-improving events. Contrary to initial assumptions, trust change through events and

experiences was not the most prominent theme identified in this study, rather these were social influence and contact. This theme also highlights that conflict violence can lead to changes in perceptions and processing of broader trust issues, beyond intergroup trust, and an avenue of study would be to explore wider trust processing, say in issues such as personal or romantic relationships, following exposure to conflict violence.

The fourth source was agency and the idea that one builds trust. Individuals see themselves (and/or project themselves) as the driving force of trust, rather than passive participants. Further work could explore the decision-making process and strategies to build trust, potentially through methods such as the critical incident technique. That said, forms of agency-centred trust may be documented but not necessarily explicable as they can include a 'leap of faith' component which can be motivated for example, by what is perceived as a higher purpose. Such documentation of trust accounts would help to develop a better understanding of agency to include in a comprehensive framework for trust.

In terms of the starting expectations, they were that there would be a single, predominant causal pathway from identity, to intergroup threat, to intergroup distrust. This was not found. Instead, changes in trust, however trust is conceptualised, can happen through multiple pathways, driven by various influences. In terms of key dynamics and links between the key concepts there were indeed examples from participants (e.g. Brigitte) that supported the original pathway, where identity and subsequently intergroup threat became salient, and there was apparent increased distrust. However, in contrast to other studies that focus

on survey or experimental means, this study, which focused on lived experience, found that there were a number of variables that affected this pathway, and furthermore that there were more examples that were not dependent on this pathway, where trust was affected by identity and intergroup threat.

Relating this study's findings to the background intergroup threat literature there were some similarities. For example, several participants discussed a sense of cultural threat (similar to a symbolic threat) and indicated they lack trust. However, this seemed to be general distrust rather than specific outgroup distrust, though it may have been that participants were reluctant to volunteer strong opinions of outgroup distrust to avoid seeming sectarian. The overall impression is that the relationship between identity, threat, and trust is variable and context-specific.

Trust change can come from outside the individual, within the individual, and agency. Arguably a complex system perspective would better incorporate these. This could be used to provide a contextualised and dynamic model of intergroup trust, rather than identify discrete linear relationships between trust and antecedents. A complex system model would be a more accurate representation of trust, one that posits trust behaviour and attitudes as something that emerges out of the system.

Following this study's findings, there are arguably three key areas for further research. Firstly, exploring the individual differences in processing violent events and betrayal, for

example through personal narratives. Secondly, looking at the role of individuals' physiological differences and how they affect trust, for example, one's ability to take a 'leap of faith'. Thirdly, would be exploring the ideologies and beliefs that can overcome social and individual barriers to trust.

While this study employed a qualitative approach, a broader range of approaches, some already highlighted, could provide greater insights with many aspects of trust yet to be fully understood.

Contribution to knowledge

In addition to the points noted in the previous section, this study provides several contributions to knowledge. These relate to issues of identity, threat and trust as well as other contributions.

Identity

This is one of the first studies to employ a phenomenological approach to identity as a whole in a conflict-affected context and Northern Ireland. It produces a more complex picture of identity which extends the growing work on complex and multiple identities, as well as recognising the diversity in identity in Northern Ireland. The study argues for an application of intersectionality to identities in a conflict-affected context. This includes social and political identities, noting that they have an element of intersectionality and that this often

overlooked in SIA research which tends to focus on singular, additive identities. This study also looks at concepts such as superordinate identities and suggests seeing this as a property that is contested and specific to interpretation, time and context rather than a set identity.

This study finds for a pluralist approach to the conceptualisation and employment of identity. While the social identity conceptualisation is predominant in the literature on Northern Ireland, and conflict in general, this study highlights the benefit and need to see identity as many things — as a ‘thing’ (or set entity), a process, a set of relationships, a dynamic, and a performance. In addition to managing multiple and complex identities, individuals manage these identities in their variable forms. While historical and social factors may limit the transferability of some of these findings of identity (e.g. the transgressive nature of police and firefighter identities), this pluralist approach to identity is likely valuable in other conflict-affected contexts.

In terms of theory, this study looks at Huddy’s (2001) criticisms and does find that SIT does fail to adequately address the issues of identity choice, subjective meaning of identities and gradations in identity strength. Conversely, this study finds identities are less stable than they may appear, even while they maintain the same ostensible label. This study supports the argument that there are challenges in relating the existing body of work on SIA to political identities. Also, in relation to SIT, the study argues that the identity associated with competitive victimhood could be seen as a form of social creativity.

This study focuses on Derry/Londonderry, rather than the much more studied Belfast and surrounding areas. It provides insight into a modern context. The study is of people living through Brexit and the suspension of Stormont, amongst other contemporary events, rather than the conflict in isolation of wider social and political changes. The inclusion of ethnic minorities and those who identify as LGBT provides a more in-depth picture and reflects the evolving identities. As noted earlier, such contextualisation is relevant to counter the tendency to decontextualise social identities despite SIT's explicitly interactionist framework (Reicher, 2004), to explore identity beyond the ones commonly ascribed to the area, to reflect on extant frameworks relevant to lived experience.

Threat

With threat, this study argues for threat to be understood at multiple levels. There has been work of arguably a neuro-reductionist approach, where intergroup threat is understood based on neurological phenomena (Neuberg & Schaller, 2016). Yet, this study finds that there are multiple levels of threat, at the physiological, individual and social level and that one must not reduce threat to neurology or conversely to social narratives — each of these issues has dynamics at their respective levels which can influence other levels.

In reference to theory, this study argues for a refinement of ITT so that it is perceived membership rather than actual membership of an outgroup that leads to intergroup threat.

One arguably novel hypothesis that came out of this study, which appears in Chapter 8 (p. 259), is that cultural threats are a manifestation of threat to group entitativity and/or social capital. If these are related it would help explain why cultural threats are felt as so important, why there is an asymmetric perception of cultural threat (i.e. a reluctance to accept others' experience of cultural threat while feeling culturally threatened oneself), and why socio-economic factors relate to differences in hostility, with working-class people potentially needing to depend more on the social resources for livelihood and employment. Furthermore, there is the question of whether the social narrative that cultural threat undermines the group, increases acuity to cultural threat.

Trust

As noted in the introduction, trust in intergroup conflict is important but insufficiently researched (Kenworthy et al., 2015). This study contributes to better understanding how trust, as well as identity and threat are conceptualised and experienced in real-world, conflict-affected contexts. This study also looks at contextual examples of how trust change happens and what are seen as the influences. This study produced findings that help develop a trust survey measure for further research: the suggestion in chapter 9 (p. 272) was a revised survey questions such as "do you feel safe in intergroup contexts?", with the response measured either as a binary nominal variable (i.e. yes/no) or with a Likert scale (i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree).

