

TRUST AND DISTRUST IN INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

BY

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis contributes to the extant body of knowledge of trust and distrust offering insights into influencing factors in intra-organisational relationships. Drawing on interviews with 50 participants from top UK and USA consulting companies, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's (1995) trustworthiness dimensions and trustor-associated factors are extended; additional adjuvant trust factors that facilitate and reinforce trust development are identified. These findings also advance understanding of trust by distinguishing between person- and task-focused natures of trust. Factors influencing distrust are found to be associated with the distruster, distrustee's distrustworthiness and adjuvant distrust factors which moderate the distrust development. Questions surrounding the relationship between trust and distrust are raised and considered, revealing trust and distrust as separate but highly associated constructs.

Highlighting culture as one of the factors influencing trust and distrust, the thesis also explores these relationships. Following a systematic review, insights gained from empirical research are offered. Building on Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural mosaic, a dynamic conceptualisation and operationalisation of culture is discussed, emphasising particularly the importance of additional associative cultural tiles within the global and diverse organisational contexts. The implications of the findings for future research and practice are discussed.

*I dedicate this thesis to the most important people in my life: my dearest husband Metin and my perfect son Alp. I could not have done this without you, your support and love. Love you my boys!*

*I also dedicate this thesis to my dearest mum Beyhan Gunes whom I recently tragically lost. I would not be who I am today without her. Love you mum. Always will!*

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*Neve Isaeva (Nurgen Celilbatur)*

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ABI – Trustworthiness dimensions: Ability, Benevolence, Integrity

CBT – Calculus-based trust

CIT – Critical Incident Technique

CQ – Cultural Intelligence

IBT – Identification-based trust

KBT – Knowledge-based trust

RQ – Research Question

SR – Systematic Review

# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction and background information

The aim of this thesis is to empirically examine the factors influencing trust and distrust in intra-organisational relationships thereby offering insight into what trust or distrust is, to question the relationship between trust and distrust, and to explore the association of trust and distrust with culture. Within this thesis ‘trust’ and ‘distrust’ specifically refer to trust and distrust within intra-organisational relationships such as between colleagues or superiors and subordinates, and consequently are approached at an interpersonal level.

In recent years, interest in trust has dramatically increased (Bachmann and Zaheer, 2013; Lyon, Möllering, and Saunders, 2015; Möllering, Bachmann, and Hee Lee, 2004). The high level of interest in trust from academics and practitioners is based on the accumulating evidence of its potential benefits (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Kramer and Cook, 2004). Researchers increasingly emphasise the strategic role trust plays in organisations such as increasing competitiveness (Lewicki, McAllister, and Bies, 1998; Möllering et al., 2004), competitive advantage (Barney and Hansen, 1994), performance (Colquitt, Scott, and LePine, 2007; Dirks, 1999; Zak, 2017b), motivation (Heavey, Halliday, Gilbert, and Murphy, 2011; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), efficiency (Shapiro et al., 1992), collaboration (Lewicki et al., 1998), cooperative behaviour (Kramer, 2001), and organisational commitment (Brockner et al., 1997; Colquitt et al., 2007).

Although trust research has become a relatively established and well-advanced within certain areas, there are still unresolved problems (Bachmann, 2015). Trust research has focused on reporting its benefits or consequences for organisations and so the knowledge on what trust does is more developed than what trust is (Castaldo, Premazzi, and Zerbini, 2010). This, however, is not acceptable, especially for something argued to be a strategic asset for

organisations (Castaldo et al., 2010) and acknowledged as a vital element in well-functioning organisations (Dietz and Gillespie, 2011; Kramer and Cook, 2004; Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). Accordingly, researchers (e.g. Castaldo et al., 2010; Dietz, 2011) have emphasised the need for further research into what trust comprises and what causes it. Knowledge on what causes it is also referred differently in the literature as antecedents, determinants, factors, or trust dimensions, but factors in this thesis, is highly fragmented (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011). The focus, however, is mainly directed towards investigating the trustworthiness factors (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; Mishra, 1996; Wasti, Tan, and Erdil, 2011). This thesis therefore contributes to research on trust by elaborating on the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships and shedding light on the constituent elements of trust. The identification of the factors influencing trust is then interpreted to demonstrate the trust development process in intra-organisational relationships. As such, I formulated the first research question as follows:

*Research Question 1 (RQ1) – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships?*

Within this thesis, distrust receives a special consideration. The investigation of the factors influencing trust is further extended to include the investigation of the factors influencing distrust. Studying distrust alongside trust is pertinent as understanding one is not wholly possible without the other, as they work together and the existence of one can prevent the other (Guo, Lumineau, and Lewicki, 2017). They both contribute to reducing the vulnerability and risks associated with organisational complexity and uncertainty, albeit differently (Cho, 2006; Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015; Lewicki et al., 1998; Luhmann, 1979). Trust reduces complexity and uncertainty by removing undesirable conduct from consideration and distrust by allowing one to take precautions, preventive, rational, and defensive action (Cho,

2006; Luhmann, 1979) based on suspicion, monitoring, and safeguarding (Lewis and Weigert, 1985).

In contrast to trust, however, research on distrust is less-advanced. This is mainly due to the long-standing treatment of distrust as the opposite of trust, as a result of which distrust has not received independent attention (Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). The debate pertaining to the nature of the trust and distrust relationship continues. A group of researchers posits trust and distrust at the opposite ends of the same trust continuum (e.g. Bigley and Pearce, 1998; Gambetta, 2000; Hardin, 2001; Schoorman, Mayer, and Davis, 2007). Alternatively, other researchers suggest trust and distrust to be separate constructs (e.g. McKnight and Choudhury, 2006; Saunders, Dietz, and Thornhill, 2014; Seppänen and Blomqvist, 2006).

Consequently, in recent years, the accumulating body of theoretical and empirical evidence pointing out trust and distrust as distinct constructs has led to a surge in scholarly interest in distrust (Guo et al., 2015; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015). However, despite the increase, research on distrust is still comparatively limited and, like trust research, is mainly focused on reporting the consequences, identifying a wide variety of its ill effects for organisations (Bijlsma-Frankema, Sitkin, and Weibel, 2015). Therefore, the investigation of the factors influencing distrust contributes to the literature on distrust not only by providing insight into such factors and the constituent elements of distrust, but also by offering a way to investigate the relationship between trust and distrust. As such, this thesis also responds to the calls (e.g. Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki et al., 1998; Moody, Galletta, and Lowry, 2014; Saunders et al., 2014) for exploring the factors influencing trust and distrust (the antecedent factors) and the relationship between them. As such, the new two research questions are as follows:

*Research Question 2 (RQ2) – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships?*

*Research Question (RQ3) – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related?*

In addition to the investigation of the factors influencing trust and distrust and the nature of their relationship, this thesis also explores their association with culture. This research was instigated after discovering ‘Cultural congruence’ (cultural similarity) as one of the factors influencing trust development, which was also emerged in the subsequent Systematic Review (SR) undertaken. I found carrying out this additional research to be a very apt decision considering the fact that the importance of the relationship between culture and trust (Saunders et al., 2010; Lyon et al., 2015) and distrust (Lewicki, Tomlinson, and Gillespie, 2006) is increasingly recognised as central to trust and distrust research. Culture is said to guide and shape individual behaviour (Smircich, 1983) in organisations and therefore to affect the understanding and expectations of trust and trustworthy behaviour (Dietz, Gillespie, and Chao, 2010). Saunders, Skinner, and Lewicki (2010) and Lyon et al., (2015) both identify culture as an emerging focus for future trust research. Understanding culture has become especially important in recent years as mobility of people across national and organisations borders is increasing (Chao, 2000; Gelfand, Aycan, Erez, and Leung, 2017). Establishing and maintaining trust in cross-cultural relations is becoming more challenging as people from different cultures, especially across national borders, bring ‘alien values and beliefs, peculiar behaviours, and even incomprehensible assumptions’ into the relationship (Dietz et al., 2010, p. 5).

In recent decades, organisational behaviour research has experienced a dramatic increase of interest (Gelfand et al., 2017). That is not surprising considering understanding cultural differences has been perceived as one of the critical success factors for organisations (Alvesson, 2013; Brown, 1992; House et al., 2004; Schneider and Barsoux, 2003). Gelfand et al. (2017) outline the growing need for understanding the cultural similarities and differences in the increasingly changing globalised and interdependent world. Therefore, this thesis further

explores the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust. At this point, it is an exploratory study, constituting a starting point for developing an understanding of culture and trust and distrust relationship. As such, the fourth research question and associated two sub-questions are as follows:

*Research Question 4a (RQ4a) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships?*

*Research Question 4b (RQ4b) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships?*

## **1.2 Research questions**

In the previous section, I revealed the research questions that underpin this thesis. I defined four research questions. The first three research questions mainly investigate the factors influencing trust and distrust and the natures of their relationship:

Research Question 1 (RQ1) – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships?

Research Question 2 (RQ2) – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships?

Research Question (RQ3) – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related?

The fourth research question comprised two sub-questions, exploring the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust:

Research Question 4a (RQ4a) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships?

Research Question 4b (RQ4b) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships?

These questions, constituting the fundamental core of this thesis, guide every decision made pertaining to the research design and consequently the contributions made. In the next section I discuss the actions taken to address these research questions and expand on the structure of this thesis.

### **1.3 Overview of the thesis structure and chapter summaries**

Following the current chapter (Chapter 1), in the next two chapters I offer literature reviews of trust and distrust (Chapter 2) and culture (Chapter 3). Subsequently after these reviews, Chapter 4 encompasses an SR on the relationship between trust and distrust and national culture. The literature reviews are followed by the Methodology chapter (Chapter 5) where the methodological choices made and methods used in addressing the research questions are discussed. The subsequent three chapters comprise the empirical analyses of the factors influencing trust – RQ1 (Chapter 6), factors influencing distrust – RQ2 (Chapter 7), and the relationship between trust and distrust – RQ3 (Chapter 8). These empirical analyses chapters are immediately followed by the Discussion chapter on trust and distrust (Chapter 9), bringing together the findings presented in the previous three chapters. Next, I move to the culture-associated areas, first presenting the empirical analysis exploring the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust – RQ4 (Chapter 10) and then reporting the findings on the culture and trust and distrust relationship in the subsequent Discussion chapter (Chapter 11). In the last chapter (Chapter 12) I conclude my thesis, elaborating on the theoretical and conceptual, methodological, and practical implications of the research undertaken, revealing the limitations, and offering future research suggestions. In the

remainder of this section I shortly summarise each chapter in order to offer insight into the overall structure of the thesis:

*Chapter 2* presents a literature review of trust and distrust. The chapter outlines the diversity of definitions of trust, partly due to its transcending different disciplinary boundaries (e.g. psychology, sociology, management, economics, and political science) and diverse intra-disciplinary theoretical and epistemological orientations and research interests. Building on the analysis of widely used definitions of trust and taking into consideration the findings of recent review articles on the matter, the chapter discusses the common themes associated with trust such as the notion of willingness to be vulnerable and positive expectations where uncertainty, risk, and/or possibility of betrayal exist.

Drawing from the literature reviewed which highlights the fragmented and limited knowledge on what trust comprises, this thesis investigates the factors influencing trust, more specifically addressing the research question ‘What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships’ – (RQ1), and consequently advances knowledge on the constituent elements of trust.

Secondly, the chapter reviews the literature on distrust, elaborating on the research outlining its relationship to trust. The chapter discusses the two views on the trust and distrust relationship. One group of researchers view distrust as the opposite of trust, placing distrust at the lower end of the trust continuum, and therefore does not give independent attention to distrust. The second group, which gains increasing support in the recent years, conceptualise trust and distrust as separate constructs with each having their own antecedents and consequences. In order to advance knowledge on what distrust comprises, this thesis investigates the factors influencing distrust, more specifically addresses the research question ‘What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships’ – (RQ2) and

consequently advancing knowledge on the constituent elements of distrust. Furthermore, this thesis further contributes to the literature by exploring the relationship between trust and distrust and offering insights into the ongoing debate on this relationship by addressing the research question ‘How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related?’ – (RQ3).

*Chapter 3* offers a literature review on culture with the aim of building a foundation to the upcoming discussions on culture and trust and distrust. The chapter explores the existing definitions of culture. The common themes between these definitions centre around the existence of a shared system, either phrased as patterns, values, beliefs, and behaviours, or experiences, which lead to similar interpretations of meaning. However, the definitions significantly vary depending on their conceptualisation of culture as a static or dynamic phenomenon.

The chapter further discusses the operationalisation of culture, focusing on different levels (e.g. individual, group, organisational, national, regional, global). The micro levels of culture are assumed to be nested in macro levels where each level represents a different unit of analysis and every level is calculated by the aggregation of the lower level. Within this, the individual level constitutes the inner core which is nested in group, organisational, national, regional, and global levels. The chapter highlights the evidence suggesting that the cross-cultural research investigating organisational behaviour such as trust most dominantly uses national level as the cultural proxy where culture is equated to national culture. Therefore, the chapter reviews the current literature on national cultures. However, the chapter also problematises such an approach by elucidating on its limitations.

Lastly, Chao and Moon’s (2005) taxonomy of ‘cultural mosaic’ is discussed which I utilised in order to structure the participants’ conceptualisations of culture. This framework constitutes a good fit because it recognises and embraces the dynamic and complex nature of culture,

recognises the multiplicity of cultural influences, provides an opportunity for multi-level analysis of culture, and offers a more representative context to study and understand the individual behaviour in organisational settings.

*Chapter 4* offers a systematic review of the relationship between national culture and trust and distrust. With the aim of exploring the dominant body of literature and understanding of the mainstream views on and issues related to the relationship between culture and trust and distrust, in this review in parallel with the dominant view in the existing literature, I mainly focused on national culture. This approach then enabled me to problematise this conceptualisation and develop a more nuanced understanding of it.

In order to discover the depth of the national culture and trust/distrust relationship and what aspects of this relationship have been investigated in the literature, I intentionally kept the review question broad-scoped. The most striking finding concerned the lack of explicit research on the distrust and national culture relationship, limiting the discussion to the culture and trust relationship. Building on 48 relevant publications discovered, broadly six different themes were found: (1) definition of trust across cultures; (2) trust and culture relationship in general; (3) trust or trustworthiness factors across cultures; (4) trust across different conceptualisations of culture; (5) impact of cultural congruence on trust; and (6) impact of cultural diversity on trust. The findings were discussed in more detail within this chapter.

The SR identified a wide range of areas where further research is needed. Among these suggestions, I focused on the areas that are relevant to the current research undertaken. Therefore, taking into consideration the fact that ‘Cultural congruence’ was identified as one of the factors influencing trust development in this thesis (Chapter 6), I carried out an exploratory study focusing on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust, addressing the fourth research question (RQ4a – To what extent does perceived

cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships and RQ4b – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships).

*Chapter 5* discusses the methodology. More specifically, this chapter discusses the methodological choices made and the methods used in the thesis. I start discussing my research philosophy, which has implications for the whole research design. Within this I discuss the foundations of the pragmatist philosophy, elaborating on my understanding and interpretation of pragmatist philosophy which builds on the more traditional works such as those by Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead, and also the contemporary interpretations of their works by researchers such as Simpson (2009) and Elkjaer and Simpson (2011). I reflect on the implications of the pragmatist philosophy for the current research undertaken within this thesis.

With the aim of capturing the live experiences of the participants and offering rich and detailed information on their social worlds, qualitative research was conducted. I have undertaken 50 interviews with the participants recruited purposefully from the top UK and US consulting companies. Within the interviews, I specifically used the Critical Incident Technique (CIT). The analysis of data was done abductively, where the inductively coded empirical data was deductively grouped into themes and broader categories drawing from the extant trust literature.

*Chapter 6* is the first analysis chapter which contributes to addressing the first research question (RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships). The chapter firstly covers the participants' understanding and use of trust, emphasising the participants' overwhelming description of trust as something building over time, gradually developing with each positive information gained contributing to the increased levels of trust. The analysis in this chapter identifies two distinct ways in which participants conceptualise

trust, contributes to the extant literature on trust by offering a new understanding to the concept of trust in intra-organisational relationships. The participants conceptualised trust as (1) trusting the trustee to do something where trust is limited to a specific task or work done and consequently is situational (task-focused trust) and (2) trusting the trustee as a person where trust is broader in meaning and scope and also includes more personal aspects or behaviours of the trustee.

Factors influencing trust comprised two broad categories as ‘factors influencing trust’ and ‘factors influencing trust development’ based on whether the factor was associated with trust itself or trust development. Factors influencing trust further had two sub-groups as ‘trustee-associated factors’ (trustworthiness factors), which were further grouped under Mayer et al.’s (1995) Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity (ABI) and thereby extending the knowledge on the constituent elements of ABI, and ‘trustor-associated factors’, based on whether the factor was associated with the trustee or the trustor. In addition to factors influencing trust, the chapter further discusses the factors influencing trust development (adjuvant trust factors), which concerned the interpersonal relationship between the trustee and the trustor. These factors were reported to facilitate and reinforce trust development and to subsequently increase trust levels. This chapter further offers detailed information of these findings.

*Chapter 7* is the second analysis chapter which contributes to addressing the second research question (RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships). The chapter firstly explores the participants’ understanding of distrust, which comprised a similar understanding and a singular use across the participants.

In the analysis two broad categories emerged as ‘factors influencing distrust’ and ‘factors influencing distrust development’ based on whether the factor directly

influenced distrust or was associated with the distrust development. The factors influencing distrust comprised two subgroups as ‘distrustee-associated factors’, which were further grouped under ABI, and distrustor-associated factors, based on whether the factor concerned the distrustor or the distrustee. In addition, four factors emerged that played an adjuvant role, increasing distrust levels and affecting distrust development. This chapter contributes to the literature on distrust, shedding light on what distrust is by expanding the knowledge on the factors influencing distrust and distrust development, where a gap of knowledge exists.

*Chapter 8* explores the relationship between trust and distrust, specifically addressing the third research question (RQ3 – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related). Building on the information gained in the investigation of factors influencing trust (Chapter 6) and distrust (Chapter 7), this chapter contributes to the literature by offering insight into the ongoing debate on whether trust and distrust are separate or opposite constructs.

The findings suggest that trust and distrust are indeed separate constructs, but at the same time they are highly associated ones and therefore should not be treated as wholly independent of each other. This conclusion was reached by the evidence outlining that trust and distrust have different natures; there are factors that are unique to trust or distrust in addition to those which are antithetical or demonstrating absence: and trust and distrust can co-exist. As such, this chapter contributes to clarifying the relationship between trust and distrust and also offers insight into the particulars of the similarities and differences between trust and distrust.

The Discussion chapter, *Chapter 9*, draws together the previous chapters and discusses the findings discovered within them. In this chapter, the knowledge gained on the factors

influencing trust (Chapter 6), the factors influencing distrust (Chapter 7), and the relationship between trust and distrust (Chapter 8) is discussed and interpreted by comparing the findings to the literature.

Until now, the thesis focuses on addressing the three main research questions and therefore mainly explores the issues related to trust and distrust. In the remainder of the thesis, I turn to the issues related to culture and trust and distrust.

*Chapter 10* explores the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust, addressing the fourth research question – ‘to what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships’ (RQ4a) and ‘to what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships’ (RQ4b).

This chapter firstly presents the participants’ conceptualisations of culture which derived from the analysis of the participants’ accounts of their own culture. Although the participants were not guided in any way in terms of the meaning of culture and were asked to reflect on their own understanding of culture, the cultural descriptions comprised multiple cultural elements which accorded well with Chao and Moon’s (2005) taxonomy of cultural mosaic. Therefore, the inductively identified cultural elements (tiles) were grouped under Chao and Moon’s (2005) three categories - demographic, geographic, and associative. Consequently, the findings offer an empirical support to Chao and Moon’s (2005) metatheory, as well as extending the constituent elements of culture.

The chapter further explores the participants’ views who claimed that there is no relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust; cultural similarity facilitates and helps trust development; and cultural differences can lead to distrust.

*Chapter 11* comprises a discussion of the issues raised in the previous chapters on culture. In this chapter, I interpret and reflect on the findings discovered in this thesis (Chapter 10) and discuss their implications, specifically considering the literature reviewed (Chapters 3 and 4).

*Chapter 12* is the conclusion chapter where I reflect on the overall outcomes of the research, considering the theoretical and conceptual, methodological, and practical implications of the findings and their contributions to theory and practice. I identify the limitations of the research and conclude with future research suggestions.

# **CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW OF TRUST AND DISTRUST**

## **2.1 Introduction**

In recent years, interest towards trust has dramatically increased (Bachmann and Zaheer, 2013; Lyon et al., 2015; Möllering et al., 2004), with the construct of trust's (re)appearance in 1990s offering what has been argued to be a popular and promising concept (Möllering, 2001). Accumulating evidence of the benefits of trust, especially in organisational settings, has drawn attention of many organisational behaviourists, management scholars, as well as practitioners (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Kramer and Cook, 2004) and has further fuelled research on trust. Trust is increasingly recognised as a vital element in well-functioning organisations (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000) and is acknowledged as a strategic, relational asset for organisations (Castaldo et al., 2010; Dietz and Gillespie, 2011). In fact, Lyon et al. (2015) describe trust as one of the most fascinating and fundamental social phenomena.

The concept of trust is the concern of a variety of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, management, economics, and political science (Colquitt et al., 2007; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer, 1998). Trust exists in many different contexts pertaining to interpersonal or social relations, as well as business arrangements and economic transactions (Bromiley and Harris, 2006; Lewis and Weigert, 2012). Whilst such multidisciplinary perspectives on trust have contributed to the trust literature (Bigley and Pierce, 1998; Colquitt et al., 2007; Rousseau et al., 1998), they also have created confusion about its definition and conceptualisation (Colquitt et al., 2007; McKnight and Chervany, 2001). The disagreement on the meaning of trust is also caused by the fact that the conceptualisations differ with respect to actors, relationships,

behaviours, and contexts (Castaldo et al., 2010). For conceptual clarity, therefore, it is crucial to explicitly elucidate on the underlying understanding of trust.

With this aim in mind, the present chapter gives a special attention to establishing the understanding of trust that will underpin this thesis. In order to attain such an understanding, this chapter starts with an overview of the disciplinary differences in the conceptualisations of trust, which is followed by a reflection on the definitions of trust in the current literature. Immediately after this, I discuss trust models and factors influencing trust and trustworthiness. In the subsequent section, I discuss distrust, which attracts oppositional views among the trust researchers. This section studies distrust in relation to trust and points out the lack of research on the complex relationship between trust and distrust (Guo et al., 2017). After discussing trust and distrust in general terms, the next section discusses them in organisational settings. The chapter is concluded with a short summary.

## **2.2 The nature of trust: A multidisciplinary construct**

Trust is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon (Blomqvist, 1997; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; Rousseau et al., 1998; Khodyakov, 2007), a dynamic (Möllering, 2013; Rousseau et al., 1998), as well as an elusive construct (Lyon et al., 2015; Kramer and Cook, 2004; Möllering et al., 2004; Welter and Alex, 2015; Williamson, 1993), with many levels and facets (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Rousseau et al., 1998), and meanings (McKnight and Chervany, 2001; Williamson, 1993). The complexity partly derives from the fact that trust is a multidisciplinary concept concerning a variety of disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and economics (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Rousseau et al., 1998). In fact, trust research in the management field is deeply influenced by, and built upon, the understanding of trust in psychology (e.g. Lewicki et al., 2006; Rousseau et al., 1998), economics (e.g. Williamson, 1993), philosophy

(e.g. Baier, 1986; Hosmer, 1995), and sociology (e.g. Blau, 1964; Fox, 1974; Siebert, Martin, Bozic, and Docherty, 2015).

Each of these disciplines differs in its way of conceptualising trust. As a result of particular disciplinary theoretical and epistemological orientations and research interests, researchers from different disciplines apply different approaches to trust research, taking on the distinct disciplinary frames and perspectives on the phenomenon (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). Psychologists, for instance, commonly conceptualise trust based on internal cognition deriving from personal attributes of trustors and trustees (Rousseau et al., 1998). Consequently, psychologists mostly focus on personal traits (Blomqvist, 1997) and consistent, benevolent behaviour (Doney, Cannon, and Mullen, 1998). Economists usually tend to emphasise costs and benefits (Doney et al., 1998) and therefore assess trust based on usefulness or positive outcomes such as increased efficiency (Blomqvist, 1997). They mostly focus on calculative (e.g. Williamson, 1993) or institutional aspects (Rousseau et al., 1998). Alternatively, according to Rousseau et al. (1998), sociologists focus on the socially embedded properties of relationships among people or institutions (e.g. Zucker, 1986). From a sociological perspective, Lewis and Weigert (1985) describe trust as a collective attribute which renders trust to be applicable to the relations among people rather than to their psychological states taken individually. Furthermore, philosophers (e.g. Baier, 1986; Hosmer, 1995) mostly concentrate on ethical and moral aspects of trust (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). In addition to the disciplinary distinctions, there are also intradisciplinary differences in conceptualising trust. For instance, Kramer (1999) draws attention to the different focus points within organisational research, such as focusing on social, moral, and ethical facets of trust or focusing on trust's strategic and calculative dimensions.

The disciplinary differences concerning the research undertaken in trust can be broadly summarised in two groups: (1) psychologists' view of trust (a) focusing on individual personality differences and conceptualising trust as a belief, expectancy, or feeling that is deeply rooted in the personality, mostly originating from an individual's early psychosocial development and (b) social psychologists' view of trust as an expectation of another party in a transaction; and (2) sociologists' and economists' view of trust as an institutional phenomenon (Lewicki et al., 2006; Lewicki and Bunker, 1995; Worchel, 1979).

Despite the disciplinary differences, studying and fully understanding trust cannot be achieved by isolating its study into specific domains and empirical methodologies of certain social science disciplines (Lewis and Weigert, 1985). Rousseau et al. (1998) explain the interdisciplinary connections of trust by relating it at once to dispositions, decisions, behaviours, social networks, and institutions. Möllering (2001) also points out that trust exists in every level of society, and thereby at once encompassing various disciplinary boundaries. Consequently, it concerns different disciplines at the same time.

Despite the multiplicity of the views on trust, within intra-organisational trust literature, Siebert et al. (2015) highlight the fact that many trust studies seem to take what Fox (1974) would refer to as a unitarist frame of reference, assuming unity of purpose, ignoring conflict and emphasising actions that can be taken to create consensus around common goals. However, the same authors note that while unitarism might be still evident in certain sectors or cultures, more pluralist considerations would better reflect the nature of modern employee relations. Acknowledging the plurality of views on trust in overall, throughout this thesis, I adopt theoretically and epistemologically a more open, integrative, and pluralist (Isaeva, Bachmann, Bristow, and Saunders, 2015; Siebert, Martin, and Bozic, 2016) approach to trust.

### **2.3 Definitions of trust**

Castaldo et al. (2010) claim that the knowledge on what trust does is better developed than what trust is. Although there is a fair amount of agreement on some aspects of trust, a universally accepted definition does not exist (Li, 2007; Kramer, 1999). Different meanings of trust are mostly due to the different worldviews, partly as a result of different disciplinary domains (Castaldo et al., 2010; McKnight and Chervany, 2001) and due to the nature of trust which encompasses a variety of different everyday usages (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). To illustrate, McKnight and Chervany (2001) point out that trust is defined as both a noun and a verb, as both a personality trait and belief, and as both a social structure and a behavioural intention.

Some scholars claim that multiple conceptualisations of trust might cause confusion, misunderstandings, and communication breakdowns among researchers (Khodyakov, 2007; McKnight and Chervany, 2001). Alternatively, other scholars draw attention to the fact that reaching to a single definition is ‘a futile quest’ (Fink, Harms, and Möllering, 2010, p.102) and a probably unproductive endeavour as the field is fragmented in its problems and approaches (Bigley and Pearce 1998). Furthermore, a single conceptualisation of trust ‘may have difficulty attaining a sufficient level of theoretical and empirical viability for research purposes’ as differences in conceptualisation of trust (e.g. trust as a personality construct, a rational choice, a construct concerning an interpersonal relationship or a social structure) are not trivial but quite significant (Bigley and Pearce 1998, p. 408). In addition, trust is a context-specific construct (Bachmann, 2010; Blomqvist, 1997; Fink et al., 2010; Saunders et al., 2010) therefore universally non-definable. Besides, the reality of trust changes depending on the time or place, making a shared common definition almost impossible (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy, 2000). Alternatively, Fink et al. (2010) claim that extant conceptual variety might contribute to a better

understanding of the phenomenon. Similarly, Bigley and Pierce (1998) suggest utilising rather than eliminating the conceptual variety in order to initiate a more reasoned debate on trust-related issues in organisational science.

Lyon et al. (2015) encourage researchers not to stop trying to conceptualise trust just because of the challenges in defining it. In order to gain insights into the nature of trusting relationships, as well to make progress in trust research, there is a strong need for conceptual clarifications (Luhmann, 2000; McKnight and Chervany, 2001). Besides, a definition sheds light on the researcher's understanding of the matter studied, as well as what is studied and how it is studied (Siebert et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is also important to clarify the intended meaning of trust because the construct of trust is used to refer to different concepts and types of trust (Castaldo, 2002). As such, conceptual clarity also contributes to determining what theoretical conclusions can be drawn from a particular research piece. With this aim in mind, the remainder of this section scrutinises the literature on the conceptualisations of trust.

Some researchers attempted to define trust in terms of its types or bases (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). Consequently, the literature consists of different types or bases of trust such as 'interaction-based trust' and 'institutional-based trust' (Bachmann and Inkpen, 2011); 'contract trust', 'competence trust', and 'goodwill trust' (Sako, 1992); 'calculus-based', 'knowledge-based', and 'identification-based trust' (Lewicki and Bunker, 1995); 'cognition-based trust' and 'affect-based trust' (McAllister, 1995); or in organisational settings 'category-based trust', 'role-based trust' and 'rule-based trust' (Kramer, 1999). Although these typologies improve our understanding of trust, they do not address the issue of providing conceptual clarity as they do not directly provide a meaning for trust (McKnight and Chervany, 2001). Therefore, I undertook a further examination of the definitions of trust currently in use. Firstly, I determined the common themes among these definitions of trust (see Table 2.1) and also

consulted five different review articles on the definitions of trust authored by Fulmer and Gelfand (2012), Fink et al. (2010), Castaldo et al. (2010), Colquitt et al. (2007), and McKnight and Chervany (2001). Whilst reviewing the common definitions of trust, I adopted an integrative approach and therefore included definitions from various disciplines in order to better comprehend the meaning of trust and evaluate it from different lenses.

Table 2.1 – Widely used definitions of trust

Definition of Trust	Common Themes
<p>An individual may be said to have trust in the occurrence of an event if he expects its worse off if one's hope is unfulfilled unless one has trusted one's hope sufficiently to invest in its fulfilment.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Deutsch, 1958, p. 266</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>
<p>An expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal, or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Rotter (1967, p. 651)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectancy</li> <li>• Reliability</li> <li>• Integrity</li> </ul>
<p>Trusting behavior.. is .. consisting of actions that (a) increase one's vulnerability, (b) to another whose behavior is not under one's control, (c) in a situation in which the penalty (disutility) one suffers if the other abuses that vulnerability is greater than the benefit (utility) one gains if the other does not abuse that vulnerability.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Zand (1972, p. 230)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Risk</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> </ul>
<p>An expectancy held by an individual that the behavior of another person or a group would be altruistic and personally beneficial.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Frost, Stimpson, and Maughan (1978, p. 103)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectancy</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> <li>• Beneficial</li> </ul>
<p>Accepted vulnerability to another's possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Baier (1986, p. 236)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> </ul>
<p>Trust is a type of expectation that alleviates the fear that one's exchange partner will act opportunistically.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Bradach and Eccles (1989, p. 104)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectancy</li> <li>• Integrity</li> <li>• Risk</li> </ul>
<p>The expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behaviour, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Fukuyama (1995, p. 26)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectation</li> <li>• Honesty</li> <li>• Cooperative behaviour</li> <li>• Shared norms</li> </ul>
<p>The expectation by one person, group, or firm of ethically justifiable behaviour-that is, morally correct decisions and actions based upon ethical principles of analysis-on the part of the other person, group, or firm in a joint endeavour or economic exchange.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Hosmer (1995, p. 399)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectation</li> <li>• Morality, ethics</li> <li>• Economic exchange</li> </ul>
<p>Perceived likelihood of the other not behaving in a self-interested manner.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Madhok (1995, p. 120)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity</li> </ul>
<p>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 party.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Mayer et al. (1995, p. 712)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Expectation</li> <li>• No control</li> </ul>

Table 2.1 continued – Widely used definitions of trust

Definition of Trust	Common Concepts
<p>One's expectations, assumptions, or beliefs about the likelihood that another's future actions will be beneficial, favorable, or at least not detrimental to one's interests. <i>Robinson (1996, p. 576)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations, assumptions, beliefs</li> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>
<p>Trust is one party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the belief that the latter party is 1) competent, 2) open, 3) concerned, and 4) reliable. <i>Mishra (1996, p. 265)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Competency</li> <li>• Reliability</li> <li>• Openness</li> <li>• Concern</li> </ul>
<p>An actor's expectation of the other party's competence and goodwill <i>Blomqvist (1997, p. 282)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectation</li> <li>• Competence</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> </ul>
<p>A psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another. <i>Rousseau et al. (1998, p. 395)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A psychological state</li> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>
<p>A willingness to rely on another party and to take action in circumstances where such action makes one vulnerable to the other party. <i>Doney et al. (1998, p. 604)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> </ul>
<p>Positive expectations regarding another's conduct. <i>Lewicki et al. (1998, p. 439)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>
<p>One party's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is (a) benevolent, (b) reliable, (c) competent, (d) honest, and (e) open. <i>Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000, p. 556)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Benevolence</li> <li>• Reliability</li> <li>• Competence</li> <li>• Openness</li> </ul>
<p>Trust (or, symmetrically, distrust) is a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both before he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) and in a context in which it affects his own action. <i>Gambetta (2000, p. 218)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subjective probability</li> <li>• No control</li> </ul>
<p>A process of building on available good reasons and suspending irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty <i>as if</i> they were favourably resolved. <i>Möllering (2005, p. 33)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process</li> <li>• Good reasons</li> <li>• Suspension</li> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Uncertainty</li> </ul>
<p>Psychological willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party (individual or organisation) based on positive expectations regarding the other party's motivation and/or behaviour. <i>Pirson and Malhotra (2011, p. 1088)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological state</li> <li>• Willingness to be vulnerable</li> <li>• Positive expectations</li> </ul>

As it can be seen from Table 2.1 and also as emphasised in the review articles, trust is defined in various ways. Trust has been conceptualised as a willingness, an expectation, a belief, confidence, an attitude, a feeling, an intention, and a psychological state. However, although a single definition of trust does not exist, there is a fundamental agreement on the meaning of trust (Rousseau et al., 1998). There are mainly two key critical components of trust: positive expectations and willingness to accept vulnerability (Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Siebert et al., 2015). It is also agreed that trust encompasses uncertainty regarding other party's motives, intentions, and actions (Kramer, 2001), which create a certain amount of vulnerability. As Wheeler (2018) emphasises betrayal is a possibility and therefore trust requires 'the expectation of no harm' (Wheeler, 2018, p. 2; Wheeler, 2013, p.3). Therefore, for the act of trust to take place, the trustor needs to be willing to accept vulnerability and to take risks. Doney et al. (1998) emphasise risk as a precondition for trust. In other words, they claim that for the development of trust, the trustor needs to have enough confidence in the trustee's motives and future behaviour to take the potential risk. The notion of risk is especially prevalent in the discipline of economics. Williamson (1993), for instance, emphasises the interchangeable use of the terms trust and risk within the transaction costs economics schema.

My understanding of trust builds on the consideration of the critical components of trust such as positive expectations, vulnerability, uncertainty, risk, and avoidance of harm. My approach to trust is built on the acceptance that trust is more than a rational decision, but nevertheless comprises calculation to a certain extent. Consequently, I embrace the complexity surrounding trust decisions and therefore adhere to the belief that trust stems from both cognitive, calculative interpretations and/or affective, emotional bases. As Möllering (2001) posits whether the bases to trust are more calculative or more intuitive, more abstract or more idiosyncratic, 'good reasons' to trust can be cognitive or emotional. As such, 'good reasons', as Möllering (2005) puts it, encompass the notions of both 'mix of feeling' and 'rational

thinking' (Lewis and Weigert, 1985, p. 972). As such, trust can be defined as a reflexive process comprising of complex feedback loops among cognitional and emotional judgements (Lewis and Weigert, 2012; Lewis and Weigert, 1985; McAllister 1995; Möllering, 2005, 2006).

Within the trust process view, it is assumed that the trustor has a set of subjective, aggregated, and confident beliefs about the actions of the trustee and expectations of positive outcomes (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). These beliefs are generated on the basis of 'good reasons' and previous experience. The good reasons are deeply affected by the trustor's assessment of the trustee's trustworthiness and their propensity to trust. Trusting involves the trustor's accepting to be vulnerable and to take the risk that the trustee will behave in a predictable way in the future (Wheeler, 2018). Despite the multiple references made to 'good reasons' in the process of explaining trust so far, what these good reasons really constitute is not clearly articulated in the literature, but nevertheless is essential to understand trust. I return back to this issue in Section 2.6.

Although in this section I endeavoured to explain my understanding of trust in order to be clear about my standpoint as a researcher, I have not shared this understanding with the participants. Rather, I kept an open-mind about the possibly different understandings of trust among the participants. In Chapter 6, I discuss the participants' understanding of trust and building on this, in Chapter 9, I offer a definition of trust that reflects the participants' conceptualisation of trust. Now, I continue my discussion with a review of the trust models.

## **2.4 Trust models**

Trust models mostly build on the notion that after an assessment of the trustee's trustworthiness, the trustor trusts the trustee, in the process of which makes herself/himself vulnerable. In their integrative model of organisational trust, Mayer et al. (1995) base the decision to trust to the trustor's propensity to trust and her/his assessment of the trustee's

ability, benevolence, and integrity. This model offers insight into the dyadic trust (trust between co-workers, superiors and subordinates) development in organisational settings. Mayer et al. (1995) differentiate between trust and factors contributing to it (which are discussed further in the subsequent section) and also between trust and the commencing risk-taking in the relationship.

Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, and Werner (1998) takes a more focused approach, emphasising the managers' roles in initiating trusting relationships, which are rewarded with reciprocation from the employees. Therefore, the aim is achieving managerial trustworthiness behaviour which, according to the authors, is influenced by organisational (e.g. organisational structure, HR policies and procedures, organisational culture), relational (e.g. initial interactions, expectations, cost of exchange), and individual (e.g. propensity to trust, self-efficacy, values) factors. In this model, the managerial trustworthy behaviour depends on managers' behaviours such as behavioural consistency, behavioural integrity, sharing and delegation of control, communication, and demonstration of concern.

It is important to note that foundationally Whitener et al.'s (1998) model (similar to many others) builds on the social exchange theory. Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) encompasses the notion of one party's aiding or assisting another whom feels obligated to return the favour. With regards to trust development, this involves the reciprocation of trust and also gradually increase of trust levels as each exchange is expected to possess a higher-value exchanges (Blau, 1964; Whitener et al., 1998). Reciprocity is also emphasised by other trust researchers (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007; Wasti et al., 2011) who emphasise that one party's trust would influence the other party's trusting them in return. However, the concept of reciprocity is not very widely utilised in trust models.

Trust models often assume a developmental nature of trust. One of the early works on trust development in a business context was undertaken by Shapiro, Sheppard, and Cheraskin (1992), emphasising three types of trust: deterrence-based trust, knowledge-based trust, and identification-based trust. This work was further developed by Lewicki and Bunker (1995, 1996) who emphasise three bases of trust: calculus-based trust (CBT), knowledge-based trust (KBT), and identification-based trust (IBT).

CBT builds on a transactional approach, focusing on the transactions between parties, where the trustor rationally assesses the benefits and cost of staying in the trusting relationship against breaking it by considering the associated risks. Whilst the relationship between the parties can stay as CBT, it might also evolve into KBT as more information is gained about the trustee. When the trustee is consistent with the trustor's predictions and assessments of the trustee, trust will evolve into KBT. Within this the trustor feels confident on the knowledge gained about the trustee and suspicion gives way to more positive expectations. When the relationship develops into a more deeper nature where the parties show affection and understand each other, and subsequently the parties begin to identify with each other, assuming common identities and purposes, IBT develops. These types of trust are linked together, and trust development occurs sequentially, but not always linearly, through these three stages and not always trust develops into KBT or IBT (Lewicki, 2011).

Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) suggest that 'real trust' begins with KBT, with the possibility of more powerful degrees of trust development. Rousseau et al. (1998) describe the deeper levels of trust as relation-based trust which draws on the quality of the relationship development over time. In their depiction of the continuum of degrees of intra-organisational trust, Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) situate CBT on low trust; KBT on confident trust; relation-based trust on high/strong trust; and IBT on complete trust.

Trust referring to either IBT or relation-based trust comprises more affective components of trust, whereas CBT, and to certain extent KBT, are more associated with the cognitive elements of trust (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Rousseau et al., 1998; Williams, 2001). The understanding of affect- and cognitive-bases of trust goes back to earlier research undertaken by researchers such as Lewis and Weigert (1985) and McAllister (1995). According to McAllister (1995) cognitive-based trust is linked to rational trust decisions as a result of processing available information and affect-based trust is built on emotional bonds. Affect-based trust, however, requires a minimum level of cognitive-based trust and develops as the relationship evolves.

Alternatively, Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) offer a process view of trust, expanding the conceptualisation of trust as a process (Khodyakov, 2007; Möllering, 2005, 2013). Within this, various inputs, such as trustor's pre-disposition to trust, trustee's character, motives, abilities and behaviours, quality and nature of trustee-trustor relationship, situational/organisational/institutional constraints, and domain specific concerns, are considered in forming the trusting belief. Such beliefs elicit trust decisions based on one's willingness to render themselves vulnerable. Finally, trust decisions are enacted with the risk-taking behaviour.

In contrast to the transition from beliefs to behaviours and actions, in the literature conceptualisation of trust development most commonly comprises two different traditions of research as behavioural tradition of trust (e.g. rational choice behaviour) and psychological tradition of trust (e.g. reflection into intrapersonal states, cognitive and affective bases of trust) (Kramer, 1999; Lewicki et al., 2006). The latter opens the possibility to trust development in addition to, and sometimes in spite of, rationality (Lewicki et al., 2006).

Lewicki et al.'s (2006) review highlights that much research draws on the notion that trust builds gradually over time where trusting choices comprise scrutinising each information to ensure the right decision is given or to withdraw it if it is misplaced. They also highlight a few works on initial trust development between parties where trust, in contrast to incremental development, is built quickly. According to McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany (1998), high levels of initial trust depends on the trustor's disposition to trust, cognitive processes which allow fast processing of initial information to facilitate quick initial judgements, and institutional-based structures which reinforce trust and ensure a safe environment for trusting. According to McKnight et al. (1998) these factors, alongside with the contextual elements, influence trust beliefs which lead to trust intentions. Initial trust development is especially important in temporary groups. Such trust is referred to as 'swift trust' by Meyerson, Weick, and Kramer (1996). For developing such trust, the focus is on the tasks and on forming trust swiftly for the duration of the project undertaken.

Within the models discussed so far, the common assumption is that ability and integrity, also referred to as cognitive-bases, precede benevolence, also referred to as affective-bases. The latter is assumed to gain importance as the relationship develops in time. Yet, there are also studies offering contrary evidence, highlighting benevolence-associated factors' role in the early stages of a relationship (e.g. Jones and George, 1998; Wasti et al., 2011; Williams, 2001). Considering all of these, the developmental models of trust building on calculated bases, such as Lewicki and Bunker's (1996) model described above, appears to be more suitable to the contexts where the relationships among the organisational members take time to build and usually develop from a more commercial, calculative nature. I further elaborate on these factors in the subsequent section.

## **2.5 The factors influencing trust and trustworthiness**

In the literature it is not unusual to observe that the terms trust and trustworthiness are used interchangeably, mostly under the heading of ‘trust’ (Flores and Solomon, 1998; Wheeler, 2018). Despite the possible conflation of the concepts, they are separate (Colquitt et al., 2007) but complementary concepts (Flores and Solomon, 1998). Trust is ‘a complex compilation of judgements by the trustor on different characteristics of the trustee’ (Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006, p. 560), whilst trustworthiness provides merits for trusting (Flores and Solomon, 1998). Characteristics of a trustee, also referred as the trustworthiness dimensions, constitute the antecedents of trust (Mayer et al., 1995; Colquitt et al., 2007). In other words, trustworthiness is a multifaceted construct that captures the character of the trustee (Mayer et al., 1995; Gabarro, 1978; Colquitt et al., 2007). As Flores and Solomon (1998, p. 209) once identified, ‘one trusts someone because she is trustworthy, and one's trustworthiness inspires trust’.

As mentioned earlier, according to Mayer et al.'s (1995) model, trust is influenced by the trustor's propensity and the assessment of the trustee's trustworthiness categorised as ABI – Ability, Benevolence, Integrity. Mayer et al. (1995, p. 717) differentiate between trust and trustworthiness by emphasising that ‘although [the trustworthiness dimensions] are not trust per se, these variables help build the foundation for the development of trust’. These components are viewed as separable ‘sub-domains’ of trust (Mayer et al., 1998; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006).

Because the ABI dimensions are used to categorise the trustee-associated factors identified in this thesis (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 5, section 5.9 for details), it is pertinent to expand the discussion on them. Ability refers to the trustee's characteristics, in terms of skills, knowledge, capabilities, and competence, proving the trustee will be able to fulfil her/his obligations (Mayer et al., 1995; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). Benevolence is the extent to which a trustee

would behave in a beneficial way to the trustor based on benign motives and would show genuine concern towards the trustee’s welfare (Mayer et al., 1995; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). Integrity refers to the trustee’s characteristics such as honesty and fairness and involves the trustee’s adherence to a set of principles that would be acceptable by the trustor (Mayer et al., 1995; Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006). Table 2.2 offers further information about which factors the ABI dimensions encompass. Colquitt et al.’s (2007) findings support the importance of all these three trustworthiness dimensions and show that they have significant, unique relationships with trust.

*Table 2.2 – The trustworthiness dimensions – Mayer, Davis, Schoorman (1995)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Factors</b>
<b>Ability</b>	The trustee’s skills, knowledge, capabilities, and competence that enable her/him to fulfil her/his obligations	Competence Ability
<b>Benevolence</b>	The trustee’s benign motives and genuine concern for the trustor	Loyalty Openness Receptivity Availability Caring
<b>Integrity</b>	The trustee’s adherence to a set of principles that would be acceptable by the trustor	Consistency Discreetness Fairness Integrity Promise fulfilment Reliability Openness Value congruence

*Adopted from Mayer et al. (1995, p. 723)*

Lewis and Weigert (1985, p. 970) base the choice of trust on “good reasons” constituting evidence of trustworthiness’. Colquitt et al. (2007) suggest that ABI provide the ‘good reasons’ to trust and they reflect both cognition- and affect-bases of trust – a cognitive calculation of ability and integrity characteristics and affective acknowledgment of benevolent behaviour.

The terminology used to refer to the ‘good reasons’ varies across studies with the use of terms such as factors, determinants, antecedents, conditions, or dimensions of trust. However, in this thesis, I will be using the term ‘factor’. What these factors are, according to McEvily and

Tortoriello (2011), is a function of the research methodology employed. McEvily and Tortoriello's (2011) review of 207 studies (see Table 2.3) shows the extent of the fragmentation across studies which utilise very diverse factors of trust.

*Table 2.3 – Trust factors*

Factor	Frequency	Factor	Frequency
1 Integrity	19	21 Motives/Intentions	2
2 Ability/Competence	14	22 Avoids taking excessive advantage	1
3 Benevolence	14	23 Calculative	1
4 Affective	12	24 Character	1
5 Cognitive	11	25 Communication	1
6 Trust (verbatim)	9	26 Concern	1
7 Loyalty	7	27 Coordination	1
8 Openness	6	28 Credibility	1
9 Fairness	5	29 Dynamism	1
10 Reliability	4	30 Expertness	1
11 Faith in intentions	4	31 Forbearance	1
12 Predictability	4	32 Goodwill	1
13 Promise/commitment fulfilment	4	33 Habitualisation	1
14 Willingness to risk	4	34 Honesty	1
15 Availability	3	35 Informal agreement	1
16 Consistency	3	36 Influence acceptance	1
17 Discreteness	3	37 Institutionalisation	1
18 Opportunism	3	38 Judgement	1
19 Receptivity	3		
20 Surveillance/monitoring	3		

Note: The frequency column shows the number of the times the factors are operationalised across 207 studies reviewed

Source: McEvily and Tortoriello (2011, p. 34)

In every study, a few of the factors illustrated in Table 2.3 are utilised. Similarly, as discussed in section 4.3, every study reviewed in the SR utilised different sets of trust factors in their research. This warrants the question of whether these studies produce representative findings when focusing on some factors influencing trust whilst ignoring the others that might be similarly important. However, beyond the review articles (e.g. Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Mayer et al., 1995), a comprehensive empirical investigation into identifying a wide range of

factors influencing trust has not been undertaken. These findings further support the need for a systematic investigation of the factors influencing trust.

## **2.6 Distrust**

After discussing the literature on trust, this section offers a review of the distrust literature. In the last two decades scholarly interest towards distrust has dramatically increased (Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015). Yet, the literature on distrust is highly fragmented with various definitions and perspectives (Guo et al., 2017). There is even less conceptual agreement in distrust literature than there is for trust (Saunders et al., 2014). Arguably, the fragmentation partly arises due to the assumptions made about its relationship to trust. Therefore, completely understanding the concept of distrust is not quite possible without studying its link to trust, which consequently influences how research on distrust is undertaken. Therefore, the following discussion of distrust is carried out in respect to its association with trust.

Traditionally, scholars perceived the relationship between trust and distrust to be a mutually exclusive and opposite one (Lewicki et al., 1998), resulting in definitions of distrust with contrary terms to trust (Saunders and Thornhill, 2004). Such an approach creates the expectation that the research on trust is also applicable to distrust after reversing the results. In this scenario, determinants of trust are expected to eliminate the occurrence of distrust (Guo et al., 2017).

Automatically assuming distrust as the opposite of trust partly derives from the negative meaning the prefix 'dis' suggests. Furthermore, in many major dictionaries, distrust is usually defined as the lack of trust (Guo et al., 2017; McKnight and Chervany, 2001). Similarly, in the literature, researchers who see distrust as the opposite of trust conceptualise distrust as the 'antithetical' (Bigley and Pierce, 1998, p. 407) and 'logical opposite' (Gurtman, 1992, p. 991) of trust, or as 'negating of trust' (Ullmann-Margalit, 2004, p. 66). Hardin (2004, p. 8) refers to

distrust as ‘the negative side of the encapsulated-interest theory of trust’. The oppositional view posits trust and distrust at the opposite ends of the same trust continuum (e.g. Bigley and Pearce, 1998; Gambetta, 2000; Hardin, 2004; Schoorman et al., 2007; Schul, Mayo, and Burnstein, 2008; Ullmann-Margalit, 2004; Worchel, 1979).

However, some researchers (e.g. Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015; Lewicki et al., 1998) argue that placing distrust at the opposite end of the trust continuum is an oversimplified view of distrust resulting from an undifferentiated and unspecified standpoint towards the relationships. However, the relationships are multiplex and multi-faceted (Lewicki et al., 1998; Seppänen and Blomqvist, 2006). As such, the unidimensional view, conceptualising trust and distrust at the ends of the same continuum, cannot capture the complexity of the relationships where individuals can trust in some respects but not in others or can trust and distrust the other party at the same time in different facets of their relationships (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015).

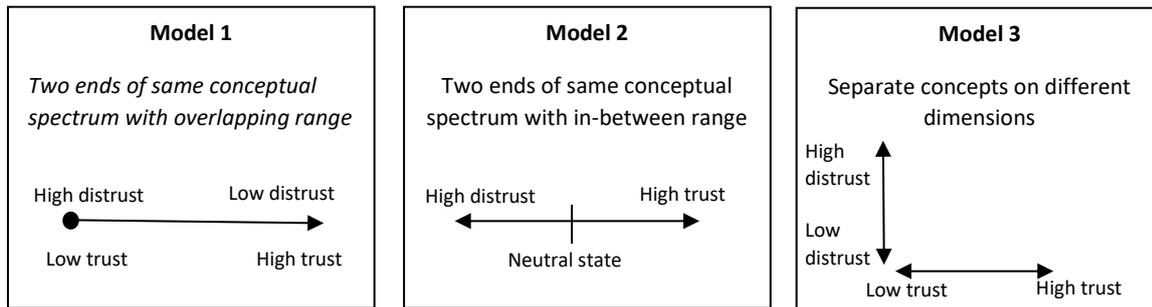
The alternative view on the issue, which has gained more support in the recent years, is that trust and distrust are separate constructs (Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015; Lewicki et al., 1998; McKnight and Chervany, 2001; Saunders et al., 2014; Sitkin and Roth, 1993). One of the preliminary works on that issue, Lewicki et al. (1998, p. 439), for instance, argue that trust and distrust are not ‘opposite ends of a single continuum’ but are separate, distinctive, and simultaneously operating constructs with their own separate antecedents and consequences. This view clearly distinguishes distrust from the notion of absence of trust. Separating the expectations and manifestations of trust and distrust, Lewicki et al. (1998) emphasise that the trusting intentions and expectations are grounded in optimism, hope, faith, confidence, assurance, and positive expectations about the conduct of the other, whilst distrusting intentions and expectations are grounded in fear, scepticism, cynicism, wariness and watchfulness, vigilance, and negative expectations about the behaviours of the other. They

also believe that such emotions can simultaneously exist in a complex, multifaceted relationship.