As well as a pluralist approach to identity conceptualisation, this study finds for a pluralist approach to conceptualising trust. There is evidently a desire to reach a consensus on how trust is conceptualised (see PytlikZillig & Kimbrough, 2016) but this study finds in favour of a diverse range of conceptualisations, rather than a move towards consensus. This is because trust can mean many things to different people and in different contexts, and utilising an inappropriate 'universal' definition can be counterproductive.

Conflicts are very diverse in nature and it has been argued that the long-term effect of conflict on trust comes down to the specificity of the conflict itself (Cassar et al., 2013). Likewise, the specificity of conflict may well determine the type of trust itself that is missing and needs to be rebuilt. Some theorists argue for essential features of trust, such as Möllering (2006) does with a 'leap of faith'. Yet, this was something that was not demonstrated as essential in this study and while it may seem desirable to have a universal construct of trust for conflict-affected contexts, this would not be ecologically valid and have limited benefit.

This study introduces the concept of safe space trust which is somewhat different to existing conceptualisations. Also, there is the idea of trust as performance, which finds that the "trust-like facades in discourse and behaviour" (Möllering, 2006, p. 5) should be taken into account in trust research. To my knowledge, this is the first study that argues for accepting trust as performance as a trust construct. While there is a long-established body of work taking a dramaturgical perspective on identity (e.g. Goffman, 1956), treating trust as a

performance is novel. This is one that requires greater attention to the discourses around trust and the social construction elements of trust, to see how these performances are undertaken and the effect they intend to produce.

This study notes contact can have a positive effect on trust but also contextualises and critiques contact theory. The benefits of intergroup contact, which demonstrably can improve intergroup relations, may be counteracted by wider social, cultural and political dynamics. Somewhat different from prevailing norms, these social dynamics are understood as more changeable and act as context- and time-specific cues. There is little research that looks at this.

Finally, on trust, there is an insight related to the individuation of the trustee when considering outgroup trust. Intergroup trust is assessed in many studies with survey questions, asking for level of agreement with questions such as 'I can trust them when they say they want peace' (Tausch, Tam, et al., 2007). If individuals think of prototypical or familiar outgroup individuals rather than an outgroup as a whole when thinking of 'them', this raises the issue of the construct validity of such questions.

Intersection

In terms of contribution to the dynamics and links between the key concepts, this study does affirm the link between identity, threat and trust, finding instances of intergroup threat with

intergroup distrust. However, this study highlights that such dynamics must be understood in context and with regard to sources of change (i.e. social, contact, events/experiences, and agency). Whereas a number of studies have looked to connect identity, threat and trust through survey- and experiment-based methods, this qualitative study, which is focused on lived experiences, highlights the complex system that individuals live in and, at an individual level, that the connection between identity, threat and trust is impacted by many factors. In terms of a broader model for intergroup trust, rather than trust being set at an early age and relatively unchangeable (i.e. 'the psychological propensity model' [Glanville and Paxton, 2007]), or being entirely due to social contexts (i.e. the 'social learning model' [Glanville and Paxton, 2007]), this study finds for trust being a 'dynamic developmental process' much as Brown (2010) posits intergroup attitudes in general. A key contribution has been moving towards creating a specific model for intergroup trust.

Other contributions

One other contribution relates to agency. Rosenberg (2003) has criticised "the paucity of discussion regarding the potentially transformative effect that individuals may have on the social or political contexts in which they operate" (p.429) in some approaches to social and political psychology. Likewise, Swann & Jetten (2017) argue "the impression readers might take away from reading the social psychological literature" is that "[p]eople lack agency" (p.382). Yet, this study finds a place for agency, in particular with trust. While there may be psychological and social factors that contribute towards trust, there was a clear sense of agency.

Another finding is that it reinforces the argument for an epistemology that captures what Rosenberg (2003) terms 'dual structuration' from individual and collective meaning and action. This is clearest, in this study, with the issue around social capital and cultural threat. While the work relating to Putnam's (2007) argument that ethnic diversity reduces social capital and trust remains contested, the argument itself seems to be in the public domain and is used to validate concerns about diversity in Northern Ireland to some extent. Thus, irrespective of whether ethnic diversity damages trust or not, based on underlying psychological dynamics, the belief that it does so as a social construction of knowledge may make it into a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is worth remarking that social science research itself can impact on attitudes and behaviour⁶⁶. Thus, it is important not to limit research of the effect on diversity in terms of social capital threat through modernist methods, but also to explore social narratives that diversity leads to such threat using more post-modernist or interpretivist approaches. To return to Rosenberg's (2003) point, there needs to be "a greater epistemological sophistication" (p.454) to capture and integrate the individual and collective structuring processes.

Practical recommendations

⁶⁶ A notable example of a theory of behaviour impacting behaviour is a study testing the economic hypothesis of 'free riding' – that individuals will not voluntarily contribute to the provision of public goods that they are not excluded from benefiting from (Marwell & Ames, 1981). The study found that most participants did not free-ride with one notable exception -- economic students, arguably because they had learned the principle of free-riding.

This study did not intentionally look for policy implications, but a few things stand out as suggestions. Firstly, this study's findings suggest that trust is not the absence of threat but rather the management of the anxiety around threat. There is an element of agency where individuals are aware that they are in a threatening situation but overcome that. A potential suggestion would be teaching or otherwise enabling individuals to consciously manage these threatening feelings.

As noted earlier there is a need to focus more on non-genuine trust, including how these performances of trust can impact on genuine trust. This may help to ensure trust-building is genuine and to disincentivise trust performances in trust-building programmes. Another suggestion may be to take into account the approach of trusting outgroups through individuals that is ostensibly employed by participants in this study.

If identities are fluid, complex, and multi-faceted, there is a questions as to what this means for institutions that are based on static identities. Some institutions take into consideration aspects of political identities (e.g. the Northern Irish Assembly 'blocks' of 'unionist', 'nationalist' and 'Other'), or religious background (e.g. the PSNI and its affirmative action policy of recruiting 50% Catholics). As such, these institutions may end up reinforcing past identities and prevent the evolution of new, potentially less sectarian, identities. Such institutions should therefore better respond to changing identities.

Finally, returning to the issue of complexity: a multilevel and complex perspective may

improve programmatic approaches to intergroup relations. Intergroup contact interventions seem well established but an additional suggestion is to help individuals navigate social and political factors outside of the intergroup contact intervention. Furthermore, a complex system requires policy approaches that are appropriate in that they respond to the changing environment. This may require a more iterative, adaptive approach.

Limitations

There are a few limitations of this study. Ideally, a study on intergroup threats and trust would be longer-term, either through a longitudinal study or long-term ethnographic study, looking at individuals over time, getting a deeper insight into how they perceive threats and identifying changes in identity, threat and trust over time. The time limitations of doctoral research prevent this, however.

There is a question as to how transferable the findings are of this study to other contexts. While some of the findings are linked to context, one could surmise that similar findings would be found in other contexts. On identity, one would expect people to hold multifaceted identities, though they may not use identical terms, like fluid. One would expect threat to be primarily about violence and physical safety, but threats to identity and culture would still be relevant as well. Trust in other conflict contexts would also include safe space trust, and trust as performance, commonality, and 'workaround'. One would also expect trust to be affected by social influence, contact, events/experiences, and agency. The

only way to really demonstrate transferability though is to repeat the study in a different context. Arguably such research is worthwhile.

Concluding comments

On a final note, it is worth recapping on the journey this study took. It started from looking at the issue of trust in the Northern Ireland conflict, then looking at the relationship between social identity and trust, to the pathway of identity-threat-trust, to findings on each of these concepts and the relationships between them.

This study furthered understanding of how identity, threat and trust are conceptualised and experienced in real-world, conflict-affected contexts and how trust change happens and its influences. This study explored identity in conflict, moving beyond the social identity conceptualisations that are commonly employed and explored alternative frameworks and conceptualisations to give a clearer understanding of how identity is understood and experienced. The analysis of threat using a qualitative and phenomenological approach allowed reflection and critique on existing frameworks for threat to see how closely they relate to lived experience. Finally, in relation to trust, this study developed conflict-relevant conceptualisations as well as understanding key trust change dynamics and the role of identity and threat in these.

This study's findings looked to provide research impact, suggestions for further research and

potential suggestions for policy in peacebuilding and conflict. In terms of demonstrating research impact, this is difficult to determine in advance of publication of the findings, as noted in chapter 6. However, informal feedback that has been received from academics and practitioners where these findings have been presented suggest they are very welcome and may well impact on theory and practice. In terms of suggestions for further research this includes the novel hypothesis that cultural threats are a manifestation of threat to group entitativity and/or social capital, a survey measure to look at 'safe space trust' and a potential question on people's physiological disposition and trust to be looked at experimentally. In relation to policy, an understanding of how trust changes and how identity and threat influences that, can inform programmes, potentially to identify which changes in threat perceptions warn about future changes in trust. Noting again that trust in conflict-affected communities is important but insufficiently researched, this study goes some way in providing meaningful insights into developing understanding in this crucial area.

Summary

To recap, this study and thesis looked at how in a conflict-affected context, trust is affected by issues of identity and threat by analysing the conceptualisations and lived experiences of identity, threat and trust, and exploring how trust changes and how this is influenced by identity and threat.

The study approach settled on a pluralistic qualitative analysis (combining thematic, phenomenological and discourse analysis), founded on a Critical Realist meta-stance, and used (qualitative) semi-structured interviews as the data source. The case study was Northern Ireland, and the fieldwork was undertaken in and around the town of Derry/Londonderry during the first half of 2017.

In relation to identity, the study finds that identity is fluid and multifaceted, with facets and subsistent identities that in some cases intersect, and in others, remain independent. These are affected by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and the subsequent identities can transgress traditional social boundaries. Concerning threat, there was strong variation in how much people felt threatened, suggesting social-level threat masks individual-level threat heterogeneity as well as social pressure to conform to threat narratives. Participants usually focused on physical threats, but also threats to identity and culture. Trust had multiple, overlapping meanings, variously defined as: a safe space, where anxiety about physical and psychic harm was contained; as performance for personal gain; as a shared commonality; as a negotiated workaround; as a process through which individuals or institutions manage wider group trust; and as a general disposition. Finally, in relation to trust change, there were several key sources and dynamics that influence trust, sometimes but not always through identity and threat: social (i.e. parents, social narratives, leaders); contact (i.e. direct outgroup contact, extended outgroup contact, and dispositional change through contact); events and experiences (i.e. violent incidents, betrayal); and agency (i.e. building trust).

This study addresses the dearth of qualitative research in lived experiences and meanings of identity, threat and trust in a conflict-affected context. The findings diverge and challenge, in many ways, existing theories on social identity and threats, as well as conceptualisations of trust. This study, therefore, provides a richer understanding of identity, threat and trust, proposes exploring such issues using a complex system approach, and suggests avenues for future research and practical recommendations.

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Appendix A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title

Social identity, threats and trust in Northern Ireland

Invitation to take part

You are invited to take part in an original research project. Participation is completely voluntary. Choosing not to take part, or withdrawing part way through, will not disadvantage you in anyway. If you are interested in taking part please make sure you are fully informed about the study before agreeing to participate, take time to read the information below carefully. Please do not hesitate to contact the primary researcher (Sumedh Rao, contact details at the end of the sheet) if you would like any further clarification.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the study is to better understand the relationship between social identity and trust in conflict-affected societies, this doctoral project will look at the experiences and meanings of identity, intergroup threats and intergroup trust in the context of Northern Ireland.

Who is doing this research?

Sumedh Rao, Doctoral Candidate, is undertaking this project on behalf of the Institute for Conflict and Cooperation and Security, at the University of Birmingham.

Sumedh Rao is a student supervised by Prof. Paul Jackson & Prof. Stefan Wolff at the University of Birmingham.

Prof. Paul Jackson can be contacted at:

[CONTACT DETAILS REMOVED]

Prof Stefan Wolff can be contacted at:

[CONTACT DETAILS REMOVED]

Do I have to take part?

No. It is completely voluntary.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be interviewed to discuss a broad range of themes relating to the research question. There are no right or wrong answers. The aim is to hear your experiences. Any interviews will take place at a time and place convenient to you. With your consent interviews may be recorded. You may request that your interview is not recorded.

How will the data that has been collected be used?

The data will be used for the completion of a doctoral thesis on the topic of the research. The data may also be used in academic publications on the same topic. None of the data used in either instance will include personal identification other than that agreed on an individual basis between the participant and the researcher (Sumedh Rao).

What are the benefits of taking part?

There are no financial benefits but participation and the findings may be of interest to you. The researcher (Sumedh Rao) can provide you a summary of the study findings.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseen physical risks to participating. Anonymity and confidentiality will be protected throughout the research process. The final research piece will be reviewed to ensure that individual personal identity is not compromised.