The issue of coexistence of trust and distrust creates further disagreement among the researchers. Whilst a group of researchers suggests and claims to prove that trust and distrust co-exist (e.g. McKnight, Kacmar, and Choudhury, 2004; Moody et al., 2014; Ou and Sia, 2010), the others believe otherwise, claiming trust and distrust cannot co-exist, or at least that would be rare (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2014; Saunders and Thornhill, 2004; Ullmann-Margalit, 2004). For example, Saunders et al.'s (2014) findings, which support Lewicki et al.'s (1998) proposition that trust and distrust are independent constructs with their own antecedents and consequences, demonstrate that the coexistence of trust and distrust is not as common as Lewicki et al. (1998) expected.

Keyton (2009, p. 7) summarises the scholars' characterisation of the relationship between trust and distrust in six competing theoretical groups where distrust is defined as (a) violations of trust, (b) low levels of trust (c) absence of trust, (d) one end of a continuum with optimal trust as the other anchor, (e) features opposite of trust, and (f) features orthogonal to trust. Guo et al. (2017) summarises the approaches to the relationship between trust and distrust in three models (see Figure 2.1). Models 1 and 3 represent the two opposing views discussed previously. Model 2 represents the view similar to Model 1 where trust and distrust are seen on the opposite ends of the same continuum but with an in-between range where the individuals are neither trusting nor distrusting (e.g. Schul et al., 2008; Ullmann-Margalit, 2004). This state arises when the individuals are not confident with the available information, so they do not completely accept or reject the information. Schul et al. (2008) call that middle stage 'suspicion' whilst Ullmann-Margalit (2004, p. 61) calls it 'trust agnosticism'. Lastly, Model 3 represents the view that conceptualises trust and distrust as separate constructs (also see Saunders and Townhill, 2004).

Figure 2.1 – Models of trust-distrust relationships



Source (Reproduced by permission): Guo et al. (2017, p. 26)

Recently, studies providing empirical support for the distinction between trust and distrust and emphasising them as separate constructs have been increasing (e.g. Cho, 2006; Clark and Payne, 1997; Connelly, Miller, and Devers, 2012; Huang and Dastmalchian, 2006; Keyton, 2009; McKnight and Choudhury, 2006; Ou and Sia, 2010; Saunders et al., 2014; Seppänen and Blomqvist, 2006). Moreover, the number of researchers explicitly discussing or acknowledging the distinctness of the two constructs is increasing (e.g. Chan, 2003; Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015; Vlaar, Van den Bosch, and Volberda, 2007). There are also neuroscientific studies lending further support for a distinction between trust and distrust. For instance, Dimoka's (2010) research studying brain activity via functional neuroimaging tools demonstrates that trust and distrust and factors influencing them are distinct and they both activate different brain areas. Dimoka's (2010) study also demonstrates that trust is associated with the brain's reward, prediction, and uncertainty areas; whereas distrust is associated with the brain's intense emotions and fear of loss areas. This finding also confirms McKnight and Chervany's (2001) assertion that, compared to trust, distrust holds strong emotions, albeit negative ones such as fear, doubt, worry, panic, paranoia, and anger.

To summarise, the literature on the relationship between trust and distrust is highly fragmented. Although there is strong support for the distinction between trust and distrust, the opposing views still continue to exist, especially concerning whether or not trust and distrust can exist

simultaneously. In this thesis I further explore the relationship between trust and distrust in Chapter 8. In addition, the thesis sheds light on the antecedent factors influencing distrust, in other words the constituent elements of distrust (see Chapter 7). With regards to distrust in intra-organisational relationships, there is a few research pieces (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018; Sitkin and Ruth, 1993) suggesting ‘value incongruence’, the incompatibility between the values of a distruster and a distrustee, as a factor causing distrust. Although value incongruence is possibly linked to integrity, it is not sufficiently articulated. Thus, with a comprehensive analysis of the factors influencing distrust, this thesis produces knowledge on an area where it is highly needed.

## **2.7 Trust and distrust in organisational settings**

So far, I discussed trust and distrust in general terms, albeit from the lens of an organisational researcher. This section, however, focuses more specifically on organisational trust and distrust. In recent years, when the consequences of trust are considered, trust research has become relatively established within management studies (Bachmann, 2015) with accumulating empirical evidence demonstrating the benefits of trust, which in turn has further fuelled the research on trust (Kramer and Cook, 2004; Dirks and Ferrin, 2001). For example, trust is reported to have a strategic impact on organisations’ competitiveness due to its role in facilitating competitive requirements of speed and quality, coordinated action in strategic initiatives, and global interactions (Lewicki et al., 1998), reducing the transaction costs (Williamson, 1993; Cummings and Bromiley, 1996; Doney et al., 1998), and generating organisational profit and success (Davis, Schoorman, Mayer, and Tan, 2000), as well as competitive advantage (Barney and Hansen, 1994). Trust is also found to contribute to the competitiveness of an organisation by encouraging openness and reducing social uncertainty and vulnerability (Möllering et al., 2004). Furthermore, a trusting environment is found to

contribute to increased quality of outcomes, greater efficiency, more flexibility, and enhanced strategic focus (Shapiro et al., 1992).

As Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) emphasise, there are three strands of organisational trust in the literature: (1) intra-organisation trust – trust within organisations, between co-workers or superiors and subordinates (e.g. Siebert et al., 2015), (2) inter-organisational trust – trust between organisations (e.g. Bachmann, 2010), and (3) trust between organisations and their customers (e.g. Morgan and Hunt, 1994). This thesis explicitly focuses on intra-organisational trust, as well as distrust. One more thing needs to be emphasised in terms of the focal point of the intra-organisational level. The organisations are multilevel systems and trust or distrust, operates at the individual, group, and organisational levels (Currall and Inkpen, 2002; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012; Pirson and Malhotra, 2011). Trust and distrust studied within this thesis specifically refers to trust and distrust at interpersonal level concerning intra-organisational relationships formed between co-workers or subordinates and their supervisors or leaders. This is exemplified in Figure 2.2, where (\*) demonstrates the focal point of this thesis.

Figure 2.2 – Conceptualising trust in three levels in organisations

		Trustee		
		Person	Group	Organisation
Trustor	Person	Person to person* (interpersonal)	Person to group	Person to organisation
	Group	Group to person	Group to group	Group to organisation
	Organisation	Organisation to person	Organisation to group	Organisation to organisation (inter-organisational)

Adopted from Currall and Inkpen (2002) and Fulmer and Gelfand (2012)

Within intra-organisational level, trust has been studied in various ways. For instance, it was found that trust affects management-subordinate relationships (Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Doney et al., 1998), effective collaborations (Lewicki et al., 1998), cooperative behaviour (Kramer, 2001), and better group performance (Dirks, 1999). It is reported to increase employees' organisational commitment (Brockner et al., 1997), employees' engagement, retention, and alignment to the organisation's purpose (Zak, 2017a), and increased employee motivation (Heavey et al., 2011; Morgan and Hunt, 1994).

This list can be extended further as the literature comprises an extensive amount of research on the consequences of trust. However, the focus is mainly on the positive aspects of trust (Skinner, Dietz, and Weibel, 2014; Gargiulo and Ertug, 2006) or, as McAllister (1997) puts it, in the richness of trust relationships. Hence, the possible limitations of trust and the implications of such limitations for organisations and their members do not receive the same attention. Gargiulo and Ertug (2006) emphasise that the trust literature is biased on reporting

the positive aspects of trust. However, some researchers emphasise that trust is not always advantageous (Lewicki and Brunsfield, 2015) but has its own dark side (Skinner et al., 2014; Gargiulo and Ertug, 2006). Gargiulo and Ertug (2006) report that trust can lead to blind faith which substantially increases the risk of malfeasance; it can lead to complacency and to the acceptance of lower quality outcomes in order to sustain the relationship; and it can lead to over-embedded relationships, complicating the relationships by creating unnecessary obligations. McAllister (1997) adds that trust might lead to lowering one's guard. Further research highlights that excessive reliance on trust might present difficulties to creativity and innovation (Nooteboom, 2002) and limit the idea flow and handicap the radical change process in new business creation (Zahra, Yavuz, and Ucbasaran, 2006). Langferd (2004) further claims that over-trust might also lead to performance loss in a self-managing teams with high levels of autonomy and little monitoring, with the latter resulting from the increased levels of trust.

Despite this possible dark side of trust, trust is commonly considered as an inherently good thing (Skinner et al., 2014). However, whilst traditionally trust has been perceived as something good, positive, and therefore advantageous, distrust, which was considered as something bad, negative, and therefore disadvantageous (Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brunsfield, 2015; Ou and Sia, 2006), was arguably accepted to be the dark side of trust. However, within the conception of trust and distrust as separate constructs, distrust has its own bright and dark side (see Guo et al., 2017 for the details of various studies reporting research findings on the bright and dark sides of distrust). Accordingly, distrust is not always disadvantageous (Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015). In some circumstances, distrust might offer help with avoiding harm (Dimoka, 2010). As Lewicki and Brinsfield (2015) point out, there are times that require being cautious, tentative, and seeking confirmation from the other party.

Distrust, like trust, can reduce complexity and uncertainty, and associated vulnerability and risk (Cho, 2006; Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015; Lewicki et al., 1998; Luhmann, 1979), albeit in a different way. Whilst trusting removes undesirable conduct from consideration, distrusting allows one to take precautions, preventive, rational, and defensive action (Cho, 2006; Luhmann, 1979) based on suspicion, monitoring, and safeguarding (Lewis and Weigert, 1985).

In this thesis, both trust and distrust receive independent attention. Drawing from Castaldo et al.'s (2010) review which outlines the extensive research on the consequences of trust whilst pointing out the lack of knowledge on what trust comprises (antecedent factors) and also considering the extent of the fragmentation on such factors (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011), this thesis investigates the constituent elements of trust by specifically focusing on examining the factors influencing trust. In addition, this thesis also investigates the factors influencing distrust, offering insight into the constituent elements of distrust, an area where a gap of knowledge exists. Accordingly, the first two research questions are formulated as follows:

*RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships?*

*RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships?*

By drawing from the information gained and, as suggested by Lewicki et al. (1998) and Guo et al. (2017), by comparing the constituent elements of trust and distrust identified in first two research questions (RQ1 and RQ2), the thesis further explores the relationship between trust and distrust, offering insight into ongoing debate surrounding this relationship. As such, the third research question is:

## **2.8 Summary**

This chapter offers a review of trust and distrust literature, outlining the increased interest in both subject matters, in trust because of the accumulating evidence outlining the benefits of trust and in distrust because of the recent evidence outlining it as a distinct construct. The chapter also outlines the diversity of the conceptualisations of trust deriving from interdisciplinary (e.g. psychology, sociology, management, economics, and political science) differences and diverse intradisciplinary theoretical and epistemological orientations and research interests. The chapter emphasises the emerging and highly agreed on themes in the trust literature such as positive expectations, vulnerability, uncertainty, risk, and avoidance of harm.

This chapter also highlights that although research on trust is highly established in some areas such as its consequences, it is limited or fragmented in others, such as what trust comprises. As such, by investigating the factors influencing trust, more specifically addressing the research question ‘What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships’ – (RQ1), this thesis advances knowledge on the constituent elements of trust.

The chapter also discusses literature on distrust, outlining the highly limited knowledge on the subject. Research concerning distrust is carried out in two ways: (1) ignoring it as an independent construct, conceptualising it as the opposite of trust, and (2) viewing it as a separate construct. With the latter view gaining more support in the recent years, research on distrust is increasing. However, despite the increase, the current knowledge on distrust continues to be highly limited. In order to advance knowledge on what distrust comprises, I investigate the factors influencing distrust, more specifically address the research question ‘What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships’ – (RQ2). In

addition, this thesis further explores the relationship between trust and distrust, offering insight into the ongoing debate surrounding this relationship by addressing the research question ‘How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related’ – (RQ3).

Having reviewed the literature on trust and distrust, now I commence with the literature review of culture (Chapter 3) in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3 – LITERATURE REVIEW OF CULTURE**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter (Chapter 2) offered a review of trust and distrust literature. This chapter reviews culture literature, constituting the foundation of culture-related matters discussed when exploring the relationship between culture and trust and distrust (Chapters 4 and 10). This investigation was prompted by not only because culture emerged as one of the factors influencing trust development (Chapter 6), but also by the increased recognition of culture and its critical value within organisational science (Gelfand et al., 2017; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012), especially with regards to trust and distrust (Saunders et al., 2010). Before commencing with the research that explores the relationship between culture and trust and distrust, this chapter reviews the current state of knowledge on culture in general.

This chapter starts with a discussion on what culture is, exploring different definitions of culture. The next section discusses the levels of culture, followed by sections exploring different cultural frameworks. The chapter is concluded with a short summary.

### **3.2 Defining culture**

Culture is a complex (Avruch, 1998; Caprar, Devinney, Kirkman, and Caligiuri, 2015; Erez and Gati, 2004; Grossberg, 2013; Taras, Roney, and Steel, 2009), ubiquitous (Grossberg, 2013; Phillips, 2007) concept which is in continual process of change (Phillips, 2007; Williams, 1976). Raymond Williams, once described culture as ‘one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language’, mainly due to its diverse usages in several distinct intellectual disciplines (Williams, 1976, p. 76, cited in Avruch, 1998, p. 6). Williams (1977) even goes further to suggest that the concepts like culture should be treated as problem-like unresolved historical movements, rather than as concepts.

Due to the polysemous (Jahoda, 2012) nature of the term culture, it is claimed that its meaning can only be better recognised in the specified context. Jahoda (2012), who associates the origin of the term culture with agriculture, highlights its many usages describing such as producing or developing something (e.g. the culture of barley, the culture of the arts, culture of bacteria) or sense of refinement of the mind or taste, which also refers to the qualities of an educated person. Therefore, the term culture is usually accompanied with different qualifiers to specify its distinctive usages such as media culture, cyberculture, sport culture, visual culture, and so on (Grossberg, 2013).

The introduction of the notion of culture to social sciences encompasses nineteenth-century usages with very different, mostly antithetical meanings, all of which can be found today (Avruch, 1998). Avruch (1998) summarises the meanings of culture broadly in three groups: (1) Special intellectual or artistic endeavours or products, which in turn mean that only a portion of a population, possibly a small one, has culture. (2) A constantly evolving quality shared by every member of a social group. This understanding of culture reflects most of the contemporary conceptualisations where culture is thought as shared values, norms, and behaviours. Unlike to the former understanding of culture, in this conceptualisation everybody has culture, acquired as a result of being a member in a social group. (3) The third usage of culture emerges as an opposition to the other views that a culture has single universal characteristics. The advocates of this usage of culture stress the plurality of diverse cultures among different people and societies. This understanding of culture is increasingly recognised by researchers who acknowledge the dynamic nature of culture (e.g. Chao and Moon, 2005).

The lack of agreement on a single understanding of culture still exists. In 1984, Roberts and Boyacigiller found the lack of agreement on how to define culture to be the most fundamentally problematic area in cross-cultural studies. More than half a century after Kroeber and

Kluckhohn (1952) had identified 164 definitions of culture, Jahoda (2012), in his review of recent definitions of culture, found that not much has changed. In fact, he realised that the most striking feature of the definitions of culture is their diversity, many of which, he claims to be logically incompatible with each other. For instance, Jahoda (2012) finds the supposed location of culture to vary significantly with definitions placing it within the mind, both in the mind and in the material world, or external but not specified where. In a different perspective, Alvesson (2013) attributes the location of culture to be not primarily in people's mind but somewhere between the minds of a group of people. Furthermore, Jahoda (2012) found that culture is treated as a 'variable' by tough-minded advocates of measurement, whilst others maintain the idea that such a position entails a misconception of what constitutes culture.

Alternatively, Tayeb (1994) questions the obsession with defining culture. She believes that such an approach is the result of cross-cultural researchers', majority of who, according to her, are trained in Anglo-American tradition, perception of culture as something universal, thereby definable in universal terms. Consequently, she argues that such an approach overlooks the possibility of the term 'culture' to be understood or defined differently in other cultures. She believes that the problem of the conceptualisation of culture cannot be solved through a tighter definition because 'the idea is tied to a particular context' (Tayeb, 1994, p. 431). Jahoda (2012) also agrees on the fact that reaching to a generally agreed definition of culture is not possible. However, defining, or attempting to define, culture cannot be entirely avoided as a researcher's explicitly elucidating her/his understanding of culture is important to clarify what theoretical conclusions can be drawn from her/his research piece (Martin, 2002). In order to understand the current state of knowledge on the definitions of culture, I undertook a conceptual work on these definitions, exploring the key definitions (see Table 3.1) and subsequently reflecting on the common themes among them.

Table 3.1 – Some definitions of culture

Definition of Culture	Common Concepts
<p>Culture ... is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. <i>Tylor (1871) cited in Avruch (1998, p. 6)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex</li> <li>• Knowledge, beliefs,... habits</li> <li>• Member of society</li> </ul>
<p>Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning. <i>Geertz (1973), p. 5)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Man made</li> <li>• Interpreting meaning</li> </ul>
<p>Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action. <i>Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952, p. 181)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patterns</li> <li>• Behaviour (acquired, transmitted)</li> <li>• Groups</li> <li>• Traditional</li> <li>• Values</li> <li>• Action</li> </ul>
<p>Culture consists of the derivatives of experience, more or less organized, learned or created by the individuals of a population, including those images or encodements and their interpretations (meanings) transmitted from past generations, from contemporaries, or formed by individuals themselves. <i>Schwartz (1992, p. 324)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• (learned, created)</li> <li>• Interpretation of meanings (transmitted, constructed, formed)</li> </ul>
<p>Culture is a fuzzy set of attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, and basic assumptions and values that are shared by a group of people, and that influence each member's behaviour and each member's interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour. <i>Spencer-Oatey (2000, p. 4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attitudes, beliefs, behavioural conventions, basic assumptions, values,</li> <li>• Interpretation of meanings</li> <li>• Shared</li> <li>• Group of members</li> </ul>
<p>Shared motives, values, beliefs, identities, and interpretations of meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives that are transmitted across generations <i>The GLOBE Study, House and Javidan, (2004, p. 15)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared (beliefs, identities, interpretation of meaning)</li> <li>• Collectives</li> <li>• Transmitted</li> </ul>
<p>A pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. <i>Schein (2006, p.17)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A pattern of shared assumptions</li> <li>• A group</li> <li>• Learned</li> <li>• Taught to new members</li> </ul>
<p>A unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, coordinate socially to achieve a viable existence, transmit social behavior, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life. <i>Matsomato (2007, p. 1293)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A unique meaning and information system</li> <li>• Shared</li> <li>• Group</li> <li>• Transmit behaviour</li> <li>• Driving meaning</li> </ul>
<p>The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others. <i>Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010, Chapter 1, Section 2, para 6)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective</li> <li>• Programming of the mind</li> <li>• Distinguishing</li> <li>• Group</li> </ul>

As seen in Table 3.1, as well as in most of the definitions in the literature, culture is defined in a variety of ways. Yet, there are some commonalities among these definitions, for example, the existence of a shared system, either phrased as patterns, values, beliefs, and behaviours, or experiences. Culture is commonly perceived to be shared by the members of a group or some form of population and hence to affect group members' interpretation of the meaning and their behaviour, as well as the members' interpretation of the others. In fact, Smith (1992) finds culture members' sharing the interpretation of the meanings as the most crucial aspect of a contemporary culture. Definitions also highlight that culture is learned, transmitted, and also newly constructed.

The main difference among the definitions derives from the underlying assumptions in regard to the nature of culture. The majority of the definitions assume culture to be a static phenomenon (Leung et al., 2005). However, culture is 'quite dynamic due to the complex influences of the entire cultural context in which people are embedded' (Hinds, Liu, and Lyon, 2011, p. 139). The more dynamic conceptualisation of culture encompasses the belief that culture is learned from past generations or contemporaries, but it is also constructed by individuals and therefore rejects a static view of homogenous, changeless, stable, or timeless notion of culture (Avruch, 1998).

Another major distinction between definitions concerns the level of analysis, focusing on group levels and seeing culture as something embedded in the group members' behaviours with strong, hard to change roots (the common approach) or focusing on the individual agency (highly rare). Within the latter view, the fact that individuals can have multiple cultural influences is recognised (Avruch, 1998; Chao and Moon, 2005), acknowledging the complexity and situational variability of the individual subject (McSweeney, 2002). and

therefore, it does not assume culture to be homogeneous, cohesive, and causal force (Alvesson, 2013).

Within this thesis I focus on the participants' definitions and understandings of culture. Building on the participants' accounts of culture, I offer insights into what constitutes culture for organisational members working in multinational organisations (see Chapter 10, section 10.2 for details).

### **3.3 Operationalisations of culture: Levels of culture**

Some researchers describe culture in different levels, or layers (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012; Hofstede et al., 2010; Schein, 2006), with the term level meaning 'the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer' (Schein, 2006, p. 25). For example, Schein (2006) conceptualises culture in three levels, the outer level consisting of the observable elements such as behaviours, language, music, and food. These elements are the reflection of a deeper level consisting of beliefs, values, norms, and rules of behaviour that members of a culture use to explain the manifest culture. The inner level, called basic assumptions, is the essence and the foundation of each culture and provides the ultimate meaning to the expressed values and behaviours. They are taken-for-granted, implicit and unconscious assumptions a group makes. They are non-confrontable and non-debatable, and hence are extremely difficult to change.

Hofstede et al. (2010) also discuss the layers of culture with an analogy of an onion with four layers: symbols (words, gestures, pictures, or objects); heroes (influential persons, dead or alive, real, or imaginary); rituals (socially essential collective activities); and values (broad tendencies to prefer certain states of affairs over others). In this understanding, symbols are the most superficial layer and values constitute the core of a culture. Hofstede et al (2010) subsume symbols, heroes, and rituals under the term practices, hence two broad levels emerge: practices

and values. In a broad sense, Hofstede et al.'s (2010) portrait of cultural layers differs from Schein's (2006) interpretation due to the absence of the deeper layer, the basic assumptions, which Schein (2006) identifies as the ultimate source of values that are hard to change. Both conceptualisations, however, built on the same assumption of deeply embedded unchangeable values.

Some of the culture researchers adopt a different approach in describing the levels of culture, focusing on units of analysis. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012), for instance, assert that culture presents itself in different levels, mainly in three levels: national or regional, corporate or organisational, and professional or ethical levels. Hofstede et al. (2010) offer an extended list of such levels, including national; regional and/or ethnic and/or linguistic affiliation; gender; generation; social class; organisational, departmental, and/or corporate levels. The micro levels of culture are assumed to be embedded in macro levels and each level represents a unit of analysis where the individual level is nested in group, organisational, national, regional, and global levels (Erez and Gati, 2004; Hofstede et al., 2010; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012).

However, some researchers argue that clear-cut boundaries among different levels are not always possible. Schneider and Barsoux (2003), for example, acknowledge that there is no obvious or natural level of analysis. Rather, according to them, there is an interplay between different cultural spheres, namely regional, industry, functional/professional, and corporate, which constantly interact with each other.

Despite the various levels of culture, the majority of the cross-cultural research treats culture as national culture (Capraz et al., Chao and Moon, 2005; Gould and Grein, 2009; Leung et al., 2005; Taras et al., 2009). One of the challenges with the national culture conceptualisations derives from the difficulty of determining what national culture really means. McSweeney

(2002) once raised the question about whether the nations have cultures. Additionally, a nation is used as an equivalent to a country or society, without any consideration whether that country or society consists of more than one nation. Almost 60 years ago, Kroeber and Parsons (1958) drew attention to the confusion among anthropologists and sociologists about the concepts of culture and society and, in most major influential works, their being used with relatively little difference. Today, culture continues to be mostly associated with a society or nation where country persists to be used as a proxy for culture (Adams and Marcus, 2004; Caprar et al., 2015). In their review, Tsui, Nifadkar, and Ou (2007), for instance, realised that nation was used as a proxy for national culture in the majority of the studies. Such an approach relies on the assumption that each nation has a distinctive, influential, and describable culture (McSweeney, 2002). Additionally, nations are assumed to comprise one culture and represent that culture (Tayeb, 1994; Smith, 1992). Culture continues to be treated as a single unified whole associated with one's country of origin despite the evidence highlighting it as a multidimensional rather than a unitary construct (Oyserman and Sorensen, 2009).

Tsui et al. (2007) also point out the fact that the concepts of nation and culture do not completely overlap and therefore the interchangeable use of them would result in ignorance of within nation variation. As Chao and Moon (2005) state, if the term culture will continue to be used as a grouping mechanism of nation-states, the classic use of term needs extension and adjustment for truly reflecting a world that is becoming increasingly hybridised and intertwined. Equating culture to a national culture and limiting the operationalisation of culture to a country level is even more problematic when the issues such as globalisation, cross-border travel, immigration, and globalised communication, media, entertainment, and education are considered (Ayca, 2005; Caprar et al., 2015; Gelfand et al., 2017). Taras, Steel, and Kirkman's (2014) review further confirms the limitations of using country as a proxy by revealing that 80% of the variation in cultural values were observed within countries.

Nonetheless, the common practice in the literature continues to be conflating culture and national culture, by using them interchangeably and most commonly adopting Hofstede's (1980) work (Caprar et al., 2015; Chao and Moon, 2005; Erez and Gati, 2004; Leung et al., 2005; Taras et al., 2014; Tsui et al., 2007). In the quest of better understanding culture, therefore, it is pertinent to review these commonly adopted cultural models, which are summarised in Table 3.2.

As mentioned, one of the most influential and best-known work on national cultures has been undertaken by Geert Hofstede. Despite the heavy criticisms on methodological shortcomings (McSweeney, 2002; Javidan et al., 2006; Smith, 2006) and problematic, national level generalisations based on averaging sub-national populations' situationally specific opinions (McSweeney, 2002), Hofstede's seminal work (Hofstede, 1980) has been and still is being utilised by many researchers (Leung et al., 2005; Taras et al., 2014). Throughout the years, Hofstede's four dimensions, collectivism/individualism, power distance, femininity/masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance, were extended to six with the addition of two dimensions, long-term orientation and indulgence/restraint (see Table 3.2 for details). Hofstede is further criticised for his claims that cultural shifts do not happen easily and national cultures hardly change (Hofstede, 2001) by some researchers (e.g. Caprar et al., 2015; Taras et al., 2014) who highlight the evidence on rapid national cultural changes.

Another major work on culture is House and his colleagues' Project GLOBE, the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Program (House et al., 2004) (see Table 3.2). Javidan et al. (2006) claim that their study develops new measures based on original data purposefully collected for the study and relies on strong theory and rigorous measurements. With this, they also criticise Hofstede (1980) whose data derive from IBM's employee attitude surveys. Despite the claimed methodological rigour, however, GLOBE was

criticised for the complexity created by the high number of dimensions, nine dimensions for each values and practices, totalling in eighteen dimensions, the issue of which is deemed to be problematic (Hofstede, 2006; Smith, 2006). Even with Hofstede's (1980) initial four dimensions, not all of the dimensions are utilised. For instance, Smith (2006) and Tsui et al. (2007) found that most of the studies mainly concentrate on the two correlated dimensions, individualism versus collectivism and power distance whilst completely ignoring the other dimensions.

The other frameworks, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) and Triandis (1996) in Table 3.2 are similar to the Hofstede et al.'s (2010) and the Globe's frameworks in terms of relying on the assumptions of measurability and generalisability of cultures, which build on the assumption of homogeneity whilst wholly ignoring individual differences (Avruch, 1998; Chao and Moon, 2005). I return back to my reflection on these frameworks in Section 3.5.

Table 3.2 – Key national culture frameworks

Framework	Cultural Dimensions
<p>Hofstede’s Dimensions (Hofstede et al., 2010)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Power distance</i> (the degree of less powerful culture members’ expectation and acceptance of unequal power distribution)</li> <li>• <i>Individualism versus collectivism</i> (the extent to which individuals are, and expected to be, looking after themselves and their immediate families or the greater collective in-group members in exchange for unquestioning loyalty)</li> <li>• <i>Feminity versus masculinity</i> (the preferences in a society for achievement, assertiveness, toughness, and material rewards for success over modesty, tenderness and being concerned with the quality of life)</li> <li>• <i>Uncertainty avoidance</i> (the extent to which members of a society feel uncomfortable or threatened by uncertainty)</li> <li>• <i>Long-term orientation</i> (the state of a culture’s being long or short term oriented)</li> <li>• <i>Indulgence versus restraint</i> (the extent of a society’s allowance for free gratification of basic and natural desires as enjoying life and having fun or surpassing and regulating such gratifications by strict social norms)</li> </ul>
<p>Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner’s Dimensions (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012)</p>	<p>Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2012) build their cultural dimensions on Parsons’s (1951) national orientations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Universalism versus particularism</i> (Universalist cultures assume one good or right way that always applies, whilst particularist cultures believe in the obligation of relationships or distinctive conditions)</li> <li>• <i>Individualism versus communitarianism</i> (This orientation depends on people’s self-regard as individuals or as part of a group)</li> <li>• <i>Neutral versus affective orientation</i> (This orientation specifies the nature of the interactions and whether they should be objective or emotion expression is acceptable)</li> <li>• <i>Specific versus diffuse</i> (This element governs one culture’s perception towards relationships)</li> <li>• <i>Achievement versus ascription orientation</i> (This dimension is related to how a person is judged: based on achievement versus status attributed to birth, kinship, educational record, gender etc.)</li> <li>• <i>Time orientation</i> (This dimension is related to whether time is viewed as linear and sequential -past, present and future, or circular and synchronic -seasons and rhythms)</li> <li>• <i>Relation to nature</i> (This dimension is based on the relationship between individuals and her/his surrounding environment and the perception of whether the factors affecting individuals’ lives are intrinsic or they act as they are a part of the environment.)</li> </ul>

Table 3.2 continued – Key national culture frameworks

Framework	Cultural Dimensions
<p>The GLOBE Study (House et al.,2004)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Uncertainty Avoidance</i> ('the extent to which members of an organisation or society strive to avoid uncertainty')</li> <li>• <i>Power Distance</i> ('the degree to which members of an organisation or society expect and agree that power should be stratified and concentrated at higher levels of an organisation or government')</li> <li>• <i>Institutional Collectivism</i> ('the degree to which organisational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action')</li> <li>• <i>In-Group Collectivism</i> ('degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organisations or families')</li> <li>• <i>Gender Egalitarianism</i> ('the degree to which an organisation or society minimises gender role differences while promoting gender equality')</li> <li>• <i>Assertiveness</i> ('the degree to which individuals in organisations or societies are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in social relationships')</li> <li>• <i>Future Orientation</i> ('degree to which individuals in organisations or societies engage in future-oriented behaviours')</li> <li>• <i>Performance Orientation</i> ('the degree to which an organisation or society encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence')</li> <li>• <i>Humane Orientation</i> ('degree to which individuals in organisations or societies encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others')</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">(House and Javidan, 2004, p. 11-13).</p>
<p>Cultural syndromes (Triandis, 1996)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using cultural syndromes, 'a pattern of shared attitudes, beliefs, categorisations, self-definitions, norms, role definitions, and values that is organised around a theme that can be identified among those who speak a particular language, during a specific historic period, and in a definable geographic region' (Triandis, 1996, p. 408).</li> <li>• Some examples of these syndromes are tightness, cultural complexity, active-passive, honour, collectivism, individualism, and vertical-horizontal relationships.</li> </ul>

In this thesis, as it is going to be further discussed in the subsequent section, what is meant by culture is not limited to key national culture. However, because both terms, culture and national culture, are mostly used interchangeably, the studies on national culture are greatly relevant for the purposes of this thesis. For example, in their research, Gelfand, Erez, and Aycan (2007, p. 485) primarily considered national culture due to the fact that 'it relates to organizational behavior'. A similar mindset appears to be common in the literature. As such, when the different levels are considered, in this thesis, although the primary focus is the individual level,

considering the dominant view in the literature, the research on national culture is highly relevant.

When the context of organisational settings is considered, in addition to national level, the organisational level and consequently organisational culture needs to be also considered. Organisational culture is defined as a set of beliefs and values shared by the organisational members (Erez and Gati, 2004). Similar to national culture, the organisational culture literature is quite diverse with various understandings of culture (Alvesson, 2013). Martin, Frost, and O'Neill (2006), for instance, summarise the disagreements in organisational culture literature as epistemological, methodological, political ideological, and theoretical. The source of different approaches towards culture mainly stems from the different assumptions researchers make about organisation and culture and how culture and organisation are linked together. Broadly, researchers either treat culture as something an organisation has or favour the view that culture is something an organisation is (Alvesson, 2013; Morgan, 1997; Schein, 2006; Smircich, 1983). The former group investigates the links between organisation and culture through conceptualising culture as a variable, thereby treating culture either as an independent variable assuming that culture is brought into organisation by its members or as an internal variable recognising the organisations as producing their own cultures (Alvesson, 2013; Smircich, 1983). Drawing upon a more traditional, objectivist, and positivist philosophy, culture is objectified and, consequently, is perceived to be an objective entity (Alvesson, 2013). Viewing culture as something organisation has, for example the embedded customs and traditions, is a result of the perception that 'culture is structurally undifferentiated, that what you see is what you get' (Avruch, 1998, p. 15). Consequently, there is no need to struggle but to go with the flow and accept the customary rules as correct behaviour. Hence, the members of the organisation are assumed to act in a certain, similar way (Millmore, 2007; Schein, 1997). Alternatively, the group advocating for culture being something an organisation is

conceptualises culture as the root metaphor, treating social or organisational world as something subjective thereby treating organisations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness (Alvesson, 2013; Smircich, 1983). This view allows ambiguity and recognises culture's non-concrete status (Martin et al., 2006; Smircich 1983).

Furthermore, similar to the national culture literature, one of the most common assumptions in the organisational culture literature is 'homogeneity'. Individuals in an organisation are assumed to share one similar culture whilst organisations are assumed to have only one culture, ignoring subcultures that coexist in the same organisation. In other words, the possibility of multiple organisational subcultures or countercultures existing within the organisation is frequently ignored (Smircich, 1983).

Project GLOBE, which is discussed earlier, concerns both national and organisational culture. In the project, the core cultural dimensions were measured in terms of two manifestations of cultures: modal practices ('What is/are') and modal values of the collective ('What should be') (House and Javidan, 2004, p. 16). This approach according to the Project Globe allows it to go beyond the conventional approach of aggregating what is desirable for individuals to a culture level. Instead, they asked the respondents to express their views on what is desirable to their societies (Javidan, House, and Dorfman, 2004). Such an approach offers an improvement on assessing culture but still heavily relies on the assumption of measurability, dimensionality, and although different, still a kind of aggregability.

Whilst the Project Globe utilises values and practices both for representing national and organisational culture, in contrast, Hofstede (2006) differentiates between the terms practices and values. He associates values with national culture and practices with organisational culture (Hofstede, Neuijen, Ohayv, and Sander, 1990). As such, he criticises the Project GLOBE's using both values and practices to measure both national and organisational culture (Hofstede,

2006). In contrast, Javidan et al. (2006) disagree with such a distinction and Hofstede's (2001) assertion of the fact that cultural values drive practices by pointing out the fact that Javidan et al.'s (2006) re-analysis of Hofstede's (1990) data, in which Hofstede introduces a differentiation between the terms and their separate associations to either national or organisational culture, did not offer such a distinction. Perhaps, these contradictory findings derive partly from trying to isolate the study of culture into a specific level, either national or organisational, and ignoring the interaction of different cultural influencers between the levels.

Although shortly discussing organisational culture here, this thesis does not aim to investigate the cultures of the organisations the participants work in. Rather, the focus is on the individuals and what they perceive as their cultures. The issues related to organisational culture is considered only if they are manifested in the participants' descriptions of their culture.

### **3.4 Reflecting on the current literature on culture and moving forward**

Having discussed the definitions of, and approaches to, culture, now I reflect on the information I gained in the process of reviewing the culture literature. In cross-cultural studies, Hofstede's (1980) pioneering work has served as a 'marker post' for subsequent cross-cultural researchers (Smith, 2006). According to Javidan et al. (2006, p. 910), Hofstede's cultural dimensions and associated country scores made it too easy for researchers and that caused the unquestioningly adaptation of Hofstede's (1980) work, resulting in 'Hofstedeian hegemony'. Similarly, the subsequent culture frameworks build on the same practice of putting culture into categorical dimensions.

Dimensionalising culture is built on the assumption that aggregating individuals' survey responses to the level of nations or organisations can reflect the widely shared values of a nation or an organisation. In national culture literature, for instance, almost all of Hofstede's subsequent researchers have accepted that national culture can be adequately operationalised

by aggregating the individuals' self-descriptive responses to a nation level (Smith, 2006). The GLOBE researchers, however, doubted the efficacy of conceptualising a culture simply based on the averages of individuals' self-reported values. Therefore, their measures were formulated based on respondents' perceptions of their organisational and national contexts (Javidan et al., 2006). Yet, the assumption of aggregating individuals' responses remains as the basis.

Dimensionalising culture is, arguably, a result of simplifying the concept of culture thereby only concentrating on the static influence of a few cultural elements, or as commonly called dimensions, without any interest in the other cultural elements and contextual variables (Leung et al., 2005). Treating cultural values as independent dimensions persists as the dominant trait approach in the literature (Tsui et al., 2007) as academic mainstream continues to classify culture in a tradition of cultural dichotomies (e.g., individualistic vs. collectivistic, independent vs. interdependent) (Hermans and Kempen, 1998; Taras et al., 2014). However, the practice of relying on such a classificatory approach is challenged due to the increased hybridisation, the emergence of a heterogeneous global systems, and the increasing cultural complexity (Gelfand et al., 2007; Hermans and Kempen, 1998).

Furthermore, most of the current culture frameworks downgrade the individual agency. However, the country-level (or organisation-level) scores cannot be expected to explain the individual behaviour (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009). Expecting so would be built on the incorrect assumption that 'culture is uniformly distributed among members of a group (Avruch, 1998, p. 14). For instance, as he himself specified, Hofstede's (1980) scores reflect the central tendency for a national group as a whole (Hofstede, 1991) and cannot be used to represent individuals. Therefore, the societal level averages cannot explain the culture of an individual, neither does the organisational level averages. An individual's culture can be significantly

different from the average given the fact that culture is ‘always psychologically and socially distributed in a group (Avruch, 1998, p. 5).

As mentioned earlier in the preceding section, possibly the most commonly made assumption in culture literature, however, derives from associating culture to nations (Kroeber and Parsons, 1958; Tayeb, 1994; Tsui et al., 2007). This assumption further relies on other assumptions. For instance, individuals are assumed to have a single culture, mainly resulting from the privileged view of culture as national culture or ethnic culture which derives from the misconception of identifying culture to be synonymous to group identity, and consequently using nation-state as the unit of analysis (Avruch, 1998). Such conceptions further build on another, previously discussed assumption that the group is homogenous and so culture is uniformly distributed among group members (Avruch, 1998; Alvesson, 2013).

In the literature there are also researchers who acknowledge the limitations of relying on such assumptions discussed above. For example, Avruch’s (1998, p. 17-8) assert that individuals hold multi-group memberships, many of which are potentially different but also cross-cutting, originated through being a member of a clan or family (through kinship), ethnic group (through language, race), social class (through socio-economic characteristics), political interest groups (through geographical region), and unions, bureaucracies, industries, political parties, and militaries (through occupational or institutional memberships). Yet, the interaction between cultures deriving from multi-group memberships (e.g. regional, ethnic, professional, organizational, and/or religious cultures) is not fully understood (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2009).

Chao and Moon’s (2005) metatheoretical taxonomy of ‘culture mosaic’ constitutes a good representation of multiple cultural influencers on an individual level. This model is also brought into attention of trust scholars by Dietz et al. (2010) and Zolfagari et al. (2016). I

discuss this model in more detail as I also used it as an overarching framework in structuring the participants' conceptualisations of culture. The final decision in using this framework was reached after I realised that the inductively coded cultural elements the participants mentioned accorded with Chao and Moon's (2005) culture 'tiles'. With further reflection on the model, I decided that this framework provides a perfect fit to explain the participants' conceptualisations of culture because it (1) recognises and embraces the dynamic, complex, and subjective nature of culture; (2) recognises the fact that individuals have multiple cultural memberships arising from different social cultural groups (Dietz et al., 2010; LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton, 1993; Roccas and Brewer, 2002), and (3) provides an opportunity for multi-level analysis of culture and understanding of the individuals' behaviours. I return back to this discussion in Chapter 10, but here discuss this model in more detail.

Before commencing with the details of the framework, it is important to point out Chao and Moon's (2005) reasoning in using the metaphor 'cultural mosaic'. Chao and Moon (2005, p. 1129) picture the cultural antecedents as 'both discrete and interactive forces painting a complex picture of cultural values for the individual'. According to Chao and Moon (2005), similar to a mosaic which comprises distinct coloured tiles, individuals' cultural mosaics (cultural profiles) consist of different features of culture or as they call it 'tiles'. Precisely as in a mosaic both the overall picture and distinctly coloured tiles are distinguishable. In other words, in an individual's cultural mosaic both the overall picture (global individual culture) and distinct tiles (localised cultural influences) can be simultaneously observed (Chao and Moon, 2005). Chao and Moon (2005) define three main categories: demographic, geographic, and associative tiles (see Table 3.3). Demographic tiles, mostly inherited from parents and ancestors, describe natural, physical, and individual aspects such as age, ethnicity, gender, and race. Geographic tiles, either natural or human-made, describe the physical features of a region that can influence group identities such as climate, temperature, coastal/inland, urban/rural, and

regional/country. The associative tiles refer to all groups that an individual chooses to associate or identify with such as family, religion, employer, profession, politics, and avocations. Whilst some of the tiles such as ethnicity and race are traditionally associated with culture, some of the others are not commonly perceived as cultural influences, but Chao and Moon (2005) posit that all tiles mentioned in their framework have had empirical support connecting them to culture. According to Chao and Moon (2005, p. 1135), ‘across individuals, networks of cultural mosaics behave like a complex system with localized structures, with (a) some tiles dominating others in interactions, (b) some tiles self-organizing into local structures, building on shared cultural identities, and (c) other tiles maintaining independent influences, manifesting themselves in unpredictable ways’.

*Table 3.3 – Chao and Moon’s (2005) taxonomy of cultural mosaic*

<b>Primary category</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Sample tiles</b>
Demographic	Physical characteristics and social identities inherited from parents and ancestors	Age Ethnicity Gender Race
Geographic	Natural or man-made physical features of a region that can shape group identities	Climate Temperature Coastal/inland Urban/rural Regional/country
Associative	Formal and informal groups that an individual chooses to associate and identify with	Family Religion Employer Profession Politics Avocations

Source: Chao and Moon (2005, p. 1130)

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter offered a review of literature on culture, starting with the definition of culture, reflecting on various definitions of culture. The common themes between these definitions centre around the existence of a shared system, either phrased as patterns, values, beliefs, and behaviours, or experiences, which result in similar interpretations of meaning. Definitions also highlight that culture is learned, transmitted, and also newly constructed. The main distinction arises from treating culture as a static phenomenon or acknowledging its dynamic nature. Another distinction concerns whether analysis of culture is isolated into certain levels (e.g. national, organisational, etc) or the interplay between different levels, as well as the fact that individuals can have multiple cultural influences, is recognised. However, the review also suggests that the complexity and situational variability of culture are increasingly being recognised.

The chapter continued with the discussion of the operationalisation of culture which is mainly done with emphasising different levels of culture. In this approach, the micro levels of culture are assumed to be nested in macro levels where each level represents a different unit of analysis. Hence, the most inner level, the individual level, is nested in group, organisational, national, and regional, global levels. The chapter further emphasised that among these levels cross-cultural research investigating individuals' organisational behaviour mainly uses national culture as the cultural proxy to an extent of equating both terms. Therefore, the chapter further reviewed the current literature on national cultures. Due to the focus on organisational behaviour, more specifically trust and distrust among organisational members, I also shortly reviewed the organisational culture literature, but emphasised that this thesis does not specifically investigate organisational cultures of the organisations the participants work in unless they mentioned organisational culture as part of their own culture.

Lastly, I discussed Chao and Moon's (2005) taxonomy of cultural mosaic as the framework which constitutes a good fit in explaining the participants' understanding of culture because it (1) recognises and embraces the dynamic, complex, and subjective nature of culture, (2) recognises the multiplicity of cultural influences, and (3) provides an opportunity for multi-level analysis of culture and understanding of the individuals' behaviours. With the 'cultural mosaic' metaphor, Chao and Moon (2005) emphasise that individuals' culture profiles (cultural mosaics) comprise multiple elements (cultural tiles). The cultural tiles are grouped under three main categories: demographic, geographic, and associative tiles. The chapter further provided the details of this framework.

In the next chapter (Chapter 4), I firstly review the literature on culture and trust and distrust relationship by conducting a systematic review. For the purposes of documenting the current state of knowledge, I mainly focused on culture as national culture, which constitutes the dominant view in the literature. I continue with the discussion on the relationship between culture and trust and distrust with building on the participants' understanding of culture in Chapter 10.

# **CHAPTER 4 – A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATIONAL CULTURE AND TRUST AND DISTRUST**

## **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to offer a systematic review (SR) of research regarding culture's relationship with intra-organisational trust and distrust. Because the cultural dimension of trust and the importance of the relationship between culture and trust are recognised increasingly as central to trust research (Lyon et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2010) and distrust (Lewicki et al., 2006), it is vital to understand the current state of knowledge on this relationship.

The conceptualisation of culture for the review purposes builds on the dominant conceptualisation and operationalisation of culture in the literature. The cross-cultural literature is dominated with research equating 'national culture' to 'culture' to the extent of conflating the terms and consequently privileging national culture (Adams and Markus, 2004; Chao and Moon, 2005; Gould and Grein, 2009; Taras et al., 2009) (see a similar discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.3). I explore this dominant body of literature in order to understand the mainstream views on and issues of the relationship between culture and trust and distrust. This then allowed me to problematise it and develop a more nuanced understanding (see Chapter 10). Therefore, in this review, in parallel with the dominant views in the existing literature, I mainly focused on the most frequently raised elements of national culture; nationality, ethnicity, and race (Adams and Markus, 2004; Chao and Moon, 2005; Chao, 2000).

SRs have been commonly used and successfully applied in many disciplines such as medicine, healthcare, social policy, and education (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006; Tranfield, Denyer, and Smart, 2003), but they have recently become more common, perhaps even constituting an emerging new normal in management and organisation studies (Briner and Denyer, 2012).

As a field, management encompasses multiple paradigms, research philosophies, and methodologies (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, 2016). Furthermore, trust research, itself, with its multidisciplinary nature, draws on different intellectual and disciplinary traditions (Lyon et al., 2015). The SR process offers an opportunity to critically examine and integrate different schools of thought (Rojon, McDowall, and Saunders, 2011) and research findings, incorporating literature from different disciplines with differing methodologies and epistemologies. Nevertheless, as this is the case with all SRs, as well as acknowledging the possible limitations of SRs (Burke, 2011), this SR does not provide definitive answers to the review question investigated, rather endeavours to report what is known and not known (Briner, Denyer, and Rousseau, 2009), further identifying the areas where research is well-established and where the literature is limited with possible gaps in knowledge that require future research.

This chapter starts with the discussion of the SR method including the review question. Then the findings addressing the review question are presented. The chapter concludes with a consideration of areas where further research would be beneficial and a summary of findings.

## **4.2 Method**

Prior to commencing the SR, I established that no similar reviews existed in order to avoid duplication of previous work. A preliminary search was conducted to investigate the existence of previous review(s) during November 2014. Firstly, following the advises of the information skills librarian, three review databases (Database of Abstracts of Reviews of Effects (DARE) provided by the Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (CRD), Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, and The Campbell Collaboration Library) were searched through a keyword search of the term 'trust'. No relevant reviews were found. Next, a search was undertaken in Summon Search

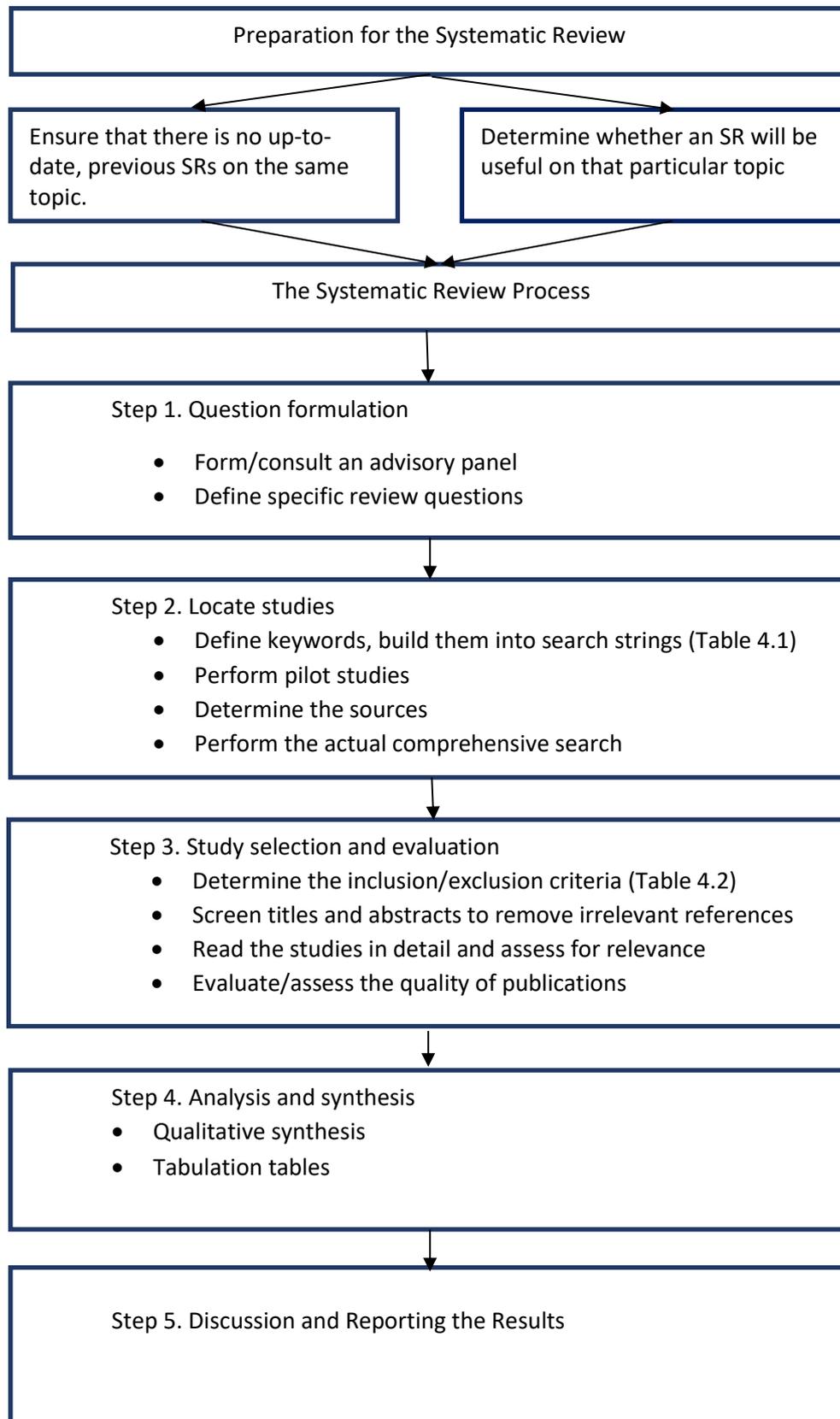
Engine<sup>1</sup>, performing the search on approximately 800 million items. No date restrictions were made. However, the search was restricted to the field of business. The investigation included searching the keyword ‘trust’ in titles and the phrase of ‘systematic review’ in the context of the abstracts. Although no reviews were found pertaining to the relationship between national culture and trust, the search revealed two SRs on trust (Delbufalo, 2012; Fulmer and Gelfand, 2012), albeit focusing on differing aspects. However, these reviews are significant for the current SR as both suggest the investigation of cultural influences on trust as a future research area.

After establishing there were no similar SRs, I commenced undertaking the SR. Following Denyer and Tranfield (2011), the SR comprised five steps. The review process is summarised in Figure 4.1 and discussed further in the subsequent sections.

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<sup>1</sup> Summon Search Engine is an online library used by different universities and was accessed via University of Surrey Library.

Figure 4.1 – Systematic review process



Firstly, I identified the specific review question (Step 1). The review question was formulated with the help of an advisory panel (Briner et al., 2009; Denyer and Tranfield, 2011; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006; Tranfield et al., 2003) comprising: four academics widely recognised for their research in trust with interest in both areas of trust and culture, the author of a recently published SR identifying the need for studying cultural influence on trust, two practitioners with real world practice and experience, and two people with expertise in conducting SRs, including an information skills librarian.

The discussions with the advisors reflected the diversity, and occasionally opposite views, in the literature regarding the relationship between culture and trust. Whilst some of them believed that culture's impact was significant, some argued the relationship between culture and trust to be less influential than claimed. Whilst most of the advisors assumed a causal relationship between culture and trust as commonly ascribed in the literature, one of the advisors questioned whether it was possible that culture and trust were mutually constitutive or defining. Considering the various opinions, as was the case in the literature, I kept the review question intentionally broad in order to identify any research pieces that touched on any relevant aspects of the relationship between culture and trust and distrust. Hence, the review question was phrased as follows:

*Review Question: How are intra-organisational trust, intra-organisational distrust, and national culture related?*

Subsequently, in order to address the review question, the keywords were defined and built into search strings (Step 2). Noting the importance of formulating the most representative search strings comprising relevant keywords, the keywords were determined based on the discussions with the advisors (Denyer and Tranfield, 2011; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). I held two additional face-to-face meetings with the information skills librarian where the

application of different sets of keywords was further discussed and the most effective search strings were determined.

The final version of the search strings was reached after conducting two pilot studies, first with different sets of keywords (January 2015) and then with the final strings in the database Business Source Complete (March 2015). At the second pilot study, 2445 results were found, most of which were irrelevant or did not match the inclusion/exclusion criteria (Table 4.2). After going through each title and/or abstract, I realised that the main source of the problem was due to the keyword 'nation\*'. The aim of using the keyword 'nation\*' was to refer to 'nation', 'nations' or 'nationality' at the same time. However, I realised it also referred to 'national' which returned irrelevant research pieces, for example subject matters concerning national surveys or research on National Health Service or a national institution. Therefore, the keyword 'nation\*' was replaced with the term 'nationality'. I also recognised that some author(s) when used the term 'organisational trust' in the title did not make any references to organisations in the abstract. This scenario presented a threat of missing relevant articles (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007). Therefore, the second string was modified to resolve this issue with the addition of an 'OR' statement. This meant that in the abstract the publication needed to have any of the terms in the first part of the second string outlined in Table 4.1, ensuring trust refers to intra-organisational trust, unless organisational trust was mentioned in the title. Table 4.1 presents the final version of the keyword strings.

Next, I conducted a comprehensive search in eight online databases, which were determined in the discussions with the information skills librarian. The databases included Business Source Premium (EBSCO), Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect, Web of Science, IBSS (International Bibliography of the Social Sciences), PsycInfo, Sociological Abstracts, and Sage Premier. The initial search was performed in March 2015 and therefore the chosen publications consisted of

journal articles, books, or relevant book chapters which were published prior to that date with no further date restrictions. Taking into consideration the time passed since the review was undertaken, in order to ensure up-to-date information, another search, which exactly replicated the first one, was conducted in November 2017. In order to differentiate between these searches, the first search will be referred to as Search I and the latter one as Search II.

*Table 4.1 – Keyword strings*

<b>Strings</b>	<b>Keywords</b>
String 1	Trust* <sup>2</sup> OR Distrust* OR Mistrust* (in abstracts)
String 2	AND Organisation* OR Organization* OR intra-organisation* OR intra- organization* OR intraorganisation* OR intraorganization* OR Business OR Firm OR Workplace OR Company OR Institution OR Corporate OR Employee OR Leader OR Team* OR Group* (in abstracts)  OR 'Organisational trust' OR 'Organizational trust' (in titles)
String 3	AND Cultur* OR Cross-cultur* OR Nationality OR Race OR Ethnic* (in abstracts)
String 4	AND 'National culture' OR 'National cultures' OR 'National cultural' (in full text)

The initial searches comprising the four keyword strings yielded 837 (Search I) and 225 (Search II) publications (For the details see Table 4.3). Studies found were evaluated against pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 4.2) - (Stage 3), yielding 125 (Search I) and 10 (Search II) possibly relevant publications. These publications were read fully and assessed for relevance, which meant offering any relevant information on the review question.

For quality reasons, only peer-reviewed publications were chosen and no grey literature, specifically no conference proceedings or unpublished work, were included. Being peer-reviewed was assumed to indicate quality, as being through a review process is perceived as a way of screening for quality, thereby indicating a certain level of conceptual and methodological rigour (David and Han, 2004; Delbufalo, 2012). Later on, in order to ensure

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<sup>2</sup> (\*) allows for discovery of truncated word forms. For example, trust\* will refer to trust, trustworthy, trusting, etc.

rigour and credibility of the selected publications, each publication was further assessed for its methodological transparency. This entailed checking whether the publications were explicit about the methods and procedures used, thereby ensuring a certain level of clarity and thoroughness in the assumptions made and the methods used (Hiles, 2008; Marshall and Rossman, 2016). None of the selected publications were eliminated due to a lack of transparency.

From the initial 125 results discovered in Search I, 44 publications (39 journal articles, one standalone book chapter and four book chapters from an edited book) and from the initial 10 results discovered in Search II, four publications (four journal articles) were included in the review. Although there were no date restrictions, the majority of the publications (94%) were published after 2000 and 46% were published after 2010, pointing out an increasing interest in the relationship between national culture and intra-organisational trust. Almost half of the publications (48%) utilised quantitative methods whilst 21% adopted qualitative methods. 25% of the publications were conceptual work and 6% utilised a form of mixed-methods strategy. Although I did not try to analyse the epistemological views as they were not explicitly stated in the publications (Isaeva et al. 2015), I looked at the methods used as they represent certain epistemological assumptions. With the dominance of the quantitative methods adopted, the emerging knowledge is deemed to be performed under a certain type of assumption and preconceptions, suggesting the subject matter to be studied from a similar perspective.

*Table 4.2 – Inclusion/exclusion criteria*

- Only books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed journal articles are included. Unpublished work and conference proceedings are not included.
- Only research published in English is included.
- There are no date restrictions.
- To ensure transparency and replicability, the keywords (see Table 4.1) are clearly defined.
- The keyword of ‘trust’ or ‘distrust’ is required to be present in the context of the abstract.
- Trust or distrust needs to refer to intra-organisational trust or distrust at any level of an organisation (individual, team, and organisational). Inter-organisational trust or distrust is not taken into consideration and interpersonal trust or distrust is only considered if it refers to any organisational referents such as co-workers, subordinates, and supervisors or leaders.

*Table 4.3 – The search results*

Databases	Search I*	After title/ abstract screening	Search II**	After title/ abstract screening
Business Source Premier (EBSCO)	186	57	27	6
Emerald Insight	160	27	89	5
ScienceDirect	132	27	36	1
Web of Science	181	20	47	2
IBSS: International Bibliography of the Social Sciences	66	5	24	0
PsycInfo	44	17	10	0
Sociological Abstracts	62	2	22	0
Sage Premier	6	1	0	0
Total	837	156	255	13
<b>Total after the elimination of duplicates</b>		<b>125</b>		<b>10</b>

\*Search I is conducted in March 2015. The results comprise any relevant publication with any prior date

\*\*Search II is conducted in November 2017. The results comprise any relevant publications with any date between January 2015 and November 2017.

Note: Consequently, this SR comprise any relevant publication with a date prior to November 2017.

The selected 48 publications were analysed and synthesised (Stage 4) prior to reporting (Stage 5). Considering the heterogeneous nature of the data, the analysis of the publications was done through synthesising the findings of each publication in accordance with common themes (Denyer and Tranfield, 2011; Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). Recognising Tranfield et al.’s (2003) assertion that meta-analysis would not be favourable with highly heterogeneous study data and following their suggestion, as well as Denyer and Tranfield’s (2011), the data were

synthesised through summarising the findings of the studies and discussing them where relevant.

### **4.3 Findings: The relationship between intra-organisational trust, as well as distrust, and national culture**

Before commencing discussing the findings, I note two things. Firstly, throughout the discussion below, culture refers to national culture and trust/distrust refers to intra-organisational trust/distrust. Secondly, although the search involved both the terms trust and distrust, as well as mistrust, none of the publications found in the review focussed explicitly on distrust, indicating this to be the most prominently neglected area. Distrust was superficially mentioned in some of the publications, usually in their literature reviews or was discussed very briefly in seven publications (e.g. Bürger, Luke, and Indeláová, 2006; Dietz et al., 2010; Farris, Senner, and Butterfield, 1973; Huff and Kelley, 2003; Newell, David, and Chand, 2007; Oertig and Buergi, 2006; Saunders et al., 2010). The absence of explicit research on distrust might be a result of the traditional view of perceiving distrust as the opposite of trust (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007). Therefore, the findings on trust are assumed, albeit implicitly in many cases, to be applied to distrust when negated. Yet, given the recent claims and empirical evidence (see Chapter 2, section 2.4 for details), as further discussed in Chapter 8 pointing out trust and distrust as distinct constructs, there is a substantial lack of research when it comes to culture's relationship with distrust. Therefore, the major gap in the literature that SR identifies concerns the relationship between culture and distrust, highlighting the absence of literature that explicitly focusing on distrust and culture. Consequently, the findings presented in the subsequent sections mainly concern the trust-culture relationship. The very limited information gained on the culture-distrust relationship is discussed wherever relevant.

As mentioned earlier, I kept the review question intentionally broad-scoped with the aim of discovering what aspects of the trust-culture relationship were investigated. The SR reveals six different themes of trust and culture relationship studied: (1) definition of trust across cultures; (2) trust and culture relationship in general; (3) trust/trustworthiness factors across cultures; (4) trust across different conceptualisations of culture; (5) impact of cultural congruence on trust; and (6) impact of cultural diversity on trust.

Below I discuss each of the six themes, starting with how trust was understood across cultures. There was very limited research on this hence the evidence discovered was not sufficient enough to make any solid conclusions. However, one of the publications offered some insight to support the notion of a similar understanding of trust across cultures. In their study, Muethel and Hoegl (2012) found that Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition of trust, including the notion of vulnerability and confidence, was similarly understood and shared by German and Chinese participants. Furthermore, in two additional studies conducted by Chathoth et al. (2011) and Ertürk (2008), the authors claimed the definition of trust to be common across cultures.

Turning to theme two, now I scrutinise the findings on the relationship between trust and culture in general. Most of the literature reviewed argued that trust was associated with culture (Farris et al., 1973) and that culture had implications for trust development and efficacy (Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002; Ertürk, 2008) through its affecting and shaping the behaviours in organisations (Pučėtaitė and Lämsä, 2008). Culture was found to influence trust-building processes (Doney et al., 1998; Sue-Chan, Au, and Hackett, 2012; Testa, 2002), how and whom to trust (Macoby, 1997), leaders fostering trust in their subordinates (Reiche et al., 2014; Wang and Clegg, 2002) through some culturally-contingent attributes (e.g. accountability) (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, and Salas, 2007), as well as employees' trust in their supervisors (Ertürk, 2008). Furthermore, culture was found to influence the interpretation and evaluation of

trustworthiness signs and subsequent attribution of the trustee's trustworthiness (Bürger et al., 2006; Sue-Chan et al., 2012). McLeary and Cruise (2015) recommended the trust researchers to consider the cultural social values as crucial indicators of how trust is manifested in different contexts.

According to Dietz et al. (2010), culture's role in the development of trust begins even before the parties meet as they would bring their cultural preconceptions to their encounters. Dietz et al. (2010) further explained that such preconceptions, together with the person's cultural receptiveness and assessment of the actions of the parties at their encounters, as well as the interpretation of 'trust cues', will determine whether breakthrough happens and trust develops or breakdown happens and distrust emerges.

Similar to the trustors' incorporating their preconceptions into their trust decisions, such decisions were also reported to be influenced by the trustors' propensity to trust, which was found to be affected by culture (Dietz et al., 2010; Ertürk, 2008; Huff and Kelley, 2003; Reiche et al., 2014; Schoorman et al., 2007; Wasti, Tan, Brower, and Önder, 2007). In fact, Schoorman et al. (2007) pointed out culture as one of the antecedents of propensity to trust, further emphasising the significance of culture for an individual's propensity to trust.

Although culture's influence on trust-related matters was quite clear from the trustor's perspective that culture was influential in the trustor's preconceptions and propensity to trust, research concerning culture and trustee's trustworthiness relationship, particularly the trustworthiness factors, which by some authors referred as trust factors or dimensions, was highly fragmented and limited. Being restricted with the fragmented data, this SR offers limited insight on this matter, outlining the inadequacy of what is known. What is learned, however, is summarised in Table 4.4. As it can be seen from Table 4.4, almost every study focused on different features, investigating different aspects of the relationship between culture and

trustworthiness. Hence, it is almost impossible to carry out a meaningful discussion that builds on the similarities and differences across the different findings.

Despite the diversity among different studies, Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI were among the most commonly adopted factors. This is not surprising given the fact that three of the studies were conducted by the same lead author (Wasti) and the other study (Schoorman et al., 2007) was authored by the originators of ABI. According to Schoorman et al. (2007) culture affects the perception of and the importance given to ABI. They further commented that masculine cultures would value Ability, whilst feminine cultures would place more value on Benevolence. Because there were no other studies with the same focus using masculine/feminine culture conceptualisation, the discussion on this matter cannot be carried further. However, their claim about different perceptions of and importance given to ABI across cultures was supported by other studies. For example, Wasti et al. (2007) found that Ability and Benevolence were differently operationalised and interpreted across different cultures (USA, Turkey, Singapore) whilst Integrity was interpreted similarly. In another study, Chatterjee and Pearson (2002) found that higher levels of importance were given to Integrity by Thai managers. Furthermore, Chathoth et al. (2011) found that collectivist cultures give more importance to every trustworthiness factor, especially to Integrity. See Table 4.4 for further the details of each study mentioned.

Although Integrity was a shared factor among these studies mentioned so far, as seen in Table 4.4, almost every study adopted different set of factors, some of which were only utilised in a particular study such as Reciprocity (Wasti et al., 2011; Wasti and Tan, 2010), Common values, Personality, Communication and Modesty (Wasti and Tan, 2010), Credibility, Honesty, Dependability, Openness, Reliability, Shared understanding, and Morality (Muethel and Hoegl, 2012), Accessibility and Achievement orientation (Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002), and

Reliability, Openness, Commitment/helpfulness, Loyalty, Competence, Friendly communication, Empathy, Authority (Bürger et al., 2006). Although some factors were shared among studies, as mentioned before, the set of factors utilised were different (see Table 4.4 for details). Whether this was a result of the impact of differing cultural contexts studied or simply the authors' own preferences remain unclear. However, in the studies conducted by Wasti and Tan (2010) and Wasti et al. (2011), the factor Modesty was found to be unique to the Turkish sample, suggesting Modesty as a possibly culture-specific factor.

Alternatively, McLeary and Cruise (2015) urge the trust researchers to tailor the currently available trust models to the context. For example, in their study they utilised trust factors found in the current trust models (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007) such as Competence, Goodwill, and Integrity with the addition of context-specific socio-affective ones such as Respect and Justice. By doing so, McLeary and Cruise (2015) claimed to achieve a more robust and valid model of trust for the Jamaican work context.

Similar to the extent of diversity in trust or trustworthiness factors, conceptualisations of culture vary across studies. Just to illustrate, in the discussion so far various cultural conceptualisations were mentioned such as masculine/feminine (dimensions from Hofstede, 1980), USA, Turkey, Singapore (country), collectivism versus individualism (dimensions from Hofstede, 1980). This warrants a further examination of how culture was conceptualised across the studies reviewed and what were the similarities and differences observed across such conceptualisations. The findings are summarised in Table 4.5 and further discussed below.

Table 4.4 – Research findings on culture and trust/trustworthiness factors

Dimensions/antecedents/factors of trust/trustworthiness <sup>3</sup>	Findings
Ability, Benevolence, Integrity	<p>Culture affects the perception of and the importance given to ABI. Masculine cultures would value Ability, whilst feminine cultures would place more value on Benevolence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Schoorman et al., 2007)</i></p>
Ability, Benevolence, Integrity	<p>(USA, Turkey, Singapore) Differences in the operationalisation and the interpretation of Ability and Benevolence across collectivist and high power distant versus individualist and low power distant cultures were observed. Only Integrity showed metric equivalence.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Wasti et al., 2007)</i></p>
Ability, Personal Benevolence, Professional Benevolence, Integrity, Reciprocity, Communication, Common values, Personality, Modesty	<p>(China, Turkey). ABI are observed to be the major factors of trustworthiness for both samples. The antecedents within the broad categories were found to be manifested and interpreted differently. Modesty is believed to be unique to Turkish culture.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Wasti and Tan, 2010)</i></p>
Ability, Benevolence, Integrity, Reciprocity	<p>(China, Turkey) ABI along with Reciprocity were found to be important trustworthiness factors among three foci (supervisor, peer, subordinate). Benevolence was found to be the most significant factor for trust development. Its manifestation was found to be more personal in the Turkish sample whilst it was more professional in the Chinese sample. Ability was found to be not prominent in supervisor trust and entirely absent in peer trust in the Turkish sample.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Wasti et al., 2011)</i></p>
Integrity, Benevolence, Performance	<p>(Brunei, Malaysia, Thailand) Substantially higher level of importance to Integrity was given by the Thai managers. No significant differences were found with Benevolence and Performance.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Chatterjee and Pearson, 2002)</i></p>
Accessibility and Achievement Orientation	<p>(China, USA) Supervisor Accessibility and Achievement orientation were found to influence supervisee trust. Supervisors' Accessibility was found to be more important for Chinese, whilst Achievement orientation was more important for the US sample. Only in the Chinese sample some kind of process control mechanisms were found to be positively affecting supervisee trust.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002)</i></p>
Credibility, Honesty, Dependability, Openness, Reliability, Shared Understanding, Morality	<p>(Germany, China) Credibility, Honesty, Dependability were found to be the most important elements of trust with slight differences in the interpretations across the samples. Openness and Reliability were found to be the unique elements for Germans. Shared Understanding and Morality were found to be the unique elements for the Chinese sample.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Muethel and Hoegl, 2012)</i></p>

<sup>3</sup> The reviewed studies used trust and trustworthiness dimensions interchangeably, as well as the terms dimensions, factors, antecedents.

Table 4.4 continued – Research findings on culture and trust/trustworthiness factors

Dimensions/antecedents/factors of trust/trustworthiness	Findings
Integrity, Commitment, and Dependability	<p>(USA, India) Authors claim that regardless of the national culture, trust is expected to consist of three dimensions, Integrity, Commitment, and Dependability, with differences in the perception or the levels of importance given to them. Less importance is found to be given to all three dimensions by the people from individualist cultures compared to the ones from collectivist cultures, with an especially significant difference in Integrity.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Chathoth et al., 2011)</i></p>
Reliability, Openness, Commitment/helpfulness, Loyalty, Competence, Friendly communication, empathy, authority (supervisors)	<p>(Czech Republic, Germany) Reliability, Openness, Commitment/helpfulness, and Loyalty were found in both samples, but the actions reported within those categories and associated signs were found to differ. Competence was observed only in the Czech sample, especially towards supervisors. Its absence for Germans was explained to be possibly due to the Germans assuming competence as a precondition for getting the job. Friendly communication and empathy were important for Czechs, albeit at personal level. Czechs were also found to believe that superiors occasionally acting in the authoritarian way would not sacrifice her/his trustworthiness.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Bürger et al., 2006)</i></p>
Competence, Goodwill, Integrity, Justice, Respect	<p>(Jamaica) Authors claim to achieve a more robust and valid model of trust for Jamaican work context by considering elements of trust found in the current trust models (e.g. Schoorman et al., 2007), as well as the context-specific ones such as Respect and Justice, representing the Jamaican culture.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(McLeary and Cruise, 2015)</i></p>
Cultural Affiliation	<p>Authors claim that Cultural Affiliation is one of the trustor's characteristics that is affected from culture. People belonging to collectivist or feminine cultures are found to be more susceptible to over-trust compared to low power distance or low uncertainty avoidance cultures. Over-trust is defined as 'a state where a trustor's trust exceeds that which is warranted given the conditions' (p. 203).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Goel, Bell, and Pierce, 2005)</i></p>

*Table 4.5 – Research findings on the effects of different cultural attributes on trust*

<b>Cultural dimensions/ Cultural proxy</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Task-oriented cultures Relationship-oriented cultures	Higher levels of propensity to trust (Schoorman et al., 2007) Requiring time before building trust (Schoorman et al., 2007)
Masculine Feminine	Valuing Ability more (Schoorman et al., 2007) Valuing Benevolence more (Schoorman et al., 2007) More susceptible to over-trust (Goel et al., 2005)
Individualism	Higher average levels of propensity to trust (Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005) Higher levels of average trust within organizations (Huff and Kelley, 2003) Stronger leader trust (Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, and Shore, 2012) Allocating less importance on all three dimensions, Integrity, Commitment, and Dependability, with an especially significant difference in the dimension of Integrity (Chathoth et al., 2011)
Collectivism	Valuing Benevolence more (Wasti et al., 2011) Higher average levels of propensity to distrust (Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005) More importance to establishing trust than the business considerations (Everett, Wong, Hong, and Evans, 2001) Mediating the effect of managers' affective trust in subordinates and also moderating managers' affective trust in subordinates and managerial trustworthy behaviour (Reiche et al., 2014) Better chance of success of theories grounded on supervisors' top-down trust of the subordinate employees (Costigan et al., 2006) More susceptible to over-trust (Goel et al., 2005) More salience with regards to individuals trusting in-group members more than out-group members (Huff and Kelley, 2003) Questioning collectivist trustors favouring their in-groups and finding no guarantees for initial trust formation, even in collectivist cultures (Branzei, Camp, and Vertinsky, 2013) Employees' trust in their supervisors and managers mostly depending on supervisors' treatment of their subordinates and subordinates trusting their supervisors, if the supervisors treat them like family and foster a feeling of confidence in them (Ertürk, 2008)
High power distance	More effective interventions promoting affect-based trust in co-worker relationships (Costigan et al., 2011) Less likely to develop high trust (Sue-Chan et al., 2012) Standing out of the attributes like Modesty (Wasti and Tan, 2010)
High collectivism and high uncertainty avoidance	More effective trust, enhancing team leaders influence among the team members (Engelen, Lackhoff, and Schmidt, 2013)
Low power distance and low uncertainty avoidance	Less susceptible to over-trust (Goel et al., 2005)

*Table 4.5 continued– Research findings on the effects of different cultural attributes on trust*

<b>Cultural dimensions/ Cultural proxy</b>	<b>Findings</b>
Southern Asian	Valuing Benevolence more (Golesorkhi, 2006)
North American and European	Valuing Integrity the most, especially North Americans (Golesorkhi, 2006)
Chinese	<p>Chinese managers trusting their subordinates to have the ability to complete a task, but not trusting the subordinates' willingness to do so (Wang and Clegg, 2002)</p> <p>More importance given to supervisors' Accessibility (Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002)</p> <p>Cognitive-based trust being more important and Competence being the key for both parties (Chinese host nationals and expatriates) for developing trust and affect-based components gaining importance as the relationship develops and the credibility is established via demonstration of competence (Ang and Tan, 2016)</p>
Australian	Australian managers trusting their subordinates in both having the ability and the willingness to complete a task (Wang and Clegg, 2002)
American	More importance given Achievement orientation (Atuahene-Gima and Li, 2002)
Low-context, linear-active	Focusing on the tasks first and then building trust (Lewis, 2006)
High-context, multi-active	First dealing with trust before getting to their task (Lewis, 2006)
Asian region	Managers' empowering based on personal trust they have in an employee (Cheung, Baum, and Wong, 2012)
German vs Czech	For trust development, Czechs valuing both personal and work-related levels, whilst Germans placing more emphasis on the work-related level and the Czech sample making a distinction between trusting the colleagues and superiors, whilst no differentiations being observed in the German sample (Bürger et al., 2006)
Race	Racial awareness being reported to affect trust in management with more racially aware employees (aware of the existing racial privileges) reporting lower trust in management (Buttner and Lowe, 2015)

Continuing the discussion where left above pertaining to the various conceptualisations of culture, it was observed that 'society', 'nation' or 'country' were commonly used as proxies for national culture. Studies not adopting national or regional proxies utilised categories of cultural dimensions, mostly in cultural dichotomies, collectivism versus individualism being the most common one (see Table 4.5). The majority of the studies utilised Hofstede's (1980)

seminal work. Interestingly, although Hofstede published revised versions of his framework throughout the years, the most recent being Hofstede et al. (2010), studies reviewed had utilised his earlier work, namely Hofstede (1980). However, not all of his dimensions were utilised as studies mostly focused on one dimension, mostly on individualism/collectivism.

The chief commonality among those studies concerned the cultural generalisations made, assuming nations to consist of and represent one culture. A few authors of the studies reviewed acknowledged the possible limitations such generalisations create. For example, Wasti and Tan (2010) who used 'country', namely China and Turkey, as a proxy for national culture, drew attention to the possible difficulties of isolating the effects of cultural variations. Furthermore, Branzei et al. (2013) challenged the practice of assuming people from the same country or region to be largely homogenous by demonstrating the substantial within country variation on the dimension of individualism/collectivism. Huff and Kelley (2003, p. 88) actually acknowledged making the common mistake of treating individualist and collectivist cultures as 'two distinct, monolithic types of cultures'. McLeary and Cruise (2015) emphasised that with focusing solely on the cultural dimension individualism/collectivism, the conceptualisation and operationalisation of trust is restricted and consequently the culture and trust relationship is not sufficiently captured. They therefore encourage the trust researchers to incorporate the other cultural dimensions such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and feminine/masculine cultures. This recommendation is associated with my previous comments on the studies which utilised Hofstede's dimensions did not use all of the dimensions, this further limiting the conceptualisation of culture. McLeary and Cruise (2015) approached this subject from a slightly different perspective and specifically emphasised the dimension uncertainty avoidance for studying trust. They drew attention to the fact that when trust is conceptualised as willingness to be vulnerable and its association with risk is considered, the

uncertainty avoidance dimension of culture would have a greater impact on the manifestation of trust.

The conceptualisations used along with the research findings are further summarised in Table 4.5. As it can be seen, the data were highly fragmented. As such, a comparison of the findings can be only performed on the commonly utilised dimensions of individualism and collectivism. The other dimensions or cultural groups (e.g. task-oriented versus relationship-oriented cultures, masculine versus feminine) comprised research findings from only one study, preventing any comparisons and arguing on the possible themes between research findings.

According to the literature reviewed, in the individualist cultures, higher average levels of propensity to trust (Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005) and stronger trust towards the leaders (Rockstuhl et al., 2012) were found to exist. Huff and Kelley (2003, 2005) questioned the common understanding of collectivist cultures being better at fostering trust than individualist cultures as they showed that average trust within organisations was higher for people from individualist cultures compared to collectivist cultures. Additionally, higher average levels of propensity to distrust were found in collectivist cultures (Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005). Nevertheless, they found individuals trusting in-group members more than out-group members to be more salient in collectivist cultures (Huff and Kelley, 2003). In contrast, Branzei et al. (2013) claimed that there were no guarantees for initial trust formation, even in collectivist cultures, and therefore they questioned the assumption that collectivist trustors would favour their in-groups. The root cause of the contradictory findings between these two studies could be associated with the fact that the collectivists studied in Branzei et al.'s (2013) study were not culturally equivalent to Huff and Kelley's (2003) collectivist groups, possibly as a result of generalising culturally heterogeneous groups under the same category of collectivism. This offers further insight into problematic nature of cultural generalisations.

Further contradictions were found in respect to the common assumption that collectivists favour the affective component of trust. Wasti et al. (2011) noted that Benevolence was valued more and Everett et al. (2001) found that establishing trust was more important than the business considerations in collectivist cultures. Ertürk (2008) further confirmed the importance of establishing personal relationships, revealing that employees trust in their supervisors and managers mostly depended on supervisors' personal treatment of their subordinates. Similarly, Costigan et al. (2006) claimed that theories grounded on supervisors' top-down trust of the subordinate employees have a better chance of success in collectivist cultures.

In contrast to the research suggesting affect-based trust as the starting point, and even a prerequisite for trust building within collectivist cultures, in their study of trust building between expatriate managers and their Chinese host country nationals, Ang and Tan (2016) found cognitive-based trust to be more important and Competence to be the key for both parties for developing trust. They also claimed that the role of affect-based components gained importance with the development of the relationship and the establishment of credibility between parties via demonstration of competence. These findings are in line with the current literature (e.g. Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995). These findings imply that the trust process is more universal than assumed. However, the cultural specific findings discussed in the preceding paragraphs prevent such a conclusion to be made. Even in Ang and Tan's (2016) study it was reported that the development of affect-based trust in the later stages enabled stronger trust relationship building which was facilitated by the cultural intelligence (CQ) of the expatriate managers. Ang and Tan's (2016) study revealed another contradiction to the previous knowledge on CQ. They emphasised that in contrast to what is believed, knowing the local cultural practices, customs, and norms was not that important for trust. What mattered was found to be what the authors called motivational CQ which encompassed the expatriate managers' demonstration of willingness to allow the host

country nationals in their personal space to socialise and to go beyond the work context which were a common practice in host country national culture and not as much for the expatriates.

To sum up the discussion so far, the first theme discussed the arguably similar understanding of trust across cultures. Afterwards, the research findings on the overall relationship between trust and culture were discussed and the research findings emphasising the relationship between trust and culture were outlined. Culture was found to play a role in trust development, trust-building processes, how and whom to trust, as well as how trust is manifested in different contexts. Some research findings emphasised that culture's impact on trust has begun even before the trustor encountered the trustee as the trustor's propensity, as well as preconceptions, which influence the trust decisions, were highly affected by culture. The research findings on different dimensions of trust or trustworthiness, however, were highly fragmented, and in some cases inconsistent. With almost every study adopting different trust or trustworthiness dimensions, as well as conceptualisations of culture, distinct and even sometimes contradictory findings were found. Finally, I turn to present the findings on the last two themes, the influence of cultural congruence (similarity) and diversity on trust.

The literature reviewed outlined that cultural congruence is an important influencer in trust building, the members of congruent dyads reporting significantly higher levels of trust (Doney et al., 1998; Ertürk, 2008; Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005; Testa, 2002, 2009). In these studies, cultural similarity was on the basis of shared norms and values, which were mostly assumed to be similarly shared among the members of the same country. The findings suggest that when norms and values were shared, there was a greater chance of forming trusting relationships due to 'the direction the target takes to earn trust is the same route the trustor follows to establish whether the target is trustworthy' (Doney et al., 1998, p. 616). The shared norms, values, and socialisation experiences were argued to play a facilitating role in bridging the understanding

of expectations regarding what was necessary to establish and maintain the trusting relationship among the parties (Dietz et al., 2010). However, in their study of German and Czech samples, Bürger et al. (2006) found that cultural congruence was only important for the German sample as they considered their Czech colleagues to be less trustworthy than their German counterparts whilst Czech participants perceived their German colleagues as trustworthy as their Czech colleagues. However, the literature reviewed does not offer more insight into the relationship between cultural congruence and trust.

Relatively more research on cultural differences was found. The impact of cultural diversity was discussed in relation to different organisational referents, most frequently among team members where trust was found to vary across different cultural contexts (Engelen et al., 2013; More and Tzafrir, 2009). The impact of cultural differences was especially prominent in the studies of the global, virtual, or geographically-distributed teams where managing diversity constituted challenges for trust building (Verburg, Bosch-Sijtsema, and Vartiainen, 2013). This was attributed to different reasons: individual differences resulting from idiosyncratic attitudes, values, and preferences (Pinjani and Palvia, 2013); significant national cultural differences which make 'some of the other team members 'different' from oneself' (Newell et al., 2007, p. 167); the threat of distrust emerging as a result of team being culturally heterogeneous and geographically dispersed (Oertig and Buergi, 2006; Zakaria, Amelinckx, and Wilemon, 2004); and absence of face-to-face interactions and possible context confusion which results in loss of trust (Lewis, 2006). Newell et al.'s (2007) study further showed that trust building among culturally diverse team members had become even more challenging when the organisation put the distributed sites into competition.

In order to resolve problems resulting from cultural differences, Oertig and Buergi (2006) suggested investing in language and intercultural communication training programmes which,

they believed, would facilitate integration among team members more quickly and efficiently and would help to reduce potential distrust. Conversely, Newell et al. (2007) discovered that a cultural training program aiming to foster better understanding across globally-distributed teams made the situation worse. One reason could be the fact that knowledge of cultural differences was not sufficient enough for initiating a trusting relationship (Bürger et al., 2006). Alternatively, it could be explained with Ang and Tan's (2016) findings which demonstrated that knowing cultures did not guarantee trust building. On the other hand, in Newell et al.'s (2007) study, the unexpected results of the cultural training programme were attributed to the misinterpretation of the newly-learned cultural traits. In that particular study, the onshore workers (Americans) started interpreting their offshore colleagues' (Indians) work as being a reflection of their cultural differences. Shortcomings which might have resulted from different situational factors, such as being new to the organisation and industry or perceiving themselves as vendors rather than as workers to take initiatives, were attributed to the newly-learned cultural trait(s). In other words, American managers started viewing and interpreting everything 'through a cultural lens of difference' and ignored the situational factors (Newell et al., 2007, p. 166). The contradictory results in both studies, arguably, were caused by the contextual differences of the studies. In Newell et al.'s (2007) study team members had never met face-to-face, whereas in Oertig and Buergi's (2006) study, face-to-face communication and relationship building were initiated at the beginning of the team forming.

Oertig and Buergi's (2006) suggestion on investing in language and intercultural communication training requires further caution and deeper investigation before its application. Henderson (2010) argued that a common working language, which is usually English, would not remove the barriers for building trust as it was assumed, but instead could create further problems. According to Henderson (2010), people speaking the same language were expected to share similar interpretations. This, however, led to misleading cues for initial trust as non-

native speakers did not always interpret things similar to the native speakers. Therefore, in order to foster trust building, the author advocated for developing awareness of and receptiveness towards diversity in communication behaviours.

For overcoming the challenges deriving from cultural differences, other alternatives to training programmes were proposed by Hsin, Chuang, and Shu (2011) and Dietz et al. (2010). Hsin et al. (2011, p. 309) suggested facilitating cultural adaptation which involved ‘a dynamic process among the virtual teams where changes are predicted to fit the norms, practices, and behaviour of another culture’. Dietz et al. (2010) emphasised the importance of recognition and promotion of shared cultural identities or creation of a new shared, common cultural identity among the parties. Although studying the issue from different points of view, both studies suggested the cultivation of a shared cultural identity where the individual differences would stop mattering as much.

Alternatively, acknowledging the diversity, implementing inclusive policies, and managing the diversity were found to have implications for trust (Buttner and Lowe, 2015). For example, Kupczyk, Szymanska, Kubika, and Oleszkiewicz (2015) discovered that taking into account the diversity, including culture, and adopting diversity management standards on matters such as employment adjustment, structure and the method of recruitment, remuneration, and employee development yielded positive results for trust in organisation, management, and co-workers.

To sum up the discussion of the findings pertaining to cultural congruence and diversity and trust, research findings outlined the evidence showing that people from similar cultures reported higher levels of trust. When cultural diversity was considered, however, it was found to be a barrier for trust building especially within highly culturally diverse teams. Cultural training or implementation of diversity management programmes were found to help trust

building; however, their application was crucial as it was also shown to have contrary effects on trust.

#### **4.4 Implications of the Systematic Review findings for this thesis**

The current chapter offered a systematic review of the relationship between culture and trust, as well as distrust. Hence, this SR advances knowledge on the cross-cultural trust literature by identifying the areas where research on the topic is well-established and more importantly where further research is needed. However, it is undoubtful that not all issues discovered in the SR can be addressed within this thesis and this is not the aim. Considering researching the cultural aspects was driven by ‘Cultural congruence’ being identified as one of the factors influencing trust development and also taking account the limited knowledge on the issues concerning the cultural congruence and trust relationship, this thesis focuses on the last two themes emerged in this SR, more particularly on the relationship between cultural congruence and diversity and trust. The research is also extended to distrust where the biggest gap of knowledge exists.

One of the major problematic issues this SR identified is associated with the conceptualisation of culture. This SR was carried out through focusing on the dominant conceptualisation of culture as national culture. In the process, it was discovered that the current state of the common practice on the conceptualisation of culture warrants concerns. Some of the studies assumed national culture to be sufficiently represented by country- or region-wide generalisations and the rest of the studies appeared, seemingly and unquestioningly, to have adopted Hofstede’s (1980) work. Yet, not all of the dimensions were utilised, mostly concentrating on only one dimension such as collectivism versus individualism, which further limited the conceptualisation of culture to a narrow understanding.

The issue warranting the most concern pertained to the contradictory findings among the supposedly similar cultures. As discussed above, these contradictory results emerged mainly as a result of relying on broad cultural generalisations, for example expecting the groups identified as ‘collectivists’ or ‘individualists’ to be homogeneous and behave similarly and furthermore assuming every group categorised as collectivists or individualists to be the same and conceptually equivalent. Therefore, this SR strongly emphasises the crucial need for researchers to consider their conceptualisation of culture carefully, recognising its multi-dimensionality and dynamic nature. With this aim in mind, in the current thesis, no assumptions were made in regard to conceptualising and defining culture. Rather, the participants’ understanding of culture was considered. Therefore, the participants were not presented with any conceptualisations of culture, but rather were encouraged to reflect on their understanding of what constituted culture. Therefore, what constituted cultural similarity and difference depended on the participants’ conceptualisation of perceived similarity and difference. As a result, the fourth research question was formulated as follows:

*Research Question 4a (RQ4a) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships?*

*Research Question 4b (RQ4b) – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships?*

## **4.5 Summary**

In this chapter a systematic review of research on the relationship between national culture and intra-organisational trust and distrust was undertaken. The purpose was to provide insights into the ways in which the link between national culture and trust and distrust is conceptualised. Whilst the aim was to investigate the national culture’s relationship both with trust and distrust, due to the lack of explicit research on distrust, the discussion of the SR findings was compelled

to focus only on the trust and national culture relationship. Knowledge on the national culture and distrust relationship was found to be the most neglected area, the SR emphasising the need for further research in this area.

The SR revealed 48 relevant publications, the majority (94%) of which were published since 2000, indicating an increasing interest in national culture's association with trust. Overall, although the literature reviewed offered some insights into the trust and national culture relationship, providing evidence of national culture's impact on trust, the SR also highlighted that such research is highly fragmented and relatively limited.

In order to discover the depth of the national culture and trust relationship and what aspects of the relationship have been investigated in the literature, the review question was intentionally kept broad-scoped. The SR revealed six different themes of the trust and national culture relationship studied: (1) definition of trust across cultures; (2) trust and culture relationship in general; (3) trust or trustworthiness factors across cultures; (4) trust across different conceptualisations of culture; (5) impact of cultural congruence on trust; and (6) impact of cultural diversity on trust.

With regards to the meaning of trust across cultures, there were only a few studies that explored this issue. They found out a similar understanding of trust across the cultures studied, outlining trust as a universal construct. There was substantially more evidence on the culture and trust relationship in general, claiming that culture had an impact on trust, propensity to trust, trust development, trust building processes, and decision to trust. Different trust or trustworthiness dimensions were adopted across studies, some of which demonstrated cultural differences, especially in their manifestations and operationalisations. Despite the substantial research found outlining the relationship between culture and trust and trustworthiness dimensions, the

knowledge still appears very limited and lacking in shedding light on the full extent of the cultural influences on the trust and trustworthiness dimensions.

The research findings pertaining to trust across different cultures were highly fragmented and in some cases, were contradictory. The contradictory findings were most probably a result of the broad cultural generalisations made where the groups identified as ‘collectivists’ or ‘individualists’ were assumed to be homogeneous and behave similarly. Consequently, due to a limited conceptualisation of culture which seems to be the common practice in the literature reviewed, the research pertaining to the relationship between culture and trust is restricted.

The last two themes discovered in the SR pertained to cultural congruence and diversity and trust. Research findings suggest that people reported higher levels of trust towards the people with same cultures to them. The majority of studies investigating cultural diversity focused on teams where cultural diversity was found to constitute a barrier for trust building. Managing diversity and implementing diversity management protocols, as well as providing cultural trainings were found to be effective in increasing trust among organisational members. However, the execution of these programmes was crucial as there were also research findings showing the negative effects of such initiatives on trust.

Within this SR a wide range of areas were discovered that needed further research. Due to the limited evidence on what is known, the areas on where further research is needed have been identified to be extensive, the SR offering a wide research agenda for future research. As it is not feasible to address all of these areas within this thesis, I focused on the aspects that are most relevant to the current research undertaken. Taking into consideration the fact that ‘Cultural congruence’ was identified as one of the factors influencing trust development in this thesis (Chapter 6), I decided to conduct an exploratory study on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust, which were the last two themes this SR identified where

further research was required. Consequently, I carried out further research with the aim of addressing the fourth research question (RQ4a – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships and RQ4b – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships). The empirical analyses undertaken to address these questions are reported in Chapter 10 and further discussed in Chapter 11. Now, I discuss the Methodology underpinning this thesis in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 5).

## **CHAPTER 5 – METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodological choices made and the methods used with the aims of addressing the research questions underpinning this thesis. Every decision made is governed by the research questions, which are described in the introduction chapter (Chapter 1, section 1.2) and is influenced by the philosophical stance taken discussed in this chapter (Chapter 5, section 5.2).

The chapter starts with the discussion of my research philosophy which constitutes the foundation of the whole research design, as well as the knowledge produced and the contributions made (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, 2016; Isaeva et al., 2015; Tsoukas and Chia, 2011). Therefore, firstly, I discuss my research philosophy as a researcher and then explore its implications for this particular research. This is immediately followed with a discussion on the approach to theory development. The next sections discuss the method (qualitative methods), the technique (Critical Incident Technique) used, and the associated quality assessments made. Immediately after, I justify the participant selection strategy and discuss the data collection and analysis. The chapter ends with a short summary.

### **5.2 Research philosophy**

#### **5.2.1 The foundations of pragmatist philosophy**

A researcher's philosophical assumptions shape the research strategies, questions, methods, data collection and analysis, and, as a result, the conclusions drawn (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, 2016; Tsoukas and Chia, 2011). Acknowledging the importance of reflexivity and the

implications of the philosophical assumptions I made throughout the thesis, in this section, I explain the pragmatist philosophical stance I adopted.

Before further discussing the latter, it might be helpful to point out the significant distinction between pragmatism, as philosophical thinking, and the pragmatic decisions made during the research process, which often appears to create confusion in the literature (Morgan, 2013). Arguably, this confusion is exacerbated by the apparent misinterpretation of the term pragmatism and its philosophical underpinnings. The dictionary term, for example, is largely concerned with and confined only to practical matters. It should be noted that pragmatism discussed here represents the former statement referring to philosophical thinking, commonly known as American Pragmatism due to its American founders.

American Pragmatism emerged during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the main originators being Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, John Dewey, and George Herbert Mead. However, pragmatism has been criticised for the lack of agreement about the concept; for example, Lovejoy (1908) identified 13 distinctive and logically independent versions of pragmatism. Indeed, Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead have not even agreed on a same label to represent their approaches. Whilst James called his approach ‘pragmatism’, in order to differentiate his ideas from James, Peirce called his approach ‘pragmaticism’, Dewey called his approach ‘experimentalism’ or ‘instrumentalism’, and Mead preferred to call his perspective ‘social behaviourism’ (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011). Nevertheless, as Simpson (2009) notes, they share a common commitment of developing a philosophy of science relevant to, and informed by, human experience and practice. Their approaches coincide with the notion of seeking practical ways for explaining human behaviour and associated sense-making as well as linking knowledge and action (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011). They further converge on the understanding that we all actively participate, in other words, we are all practitioners in our

social worlds (Simpson, 2009; Elkjaer and Simpson, 2006; Strauss, 1978), and as such the social meanings shaping thoughts and actions are continuously constructed and re-constructed through active participation.

It is also worthwhile to mention two contemporary pragmatist thinkers such as Richard Rorty and Hilary Putnam who played an important role in reviving interest in pragmatism and enabling it to gain momentum (Bernstein, 1989; Dickstein, 1998; Malachowski, 2014; Westbrook, 1998). Rorty has created quite a controversy in the intellectual community with his claims about reality (Westbrook, 1998, Malachowski, 2014). Rorty, Williams, and Bromwich (1980) claim that there are no final answers to questions about knowledge, truth, and representation and, therefore, they should be rejected and eliminated from philosophy. He suggests that the traditional questions such as metaphysics and epistemology can be neglected as they have no practical use or social utility (Rorty, 2007), advising the abandonment of the problematic areas in philosophy where no final answers are possible such as the eternal pursuit of truth in the temporalised world (Saatkamp, 1995). In contrast to Rorty's suggestions for the philosophy to move to a new ground, Putnam has wanted to build on the existing tradition drawing upon what was useful in classic pragmatism as he is more appreciative of and more similar to classic pragmatists (Malachowski, 2014). Although Putnam considers Rorty's pragmatism to be fundamentally flawed, they both agree on pragmatism's focus on achieving practical results (Malachowski, 2014). It should be noted that despite the controversy he created, Rorty has not questioned pragmatism's position as a philosophy (Malachowski, 2014). Rorty's views coincide with Dewey's that the 'epistemology industry' needs to stop trying to solve the unsolvable problems and to get over them (Westbrook, 1998, p. 128).

In any case, such statements, arguably, caused some researchers to question pragmatism's philosophical status. For instance, although Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 18) claim to

embrace pragmatism as a philosophical stance, they also state that pragmatism is, in a sense, anti-philosophy. Similarly, Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010) describe pragmatism not as a philosophical position, but rather as a set of philosophical tools that can be used to address problems.

Even among researchers who perceive pragmatism as a philosophy, pragmatism attracts very diverse views. Rorty (1982, p. 160) describes pragmatism as ‘a vague, ambiguous, and overworked word’. Similarly, Bernstein (1989) draws attention to the diverse philosophic arguments among the pragmatists. I concur with Bernstein (1989) on his suggestion that such vitality and diversity of pragmatist tradition can be best appreciated by perceiving the distinctive, sometimes even competing, ideas as different voices in an ongoing engaged conversation, drawing upon diverse sources. Although appreciative of different voices, my understanding of pragmatism centres on the more traditionalist views deriving from American Pragmatism. However, I will not be using the exact label of ‘American Pragmatism’. In contrast to Mounce’s (1997, p. 1) claim that ‘pragmatism is the distinctively American philosophy’, pragmatism is now a more ‘cosmopolitan’ philosophy (Malachowski, 2014) and lost its ‘American colouration’ (Gunn, 1995, p. 298, cited in Malachowski, 2014). Nonetheless, among leading trust researchers, pragmatism is still more common in North America compared to other geographical locations (Isaeva et al., 2015).

Noting the diversity of opinions pertaining to the pragmatist philosophy, in the remainder of this section I endeavour to explain my pragmatist stance. I discuss my approach and understanding of pragmatist philosophy, as well as my interpretation of the works of pragmatist philosophers, mainly the founders such as Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead and also the contemporary interpretations of their works by researchers such as Simpson (2009) and Elkjaer and Simpson (2011). I further build my discussion on particular themes concerning the

pragmatist philosophy such as focusing on human experience and practice (Simpson, 2009), seeking practical relevance and useful knowledge (Wicks and Freeman, 1998), and actively participating in our social worlds (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2006; Simpson, 2009; Strauss, 1978).

Pragmatist researchers focus on serving human purposes and seek to produce useful knowledge and research that scrutinises practical relevance (Wicks and Freeman, 1998). It provides a foundation for understanding practice as creative action (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2006, 2011). At this point, two very important issues emerge and hence require further clarification: practice and usefulness. These concepts are discussed further below.

In recent years, ‘practice’ has become an ambiguous term; as Simpson (2009, p. 1330) notes, ‘on one hand we are concerned with the mundane practicalities of just getting on in the hurly burly of a dynamic and uncertain world where there is little call for theory; on the other hand, we have philosophically and theoretically informed disciplines and activities that constitute the praxis of a socially responsive and responsible life’. In a way, researchers are compelled to choose between theory or practice, and if they choose both they are required to justify their choice. In fact, practice theory consists of multiple dualisms such as theory versus practice, low versus high practices, rational action versus normatively-oriented action, convergent versus divergent dynamics, individual versus social levels of analysis, and so on (Simpson, 2009). However, it can be argued that as Joas (1997 cited in Simpson, 2009) notes, comprehensive theory of practice cannot be founded on such dualisms as human action transcends the boundaries it imposes.

Whilst discussing the term practice, I would like to make my position clear regarding its meaning as in the literature the term practice most commonly refers to the application of ideas or methods in the practitioner community. However, such an approach is arguably short-sighted. In this thesis, practice is conceptualised as the conduct of transactions between actors

where the actors are the meaning-makers through active and reflexive participation in the transactions constituting the experiences (Simpson, 2009). In other words, the term practice refers to a dynamic, temporal process involving human conduct and the exercise of social agency transcending the boundaries of individual and social (Simpson, 2009). Therefore, in this thesis, the concept of practice goes beyond the commonly-attributed understanding of producing useful knowledge for the practitioner community to also include research that involves any aspects of human conduct which is shaped by actors' choices based on their anticipation of the likely outcomes of their social actions. This, consequently shapes their worlds.

The second issue that needs clarification concerns the perception of useful knowledge. From the particular pragmatist position underlying this thesis, useful knowledge is something that facilitates successful action through creating solutions to the problems whilst informing future practice (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). Yet, the concept of usefulness depends on the agency and the context. Another issue to consider pertains to the question of 'useful to whom'. Elkjaer and Simpson (2006) interpret Dewey's understanding of philosophy as the one that is practically useful in people's lives in comparison to the ones that are based on primarily intellectually abstract endeavour. In this scenario, 'whom' refers to the practitioner community. However, care must be taken before reaching this conclusion. In some cases, knowledge originated from primarily intellectual knowledge endeavours, in turn, has promoted knowledge which is perceived to be useful in a Deweyan way of defining usefulness. My understanding of useful, therefore, is based on Wicks and Freeman's (1998) proposition that the criterion of usefulness applies across two dimensions: (1) epistemological (is this information credible, well-founded, and reliable) and (2) normative (does this help advance practice). Besides, 'all knowledge is knowledge from some point of view' (Fishman, 1978, p. 531 cited in Feilzer,

2010) and its usefulness will highly depend on the user. Furthermore, the judgments would be made according to the context of a particular problematic situation (Westbrook, 1998).

In addition to usefulness as a practical consideration, as Malachowski (2014, p. 6) summarises, pragmatism is also concerned with issues regarding whether something ‘engages our interests, whether it helps us cope in the appropriate circumstances, whether it helps us make better sense of the world around us, and, more generally, whether, following James’s lead, it fits in with our already secured fund of beliefs and experience’. Focus on human experience is one of the critical elements of classical pragmatism. For instance, Dewey highlighted its importance with the following statement: ‘The genuine interests of ‘pure’ science are served only by broadening the idea of application to include all phases of liberation and enrichment of human experience’ (Dewey, 1958, p. 165, cited in Malachowski, 2014). As active participants, or practitioners in real world events, we as individuals construct meanings and interpret the events based on personal experience and infer future actions. All of this is a consequence of a communicative process, building on constant interaction with the social universe (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). As such, meaning-making becomes one of the most significant elements of pragmatism.

Lovejoy (1908) and Henle (1951) interpret James’s understanding of meaning-making, claiming that according to James a statement would be meaningful if the statement itself or what is believed about that statement has experimental consequences (Meyers, 1971). In contrast, Meyers (1971, p. 369) finds this interpretation to be mistaken as he supports Perry’s (1958) view that beliefs are not a part of the meaning, so pragmatism is, for James, ‘the application of practical principles to the theoretic process itself’. On this issue, I align with Simpson’s (2009) interpretation of Mead who attributes the ‘social act’, deriving from social engagements and action between actors, as the basis of all human meaning-making as actors render a form of agency in shaping the meanings. Thus, Simpson (2009, p. 1336) defines social

agency as ‘the capacity to influence the meanings of social actions’. I adopt Emirbayer and Mische’s (1998, p. 970) more comprehensive definition of agency which is defined as ‘the temporally constructed engagement by actors of different structural environments –the temporal relational contexts of action’, resulting in different ways of experiencing the world through the relationships of the actors with surrounding persons, places, meanings, events, and actual interactions. Hence, pragmatism is built on a constructive way of understanding the social worlds and associated meaning-making.

I would like to summarise my understanding of the philosophical foundations of pragmatism through Simpson’s (2009) interpretation that: ontologically, a pragmatist approach focuses on meaning-making itself rather than on meanings of particular meaning-makers through intra-, inter- or extra-personal transactions which in turn offers a perspective on practice; epistemologically, pragmatism endorses playing an active role in knowing the worlds through participatory social actions; and methodologically, pragmatism provides a different approach to seeing practice and exploring different questions. In short, pragmatism is considered to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism and facts and values, as a result of treating theories, concepts, ideas, hypotheses, and research findings as instruments of thought and action that will have practical consequences in particular contexts (Saunders et al., 2016). It reflects my reluctance towards and suspicion of dichotomies (Putnam, 1995), hard and fixed boundaries, and absolutes as pragmatism encourages pluralism (Bernstein, 1989; Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011; Möllering, 2015). As an endnote, I should add that pragmatism as a philosophy is not the crude summary of ‘what works’ (Morgan, 2013; Patton, 2015).

### **5.2.2 The implications of Pragmatist philosophy for this research**

Elkjaer and Simpson (2011) point out pragmatism’s particular relevance in understanding the dynamic processes and practices of organisational life. Similarly, with this research, I aimed to

understand the trusting and distrusting practices in organisations and their interpretations by different organisational actors from a pragmatist stance. As such, the social act in this research is trust and distrust, whilst the context is the actors' organisations and differing cultures. A contextual perspective is useful, as pragmatist thinkers such as Dewey and Mead posit, ends and means develop in ever-changing contexts as a result of contextually-embedded actors' re-evaluation and reconstruction of their choices of action (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). From a pragmatist point of view that means that the context in which meaning making occurs and action is instigated is dynamic rather than static and is shaped and reshaped as a result of constant construction and reconstruction. Therefore, arguably, understanding trust and distrust is not possible without taking into consideration the actors (trustor and trustee) as the meaning-makers and also the organisational and cultural context where trust and distrust develop. Trust and distrust, from this perspective, are a result of 'a foundational orientation between self and other' (Lewis and Weigert, 2012, p. 26) and a reflexive process of interaction between beliefs and expectations of the trustor and her/his act of trust or distrust.

Pragmatist philosophy has much to contribute to the present research due to its scepticism of absolutes, certainties, and finalities and its challenging universalist assumptions whilst supporting pluralism (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011; Möllering, 2015). Pragmatism goes beyond defining the abstract tools, their essence, or their hierarchies, and instead seeks to discover what those abstract tools can do, how they function, and how they can be used for knowledge production, and consequently how those functions can be improved and utilised for new requirements (Hickman, 2001). This research challenges the universalistic trust models and argues for the context sensitivity of trust and thereby claiming that trust needs to be studied in the particular context from the lens of the actors (trustors and trustees) as they are the real meaning-makers.