If the research appears to be causing upset or trauma it will be immediately stopped. If you find that reflecting upon your experiences causes distress or upset, support is available from your Doctor/GP. Alternatively, you can contact:

WAVE Trauma Centre

Telephone: (028) 7126 6655 (Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)

Address: 25-30 The Diamond, Derry Londonderry, Co. Londonderry, BT48 6HP

Website: <http://www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk/home>

The WAVE Trauma Centre offer care and support to anyone bereaved, injured or traumatised through the 'Troubles' of Northern Ireland.

For Out of Hours, help is available from:

Lifeline NI

Telephone: 0808 808 8000

No matter what your age or where you live in Northern Ireland, if you are or someone you know is in distress or despair, Lifeline is here to help.

Samaritans Belfast

Telephone: (028) 9066 4422

If something's troubling you, then get in touch with the Samaritans. We're here 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Can I withdraw from the research and what will happen if I don't want to carry on?

Yes, You are free to withdraw at any point with no consequences. In the context of this study this means that you may refuse to be interviewed, or stop the interview at any time. You may also refuse to respond to any email correspondence. Additionally, if requested (up to 30 days after the interview) any data you provided can be destroyed.

Are there any expenses and payments which I will get?

No

Whom do I contact if I have any questions or a complaint?

If you have any questions or complaints about this study, or if this study has harmed you in any way, you can contact the University of Birmingham Ethical Review Committee using the following details:

[CONTACT DETAILS REMOVED]

Will my records be kept confidential?

Yes. All written materials will be anonymised and stored on an encrypted computer or kept in a locked cabinet at the University of Birmingham. Only the primary researcher, Sumedh Rao, will have access to the complete records. The raw data and any data including personal identification will not be shared with anyone. As required by university regulations all data will be kept (securely) for a period of 10 years after publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?

Sumedh Rao, doctoral candidate at the University of Birmingham is undertaking this research as part of a PhD funded by the University of Birmingham's Institute for Conflict, Cooperation and Security. Sumedh will receive no other payment or inducement for conducting this research.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the University of Birmingham Humanities & Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

Further information and contact details.

For any further information/clarification please contact the primary researcher as follows:

Sumedh Rao

[CONTACT DETAILS REMOVED]

Compliance with the Declaration of Helsinki

This study complies, and at all times will comply, with the Declaration of Helsinki[1]as adopted at the 64th WMA General Assembly at Fortaleza, Brazil in October 2013; and also includes the accompanying footnote at the bottom of the page: [1] World Medical Association Declaration of Helsinki [revised October 2013]. Recommendations Guiding Medical Doctors in Biomedical Research Involving Human Subjects. 64th WMA General Assembly, Fortaleza (Brazil).

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

“Social identity, threats and trust in Northern Ireland”

We would greatly appreciate you taking the time to take part in this study. If you agree to participate, please put your Name, Sign and Date this consent form which has been approved by the University’s Humanities and Social Sciences Ethical Review Committee.

Statement of consent

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that taking part in the study is voluntary.
- I understand that confidentiality will be ensured and my identity will be protected in the analysis and further reports.
- I understand that I can request the interview notes or a copy of the draft research from the researcher.

- I understand that I can withdraw from the study and may request the return of any data I have provided, and request the researcher to destroy these data by contacting the researcher: [CONTACT DETAILS REMOVED] within 30 days of the interview.
- I understand that my personal data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study.

Participant:

Name **Date** **Signature**

Researcher:

Name **Date** **Signature**

Appendix B: INTERVIEW PROCEDURE & QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Participants will be given an information sheet and consent form to read and sign before the following questions.

To be read out:

“Firstly, I want to make sure that you are happy to be recorded and have notes taken. [Wait for answer]. Great. So I want to talk to you about your experiences and thoughts growing up and living here. Before we do I have to say a few things: I doubt any questions will make you feel uncomfortable but as with any interview you can stop at any time. All of the information from this interview will be kept anonymous and confidential, and any work that comes from it will not use your real name. Are you happy to go ahead?”

1) Tell me about yourself/ yourselves?

Prompts: Where did you grow up? What was it like living there? Do you have memories about the conflict? What opinions do you have about the peace process?

2) People talk about identity in Northern Ireland. What does that mean to you?

Prompts: Is identity important in Northern Ireland? How do you see it has changed?

3) People talk about trust between communities. What does that mean to you?

Prompts: which members; trust in what way; different for different members of the community;

4) Are there events or experiences that have changed how you feel?

Prompts: what about the Good Friday agreement; the flag protests; the election; Brexit; 12th July; political protests; parades

5) People talk about feeling threatened. What does that mean to you?

Prompts: who do you feel threatened by; are there certain experiences you have had which have made you feel more or less threatened; has that changed the way you act; has that changed the way you think about people; what about cultural threats?