This thesis endeavours to understand the actors (people in organisations) and explores their accounts of the trusting and distrusting acts and how they make the meanings. In meeting this aim, pragmatist philosophy is not restricted to observing ‘reality’ but accepts the fact that human actions construct the reality and reality continues to be constructed and reconstructed based on human conduct (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2015; Simpson, 2009). Pragmatism is built on the notion of the participation of the social actors in constructing meanings which might be a reflection of our current actions and reflection into the future, thereby rendering a dynamic and inherently creative action (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2006, 2011). As Peirce has suggested, the meanings we ascribe to events and actions are interpreted based on the future consequences those events and actions evoke (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011). Therefore, in this thesis, the meaning-making of actors and how they define trust, as well as distrust are investigated by taking the actors’ own way of understanding and meaning-making as the basis. In other words, in this research, I recognise and embrace the fact that truths can be multiple and fallible (Bernstein, 1989; Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011; Malachowski, 2014; Saatkamp, 1995; Westbrook, 1998), which represents the result of a holistic understanding of the self as social and participating agent (Elkjaer and Simpson, 2011).

As a last note, I believe the pragmatist perspective from which this thesis is written can contribute to the trust literature by providing an alternative lens in understanding the concept. As recently highlighted, the trust field is dominated by positivism (Isaeva et al., 2015; Siebert et al., 2016). Isaeva et al. (2015) suggested that pragmatist research can contribute to the trust field by producing rigorous, highly relevant research by offering timely, useable knowledge which also has a practicable impact from an organisational perspective (also see Bijlsma-Frankema and Rousseau, 2015). I also want to draw attention to another element in this thesis: culture. Similar to the research in trust, culture research is also dominated by a positivist philosophy (Jahoda, 2012; Tayeb, 1994). Hence, this study creates an opportunity to study the

interrelationships between both concepts from a different angle and offer a different perspective. In short, this research aims to produce credible, well-founded, reliable, and relevant knowledge (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008) that will advance the field of trust.

### **5.3 Approach to theory development**

After reflecting on my research philosophy, before commencing the discussion on the methods used, it is important to explore the approach to theory development that underpins this thesis: abduction. Abduction encompasses going back and forth between, as well as combining, deduction (moving from theory to data) and induction (moving from data to theory) (Saunders et al., 2016; Suddaby, 2006). In other words, abduction consists of ‘alternating between (empirically-laden) theory and (theory-laden) empirical ‘facts’ (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009, p. 5). Building on pragmatist philosopher Peirce’s work of theory of inference, meaning, and action, I adopted an abductive approach, following the surprises emerged during the research process (Locke, Golden-Biddle, and Feldman, 2008; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012; Van Maanen, Sørensen, and Mitchell, 2007). For example, in my analysis I started with an inductive approach, identifying the concepts from the empirical data. However, in some cases the emergent concepts were highly associated with the existing concepts. Therefore, where appropriate, I used these theories to structure the inductively identified concepts, adopting a more deductive approach in the categorisation. I have, therefore, went back and forth between using an inductive or a deductive approach as relevant (Patton, 2015), resulting in the use of an overall abductive approach. Consequently, such an approach allowed ‘leading away’ from ‘old to new theoretical insights’ (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012, p. 169). I offer more details in section 5.9, where I explain the abductive analysis process undertaken in this thesis.

## 5.4 Method

As a pragmatist, my decision to use either qualitative or quantitative methods was entirely driven by the aim of finding the most appropriate method to address the research questions. Therefore, I considered both methods and their differing strengths and weaknesses, which in turn provide, although not wholly mutually exclusive, alternative research strategies (Patton, 2015). For example, quantitative methods are advantageous in studying causal relationships, measuring statements, executing comparisons, doing statistical aggregations of the data, and allowing generalisations (Patton, 2015). However, when there is a need for much more in-depth analysis of the matter studied, which is also the aim of this thesis, the quantitative methods become less useful.

Because quantitative methods impose a limited worldview on the participants as a result of coding the social world with predefined operational variables and hypotheses and, therefore, asking questions accordingly (Marshall and Rossman, 2016) and forcing the respondents to fit their perceptions, knowledge, experiences, and feelings into the researchers' pre-determined categories (Patton, 2015), it would not be possible to capture the stories, the complex narratives of personal experiences and worldviews of the participants. However, in order to address the research questions in the most satisfactory way, capturing the participants' views, as well as their experiences, and understanding trust and distrust through their lenses were crucial. Therefore, the focus was to gather data that represented the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they placed on events, processes, and structures of their lives with inferences to the social world around them (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014). Consequently, within this thesis I use qualitative methods which enabled the depth of understanding of the issues studied whilst producing rich and detailed information (Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015).

As a last note, Patton (2015) believes that the qualitative-quantitative debate has been decelerated with an emerging consensus on choosing methods according to the purposes and research questions rather than insisting on a single ‘right’ methodological approach. However, the deceleration Patton (2015) estimates is not yet observed in trust research as the trust field is dominated by positivist research where quantitative methods are perceived as the norm of conducting research (Isaeva et al., 2015; Siebert et al., 2016). This research, therefore, provides an opportunity to discover unexplored areas in trust research and thereby presents original contribution to the knowledge offered from a pragmatist lens.

### **5.5 The quality assessment of qualitative research**

In recent years, although the value of qualitative research has been increasingly recognised (Marshall and Rossman, 2016), arguably, qualitative research continues to be under the shadow of quantitative research. For example, the trustworthiness of the knowledge is most commonly assessed through the consideration of objectivity, reliability, validity, and generalisability (Barbour, 2014; Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015), drawing from the natural and experimental sciences for direction (Marshall and Grossman, 2016) and thereby assessing the value of qualitative research in comparison to quantitative research by using quantitative criteria.

In the literature it is also possible to find alternative quality criteria, specifically offered for qualitative research, such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). However, such terms are criticised, critics emphasising that they have little resonance outside the qualitative community and are difficult to interpret and operationalise (Barbour, 2014). Therefore, in qualitative research the term ‘quality’ and the criteria for quality remain elusive (Barbour, 2014) with the utilisation of numerous terms such as ‘possibly or probably true, reliable, valid, dependable, reasonable, confirmable, credible, trustworthy, useful, compelling, significant, empowering’ (Miles et al., 2014, p. 309-310).

Drawing from a pragmatist philosophy, in order to reach to a greater audience, I opted to build my discussion of the quality criteria around Miles et al.'s (2014) five main categories, blending the traditional terminology with the alternative constructs: (1) objectivity/confirmability of qualitative work, (2) reliability/dependability/auditability, (3) internal validity/credibility/authenticity, (4) external validity/transferability/fittingness, and (5) utilization/application/action orientation. In the next section, I commence with explaining these concepts.

### **5.5.1 The objectivity/confirmability of qualitative work**

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) describe objectivity as an ambiguous term whilst questioning whether it is possible to produce objective knowledge through interviews. As a pragmatist who seeks to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, I will not engage in the objectivism versus subjectivism debate, rather will clarify my position. I concur with the belief that '[t]here is no value-free science' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). My direct involvement in the research process is undeniable and also unavoidable as the researcher is the instrument in a qualitative enquiry (Creswell, 2014; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Patton, 2015). I embrace the possible subjectivity my involvement as a researcher brings into the research which facilitates a better understanding of the complex social phenomena 'as a result of developing in-depth understanding and empathy of the participants' worlds', which requires involvement (Marshall and Rossman, 2016, p. 70). Besides, '[t]he perspective that the researcher brings to a qualitative inquiry is part of the context for the findings' (Patton, 2015, p. 73).

As mentioned earlier, a pragmatist's thoughts and actions are shaped by social meanings, which are continuously constructed and re-constructed through active participation in 'the lives of the participants' (Marshall and Rossman, 2016, p. 117) and tell stories about the worlds studied

(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). However, these stories are ‘couched and framed within specific storytelling traditions’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 6). I am aware that I am communicating the participants’ experiences through my interpretations, which is therefore inevitably influenced by my viewpoints (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). To sum up, the final report of the research is actually a consequence of co-created knowledge of both interviewer (myself) and interviewees (the participants) influenced by questions asked and answers given and then by the researcher’s (myself) analysis and reporting, and the procedures and techniques applied along the way (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

My stance in this research can be summarised with Patton’s (2015) term of ‘empathic neutrality’ where empathy describes the interest, caring, and understanding showed to the participants whilst neutrality outlines the non-judgemental stance taken. I entered this research with an open mind, not setting about to prove a perspective or trying to arrive at a predisposed preposition, but instead aimed to understand the worlds of the organisational members whilst discovering the emerging complexities and diverse perspectives and reporting both confirming and disconfirming evidence (Patton, 2015). Seidman (2013, p. 98) captures precisely my approach to research as ‘I try to strike a balance, saying enough about myself to be alive and responsive but little enough to preserve the autonomy of the participant’s words and to keep the focus of attention on his or her experience rather than mine’.

### **5.5.2 Internal validity/credibility/authenticity**

Miles et al. (2014) identify the issue here to be related to the truth value, to whether findings of the study make sense and are credible to the stakeholders. I will address this issue from a pragmatist viewpoint. First of all, I am not promising to deliver a single truth; rather I offer my findings based on my analysis and interpretation of the data (Patton, 2015). I align with the pragmatist thought of appreciating researchers’ ideas and theories with practical and useful

value (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Simpson, 2009; Wicks and Freeman, 1998). As a result, the question of whether the research produces true knowledge is replaced with the question of whether the research provides practical and useful knowledge (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015). I address this issue below (Section 5.5.5) as it requires much more detailed discussion.

As Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011) assert, the concept of validity causes frustration as it can neither be simply dismissed nor can be easily constructed. Although the term validity is borrowed directly from quantitative research, it does not possess similar implications in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) attribute the validation to the quality of the researcher's craftsmanship and her/his checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting the findings. Hence, the quality is closely associated with the researcher's credibility, competence, thoroughness, and integrity (Patton, 2015). The final categorisation of the empirical data involved various debates and discussions with three academics (two supervisors and one external academic) until consensus on a scheme emerged.

I also followed Creswell's (2014) suggestions in order to ensure a certain level of accuracy. I used rich, thick descriptions and quotes to create a direct connection between the readers and the participants. Throughout the presentation of the research findings, I endeavoured to be reflexive and reflective, presenting a window into my thinking processes as the researcher (Patton, 2015). I did not do 'cherry-picking' whilst presenting the emerging themes (Barbour, 2014). I have endeavoured to present negative or discrepant information even if it contradicted the themes I presented. I continually assessed and weighed the evidence, checking the meanings of outliers and contradictory statements, following up on surprises, getting feedback from the participants, and checking the representativeness of the findings. I used peer debriefing at different stages of the research process. The findings were also discussed with academics from

diverse disciplines, as well as the participants, the information of which is presented in more detail below.

### **5.5.3 Reliability/dependability/auditability**

Reliability concerns the consistency and trustworthiness of the undertaken research process and findings, with relation to reproducibility of reasonably similar findings at other times by other researchers (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Miles et al. 2014). In other words, the concept of reliability, historically, is about the quality and appropriateness of the instrument and its producing comparable results across different administrations (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). However, where the researcher is the ‘instrument’ (Creswell, 2014; Guba and Lincoln, 1981; Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Patton, 2015), reliability is more about the researcher and whether she/he is credible, and the interpretation of the data is trustworthy (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). In a rationalist sense, due to heavy reliance on the human subject, researchers trade-off some objectivity and reliability to gain flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge which cannot be obtained through physical instruments (Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1981; Patton 2015). Alternatively, in a pragmatist sense, the traditional interpretation and application of reliability is problematic due to its reliance on the assumption of an unchanging, replicable universe. Ontologically speaking, a pragmatist believes that the social world is continuously constructed where the researcher is the active practitioner (Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Simpson 2009). Therefore, it is not possible to promise replicability as the world constantly changes (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Consequently, this thesis does not guarantee replicability but instead offers insight into the participants’ perspectives and experiences, in a defined context.

#### **5.5.4 External validity/generalisability/transferability/fittingness**

The generalisability of knowledge is built on the expectation that scientific knowledge is universal and therefore is always valid at every place and time. However, generalisability has a limited use in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014), or is even incongruent with the definition of knowledge that I have been describing throughout this chapter as ‘socially and historically contextualized modes of understanding and acting in the social world’ (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015, p. 295). Moreover, the notion of generalisation is quite problematic even in general. For example, as Cronbach (1975, p.122-3) says, ‘[g]eneralizations decay. At one time a conclusion describes the existing situation well, at a later time it accounts for rather little variance, and ultimately is valid only as history’. Then the question is whether the concept of generalisability should be ignored and Lincoln and Guba’s (2000, p. 27) statement, which is also the title of the chapter, that ‘[t]he only generalization is: there is no generalization’ be accepted. The answer to this question, arguably, will depend on the research context and the authors’ philosophy.

In this research, the findings and the theoretical framework developed are representative of the particular organisational and cultural context discussed and therefore it is not possible to claim the findings are generalisable to every context. However, it is more accurate to discuss the ‘transferability’ of the findings, the term which is suggested as an alternative to generalisability in qualitative research (Barbour, 2014; Guba, 1981; Lincoln and Guba, 1981, 2000; Maxwell and Chmiel, 2014). My main aim in this research was not to produce findings that would be generalisable to any context in any time, but to produce knowledge that may be transferred to others if there is a certain amount of sufficient shared similarity or a degree of ‘fittingness’ between the contexts (Guba, 1981; Guba and Lincoln, 1981, 2000; Patton, 2015). The readers and the users of the research findings are the ones who will decide on their persuasiveness and if it has meaning and resonance and transferability to other individuals, contexts, situations, and

times (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Miles et al., 2014). In other words, the transfer of the findings or emerging recommendations will depend on their perceived usefulness by the users (Barbour, 2014).

### **5.5.5 Utilisation/application/action orientation**

When discussing my pragmatist philosophy, I often referred to pragmatism's focus on producing practical and useful knowledge. Following Wicks and Freeman (1998), usefulness is: (1) producing rigorous knowledge which is credible, well-founded, and reliable and (2) helping to advance practice. In preceding sections, I explained what kind of measures I have taken to ensure accuracy and the usefulness of the research results. In terms of advancing practice, I questioned my findings and whether the research had relevance to, and reflected the real-world issues, concerns, and experiences of the participants and focused sufficiently on the informing actions and decisions (Patton, 2015).

As a pragmatist, I argue that in a study investigating the individuals' lived experiences, human actions cannot be entirely understood without understanding the meanings the participants give to those actions (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). Such an objective requires taking into consideration the context in which the phenomena are nested (Miles et al., 2014) with an awareness towards the complexities involved pertaining to the participants' thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptions (Marshall and Rossman, 2016). The biggest challenge with so much knowledge gained was to make sense of, and to artfully interpret what I learned; 'moving from the field, to the text, to the reader' (Denzin, 2014, p. 589).

In order to enhance the production of understandable, relevant, usable, and actionable findings which make sense and are credible and plausible, I discussed the findings with the intended users. In order to ensure that the findings represent the worlds of the participants accurately, I reached out to five participants who previously offered further help if it was necessary. I

contacted them at various stages of the research with the emergent themes and dimensions in order to gauge their feelings about and the views on the accuracy and the representativeness of the findings. The findings were also discussed in various research group meetings with other academics and were presented at a conference where the reaction of a bigger research community was taken into consideration in the finalisation of the thesis report. Furthermore, the research process and findings were regularly discussed with my two supervisors. Hence, such initiatives enabled ensuring that the analysis is grounded in the data and is evaluated from multiple theoretical and practical lenses (Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Miles et al. 2014, Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

After discussing the use of qualitative methods and establishing the measures taken to ensure quality, now I proceed with the discussion of the technique used as part of the research process.

## **5.6 The Critical Incident Technique (CIT)**

The possible value of using the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) in trust research has been recognised by different researchers (e.g. Lewicki et al., 1998; Münscher and Kühlmann, 2015). Before discussing the implications of this technique in the context of this thesis, however, it is pertinent to establish what the CIT actually means. Therefore, in the subsequent sub-section I explore what CIT is and then discuss the rationale behind choosing to use it in this thesis.

### **5.6.1 What is CIT?**

CIT is ‘a systematic, inductive, open-ended procedure’ for information elicitation from the respondents (Norman, Redfern, Tomalin and Oliver, 1992, p. 591). It consists of a set of procedures for collecting and analysing information about human behaviour which in turn sheds light on the practical problems (Flanagan, 1954). The CIT enables understanding of a

significant occurrence (e.g. incident, event, process, or issue) from the perspective of the participant whilst considering the cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements (Chell, 2004).

The CIT was originally introduced by Flanagan (1954) at a time when positivism was the dominant philosophy in both natural and social sciences (Chell, 2004) and therefore the analysis was built on the quantification of data. However, throughout the years, the technique has further developed, both on the focus and on the way of undertaking the analysis and interpretations (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, and Maglio, 2005; Chell, 2004). As such, in recent years, the CIT has been used extensively as an exploratory and investigative qualitative research method (Butterfield et al., 2005).

Within CIT, an incident can be defined as an observable event which is significant for the respondent and allows inferences to be made about that particular individual. This definition mainly derives from the general description of 'incident' in the literature where an incident is defined as an observable human activity which is sufficiently complete, adequately detailed, and clear thereby allowing for inferences and predictions to be made about the person performing the act (Bitner, Booms, and Mohr, 1994; Chell, 2004; Flanagan, 1954; Gremler, 2004; Snodgrass, Gervais, Corbett, and Wilde, 2009). The described incident, rather than being a single clear-cut description of a single event, can be an amalgam of similar types of events (Norman et al., 1992) as was usually the case in this research as the investigation comprised very complex phenomena such as trust and distrust.

An incident is critical if it makes 'a "significant" contribution, either positively or negatively, to the general aim of the activity' (Flanagan, 1954, p. 339). The criticalness mainly depends on the participant's self-attribution of significance. In other words, the criticality of incidents is related to the value judgments made by the participants on the significance they attach to the meaning of the incident or to the interpretation of the significance of an event (Tripp, 2011). As

such, an incident's being critical does not necessitate it to be some kind of a spectacular event. Indeed, Tripp (2011) claims that the vast majority of such incidents, when observed from outside, are straightforward or typical in nature rather than being dramatic, obvious accounts, or a person's turning point in her/his life. Rather, what matters is that the incident is significant for the participant. In other words, concurring with Chell (2004, p. 58), what matters is that the participants' accounts, whether 'partial or not, biased or not, such accounts constitute their reality, and, arguably, it is the way they view the world which shapes their future actions'.

Building on participants' choice of what is relevant and significant for them also provides an opportunity for attaining rich data as a result of not (1) restricting the respondents with previously defined preconceptions of what needs to be important or (2) restraining them into the boundaries of a previously determined framework (Gremler, 2004). Consequently, the CIT enabled me to obtain the details of the first-hand experiences of the participants (Bitner et al., 1994; Gremler, 2004). Not forcing the responses into a predefined structure allowed an opportunity to identify events which otherwise might have been missed (Snodgrass et al., 2009). Furthermore, with a concentrated focus on an incident, the participants had an opportunity to identify and clarify the feelings and the meanings they attached to the incidents (Cox, Bergen, and Norman, 1993), presenting a description of the event with rich emotional colour (Sharoff, 2008).

It is highly likely that the chosen incidents were interpreted as significant due to the strong emotions and intense feelings they had evoked at the time and in its subsequent reflections and interpretations (Cope and Watts, 2000). Going back to Tripp's (2011) comments, an incident that seems routine, minor, not at all dramatic to some people may induce strong feelings in others. To sum up, what makes an incident significant is a result of the significance a person (the participant) attaches to it.

### **5.6.2 The implications of the CIT for this research**

There were two main reasons for using the CIT in this thesis. The first reason concerns the nature of the phenomena studied. The CIT provided a viable way of investigating the phenomena of trust and distrust. Investigation of such phenomena is challenging as people are not usually consciously aware of the development of trust or distrust (Münscher and Köhlmann, 2015). With the CIT, however, the participants were asked to talk about events which instigated trusting or distrusting actions in them. Whilst telling their stories, they were not forced to identify what really caused trust or distrust. Instead, they were asked to talk about their experiences and tell their stories which enabled me to understand their social worlds and their associated meaning-making. Furthermore, during the interviews we, the interviewee (participant) and the interviewer (myself), have co-constructed meanings as we both reflected on our own answers and questions (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Simpson, 2009). The participants were the actors who were the real meaning-makers of the trust and distrust events whilst as the researcher I was the one who (re)conceptualised their perceptions of their world views and interpreted them. Consequently, I, as the researcher, participated in their meaning-making process.

The second reason for choosing the CIT was driven by the goal of addressing the debate associated with the trust and distrust relationship. One of the main research questions (RQ3) seeks to identify the nature of the relationship between trust and distrust and offer insight into the ongoing debate on whether trust and distrust are the same constructs sited at the opposite ends of the same continuum or the separate constructs. As also suggested by other trust researchers such as Guo et al. (2017), Huang and Dastmalchian (2006), and Lewicki et al. (1998) as a possible way to offer insight into this debate, I followed Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman's (1959) study which investigated the distinction between satisfaction and

dissatisfaction by using the CIT. Hence, the data collection and analysis followed Herzberg et al. (1959). This is further explained in the subsequent sections. Now, I proceed with the discussion of the participant recruitment process.

## **5.7 Participant selection**

In the previous sections, I described the underlying method used and the technique applied in this thesis and emphasised that their choices were solely driven by the research questions. Similarly, the choice of the participants in this thesis was governed by the participants' capacity to articulate on the problem and ability to answer the research questions (Creswell 2014; Saunders and Townsend, 2017). Consequently, the participants were selected purposefully to aid in addressing the research questions (Creswell, 2014; Teddy and Yu, 2007).

The decision driving the sampling strategy was not to attain a statistically-determined probability sample which would allow generalisations of the findings from a sample to a population (see section 5.5.4 for a detailed discussion on the issue). Rather, the aim was to reach out to those who could offer rich and illuminative cases which would have the ability to facilitate in-depth understanding, thereby serving the purpose of the research (Patton, 2015). Hence, the aim in this research was to collect 'appropriate data' (Saunders, 2012) which allowed access to useful knowledge (Saunders and Townsend, 2017). Participants were therefore chosen with the aim of gaining understanding and insights into trust and distrust in an organisational context. The purposive sampling criteria were that the individuals will be working adults with diverse work experiences. It was also very important to achieve a highly heterogeneous sample and therefore the participants needed to be recruited from diverse culture, age, gender groups.

Considering the purpose of the research and the sample requirements, consulting companies constituted a good fit. Firstly, these organisations prided themselves on recruiting and employing a diverse workforce which enabled accessing to a highly heterogeneous sample.

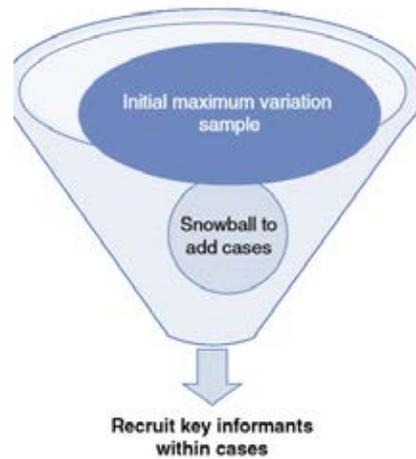
Secondly, and very interestingly, trust has been among the core values of these organisations. This is not surprising given the fact that such companies rely on human resources and therefore trust becomes an essential element of managing them, especially considering the transient and dynamic work environment with the constant changing work structure and projects. Furthermore, academic work (e.g. Bogenrieder and Nooteboom, 2004; Glückler and Armbrüster, 2003) drew attention to the significance of trust in such organisations.

After establishing the top consulting companies as appropriate organisations for recruiting the participants, the initial access was gained with the assistance of two people, one of whom was a senior person in the UK offices of one of the top consulting companies and another key contact working in another top consulting company in the UK, who was introduced to me by the University of Birmingham External Relations Office. Both these contacts had the ability to act as a gatekeeper and broker my access to participants. In order to protect the confidentiality of these companies, specific information about them is not shared here. However, this can be noted that they are among the largest consultancy organisations across the world based on their revenues and the number of employees they employ.

The initial criterion for attaining a purposeful sampling strategy was to adopt a maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling in order to achieve a high variation in culture, as well as in age/gender/experience/grade and identify common and different patterns of trust and distrust dynamics across diverse groups, which facilitated the discovery of central themes that are shared across a great deal of variation (Patton, 2015). As such, achieving a highly diverse sample enabled identifying a range of common patterns (Marshall and Rossman, 2016; Miles et al., 2014), more specifically core experiences and central and shared dimensions of trust and distrust (Patton, 2015). See Table 5.1 below for the details of the demographics of the participants.

I recruited 20 participants through my first contact and 10 through the second contact. As the interviews progressed, the sampling strategy had evolved (Miles et al., 2014). As I was interviewing the initial chosen participants, new opportunities arose which consequently resulted in my using and combining more than one sampling strategy. One of these strategies was snowballing – recruiting new interviewees that are introduced by the initial participants as possible good sources for the focus of enquiry (Patton, 2015). A participant introduced to me by the first contact further helped me to recruit seven participants from the same company's US offices. Furthermore, three additional participants were introduced to me by other three participants. Ten more individuals were recruited by an adaptation of convenience sampling strategy – selecting participants based on ease of access (Patton, 2015), where individuals working at various top consulting companies were contacted using the University of Birmingham's alumni contacts. As a result, 50 participants were interviewed from five consulting organisations (Organisation-A: 27; Organisation-B: 11; Organisation-C: 6; Organisation-D: 4, and Organisation-E: 2 participants). Figure 5.1 illustrates the final purposeful sampling strategy (Patton, 2015), which comprises a maximum variation sampling strategy, which was combined with snowballing when the opportunity emerged, and lastly supplemented with convenience sampling strategy.

*Figure 5.1 – Sampling strategy*



Source (reproduced by permission): Patton (2015, p. 305)

Twenty-one of the participants were English and the remaining 29 participants belonged to different ethnicities comprising Indian (7), Turkish (6), American (3), Azerbaijani (2), French (2), Italian (2), Afghan (1), Belgian (1), Canadian (1), Chinese (1), Greek Cypriot (1), Irish (1), and Surinamese African (1). The demographics of the participants are further detailed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Participant demographics

**Gender**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	25	50%
Male	25	50%
Total	50	100%

**Age**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Between 20-29	17	34%
Between 30-39	14	28%
Between 40-49	12	24%
Between 50-59	7	14%
Total	50	100%

**Years of Experience**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 6 years	16	32%
Between 6 and 10 years	6	12%
Between 11 and 15	7	14%
Between 16 and 20	11	22%
More than 20	10	20%
Total	50	100%

**Grade\***

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pre-management	22	44%
Managerial	16	32%
Executive	12	24%
Total	50	100%

\*In the consulting firms, the pre-management staff are usually the consultants and senior consultants; the managerial positions are held by managers and senior managers; and the executive staff comprise directors and partners, and in this research, there was a C-level executive.

The decision on the total number of the participants required for achieving data saturation in heterogeneous samples was made in line with the experts' recommendations. Different qualitative researchers have different opinions regarding the sufficient number of participants required (see Saunders and Townsend, 2016 for an extensive review on the matter). Following Francis et al.'s (2010) suggestions, the emergence of new categories was questioned after the interview data for the first 15 participants were analysed. This process was undertaken separately for factors influencing trust, factors influencing distrust, and the relationship between trust, distrust, and culture. For the latter, it was realised that data saturation (no new concepts emerged) was achieved early on as no new themes emerged after the fifteenth interview.

Saturation in the analysis of the factors influencing trust was reached with the 26<sup>th</sup> participant. Saturation in the analysis of the factors influencing distrust was reached with the 42<sup>th</sup> participant. In order to ensure no new categories and themes emerged, the interviewing process was further carried out until 50 participants were interviewed (Saunders and Townsend, 2016).

## **5.8 Data collection**

Before commencing with the data collection, approval of the University of Birmingham's Ethics Committee was obtained, and data collection and subsequent data analysis adhered to the University's ethics requirements (see Appendix A). Prior to the interviews, the participants were presented with the 'participant information sheet' (see Appendix B) which outlined the details of the research. The participants were asked to sign an 'informed consent form' (see Appendix C) where they declared their understanding of the purpose of the study and what is expected from them, and that their participation was voluntary and they had the right to withdraw from the study. The participants were ensured that their names and the organisations they work for would be anonymous and their information would be confidential.

Fifty interviews operationalising the CIT were undertaken. Seventeen of the interviews were conducted face-to-face, whilst 24 were conducted via Skype video conferencing and nine via telephone conversations (Hanna, 2012; Sheehan, Saunders, and Wang, 2015; Wang and Saunders, 2012). Personally, the utilisation of different interview methods did not cause any distinction in terms of the results obtained. In this, the fact that the participants often conduct their business via Skype and telephone, inevitably played a major role.

The participants were asked specific, predefined, open-ended questions with a focus on 'critical incidents' and additionally were asked dynamic, customised probing questions in the light of newly-emerging topics during the discussions which consequently helped to explore more details on that particular event and keep the focus on the event and its specifics. During the

interviews, I considered the possibility of recalling bias stemming from difficulties in remembering the event (Gremier, 2004; Snodgrass et al., 2009). Because the CIT relies on the participants communicating and the interviewer's interpreting the events, it was important that the respondents recalled and explained the event clearly. At the same time, the nature of the technique makes the recollection of the memories relatively easier because of two main reasons. Firstly, the issue of recollection of the memories is facilitated by focusing on specific incidents where the participant shares her/his singular experience as a story (Sharoff, 2008). Secondly, because of the use of significant events, it is much easier to accurately identify such incidents compared to the average ones in nature (Flanagan, 1954). In addition, with the CIT, establishing the reasons for why the incident is important is arguably more important than exacting the details (Cox et al., 1993).

Nevertheless, in order to better understand the incidents and their implications, as well as to eliminate recalling bias as much as possible, I endeavoured to collect highly detailed incidents. In order to achieve that respondents were encouraged to take the time to think. Furthermore, during the interviews the respondents were further probed in order to ensure that the details were sufficiently communicated and the different angles of the incident were captured. I especially concentrated on elaborating on the issues that the participants perceived to be important for them. I heeded Flanagan's (1954, p. 343) suggestions about what a critical incident is and therefore ensured that: (1) an actual behaviour is reported; (2) the incident was observed by the respondent; (3) all relevant factors in the situation were given; (4) the respondent made a definite judgment regarding the criticalness of the behaviour; and (5) the respondent made it clear why she/he believed the behaviour was critical. In light of such criteria, I continued probing until I was satisfied that sufficient details were captured. Collecting the detailed accounts of the incidents also has implications for reliability purposes. As Flanagan

(1954) suggested, the accuracy of an incident can be deduced from the level of full, precise detail presented about the incident itself.

The interviews comprised four critical incident questions (see Appendix D for the details). The first two critical incident questions were adopted from Herzberg et al. (1959, p. 141-2) and the last two critical incident questions were adopted from Münscher (2011). In the latter publication the original publication was in German, but the interviews questions were translated to me by Robert Münscher.

The first and the third critical incident questions aimed to address the first research question (RQ1) and the second and the fourth critical incident questions aimed to address the second research question (RQ2). The third research question (RQ3) built on the comparison of the findings of these two research questions. The first critical incident question was:

*Critical Incident Question 1: Think of an event in the past when you felt especially trusting of another member in the organisation you are or were working for at that time. That person can be a supervisor, subordinate, or a colleague and you do not need to name them. Please tell me about it.*

The third critical incident question was:

*Critical Incident Question 3: Think of someone from your current or previous organisation that you really trust. As before you do not need to name them.*

The same process was followed with critical case questions 2 and 4 where the term trust was replaced with distrust. Each question had further probing questions (see Appendix D). For example, in questions 1 and 2, the participants were asked to elaborate on what happened; how and under what circumstances the event happened; who was involved; what made this incident particularly significant; how it made the participant feel and what it meant to them. The

participants were also asked to rate their level of trust in Question 1 and the level of distrust in Question 2 before and after the event with the utilisation of a nine-point Likert scale-type question. In questions 3 and 4, the participants were further asked to reflect on how they had come to know that they can trust in Question 3 and distrust in Question 4 that person and whether that person had done something particular to earn their trust in Question 3 and distrust in Question 4. Afterwards, the participants were asked to describe the characteristics or behaviours of that person they found trustworthy in Question 3 and distrustworthy in Question 4.

Overall, among the 50 participants 46 responded to Question 1. One participant did not have a significant event to talk about and we ran out of time with the three participants. 44 participants responded to Question 2. Four of the participants claimed not having experienced a significant distrust event and no time remained for the two participants to respond to this question. Question 3 was responded by 48 participants, one of whom did not have someone who he really trusted and one did not have enough time to completely answer this question. For the Question 4, 42 participants answered as seven did not have someone they really distrusted and one did not have sufficient time to answer this question.

In order to explore the role of culture on trust or distrust (Research Question 4), after each set of questions, the participants were asked an open-ended question: *Does this person share a similar cultural background with you?* This question was followed by probing into whether the perceived similarity or difference played any role in terms of trust or distrust.

Overall, special consideration was given to the consequences of the interviews for the participants. The questions took the participants through a journey into their past experiences where they had to remember events when they felt especially trusting or distrusting. Consequently, they occasionally had to recall some unpleasant events. As Patton (2015, p. 495)

describes, ‘interviews are interventions’, evoking thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experience for both the interviewer and the interviewee whilst sometimes awakening some memories or knowledge that they have forgotten. During the interviews, I watched the interviewees for any signs of distress. I also informed them before starting the interview that they have the right to stop the interview whenever they felt uncomfortable or they could choose not to answer any questions that they did not want to. There were no such events. Luckily, there was no information shared with me that could create possible danger for someone else or to the community that would have required me to report it to appropriate bodies.

As data collection proceeded, each interview was transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber. Each transcript was later checked by me in order to ensure accuracy and reliability of the data. The interviews were conducted between April 2016 and June 2017. Each interview lasted around one hour, resulting in a mean of 55 minutes, median of 51 minutes, with a lower quartile of 42 and upper quartile of 67.

## **5.9 Data analysis**

The whole research process was dynamic in nature, there being a constant interplay between different stages of the research (Bryman and Burgess, 2002a). Consequently, the ‘analysis is [was] not a distinct phase’ but was carried out simultaneously with the research design and data collection (Bryman and Burgess, 2002b, p. 217). Hence, the analysis started at very early stages of the research as I started taking notes of the emerging issues and possible themes whilst conducting the interviews and later on whilst reading and re-reading the transcripts. When all interviews were completed, I was confronted with a mountain of impressions and transcribed interview data (Denzin, 2014), corresponding to more than 500 pages comprising over 270,000 words.

The analysis of data followed the recommendations of Flanigan's (1954) and the operationalisation of Herzberg et al. (1959) (also see Wasti et al., 2011 for a similar study). The data was analysed abductively, where the sense-making involved inductively identifying categories (Patton, 2015) and deductively grouping them into broader themes. Initially, the data were coded inductively where as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> order analysis (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013; Thomas, 2006), the 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts (and factors in regard to trust and distrust) were identified. The coding comprised mainly the utilisation of in-vivo codes which included the use of the participants' own language, proclaiming the participant's voice, or a descriptive code comprising a word or a short phrase, summarising the topic or the content of the information (Gioia et al., 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, in the process of labelling the codes, I did not restrict the labels into a strict form of adjectives, nouns, versus verbs, or behaviours, attitudes, versus characteristics. I also prepared a code dictionary which includes a short definition of the codes in order to ensure the consistent application of the codes over time and to facilitate comparisons or reliability checks with other researchers deciding to be involved in the coding (Miles et al., 2014) (see Appendix E). Furthermore, in a similar way to content analysis, the frequencies of the 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts were noted which were utilised in the discussions of the factors influencing trust and distrust in Chapters 6 and 7.

Due to the overall abductive approach, the 2<sup>nd</sup> order analysis of data did not perfectly follow Gioia et al.'s (2013) three-stage model of 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts, 2<sup>nd</sup> order themes, and aggregate dimensions. Whilst the 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts were inductively identified similar to Gioia et al. (2013), the categorisation of 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts into superordinate categories (Thomas, 2006) resumed a more deductive nature with the incorporation of the literature in grouping the concepts. In the subsequent paragraphs, I further elaborate on the details of the analysis. As mentioned earlier, the final categorisation of the empirical data involved various debates and

discussions with three academics (two supervisors and one external academic) until consensus on a scheme was agreed on.

In the process of addressing the first research question, the final categorisation of the factors influencing trust has not been an easy and straightforward process, but rather was an iterative one. After the inductive identification of the 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts – trust factors (these are listed in Table 5.2 and highlighted with an asterisk), I realised that not every factor was associated directly with trust as some of the factors actually concerned the trust development. Consequently, two broad categories emerged as ‘factors influencing trust’ and ‘factors influencing trust development’, depending on whether the emergent factor was associated with trust or trust development. This constitutes the first breaking point from the inductive analysis of Gioia et al. (2013), where a back and forth (abductive) approach is undertaken. Then, taking a step backwards, I examined each factor under these categories. The majority of the factors influencing trust were related to the trustee’s characteristics and behaviours, which are also known as trustworthiness factors. However, there were also two factors concerning the trustor. Therefore, factors influencing trust were further divided into two sub-groups: trustee-associated and trustor-associated factors. Going one more step backwards, the trustee-associated factors were grouped under Mayer et al.’s (1995) Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity (ABI) which constituted a good overarching framework to structure such factors. Just to exemplify the process, the factors such as ‘Competence/Ability/Capability’, ‘Knowledgeability’, ‘Confidence’, ‘Technical help’, ‘Hard working’, and ‘Cleverness’ identified in the inductive 1<sup>st</sup> order analysis, after going back and forth in the 2<sup>nd</sup> order analysis, were grouped under Ability, which, along with Benevolence and Integrity, constituted the trustee-associated (trustworthiness) factors (see Table 5.2). In addition to the factors influencing trust, six factors (adjuvant trust factors) emerged that influenced trust development. All of these factors are listed below in Table 5.2 and further discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

Table 5.2 – Factors influencing trust and trust development

---

## A. FACTORS INFLUENCING TRUST

### a. Trustee-associated factors (Trustworthiness factors)

#### Ability

- Competence/Ability/Capability\*
- Knowledgeability\*
- Confidence\*
- Technical help\*
- Hard working\*
- Cleverness\*

#### Benevolence

- Helping/supporting\*
- Caring\*
- Availability\*
- Friendly, nice, kind personable\*
- Altruistic motivation/unselfish behaviour\*
- Approachability\*
- Understanding\*
- Goodness\*
- Humour/fun\*
- Modesty\*
- Non-judgemental\*
- Mature\*
- Loyalty\*
- Positive attitude\*

#### Integrity

- Honesty\*
- Openness\*
- Integrity\*
- Keeping confidentiality\*
- Promise fulfilment\*
- Consistency\*
- Genuineness\*
- Fairness\*
- Reliability\*
- Discreetness
- Transparency\*
- Non-opportunistic behaviour\*

### b. Trustor-associated factors

- Trustor's propensity\*
- Feeling/instinct/intuition\*

## B. FACTORS INFLUENCING TRUST DEVELOPMENT (ADJUVANT FACTORS)

- Relationship\*
- Communication\*
  - Opening up\*
  - Having open and honest conversations\*
  - Listening\*
  - Body language\*
- Trust Reciprocity\*
- Collective trust\*
- Cultural Congruence\*
- Cooperation/collaboration\*

---

Note: (\*) shows the factors that were inductively identified from the empirical data as part of 1<sup>st</sup> order analysis

In the process of addressing the second research question, categorisation of the factors influencing distrust followed a similar pattern to the one of trust. I realised that the inductively identified factors (1<sup>st</sup> order concepts which are highlighted with an asterisk in Table 5.3) either concerned distrust or distrust development, thus were grouped under two broad categories: ‘factors influencing distrust’ and ‘factors influencing distrust development’ (see Table 5.3). The factors influencing distrust encompassed two subgroups –distrustee-associated and distrustor-associated factors, depending on whether the factor concerned the distrustee or the distrustor. The distrustor-associated factors comprised two factors which were similar to the ones emerged in trustor-associated factors category. The categorisation of the distrustee-associated factors was challenging. Whilst these factors were closely associated with ABI, they were not exactly the opposites of ABI for warranting a negative labelling. Consequently, due to their close association with ABI, I labelled these factors as Ability-, Benevolence-, and Integrity-associated factors. Furthermore, four factors were identified that influenced distrust development, increasing distrust levels (adjuvant distrust factors). These factors are listed below in Table 5.3 and further discussed in detail in Chapter 7. As it was the case with trust, the final categorisation of these factors was discussed with three academics (two supervisors and one external academic) until we reached a consensus on the final categorisation scheme.

Addressing the third research question encompassed using every information gained in addressing the first and second questions and comparing them against each other. This information is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8.

Table 5.3 – Factors influencing distrust and distrust development

---

**A. FACTORS INFLUENCING DISTRUST**

**a. Distrustee-associated factors (Distrustworthiness factors)**

**Ability-associated**

- Lack of knowledge\*
- Lack of confidence/Insecure\*
- Lack of competence/Ability/Capability\*
- Lazy\*

**Benevolence-associated**

- Lack of help/support\*
- Self-interested behaviour\*
- Rude, not nice and friendly\*
- Condescending behaviour\*
- Dictatorial behaviour\*
- Not caring\*
- Unavailability\*
- Arrogance/conceitedness\*
- Aggressiveness/temperamental\*
- Lack of understanding\*
- Undermine one's authority\*
- Unapproachability\*
- Unreceptivity\*
- Lack of goodness\*
- Immature\*

**Integrity-associated**

- Dishonesty\*
- Harmful behaviour\*
- Disrespectful behaviour\*
- Disingenuousness\*
- Opportunistic behaviour\*
- Not fulfilling their agreement\*
- Closeness/Not open\*
- Unfairness\*
- Lack of or questionable integrity\*
- Duplicity\*
- Breaking confidentiality\*
- Claiming ownership of somebody else's work\*
- Discrimination/favouritism\*
- Overambitiousness\*
- Promise breaking\*
- Going behind one's back\*
- Blaming others for failure\*
- Politics\*
- Deception\*
- Lack of transparency\*
- Inconsistency\*
- Falseness\*
- Unreliability\*
- Manipulativeness\*

**b. Distrustor-associated factors**

- Distrustor's propensity\*
- Feeling/Intuition/Instinct\*

## **B. FACTORS INFLUENCING DISTRUST DEVELOPMENT (ADJUVANT FACTORS)**

- Problematic communication\*
    - Lack of communication\*
    - Not opening up\*
    - Not listening\*
    - Body language\*
  - Problematic relationship\*
  - Problematic cooperation/collaboration\*
  - Collective distrust\*
- 

Note: (\*) shows the factors that were inductively identified from the empirical data as part of 1<sup>st</sup> order analysis

In the process of addressing the fourth research question, the analysis of the data on culture also had an abductive nature. The inductively-determined 1<sup>st</sup> order concepts were deductively grouped under the themes ‘Cultural similarity’ and ‘Cultural difference’ which comprised the source of the inquiry as the research encompassed the investigation of the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust (RQ4). These concepts are listed in the table below Table 5.4 and further discussed in Chapter 10.

*Table 5.4 – Culture similarity/difference and trust/distrust associated concepts*

---

### **A. Cultural similarity/difference and trust**

#### **a. Cultural similarity-trust**

- No influence
- Helping with trust building
- Facilitating trust building
- Better understanding, empathising
- Increased tendency to trust

#### **b. Cultural difference-trust**

- No influence

### **B. Cultural similarity/difference and distrust**

#### **a. Cultural similarity-distrust**

- No influence
- Unmet expectations of assumed behaviours within a shared culture
- Enhanced feelings of hurt or betrayal

#### **b. Cultural difference-distrust**

- No influence
  - Constituting barriers
  - Lack of understanding or empathising
  - Prejudices
-

During discussing the findings in the subsequent chapters, I often refer to the participants, quoting them where relevant. In order to protect the anonymity of the participants, I address them with abbreviations and numbers such as P01, P02, and so on. However, in culture chapter (Chapter 10), I use different numbers. This is because the quotes contain highly personal information that might identify them if connected to the previous quotes where I also mention other information such as the participants' positions (e.g. director, manager, etc) in the company. Therefore, in Chapter 10, I endeavoured not to disclose any further information about the participants, her/his age, position, and so on as the quotes used in this chapter already contained an extensive amount of personal information.

### **5.10 Summary**

This chapter explored the methodological choices made and the methods used throughout this thesis. It started with the discussion of my research philosophy pragmatism which has governed the whole research design and every decision made. More specifically, in this chapter I discussed my understanding and interpretation of pragmatist philosophy which centres around the works of the founders such as Peirce, James, Dewey, and Mead and also the contemporary interpretations of their works by researchers such as Simpson (2009) and Elkjaer and Simpson (2011).

In order to address the research questions in the most satisfactory way, capturing the participants' views, as well as their experiences, and obtaining rich, detailed information regarding their social worlds and the meanings they place on events, qualitative methods were used. For eliciting information from the participants, a special technique comprising a systematic and inductive procedure, the CIT, has been employed. The participants were recruited from various multinational organisations, namely top consulting companies, by using the purposeful sampling strategy. As a result, 50 interviews were conducted, which provided

an empirical way to accessing to practice. The empirical data were analysed abductively. Initially, data were coded inductively where ‘first-order concepts’ were identified as part of first-order analysis (Gioia et al., 2013). In the second-order analysis the grouping of the concepts into ‘second-order themes’ (Gioia et al., 2013) assumed a more deductive nature, grouping the concepts into themes and broader categories based on the extant trust literature. I discussed the final categorisation scheme with three academics (two supervisors and one external academic) until consensus was reached and the disagreements were resolved. These issues are further discussed in Chapter 6, 7, 8, and 10, where findings of the empirical analyses are discussed. In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 6) I discuss the empirical findings on the first research question.

# **CHAPTER 6 – EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF TRUST IN INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

## **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships and thereby addressing the first research question (RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships). As explained in more detail in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 5, section 5.6), the CIT suggested by Flanagan (1954) was used, applying an approach similar to Herzberg et al. (1959). Consequently, the factors influencing trust were determined from the empirical data gathered. Within this chapter I elaborate on these factors, drawing attention to the factors that are more widely associated with trust and perceived as more important. In addition, reflecting on the participants' views on the meaning of trust and the distinct way they use trust, I distinguish between person- and task-focused natures of trust.

The chapter commences with the discussion of the participants' conceptualisations of trust and the distinctions they make in defining it. Subsequently, the findings are presented, elucidating the factors influencing trust and trust development. The chapter is concluded with a summary of findings.

## **6.2 Findings**

### **6.2.1 The meaning and the use of trust**

Before presenting the findings on the factors influencing trust, it is pertinent first to understand what the participants meant by trust. Trust was overwhelmingly described as something developing over time. This was supported by almost three quarters of the participants who used similar statements such as trust 'builds over time', 'evolves over time', 'develops step-by-step',

‘is a long-term process’, ‘is a layering process’, or ‘is a journey’. As a director further explained, trust is not something instantaneous, but rather develops over time, echoing his fellow proponents’ views on the matter:

*“Trust isn’t a black and white thing...so it’s not a case of not trusting and then trusting, it’s a case of not really trusting and then trusting a bit more” [P39].*

For trust building, therefore, these participants emphasised the importance of the continuity of similar trustful behaviours, with *“no specific event that would damage that trust” [P39]*. Therefore, it was seen especially important that there were no violations of trust or disappointments with the trustee, a sentiment typified by the following consultant:

*“It’s just a continuous thing where he’s never broken my trust and it has accumulated over time.” [P48]*

Correspondingly, another consultant commented that accumulating positive evidence, which would also imply that no violations of trust were experienced, was important for establishing a trustee’s likelihood of trustworthy behaviour:

*“If it’s something that happened one-off, it could be just that, it could be a one-off, whereas if you see something happen on more than one occasion you feel confident that if in another situation further down the line, the outcome is going to be the same.” [P41]*

According to some of these participants, consistent trustworthy behaviour and accumulating positive evidence generated assurance, which consequently reduced the perceived risk of harm. This was highlighted by a manager who mentioned only trusting, which he described as making himself vulnerable, if he was assured that the trustee would behave in a trustworthy manner every single time:

*“I abolish my natural defence mechanism when I opt to trust someone... You will make yourself vulnerable only if you know that you can trust a person every single time and this person won’t harm you in the future in any case.” [P01]*

Despite the vast agreement on the nature of trust as something continuous which builds over time, the participants (the trustors) used trust in two distinct ways: (1) trusting the trustee on a specific work-related matter (e.g. presenting effectively to very senior people in the organisation, completing a project successfully) and (2) trusting the trustee as a person. In the former reference of trust, trust was highly task-specific, almost completely relying on, and limited to, the work undertaken. In order to differentiate such trust, it is referred to as task-focused trust in the remainder of this thesis. In the second conceptualisation, however, trust encompassed a broader meaning, also incorporating personal aspects, sometimes even to an extent of going beyond the work sphere. To differentiate such trust from task-focused trust, in the remainder of this thesis it is referred to as person-focused trust. Person-focused trust comprised trusting the trustee as a person, covering a broader meaning and understanding of trust, whereas task-focused trust was situational and highly task oriented and conceptually and practically circumscribed. When asked about a significant trust event or a significant person they trusted, the participants overwhelmingly described person-focused trust (Table 6.1).

*Table 6.1 – Total number of the responses*

	<b>Person-focused trust</b>	<b>Task-focused trust</b>	<b>Final total</b>
Significant event (Question1)	39	7	<b>46</b>
Significant person (Question 3)	46	2	<b>48</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>94</b>

To sum up the discussion so far in this section, firstly, the discussion comprised the participants’ overwhelming description of trust as something developing over time, building gradually with

every positive encounter with the trustee. Despite the significant agreement on the nature of trust, the participants conceptualised trust in two distinct ways. The first form, also the one mentioned the most, comprised a more comprehensive meaning, encompassing trusting someone as a person (person-focused trust). The second form, however, was more situational and was limited to a task or work done. Such trust encompassed the meaning of trusting someone to do something.

### **6.2.2 The factors influencing trust**

After establishing the participants' understanding of trust, now I turn to discuss the factors influencing trust. In order to identify these factors, the participants were asked to describe a significant trust event (Question 1) and a significant trust person (Question 3) (see the Methodology chapter – Chapter 5, section 5.8 for details). 46 of the 50 participants described a significant trust event whilst 48 of them were able to describe a significant person (Table 6.1). All of the participants who talked about a significant event, in the process of explaining their reasoning of trusting the trustee, went beyond the main event, elaborating further on the factors influencing trusting, consequently providing an extensive list of such factors. The factors discovered in the analysis of the Question 1, as well as the Question 3, are further discussed below. Categorisation of these factors, however, was not an easy and straightforward process. At the early stages of the analysis, the inductively identified factors seemed to be in line with Mayer et al.'s (1995) integrative organisational trust model, in which trust is influenced by the Trustor's propensity and comprised the assessment of the trustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity (ABI). The latter is also known as the dimensions of trustworthiness. However, not all factors could be grouped successfully according to this framework. The main reason was that some of the factors mainly concerned trust development and not trust. Therefore, the factors were grouped under two broad categories: (1) factors influencing trust and (2) factors

influencing trust development. The former category comprised two subgroups trustee-associated factors (trustworthiness dimensions) grouped under ABI and trustor-associated factors (see Chapter 5, section 5.8 for details). Table 6.2 summarises the factors influencing trust and trust development within their respective categories. Although this table was presented in the Methodology chapter when explaining the categorisation scheme (see Table 5.2), I found it pertinent to also place it here to facilitate a better understanding of the subsequent discussions on the factors influencing trust. Also, Appendix E, Table 1 presents the definitions of each factor.

*Table 6.2 – Factors influencing trust and trust development*

---

**A. FACTORS INFLUENCING TRUST**

**a. Trustee-associated factors (Trustworthiness factors)**

**Ability**

- Competence/Ability/Capability
- Knowledgeability
- Confidence
- Technical help
- Hard working
- Cleverness

**Benevolence**

- Helping/supporting
- Caring
- Availability
- Friendly, nice, kind personable
- Altruistic motivation/unselfish behaviour
- Approachability
- Understanding
- Goodness
- Humour/fun
- Modesty
- Non-judgemental
- Mature
- Loyalty
- Positive attitude

**Integrity**

- Honesty
- Openness
- Integrity
- Keeping confidentiality
- Promise fulfilment
- Consistency
- Genuineness
- Fairness
- Reliability
- Discreetness
- Transparency
- Non-opportunistic behaviour

**b. Trustor-associated factors**

- Trustor's propensity
- Feeling/instinct/intuition

**B. FACTORS INFLUENCING TRUST DEVELOPMENT (ADJUVANT FACTORS)**

- Relationship
  - Communication
    - Opening up
    - Having open and honest conversations
    - Listening
    - Body language
  - Trust Reciprocity
  - Collective trust
  - Cultural Congruence
  - Cooperation/collaboration
-

The factors influencing trust mainly concerned (1) the trustee's characteristics and behaviours and therefore were associated with the trustee's trustworthiness and (2) the trustor. I start with discussing the trustee-associated factors.

*Trustee-associated factors (Trustworthiness dimensions)*

As mentioned earlier, the trustee-associated factors, in other words the factors concerning the trustee's characteristics and behaviours, in other words trustworthiness, were grouped under Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI. The constituent factors of ABI identified in this research, however, were more comprehensive than what Mayer et al. (1995) originally suggested. All these factors are listed in Tables 6.3 and 6.4. Table 6.3 illustrates each trustee-associated factor and its corresponding frequency (the total count of how many participants mentioned it). Table 6.4 illustrates the same factors but offers a comparison of the factors across all trustee-associated factors.