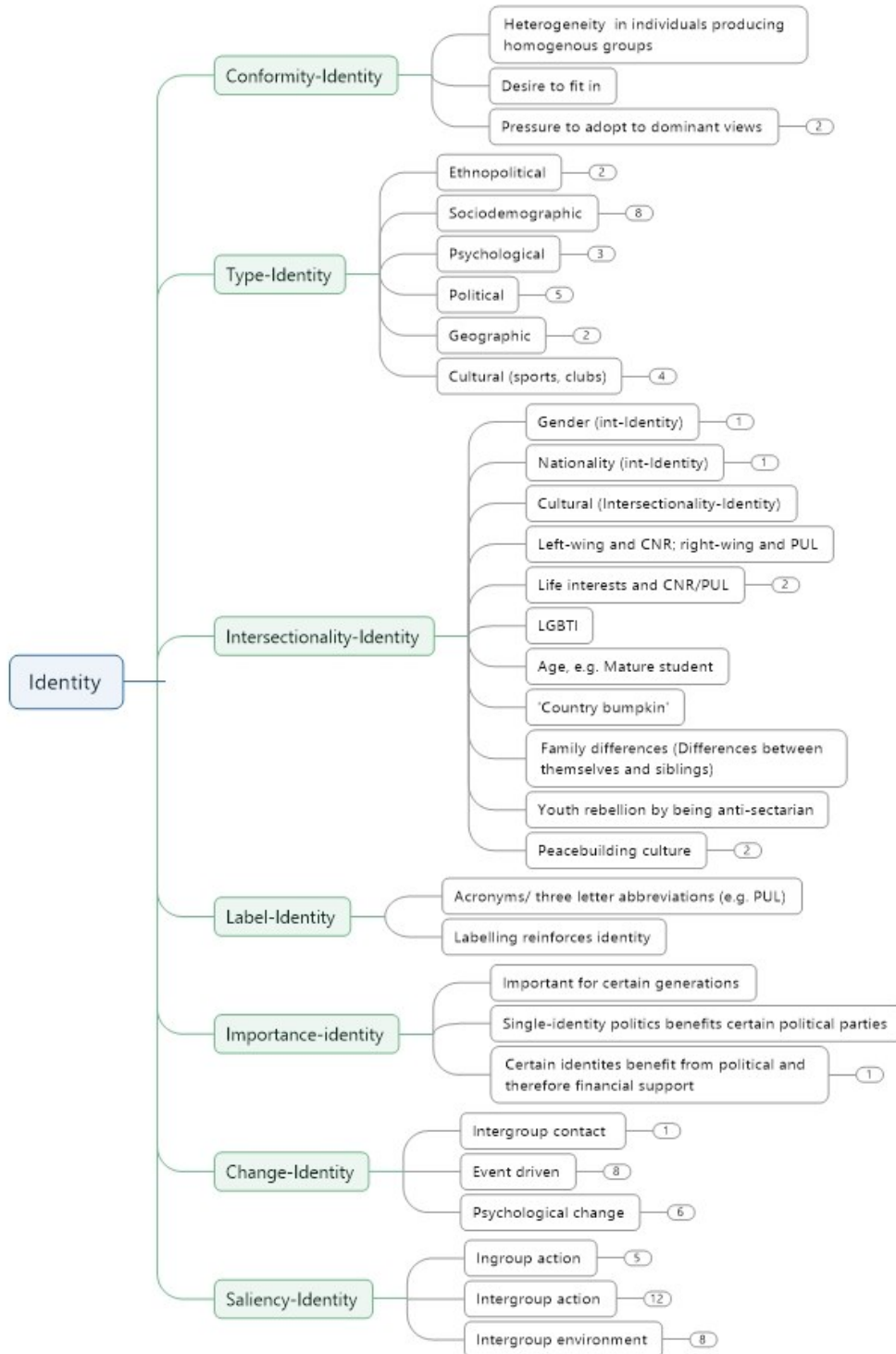
Appendix C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

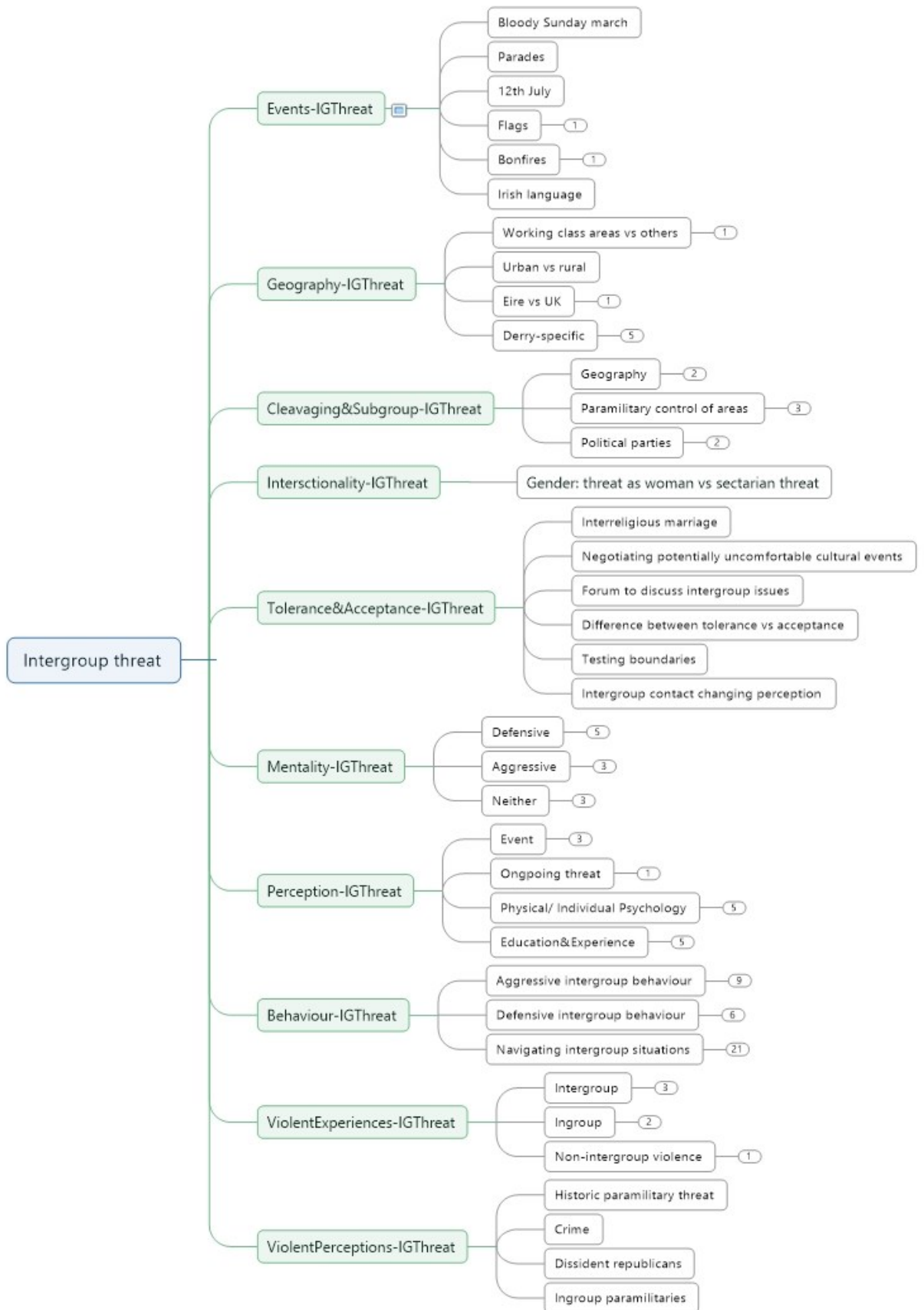
Participants were interviewed in and around the town of Derry/Londonderry between January and May 2017. Their names were pseudonymised using a name generator and none of the pseudonyms match any of the participants' actual names. Background and gender were noted based on the interviewer's assignation and may not reflect how the participants view themselves. Background was recorded as Catholic/nationalist/republican (CNR), Protestant/unionist/loyalist (PUL), or as neither (Neutral).