Table 6.3 – The content analysis of the trustee-associated factors

Factors	Total				Person-focused trust				Task-focused trust			
	Q1		Q3		Q1		Q3		Q1		Q3	
	n=46	%	n=48	%	n=39	%	n=46	%	n=7	%	n=2	%
<b>ABILITY</b>	<b>19</b>		<b>28</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>26</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>2</b>	
- Competence/ Ability/Capability	13	28.3%	9	18.8%	6	15.4%	8	17.4%	7	100.0%	1	50.0%
Knowledgeability	3	6.5%	8	16.7%	2	5.1%	8	17.4%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Confidence	1	2.2%	6	12.5%	0	0.0%	6	13.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
Technical help	2	4.3%	1	2.1%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	1	50.0%
- Cleverness	0	0.0%	2	4.2%	0	0.0%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Hard working	0	0.0%	2	4.2%	0	0.0%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>	<b>79</b>		<b>83</b>		<b>71</b>		<b>82</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>1</b>	
- Helping/ supporting	33	71.7%	28	58.3%	32	82.1%	28	60.9%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Caring	11	23.9%	5	10.4%	11	28.2%	5	10.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Availability	7	15.2%	9	18.8%	5	12.8%	9	19.6%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%
- Friendly, nice, kind personable	5	10.9%	11	22.9%	4	10.3%	10	21.7%	1	14.3%	1	50.0%
- Altruistic motivation/ unselfish behaviour	10	21.7%	3	6.3%	9	23.1%	3	6.5%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Approachability	4	8.7%	6	12.5%	4	10.3%	6	13.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Understanding	2	4.3%	7	14.6%	2	5.1%	7	15.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Goodness	2	4.3%	3	6.3%	2	5.1%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Humour/fun	2	4.3%	3	6.3%	2	5.1%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Modesty	0	0.0%	4	8.3%	0	0.0%	4	8.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Non-judgemental	1	2.2%	2	4.2%	0	0.0%	2	4.3%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Mature	1	2.2%	1	2.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Loyalty	0	0.0%	1	2.1%	0	0.0%	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Positive attitude	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	<b>52</b>		<b>83</b>		<b>42</b>		<b>81</b>		<b>10</b>		<b>2</b>	
- Honesty	10	21.7%	15	31.3%	9	23.1%	14	30.4%	1	14.3%	1	50.0%
- Openness	9	19.6%	16	33.3%	7	17.9%	15	32.6%	2	28.6%	1	50.0%
- Integrity	9	19.6%	9	18.8%	7	17.9%	9	19.6%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%
- Keeping confidentiality	6	13.0%	12	25.0%	6	15.4%	12	26.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Promise fulfilment	5	10.9%	10	20.8%	2	5.1%	10	21.7%	3	42.9%	0	0.0%
- Consistency	4	8.7%	6	12.5%	3	7.7%	6	13.0%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Genuineness	3	6.5%	3	6.3%	3	7.7%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Fairness	2	4.3%	3	6.3%	2	5.1%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Reliability	1	2.2%	4	8.3%	0	0.0%	4	8.7%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
- Discreetness	2	4.3%	2	4.2%	2	5.1%	2	4.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Transparency	0	0.0%	3	6.3%	0	0.0%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
- Non-opportunistic behaviour	1	2.2%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

Note: Q1 – Question 1 (significant event); Q3 – Question 3 (significant person); n – Number of participants responded to the question

Table 6.4 – The proportional distribution of the trustee-associated factors

Factors	Final		Person-focused trust				Task-focused trust			
	Total	%	Q1	Q3	Total	%	Q1	Q3	Total	%
<b>ABILITY</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>36.4%</b>
- Competence/Ability/ Capability	22	6.4%	6	8	14	4.5%	7	1	8	24.2%
Knowledgeability	11	3.2%	2	8	10	3.2%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Confidence	7	2.0%	0	6	6	1.9%	1	0	1	3.0%
Technical help	3	0.9%	1	0	1	0.3%	1	1	2	6.1%
- Cleverness	2	0.6%	0	2	2	0.6%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Hard working	2	0.6%	0	2	2	0.6%	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>49.2%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>27.3%</b>
- Helping/supporting	61	17.7%	32	28	60	19.3%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Caring	16	4.7%	11	5	16	5.1%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Availability	16	4.7%	5	9	14	4.5%	2	0	2	6.1%
- Friendly, nice, kind personable	16	4.7%	4	10	14	4.5%	1	1	2	6.1%
- Altruistic motivation/ unselfish behaviour	13	3.8%	9	3	12	3.9%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Approachability	10	2.9%	4	6	10	3.2%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Understanding	9	2.6%	2	7	9	2.9%	0	0	0	0.0%
Goodness	5	1.5%	2	3	5	1.6%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Humour/fun	5	1.5%	2	3	5	1.6%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Modesty	4	1.2%	0	4	4	1.3%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Non-judgemental	3	0.9%	0	2	2	0.6%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Mature	2	0.6%	0	1	1	0.3%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Loyalty	1	0.3%	0	1	1	0.3%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Positive attitude	1	0.3%	0	0	0	0.0%	1	0	1	3.0%
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>36.4%</b>
- Honesty	25	7.3%	9	14	23	7.4%	1	1	2	6.1%
- Openness	25	7.3%	7	15	22	7.1%	2	1	3	9.1%
- Integrity	18	5.2%	7	9	16	5.1%	2	0	2	6.1%
- Keeping confidentiality	18	5.2%	6	12	18	5.8%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Promise fulfilment	15	4.4%	2	10	12	3.9%	3	0	3	9.1%
- Consistency	10	2.9%	3	6	9	2.9%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Genuineness	6	1.7%	3	3	6	1.9%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Fairness	5	1.5%	2	3	5	1.6%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Reliability	5	1.5%	0	4	4	1.3%	1	0	1	3.0%
- Discreetness	4	1.2%	2	2	4	1.3%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Transparency	3	0.9%	0	3	3	1.0%	0	0	0	0.0%
- Non-opportunistic behaviour	1	0.3%	1	0	1	0.3%	0	0	0	0.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

Note: Q1 – Question 1 (significant event); Q3 – Question 3 (significant person)

When the trustee-associated factors are considered, the majority of all factors mentioned were Benevolence-associated (47%), 39% were Integrity-associated, and 14% were Ability-associated (see Table 6.4). However, when task- and person-focused trust are considered separately, in task-focused task, Ability-associated factors were mentioned more frequently. I continue my discussion with Ability-associated factors.

#### *Ability-associated factors*

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the Ability-associated factors were especially significant for task-focused trust. Significance of Ability-associated factors are especially apparent when their distinct mentions by the participants are considered (Table 6.3). For example, in the significant trust event question (Question 1) seven participants described task-focused trust and each of these participants mentioned the factor ‘Competence/Ability/Capability’, resulting in 100% mentions in the corresponding category (Table 6.3).

The significance of the dimension Ability for task-focused trust is not very surprising considering its work domain-specificity and dependence on the work done, which is highly contingent on the trustee’s ability. This is typified by the following statement of a director who mentioned trusting the trustee’s technical ability, thereby limiting trust to a particular domain:

*“I trust this person on a technical level and I know that they’re good at what they do and so if I have a question on a technical matter, I can go to him and get a good response from him.” [P38]*

Domain-specificity of task-focused-trust was further exemplified by a consultant who mentioned fully trusting someone in a particular situation but also remarked that his trust would

not automatically extend to the other situations: “*you never know in another one what will be the case... you can always reassess that*” [P16].

In person-focused trust, however, Ability-associated factors were mentioned less frequently (Tables 6.3 and 6.4). Mixed opinions were presented regarding Ability-associated factors, creating a controversy in these factors’ perceived importance in engendering trust. Although Ability-associated factors were perceived as important by many who mentioned them, a small proportion of participants claimed that Ability-associated factors did not influence their trusting decisions, a situation of which was voiced by the following statement of a manager: “*So, when it comes to competence, I don’t think it has an effect on me trusting this person*” [P01]. Similarly, another manager explained that trusting in one’s skills did not mean trusting in the person:

*“If you have a certain question to ask and you want someone’s opinion obviously, you go to someone with that experience and background who is knowledgeable. Then that just might be one of the things. You might not mean therefore we have a trusting relationship or not”* [P5].

#### *Benevolence-associated factors*

When the Benevolence-associated factors are considered, there was not a very notable distinction between person- and task-focused trust. Despite the fact that some of the factors mentioned in person-focused trust were absent in task-focused trust, the comparison is limited by the small sample of task-focused trust cases. Therefore, the discussion below is carried out with an overall consideration of Benevolence-associated factors.

When overall comparison of trustee-associated factors is considered, the Benevolence arose as the most frequently mentioned dimension (Table 6.4). Among all Benevolence-associated

factors, 'Helping/supporting' was especially significant, being mentioned by the clear majority of the participants (Table 6.3). This factor, although was also mentioned in trusting the peers, was most frequently discussed in relation to trusting the superiors.

In discussions of 'Helping/supporting', different aspects of the matter were mentioned. Some of these aspects comprised issues regarding the trustee's mentoring, training, and providing advice or suggestions, not only when asked but offering it willingly when necessary. The vast majority of the participants mentioning 'Helping/supporting' attributed their trust to their superior's supporting and investing in their career and development, both in their "*professional and personal development*" [P27]. For example, building upon his past experience, a director ascribed his trust of his superior to that particular superior's career support, providing opportunities and enabling his advancement and growth, echoing the views of the other participants who mentioned 'Helping/supporting': "*I do trust that person because they have invested in me... in my career development*" [P38].

The impact of being supported by one's superior for trust building was especially apparent when that particular superior actually supported the participant against a third party, a client or someone in the organisation, especially the upper management. The participants outlining this point, in order to explain their reasons for trusting their superiors, used similar statements such as their superior's standing behind them, defending them, backing them up, looking out for them, or being on their side, as exemplified by the statement of the following manager who explained fully trusting her superior after that superior's support of her in a performance review meeting:

*"I got this new manager, new performance review manager...We had regular one-to-ones. She truly believed in me, she listened to the work I was doing, she helped and advised me on things I could do to improve myself in my role. Then we had a meeting to calibrate everyone.*

*When she came back from that meeting and she told me what she'd said and she truly stood up for me, she really gave a comprehensive case and it was then that I fully trusted her. To say do you know what, this person is actually acting in my best interests, she really is looking out for me" [P29]*

Similar to 'Helping/supporting', three of the other Benevolence-associated factors, namely 'Approachability', 'Availability', and 'Caring', were discussed by the participants more frequently in relation to their superiors.

'Approachability' was most often emphasised by the participants who held junior positions. A junior participant even defined 'Approachability' as the most significant element in trusting his superior, remarking "*Approachability is the key*" [P40]. The vast majority of the participants enlisting 'Approachability', as well as 'Availability' as a factor influencing trust, highlighted similar issues emphasising superiors being approachable or making themselves available to be assuring. A consultant holding a junior role summarised the reasons why she trusts her superior as follows:

*"I would also say they are a lot more senior than I am, so I also think that examples where they've given me a lot of time and support have also helped build my trust in them. Because I know that time is precious to them and yet if I need them then I can rely on them and they will make time for me, which I think is really important, I know I have that security in them."* [P27]

Furthermore, 'Caring' was also mentioned more frequently in terms of trusting one's superior. The participants mentioning this factor acknowledged trusting of those superiors who genuinely cared about them (Caring) and understood their feelings (Understanding), empathising with the situations or pressures they were under. Some of these participants who talked about 'Caring' emphasised the superiors' not only caring about work-related matters but also caring about

personal problems. Two of these participants even took a step further to liken their superiors to a brother, mentioning trusting those superiors who cared about them and treated them like a brother would do. The statement of the following senior manager, who was talking about trusting his colleague, summarises the viewpoints of the participants who mentioned ‘Understanding’:

*“He demonstrates that he understands any pressure that I am under or anything I am dealing with. He is very aware of other people. Because he is aware of other people and demonstrates a good degree of empathy, it means that I trust that he would understand how I am feeling, what I need from him or what I need to get done within the work and outside of the work. So, it is an awareness of how decisions he makes or the way he behaves will impact other people.” [P8]*

The remaining Benevolence-associated factors were discussed equally across different trustee groups. These factors concerned the trustee’s traits such as their being ‘Friendly, nice, kind’, ‘Non-judgemental’, ‘Mature’ and ‘Modesty’, ‘Humour/fun’, ‘Goodness’, ‘Positive attitude’, as well as their ‘Altruistic motivation/unselfish behaviour’. Altruistic motivations and behaviour were especially associated with building high levels of trust due to the implications of such behaviour on the perceptions of reduced harm and vulnerability.

#### *Integrity-associated factors*

The Integrity-associated factors were perceived as similarly important in both task- and person-focused trust conceptualisations (Table 6.4). ‘Honesty’, ‘Openness’, ‘Integrity’, ‘Keeping Confidentiality’, ‘Promise fulfilment’, and ‘Consistency’ were among the factors most frequently mentioned in person-focused trust whereas ‘Promise Fulfilment’ was the most frequently mentioned factor in task-focused trust (Table 6.3).

The trustee's having high levels of integrity was perceived to imply that the trustee would not have hidden agendas or unethical motives and would not knowingly harm the participant, sentiments echoed by the statement of a manager: *"I think the key part is where I trust her ethics, I trust her code of conduct, so I know she's not trying to play games, there's no agenda to her in what she's saying"* [P10]. A senior participant, a department head, added that the source of her trust of that particular trustee was rooted in that person's having high morals which was also extended to a corporate level:

*"She has a very strong sense of what is right and wrong, she has a very strong sense of her personal values and sort of the balance that you need to have as an individual and as a corporate citizen"* [P23].

The following statement of a director summarises the issues discussed in regard to Integrity. He emphasised the importance of integrity, especially in a commercial environment where people might be very ambitious:

*"I suppose the watch word was integrity and what do you mean by that...well it's just being straight with each other and saying the same things to one person that you will say to another. Another way to define these things is to put the team and the task above personal gain, so that's a facet of integrity. ...Most people in this sector are ambitious, they're bright, they want to see progression, promotion, money and all those things. So, it's important that the people you work for, you work with have that sense that they want for you what you want for you, that conveys trust, the idea that both of you, the boss and the junior guy, share a kind of future vision of what you will later be, that's critical."* [P47]

With regards to trusting the superiors who are directly responsible for the participant's performance appraisal and year-end assessment, the Integrity-associated matters also comprised issues such as the superior's recognising the participant's achievements and communicating honest and fair feedback, assessment, and appraisal reports to the upper management, which were free of personal feelings and judgements, the acts of which consequently influenced the participant's career progression and promotion.

In this section, I discussed the trustee-associated factors which also known as trustworthiness dimensions. These factors were grouped under Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI. However, the factors discovered as part of ABI were much more extensive than what Mayer et al. (1995) initially suggested (see Table 2.3), expanding the knowledge on ABI and associated factors. Among these factors, in overall, Benevolence-associated factors were the most frequently mentioned ones. However, they were mentioned less frequently in task-focused trust where Ability-associated factors were perceived as more important. All trustee-associated factors are summarised in Tables 6.3 and 6.4. Having discussed the trustee-associated factors, now I commence with discussing the trustor-associated factors.

#### *Trustor-associated factors*

In their integrative organisational model, in addition to the trustee's ABI, Mayer et al. (1995) also perceived 'Trustor's propensity' as something influencing trust. According to Mayer et al. (1995), 'Trustor's propensity' concerns the trustor's willingness or tendency to trust others which in turn determines how much trust a trustor would have for a trustee prior to the availability of any information. Consequently, Mayer et al. (1995) projected that the trustors with high levels of propensity to trust would have high levels of trust towards the trustee despite of unavailability of information about the trustee.

In line with their predictions, some of the participants, around one-fifth, commented on their initial state of trust, describing themselves as naturally trusting or distrustful. Alternatively, some of the participants remarked on always being neutral towards others at their initial encounters. All of the participants who mentioned being very trusting, used very similar statements such as ‘I am a naturally trusting person’ or ‘I am a foundationally trusting person’. One of these participants even took an extreme stance, stating to be trusting of everyone unless they have done something to lose it. Her trust therefore was readily available to everyone and only higher degrees of it needed to be earned:

*“I am a pretty trusting person to begin with and for me you don’t have to earn my trust... you have to earn degrees of my trust. You don’t have to earn my trust, but you certainly can lose it.” [34SL]*

The participants who admitted being distrusting argued that trust is something earned, emphasising the nature of trust as something building gradually over time. Such views are captured in the following statement of a director who commented:

*“I am a naturally distrustful person in as much as I think trust is something that you earn with somebody. So, with the people that I work with I treat with a healthy kind of, you know distrust. I don’t disbelieve that everybody sets out to not be trustworthy, but I think it is something that you work out over your relationship with them, how you test talking to people about things, you test their reaction, you understand how they respond to things, you understand what they tell you about situations with other people, etcetera. Then you build your trust network around that.” [P14]*

‘Trustor’s propensity’ had implications for the levels of trust and the length required to build trust and consequently had a moderating effect on trust. In addition to and in a similar nature to the ‘Trustor’s propensity’, the other trustor-associated factor was ‘Feeling/Instinct/Intuition’.

Like ‘Trustor’s propensity’, this factor was especially influential in the lack of personal interaction and knowledge of the trustee. Six of the participants mentioned relying on their feelings in trusting others, a sentiment exemplified by the statements of a consultant:

*“Well, I go a lot with my gut feeling, the problem is that when you don’t know somebody too much you kind of have to trust your feeling in your own, that kind of first impression that you have about somebody.” [P50]*

These participants talked about incorporating their ‘feelings’, ‘gut feeling’, ‘instincts’, or ‘intuition’ into their trust decisions. Therefore, this factor illustrates an affective aspect where trust decisions incorporate irrational elements of feelings, intuitions, or instincts. Following manager’s statement offers a further exemplification of this factor and its incorporation in trust decision:

*“Your own emotions, intuitions will play a part in it...Can’t explain why, just intuition, or something programmed in the way you had experiences before led to either to trust or not trust that person” [P05].*

To sum up, two trustor-associated factors were mentioned by the participants that influenced trust: ‘Trustor’s propensity’ (the initial trust the trustor has towards others) and ‘Feeling/instinct/intuition’ (the trustor’s unexplainable initial feeling towards the trustee and associated willingness to trust the trustee). Both these factors were more influential in the very early stages of the relationship when the trustor did not have actual experiences with the trustee and they ceased to matter as the relationship developed as more information was gained about the trustee.

Until now, I discussed the factors influencing trust which concerned the trustee (trustee-associated factors) and the trustor (trustor-associated factors). Now I discuss the factors that were mentioned to influence trust development.

### 6.2.3 The factors influencing trust development (Adjuvant trust factors)

In the preceding section, I discussed the factors that were directly associated with the trustee or the trustor and influenced trust. There were, however, other six factors which were not precisely linked to the trustee or the trustor but concerned the interpersonal relationship between the trustee and the trustor and influenced trust development by increasing trust levels positively. Due to the fact that these factors were described as facilitating and most significantly reinforcing trust development and increasing trust levels, I refer to them as ‘adjuvant trust factors’. These factors are illustrated in Table 6.5 and further discussed below.

Table 6.5 – The content analysis of the adjuvant trust factors

Factors	Person-focused trust				Task-focused trust			
	Q1		Q3		Q1		Q3	
	n=39	%	n=46	%	n=7	%	n=2	%
<b>- Relationship</b>	24	61.5%	31	67.4%	1	14.3%	0	0.0%
<b>- Communication</b>	23	59.0%	28	60.9%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%
Opening up	15	38.5%	17	37.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Listening	3	7.7%	5	10.9%	0	0.0%	1	50.0%
Having open and honest conversations	3	7.7%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Body language	2	5.1%	3	6.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>- Trust Reciprocity</b>	14	35.9%	9	19.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>- Collective trust</b>	7	17.9%	3	6.5%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%
<b>- Cultural congruence</b>	3	7.7%	6	13.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>- Cooperation/ collaboration</b>	1	2.6%	4	8.7%	2	28.6%	0	0.0%

Note: Q1 – Question 1 (significant event); Q3 – Question 3 (significant person)

The factor ‘Relationship’ was mentioned by the clear majority of the participants (Table 6.5). It was frequently mentioned in person-focused trust whereas it was not very prominent in task-focused trust as it was only mentioned once (Table 6.5). This factor, although was mentioned

across different trustee groups, was most frequently discussed in terms of trusting the peers. All of the participants who mentioned 'Relationship' discussed that building some kind of relationship, not necessarily a full-fledged friendship, facilitated trust development as exemplified with the statement of a partner:

*“Having that personal bond, it doesn't have to be friendship or a full personal relationship but having something a bit more than just the professional always helps”*  
[P21].

A director further articulated that trust without building a relationship would be *“on the surface rather than being a deeper level of trust”* [P28]. Some of these participants explained trust to be a normal consequence in a relationship, especially in a friendship, as some characteristics or behaviours engendering trust (e.g. honesty, understanding, caring, keeping confidentiality, etc) were automatically assumed to exist in relationships. This was highlighted by a senior participant, a department head, who argued that building a relationship *“adds an extra context, because she's a friend she understands my personal home life and how sometimes that can impact on my work life”* [P23]. As also emphasised by a consultant, trust was reinforced by developing a relationship as one would trust them *“not just as a colleague but as a friend as well”* [P30].

An executive further explained that building relationships, consequently socialising outside of work, reinforced trust development because it allowed better knowing the trustee as a result of *“see[ing] the way they operate in work, see[ing] the way they operate outside of work”* would draw *“a more rounded picture of the individual”* [P25]. This point was supported by a manager who added that seeing others outside would allow a deeper knowledge of the trustee: *“It's always good to get to know colleagues outside of the office because you often see that they're completely different individuals outside of the office than in the office”* [P42]. Similarly, a

consultant further elucidated that building a personal relationship would facilitate deeper levels of trust development as the trustor would get to know the true self of the trustee, as well as it would support trust building in the work-related aspects:

*“[Trusted her] because I knew her in a personal capacity, so whereas colleagues at work you can trust in them, but they are never really...well you don’t know if they are ever their true selves, because you have a professional persona, you put your uniform on and you put your work face on and you are at work and that never necessarily means that you are the true you. So, I definitely had that personal relationship with her which I trusted in, which then we built upon in a professional capacity as well” [P27].*

Although the context of consulting did not emerge as an issue in regard to the matters discussed earlier, it was raised in relation to building relationships. Due to the nature of their jobs, some of the participants talked about the necessity of socialising outside of work, especially when working away from home. This is exemplified by the statement of a partner who commented: *“in the situations where you’re away from home you eat together every night, you get to know each other, so we built a personal relationship” [P21]*. A consultant added that *“it just brings you close, in the first week you’re already close to these people... you’re with your colleagues more than you are with your wives or your girlfriend or whatever it is” [P31]*. The following response from a senior consultant provides a summary of the matters discussed here. He emphasised that living in a shared accommodation facilitated getting to know the trustee and building trust much faster which could also backfire if the relationship had failed:

*“Since we were in a different country we were living in a shared apartment block which we shared with everybody, so we were living together as well as working together. So, I think that definitely helped build a much closer relationship beyond the*

*office and it made the whole process much quicker to gain each other's trust because you get to know them as a person rather than just as a colleague. I think that's the main reason it takes longer generally to build trust in the workplace because you only spend a few hours with them and that's why you need many more hours. Whereas with the people you live and work with, you know obviously, it can go the other way as well, you know ultimately if you don't like them as a person even if they're good at work, you might not want to work with them. But in this case, I liked the person in real life and their work ethic, so it built that trust much faster." [P30]*

Very similar to 'Relationship', 'Communication' was perceived as an important factor in trust development and was mentioned frequently (Table 6.5). The participants mentioning this factor discussed different aspects of 'Communication', emphasising issues such as 'Having open and honest conversations', 'Opening up', and 'Listening', as well as non-verbal communication cues such as 'Body language' and their impact on trust development. Among these, 'Opening up' was perceived as especially important as the trustee's opening up with personal or confidential information to the trustor was reported to facilitate trust development and strengthen trust. This factor was most often discussed by the participants in relation to trusting their peers. The participants mentioning this factor talked about trusting those people who shared personal or confidential information about themselves. The trustees' opening up with personal information or sharing confidential information was perceived to reinforce trust, a sentiment voiced by a department head who stated that "*sharing confidential information demonstrates a deeper level of trust*" [P24]. A few of these participants further explained that such an act, the other party's opening up their vulnerabilities by sharing confidential or personal information about themselves, provided a sense of security, making it less likely for the trustee to betray the participant's trust and harm her/him, consequently facilitating trusting the trustee. This claim was exemplified by the following statement of a manager:

*“They’ve shared their own vulnerabilities and I think that’s the key right...it’s less likely that they’re going to go and share your information if they feel like you know the nature of their vulnerabilities” [P33].*

Another important factor that was mentioned frequently was ‘Trust reciprocity’ which was only mentioned in person-focused trust. ‘Trust reciprocity’, the trustee’s trusting the trustor, was said to enable or enhance the trustor’s trusting the trustee. The participants mentioning this factor argued that being trusted by the trustee facilitated or reinforced trusting them back, using very similar statements such as: *“if someone trusts you it is easier to trust back” [P6]* or *“her trusting me makes me trust her more” [P13].*

‘Trust reciprocity’ was especially important for those who held junior positions and were entrusted with what they considered important work. Such feelings were typified by the following statement of a junior participant whose trust towards his manager was strengthened when that particular manager trusted him on a very significant project with one of the largest clients at a very junior position:

*“My experience at the time was more limited, you know having just come out of university a year and a half ago. But I was entrusted with something so significant to one of our largest clients so soon. That’s what made it quite significant...I think that’s quite key, just the fact that I knew that he would let me do that to a big client, made me trust myself more and made me trust him more” [P40].*

Similarly, a director now, when talking about someone she really trusted, explained how her trust of her superior at that time increased when that particular superior trusted her when she was in a very junior position:

*“The reason she stands out more for me is I was working as a graduate at the time and she was one of the senior executives and yet in the work that we were doing together she trusted me to lead a number of work streams for her...She gave me the opportunity to go and perform or take on projects in the organisation that perhaps others wouldn’t have taken the risk on.” [P28]*

‘Trust reciprocity’ was not only emphasised by the participants holding junior positions but was also discussed by those in more senior positions. The participants who had more senior positions highlighted that not being micro-managed by their superiors or the superior’s trusting them enough to empower or delegate responsibilities or control reinforced their trust of those superiors, the sentiments echoed in the following participant’s statements: *”the level to which they delegate or the amount of responsibility they delegate is an indication of how much they trust you” [P24]* which then was mentioned to facilitate trusting them back. This same participant, occupying a very senior position himself, explained the importance of the superior’s (leader’s) trusting their subordinates, as well as instilling trust in them to trust their seniors back:

*“I think it’s very important, not just in business but when you’re working with teams the way we operate is we don’t micromanage people at all, we hire bright people, we give them training and support to enable them to do the jobs and we trust them to get on with it. It’s important to have that trust, to know that if things go wrong you won’t be blamed for it, there’s a trust that you know what you’re doing and that if things go wrong then you’ll be supported by your team and your leaders.” [P24]*

Although not being mentioned as often as the factors discussed earlier, ‘Collective trust’ was another factor mentioned to influence trust development and was discussed for both person- and task-focused trust (Table 6.5). ‘Collective trust’, other organisational members’ shared

beliefs about and agreements on the trustee's trustworthiness, was reported to be influential in trust development in two different ways. Firstly, the other organisational members' collective agreement of the trustworthiness of the trustee was considered at the initial stages, where the trustor did not have enough information about the trustee to form their own decisions, as exemplified by a consultant: *"Beforehand, when everyone around you has been saying how trustworthy the person is, so you can have a fairly high level of trust to start with [P41]*. Another participant's statement, a department head, further exemplified the impact of other organisational members' opinions on her initial trust:

*"I didn't know really anything about him other than what other people had said... I was going to have to put a lot of trust in what other people had said to me about him" [P23]*.

The impact of the 'Collective trust' at the later stages of the trustor-trustee relationship was slightly different. When the trustor had enough information to form her/his own opinions on the trustworthiness of the trustee, the other organisational members' opinions played the role of reconfirmation of the trustee's trustworthiness, augmenting the trustor's trust. This situation is typified by the following senior consultant's statement:

*"I suppose, the [trusting] belief is reinforced by what the others around me say. And they tend to express the same sort of opinion". [P02]*

The participants discussing 'Cultural congruence' mentioned this factor only in person-focused trust (Table 6.5). The participants mentioning this factor discussed that a shared culture facilitated and accelerated trust development because it provided a common context or a common ground to build on. Such sentiments were typified by the statement of a director who explained that sharing a similar culture provided a connection which consequently made it easier to build trust:

*“We were both the same age and we were both from the same town, we had quite a strong connection... it takes a while to break down those barriers with people. I think with him it was just a case of having some kind of connection that helped to break down that barrier... Through that kind of connection, I think that trust was built up.”* [P39].

Another consultant also explained how having similar cultures, as well as going through similar experiences enabled trust building:

*“I’d say we both do come from similar cultural backgrounds and I think also the trust is a result of sharing similar experiences... I guess it just sort of simply comes down to that I could relate so easily to him in that it’s no effort in terms of building a relationship, we just seemed to click straight away, and I think that was probably partly due to a similar cultural background. I think the fact there is no effort in terms of having a good relationship made me instinctively quite trust him.”* [P35]

In addition to the fact that ‘Cultural congruence’ offered a context that facilitated trust development, it also had an indirect influence on trust development through contributing to building relationships, another factor that was discussed to influence trust development. I return back to this discussion in more detail in Chapter 10.

The last factor ‘Cooperation/collaboration’, although was mentioned by few participants was discussed in both person- and task-focused trust and was claimed to be very important by those who mentioned it (Table 6.5). This factor was most commonly mentioned in regard to teams where the participants mentioned trusting the other team members who would collaborate and contribute equally. When team leaders were concerned a participant mentioned trusting his team leader who collaborated with the team members when needed that *“if anything was stuck he would naturally come in and help... get hands on and do stuff and not just talk”* [P30].

To sum up the discussion so far, in this section I discussed the factors mentioned to influence trust development which played an adjuvant role for trust development, increasing trust levels by facilitating and reinforcing trust development. Six such factors were discussed which are also illustrated in Table 6.5. Among these six factors only three, 'Relationship', 'Collective trust', and 'Cooperation/collaboration' were mentioned in both person- and task-focused trust whilst the remaining three, 'Communication', 'Trust reciprocity', and 'Cultural congruence', were discussed only in person-focused trust.

### **6.3 Summary**

This chapter sought answers for the first research question (RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships). Before commencing with the discussion of these factors, the chapter explored the participants' understanding of trust and the use of the concept. The participants overwhelmingly emphasised the time span required to build trust, claiming that trust develops over time, gradually by processing each positive incident with the trustee. The continuation of trust therefore was highly contingent on no violations to trust happened. Despite the collective agreement on the nature of trust, the participants differentiated in the uses of trust, employing trust in two distinct ways: (1) trusting the trustee to do something where trust is limited to a specific task or work done and consequently is situational (task-focused trust) and (2) trusting the trustee as a person where trust is broader and also includes more personal aspects or behaviours of the trustee (person-focused trust). Such a distinction between the utilisations of trust warrants the question whether the fragmentation in trust literature discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2) is partly due to this previously unidentified distinction between different uses of trust. Although answers to this question require further research, the findings clearly outline the implications of making such a distinction as different factors are perceived important in each trust.

After discussing the findings on the nature and conceptualisations of trust, the chapter continued with the discussion of the factors influencing trust. The factors were divided into two groups, emphasising factors influencing trust and factors influencing trust development. The factors influencing trust were either trustee- or trustor-associated. The trustee-associated factors were categorised under Mayer et al.'s (1995) trustworthiness dimensions -ABI. Whilst these dimensions were influential in identifying and describing trustee-associated factors, the factors under these dimensions appear to be more comprehensive than what Mayer et al. (1995) initially identified, the findings also extending the knowledge on the constituent elements of ABI. Among these dimensions, in person-focused trust, Benevolence was perceived as the most significant dimension, encompassing the most frequently mentioned factors, whereas in task-focused trust Ability was perceived as the most important dimension.

The trustor-associated factors comprised two factors: Mayer et al.'s (1995) 'Trustor's propensity' and a newly emerged factor, 'Feeling/Instinct/Intuition'. Both factors concerned a trustor's willingness and tendency to trust the trustee, which were influential especially at the very early stages of the relationship when enough information about the trustee was not yet available.

The second category, factors influencing the trust development, encompassed mainly six factors: Relationship, Communication, Trust Reciprocity, Collective trust, Cultural congruence, and Cooperation/collaboration. These factors play an adjuvant role for trust development, increasing trust levels by facilitating and reinforcing trust development.

Now, I turn to the investigation of the factors influencing distrust in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 7) and return back to the issues discussed in this chapter in the discussion chapter (Chapter 9).

# CHAPTER 7 – EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF DISTRUST IN INTRA-ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

## 7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships, addressing the second research question (RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships). Following a similar approach to the investigation of the factors influencing trust (Chapter 6), the factors influencing distrust were determined from the empirical data gathered via the utilisation of the CIT (see Chapter 5, section 5.6 for the details).

Traditionally within the conceptualisation of distrust as the opposite of trust, it can be automatically assumed that findings on trust are applicable to distrust after the results are negated. Within this assumption the factors influencing distrust need to be antithetical trust factors (Guo et al., 2017). However, in recent years, such assumptions were challenged with the accumulating empirical evidence pointing out trust and distrust as separate constructs (e.g. Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki et al., 1998; Saunders et al., 2014) (see a similar discussion in Chapter 2, section 2.6). Nevertheless, the debate on the relationship between trust and distrust remains unresolved which this thesis aims to offer insights into. Therefore, identification of the factors influencing distrust serves not only to shed light on what such factors are but also to offer insight into the debate on the trust and distrust relationship.

The chapter commences with the discussion of the participants' conceptualisations of distrust. Subsequently, the findings concerning the factors influencing distrust are presented. These factors, as it was the case with trust, were grouped based on whether they influenced distrust or distrust development. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the findings.

## 7.2 Findings

### 7.2.1 The meaning and the use of distrust

Unlike the two uses of trust, the participants' discussions of distrust did not encompass any distinctions. Additionally, in contrast to the possibly situational and to some extent domain-specific nature of trust, distrust resulted in entirely distrusting the person. In other words, distrust had a more pervasive nature, distrust emerging in a situation escalating to a person in general, and sometimes even to the whole organisation. For example, a quarter of the participants who discussed distrusting their superiors mentioned distrusting the entire organisation as a result of distrust felt towards their superiors, a situation typified by a manager who commented: *"This [trusting the superior] also made me distrust the whole organisation and the whole structure"* [P3]. Another participant, a manager, who explained the root cause of her distrust of her superior as *"she probably saw me as a threat and at that point then just kept me down in every which way she could"* [P29], further described how her distrust of her superior was extended to the whole organisation:

*"This whole thing has taught me to distrust the organisation as a whole because it should have had mechanisms in place to pick up on her. Although it claims it does, it blatantly doesn't, they knew they had a problem with her and it was never dealt with and there was never any of that back up there".*  
[P29]

The participants most commonly carried out their discussions on distrust in parallel with trust. Therefore, I resume the discussion on distrust and the understanding of distrust in the next chapter (Chapter 8) where I further explore the relationship between trust and distrust.

### **7.2.2 The factors influencing distrust**

In order to determine the factors influencing distrust, the participants were asked to describe a significant event which made them especially distrusting of another organisational member (Question 2) and a significant person who they really distrusted (Question 4), resulting in 44 events and 42 persons described, respectively (see Chapter 5, section 5.8 for details). All participants who talked about a significant event, in the process of explaining their reasons for distrusting the trustee, provided accounts that went beyond the main event, elaborating further on the factors influencing distrust, and consequently providing an extensive list of these factors. The factors emerging from the analysis of Question 2 (significant event), as well as Question 4 (significant person), are further discussed in the text below. Categorisation of these factors, however, was not an easy and straightforward process (see Chapter 5, section 5.9). The analysis of data followed a similar abductive approach to the analysis of trust data. Firstly, I coded the empirical data inductively. Whilst keeping an open mind in regard to the relationship between trust and distrust and not making any assumptions, I was aware of the emerging factors and the fact that not all of them were negative versions of the trust factors, although there were some which were. Similar to the trust factors, the emerging distrust factors either concerned distrust directly or distrust development, both of which constituted the highest categories. Factors influencing distrust comprised further two subgroups, based on the referent they concerned, the referent inferring to the distruster or the trustee, such as ‘trustee-associated factors’ and ‘distruster-associated factors’. In addition to these factors, four additional factors emerged that influenced distrust development. All these factors are outlined in Table 7.1 and further discussed in the text below. Table 7.1 is the same table included in the Methodology chapter (Table 5.3). I thought it pertinent to also place it here to facilitate the understanding of the upcoming discussions of these factors. Also, Appendix E, Table 2 presents the definitions of each factor.

*Table 7.1 – Factors influencing distrust and distrust development*

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**A. FACTORS INFLUENCING DISTRUST**

**a. Distrustee-associated factors (Distrustworthiness factors)**

**Ability-associated**

- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of confidence/Insecure
- Lack of competence/Ability/Capability
- Lazy

**Benevolence-associated**

- Lack of help/support
- Self-interested behaviour
- Rude, not nice and friendly
- Condescending behaviour
- Dictatorial behaviour
- Not caring
- Unavailability
- Arrogance/conceitedness
- Aggressiveness/temperamental
- Lack of understanding
- Undermine one's authority
- Unapproachability
- Unreceptivity
- Lack of goodness
- Immature

**Integrity-associated**

- Dishonesty
- Harmful behaviour
- Disrespectful behaviour
- Disingenuousness
- Opportunistic behaviour
- Not fulfilling their agreement
- Closeness/Not open
- Unfairness
- Lack of or questionable integrity
- Duplicity
- Breaking confidentiality
- Claiming ownership of somebody else's work
- Discrimination/favouritism
- Overambitiousness
- Promise breaking
- Going behind one's back
- Blaming others for failure
- Politics
- Deception
- Lack of transparency
- Inconsistency
- Falseness
- Unreliability
- Manipulativeness

**b. Distrustor-associated factors**

- Distrustor's propensity
- Feeling/Intuition/Instinct

## **B. FACTORS INFLUENCING DISTRUST DEVELOPMENT (ADJUVANT FACTORS)**

Problematic communication

- Lack of communication
- Not opening up
- Not listening
- Body language

Problematic relationship

Problematic cooperation/collaboration

Collective distrust

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As mentioned above, the factors influencing distrust mainly concerned (1) the distrustee's characteristics and behaviours and therefore were associated with the distrustee's distrustworthiness and (2) the distruster. I start with discussing the distrustee-associated factors.

### *Distrustee-associated factors (Distrustworthiness factors)*

The majority of the factors mentioned by the participants were related to the distrustees, more specifically to the distrustees' traits and behaviours. These factors, although were closely associated with the distrustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity (ABI), did not necessarily constituted the exact opposites of ABI to warrant a grouping scheme with the contrary terms or terms indicating the absence of ABI. Therefore, taking into consideration the high association between the distrustee-associated factors and ABI, the categorisation of the distrustee-associated factors was carried out with grouping them under the three subgroups termed as Ability-, Benevolence-, and Integrity-associated factors. When the overall distrustee-associated factors are considered, the Integrity-associated factors were the most frequently mentioned ones, emphasising their importance for distrust decisions. Each distrustee-associated factor was listed in Tables 7.2 and 7.3. Table 7.2 illustrates each distrustee-associated factor and its corresponding frequency (the total count of how many participants mentioned it). Table 7.3 illustrates the same factors but offers a comparison of the factors across all distrustee-associated factors.

Table 7.2 – Content analysis of the distrustee-associated factors

Factors	Total		Question 2		Question 4	
	N=86	%	N=44	%	N=42	%
<b>Ability-associated</b>						
- Lack of knowledge	5	5.8%	3	6.8%	2	4.8%
- Lack of confidence/Insecure	3	3.5%	1	2.3%	2	4.8%
- Lack of competence/ Ability/Capability	2	2.3%	2	4.5%	0	0.0%
- Lazy	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	2.4%
<b>Benevolence-associated</b>						
- Lack of help/support	24	27.9%	17	38.6%	7	16.7%
- Self-interested behaviour	13	15.1%	6	13.6%	7	16.7%
- Rude, not nice, not friendly	11	12.8%	3	6.8%	8	19.0%
- Condescending behaviour	8	9.3%	2	4.5%	6	14.3%
- Dictatorial behaviour	6	7.0%	1	2.3%	5	11.9%
- Not caring	6	7.0%	4	9.1%	2	4.8%
- Unavailability	5	5.8%	2	4.5%	3	7.1%
- Arrogance/conceitedness	5	5.8%	2	4.5%	3	7.1%
- Aggressiveness/ temperamental	5	5.8%	3	6.8%	2	4.8%
- Lack of understanding	3	3.5%	3	6.8%	0	0.0%
- Undermine one's authority	3	3.5%	2	4.5%	1	2.4%
- Unapproachability	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	4.8%
- Unreceptivity	2	2.3%	1	2.3%	1	2.4%
- Lack of goodness	2	2.3%	1	2.3%	1	2.4%
- Immature	1	1.2%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%

Table 7.2 continued – Content analysis of the distrustee-associated factors

Factors	Total		Question 2		Question 4	
	N=86	%	N=44	%	N=42	%
<b>Integrity-associated</b>						
- Dishonesty	28	32.6%	11	25.0%	17	40.5%
- Harmful behaviour	18	20.9%	9	20.5%	9	21.4%
- Disrespectful behaviour	12	14.0%	6	13.6%	6	14.3%
- Disingenuousness	11	12.8%	5	11.4%	6	14.3%
- Opportunistic behaviour	10	11.6%	3	6.8%	7	16.7%
- Not fulfilling their agreement	10	11.6%	5	11.4%	5	11.9%
- Closeness/Not open	8	9.3%	2	4.5%	6	14.3%
- Unfairness	8	9.3%	4	9.1%	4	9.5%
- Lack of or questionable integrity	8	9.3%	3	6.8%	5	11.9%
- Duplicity	8	9.3%	1	2.3%	7	16.7%
- Breaking confidentiality	6	7.0%	2	4.5%	4	9.5%
- Claiming ownership of somebody else's work	6	7.0%	4	9.1%	2	4.8%
- Discrimination/favouritism	6	7.0%	3	6.8%	3	7.1%
- Overambitiousness	6	7.0%	3	6.8%	3	7.1%
- Promise breaking	5	5.8%	3	6.8%	2	4.8%
- Going behind one's back	5	5.8%	5	11.4%	0	0.0%
- Blaming others for failure	5	5.8%	3	6.8%	2	4.8%
- Politics	5	5.8%	1	2.3%	4	9.5%
- Deception	4	4.7%	2	4.5%	2	4.8%
- Lack of transparency	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	3	7.1%
- Inconsistency	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	3	7.1%
- Falseness	2	2.3%	0	0.0%	2	4.8%
- Unreliability	1	1.2%	1	2.3%	0	0.0%
- Manipulativeness	1	1.2%	0	0.0%	1	2.4%

Note: Question 2 (significant distrust event); Question 4 (significant distrust person)

Table 7.3 – The proportional distribution of the distrustee-associated factors

Factors	Final total		Question 2		Question 4	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Ability-associated</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
- Lack of knowledge	5	1.7%	3	2.3%	2	1.3%
- Lack of confidence/Insecure	3	1.0%	1	0.8%	2	1.3%
- Lack of competence/Ability/Capability	2	0.7%	2	1.5%	0	0.0%
- Lazy	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
<b>Benevolence-associated</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>33.6%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>36.9%</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>30.8%</b>
- Lack of help/support	24	8.4%	17	13.1%	7	4.5%
- Self-interested behaviour	13	4.5%	6	4.6%	7	4.5%
- Rude, not nice, not friendly	11	3.8%	3	2.3%	8	5.1%
- Condescending behaviour	8	2.8%	2	1.5%	6	3.8%
- Dictatorial behaviour	6	2.1%	1	0.8%	5	3.2%
- Not caring	6	2.1%	4	3.1%	2	1.3%
- Unavailability	5	1.7%	2	1.5%	3	1.9%
- Arrogance/conceitedness	5	1.7%	2	1.5%	3	1.9%
- Aggressiveness/temperamental	5	1.7%	3	2.3%	2	1.3%
- Lack of understanding	3	1.0%	3	2.3%	0	0.0%
- Undermine one's authority	3	1.0%	2	1.5%	1	0.6%
- Unapproachability	2	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	1.3%
- Unreceptivity	2	0.7%	1	0.8%	1	0.6%
- Lack of goodness	2	0.7%	1	0.8%	1	0.6%
- Immature	1	0.3%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%

Table 7.3 continued – The proportional distribution of the distrustee-associated factors

Factors	Final total		Question 2		Question 4	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<b>Integrity-associated</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>62.6%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>58.5%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>66.0%</b>
- Dishonesty	28	9.8%	11	8.5%	17	10.9%
- Harmful behaviour	18	6.3%	9	6.9%	9	5.8%
- Disrespectful behaviour	12	4.2%	6	4.6%	6	3.8%
- Disingenuousness	11	3.8%	5	3.8%	6	3.8%
- Opportunistic behaviour	10	3.5%	3	2.3%	7	4.5%
- Not fulfilling their agreement	10	3.5%	5	3.8%	5	3.2%
- Closeness/Not open	8	2.8%	2	1.5%	6	3.8%
- Unfairness	8	2.8%	4	3.1%	4	2.6%
- Lack of or questionable integrity	8	2.8%	3	2.3%	5	3.2%
- Duplicity	8	2.8%	1	0.8%	7	4.5%
- Breaking confidentiality	6	2.1%	2	1.5%	4	2.6%
- Claiming ownership of somebody else's work	6	2.1%	4	3.1%	2	1.3%
- Discrimination/favouritism	6	2.1%	3	2.3%	3	1.9%
- Overambitiousness	6	2.1%	3	2.3%	3	1.9%
- Promise breaking	5	1.7%	3	2.3%	2	1.3%
- Going behind one's back	5	1.7%	5	3.8%	0	0.0%
- Blaming others for failure	5	1.7%	3	2.3%	2	1.3%
- Politics	5	1.7%	1	0.8%	4	2.6%
- Deception	4	1.4%	2	1.5%	2	1.3%
- Lack of transparency	3	1.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.9%
- Inconsistency	3	1.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.9%
- Falseness	2	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	1.3%
- Unreliability	1	0.3%	1	0.8%	0	0.0%
- Manipulativeness	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: Question 2 (significant distrust event); Question 4 (significant distrust person)

As mentioned earlier and also as it can be seen from Table 7.3, the overall proportion of the Ability-associated factors was very low. Ability-associated factors were mentioned only by a few participants as a reason for distrust, as exemplified by the following consultant:

*“I didn’t ever really have much faith in his knowledge level...my distrust was kind of rooted in this feeling of he is incompetent. I suppose, you know distrusting not only him as a team player but also in his skill and ability.”*

[P27]

Considering the above statement, in addition to the Ability-associated factors (Lack of knowledge, Lack of Competence/Ability/Capability), the participant touched on the fact that the distrustee was not a team player. Actually, this participant identified the distrustee's not being a team player, in other words, the distrustee's destructive behaviour to the established team dynamics (Problematic cooperation/collaboration) as the primary source of distrust. Similar to this particular participant, none of the participants singled out the Ability-associated factors as a sole reason for distrust, instead discussing them in conjunction with other distrust factors. Furthermore, a few participants outlined that the Ability-associated factors generated distrust because of the certain kind of behaviour they promoted. For example, an executive identified insecurity (Lack of confidence/Insecure) as a reason for distrust, as such a trait, according to her, initiated self-serving behaviour motivated for gaining self-advantage:

*“This is a bit of a sweeping statement but generally people who are insecure in themselves are the kinds of people in my opinion that you’ve got to watch the trust. Because they need something to bolster their personality, so they need something to play to their ego, they need something that would get them position, they need something that makes them feel good. They need something to bolster themselves up and therefore that’s a driving factor for them and when you’ve got somebody who needs that driving factor they’ll do anything to get it.” [P25]*

In contrast to Ability-associated factors, the participants mentioned Benevolence-associated factors more frequently (Table 7.3). Among these factors, ‘Lack of help/support’ was the most commonly mentioned one, being mentioned by a quarter of the participants (Table 7.2). This factor was most often discussed in regard to distrusting the superiors. The participants who mentioned this factor in order to explain the reasons for their distrust used very similar

statements such as ‘not behind me’, ‘not on my side’, ‘not looking out for me’. These statements were most often used in reference to the superiors’ lack of help and support in participants’ career development. This, for instance, encompassed issues such as superiors’ not helping and supporting the participants in performance assessment review meetings which could enable career advancement and promotion, as well as the lack of help and support against the third parties, for example against accusations. One of the participants, a senior manager, even took an extreme stance and claimed to distrust her peers, as she put it, *“the leaders who are not diligent enough to support junior staff”* [P34].

When the superiors’ behaviour was concerned, the superiors ‘Dictatorial behaviour’ was also mentioned as a reason leading to distrust. A director, for example, summarised such behaviour as *“I’m your boss and I will tell you what to do and you have to do what I ask you”* [P37] which then led to distrust.

Along with the ‘Dictatorial behaviour’, another factor influencing distrust was ‘Condescending behaviour’, which was discussed especially pertaining to the superiors. These participants used similar expressions such as the distrustee’s ‘behaving superiorly’, ‘belittling with disparaging comments’, ‘looking down on’, and ‘not valuing or showing respect’ for explaining the rationale behind their distrust, as typified by the following participant, a manager who also emphasised ‘Not listening’ as a factor influencing distrust, echoing other participants’ views on the matter as well:

*“You can tell by his face, by his way of talking to you he is basically looking at you from the top, basically looking like he is giving you the favour to listen to you. And he never really listens to things”* [P04].

Lastly, two more Benevolence-associated factors were discussed more frequently in regard to distrusting the superiors: ‘Lack of understanding’ and ‘Not caring’. For example, a participant,

a consultant, explained how her distrust towards her superior stemmed from that superior's solely caring for work-associated matters and not understanding possible personal life predicaments and their consequences for the participant: *"They simply don't care about a person or people's circumstances, so it is all about work, not about if that person has a child, if that person needs to be at home for certain reason or that sort of thing"* [P07]. Another participant, a director, further exemplified how her superior's not caring about a very sensitive issue (her daughter's being hospitalised) caused a strong sense of distrust towards that superior which subsequently led her to quit that company:

*"My daughter got really ill and I was working in the middle of a project and [the manager] was so concerned about the project rather than my daughter and I was shocked. He said, look I don't want your daughter coming in the middle of this project, it is important, I want you to give a full account review next day while you are in the hospital. [P37]*

Every Benevolence-associated factor mentioned so far was a factor the participants discussed more frequently in relation to their superiors. Only one factor, 'Undermine one's authority', was discussed in relation to distrusting the subordinates. This factor was mentioned by all three participants who discussed distrusting their subordinates, one of whom explained his reasons for distrusting as follows:

*"At any opportunity and often in a public environment like in a meeting or something like that, the person would constantly try and undermine my authority"* [P15].

The remaining Benevolence-associated factors were equally discussed across different distrustee groups, namely superiors, peers, or subordinates. Among these factors 'Self-interested behaviour' and 'Unavailability' were among frequently mentioned ones (Table 7.2).

Alternatively, some of the factors such as ‘Unapproachability’, or ‘Unreceptivity’ were mentioned only a few times (see Table 7.2) and therefore I do not speculate on whether these factors would be discussed more in association with any particular distrustee groups. In addition to all Benevolence-associated factors discussed until now, there were also those Benevolence-associated factors concerning the distrustees’ characteristics such as the distrustee’s being ‘Rude, not nice, and not friendly’, ‘Lack of goodness’, being ‘Immature’, ‘Aggressiveness/temperamental’, or ‘Arrogance/conceitedness’.

All the Ability- and Benevolence-associated factors combined together, however, were less often mentioned compared to all Integrity-associated factors (Table 7.3). Among all Integrity-associated factors, ‘Dishonesty’ was mentioned most frequently, emphasised by more than a quarter of the participants (Table 7.3). ‘Dishonesty’ comprised several components such as lack of honesty or selective honesty. Selective honesty encompassed not portraying the whole truth, but only conveying the desired information, as exemplified by the words of the following consultant:

*“He is only saying the things that are nice to hear, wanted to hear rather than what is the truth. Basically, staying away from the hard facts...I think in a way what is very mistrusting is that you never know when he is telling you the whole truth, so it’s such a fundamental thing” [P30].*

Similarly, another participant, a director, also emphasised the impact of not communicating the whole picture on distrust:

*“It’s like talking to a politician. It is a good technique for certain things, but when you’re simply only answering about 20% of the questions you’re being asked, then you build the distrust. You don’t believe that they’re telling you the truth because they’re dodging questions and spinning the story.” [P39]*

As another form of ‘Dishonesty’, some of the participants emphasised the distrustee’s lying. One manager even took an extreme stance and admitted that lying would always lead to distrust: *“The lying is everything...It doesn’t matter what else happens after that”* [P34]. Along with ‘Dishonesty’, some of the participants emphasised secrecy, hiding things, and not being open (Closeness/Not open), as well as ‘Lack of transparency’ as factors influencing distrust.