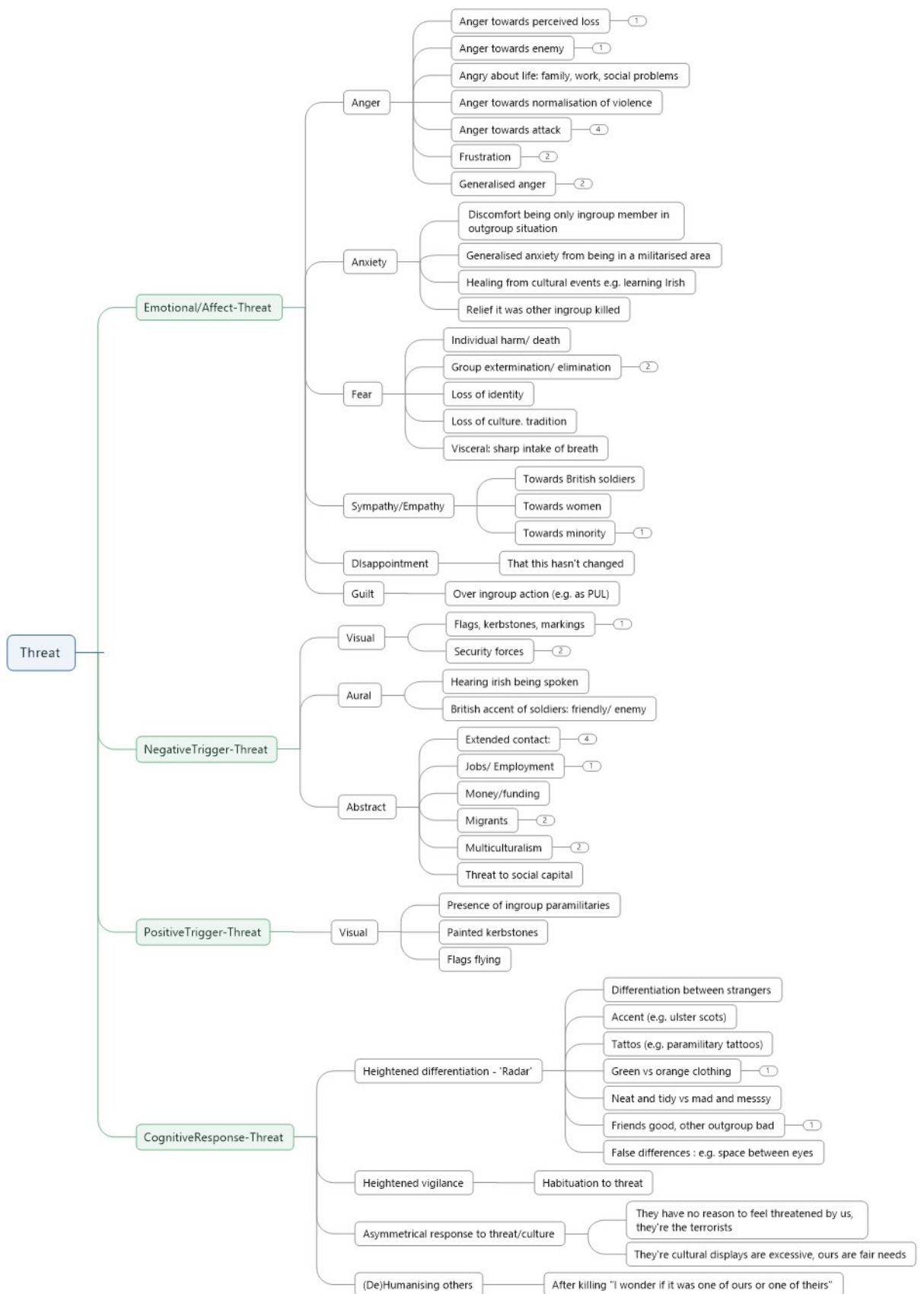
Date Interviewed	Pseudonym	Background	Gender
17 January 2017	Abel	CNR	male
17 January 2017	Ahmad	PUL	male
18 January 2017	Amira	CNR	female
18 January 2017	Artie	PUL	female
19 January 2017	Bernardina	PUL	female
19 January 2017	Blair	Neutral	male
20 January 2017	Brigitte	Neutral	female
20 January 2017	Chas	CNR	male
24 January 2017	Clay	CNR	male
09 February 2017	Dalene	CNR	female
09 February 2017	Dionna	PUL	female
09 February 2017	Dirk	CNR	male
10 February 2017	Domingo	PUL	male
10 February 2017	Edmond	PUL	male
10 February 2017	Emanuel	PUL	male
13 February 2017	Frances	PUL	male
15 February 2017	Gale	CNR	male
15 February 2017	Galen	PUL	male
17 February 2017	Garry	PUL	male
20 February 2017	Hal	Neutral	male
20 February 2017	Hiram	CNR	male