The second most frequently mentioned Integrity-associated distrust factor was ‘Harmful behaviour’ (Table 7.3). The harm discussed mostly concerned the issues related to career progression. For instance, some of the participants talked about the unfair, groundlessly negative, scathing, or unwarranted performance assessment or appraisal reports provided by the superiors to the upper management, which consequently harmed the participants’ career advancement and therefore said to lead to distrust. A few participants especially emphasised how they distrusted their superiors who intentionally harmed their career advancement because of perceiving them as a threat, the issue of which was typified by a manager’s statement:

*“I think she probably saw me as a threat and at that point then just kept me down in every which way she could... But yes, anything she could do to keep me down she would, so in performance management it was only just about good enough, she would never support any promotion cases... I was a valuable member of the team to her, but she didn’t want to recognise that. So, from that point of view, it would just get down to petty levels, things like giving me the worst desk on the team for instance, that sort of thing.”* [P29]

Another participant, a manager, further articulated the possible ‘Harmful behaviour’, emphasising distrusting those people who do not hesitate to harm others in order to achieve their goals or promote themselves:

*“Stepping on other people is his common characteristic. I developed strong distrust to that person...He would do everything possible to promote himself and harming other people or harming their career is not important for him in the way to achieve his goal.” [P01]*

The issues raised in the above statement are related closely to other factors discussed such as ‘Opportunistic behaviour’, ‘Over-Ambitiousness’, ‘Going behind one's back’, and ‘Politics’. The latter factor, ‘Politics’, was mentioned by some other participants who emphasised that people who get involved in political games in a quest for power or aggressively pursue their interests for personal gain would elicit distrust. The following senior manager’s statement provides an example for what ‘Politics’ might encompass. He voiced how a director’s pursuit of becoming a partner elicited distrust:

*“I thought deeply about pay differential between the director and a partner. Does that engender the right kind of behaviour?...I have seen from a number of directors wishing to make that jump is that they will sometimes do it at the expense of other people. And that is where mistrust comes in.” [P08]*

Building on the work context raised in the preceding statements, there were some distrust factors which were closely associated with the organisational settings. For example, six participants narrated a distrust event where the ownership of their work was claimed by the others (Claiming ownership of somebody else's work). Correspondingly, some of the participants pointed out being unfairly blamed for failed work (Blaming others for their failure) as a reason for distrust, the situation of which was emphasised to be especially important when the distrustee was the participant’s superior, as exemplified by the statement of a participant, a department head: *“When he basically blamed me for something I hadn’t*

done, at that point I pretty much write him off as a manager” [P23]. This participant further explained:

*“I was incredibly disappointed in him as my manager and that he had blamed me for something that was not my fault and not to vouch for his own actions. Secondly, I was angry because I took great pride, and still do in my work, and I felt that he had somehow tarnished my own reputation and I was put in a really difficult position because I was asked about it.” [P23]*

Another participant, a director, further elaborated on this matter, emphasising the superiors’ responsibility for protecting their subordinates instead of putting the blame on them:

*“I think what made it particularly poignant was the seniority level because the guy was pretty senior, and he blamed it on the most junior person on our team and to me it was just a dirty move... In an environment where everybody has a role, you have expectations of what each and everyone’s role is.... If something goes wrong with a client or with somebody important, the manager takes the hit even if it’s not his fault and then offline he goes and talks with the team” [P45].*

In discussing ‘Blaming others for their failure’, the majority of the participants mentioning this factor discussed it mostly in relation to their superiors. There was only one more factor where the distrustee group mainly concerned the superiors: ‘Discrimination/Favouritism’. This factor encompassed discussions such as the superiors’ not treating their team equally, favouring some members more, valuing the more junior staff less, or discriminating based on gender, as epitomised by the statement of a director: *“I feel like he reacted much more strongly to me standing up to him than he did to some of my male colleagues” [P45].*

Carrying out the discussion from the work context perspective, ‘Disrespectful behaviour’, behaviour that perceived as inappropriate in a workplace and thereby disrespectful, was another factor reported to engender distrust. This is epitomised by the following senior manager’s statement:

*“We had a very contentious and quite frankly disrespectful exchange. All the trust and/or respect that I had for this person really just went out of the window in one transient moment... It was very disrespectful, and it challenged my own moral compass and my internal boundaries of respect in the workplace. They were compromised in a way that is more than professional disagreement or constructive dissention but rather just disrespect”. [P32]*

Not all Integrity-associated distrust factors discussed, however, were limited to the work context and there were also those which concerned the general behaviours of a distrustee such as ‘Breaking confidentiality’, ‘Not fulfilling their agreement’, ‘Not keeping promises’, ‘Deceptiveness’, and ‘Duplicity’. When discussing their rationale for distrust, some of the participants also mentioned some traits of the distrustee such as ‘Disingenuousness’, ‘Falseness’, and ‘Manipulativeness’ which were found to contribute to distrust.

As it can be seen from Table 7.2, as well as from Table 7.3, there was a long list of differing Integrity-associated factors mentioned by the participants. Various facets of Integrity-associated matters were discussed, each participant touching on different aspects of Integrity. Most of the participants explained the reasons for their distrust by intertwining various components together, as done by the following participant, a senior manager, who mentioned ‘Lack of or questionable Integrity’, ‘Dishonesty’, ‘Inconsistency’ and ‘Opportunistic behaviour’.

*“[He does] what is required in the moment and not what’s honest or good or truthful, an attitude of always trying to get over and always trying to make sure that they gain in individual best interests and not what’s right or wrong. Just a sense of a lacking strong sense of right and wrong...if you don’t have a moral compass of right or wrong, you go with the wind and do whatever it calls for today, that’s not a solid sense of character” [P32].*

To sum up the discussion so far, in this section the distrustee-associated factors which were grouped under Ability-, Benevolence-, and Integrity-associated factors were discussed. Among all these factors, Integrity-associated factors constituted the most commonly mentioned factors (63%), whereas Ability-associated factors were mentioned less frequently and always mentioned in addition to other factors (Table 7.3). Now, I move on to discuss the distruster-associated factors.

#### *Distruster-associated factors*

The discussion of the distruster-associated factors mirrors exactly the discussion of the trustor-associated factors (see Chapter 6, section 6.2). Two such factors emerged: ‘Distruster’s propensity’ and ‘Feeling/Instinct/Intuition’. The former factor concerned the initial distrust or even trust, the distruster had for others before any information was available and therefore comprised a similar connotation to Trustor’s propensity.

The second factor ‘Feeling/Instinct/Intuition’ was mentioned by one-tenth of participants. These participants pointed out that although they could not rationally explain the reasoning, they incorporated their feelings, gut feeling, instincts, or intuitions into their distrust decisions, as exemplified by a manager who commented: *“Can’t explain why, just intuition, or something programmed in the way you had experiences” [P05].* Another participant, a

director, commented as follows, voicing the other participants' opinions who raised this factor:

*"We all form human judgements pretty quickly about whether or not someone is trustworthy. Sometimes if we deem them untrustworthy we don't quite know why, it's more of a feeling than a scientific process, sometimes that's clearly unfair, it's always going to be, but you can't really define our innate human reactions. So, I think I've learnt increasingly to slightly go with my gut...I tend to get more things right in personal judgements than I get wrong. So that tells me that normally I should just trust my instincts on things." [P47]*

To sum up, both factors, 'Distrustor's propensity' and 'Feeling/Instinct/Intuition', were found to influence the distrustor's tendency and inclination to distrust the distrustee. They were incorporated into the distrust decisions relatively more at the very early stages of the relationship when the information about the distrustee was not yet available. These distrustor-associated factors, along with the previously discussed distrustee-associated factors constituted the factors influencing distrust. Now I move to the factors influencing distrust development.

### **7.2.3 The factors influencing distrust development (Adjuvant distrust factors)**

In the preceding section, I discussed the factors that were directly associated with the distrustee or the distrustor and influenced distrust. There were, however, other four factors which were not precisely linked to the distrustee or the distrustor but concerned the interpersonal relationship between the distrustee and the distrustor and influenced distrust development by increasing distrust levels. Due to the fact that these factors were described as increasing distrust development, I refer to them as 'adjuvant distrust factors'.

In a way, these factors had what could be termed as a moderating effect because of increasing levels of distrust and thereby playing an adjuvant role in distrust development. These factors, which were listed in Table 7.1, are also illustrated in Table 7.4 and are discussed further below.

*Table 7.4 – Content analysis of the factors influencing distrust development (adjuvant distrust factors)*

Factors	Total		Question 2		Question 4	
	N=86	%	N=44	%	N=42	%
<b>Problematic communication</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26.2%</b>
- Lack of communication	6	7.0%	3	6.8%	3	7.1%
- Not listening	6	7.0%	1	2.3%	5	11.9%
- Not opening up	3	3.5%	1	2.3%	2	4.8%
- Body language	2	2.3%	1	2.3%	1	2.4%
<b>Problematic relationship</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11.9%</b>
<b>Problematic cooperation/ collaboration</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7.1%</b>
<b>Collective distrust</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11.9%</b>

Note: Question 2 (significant distrust event); Question 4 (significant distrust person)

Four factors were mentioned to influence distrust development. The factor, ‘Problematic communication’ further comprised four factors such as ‘Lack of communication’ (not being able to communicate or the distrustee’s unwillingness to communicate), ‘Not listening’ (the distrustee’s not listening what the distruster has to say), ‘Not opening up’ (the distrustee’s not opening up to the distruster), and ‘Body language’ (having a closed body language, avoiding direct eye contact).

‘Problematic relationship’ was identified as influencing distrust development by almost one-tenth of the participants (Table 7.4). None of these participants, however, referred to failing to build a personal relationship or friendship. In contrast, distrust emerged when the distrustee was more concerned with the work or the output of the work than the participant herself/himself and building a rapport with her/him, a sentiment exemplified by the following statement of a consultant:

*“I think distrust stems from the way she communicates with me, so it’s always less personal, more blunt responses, very much focused on business performance, a corporate performance... So yes, the relationship is professional with most people, but it always breaks into some sort of social environment at some point, so you feel like you know...you get to know people as people rather than as just employees or colleagues.” [P40]*

What was meant by ‘Problematic relationship’ also comprised failing to get along or to build a healthy working relationship or a common ground. Similarly, having conflicts, disagreements, or disputes were said to cause distrust. According to a few of these participants root cause of the ‘Problematic relationship’ between the parties was due the distrustee’s hostility who perceived the distruster as a threat, a situation exemplified by the following manager’s words: *“Because they found me a threat and because of that threat there wasn’t a nice working relationship between us. There was definitely distrust” [P05].*

Another factor mentioned by the participants to influence distrust development was ‘Problematic cooperation/collaboration’. The participants who mentioned this factor argued that the distrustee’s individualistic and ‘me’ instead of ‘us’ behaviour, which was commonly referred as the distrustee’s not being a ‘team player’ but instead looking after personal objectives, led to distrust, sentiments illustrated by the statement of the following participant:

*“When you are working in a team, you are working as a team, right? But sometimes some people get more ambitious and they are running a different race than what you are running” [P09].*

Lastly, ‘Collective distrust’, the other organisational members’ finding the distrustee distrustworthy or the distrustee’s having a reputation in the organisation warranting distrust,

according to a small group of participants, was found to influence the distrust development, a sentiment voiced by a senior consultant:

*“This person has a reputation in the organisation as someone who will aggressively pursue things that suit his own interests and isn’t necessarily, terribly interested in helping others...I suppose, distrust is reinforced by what the others around me say and they tend to express the same sort of opinion”*  
[P02].

Another participant, a manager, who acknowledged that he would form his decisions based on personal experience, admitted that the others’ opinions about the distrustee accelerated his distrust decision:

*“I think it was based mostly on my observations of him and also the way he managed me was very bad and I’ve spoken to a few of his colleagues and they said exactly the same thing, they said yes he’s like this all the time. So, I know it’s bad, but that naturally puts speed into distrusting someone.”* [P42]

‘Collective distrust’, which referred to incorporating the other organisational members’ collective agreement on the distrustworthiness of the distrustee into their distrust decisions, was argued to be important when the distruster had no personal experience with the distrustee. Alternatively, at the later stages of a relationship, the others’ collective distrust played the role of reconfirming the distruster’s own judgement of the distrustee’s distrustworthiness, which further augmented the distruster’s distrust.

To sum up, in addition to the factors influencing distrust, four additional factors were found which had more of, what would it be called, a moderating effect on distrust. These factors,

which were referred to as adjuvant factors here, found to influence distrust development, increasing the distrust levels.

### **7.3 Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to address the second research question (RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships). The factors influencing distrust were determined through analysing the participants' answers to two questions where they were asked to discuss a significant distrust event and a significant distrust person. The inductively identified factors either directly influenced distrust or contributed to distrust development and therefore were categorised as 'factors influencing distrust' and 'factors influencing distrust development'.

The factors influencing distrust comprised two subgroups depending on whether they concerned the distrustee or the distruster. The distrustee-associated factors concerned the distrustee's distrustworthiness which was associated with the distrustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity, in other words Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI. Among all distrustee-associated factors, the Integrity-associated factors were the most frequently mentioned ones. In contrast, the Ability-associated factors were seldom mentioned and always were discussed in conjunction with other distrust factors. Benevolence-associated factors were mentioned relatively more often but not as frequent as the Integrity-associated factors.

The distruster-associated factors comprised two factors, 'Distruster's propensity' and 'Feeling/Instinct/Intuition'. The former factor concerned the initial distrust, or trust, the distruster had towards others which governed her/his inclination to distrust. The latter factor concerned the feelings, instincts, or intuitions the distruster had that prompted her/him to distrust the distrustee. Both these factors were relatively more influential at the early stages of a relationship.

With regards to the factors influencing distrust development, four associated factors emerged which played an adjuvant role and thereby increasing distrust levels. These factors concerned issues related 'Problematic communication', 'Problematic relationship', 'Problematic cooperation/collaboration', and 'Collective distrust'.

Having discussed the factors influencing distrust and distrust development in this chapter, now I commence with the next chapter. Chapter 8 builds on the information gained here, as well as in the preceding chapter concerning the factors influencing trust and trust development (Chapter 6) and explores the relationship between trust and distrust.

# **CHAPTER 8 – THE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUST AND DISTRUST**

## **8.1 Introduction**

The preceding two chapters explored the factors influencing trust (Chapter 6) and distrust (Chapter 7). Building on the findings from these two chapters, this chapter addresses the third research question (RQ3 – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related). As such, the discussion in this chapter was carried out by drawing upon the evidence presented in Chapters 6 and 7.

Almost twenty years ago, Lewicki et al. (1998, p. 450) pointed out ‘the possibilities of separating trust from distrust and for trust and distrust's coexistence’ (also see Sitkin and Roth, 1993). A recent review by Guo et al. (2017) outlined that despite the recent increasing interest on distrust the research on this topic is limited and fragmented, emphasising the unresolved debate surrounding the relationship between trust and distrust. Lewicki et al. (1998) predicted that as separable and distinct constructs, trust and distrust would have different natures and antecedents (factors). Correspondingly, Guo et al. (2017) suggested that identifying and comparing the antecedent factors of trust and distrust are a step forward in establishing the relationship between trust and distrust. Following Guo et al.’s (2017) suggestion, the investigation of the relationship between trust and distrust centred around the comparison of the factors influencing trust and distrust.

The chapter starts with a discussion on the natures of trust and distrust which is followed by the comparison of the factors influencing trust and distrust. In the subsequent section, questions regarding the co-existence of trust and distrust are raised and addressed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

## **8.2 The relationship between trust and distrust**

In order to shed light on the debate surrounding the relationship between trust and distrust, I followed previous research suggestions (e.g. Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki et al., 1998) and compared the antecedent factors influencing trust and distrust. As such, this chapter builds on the comparison of the information gained through the investigation of the factors influencing trust (Chapter 6) and distrust (Chapter 7). Consequently, drawing from the evidence already presented in the previous chapters (where the details of the issues raised here can be found), this chapter aims to bring this evidence together and reflect on it. The first part of the subsequent discussion builds on the reflection on the natures of trust and distrust.

### **8.2.1 The natures of trust and distrust**

In Chapter 6, I discussed how the participants conceptualised trust in two distinct ways, trusting someone as a person (person-focused trust) and trusting someone to do something (task-focused trust). Such a distinction, however, was not observed in distrust, this implying a similar understanding and conceptualisation of the construct across the participants. In other words, the situational and domain-specific nature of trust as seen in task-focused trust was not observed in distrust. Rather, in every distrust event narrated by the participants, distrust referred to distrusting the person as a whole, similar to the concept of person-focused trust. Moreover, distrust presented a pervasive nature, escalating from a situation to a person, or even sometimes to the whole organisation. Whilst there were no trust cases where the participants claimed to trust the organisation as a result of trusting their managers, more than a quarter of all participants discussing distrusting their superiors mentioned distrusting the entire organisation as an extension of distrust felt towards their superiors.

Distrust's pervasive nature was, partly, a result of the strong feelings it engenders. Some of the participants commented on the distinction between trust and distrust by pointing out the

difference between the magnitude of the feelings trust and distrust elicit. These participants remarked that the feelings evoked by distrust were much stronger than those that trust roused, the sentiment of which is epitomised by the statement of a manager: *“I think the feeling you get from distrust is much stronger than the feeling you do of trust because it is instant”* [P05]. The various feelings that are reported by the participants are summarised in Table 8.1. As it can be seen from the table, only a few of the feelings expressed with regards to trust or distrust had opposite connotations such as happy/unhappy, good/bad, impressed/disappointed, comfortable/uncomfortable, like/dislike, alone/not alone, respected/disrespected. It appeared that distrust evoked highly strong emotions such as betrayal, resentment, and hurt. Similar sentiments are further emphasised in the following manager’s statement:

*“Distrust is a very strong feeling...distrusting behaviour usually sticks more in your mind and is easier to remember. That is human nature. Negative things usually are much easier to remember”* [P01].

*Table 8.1 – The feelings reported by the participants in association with trust and distrust*

<b>Trust</b>		<b>Distrust</b>	
Assured	Not alone	Abused	Let down
Caring	Pleased	Alone	Mad
Comfortable	Pride	Angry	Not liking
Confident	Safe	Annoyed	Resentful
Energised	Satisfied	Bad	Sad
Enthusiastic	Secure	Betrayed	Shocked
Excited	Supported	Demotivated	Stressed
Good	Reassuring	Deceived	Surprised
Happy	Refreshing	Disappointed	Terrible
Honoured	Reinforced	Dislike	Tired
Impressed	Respected	Disappointed	Uncomfortable
Less doubtful	Touched	Disrespected	Uneasy
Liberating	Trusted	Excruciating	Unhappy
Like	Valued	Frustrated	Upset
Nice		Hurt	Worthless
		Irritated	

In the interviews the participants were not asked specifically to reflect on the relationship between trust and distrust (see Chapter 5, section 5.8 for details). However, some participants,

around a quarter of them, commented on the distinction between the natures of trust and distrust, highlighting the different time span associated with trust or distrust development. These participants emphasised that building trust takes time whereas distrust could be instantaneous. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 6, these participants argued that trust develops gradually, augmented by positive incidents; whereas distrust could be immediate and could even be initiated by a sole incident. Such claims are captured in the following statement of a manager, representing the other participants who expressed similar views:

*“At the beginning your trust will be less, you will trust with smaller things. Subconsciously your trust will grow over a period of time. Trust with smaller pieces until you feel you can share larger pieces. With distrust, I think, it could be a make or break decision.” [P05]*

The distinction between the natures of trust and distrust was further observed in the analysis of the responses to two 9-point Likert scale questions asked during the interviews. The participants were required to rate the feeling of trust (Question 1) and the feeling of distrust (Question 2) they had before and after the significant events they described (see Chapter 5, section 5.9 for more details). In Question 1, despite the participants narrated a significant event, the jumps between the before and after the trust event rates were small (2 or 3 points in average), high levels of trust always requiring more than one positive incident. In contrast, in almost all cases concerning distrust, big jumps between before and after rates (6 points in average) were observed and almost in every event narrated high levels of distrust were reached with a single event. These findings support the claims in the preceding paragraph that trust evolves gradually, step-by-step building with every positive incident and thereby requiring a long time for high levels of trust to emerge whereas high levels of distrust can be reached with

a single incident very quickly. These findings support the notion of tentative steps in trust and leaps in distrust building.

In contrast to the tentative steps taken to build trust, breaking it was said to happen very quickly. In order to portray such circumstances, a few of the participants used very similar statements to: *"All the trust and/or respect that I had for this person really just went out of the window in one transient moment" [P32].*

In the quest for investigating the relationship between trust and distrust, it is important to draw attention to the distrust language used by some participants, where the term distrust was conflated with 'not trust'. Partially this is because, as it was exemplified in the above quote (P32), when that participant's trust was broken, distrust emerged (the high association between trust and distrust, a concept I will return later on). But in other cases, the terms distrusting and not trusting were used interchangeably, usually meaning distrust. These participants, although explicitly discussing distrust, used the term 'not trust' in reference to distrust. This implies a possible terminologically similar use of the terms distrust and not trust. However, the evidence concerning the natures of trust and distrust suggests a distinction between the constructs. Now, I commence with the comparison of the factors influencing trust (Chapter 6) and distrust (Chapter 7).

### **8.2.2 The factors influencing trust and distrust**

For both trust and distrust, there were two major categories: factors influencing trust or distrust and factors influencing trust or distrust development. I start discussing the factors influencing trust and distrust.

Factors influencing trust and distrust encompassed two subgroups based on whether they concerned the trustor/distrustor or the trustee/distrustee. Both trustor- and distrustor-

associated factors concerned the trustee's/distrustee's propensity (Trustor's propensity in trust and Distrustor's propensity in distrust) and Feeling/Instinct/Intuition in both trust and distrust. These factors comprised similar meanings in both trust and distrust. Whilst the former factor concerned a person's willingness or tendency to trust or distrust others, the latter pertained to a feeling, gut feeling, instinct, or intuition the trustor/distrustor had towards the other party which consequently influenced her/his willingness to trust or distrust the other party. These factors are discussed in more detail in their respective chapters (Chapters 6 and 7). However, the point concerning the relationship between trust and distrust is that the emergent distrustor-associated factors are not the negated versions of the corresponding trust factors. When the trustor/distrustor-associated factors are considered, the relationship between trust and distrust cannot be concluded to be an opposite one, suggesting a separation between the constructs.

Moving forward, I further compared the trustee- and distrustee-associated factors which concern the trustee' trustworthiness and distrustee's distrustworthiness respectively (see Table 8.2).

*Table 8.2 – The comparison of the proportional distributions of the trustworthiness and distrustworthiness factors*

<b>Trustworthiness/ Distrustworthiness Factors</b>	<b>TRUST</b>	<b>DISTRUST</b>
	<b>Final %</b>	<b>Final %</b>
Ability-associated	13.7%	3.8%
Benevolence-associated	47.1%	33.6%
Integrity-associated	39.2%	62.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: These findings are drawn from Table 6.4 and Table 7.3.

When the overall trustee/distrustee-associated (trustworthiness/distrustworthiness) factors are considered (Table 8.2), it can be seen that the participants predominantly mentioned Integrity-associated factors in their reasoning for distrust, whereas for trust, Benevolence-associated factors, with the exception of task-focused trust where Ability-associated factors, were most frequently mentioned. Although the frequencies of mentions by itself do not offer a solid

conclusion, they suggest a possible significance of Integrity-associated factors in leading to distrust and Benevolence-associated factors in engendering trust (as it was the case for Ability-associated factors in task-focused trust). The chief distinction between trust and distrust was with regards to Ability-associated factors. These factors were, except for some participants, reported to influence trust decisions and were especially critical in task-focused trust to an extent of almost being a prerequisite in such trust (see Chapter 6, section 6.2 for details). In contrast, with regards to distrust, Ability-associated factors were rarely mentioned and were never mentioned as main reasons for distrust; rather they were always mentioned in conjunction with other factors. This information is summarised further in Table 8.3a.

Overall comparison of the factors (Table 8.3a) demonstrates that the majority of the Ability-associated distrust factors were associated with corresponding trust factors, referring to the absence of such factors (e.g. Lack of Competence/Ability/Capability, Lack of knowledgeability, Lack of Confidence/Insecure). Furthermore, there was a distrust factor that was the opposite of the associated trust factor (Lazy) and two factors were unique to trust and absent in distrust (Technical help and Cleverness that only emerged in trust).

*Table 8.3a – The detailed comparison of the trustworthiness and distrustworthiness factors – Ability-associated factors*

Factors	Final Trust		Final Distrust	
	Total	%	Total	%
<b>ABILITY</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3.8%</b>
- Competence/Ability/ Capability (Distrust = Lack of)	22	6.4%	2	0.7%
- Knowledgeability (Distrust = Lack of)	11	3.2%	5	1.7%
- Confidence (Distrust = Lack of/Insecure)	7	2.0%	3	1.0%
- Technical help	3	0.9%	N/E	
- Cleverness	2	0.6%	N/E	
- Hard working (Distrust = Lazy)	2	0.6%	1	0.3%

Note: N/E = Not emerged. The findings are drawn from Table 6.3 and Table 7.2 (see these tables for the details)

As it can be seen from Table 8.3b, similar to the Ability-associated factors, among the Benevolence-associated distrust factors, there were factors corresponding to the absence of the associated trust factors (e.g. Lack of help/support, Lack of understanding, Lack of goodness), opposites (e.g. Not caring, Unavailability, Unapproachability, Rude, not nice, or not friendly, Self-interested behaviour, Immature, Arrogance/conceitedness), and the distinct factors belonging only to trust (e.g. Humour/fun, Positive attitude, Loyalty, Non-judgemental) or distrust (e.g. Aggressiveness/temperamental, Condescending behaviour, Dictatorial behaviour, Undermine one's authority, Unreceptiveness).

Table 8.3b – The detailed comparison of the trustworthiness and distrustworthiness factors – Benevolence-associated factors

Factors	Final Trust		Final Distrust	
	Total	%	Total	%
<b>BENEVOLENCE</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>33.6%</b>
- Helping/supporting (Distrust = Lack of)	61	17.7%	24	8.4%
- Caring (Distrust = Not)	16	4.7%	6	2.1%
- Availability (Distrust = Unavailability)	16	4.7%	5	1.7%
- Friendly, nice, kind personable (Distrust = Rude, not nice, not friendly)	16	4.7%	11	3.8%
- Altruistic motivation/ unselfish behaviour (Distrust = Self-interested behaviour)	13	3.8%	13	4.5%
- Approachability (Distrust = Unapproachability)	10	2.9%	2	0.7%
- Understanding (Distrust = Lack of)	9	2.6%	3	1.0%
Goodness (Distrust = Lack of)	5	1.5%	2	0.7%
- Humour/fun	5	1.5%	N/E	
- Modesty (Distrust = Arrogance/conceitedness)	4	1.2%	5	1.7%
- Non-judgemental	3	0.9%	N/E	
- Mature (Distrust = Immature)	2	0.6%	1	0.3%
- Loyalty	1	0.3%	N/E	
- Positive attitude	1	0.3%	N/E	
- Condescending behaviour	N/E		8	2.8%
- Dictatorial behaviour	N/E		6	2.1%
- Aggressiveness/ temperamental	N/E		5	1.7%
- Undermine one's authority	N/E		3	1.0%
- Unreceptivity	N/E		2	0.7%

Note: N/E = Not emerged. The findings are drawn from Table 6.3 and Table 7.2 (see these tables for the details)

As it can be seen from Table 8.3c, similar to the Ability- and Benevolence-associated factors, among the Integrity-associated distrust factors, there were factors corresponding to the absence of the associated trust factors (e.g. Lack of or questionable Integrity, Lack of transparency), opposites (e.g. Dishonesty, Closeness/Not open, Breaking confidentiality, Promise breaking, Inconsistency, Disingenuousness, Unfairness, Unreliability, Opportunistic behaviour), and the distinct factors belonging only to trust (e.g. Discreetness) or distrust (e.g. Harmful behaviour, Disrespectful behaviour, Not fulfilling their agreement, Duplicity,

Claiming ownership of somebody else's work, Discrimination/favouritism, Going behind one's back, Overambitiousness, Blaming others for failure, Politics, Deception, Falseness, Manipulativeness).

Table 8.3c – The detailed comparison of the trustworthiness and distrustworthiness factors – Integrity-associated factors

Factors	Final Trust		Final Distrust	
	Total	%	Total	%
<b>INTEGRITY</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>39.2%</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>62.6%</b>
- Honesty (Distrust = Dishonesty)	25	7.3%	28	9.8%
- Openness (Distrust = Closeness/Not open)	25	7.3%	8	2.8%
- Integrity (Distrust lack of or questionable)	18	5.2%	8	2.8%
- Keeping confidentiality (Distrust = Breaking confidentiality)	18	5.2%	6	2.1%
- Promise fulfilment (Distrust = Promise breaking)	15	4.4%	5	1.7%
- Consistency (Distrust = Inconsistency)	10	2.9%	3	1.0%
- Genuineness (Distrust = Disingenuousness)	6	1.7%	11	3.8%
- Fairness (Distrust = Unfairness)	5	1.5%	8	2.8%
- Reliability (Distrust = Unreliability)	5	1.5%	1	0.3%
- Discreetness	4	1.2%	N/E	
- Transparency (Distrust = Lack of)	3	0.9%	3	1.0%
- Non-opportunistic behaviour (Distrust = Opportunistic behaviour)	1	0.3%	10	3.5%
- Harmful behaviour	N/E		18	6.3%
- Disrespectful behaviour	N/E		12	4.2%
- Not fulfilling their agreement	N/E		10	3.5%
- Duplicity	N/E		8	2.8%
- Claiming ownership of somebody else's work	N/E		6	2.1%
- Discrimination/ favouritism	N/E		6	2.1%
- Overambitiousness	N/E		6	2.1%
- Going behind one's back	N/E		5	1.7%
- Blaming others for failure	N/E		5	1.7%
- Politics	N/E		5	1.7%
- Deception	N/E		4	1.4%
- Falseness	N/E		2	0.7%
- Manipulativeness	N/E		1	0.3%

Note: N/E = Not emerged. The findings are drawn from Table 6.3 and Table 7.2 (see these tables for the details)

What this comparison of the trust and distrust factors demonstrates is that not all of the distrust factors are antitheses of the associated trust factors. The fact that there are distinct factors for both trust and distrust in addition to the factors that are opposites and also those outlining the absence, suggests that both trust and distrust are separate constructs with their distinct antecedents. However, the fact that there are those distrust factors which are indeed the opposite of the trust factors also implies that trust and distrust are highly associated with each other. This, in addition to the cases where distrust emerges as a result of broken trust, prevents the notion of total separation between the constructs. This thesis, as shown in Table 8.3, outlines the exact differences and similarities between the factors influencing trust and distrust.

Lastly, I overview the adjuvant factors emerged both in trust and distrust that influenced trust and distrust development (Table 8.4). Some of these factors were associated with similar issues such as relationship, communication, collaboration and cooperation, and collective agreement of the other organisational members. These factors, however, were mentioned more frequently by the participants talking about trust. In other words, these factors which concern interpersonal relationships were perceived as very important for trust development. Especially, the factors 'Relationship' and 'Communication' have been very commonly discussed to influence trust development and increase trust levels. There were also two distinct trust factors (Trust Reciprocity and Cultural congruence) which were discussed to influence trust development, whereas no relevant such factors emerged in distrust. In other words, distrustee's distrusting the distrustor or cultural similarities/differences were not discussed by the participants in association to distrust.

Table 8.4 – The comparison of the factors influencing trust and distrust development (adjuvant factors)

Factors	Trust total		Factors	Distrust Total	
	N=94	%		N=86	%
<b>Relationship</b>	56	59.6%	<b>Problematic communication</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>19.8%</b>
<b>Communication</b>	52	55.3%	- Lack of communication	6	7.0%
- Opening up	32	34.0%	- Not listening	6	7.0%
- Listening	9	9.6%	- Not opening up	3	3.5%
- Having open and honest conversations	6	6.4%	- Body language	2	2.3%
- Body language	5	5.3%	<b>Problematic relationship</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10.5%</b>
<b>Trust Reciprocity</b>	23	24.5%	<b>Problematic cooperation/ collaboration</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>Collective trust</b>	12	12.8%	<b>Collective distrust</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9.3%</b>
<b>Cultural congruence</b>	9	9.6%			
<b>Cooperation/ collaboration</b>	7	7.4%			

In short, factors influencing both trust and distrust, as well trust and distrust development can be summarised in three groups. Factors influencing distrust or distrust development either constituted (1) the absence or lack of the associated trust factor, (2) the opposite of the associated trust factor, or (3) distinct, unique to trust or distrust. This information lends support to the distinction between trust and distrust but also highlights that trust and distrust are highly associated constructs due to the existence of opposite factors. Taking a step further, the findings contribute to outline the exact similarities and differences between factors influencing trust and distrust, as well as trust and distrust development.

### 8.2.3 Co-existence of trust and distrust

Observation of both trust and distrust towards the same person in a particular situation, in other words the discovery of co-existence of trust and distrust, could offer clear evidence in regard to the separation of trust and distrust as distinct constructs. There were a few cases where the participants reported both trusting and distrusting the same person at the same time, albeit in different domains. This situation is exemplified by the following manager's statement

who mentioned distrusting her superior as a team leader whilst trusting her Ability to do a piece of work:

*“If you broke down her job into actually the work she was doing on a day to day basis, the actual high skills needed to be able to do that job, she could do that. If you then take the second element of she was the team leader, she couldn’t do that, she wasn’t very good at it. So, I could trust the fact that you could give her a piece of work and that would be done, she’d know what to do and she could manage that. But I couldn’t trust her to manage the team as effectively as it should be managed because she blatantly couldn’t.” [P29]*

There were a few more instances where the co-existence of trust and distrust was reported. A few of the participants who differentiated between personal and professional life reported trusting and distrusting the same person, albeit in different contexts. This situation was typified by the statement of the following director, who said:

*“I don’t like that person, I don’t trust them, I wouldn’t go for a meal with them or I wouldn’t socialise with them outside and there wouldn’t be people that I want to socially interact with. But at a professional level, I know that they’re good at their job, they’re competent, the decisions that they make are correct, and so I do think that there is a kind of strong distinction between the two.” [P38]*

Both in these statements, as well as in the similar ones, the participants do not explicitly use the term distrust, but rather use the term ‘not trust’. This was a common way of reference among the participants, the issue of which was discussed earlier in this chapter. Independent of whether the term ‘not trust’ refers to distrust or not, the above statements constitute

evidence to the trust and distrust as separate constructs argument. Firstly, if the term ‘not trust’ does not refer to distrust, this again offers the separation argument support, albeit differently. Within this scenario, whilst at one end of the trust continuum exists high trust, the other end is occupied by no trust which if trust and distrust were opposites would be occupied by distrust. Having its own high and low ends suggests that trust and distrust are distinct constructs.

In contrast, if ‘not trust’ refers to distrust then the above statements most definitely suggest trust and distrust as separate constructs due to the co-existence of each construct: trusting and distrusting the same person. As a result, these statements constitute evidence to the fact that trust and distrust are separate constructs.

There is an interesting commonality between these two statements, as well as among the cases where the co-existence of trust and distrust was reported. In each case, one of the factors mentioned to engender either trust or distrust was always Ability-associated. For example, in the first quote (P29) above the participant trusted her superior’s ‘Competence/Ability/Capability’ -an Ability-associated factor, however distrusted that superior in general. In the second quote (P38), the participant trusted the trustee’s Ability (task-focused trust), however, distrusted him as a person. In short, in each case where the possible co-existence of trust and distrust was observed, either trust or distrust was always instigated by an Ability-associated factor(s). Another interesting observation among these examples was related to an issue I discussed earlier in regard to the natures of trust and distrust. In none of the examples distrust was limited to a situation. Distrust was always mentioned with regards to distrusting the person wholly whereas trust could be situational or domain-specific.

In conclusion, this chapter offers support for the necessity to treat trust and distrust as separate constructs, but also warns against ignoring the high association between them. The findings outline the similarities and differences concerning the natures, as well as the factors influencing trust and distrust, going beyond supporting the trust and distrust as separate constructs arguments, to offer insight into what separates (or connects) the constructs.

### **8.3 Summary**

This chapter contributes to addressing the third research question (RQ3 – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related?). This chapter offers insight into the relationship between trust and distrust, mainly building on the findings presented in the previous two chapters (Chapters 6 and 7).

The findings suggest that trust and distrust are separate but highly associated constructs. This conclusion is drawn on the basis of three findings. Firstly, the findings suggest that trust and distrust have different natures. Whilst trust was emphasised to build over time, requiring a collection of positive incidents before fully trusting, distrust was said to be immediate where full distrust could be reached with a single incident. Moreover, in contrast to trust, distrust was observed to have a pervasive nature as distrust initiated in a particular situation was usually found to be extended to a person as a whole. Whilst it was possible for situational trust to exist (e.g. task-focused trust), there was only one type of distrust (person-focused). Furthermore, distrust was usually reported to elicit stronger feelings than did trust, sticking in the mind for a longer period of time.

Secondly, the comparison of the factors influencing trust and distrust, as well as trust and distrust development yielded three types of factors: (1) there were distrust factors which were the antitheses of the corresponding trust factors; (2) there were distrust factors which constituted the lack of the corresponding trust factors; and (3) there were factors which were

unique to trust or distrust. The fact that not all distrust factors were the opposites of the trust factors and also that distinct factors emerged in both trust and distrust further suggest that trust and distrust are distinct but also highly associated constructs. Thirdly, the possible co-existence of trust and distrust further offers support to the conclusion on trust and distrust as separate constructs.

In a summary, the conclusion drawn in this chapter, although a tentative one, is that trust and distrust are separate constructs and therefore need to be treated as such. Consequently, their conceptualisations, measures, and operationalisations need to be distinct, but not independent of the consideration of the strong association between them. This discussion is further carried out in the subsequent Discussion chapter (Chapter 9).

# **CHAPTER 9 – DISCUSSION: TRUST AND DISTRUST**

## **9.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprises three independent sub-sections which offer the summaries and the discussions of the findings pertaining to the three main research questions: RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships; RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships; and RQ3 – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related.

## **9.2 Trust in intra-organisational relationships**

In Chapter 2, I emphasised the dramatic increase in trust research in the recent decades. The surge of interest towards trust from academics and practitioners is no doubt partly accelerated by the accumulating evidence of its potential benefits. Yet, not every aspect of trust has been equally explored, researchers (e.g. Castaldo et al., 2010; Dietz, 2011) emphasising the need for further research into what trust is. This thesis contributes to the literature by advancing knowledge on what trust is by shedding light on the antecedents of trust, namely the factors influencing trust and trust development. In particular, I sought answers to the research question: RQ1 – What are the factors influencing trust in intra-organisational relationships?

In chapter 2, I also outlined the diversity among the trust conceptualisations and definitions, but at the same time emphasised the unattainability of reaching to a single definition which would reflect different worldviews or would cater for every research purpose. Nevertheless, I also highlighted the need for conceptual clarification, which, as Luhmann (2000) and McKnight and Chervany (2001) suggest, enables gaining better insights into the nature of trusting relationships investigated. Therefore, before commencing the discussion of the findings on the factors influencing trust, I state a definition of trust that builds on and reflects

the participants' understanding and description of trust. I also note the possible individual distinct opinions on defining trust. This attempt is merely to emphasise the most overwhelming understanding of trust among the participants, as well as to incorporate the common understanding of trust in the literature. As such, trust is 'the trustor's willingness to be vulnerable to the actions of the trustee based on her/his complex judgements and continuous assessment of the trustworthiness of the trustee'. Hence, trust, which involves the willingness to accept vulnerability, comprises the continuous processing of the trustworthiness of the trustee with the aim of decreasing uncertainty and possible risk of harm. This also requires no interruptions of this process with the violation of trust. Although this definition was applicable to and representative of the majority of the participants' understanding of trust, it should be noted that the participants used trust in two distinct ways: (1) trusting the trustee as a person in general (person-focused trust) and (2) trusting the trustee to do something limiting trust into a particular situation or task (task-focused trust). The former usage of trust goes beyond the idea of trusting someone with something to include trusting them personally. Such trust, therefore, is much more complex and deep. In contrast, task-focused trust is limited to trusting someone with a particular matter and does not necessarily mean trusting them personally. Therefore, the above definition of trust mainly represents person-focused trust.

After clarifying the understanding of trust, now I commence with the discussion of the findings on the factors influencing trust and trust development. According to Lewis and Weigert (1985) and Möllering (2005) the choice of trust is based on 'good reasons'. These 'good reasons', also referred to as factors, determinants, antecedents, conditions, or dimensions of trust in the literature but as factors in this thesis, are interpreted and found to vary across studies. For example, in their review, McEvily and Tortoriello (2011) found the trust factors to be highly fragmented resulting from each study's utilising different set of factors (see Table 2.3).

Lewis and Weigert (1985) link the ‘good reasons’ to those ‘constituting evidence of trustworthiness’ (p. 970). In their seminal paper, which has been highly influential throughout the years, as well as for this thesis, Mayer et al. (1995) explain such ‘good reasons’ as the trustworthiness of the trustee, building on the trustee’s Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity (ABI), which was also supported by the empirical tests conducted by Mayer and Davis (1999). ABI are also the top three most frequently adopted factors across studies that were found in McEvily and Tortoriello’s (2011) review (see Table 2.3). Colquitt et al.’s (2007) review supports the importance of all these three dimensions, identifying their significant and unique relationship with and influence on trust. Within this thesis the findings suggest that these factors constitute a good overarching framework for structuring the trustee-associated factors that the participants mentioned. The emergent factors, however, were more extensive and comprehensive than what Mayer et al. (1995) initially suggested (see Table 2.2). As such, the findings of this thesis expand the knowledge on the constituent elements of ABI.

Previous research confirming the significant relationship between trust and ABI found that the relationship between trust and Ability and Benevolence was moderate whereas weaker in magnitude with Integrity (Colquitt et al., 2007). In the current research, when the frequencies of the distinct mentions of the factors are considered, in its entirety the dimension Benevolence emerged as the most frequently mentioned dimension in person-focused trust, whereas Ability was the most frequently dimension in task-focused trust. Integrity was similarly mentioned across the two types of trust. Also reflecting on Colquitt et al.’s (2007) findings, the consideration of the distinction between these two uses of trust could emerge as something very important.

Considering the distinction between person- and task-focused trust could further be useful in explaining the disagreement among the trust researchers in regard to the possible sequence of

each dimension and its importance in trust relationships. It is commonly assumed that Ability and Integrity, also referred to as cognitive-bases, precede Benevolence, also referred to as affective-base, and that Benevolence is supplementary and only gains importance as the relationship develops in time (e.g. Colquitt et al., 2007; Jarvenpaa, Knoll, and Leidner, 1998; Lewicki and Bunker, 1995, 1996; Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995; Rousseau et al., 1998). Within this belief, the influence of Benevolence is recognised more during the later stages of the relationships where deeper levels of trust exist whilst it is mostly ignored during the early stages of a relationship (Williams, 2001).

However, there are also some studies offering contrary evidence by showing the role of Benevolence in the early stages of a relationship (e.g. Jones and George, 1998; Wasti et al., 2011; Williams, 2001). The dilemma on these contradictory results could be explained through considering the two distinct usages of trust discovered in this particular thesis. In task-focused trust, the former group's claims were valid where the Ability-associated factors were the primary influencers of trust whereas the Benevolence-associated factors were the supplementing ones as in such trust the trustor trusts the trustee to be able to do something where trust is limited to a specific task or situation. However, it is also possible that task-focused trust could develop into person-focus trust where Benevolence-associated factors would gain more importance, the scenario of which supports the former groups claims. In contrast, in person-focused trust, the Benevolence-associated factors were the most commonly mentioned factors and were argued to be important from the beginning of the relationship. In some cases, in person-focused trust, these factors were the sole cause of trust and therefore were perceived very important, the arguments of which support the latter groups claims.

In line with this discussion, it appears that trust models building on the incremental development of trust, for example, Lewicki and Bunker's (1995, 1996) model needs further consideration (see

Chapter 2, section 2.4 for details). Whilst Lewicki and Bunker's (1995, 1996) CBT encompasses similar aspects to task-focused trust, KBT and IBT, or in Rousseau et al.'s (1998) relation-based trust, do not precisely overlap with person-focused trust. In KBT, IBT, or relation-based trust, the assumption is that the relationship between trustor and the trustee evolves with the development of a deeper relationship as a result of gaining more knowledge about the trustee and later on developing deeper affection towards and identification with the trustee. However, person-focused trust could comprise low levels of trust which can develop into more confident, deeper and stronger trust. In this research, person-focused trust was not found to develop subsequent to other forms of trust. Rather, it involved trusting the trustee personally which could start with low levels of trust and strengthen with the trustor's gaining confidence in the trustee. As such, Lewicki and Bunker's (1995, 1996) model is more representative of trust that I conceptualised as task-focused trust. The common treatment of trust in the current literature is also more in tune with task-focused trust; that is focusing on trusting someone with something, rather than in more general sense.

However, at this stage, it is important to highlight the need for further research on task- and person-focused trust and the distinction between them. Further research can shed light on the issues such as whether person-focused trust subsume task-focused trust, whether two concepts overlap, or whether they are completely distinct. Further questions may encompass the issues of whether they are equally stable over time or whether person-focused trust is more stable and possibly stronger. Despite the questions requiring further investigation on these issues, nevertheless making the distinction between the different usages of trust appears to be not only important to identify the different factors associated with each type of trust but also to understand the interplay between different trustee-associated factors, namely the trustworthiness factors.

In contrast to the common practice in the literature, the factors influencing trust are not limited to the trustworthiness (trustee-associated) factors. In addition to the trustee-associated factors, two trustor-associated factors were mentioned to influence trust. These factors, 'Trustor's propensity' and 'Feeling/Intuition/Instinct', had more of, what it could be called, a moderating effect as they had implications for the levels of trust and the length required to build trust. Both these factors were more influential at the early stages of the relationship when the trustor did not have an actual experience with and knowledge about the trustee. 'Trustor's propensity', which is also acknowledged by Mayer et al. (1995), concerns the trustor's willingness or tendency to trust others which in turn determines how much trust a trustor would have for a trustee even prior to gaining any information about the trustee. Consequently, Mayer et al. (1995) project that the trustors with high levels of propensity to trust would have high levels of trust towards the trustee despite the unavailability of information on the trustee. This proposition was indeed observed in this research. The participants who described themselves as naturally trusting people reported high levels of initial trust. In contrast, the participants who described themselves as distrustful argued that their trust needed to be earned which required an extended period of time for the observation and assessment of the trustee's behaviour. The second trustor-associated factor, 'Feeling/instinct/intuition', was also reported to be more influential in the initial interactions with the trustee. The participants who mentioned this factor talked about having an unexplainable feeling, gut feeling, instinct, or intuition that prompted them to trust the trustee. Some previous research emphasised the incorporation of feelings into trust decisions (e.g. Lewis and Weigert, 1985; McAllister, 1995; Morrow, Hansen, and Pearson, 2004), however, it was not singled out as a factor that influenced trust. The findings in the current research suggest that this factor emphasises an affective and irrational aspect of trust where a trustor relies on her/his feelings, gut feeling, intuitions, or instincts in trusting the trustee and could be very influential for some individuals.

In addition to the factors influencing trust (trustee- and trustor-associated) factors identified, there were other factors that were discovered. These factors, however, did not directly influence trust, but instead affected the trust development process. These factors played an adjuvant role, moderating trust and facilitating and reinforcing trust development, as well as increasing trust levels. These factors, 'Relationship', 'Communication', 'Trust Reciprocity', 'Collective trust', 'Cultural congruence', and 'Cooperation/collaboration', were most frequently mentioned in person-focused trust.

'Relationship' and 'Communication' were especially significant being mentioned by the clear majority of the participants. The participants who mentioned 'Relationship' discussed that building some kind of relationship, not necessarily a full-fledged friendship, facilitated trust development. When a friendship or a personal relationship was developed, however, it made an important contribution to building deeper levels of trust. 'Relationship' as a factor influencing trust development, in other words as a concept in general, might have implications for other research. For example, it might be highly relevant for researchers focusing on face-to-face trust building initiatives, such as Wheeler (2018) and can be closely associated with Wheeler's (2018) theory on bonding trust.

'Communication', more specifically 'Having open and honest conversations' and the trustee's 'Listening' or demonstrating 'Body language' supporting her/his trustworthiness were discussed to contribute to trust development. Among all issues discussed in regard to 'Communication', the factor 'Opening up' was the most frequently mentioned one, which was claimed by the participants to have a significant impact on engendering or strengthening trust. The trustee's opening up with personal or confidential information was claimed to change the momentum of the relationship, which consequently led to higher levels of trust.

Not mentioned as frequently as ‘Relationship’ and ‘Communication’, but still highly often mentioned factor ‘Trust reciprocity’ is another factor reported to influence trust development. ‘Trust reciprocity’, the trustee’s trusting the trustor, was said to facilitate or reinforce trusting them back. The participants holding more junior positions emphasised the implications of being trusted by senior people and its consequences for their career. The participants holding senior positions highlighted the importance of not being micro-managed by their superiors or the superiors trusting them enough to empower or delegate responsibilities or control, which, according to them, leads to increased levels of trust. In a way, being trusted said to lead to reciprocation of trust.

The recognition of the relationship between reciprocity and trust goes back to Deutsch (1958, p. 268) who emphasised that a person who is aware of being trusted would be ‘bound by the trust which is invested in him’ which he referred to as ‘responsible’ – ‘being responsible to the trust of another’. Fox (1974) made similar comments that if the employees are shown via the rules and roles in place that are trusted, they will feel obliged to return the trust invested in them and therefore trust would beget trust. This understanding, however, has not received enough attention in the recent studies and therefore has not been sufficiently articulated. A similar factor termed ‘Reciprocity’ has been identified by Wasti et al. (2011) in their study of Turkish and Chinese samples (see Chapter 4, section 4.3). Discovering a similar factor, which I termed as ‘Trust reciprocity’ in this research drawing from a culturally heterogeneous sample, suggest that Wasti et al.’s (2011) ‘Reciprocity’ is not distinct to Turkish and Chinese cultures and therefore requires more attention as within this research it was found to be highly influential in facilitating and strengthening trust development. Very similar to ‘Trust reciprocity’, a few participants also mentioned the factor ‘Cooperation/collaboration’ to influence trust development positively.

Trust development, according to some of the participants, was also influenced by the other organisational members' opinions. The factor, 'Collective trust', which referred to the collective agreement of the other organisational members on the trustworthiness of the trustee, was reported to be influential in both at the initial stages of the relationship, when not enough information about the trustee was available, and at the later stages. At the later stages, this factor played a confirmatory role, reinforcing the trustor's opinion about the trustee's trustworthiness. The other organisational members sharing similar opinions to the trustor was said to bring confidence to the trustor in her/his decision to trust, strengthening trustor's trust.

Lastly, the factor 'Cultural congruence' emerged as a factor that facilitated trust development and accelerated trust building process because it provided a common context or a common ground to build on. This was, partly, due to the fact that sharing similar cultures enabled bonding over it and building a relationship which in turn helped with trust building. I explore this factor more in the subsequent chapters (Chapters 10 and 11).

These factors, which I refer to as adjuvant trust factors, in general concern the interpersonal relationship between the trustee and the trustor. Considering the high frequency of mentions of these factors in terms of facilitating and reinforcing trust development, it can be inferred that building interpersonal relationships has vital implications for trust development.

Another interesting finding concerns the concept of vulnerability. Trust, as was also done in this thesis, is commonly defined as 'willingness to be vulnerable'. Although this is an established notion of trust anymore, it is mainly discussed in terms of the trustor's willingness to be vulnerable towards the actions of the trustee by trusting them (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; Mishra, 1996). However, the impact of vulnerability is not limited to the trustor's accepting to be vulnerable. The findings suggest that the trustee's willingness to be vulnerable and more significantly demonstrating their vulnerability positively influence trust development. For

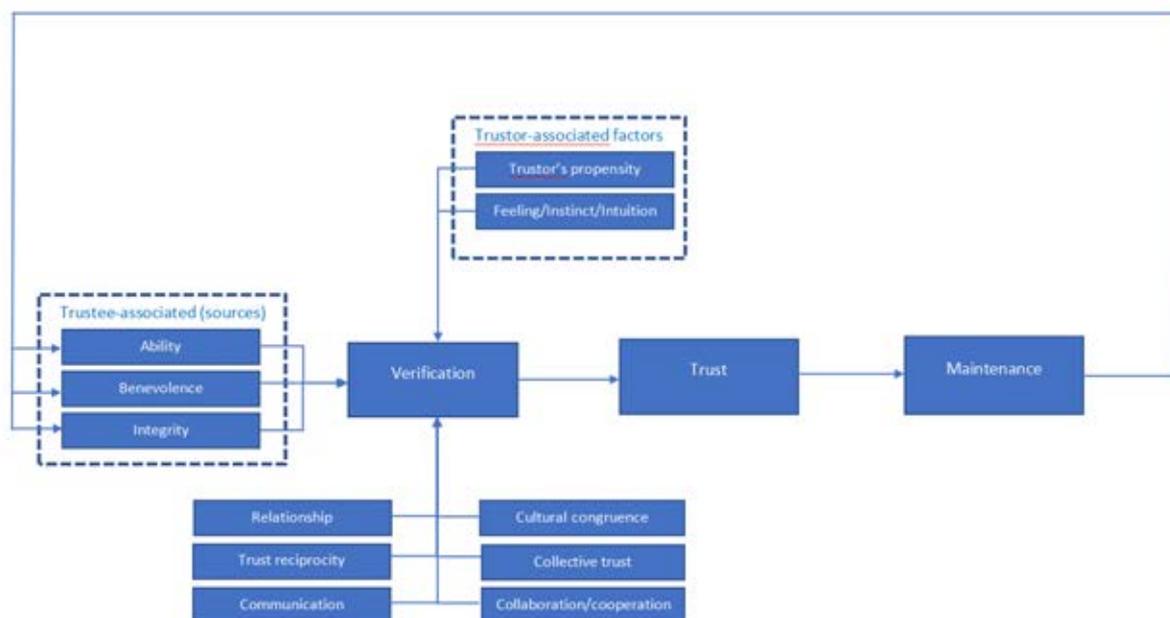
example, the factor Opening up, the trustee's opening up with personal or confidential information, in other words opening up their vulnerabilities to the trustor, was claimed to contribute to the increased levels of trust. Similarly, but less so, the trustor's willingness to be vulnerable by trusting the trustee, empowering them and delegating their own responsibilities or control to them (Trust reciprocity) was reported to lead to increased levels of trust. The trustee's sharing their vulnerabilities with the trustor implied that the trustee would be less likely to harm the trustor as they made themselves vulnerable, which in turn would decrease the trustor's vulnerability and facilitate trust development.

The findings on the factors influencing trust and trust development can be summarised as seen in Figure 9.1 which illustrates the trust development process in intra-organisational relationships. This model supports the participants' views, as well as the other trust researchers' views (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; Möllering, 2005; Lewicki et al., 2006; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Lewis and Weigert, 2012; Williams, 2001) that trust develops over time. In accordance with this, trust encompasses trustor's complex and continuous assessment of the trustworthiness of the trustee, in particular trustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity. Verification of the trustworthiness of the trustee leads to trust, the process of which might result in distrust if the verification fails or neutral state if the trustor cannot form her/his decision. The verification of the trustee's trustworthiness is also influenced by the 'Trustor's propensity' or a possible 'Feeling/intuition/Instinct' the trustor has towards the trustee, which would subsequently influence her/his willingness to trust the trustee.

When trust emerges, however, it is not an ultimate state. This needs to be maintained. Whilst the continuous flow of positive outcomes can enable the levels of trust to increase, a negative outcome can break the trust. Furthermore, trust, as well as the levels of trust, and consequently trust development is influenced by different factors. Factors such as 'Relationship',

‘Communication’, ‘Trust Reciprocity’, ‘Collective trust’, ‘Cultural congruence’, and ‘Cooperation/collaboration’ as the adjuvant factors will facilitate and reinforce trust development and consequently increasing trust levels. As a last note, this also needs to be noted that the whole trust development process is different for each individual as each individual is unique and has different perceptions on what is important in regard to trust and to maintain it. Consequently, some of these factors identified might be more significant for some people whilst not as much for others.

*Figure 9.1 – Trust development process*



### 9.3 Distrust in intra-organisational relationships

In Chapter 2, I outlined the highly limited and fragmented research on distrust due to its historically being treated as the opposite of trust and thereby not receiving independent consideration (Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). Within this thesis, however, distrust received an independent consideration. Researching distrust in this thesis was partly inspired by the accumulating body of theoretical and empirical evidence supporting trust and distrust as separate constructs with distinct determinants, effects, and processes (Guo et al., 2017;

Lumineau, 2017; Saunders et al., 2014; Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). However, in spite of the surge in scholarly interest towards distrust in the last two decades (Guo et al., 2017; Lewicki and Brinsfield, 2015), the focus of recent research mainly centred around reporting its consequences, identifying a wide variety of ill effects for organisations, and therefore the knowledge about what causes distrust, factors influencing it, and how it develops still remain highly limited (Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Moody et al., 2014). Therefore, this thesis contributes to the distrust literature by advancing knowledge on what distrust is by shedding light on the factors influencing distrust and distrust development. In particular, this thesis seeks answers to the research question: RQ2 – What are the factors influencing distrust in intra-organisational relationships. Considering the lack of research on such factors, the findings of this thesis constitute a significant contribution to distrust literature.

The findings outline that distrust, unlike trust where two distinct uses of trust emerged, was understood similarly across participants where distrust was conceptualised with similar focus to person-focused trust. Consequently, distrust was not situational but extended to a person as a whole. In other words, distrust was described as person-focused by all participants. Distrust elicited within a situation was extended to a person, with the high possibility of being escalated towards the management and the whole organisation when the distrustee was a supervisor. This findings on the escalating cycle of distrust support similar views raised by other researchers (e.g. Fox 1974; Sitkin and Roth, 1993).

The factors influencing distrust comprised two main groups, encompassing factors influencing distrust and factors influencing distrust development. The factors influencing distrust were further divided into two groups as distrustee- and distrustor-associated factors depending on whether the factors were related to the distrustee or the distrustor. The distrustee-associated factors concerned the distrustee's distrustworthiness, namely the distrustee's Ability,

Benevolence, and Integrity and therefore were grouped as such. Among all distrustee-associated factors, the Integrity-associated factors were the most frequently mentioned ones whereas Ability-associated factors were the least frequently mentioned ones. None of the participants raised any Ability-associated factor as a direct reason for distrust. In other words, a distrustee's lack of ability was not perceived as a primary influencer of distrust. In the few cases where the Ability-associated factors were mentioned, they were discussed in conjunction with other factors, thereby resuming a supplementary role. In contrast to Ability-associated factors, the participants mentioned Benevolence-associated factors more frequently. Nevertheless, when the overall distrustee-associated factors are considered, the Ability- and Benevolence-associated factors, even when combined together, constituted a smaller proportion than the Integrity-associated factors. Building on the findings, it is reasonable, although tentative, to assume that Integrity-associated factors play a significant role in engendering distrust. Therefore, it can be assumed that Integrity breaches would most possibly lead to distrust.

The assessment of the distrustee's distrustworthiness is also influenced by the 'Distrustor's propensity' and her/his 'Feeling/Instinct/Intuition', the two factors discovered to influence distrust that is associated with the distrustor. The 'Distrustor's propensity' is equivalent in meaning to Mayer et al.'s (1995) notion of trustor's propensity which was also found as one of the trustor-associated factors in this thesis. This factor is found to influence a distrustor's tendency to distrust, or trust, others even before any relevant information is available. The factor 'Feeling/Instinct/Intuition' was also equivalent in meaning to the similar factor emerged in trust within this thesis, which is associated with an unexplainable feeling, gut feeling, instinct, or intuition the distrustor has towards the distrustee that instils distrust even before the distrustee does something to engender distrust.

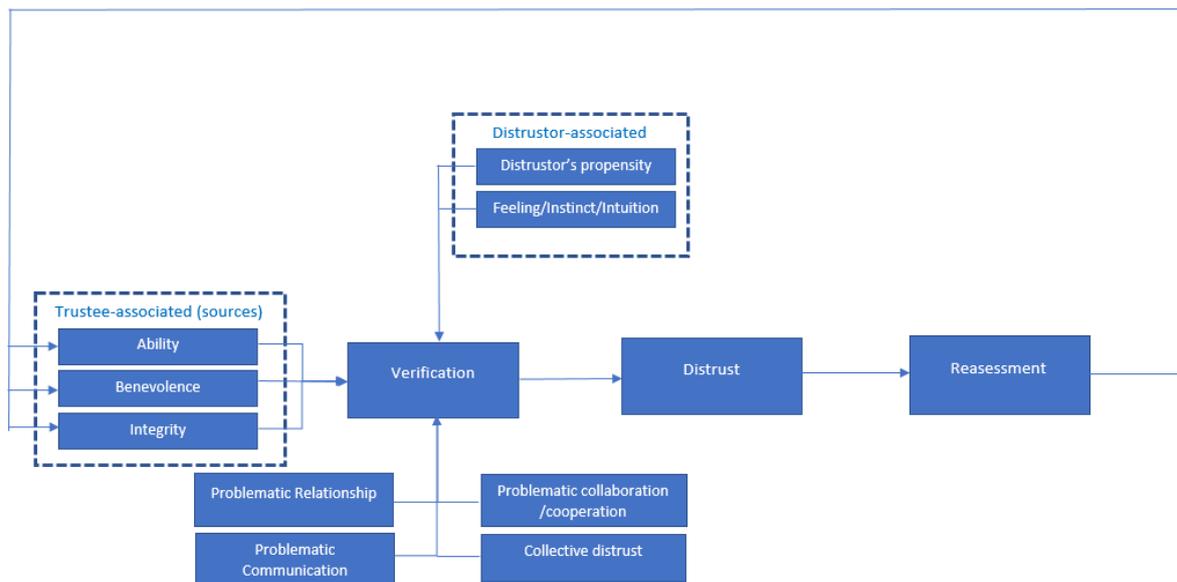
Unfortunately, the literature is highly limited in terms of the knowledge on factors influencing distrust. There are a few research pieces (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018; Sitkin and Ruth, 1993), however, which point out ‘value incongruence’ as a factor causing distrust where value incongruence refers to incompatibility between the values of a distruster and a distrustee which result in the distruster’s feeling vulnerable and threatened by the unpredictable actions of the distrustee (Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018; Sitkin and Ruth, 1993) and possibility of harm (Tomlinson and Lewicki, 2006). In these studies, however, what are the values in question is not precisely identified. Current thesis sheds light on possible such values (Integrity-associated factors). Furthermore, this thesis offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing distrust, and consequently contributing to the literature where a big gap of knowledge exists.

In addition to factors influencing distrust (adjuvant distrust factors), four additional factors were identified: ‘Problematic communication’, ‘Problematic relationship’, ‘Problematic cooperation/collaboration’, and ‘Collective distrust’. These factors did not directly influenced distrust but instead affected the distrust development process by increasing distrust levels. ‘Problematic relationship’ pertained mostly to not being able to relate to each other and failing to build any kind of relationship. Rather, the interactions between the parties were dominated by conflicts, disagreements, or disputes and, consequently by animosity. Similarly, ‘Problematic cooperation/collaboration’ concerned issues such as failing to collaborate and cooperate and not acting as a team member who contributes equally to the team. ‘Communication’ encompassed issues such as disability to communicate, not listening, and a body language signifying distrustworthiness. Lastly, ‘Collective distrust’, the other organisational members’ opinions and their perceptions of the distrustworthiness of the distrustee or the distrustee’s already established reputation in the organisation which warrants distrust were said to influence distrust development. Although the latter factor is somehow

researched (e.g. Searle and Ball, 2004), in the current literature these factors are not operationalised in terms of their influence to distrust. These factors which are termed as the adjuvant distrust factors in the current thesis due to their role in increasing distrust offer further insight into the factors influencing distrust development, an area where the extant knowledge is highly limited. These factors, which concern the interpersonal relationships, also draw attention to the role of the interpersonal relationships among the organisational members on distrust development.

The findings concerning the factors influencing distrust and distrust development can be summarised as seen in Figure 9.2 which illustrates the model of distrust development process in intra-organisational relationships. In contrast to the trust model discussed earlier (Figure 9.1) which emphasised that trust requires time and therefore it would take longer time to build, the distrust development process could be very short. Nevertheless, similar to trust, distrust development process encompasses distruster's complex assessment of the distrustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity. Verification of the distrustworthiness of the distrustee would lead to distrust. If this fails, however, the previous state might be preserved (e.g. trust, neutral). The verification of the distrustee's distrustworthiness is also influenced by the 'Distruster's propensity' or a possible 'Feeling/intuition/Instinct' the distruster has towards the distrustee, which would subsequently influence her/his tendency to distrust the distrustee. Due to the continuous flow of information, however, the decision to distrust might be reassessed. Furthermore, distrust will also be influenced by various factors such as 'Problematic relationship', 'Problematic communication', 'Problematic operation/collaboration', 'Collective distrust' which might increase the levels of distrust and accelerate distrust development. As noted before, this process can be different for each individual as each individual would have their own understanding of distrust and what is important in regard to distrust development.

Figure 9.2 – Distrust development process



In short, this thesis contributes to the distrust literature by distinctively focusing on distrust and offering insight into the factors influencing distrust and distrust development, a subject area where the knowledge is highly limited. These factors are further utilised in the investigation of the relationship between trust and distrust, the issues of which I elaborate in the subsequent section.

#### 9.4 The relationship between trust and distrust

As also discussed in Chapter 2, in the literature there are two distinct groups of thought in the approaches to the trust and distrust relationship. The first group places distrust at the low end of the trust continuum, where low trust – or absence of trust equates to distrust (e.g. Gurtman, 1992; Mayer et al., 1995; Schoorman et al., 2007). The second group conceptualises trust and distrust as distinct constructs with their own antecedents and consequences (Chang and Fang, 2013; Cho, 2006; Connelly et al., 2012; Dimoka, 2010; Komiak and Benbasat, 2008; Lewicki et al., 1998; McKnight et al., 2004; Ou and Sia, 2010; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Saunders and Thornhill, 2004; Saunders et al., 2014; Van de Walle and Six, 2014). The latter group, however,

although treating trust and distrust as separate constructs, disagrees on the issue of the co-existence of trust and distrust. Whilst a group of researchers suggests and even proves the ambivalence of trust and distrust (e.g. McKnight et al., 2004; Moody et al., 2014; Ou and Sia, 2010), the others believe otherwise, claiming trust and distrust cannot co-exist, or at least this would be a rare occasion if they do (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Saunders et al., 2014; Saunders and Thornhill, 2004). This thesis contributes to the literature by advancing knowledge on the relationship between trust and distrust, offering insight into the long-lasting debate on this matter. In particular, this thesis addresses the research question: RQ3 – How are intra-organisational trust and distrust are related.

Guo et al.'s (2017) review, which highlighted the limited knowledge on the complex relationship between trust and distrust, suggested the comparison of the factors influencing both trust and distrust (which are also referred to as determinants or antecedents in the literature) as a possible avenue forward in clarifying the nature of the relationship (also see Lewicki et al., 1998 and Moody et al., 2014 for similar suggestions). Consequently, by investigating the factors influencing trust and distrust, this thesis does not only contribute to the extant knowledge by offering empirical evidence on the argument that trust and distrust are separate constructs, but also highlights the distinction between trust and distrust by outlining the respective similarities and differences between the constructs. The findings further suggest that although trust and distrust need to be treated as separate constructs, they are not totally independent of each other, rather they are highly associated. In that aspect, the findings align with Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema's (2018) claims that whilst trust and distrust have distinct determinants, the trust development process is not totally independent from distrust-related matters as presence of distrust would undermine the assessment of trustworthiness and therefore would hinder the trust development.

The findings in this thesis suggest that one of the chief distinctions between trust and distrust derives from their different natures. The findings suggest that trust building takes time as it develops step-by-step, with every positive information contributing to the trust development. However, engendering distrust does not require time as it can be initiated by a single event and therefore can be immediate. The findings provide empirical evidence to support Burt and Knez's (1996, p. 83) statement that 'trust builds incrementally, but distrust has a more catastrophic quality'. As such, the findings suggest that whilst the commonly acknowledged concept of the 'leap of trust' (e.g. Möllering, 2001, 2006) is rare, 'leap of distrust' is a frequent occurrence. The latter concept is a contribution introduced by this thesis and needs further exploration. The distinction between the natures of trust and distrust is further supported by the distinct feelings trust and distrust elicit where the feelings distrust initiate are much stronger and deeper, a conclusion also supported by other researchers (e.g. Chang and Fang, 2013; Ou and Sia, 2010; Saunders et al., 2014). In addition, in this thesis a wide range of such feelings are identified.

Another distinction identified concerns the conceptualisations of trust and distrust. Whilst trust could be situational, limited to a particular context or task (task-focused trust) or broader in scope encompassing trusting an individual personally as a whole (person-focused trust), distrust was conceptualised similarly as distrusting a person in a whole, something equivalent to person-focused trust in scope. In other words, whilst it is possible to limit trust into specific domains (e.g. Mayer et al., 1995; Zand 1972), distrust is pervasive and self-amplifying as distrust in one domain of the relationship is generalised to other aspect of the relationship, escalating to the overall relationship, the findings offering empirical evidence and support to the other researchers' similar suggestions (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; Connelly et al., 2012; Fox, 1974; Kramer, 1994; Mesquita, 2007; Sitkin and Roth, 1993; Ullman-Margalit, 2004). The findings also support researchers (e.g. McKnight et al., 2004; Moody et al., 2014;

Ou and Sia, 2010) who claim that trust and distrust can co-exist. The findings suggest that co-existence of trust and distrust can only be possible within different domains or contexts, where either trust or distrust is initiated by an Ability-associated factor.

Lastly, the comparison of the factors influencing trust and distrust further offers support to the separation of, but also the high association between, the two constructs. Although there were many factors, the positive manifestations of which were associated with trust whilst their negated forms were related to distrust, there were also those factors which were unique to trust and distrust or simply emerged solely in either trust or distrust. Consequently, the findings suggest that operationalising or measuring distrust as the same but opposite construct of trust would be problematic or even inaccurate.

In their highest levels both trust and distrust were categorised similarly, both comprising two main groups of factors: factors influencing trust/distrust and factors influencing trust/distrust development. The factors influencing trust/distrust comprised trustee/distrustee- and trustor/distrustor-associated factors. The trustee/distrustee-associated factors were closely associated with Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI and therefore were grouped as such. However, the respective ABI-associated factors discussed both in trust and distrust seemed to have different implications for trust and distrust. Providing empirical support to the predictions of many researchers (e.g. Guo et al., 2017; Huang and Dastmalchian, 2006; Lewicki et al., 1998; Ou and Sia, 2010), a similar pattern to Herzberg et al.'s (1959) argument of hygiene and motivator factors to job satisfaction and dissatisfaction emerged in regard to trust and distrust. Integrity seems to be the hygiene factor which would play a significant role in engendering distrust and preventing trust building. In contrast, Benevolence seems to be the motivational factor which would play a significant role in engendering and strengthening trust. Ability could be seen as a hygiene and

motivational factor as it was essential (the hygiene factor) in task-focused trust and motivational factor in person-focused trust.

Trustor/distrust-associated factors comprised similar factors: Trustor's/Distrustor's propensity and Feeling/Instinct/Intuition, which is not surprising given the trustor or distrustor can refer to the same person. In terms of the factors influencing trust/distrust development, although three factors (Problematic relationship, Problematic Communication, Problematic cooperation/collaboration) encompassed somehow contrary meanings to their respective trust factors, one factor Collective trust/distrust had a similar meaning both in trust and distrust and concerned the other organisational members' collective agreement on the trustee's/distrustee's trustworthiness/distrustworthiness. Furthermore, two distinct factors (Trust reciprocity and Cultural congruence) emerged only in trust, further outlining the distinction between trust and distrust and their distinct influencers.

In summary, the findings suggest that trust and distrust need to be conceptualised, operationalised, and measured separately. However, the strong association between the constructs should be taken into account. Although there are distrust factors that are the conceptual opposites of the corresponding trust factors, in its entirety, distrust is not the logical opposite of trust. Nevertheless, due to the existence of many antithetical factors, as well as the possibility of broken trust resulting in distrust, as a concept distrust remains to be conceptually strongly connected to trust. Moreover, despite all the evidence supporting the distinction between trust and distrust, they are not totally independent of each other as the process of trust and distrust are entwined due to the fact that the presence of one influences the emergence of the other. For example, the emergence of distrust hinders trust development. Therefore, what is suggested in this thesis is that distrust needs to be conceptualised, operationalised, and measured distinctly with an awareness of its strong association with trust.

## 9.5 Summary

This discussion chapter drew together and reflected on the information gained in the previous chapters concerning factors influencing trust (Chapter 6), factors influencing distrust (Chapter 7), and the relationship between trust and distrust (Chapter 8). The findings are discussed and interpreted in line with the relevant literature. More specifically, in this chapter I discussed the three main research questions and associated findings.

Within this thesis, I explain the findings on the factors influencing trust with a trust development process which reflects the participants' views on developmental nature of trust. In accordance with this, trust encompasses trustor's complex and continuous assessment and verification of the trustworthiness of the trustee, in particular trustee's Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity. This process is influenced by the 'Trustor's propensity' or a possible 'Feeling/intuition/Instinct' she/he might have towards the trustee. In addition, six other factors, 'Relationship', 'Communication', 'Trust Reciprocity', 'Collective trust', 'Cultural congruence', and 'Cooperation/collaboration', play an adjuvant role, facilitating and reinforcing trust development and consequently increasing trust levels.

Similarly, the findings on the factors influencing distrust can be also explained by the distrust development process model. Distrust development process, which is mostly a short process, encompasses distruster's complex assessment and verification of the distrustee's distrustworthiness, namely her/his Ability, Benevolence, and Integrity. This process is also influenced by the 'Distruster's propensity' or a possible 'Feeling/intuition/Instinct' the distruster has towards the distrustee or additional adjuvant distrust factors such as 'Problematic relationship', 'Problematic communication', 'Problematic operation/collaboration', 'Collective distrust' which increase the levels of distrust and accelerate distrust development.

In short, these findings shed light on the determinants of both trust and distrust and offer insight into trust and distrust development processes.

The findings pertaining to the relationship between trust and distrust suggest that trust and distrust are separate but highly associated constructs. With distinct natures and all distrust factors' not being the conceptual opposites of the associated trust factors, the findings challenge the notion of distrust as the logical opposite of trust, supporting the separation between the constructs. The findings also reflect on particular similarities and differences between trust and distrust.

Now, I commence with the fourth research question which concerns the relationship between trust, distrust and culture similarity/difference. As mentioned earlier, 'Cultural congruence' emerged as one of the factors influencing trust development. This factor or any associated factors did not emerge in distrust. However, literature outlines links between distrust and culture (e.g. Newell et al., 2007; Dietz et al., 2010). Furthermore, the SR outlined possible research potentials on cultural similarities and differences and trust and distrust. Therefore, in the subsequent chapter I explore the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust.

# **CHAPTER 10 – EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CULTURAL SIMILARITY/ DIFFERENCE AND TRUST/DISTRUST**

## **10.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to explore the relationship between cultural similarities and differences and trust and distrust. More specifically, the chapter seeks answers to the fourth research question and its two sub-questions: (1) RQ4a – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships and (2) RQ4b – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships.

In Chapter 3, I reviewed the culture literature in general. In the subsequent chapter (Chapter 4), I conducted an SR investigating the relationship between culture and trust and distrust. In the SR culture, in line with the dominant view, was conceptualised as national culture. Having observed the limitations with such a conceptualisation, in the empirical study the conceptualisation of culture was built on the participants' understanding and definition of culture. Therefore, in order to ensure a better understanding of the upcoming culture-related discussions, the chapter starts with the discussion of the participants' conceptualisations and use of culture and then moves on to discussing the findings pertaining to the research questions. The chapter ends with a short summary of findings.

## **10.2 The participants' use of the concept of culture**

In this empirical study the definition of culture was built on the participants' use of the concept and consequently what cultural similarity and difference meant relied on the participants'

perceptions. This was especially crucial as I endeavoured to study and reflect the participants' own worlds. In the interviews the participants were asked to describe their own cultural background (see Chapter 5, section 5.8 for details on data collection). During this process, they were not guided by a predefined meaning of culture and were not presented with a list of possible cultural elements. Rather, the participants were encouraged to reflect on what they considered culture is and what is culturally important for them. On reflecting on the descriptions of their culture, I realised that every participant's account of her/his culture comprised multiple cultural elements, indicating a complex use of the concept.

The analysis of the participants' accounts of their culture and associated cultural elements mentioned followed an abductive approach (see Chapter 5, section 5.3 for details on abduction). Hence, firstly I inductively coded the cultural elements mentioned by the participants. Then, realising the majority of these cultural elements accorded with Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural 'tiles' from their taxonomy of cultural mosaic (see Chapter 3, section 3.4 for details), I used Chao and Moon's (2005) framework in order to structure the inductively identified cultural elements. Consequently, each inductively identified cultural element was deductively grouped under three categories defined in Chao and Moon's (2005) culture framework: demographic, geographic, and associative tiles.

Each cultural profile described by the participants comprised different cultural elements, incorporating what they perceived culturally important and therefore was unique to every individual. Furthermore, every participant's account of their culture comprised a combination of different cultural elements, blending to form a unique whole. Table 10.1 summarises the participants' distinct mentions of various cultural elements in the descriptions of their culture.

Table 10.1 – Content analysis of the cultural elements mentioned by the participants

Primary category	Cultural element (tile)	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Demographic</b> (17%)	Ethnicity	19	38%
	Race	13	26%
	Gender	7	14%
	Age	2	4%
<b>Geographic</b> (30%)	Place of birth and childhood*	31	62%
	Places lived*	23	46%
	Nationality/// footnote	12	24%
	Cosmopolitanism (e.g. global, international, European)*	8	16%
<b>Associative</b> (53%)	Family	28	56%
	Education*	25	50%
	Religion	14	28%
	Interests*	10	20%
	Organisation*	9	18%
	Socio-economic background*	9	18%
	Upbringing*	8	16%
	Profession	5	10%
	Friends/community*	4	8%
	Lifestyle*	4	8%
	Industry*	3	6%
	Marital status*	3	6%
	Language*	3	6%
	Values*	2	4%
	World views*	2	4%
Political affiliation	1	2%	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

The cultural elements with \* demonstrate those emerged inductively in this research and are not among the particular examples Chao and Moon (2005) identified which are illustrated in Table 3.3. Although nationality was not included in Chao and Moon's (2005, p. 1130) summary table, they discuss it in their paper.

The demographic tiles, according to Chao and Moon (2005), include the cultural elements which are physical or inherited from parents and ancestors. Four tiles -age, ethnicity, gender, and race, were mentioned by the participants that were associated with this category. Ethnicity and race were the most commonly mentioned demographic tiles which were mentioned by more than one-third and one-fourth of the participants, respectively (Table 10.1).

The geographic tiles refer to the physical features of a region an individual belongs or belonged (Chao and Moon, 2005). Four tiles – place of birth and childhood, places lived, nationality, and cosmopolitanism, were mentioned by the participants that belonged to this category. Three-fifth of the participants mentioned the place where they were born or grew, and almost half of the participants mentioned the places they lived as defining elements of their culture. The discussions on the places mentioned centred around the names of countries, cities, regions, or physical features of a place such as urban or rural. Nationality, however, was only mentioned by a quarter of the participants. This is not very surprising considering that for half of the participants, the associated nationality of the country they worked and lived (i.e. the UK or USA) was not the one of their or even their parents' birth place. The current nationality of these participants was something they or their parents acquired upon moving to that country. Consequently, nationality was a conceptually complex notion. Furthermore, instead of referring to a single nationality, a few of the participants described themselves as 'global', 'international', 'European', or 'Western', emphasising culturally belonging to more than one nationality. I termed this newly emerged cultural tile as cosmopolitanism.

The third category, associative tiles, includes the formal and the informal groups with whom an individual associates or choses to identify with (Chao and Moon, 2005). In the accounts of their culture, the participants mentioned various associative tiles, among which family and education were mentioned most commonly, being mentioned by half of the participants as defining elements of their cultures (Table 10.1). Education mostly referred to whether the participant attended a state or private school, whether she/he had a university education, and in some cases, the name of the attended education institutions. Family encompassed issues such as the extent of the participant's identification with family members (e.g. parents, siblings, spouse, children), family structure, closeness to family, and matters associated with family members. There were also those tiles which are not commonly observed as part of culture in

the literature such as interests, world views, life style, political affiliations, and socio-economic background. Furthermore, in some culture descriptions, various work context-associated tiles were included. For example, some of the participants when describing their culture referred to the organisation(s) where they worked, their profession, or industry worked in.

As it can be seen from Table 10.1 many different cultural elements were mentioned by the participants as each participant described a unique cultural profile. The findings offer an empirical support to Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheoretical taxonomy of cultural mosaic. The identified cultural elements extend Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural tile examples, shedding further light on the constituent elements of culture. The cultural tiles such as nationality, ethnicity, or race, which in the literature are commonly associated with culture, were not very frequently mentioned by the participants. This was most possibly a result of cultural diversity each participant was exposed to throughout their lives or the nature of the multinational organisations they worked. For example, some of the participants drew attention to the fact that in a highly culturally diverse environment (e.g. the UK and USA), the cultural differences, in the traditional sense such as nationality, ethnicity and race, were not as obvious and defining as they would have been in a culturally homogenous environment, a sentiment epitomised in the statement of the following participant:

*“In England, there are so many cultures now, whereas my grandparents probably would think of the English culture being a really strict regimented root, I think now it's very different. You've got so many cultures living together and that's what defines the culture, the multitude and the tapestry of different cultures rather than one particular one...I think it has become less of a defining feature with British culture because everywhere has become quite multicultural” [P76]*

Such sentiments in addition to the participants' explicitly describing themselves as global, international, Western, or European citizens resulted in the emergence of the tile cosmopolitanism. This tile was not initially a part of Chao and Moon's (2005) model and was introduced into it in this research. As I will exemplify in the following discussion, it seems to be an important cultural element in multinational, culturally diverse organisations. Cosmopolitanism also encompassed notions such as belonging to multiple national or ethnic heritages or simply possessing an open mindset as exemplified by the following participant:

*“I think I am a global citizen, which means that I happened to be born in Belgium, I happened to live in Belgium, I probably have some Belgium affinity, but I'm more European and global in mindset. I had an upbringing which is global international, which I think formed me culturally. I am a believer in religion and I think everybody needs to define that for themselves. I think I'm a tolerant person and I am culturally attracted to tolerance, by openness. What else for culture? I think that art and music and those kinds of cultural aspects should be part of your personality, I will raise my kids with the ability to be open to that as well.” [P109]*

Although seemingly nationality was not mentioned frequently, the place of birth and childhood, which for many participants did not coincide with the nationality held, was perceived as an important defining element of culture and therefore was the most frequently mentioned cultural tile. Correspondingly, the tile places lived was also mentioned frequently. These tiles, place of birth and childhood and places lived, were mostly stated together in descriptions of culture as exemplified by the following participant who also mentioned his ethnicity, nationality, community/friends, education, family, and religion in his description of his culture:

*“Cultural background is born in Cyprus as a Greek Cypriot and when I was two, we came to the UK. So basically, I’ve lived in London since I was two apart from three years at the university. The immigrant experience... My parents were close to other Greek immigrants, so we had a community, I went to Greek school on Saturdays as well as my normal school week. So even though we grew up British and we became British citizens we obviously had the Greek cultural background which is Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, enjoyment of family, of food, of a community. I mean religion is in there but it’s not obsessive religion, it’s just religion for community, so we’re still active in the church.” [P81]*

The associative tile religion, which was already illustrated in a few of the above quotes, was perceived as an important aspect of one’s culture by some of the participants. For example, for the following participant religion was a significant cultural identifier along with his ethnicity:

*“By ethnicity, I am Afghan by background, so I was born in Kabul, but I grew up here in the UK, so I have lived pretty much all my life in the UK. From an identity perspective I still identify myself as being someone that came here as a refugee and so forth. Obviously, I’m a Muslim as well, so from a religious perspective that means that there are certain boundaries for me and again I’m quite conscious of those as well, both those things, the ethnicity and then the religion.” [P98]*

Religion was mentioned by a quarter of the participants. However, it was not perceived as important by everyone who mentioned it. For instance, the participants who were atheists or agnostics admitted not being identified by religion and consequently it was not a part of their culture. Such sentiments were explained by a participant as: *“I am an agnostic. It doesn’t really*

*define me. I think if you are a Christian or Jewish, maybe you define more with the other people within your religion but being Agnostic, you don't have a group of people like 'yeah we are agnostic'. That doesn't really hold much cultural relevance for me" [P63].* Instead, for this participant culture was:

*"It's mainly about my education and also ethnicity so obviously being Chinese and brought up in the UK. I am a minority so that is culturally a part of my heritage but then also educationally I went to a state school throughout my life and then university. So, I guess I would define on those three levels mainly as my cultural background." [P63]*

In this description of culture, three cultural tiles -ethnicity (demographic), places lived (geographic), and education (associative), intertwined together forming a whole that represented the participant's own unique culture. Similar to this participant, every participant's description of culture reflected a complex understanding of culture. None of the participants limited the description of culture to a single tile such as ethnicity or nationality. Rather, each participant described their culture by drawing on combinations of tiles, usually across categories. When all tiles are considered (see Table 10.1), the most frequently mentioned tiles (53%) corresponded to the associative tiles whilst only 17% were demographic and 30% were geographic tiles.

To sum up the discussion so far, in this section, I discussed the participants' conceptualisations and uses of culture. Each participant described her/his culture by combining multiple cultural elements as the building blocks of their culture, demonstrating the complexity and subjectivity of the use of the concept. Then, I grouped these cultural elements under three categories suggested by Chao and Moon (2005): demographic, geographic, and associative. Although this model constituted a good fit for structuring the empirical data, the findings extend Chao and

Moon's (2005) initially suggested cultural tiles, with the addition of new cultural tiles that emerged inductively from the data.

### **10.3 Cultural similarities, cultural differences and trust and distrust**

In the preceding section, I discussed the participants' understanding of culture, which demonstrated diverse views on what culture meant. The diversity of the participants' conceptualisations of culture was further observed in what they thought to be culturally similar or different. What constituted similar cultures to the participants depended on their perception of culture and which cultural tiles they considered as important in defining their culture.

Now, I commence with discussing the extent of the influence between perceived cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust in intra-organisational relationships. There were two groups of thought. A group of the participants acknowledged the existence of a link between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust, the other group of the participants disagreed on such an association. More specifically, half of the participants did not think there was a relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust whilst three-quarters of the participants did not believe a link between cultural similarity/difference and distrust existed. I start discussing the participants' views who did not think cultural similarity/difference had an influence on trust and/or distrust.

#### *No relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust*

The proponents of no influence of cultural similarity/difference on trust or distrust offered several reasons in order to support their claims. One of the reasons was related to the nature of the organisations they worked in. The participants raising this point mentioned that as they were working at multinational organisations (top consulting companies), the workforce was

already highly diverse. Accordingly, the cultural differences did not stand out as they were quite common, as epitomised by the following participant's statement:

*"I've really been lucky at both companies I've worked for. I mean they're just so diverse that you don't really see culture or skin colour or all these things you usually see in society. I really don't think that it influences any of our relationships with colleagues." [P91]*

Another participant further articulated that point. He commented on the extent of the diversity of cultures in the organisation he worked in (one of the top consulting firms) and argued that people's culture would not matter in that work context:

*"In the work place, we have all kinds of cultures, people from all kinds of backgrounds working in our organisation. We are tolerant, respectful of people's views and things they need to do, so it doesn't seem to be relevant to the working environment. It doesn't really seem to feature, you know the ethnicity of people, it doesn't really seem to feature in the roles that we do." [P84]*

Building on these points, another participant offered a different perspective, adding that the organisation that he worked in (another top consulting company) was so diverse that the differences became a normality and consequently the cultural differences would not matter:

*"I don't think it [culture] has that much of an effect, I think I found that in my organisation there's very rarely two people that have come from the same or very, very similar cultures, everyone seems to have come from different cultures. It's something that people just accept. I don't really think about it at the work place because it becomes so normal." [P100]*

As it can be also seen from the above quotes, the participants, who utilised a very broad understanding of what culture is when reflecting on their own culture, when discussing the link between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust and claiming no such a connection exists, mainly limited the use of culture to more traditional cultural elements such as nationality, ethnicity, and race, which they claimed not to matter for trust and distrust dynamics. Inevitably, as these participants overwhelmingly emphasised, the nature of the multinational, culturally diverse organisations and the emergence of a more cosmopolite environment in such organisations had an impact on this conclusion. Beyond this, openness towards diversity brought by a cosmopolite mindset led to accepting and embracing cultural differences, as typified by the following participant:

*“I don’t really assign a particular culture to myself, I assign more values. I guess that’s why I kind of struggled to see the people I work with as a distinct culture because I see it more as a blend. Yes, I think being exposed to so many different first of all languages and ways of thinking really young, made me realise there’s no right way, there’s no right culture and there’s no one way of thinking about it and diverse cultures and diverse opinions kind of make things better.” [P101]*

In similar lines but from a different aspect, a few of the participants noted that cultural similarities or differences of individuals did not have an impact on trust or distrust decisions as they claimed that everyone in an organisation would share a similar culture, blending under the organisational culture. Such thoughts are voiced by the following participant as follows:

*“I think once you get into an organisation you become a part of that organisation’s culture. I think you have to fit into the organisation’s culture, whatever it is. So, everyone has a common culture once you join the*

*organisation. I think everyone blends, meets at that level. So, my personal cultural background is not really relevant.” [P63]*

To sum up, the main reason why the participants (half in trust; two-thirds in distrust) claimed that cultural similarity/difference had no influence on trust or distrust was due to the fact that certain cultural tiles – organisation and cosmopolitanism, have become more important in relation to trust/distrust over other cultural tiles. The participants focusing on cultural elements such as nationality, ethnicity, race, etc. found them irrelevant in their trust or distrust decisions as having a cosmopolite background or mindset, these participants found these differences as highly ordinary in the multinational organisations they worked. In other words, the cultural tile cosmopolitanism gained prioritisation over other tiles. Very similarly, for the participants who emphasised the organisation culture as the dominant culture, the tile organisation gained importance over other cultural tiles. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that when the tiles cosmopolitanism and organisation dominated the other cultural tiles, the participants considered the influence of cultural similarity/difference on trust/distrust to be less important. Now, I continue discussing the views of the participants who suggested there was a link between cultural similarity/difference and trust.

#### *Cultural similarities, cultural differences and trust*

In the preceding paragraph, I highlighted that the participants who claimed that there was no link between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust mainly focused on the demographic tiles such as ethnicity and race and the geographic tile nationality as cultural identifiers. In contrast, the participants who considered there was a link between cultural similarity/difference and trust, although incorporating these tiles into their comparisons and assessments of cultural similarity or difference, mostly based the cultural similarity to the shared associative tiles such as education, family, upbringing, and interests. This was partly a

result of distinct understanding of culture of the participants who defined culture as “*culture is all about what we believe and the way we act and behave*” [P99]; “*to me, culture is about how I see the world or life. I see family in the centre of everything, even before work and career*” [P61]. Consequently, for the participants who voiced similar opinions on culture, the notion of sharing a similar culture was not limited to the demographic cultural tiles or nationality. These participants focused on a broader understanding of culture, combining all three categories of demographic, geographic and associative tiles. This also implies that for the participants who define culture as nationality and ethnicity, cultural similarity/difference is not perceived to have an important impact on trust and distrust, whereas for those participants who conceptualise culture more broadly, especially for those focusing on associative tiles as cultural identifiers, cultural similarity/difference has an impact on trust.

As mentioned earlier, half of the participants reported a link between culture and trust, focusing on the relationship between cultural similarities and trust. Whilst these participants noted that cultural differences did not constitute a barrier for trust, they believed that cultural similarities helped with trust development. These participants most overwhelmingly stated that having similar cultures made it easier to trust the trustee. What was seen as cultural similar was not necessarily about what the similarity was per se, but rather it was about the perception of cultural similarity.

Trust building was said to be easier as a shared culture would provide a common ground to build on. Consequently, the availability of a common ground was said to facilitate better understanding of the other person and interpreting their behaviour, acts of which were believed to accelerate trust development. These sentiments are typified in the following participant’s statement:

*“The absence of the common ground would cause trust building to take a little longer...it [shared cultures] removed barriers to understanding. Fairly early on I knew what he would speak and those happened to be very similar to my own; so definitely makes it easier.” [P62]*

Another participant explained the reason of a faster trust development as that *“there’s a learning curve you have to go through”* with every new person met, but *“less of a learning curve needed to operate” [P109]* with people sharing similar cultures and subsequently similar values and norms. Another participant taking a similar outlook highlighted that a shared culture would provide *“a link, a head start” [P76]*. As such, a similar culture was said to provide insight into the other party’s behaviour, offering a connection and eliminating the barriers between parties, a sentiment echoed in the following participant’s statement: *“I think with him it was just a case of having some kind of connection that helped break down barriers.” [P99]*.

Along similar lines, another participant also added:

*“If you are from the same cultural background, it is easier to build that trust and that relationship...if you are from a different cultural background then there are some extra hurdles to get through to build up that same level of trust.” [P98]*

Partly, it was believed that sharing similar cultures made it easier to build trust because it made it easier to establish relationships, enabling bonding, and subsequently building trust. This, according to some of the participants was partly caused due to having similar train of thoughts, reacting to things similarly, and valuing similar things.

The impact of culture on trust was not only limited to the early stages of the trustee-trustor encounters as portrayed in the above discussion. The majority of the participants admitting the link between cultural similarity/difference and trust emphasised that a shared culture enabled

understanding each other better, a sentiment exemplified by the statement of the following participant:

*“I think cultural similarity played a very important role, because I think it’s easier to build up trust with someone when they understand you and you understand them and I think the reason why I got to trust him so much, which was like a major amount, is because when I was speaking to him he understood me and because he’s quite similar to me, he understood exactly what I want and what I’m trying to get. And that made me think this is a person I can trust.” [P102]*

In addition to facilitating understanding of each other, as noted by some of the participants, shared similar cultures enabled avoiding misunderstandings, as epitomised by the following statement of a participant: *“I think when you’ve got a very similar cultural background with people there’s just less room for misunderstanding” [P76]*. Misunderstandings otherwise were seen as a possible barrier for trust development.

Furthermore, some of the participants highlighted that it was easier to empathise with somebody sharing a similar culture as they would understand each other better and recognise the difficulties experienced. The following statement of a participant offered insight into how shared cultures facilitated better understanding of each other:

*“I think that I view him as understanding me a little bit better and understanding some of my unique challenges and/or position, and perspective as it alludes to the work and as it alludes to how we conduct ourselves and how we view work... At the end of the day, I show up like anyone else, but there are decisions and contemplations that occur for me to show up like anyone else that are unique to me because of where I come from, who I am,*

*what I look like, what I'm compensating for and I think he has an acute awareness of that as someone who may be compensating for different things, but recognises that there is some pre-work that happens before we show up."*

[P92]

The discussion so far concerning the relationship between shared similar cultures and trust can be summarised with the statement of the following participant who likened having a similar culture to ballast which provides a foundation to build on. This concept, by some of the other participants, was referred to as having a connection, a link, or a common ground which accelerated trust building as the parties involved had less of a learning curve to go through. Furthermore, the parties would understand each other better and consequently trust was engendered at a faster time:

*"There's a good word that I use sometimes called ballast, which is the foundation; ballast is the kind of foundation, the rock underneath you which you build on. So, if you have that then it's more likely that you'll trust somebody. If they come from a completely different sphere, then you have to work a lot harder to overcome misunderstandings."* [P81]

Lastly, there were a few participants who admitted being inclined to trust those who share a similar culture to them. One of these participants commented: *"I suppose they [cultural similarities] would incline me to trust that person more readily because I perceived that I understand who they are, their values, interests, and to some extent their priorities"* [P62]. Another participant, an English person who was born and raised in the countryside in the North of England admitted having a tendency to trust people with a regional accent which represented a similar upbringing, education, or socio-economic status:

*“I tend to trust people from the north of the country more than from the south of the country mainly because of their accent. It’s a terrible thing but it’s true. If you’ve been brought up in a part of the country and you hear somebody speaking and they’ve got a regional accent and you’ve got a regional accent you relax. You immediately gravitate towards them because they’ve got a regional accent. Because if you speak to somebody, an English person who has no regional accent, you automatically think that they’ve been better educated than you have, they’ve got more money than you have and they’re going to look down their noses at you. If somebody talks as if they talk like the Queen I immediately feel that they’re a bit posh, they’re not one of my kind of people.” [P85]*

If the above statement is examined, the participant has not considered the shared ethnicity, race, and nationality as important identifiers of a shared culture. Instead, she focused on the shared regional accent which relates to the place of birth and childhood, as well as the associative tiles such upbringing, education, or socio-economic status as the important indicators of a shared culture. Similar to this participant, the notion of a shared cultural similarity mostly centred around the common associative tiles. Therefore, it is fair to deduce that the associative tiles are important cultural elements in regard to trust. In short, when the relationship between cultural similarity and trust is considered, the most important aspect was the notion or the perception of a shared culture, which depended heavily on the participants’ own understanding of culture in which the associative tiles, in addition to the geographic tile the place of birth and childhood, had a priority and domination over the other tiles.

In addition, when trust is concerned, the cultural tile cosmopolitanism emerges as an important influencer. As also illustrated on some of the quotes above, the cosmopolite mindset has vital

implications for trust development. Being aware of and open towards different cultures and making sense of others' behaviour from that individual's cultural perspective were, according to some of the participants, perceived to help with building trusting relationships, the views of which are exemplified by the following participant:

*“I think I'm quite open and understanding to different cultures and diversity. Because I think different cultures value different things, you know different things are important and therefore I think what you have to try to understand is, things from the other person's perspective or the other culture perspective. Because only by doing that you can meet at a level where you can be trusting with each other.” [P74]*

This open, cosmopolite mindset, which emerged as important for trust development, was also seen to eliminate the negative impact of cultural differences on distrust, an issue I return back in the subsequent section.

#### *Cultural similarities, cultural differences and distrust*

Whilst discussing the link between cultural similarity/difference and trust, almost all participants focused on cultural similarity rather than differences as many claimed that a shared culture helped with trust development but having different cultures did not necessarily have an impact on trust. With regards to distrust, a similar mentality was held by some of the participants who claimed that cultural similarity helped with trust but cultural difference did not necessarily lead to distrust, The views of these participants were echoed in the following participant's statement:

*“I think cultural similarities help build trust quicker, whereas I wouldn't necessarily say the opposite is true when I'm looking at it from a distrust*

*perspective. If cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities, if they were lined up then I think that helps resolve issues quicker, even if it's nothing more than just understanding the other person's perspective and understanding if they say something, then understanding what that means from that cultural reference point... But I wouldn't necessarily say that if you're both from different ethnicities then that increases the distrust." [P98]*

For most of the participants sharing similar views, the underlying reason for not perceiving cultural differences to have an impact on distrust was associated with having an open, cosmopolite mindset. For the participants with culturally diverse backgrounds or for those frequently exposed to highly culturally diverse people, cultural differences were not seen as a barrier, as illustrated by the words of the following participant:

*"I don't think culture is a massive barrier. I interact probably with people from seven to eight different countries across the world every day. I had distrusting relationships. I don't think it has been for cultural reasons ever... But I think it is because partly, I am fairly aware of cultural differences. Like I said, I lived in multiple countries. I have seen lots of different cultures. I don't think that it's an enormous factor in my distrust, but it is probably a bigger factor in a broader population who hadn't had such a broad experience in different cultures." [P68]*

As such, whilst cosmopolitanism as a cultural tile was important for trust building, in distrust it prevents cultural differences to constitute barriers and lead to distrust. The majority of the participants reported having a culturally diverse background as a result of living at various countries at a certain time of their life or being keen travellers. Consequently, they mentioned having been exposed to different cultures, which according to them resulted in openness and

tolerance to differences and thereby developing a cosmopolite mindset. This fact undoubtedly contributed to the high number of participants (two-thirds) who asserted that no link between cultural similarity/difference and distrust existed.

Nevertheless, the remaining participants (almost a quarter) talked about the connection between cultural similarity/difference and distrust. The issues discussed pertained to the consequences of distrust between people sharing similar cultures and the impact of cultural differences on distrust. The participants who discussed distrust between individuals sharing similar cultures admitted making assumptions about people who had a similar culture to them and about their expected behaviour, which when not met was said to lead to distrust. These participants acknowledged being blinded with their assumptions and expectations, already presuming a certain level of trust without having too much information about that person. The following participant's statement summarises these discussions, echoing the others who raised similar points:

*“I think I probably made some assumptions that he would not do that kind of thing... I probably was a bit too naïve, I'm always happily naïve to start with, but in this case, I was probably unhealthily naïve in the sense that I probably should have been a bit more careful, so I was probably over-trusting. Because of the cultural background and I thought that I didn't have to go through more fact finding with him.” [P109]*

Furthermore, a few participants commented that if a person, who behaved in a distrustworthy way, causing distrust, was sharing a similar culture to them, this elicited enhanced feelings of hurt or betrayal. This was connected to the point mentioned in the preceding paragraph about forming a certain set of expectations about people with similar cultures, which when not met

engendered distrust. In addition, the feelings of distrust were reported to be stronger, sentiments typified by the words of the following participant:

*“In terms of distrust, I suppose the similarity enhances the feeling of betrayal that I perceive because I wouldn’t expect to be let down or put in a difficult position by someone from a similar background. I don’t know how rational that is, but I guess it’s my first instinct.” [P62]*

In all of the cases where the relationship between cultural similarity and distrust was discussed, the notion of cultural similarity was not dominated by any certain tile. Rather it comprised a wide range of cultural tiles and encompassed the participants’ perception and attribution of similarity.

When the relationship between cultural difference and distrust was discussed, the participants claimed that cultural differences hindered mutual understanding which would result in misunderstandings. These participants outlined that cultural differences made it harder to understand and sometimes empathise with each other, which then lead to distrust.

A few participants outlined how distrust could emerge as a result of misunderstandings initiated by language barriers. It was said that the native speaker makes a certain set of assumptions about the other party’s understanding everything said. The other party, however, may not understand everything in the same way, some meanings getting lost in the interpretation, which could lead to distrust. This information is summarised in the statement of the following participant who thought the source of his distrust towards his superior was partly a result of cultural differences in which the associative tile language played a significant role:

*“I guess the language barrier probably played a role. We overestimate our ability to communicate and I think that was especially true when one person*

*is speaking a second language. It is very easy for the person speaking the first language to assume that the person they're speaking to has understood everything that they've said, but there is so much nuance that you pick up only by being constantly immersed in a language for a period of many years actually. I think the language had an impact when I think upon it, there are a lot of things that I thought he understood that he did not.” [P104]*

Lastly, a few participants talked about making generalisations, reflecting on their previous bad experiences with people from a certain culture and building prejudices towards all people from that culture. Consequently, attributing a certain type of behaviour of people from one culture to everyone sharing that culture constituted a barrier, initiating a certain level of initial distrust. In such scenarios, what culture referred to mainly corresponded to the tile nationality. These sentiments are epitomised in the following participant's statement:

*“To be honest with you, I think as with most humans, I'd probably start to make assumptions and build prejudice. I know people like to say that they don't, but they do, it's true, people build prejudices and I would probably have a mistrusting prejudice towards people from certain countries.” [P99]*

When the conceptualisations of culture are considered within the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and distrust, the participants discussing cultural similarities and distrust conceptualised culture more broadly incorporating demographic (e.g. ethnicity), geographic (e.g. nationality) and associative (e.g. religion, interests) tiles together. However, in the discussion concerning the cultural differences and distrust two cultural tile dominated what culture referred to: language (associative) and nationality (geographic). Consequently, language barriers and generalisations made across nationalities were perceived to influence distrust decisions. However, the overall reason behind the majority of the participants' (two-

thirds) not associating cultural similarity/difference with distrust could be explained by the cultural tile cosmopolitanism taking priority over every other cultural tile. As such, the participants having a cosmopolite background or mindset did not perceive cultural differences to influence distrust. According to them, distrust was solely caused by the other party's own behaviours.

To sum up the discussion on culture and distrust relationship, not many participants considered that there was a relationship between cultural similarities/differences and distrust as this link was only acknowledged by one-third of the participants. Some of these participants pointed out the consequences of a shared culture which would result in a certain set of assumptions in regard to the other person's behaviour which if not met was said to result in distrust. The remaining few talked about experiencing enhanced feelings of hurt and betrayal when the distrustee shared a similar culture to them. Alternatively, the participants noting the link between cultural difference and distrust claimed that having different cultures created a barrier to understanding each other, causing misunderstandings or prejudices and subsequently eliciting distrust.

The discussions on culture and distrust relationship were narrowly scoped and were mostly limited to (1) similar cultures' leading to certain assumptions which when not met resulted in distrust and enhanced feeling of hurt and betrayal and (2) different cultures' constituting barriers to understanding, causing misunderstanding and prejudices which lead to distrust.

#### **10.4 Summary**

This chapter firstly explored the participants' conceptualisation of culture, building on the accounts of their culture. Although the participants were not guided in any way in terms of the meaning of culture and were prompted to reflect on their own understanding of culture, the cultural elements they mentioned mapped well onto Chao and Moon's (2005) taxonomy of

cultural mosaic. Consequently, this framework was utilised to structure the inductively identified cultural elements, grouping them under Chao and Moon's (2005) three categories - demographic, geographic, and associative. The findings contribute to culture literature by extending the knowledge on the constituent elements of culture, offering empirical support to Chao and Moon's (2005) culture framework. What the participants ascribed to as important depended on their own unique conceptualisation of culture and perception of what was culturally significant for them.

With regards to the investigation of the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust, half of the participants did not consider there was a link between cultural similarity/difference and trust whereas this corresponded to two-thirds of the participants when distrust was concerned. The main reason for this conviction centred around the nature of the organisations the participants worked in (multinational consulting organisations with highly culturally diverse workforce) where cultural differences were not seen as very salient and were perceived as normal. That conclusion was also caused by the culturally diverse backgrounds or open, cosmopolite mindsets. With the certain tiles such as cosmopolitanism and organisation gaining more prominence over other tiles, cultural similarities or differences were perceived irrelevant for trust or distrust.

When the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust is considered, half of the participants reported a possible link between these concepts. Within these, culture was used in a broad sense, in addition to the demographic tiles also encompassing geographic and more associative tiles. The associative tiles especially played an important role in the relationship between similar cultures and trust.

Overall, the participants acknowledging the link between cultural similarity/difference and trust emphasised that having different cultures did not prevent trust development, but sharing

similar cultures helped with trust development. According to them, sharing similar cultures facilitated trust development by providing a connection to build on, enabling and also reinforcing relationship building and bonding and subsequently trust development. The connection, the link, or the common ground that shared cultures provided were said to facilitate understanding each other better and empathising, and consequently making it easier to build trust more quickly. A similar culture was claimed to accelerate trust building because less of a learning curve was necessary due to the belief that the cultural knowledge of the other party generated the early knowledge of the other party and enabled predicting their behaviour.

The participants who acknowledged the link between cultural similarity/difference and distrust, more specifically a quarter of them, discussed that having similar cultures led to making some assumptions regarding the other party's behaviour which when not met engendered distrust. Furthermore, a few participants admitted having enhanced feelings of betrayal or hurt when distrust emerged towards someone sharing a similar culture to them. Alternatively, when the parties had different cultures, diversity was reported to hinder parties' understanding each other and to some extent empathising with each other, which then led to distrust. Moreover, some of the participants discussed that the cultural differences cultivated misunderstandings or prejudices, which in turn elicited distrust. The cultural tiles that mainly discussed in regard to the cultural similarity/difference and distrust were ethnicity (demographic), nationality (geographic), and language (associative).

In the following chapter (Chapter 11), I discuss the issues raised here and interpret the implications of the findings, considering that the individuals interviewed work at global, multinational organisations, such as the top consulting firms, where the workforce is highly diverse.