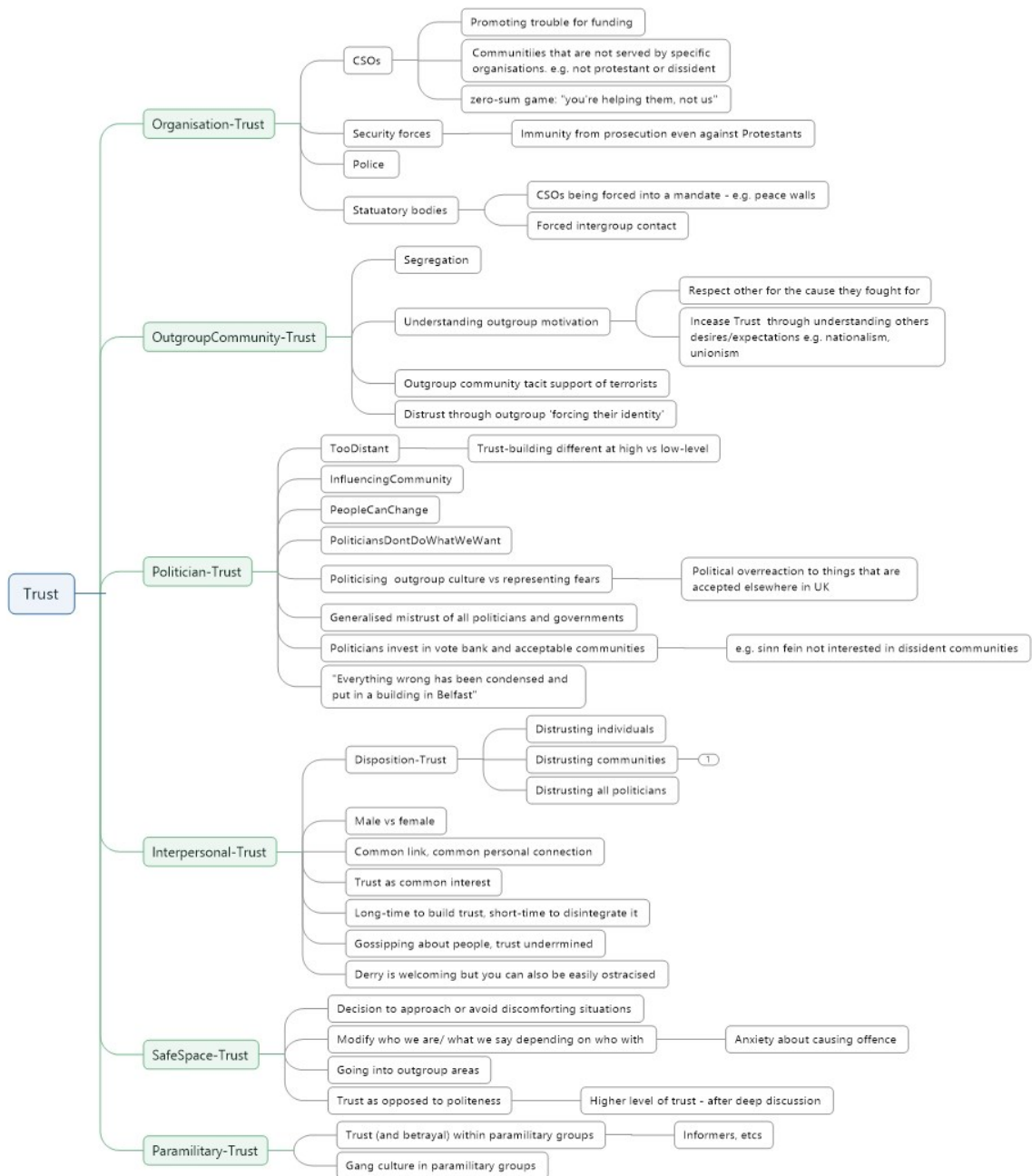
20 February 2017	Ilene	PUL	female
21 February 2017	Jackie	PUL	male
21 February 2017	Jeremy	CNR	male
21 February 2017	Jestine	CNR	female
21 February 2017	Joaquin	CNR	male
10 March 2017	Johanne	PUL	female
10 March 2017	Jonna	PUL	female
10 March 2017	Joy	CNR	female
13 March 2017	Lamont	PUL	male
13 March 2017	Lashay	CNR	female
13 March 2017	Leonora	Neutral	female
14 March 2017	Linnea	CNR	female
14 March 2017	Malcom	PUL	male
14 March 2017	Marceline	PUL	female
14 March 2017	Mariann	PUL	female
15 March 2017	Maybell	CNR	female
15 March 2017	Napoleon	CNR	male
16 March 2017	Portia	CNR	female
16 March 2017	Rana	PUL	female
21 March 2017	Richard	CNR	male
21 March 2017	Rico	PUL	male
05 May 2017	Rosaria	CNR	female
05 May 2017	Samuel	CNR	male
09 May 2017	Sarah	PUL	female
10 May 2017	Shavonne	PUL	female
10 May 2017	Sherry	CNR	female
11 May 2017	Shon	CNR	male
11 May 2017	Stefania	CNR	female
11 May 2017	Theodore	PUL	male

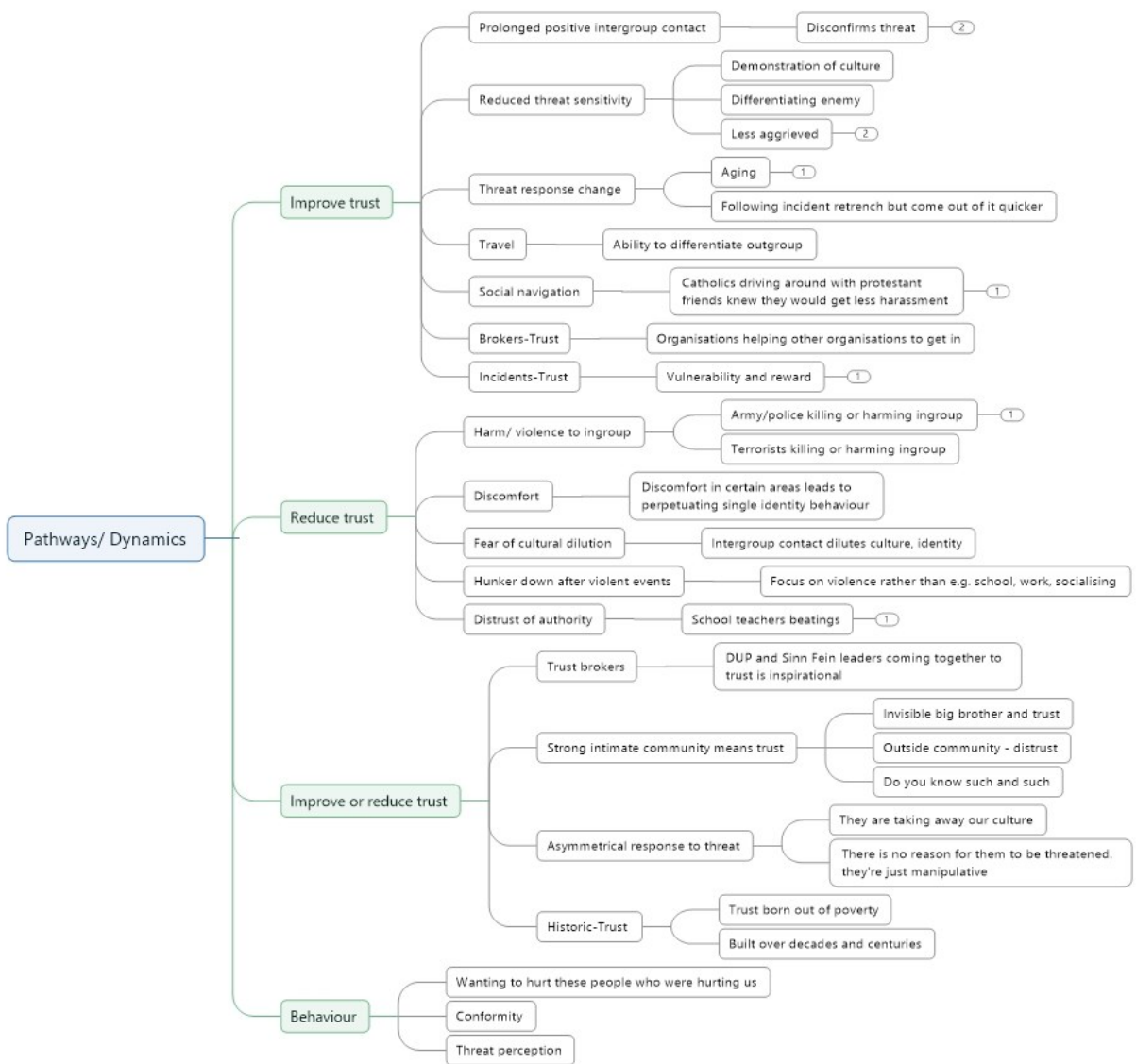
Appendix D: INITIAL CODING FRAMEWORKS











Appendix E: PERSONAL REFLECTION

This thesis came about as a convergence of my different interests and experiences. As an undergraduate student studying psychology, the work by social psychologists looking at prejudice and intergroup relations was particularly striking. Especially noteworthy was the work of Henri Tajfel (e.g. Tajfel, 1969), a naturalised Brit who survived prisoner-of-war camps during World War II, but found after the war that all his family and many of his friends had been killed in the Holocaust, because they, like him, were Jewish. Much of the work on intergroup relations, I speculate, is driven by those who want to understand how prejudice and intergroup discrimination comes about and comes to have such disastrous consequences. When I turned to political science to get an understanding of how politics shapes and is shaped by society, I found that the paradigms I learned as a psychology undergraduate were not employed. I have since maintained the view that psychologists have much to teach political scientists about intergroup conflict, but likewise, psychologists have much to learn from political scientists. This thesis comes about because of an admiration and respect for both disciplines, and a sense that better synthesis of the two disciplines, through a contribution to the burgeoning field of political psychology, would be more beneficial than competing explanations from siloed disciplines.

My interest in Northern Ireland came about from visiting the area and learning about the Troubles. Growing up in London in the 1980s and 1990s, the bombing campaign of the IRA was something I was aware of but did not truly grasp in terms of origins and motivations. I

had read about ethnic conflict in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia but that it happened in a culture that was supposed to be familiar to me, and in one of the wealthiest countries in the world was surprising. I was intrigued that underpinning much of the conflict was the issue of prejudice and discrimination. These issues existed in London but were mostly centred on issues of race. That there could be such strong prejudice against people who were physiognomically identical was startling and reminded me of what I had studied as an undergraduate about intergroup conflicts. If I was to study ethnic conflict, it seemed apt to focus on Northern Ireland.

Expounding my interests and motivation for the thesis is important, not just to orientate the reader to the focus of the thesis, but also to highlight the importance of individual meanings and experiences, including those of this thesis' author. This thesis focuses very much on individuals' meanings and experiences. This thesis, and the doctoral study that it is based on, draws on (what some would consider) 'objective' facts about the psychology of ethnic conflict, but also (what some would consider) 'subjective' experiences and meanings, as well as addressing the epistemological and ontological challenges from this combined approach. I argue that both approaches are important for a clearer understanding of the intergroup relations and ethnic conflict, including in the context of Northern Ireland.

Looking back at the work undertaken, the doctoral research was a journey of sorts. It was different from what I had envisaged at the start, was somewhat convoluted, and took me to several dead ends before I got to where I did. The research starting point was to get a better

understanding of how group membership shapes perceptions at the individual level and how feeling part of one group changes the way one interacts with someone from a different group. To do this, I focused on the way in which social identity shapes perceptions of threats to one's group and how these threat perceptions affect trust in another's group (i.e. an outgroup). When an appropriate mixed qualitative and quantitative approach was not found (after several months of since discarded investigation and preparation), I focused exclusively on a qualitative approach. When the use of focus groups seemed likely to move away from what I believe would be the most appropriate data, which is personal experiences and meanings, interviews became the sole data source drawn on for this study (again despite practical and ethical review preparation for focus groups). Even once the data had been decided, there was a question of method with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis as the initial method, then pure grounded theory, before settling on a pluralistic qualitative approach, drawing on several methods.

Despite this tortuous journey — apparently common with doctoral research — it provided rich experience and insights. This, in itself, provides support for the final approach for this thesis and the focus on individuals' meanings and experiences, rather than experimental or survey-based data.

In this study, I found it notable that I too had ascribed others to simple identities, while considering my own identity to be complex, much like the participants in this study. I had come into the study expecting Protestants and Catholics but instead found multifaceted

individuals. I had thought threat would be purely physical and was surprised just how significantly threat to identity and culture were seen. And finally, with trust: I had assumed it was about trusting people in a dyadic way and was taken aback that for many people it is a sense of safety.

One point that became clear during the interviews was my positionality in this study. In contrast to an experimental approach, which I have undertaken in the past and where the researcher is positioned as an independent observer, I very much became part of the research process during this study. In all interviews there is, as always, an issue of social desirability bias, where participants respond so as to be viewed favourably by others, often to be in accordance with social norms. But also, aspects of myself — being male, being visibly of Indian/Asian origin, speaking with a London accent — likely elicited different responses than if the interviewer had been someone else. Current affairs issues — Brexit, the Catholic Church scandals, the Renewable Heat Initiative scandal — seem to have an impact on how participants answered. This most affected identity, based on participants' responses. By the end of the study it seemed clear that while some aspects of identity are stable, others fluctuate with current affairs and changes in saliency. This saliency, in turn, depends on where a participant is, and who they are talking to. Furthermore, participants accounts seemed a mixture of personal reflection and performance. While it was impossible to be sure which was which, I find that there is sufficient clarity to draw insightful conclusions, and I assert that these conclusions are sufficiently evidenced in this thesis. The criticisms from psychology's (and wider social science's) interpretive turn seemed clear to me, however — I was not simply observing 'truth', but somehow creating knowledge with

each interview.

This study set out to somewhat explore the psychology of ethnic conflict. At the end of this thesis, I am left even more critical of the primordialist school (Geertz, 1963) — how can there be a ‘natural’ kin connection when the identities that bond people are so varied, multidimensional and fluid? It seems true that ethnicity, and linked to that, identity can help to organise and secure resources, as the instrumentalist school postulates (e.g. Collier & Hoeffler, 2004), but ethnicity and identity seem to have a dynamic that is independent of its relation to resources. And finally, when I look at the constructivist school approach — that ethnicity is the product of social processes that are made and remade over time, rather than ascribed through birth (Barth, 1969) — I see a lack of agency in this explanation. Ultimately, this study for me reinforces the idea that there are innate, instrumental and socially constructed components in relation to identity, threat, and trust, and therefore ethnic conflict.

On a final note: this thesis and study were premised on my personal interests in psychology, political science, ethnic conflict and the Troubles. At the end of the process, I am content that I have touched on all of these, and to feel that I have contributed in some way to their understanding.