# **CHAPTER 11 – DISCUSSION: CULTURAL SIMILARITIES, CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND TRUST AND DISTRUST**

## **11.1 Introduction**

The investigation of the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust was inspired by the emergence of ‘Cultural congruence’ as a factor influencing trust development in the empirical research undertaken for this thesis. The need for further research concerning the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust was further confirmed in the SR I conducted (see Chapter 4). Also, considering the increasingly recognised critical role of culture on organisational behaviour (Alvesson, 2013; House et al., 2004; Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner, 2012), particularly on trust (Saunders et al., 2010) and distrust (Lewicki et al., 2006) and taking into account Gelfand et al.’s (2017) suggestions on the importance of understanding cultural similarities and differences in the increasingly globalised world, I carried out further research on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust.

In order to better understand culture’s role, in Chapter 3 I reviewed the literature on culture. Afterwards, I conducted an SR on culture’s relationship with trust and distrust. I kept the scope of the review intentionally broad to explore what aspects and to what extent these relationships were investigated in the current literature (Chapter 4). In order to understand the current knowledge, the conceptualisation of culture comprised the dominant approach in the literature, namely national culture. After completing the reviews, I undertook an empirical study in which I explored the participants’ use of culture and their thoughts pertaining to the relationship between cultural similarity/differences and trust/distrust. In the following sections I discuss the findings, comparing them to the literature reviewed. First, I start with a discussion on culture

in general and continue with discussing the issues pertaining to cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust.

## **11.2 Culture**

Prior to undertaking this research, I was conflicted in terms of finding a definition of culture that would cater for the requirements of this research. The culture literature itself creates confusion with the range of fragmented and diverse definitions (Dietz et al., 2010; Gelfand et al., 2007; Jahoda, 2012; Taras et al., 2009). Having been faced with the challenges of and limitations with conceptualising culture in line with the mainstream practice (mainly focusing on national culture) as I did when conducting the SR, I decided not to pursue a similar approach in the empirical research I undertook. Taking into account my dedication to understand my participants' worlds, I decided against adopting a predetermined definition of culture, but rather explored my participants' understanding and use of culture. This approach therefore, contributes to cross-cultural organisational theory by offering insights into the practice – the actual organisational actors' understanding and use of culture.

The participants' conceptualisation of culture and associated cultural elements went beyond the inclusion of traditional cultural elements (e.g. ethnicity, nationality, and race) to also comprise other cultural elements such as family, education, religion, interests, etc. and also more work context-related elements such as organisation, profession, and industry (see Table 10.1 for details). In addition, new cultural elements such as place of birth and childhood, places lived, and cosmopolitanism emerged from the empirical data. What was understood by culture comprised various levels, encompassing individual, organisational, national, and global at once.

In the literature, however, these levels are most commonly treated as separate units. Within this approach the micro levels of culture are nested in macro levels and each level represents a unit

of analysis (e.g. Erez and Gati, 2004; Hofstede et al., 2010). These hierarchical levels comprise the inner individual level which is nested in group, organisational, national, regional, and global levels (Erez and Gati, 2004). Therefore, each culture group is treated separately. Consequently, by demonstrating the interplay between different levels, the findings challenge the practice of insulating culture into specific levels and treating each level as a separate entity. These findings therefore lend support to other researchers emphasising the dynamic nature of culture and acknowledging the interactions between the levels (e.g. Chao and Moon, 2005; Erez and Gati, 2004; Schneider and Barsoux, 2003).

This thesis offers support to, as well as constitutes an example for, the empirical application of Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheory of the taxonomy of the cultural mosaic. The only other study operationalising it was conducted by Zolfagari et al. (2016). However, Zolfagari et al. (2016) guided their participants by offering a definition of culture and eleven defined cultural tiles. In contrast, in the current research the participants were not guided in any way and the cultural elements were identified inductively from empirical data. Then, I grouped these cultural elements under Chao and Moon's (2005) three categories – demographic, geographic, and associative, which I realised constituted a fitting grouping structure.

The findings also challenge the dominant view of culture as national culture. In the current literature the cross-cultural research is dominated by studies concentrating on a national level to the extent of conflating 'national culture' with 'culture' (Chao and Moon, 2005; Gould and Grein, 2009; Taras et al., 2009). I myself followed a similar approach when undertaking the SR with the aim of researching the dominant body of literature and thereby understanding the mainstream views on and issues of the relationship between culture and trust and distrust. As such, I had the first-hand opportunity to observe the limitations of such a conceptualisation. To start with, in most of the studies reviewed national culture was used almost synonymously with

society, country, nation, or ethnicity, something also criticised by other researchers (e.g. Adams and Marcus, 2004). The other studies unquestioningly utilised cultural dimensions (e.g. collectivism versus individualism) by referring to Hofstede's earlier work – Hofstede (1980). Within this approach, culture groups are assumed to be homogenous and all group members to act similarly. The SR, however, revealed contradictory findings associated with presumably similar groups. For example, the findings on a study concerning the collectivists were different from, and even contradictory to, another reporting research findings on (presumably similar) collectivists (see Chapter 4, section 4.3). This is mainly due to aggregation of individual level responses to a group level and assuming all group members to share similar characteristics. Therefore, such an approach constituted challenges to understanding trust or distrust in intra-organisational relationships as seen in the SR (Chapter 4).

Having asked the participants themselves to reflect on their understanding of culture and to describe their own cultural background, it is apparent that a more comprehensive and representative definition of culture, which goes beyond the traditional elements such as nationality and ethnicity, is required. In particular, the tile nationality was mentioned only by a quarter of the participants, implying that it might not be a significant cultural parameter as the literature portrays it to be in multinational organisational settings with highly culturally diverse workforce. Furthermore, for many participants nationality held did not coincide with the nationality of the country they worked and lived in (UK and USA) or it was not the one belonging to their, or at least their parents' birth place. Therefore, the tiles places of birth and childhood and places lived constituted a better representation of the geographic attributes of one's culture. Both these tiles were among the most frequently mentioned constituent elements of culture described by the participants.

Another geographic tile that needs further attention is cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitanism as a concept is not new in culture research. However, it is the first time it is considered as a constituent element of culture and operationalised among Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural tiles.

In a very broad sense cosmopolitanism utilised in this research encompasses a similar connotation to Delanty's (2006) conceptualisation of cosmopolitanism which builds on the understanding of world openness. According to Delanty (2006, p. 36) cosmopolitanism is 'a dynamic relation between the local and the global', concerning 'the multiple ways the local and the national is redefined as a result of interaction with the global'. In this view the emphasis is on the individual agency and openness to others. For example, Delanty (2006) offers Europeanisation as one of the most relevant examples of cosmopolitanism. Very similarly, I use the tile cosmopolitanism to refer to the participants who described themselves as 'European', 'Western', 'global', or 'international'.

Not all researchers relate a similar meaning to cosmopolitanism. For example, Skovgaard-Smith and Poulfelt (2017) see cosmopolitanism as collective belonging of cosmopolitan 'us' which, according to them, does not imply openness to others. However, in both conceptualisations national affiliations are downgraded and, alternatively, the inter-relations between societies are emphasised. The main distinction between these studies and the current research stems from the fact that although downgrading nationality, they continue focusing on nationality as a cultural identifier, emphasising globalisation, mobility, modernisation, and their impact on the national identity shifts. However, in this study, similar to nationality, cosmopolitanism is a separate geographic tile. It is not culture per se, but rather it is one of many cultural tiles forming one's individual culture.

When the overall cultural tiles are considered (see Table 10.1), another issue that needs to be emphasised is the participants' incorporation of several work-related cultural elements into their descriptions of culture such as organisation, industry, and profession. These are rarely treated as part of one's culture, but rather are seen as part of an organisational culture. This further supports the interplay between different culture levels and their interaction. Considering the emphasis on the work context, these tiles have the potential to stand out among all tiles in organisational cultural research. These issues need further consideration and investigation in order to better understand the implications of work-related tiles in one's culture and what that means for organisational settings.

The findings in this research can be interpreted as a step forward in establishing the need for utilising a broader and more dynamic conceptualisation of culture. The findings in the SR emphasising the limitations of the dominant view of culture mainly as national culture, and the participants' conceptualisations of culture which demonstrated the complex and subjective nature of culture outlines the need for more representative operationalisations of culture. This thesis supports Chao and Moon's (2005) conceptualisation of culture, offering empirical support and further expanding it. Now, I continue the discussion with reflecting on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust.

### **11.3 Cultural similarities, cultural differences, and trust and distrust**

The information gained from the analysis of the participants' own conceptualisation and use of culture has various implications for researching culture-related matters that are associated with trust and distrust. Before commencing with these I would like to take a step back and offer a short overview of the underlying reasons for undertaking this particular research.

Investigating the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust was instigated firstly after the emergence of 'Culture congruence' as a factor influencing trust

development, and later with the findings in the SR outlining the possible link between trust and culturally congruent or culturally diverse groups and trust. In this respect, the knowledge gained in the SR, however, was highly restricted due to the fragmented and limited research, especially when distrust was considered. Consequently, the findings in this research shed light on these under-studied areas. Firstly, the findings in the SR contribute not only to highlight what is known in the literature about the relationship between national culture and trust and distrust, but also what is not known with regards to this relationship.

In addition to the SR investigating the relationship between culture and trust and distrust, in this thesis I focused on addressing the fourth research question (To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust (RQ4a) or distrust (RQ4b) in intra-organisational relationships). The extent of perceived influence of cultural similarity/difference on trust and/or distrust varied across the participants with claims of no influence to acknowledgments of some kind of impact. The only consensus was on the relationship concerning cultural differences and trust, the participants talking about this claiming that cultural differences did not obstruct the trust development. This finding, however, contradicts the SR results where studies were found to report that cultural differences constituted barriers to trust development (e.g. Newell et al., 2007; Oertig and Buergi, 2006; Zakaria et al., 2004). Arguably, this is partly a result of the contextual differences among the studies. In the current research the participants working at multinational consulting companies with a highly culturally diverse workforce or having an open and cosmopolite mindset inevitably resulted in their being more tolerant to cultural differences and therefore not seeing it as a barrier to trust. Similar views were shared by the participants who claimed that no relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust (half of the participants) and distrust (two-thirds of the participants) existed. For some of these participants the cultural tile cosmopolitanism dominated the other tiles, gaining priority over all other cultural tiles, which diminished the effect of the cultural similarity or difference on

trust or distrust. Very similarly, for some of these participants the tile organisation dominated every other cultural tile and therefore personal cultural differences ceased to matter within a shared organisational culture. These findings also offer empirical support to Chao and Moon's (2005) proposition on the possibility of certain tiles dominating the other tiles, contributing to literature by illustrating the interplay between different tiles. This also supports Gelfand et al.'s (2017) claim on different cultural structures being activated or suppressed based on the situation. In situations where a cosmopolite mindset existed (cultural tile cosmopolitanism dominated the others) or the organisational culture absorbed any other cultural differences (cultural tile organisation dominated others), the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust was concluded as uninfluential.

With regards to the relationship between cultural similarity and trust, the findings support the researchers' (e.g. Doney et al., 1998; Ertürk, 2008; Huff and Kelley, 2003, 2005; Testa, 2002, 2009) claims that shared similar cultures might increase levels of trust. This was supported firstly with the emergence of the factor 'Cultural congruence' as one of the factors facilitating and reinforcing trust development and then with the results of the empirical study discussed in Chapter 10. The findings further offer insight into the reasons why having similar cultures influences trust development positively. These reasons can be summarised as that a shared culture: (1) helps trust development; (2) makes it easier to trust the other party as a result of mutual understanding and empathising; (3) provides a foundation and common ground to build on; (4) offers a connection and a link; (5) facilitates relationship building and bonding which subsequently facilitate trust building; (6) enables faster trust building due to the requirement of a less of a learning curve with regards to the other party's behaviour; and (7) increases the likelihood of trusting.

For the participants who discussed the link between cultural similarity and trust, what cultural similarity meant heavily depended upon their perception of a shared culture. This perception of similarity mostly comprised the consideration of the associative tiles and the geographic tile place of birth and childhood, these tiles gaining priority and domination over the other tiles. As also suggested by others (e.g. Caprar et al., 2015; Taras et al., 2014), the more cultural elements were shared between the parties, in other words the more the life experiences were shared and the more socialisation took place between the individuals, the greater the likelihood of developing the perception of a shared similar culture or cultural lens was. Furthermore, the cultural tile cosmopolitanism has important implications for trust. Having a cosmopolite mindset, being aware of different cultures and making sense of others' behaviour from that individual's cultural perspective, were reported to facilitate building trusting relations.

When the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and distrust is considered, the number of participants who considered no such a relationship existed was even higher as two-thirds of the participants argued against such a link. This was partly because some of the participants who discussed culture's relationship with trust and distrust specifically emphasised that although they believed sharing similar cultures helped in trust building, they did not think belonging to different cultures would have an impact on trust or generate distrust. As also mentioned earlier, the dominance of the cultural tile cosmopolitanism, stemming from the cosmopolite natures of the organisations the participants worked in and the participants' culturally diverse backgrounds or interactions, has especially contributed to the perception of the lessened impact of cultural similarity/difference on distrust.

When it comes to the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and distrust, the SR reported the lack of knowledge on this matter. The limited literature discovered outlined that belonging to different cultures constituted a barrier, contributing to distrust development (e.g.

Newell et al., 2007; Oertig and Buergi, 2006; Zakaria et al., 2004). The findings in this empirical research support that, further explaining the reasons behind why cultural differences might lead to distrust. The findings suggest that cultural differences constitute as possible barriers to understanding, causing misunderstanding and obstructing empathising with each other, which were then found to elicit distrust. In addition to hindering better understanding, having different cultures was believed to create prejudices which led to distrust. As such, the findings offer insight into the causes of distrust between parties sharing different cultures.

However, the findings also outline a link between shared similar cultures and distrust. In the cases where the parties shared similar cultures, the participants discussed making assumptions and even having trust to a certain extent on the basis of presumed knowledge of the other party and their behaviour, which if not met were said to lead to distrust. The participants also reported enhanced levels of feelings of betrayal and hurt when distrust emerged with those sharing similar cultures to them, partly due to forming a certain set of expectations about people who have similar cultures. The findings align with Henderson (2010), who argued against the belief that a shared working language could facilitate communication and foster trust. The findings suggest that talking the same language might still result in distrust, if one of the parties is not a native speaker. As Henderson (2010) suggests, creating awareness and receptivity towards the cultural differences might be more effective. Consequently, the cultural tile language, as well as the tile nationality which might cause country level generalisations and subsequent prejudices, were found to play a role on engendering distrust.

The associated findings, which contribute to the literature by shedding light on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and distrust can be summarised as follows. Belonging to different cultures: (1) constitutes barriers to understanding and empathising; (2) causes misunderstanding; and (3) creates prejudices, all of which contribute to distrust development.

When similar cultures were shared, however, distrust emerged only if certain assumptions about the other party's behaviour were not met. Additionally, the feelings of betrayal or hurt were claimed to be stronger when the parties had similar cultures.

In contrast to trust, where 'Cultural congruence' emerged inductively as one of the factors influencing trust development, in distrust a similar factor did not emerge. Also considering the large amount of the participants (two-thirds) who claimed no relationship between cultural similarity/difference and distrust existed as, according to them, distrust is solely caused by others' behaviours, the link between cultural similarity/difference and distrust might be less substantial compared to the one between cultural similarity/difference and trust in multinational culturally diverse organisations.

#### **11.4 Summary**

This discussion chapter drew together and reflected on the information gained in the literature reviewed on culture (Chapter 3), the SR undertaken on the relationship between national culture and trust and distrust (Chapter 4), and the empirical study conducted on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust. Thus, the findings are discussed and interpreted in line with the relevant literature. More specifically, in this chapter I discussed the fourth research question and its two sub-questions: RQ4a – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence trust in intra-organisational relationships and RQ4b – To what extent does perceived cultural similarity/difference influence distrust in intra-organisational relationships.

This exploratory research on cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust was mainly initiated by 'Cultural congruence' emerging as one of the factors influencing trust development. Furthermore, the issues pertaining to the cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust were identified as potential areas for future research by the SR.

Within this chapter the findings concerning the views of the participants who reject the existence of any relationships between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust and who acknowledged the existence of some kind of connection between them are discussed in line with the associated literature. Consequently, the findings expand the current knowledge on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust, offering insight into the particulars of such relationships and their impact on trust and/or distrust development.

When culture-related matters are considered, however, the most notable contribution offered pertains to the conceptualisation of culture. The findings offer insight into the complex and subjective nature of culture, which encompasses various levels (e.g. individual, group, organisational, national, and global) at once. The findings therefore challenge the practice of limiting the study of culture into one particular level when studying the individuals' organisational behaviour in multinational, culturally diverse organisations. The findings offer empirical support to Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheory and further extend it with the addition of new cultural tiles (e.g. cosmopolitanism), emphasising the associative tiles as important cultural elements (e.g. family, education, interests, etc.), and highlighting the diminishing effect of nationality within the conceptualisation of culture, the findings suggesting alternative geographic tiles such as place of birth and childhood an places lived.

## CHAPTER 12 – CONCLUSION

### 12.1 Introduction

*Trust . . . is widely talked about, and it is widely assumed to be good for organizations. When it comes to specifying just what it means in an organizational context, however, vagueness creeps in.*

—Porter, Lawler, and Hackman, 1975, p. 497 cited in  
McAllister, 1995, p. 24

After more than 40 years, interestingly, the above statement still reflects the current state of trust research. Almost more than two decades ago, Kramer (1999, p. 594) commented that trust has moved from being a ‘bit player to center stage in contemporary organizational theory and research’; today trust still remains in the limelight and interest on researching trust continues with full-force ardour. However, the focus has been mostly channelled to the consequences of trust, especially to proving the benefits of trust. Consequently, although the benefits or the consequences of trust are well documented, not all aspects of trust have been equally investigated and understood, especially when it comes to what trust comprises (Bachmann, 2015; Castaldo et al., 2010). In order to advance the knowledge on the constituent elements of trust, the investigation of the factors influencing trust constituted the central focus of this thesis, together with the factors influencing distrust.

The investigation of trust was carried out concurrently with the investigation of distrust. The factors influencing both trust and distrust were independently identified and compared to explore the relationship between them. Consequently, this thesis contributes to the extant body of knowledge of trust by offering an integrative and comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing trust (RQ1), as well as distrust (RQ2) in intra-organisational relationships,

and by offering insight into the ongoing debate surrounding the relationship between trust and distrust (RQ3). The findings suggest that trust and distrust are separate but highly associated constructs. The findings further shed light on the similarities and differences concerning the factors influencing both trust and distrust.

The thesis also contributes to the cross-cultural trust literature by offering insight into the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust (RQ4a) and distrust (RQ4b), where the SR I conducted outlined the knowledge on the cultural similarity/difference and trust relationship to be highly fragmented and limited whereas knowledge on the cultural similarity/difference and distrust relationship is almost non-existent. As such, the findings offer insight into the extent and the nature of these relationships. Furthermore, the findings suggest that shared similar cultures could facilitate and reinforce trust development in organisational settings whereas differences could lead to distrust.

More significantly, however, this thesis demonstrates how conceptualisations of culture in the traditional sense, mainly as nationality or ethnicity, do not fully reflect what culture is for the professionals working in multinational organisational settings such as consulting companies. The thesis discusses the participants' conceptualisations of culture which represent the complex cultures of the contemporary, globalised world.

The findings have theoretical and conceptual, methodological, and practical implications. In the remainder of this chapter, these implications are discussed, the limitations are revealed, and future research suggestions are offered.

## **12.2 Theoretical and conceptual implications**

In this thesis four research questions were investigated concerning: (1) factors influencing trust and trust development (RQ1); (2) factors influencing distrust and distrust

development (RQ2); (3) the relationship between trust and distrust (RQ3); and (4) the relationship between similar or different cultures and trust (RQ4a) and/or distrust (RQ4b). Consequently, this thesis advances knowledge on trust, distrust, and culture, as explained further below.

The investigation of the first research question offers several contributions to the trust literature. One of the most significant contributions of this thesis pertains to the discovery of the distinct person- and task-focused natures of trust, which have not been previously recognised in the literature. Task-focused trust encompasses trusting the trustee to do something where trust is limited to the successful completion of a specific task or work and consequently is situational. In contrast, person-focused trust is associated with trusting the trustee as a person where trust is much broader and inclusive of personal aspects or behaviours of the trustee. Making this distinction is especially significant considering the different factors found to associate with each type of trust. Furthermore, as covered in the Discussion chapter (Chapter 9), this distinction might shed further light on some contradictory findings associated with the factors influencing trust and their importance in a relationship.

Another contribution pertains to the identification of the factors influencing trust and trust development. Offering a comprehensive understanding of the constituent elements of trust, the findings challenge the common practice of treating the trustworthiness-associated factors as the sole influencers of trust. The findings demonstrate the trustworthiness factors as important influencers of trust, as well as offer insight into other factors that influence trust and trust development. Furthermore, the findings expand the knowledge on what Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI comprises. In short, the findings contribute to the accumulating body of literature on intra-organisational trust by providing comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing trust and trust development which build on the analysis of empirical data gained

directly from the organisational members. As such, the findings offer an integrative account of the highly fragmented constituent elements of trust (McEvily and Tortoriello, 2011).

The findings support the views on the developmental nature of trust (e.g. Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Mayer et al., 1995; McAllister, 1995), which builds on the notion of the trustor's processing each new knowledge she/he gains about the trustee. Consequently, the trustor forms judgements based on the continuous assessment of the trustworthiness of the trustee with the aim of decreasing uncertainty and possible risk of harm. Within this thesis a process model of trust is presented (see Figure 9.1). This model illustrates the various factors influencing trust and trust development and associated verification and maintenance processes involved in the engenderment of trust and development of higher levels of trust. This model not only contributes to the process view of trust (e.g. Dietz and Den Hartog, 2006; Khodyakov, 2007; Möllering, 2005, 2013), but also develops it further.

The findings associated with the second research question offer insight into the factors influencing distrust and distrust development. Arguably, this contribution is especially significant as the knowledge on distrust is very limited. This is a result of distrust being treated as the opposite of trust and therefore being largely ignored (Guo et al., 2017; Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). In recent years, however, this supposition was challenged with the accumulating evidence outlining distrust as a separate construct (e.g. Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015; McKnight and Choudhury, 2006; Ou and Sia, 2010; Saunders et al., 2014). However, because the current literature is mostly focused on proving the distinction between trust and distrust, the knowledge on the complex relationship between trust and distrust continues to be limited (Guo et al., 2017). Therefore, this thesis contributes to the intra-organisational distrust literature by distinctively focusing on distrust and offering insight into the constituent elements of distrust within intra-organisational relationships, addressing several calls previously made

for researching the factors influencing distrust (e.g. Guo et al., 2017; Moody et al., 2014; Saunders et al., 2014) and produces a contribution where there is a significant gap of knowledge.

The third research question investigated the relationship between intra-organisational trust and distrust. The findings in this thesis contribute to the accumulating body of theoretical and empirical evidence supporting trust and distrust as separate constructs. This thesis also acknowledges the high association between the constructs, emphasising that although trust and distrust need to be treated separately, it should not be to the extent of assuming complete independence. In other words, trust development cannot be entirely independent of distrust as the presence of distrust might hinder trust, supporting similar views suggested by Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema (2018). In short, this thesis goes beyond offering empirical evidence to support the distinction between trust and distrust, but also offers insight into the particular similarities and differences regarding the factors influencing both constructs.

The fourth research question explored the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust. The findings pertaining to the conceptualisation of culture offer an empirical support to the Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheoretical model of culture. As such, the participants' own accounts of their culture challenge the practice of applying cultural-level theory, most commonly on a national level, to an individual level and draw attention to the inadequacy of limiting culture to cultural elements such as nationality or ethnicity, and thereby emphasising culture's complex and dynamic nature. The findings further shed light on the relationship between cultural similarity/difference and trust and/or distrust, elaborating on different views regarding the reasons why cultural similarity/difference might not have any association with trust and/or distrust, how sharing similar cultures might facilitate or reinforce trust development, or how cultural difference might lead to distrust.

### **12.3 Methodological implications**

Research on trust has been criticised for being conducted in relatively culturally similar environments, in particular in Western contexts (e.g. Dietz et al., 2010; Rockstuhl et.al, 2012; Sue-Chan et al., 2012; Wasti et al., 2011). Although I recruited the participants from the top UK and USA consulting companies (Western contexts), I endeavoured to achieve cultural heterogeneity among the participants. As explained in the Methodology chapter (Chapter 5, section 5.7), I also achieved heterogeneity in gender, age, the length of work experience, and grade, the strategy of which allowed for the discovery of central themes that are shared across a great deal of variation. Consequently, whilst the uniqueness of each individual was considered, the findings also demonstrate the common themes across different individual groups.

The utilised research technique, the CIT (Critical Incident Technique), facilitated the investigation of concepts as trust and distrust. This is especially important as research suggest (e.g. Münscher and Kühlmann, 2015) people are not usually consciously aware of the development of trust or distrust. With the CIT the participants were asked to talk about events which instigated trusting or distrusting in them. Whilst telling their stories, they were not forced to identify what really caused trust or distrust. Instead, they were asked to talk about their experiences and tell their stories which enabled me to understand their social worlds and their associated meaning-making.

To make sense of the participants' experiences, the data were abductively analysed (see Chapter 5, section 5.3 for details on abductions). This, firstly, allowed for the discovery of new concepts (e.g. task-focused trust versus person-focused trust). Secondly, it allowed the communication of the participants' social worlds and consequently representing their voice in the final report. At the same time, where relevant, the current literature was utilised in

structuring the empirical data such as Mayer et al. (1995) and Chao and Moon (2005). Consequently, the research was also grounded in the current literature, the findings further extending the associated knowledge.

The findings, for example, extend the constituent elements of Mayer et al.'s (1995) ABI. The inductively identified factors within this thesis go beyond Mayer et al.'s (1995) suggested factors constituting the ABI and therefore the findings extend the knowledge on such factors. Similarly, the cultural elements that were inductively identified from the participants' accounts of their culture extend Chao and Moon's (2005) model of 'cultural mosaic'. The emergent cultural elements added to what Chao and Moon (2005) initially suggested. As such, the findings extend the knowledge of what constitutes culture. Furthermore, this thesis provides an example for the operationalisation of Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheoretical conceptualisation of culture in organisational settings. The only other operationalisation of this model, conducted by Zolfagari et al. (2016), by forcing the participants to fit their culture into the previously determined cultural tiles, played an affirmative rather than exploratory role. In contrast, in the current thesis, as a result of initially using an inductive approach, the participants freely reflected on what culture means to them and offered what can be called a more representative conceptualisation.

#### **12.4 Implications for practice**

This thesis suggests that trust and distrust are separate but highly associated constructs. This finding has implications for practice, both for the academic and professional worlds. As separate constructs, different strategies need to be adopted in dealing with matters related to building trust or dissolving distrust. The value of fostering trust between organisational members has long been recognised with the accumulating evidence demonstrating its benefits (e.g. Dirks and Ferrin, 2001; Kramer and Cook, 2004; Zak, 2017b). As mentioned earlier,

distrust, however, suffers from the long-established tradition of being perceived as the opposite of trust and ignored as an independent construct (Guo et al., 2017; Sitkin and Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). In this scenario, it can be assumed that the distrust-associated matters can be resolved by focusing on trust initiatives, such as trust repair. However, the fact that distrust is not the opposite of trust, preventing or eliminating distrust cannot be achieved by solely focusing on trust. This thesis demonstrates how factors influencing distrust are not necessarily the opposites of those influencing trust. The distinct factors identified in this thesis can be useful in identifying trust-building or distrust-preventive strategies that are designed specifically to deal with trust or distrust and therefore have the power to yield more effective solutions. In short, the attempts at fostering trust in organisational environments do not guarantee distrust prevention. Organisations, therefore, need to consider both trust and distrust separately in their practices, for example when developing human resource management policies.

Ignoring distrust can have detrimental consequences for organisations. The findings outlined distrust's self-amplifying and pervasive nature, distrust felt towards the supervisors often being generalised towards the whole organisation. Being aware of this, the organisations can implement rules and policies to eliminate distrust. At a personal level, the findings help individuals to better understand and make sense of the trust or distrust relationships they build with colleagues, superiors, and subordinates.

The findings on the factors influencing trust or distrust can be further utilised for trust building or distrust eliminating initiatives. The adjuvant factors, for example, highlight the role of interpersonal relationships for trust or distrust. Thus, initiatives supporting the organisational members' building relationships and bonding might help with trust development. Other examples on the utilisation of the trust factors in policies can encompass implementing HR

practices and policies encouraging bonding (Relationship), open and honest communication (Communication), collaboration and cooperation between organisational members (Collaboration/cooperation), demonstrating trust towards the employees, empowering and delegating control (Trust reciprocity), approachability (Approachability) and availability (Availability) of the management to their subordinates, building support mechanisms between organisational members (Helping/supporting), and cultivating a transparent (Transparency), honest (Honesty), fair (Fairness) environment, with high moral codes (Integrity). For distrust-preventive strategies, the policies need to be built with a focus of preventing harm, especially to career progressions of the organisational members (Harmful behaviour), taking advantage of the possible vulnerabilities (Opportunistic behaviour), abusing power (Politics), discriminating (Discrimination/favouritism). All of these are only some of the possible avenues that can be taken in the quest of cultivating trusting environments and eliminating the dangers of distrust. In short, the findings pertaining to the factors influencing trust and distrust will enable academics to develop theories and organisations to implement strategies for trust or against distrust as they will know the factors that are important and more prominent for both trust or distrust.

The findings on culture also have implications for both academia and practitioner community. Drawing from the participants' understanding and use of culture, which encompasses various levels (e.g. individual, organisational, national, regional, global) at once and comprises multiple cultural elements, it appears that the dominant view on culture (focusing on national culture and associated cultural elements such as nationality and ethnicity) does not accurately represent the practice. This highlights the need for adopting new conceptualisations and operationalisations not only in cross-cultural trust research but possibly in organisational research. The findings offer empirical support to, and demonstration of, Chao and Moon's (2005) conceptualisation and operationalisation of culture. This thesis therefore contributes to

cross-cultural organisational theory by offering insights into the actual organisational actors' understanding and use of culture and demonstrates how Chao and Moon's (2005) cultural mosaic can be utilised in cultural research.

Furthermore, the findings in this thesis suggest that the perception of a similar culture is not necessarily limited to whether the parties share a similar nationality or ethnicity, the cultural elements on which the organisations have no power to influence or change. However, the participants also identified various associative cultural tiles (e.g. family, education, interests, world view, lifestyle, etc) as integral part of their culture. Therefore, the organisations can act on achieving a shared culture among their employees by instigating socialising, bringing people with shared interests together. As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter 11), increased socialising experiences between the parties can contribute to a perception of a shared culture or cultural lens. Within this scenario, creating a shared culture is possible. This initiative has a twofold impact. Socialising activities might also facilitate relationship building among the employees, which was found to positively influence trust development.

The findings also suggest that encouraging a cosmopolite mindset would help with trust building and diminishing the negative consequences of distrust. Openness towards diversity, for example implementing inclusive policies, according to the SR findings, is also found to positively influence trust (Buttner and Lowe, 2015). For example, adopting diversity management practices across a range of HR activities can yield a positive correlation between trust in organisation, management, and co-workers (Kupczyk et al., 2015). The empirical study results also suggest that people with more open mindset are more tolerant to differences and less susceptible towards distrust. As such, the organisations with more tolerant policies can encourage openness among its members which has implications for both trust and distrust.

At an individual level, the findings on culture may encourage openness. Among the individuals assimilating this broad understanding of culture, cultural differences might be underplayed, which then would prevent such differences to act as barriers between individuals.

## **12.5 Limitations and future research**

The research undertaken in this thesis is inevitably subject to several limitations. It is usually customary to state the limitations pertaining to the generalisability of the qualitative data. However, I do not see this as a limitation; rather, generalisability as a concept is not applicable to qualitative research. It should be noted that the findings are representative of the context studied, namely multinational consulting organisational settings, and therefore it is not possible to claim the generalisability of the findings to every context. However, it is more accurate to discuss the ‘transferability’ of the findings and whether they can be transferred to other contexts if there is a sufficient amount of shared similarity between them. Whether the findings are persuasive and if they have meaning and resonance and transferability to other individuals, contexts, situations, and times will ultimately be decided by the readers and the users of the research findings (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015; Miles et al., 2014) as transferability of the findings or emerging recommendations will depend on their perceived usefulness by the users (Barbour, 2014). But at the same time, it is fair to claim that the findings represent the multinational organisational settings. I have not particularly examined the consulting industry but focused on the multinational context in general. The context of consultancy was considered only when it was brought up by the participants. However, it would be interesting to examine the consultancy context in more detail. Future research could also extend the multinational organisational context focus span to include different industries. The contextual comparisons of multinational and national, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, could further yield valuable insight into both trust- and distrust-associated matters and culture.

Another possible limitation is related to the research technique CIT. Whilst the utilisation of the CIT has contributed to the investigation of trust and distrust, a possible limitation attributed to the technique needs to be acknowledged. Possible consequences of recalling bias (difficulty in recollecting the memories regarding the events described) need to be considered. To facilitate recollection of memories, the participants were asked to reflect on significant events which are more memorable compared to average events and therefore easier to be accurately identified (Flanagan, 1954). Furthermore, as I mentioned earlier (see Chapter 5, section 5.9 for the details on this issue), with the CIT, establishing the reasons for why the incident is important is arguably more important than obtaining its exact details (Cox et al., 1993).

Future research can be also very useful in further developing the concepts which have emerged in this thesis. Research mainly focusing on the person- and task-focused trust can help to provide further depth and insight into these concepts. Moreover, it would be very interesting to investigate the implications of such a distinction on other trust-related matters. For example, some questions to consider can be: 'is the fragmentation in trust definitions partly due to this distinction?'; 'what are the implications of such a distinction for trust-building initiatives?'; 'does person-focused trust encompass deeper levels of trust compared to task-focused trust', or 'does person-focused trust subsume task-focused trust, do two concepts overlap, or are they completely distinct'. Another concept introduced in this thesis, leap of distrust, can also benefit from further articulation. It can also be compared to similar concepts such as leap of trust suggest by Möllering (2001, 2006).

Similarly, further research on the relationship between trust and distrust is needed. The research findings demonstrates the distinction between trust and distrust, but also suggest a strong association between trust and distrust. Future research needs to further explore this association and its implications for the trust and distrust relationship. This thesis offers a starting point by

demonstrating the similarities and differences between the natures and the factors influencing trust and distrust.

Arguably, where the future research is most required is linked to culture-related matters. With the factor 'Culture congruence' emerging as one of the factors influencing trust development, and similar issues being identified in the SR, as well as taking into consideration the increasing importance given to culture in trust (e.g. Saunders et al., 2010) or distrust research (e.g. Lewicki et al., 2006), I carried out further research on cultural similarity/difference and trust/distrust. This focus, however, can be broadened and extended to investigate the relationship between trust/distrust and culture in more general terms.

Further consideration needs to be given to the conceptualisation of culture. Whilst conducting the SR, I followed a similar conceptualisation of culture to the dominant view in the literature as national culture. As I discussed later, such a conceptualisation of culture is not representative of the highly diverse workforce employed at multinational consulting companies. A similar SR can be conducted with a broader conceptualisation of culture as defined in Chapter 10. Future research should also investigate whether traditional elements of culture, nationality and/or ethnicity, sufficiently represent culture in every context. Such cultural proxies appear not to capture the richness and complexity of culture in multinational organisational settings with a highly diverse employee structure. Therefore, it is crucial for future research to adopt a more dynamic conceptualisation and more representative operationalisations of culture. One way forward to achieve such a conceptualisation and operationalisation was introduced by Chao and Moon (2005) and was further extended in this thesis. However, further investigation of how this conceptualisation can be utilised in organisational studies has a vital importance.

In conclusion, this thesis expands the extant knowledge on trust by elaborating on the factors influencing trust. Firstly, insight into the constituent elements of trust is offered, which extends

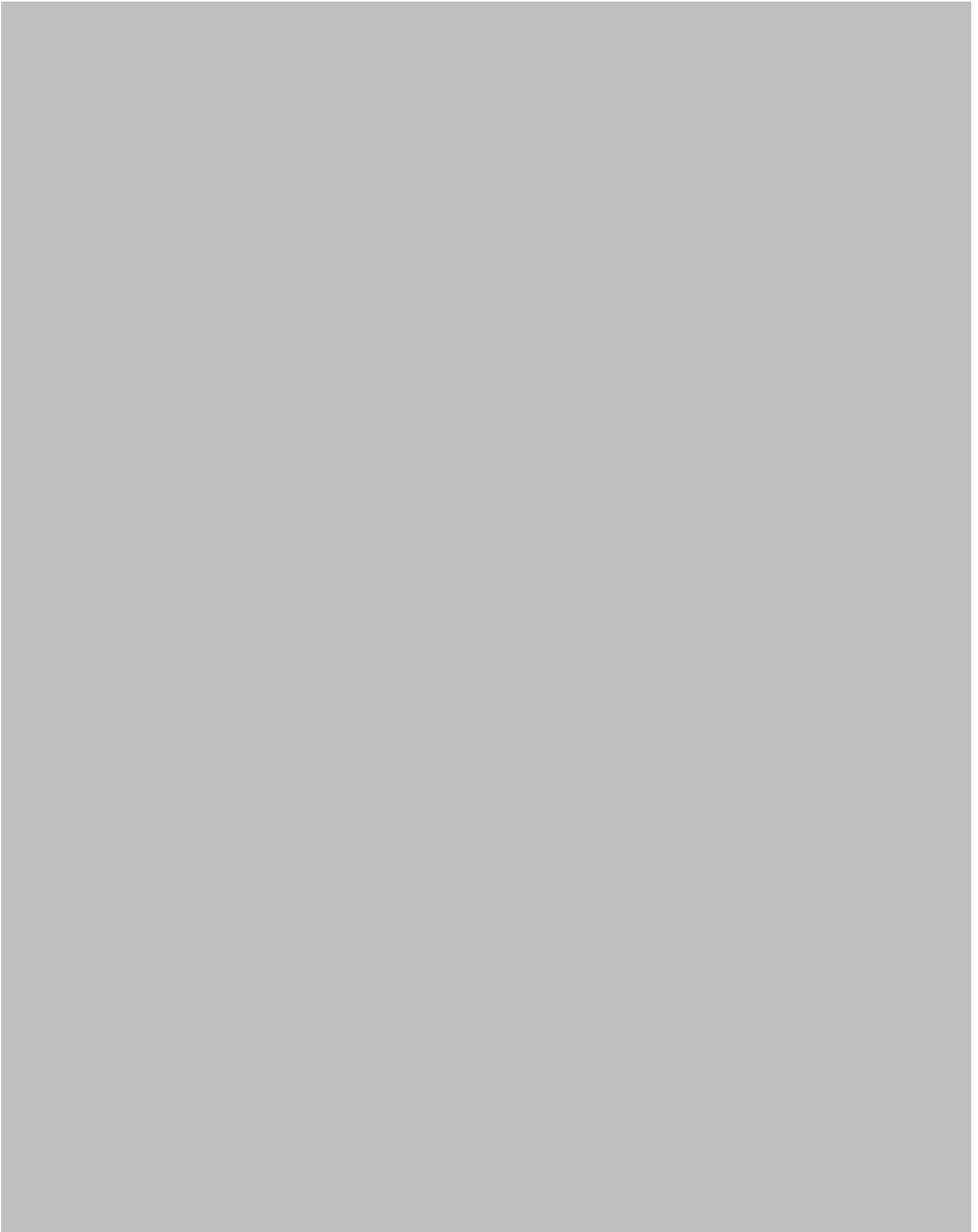
Mayer et al.'s (1995) trustworthiness dimensions and demonstrates that factors influencing trust are not limited to trustworthiness. The findings offer further contribution to what trust is by drawing attention to the distinct person- and task-focused natures of trust and their implications for trust research.

Secondly, the investigation of the factors influencing distrust offers insight into an area where the current knowledge is highly limited. Thirdly, the thesis further questions the long-standing dependent status of distrust, by exploring the independent relationship between trust and distrust. The research findings suggest trust and distrust to be separate but highly associated constructs, challenging the traditional treatment of distrust as the opposite of trust but also warns against ignoring the association between the constructs.

Lastly, the thesis offers insight into the relationship between culture similarity/difference and trust and distrust, firstly by a systematic review of the literature, reporting the current state of knowledge, and secondly through insight gained from empirical research. Insights into the complex conceptualisation of culture are presented, findings offering empirical support to Chao and Moon's (2005) metatheoretical model and further expanding it. Finally, the implications of the findings for future research are discussed.

Within this thesis I focused on the participants, who as active practitioners in real world events, are the actual meaning makers. Building on the participants' stories, complex narratives of personal experiences and worldviews, with this thesis I offer a window into their social worlds. Consequently, the findings reflect the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they place on events concerning trust, distrust, and culture. Overall, I endeavoured to offer credible, reliable, and well-founded knowledge that will advance the practice, both in academia and practitioners worlds.

## **APPENDICES**



## **Appendix B – Participant information sheet**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study, conducted as a part of my doctoral thesis at the University of Birmingham. This document provides you with key relevant information about the research project, to help you decide whether you would like to participate in the study. Please feel free to ask any questions if you require further information.

### **What is the research about?**

This research is about understanding trust and distrust in cross-cultural organisational settings. This is an important topic for organisations and employees such as yourself, because trust is increasingly recognised as a strategic, relational asset and a vital element in well-functioning organisations. With the accumulating evidence of the benefits of trust for organisations, it has been acknowledged as a foundational factor for achieving organisational success. Therefore, understanding organisational trust has become more important than ever.

The aim of this study is to examine trust and distrust dynamics among organisational members and to learn from you and others' real-life experiences. Understanding first-hand accounts of those who are in the best position to provide them will help to develop more representative trust theories, that will benefit organisations and people who work in them. The findings will be compared across different cultural groups in order to understand culture's influence on trust.

### **What does participation involve?**

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to answer questions related to your previous experiences, regarding what you perceive to be significant in terms of trust and/or distrust development in organisations. Your answers will be used to identify and better understand the sources of trust and distrust. Each interview is expected to last around one hour. With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed in order to facilitate the analysis. You will have the opportunity to view a summary of the findings of the completed study.

### **Is participation voluntary and can I change my mind?**

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you feel uncomfortable in any way, at any time during the interview session, you have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview. If you decide to withdraw at any time in the future, your data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed. If you wish to withdraw, you should do so before October 2016 when the data analysis process will start and all data will be synthesised.

### **What will happen to the information I provide?**

The information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential. It will be used only for research purposes and will be accessed only by the researchers involved in this research. The researchers who will have access to the data are myself, Neve Isaeva, Prof. Mark Saunders and Dr. Alex Bristow. As a participant, the information you provide will be stored anonymously under acronyms not traceable back to you. However, until October 2016, a separate document will be kept that links the participant's codes to the participants initials in order to identify your data in case you decide to withdraw in the future before the deadline. This document will be only accessible by me and will be destroyed when withdrawal deadline is reached. The organisation you work for will be kept anonymous at any time.



## Appendix C – Consent form

### Data processing statement

This information is being collected as part of a research project concerned with the trust and distrust in organisational settings by Neve Isaeva at the University of Birmingham in collaboration with Prof. Mark Saunders (University of Birmingham) and Dr. Alexandra Bristow (University of Surrey). The information which you supply and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be only accessed by the authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the lead researcher, Neve Isaeva, and only be used for research purposes. By supplying this information, you are consenting to your information to be stored for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published. The data will be preserved and accessible for research purposes for ten years.

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### Consent for participation in the study

- I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information leaflet for the study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily.

- I understand that if I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. If I withdraw, my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed. I understand that if I decide to withdraw at any time in the future, I should do so before 31 September 2016.

- I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded, subsequently transcribed, and will be stored anonymously under acronyms not traceable back to me. I understand that until 31 September 2016, a separate document will be kept that links my responses to my initials in order to identify my data in case I decide to withdraw. I understand that this document will be only accessible by the lead researcher and will be destroyed when withdrawal deadline is reached.

- I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name or the name of the organisation I work for in any research pieces that use the information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant will remain secure. I understand that my personal data will be processed only for research purposes as explained above, as well as in the information sheet, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

- I have been given a copy of this consent form.

- Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of the researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D – Interview schedule

Thank you very much for agreeing on participating in this interview. The purpose of this interview is to learn from your experiences about trust and distrust in cross-cultural organisational settings. Your accounts of these issues will help to better understand trust and distrust dynamics among organisational members. Hopefully, you will find this discussion helpful in identifying strategies for building and strengthening trust relationships with other members in your organisation.

I would like to record the interview in order to ensure accuracy for better analysis of the data and understanding of the information you provide. Above all, I would like to assure you that nothing that you say will be attributed to you personally and there will be no way of identifying you or the organisation you work for in any publication that results from these interviews. You will receive a copy of any publications upon its completion.

The interview is expected to last about an hour. Before starting asking questions, I would like to ensure that you have no further questions regarding the interview or the interview process.

I have here a copy of an information sheet about the project, which I would like to go through with you. Before we start. Is that OK?

Finally, please can I check that you are happy to proceed with the research? [If they say yes, talk through the consent form and ask them to sign it]

### Interview Questions

**CRITICAL CASE 1:** Think of an event in the past when you felt especially trusting of another member in the organisation you are or were working for at that time. That person can be a supervisor, subordinate, or a colleague and you do not need to name them. Please tell me about it.

Probes:

- What happened?
- How it happened?
- Under what circumstances the incident took place?
- Who was involved? (No names should be provided) Was that person a colleague, supervisor, subordinate?
- What makes this incident particularly significant?
- How did it make you feel? Could you tell me why you felt the way you did at the time?
- What did this event mean to you?
- Before this event, did you feel trusting (to some extent) towards that person? (If 1 is the lowest and 9 is the greatest, what number would best describe the feeling of trust you felt towards that person before and after the incident?)
- Does this person share a similar cultural background with you?
- Does this similarity/difference play any role in the trust relationship between you two?

**CRITICAL CASE 2:** Now that you have described an occasion when you felt especially trusting, please think of another event in the past when you felt especially distrusting of another member in the organisation you are or were working for at that time. That person can be a supervisor, subordinate, or a colleague and you do not need to name them. Please tell me about it.

Probes:

- What happened?
- How it happened?
- Under what circumstances the incident took place?
- Who was involved? (No names should be provided) Was that person a colleague, supervisor, subordinate?
- What makes this incident particularly significant?
- How did it make you feel?
- Could you tell me why you felt the way you did at the time?
- What did this event mean to you?
- Before this event, did you feel distrusting (to some extent) towards that person? (If 1 is the lowest and 9 is the greatest, what number would best describe the feeling of distrust you felt towards that person before and after the incident?)
- Does this person share a similar cultural background with you?
- Does this similarity/difference play any role in the distrust relationship between you two?

CRITICAL CASE 3: Think of someone from your current or previous organisation that you really trust. As before you do not need to name them.

Questions and probes:

- Tell me, how have you come to know you can trust this person?
- How did you realise that you can trust him/her? Did he/she do something particular for earning your trust?
- Could you describe me which characteristics or behaviours of this person you find trustworthy?
- Does this person share a similar cultural background with you?
- Does this similarity/difference play any role in the trust relationship?

CRITICAL CASE 4: Now that you described someone you really trust, please think of someone else from your current or previous organisation that you really distrust. As before you do not need to name them.

Probes:

- Tell me, how have you come to know you distrust this person?
- How did you realise that you distrust him/her? Did he/she do something particular for earning your distrust?
- Could you describe me which characteristics or behaviours of this person you find distrustworthy?
- Does this person share a similar cultural background with you?
- Does this similarity/difference play any role in finding this distrust relationship?

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Could you tell me a little bit about your cultural background? (Tell the participant to reflect on their understanding of what constitutes culture)

Could you tell me how old you are and total years of work experience?

Before ending this interview, is there anything else you would like to tell me about any of the issues we discussed?

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview. Could you please specify if you would like to receive a copy of the transcript of this interview?

## Appendix E – Code dictionary: Definitions of the factors discovered

Table 1 - Definitions of the factors influencing trust and trust development

Factor	Definition
<b>Factors influencing trust</b>	
<b>Trustee-associated Ability</b>	
Cleverness	Trustee's intelligence
Competence/Ability/Capability	Trustee's competence, ability, or capability
Confidence	Trustee's confidence in themselves or their abilities
Hard-working	Trustee's ability and commitment to work, working hard with perseverance and diligence
Knowledgeability	Trustee's knowledgeability about their job
Technical help	Trustee's ability to help or support in job or task- associated matters
<b>Benevolence</b>	
Altruistic motivation/ unselfish behaviour	Trustee's demonstration of altruistic and/or selfless concern
Approachability	Trustee's accessibility and ease of approach
Availability	Trustee's making themselves available for the trustor when needed
Caring	Trustee's displaying concern and kindness
Friendly, nice, kind, personable	Trustee's characteristics such as being friendly, nice, kind, and personable
Goodness	Trustor's perceiving the trustee as a good person
Helping/supporting	Trustee's willingness to provide help or support to the trustor and encouragement of trustor's personal and professional development, usually by providing career support
Humour/fun	Trustee's sense of humour and ability to have fun
Loyalty	Trustee's being loyal or faithful
Mature	Trustee's maturity and responsible character
Modesty	Trustee's modesty and humbleness
Non-judgemental	Trustee's non-judgemental personality
Positive attitude	Trustee's demonstration of positive attitude and behaviour.
Understanding	Trustee's demonstration of understanding of the trustor's (and others') feelings and situations, showing sympathy and empathy

<b>integrity</b>	
Consistency	Trustee's consistency in their behaviours
Discreetness	Trustee's discreetness, being careful with things said and done
Genuineness	Trustee's genuineness, sincerity, and authenticity
Fairness	Trustee's fair, just, and impartial treatment and behaviour of others
Honesty	Trustee's honesty and truthfulness
Integrity	Trustee's integrity, high ethics, and moral principles
Keeping confidentiality	Trustee's keeping the information told them confidential, private, and secret
Non-opportunistic behaviour	Trustee's not taking advantage of the circumstances or others
Openness	Trustee's being open about themselves and not being involved in secrecy
Promise fulfilment	Trustee's keeping their promises
Reliability	Trustee's quality of being reliable or dependable
Transparency	Trustee's quality of being transparent
<b>Trustor-associated</b>	
Trustor's propensity	Trustor's willingness or tendency to trust others
Feeling/Instinct/ Intuition	Trustor's feeling, gut feeling, instinct, or intuition governing the tendency to trust
<b>Factors influencing trust development</b>	
Collective trust	Collective agreement of the other organisational members on the trustworthiness of the trustee
Communication: - Body language	Trustee's non-verbal communication of positive attitudes and feelings
- Having open and honest conversations	Trustor's having open and honest conversations with the trustee
- Listening	Trustee's willingness to listen
- Opening up	Trustee's opening up with personal or confidential information
Cooperation/ collaboration	Trustee's demonstration of cooperation and collaboration and willingness to work together
Cultural congruence	Shared similar culture between the trustor and the trustee
Relationship	Building closer relationships, connections, or bonds
Trust Reciprocity	Trustee's demonstration of trust towards the trustor

Table 2 – Definitions of the factors influencing distrust and distrust development

Factor	Definition
<b>Factors influencing distrust</b>	
<b>Distrustee-associated</b>	
<b>Ability-associated</b>	
Lack of Competence/ Ability/Capability	Distrustee’s lack of competence, ability, or capability
Lack of Confidence/ Insecure	Distrustee’s lack of confidence in themselves or their abilities, insecurity
Lack of Knowledgeability	Distrustee’s lack of knowledgeability about their job
Lazy	Distrustee’s unwillingness to work, lack of ability to work hard, and demonstration of laziness, aversion to work
<b>Benevolence-associated</b>	
Arrogance/ conceitedness	Distrustee’s arrogance or conceited character and lack of modesty and humbleness
Aggressiveness/ temperamental	Distrustee’s aggressive character or behaviour and displaying mood swings
Condescending behaviour	Distrustee’s behaving condescendingly and showing patronising superiority
Dictatorial behaviour	Distrustee’s behaving in autocratic and dictatorial way or trying to impose their way
Immature	Distrustee’s immaturity and irresponsible character
Lack of help/support	Distrustee’s unwillingness to provide help or support to the distruster and their career progression
Lack of understanding	Distrustee’s lack of understanding of the distruster’s (and others’) feelings and situations, lack of sympathy and empathy
Not caring	Distrustee’s not showing concern and care
Lack of goodness	Distrustee’s not being a good person
Rude, not nice, or friendly	Distrustee’s characteristics such as being rude or not being nice or Friendly
Self-interested behaviour	Distrustee’s concern in their own self-interests
Unapproachability	Distrustee’s inaccessibility and unapproachability
Unavailability	Distrustee’s being unavailable for the distruster when needed
Undermine one’s authority	Distrustee’s undermining and disregarding the distruster’s authority

Unreceptivity	Distrustee's unreceptiveness towards new ideas or suggestions
<b>Integrity-associated</b> Blaming others for failure	Distrustee's blaming others unfairly for failures
Breaking confidentiality	Distrustee's disclosing the information shared with them in confidence
Claiming ownership of somebody else's work	Distrustee's claiming ownership of the distruster's work
Closeness/Not open	Distrustee's being closed off and being involved in secrecy
Deception	Distrustee's partaking in deceptive behaviour
Discrimination/favouritism	Distrustee's demonstration of favouritism and discrimination
Dishonesty	Distrustee's lack of honesty and truthfulness, lying
Disingenuousness	Distrustee's lack of demonstration of genuinity, sincerity, and authenticity
Disrespectful behaviour	Distrustee's behaving disrespectfully, inappropriate for the work context
Duplicity	Distrustee's speaking and behaving in different ways to different people concerning the same matter
Falseness	Distrustee's falseness
Going behind one's back	Distrustee's saying or doing something in secrecy in matters concerning the distruster
Harmful behaviour	Distrustee's causing harm to the distruster
Inconsistency	Distrustee's inconsistency in their behaviours
Lack of or questionable integrity	Distrustee's lack of and questionable integrity, ethics, and morals
Lack of transparency	Distrustee's lack of quality in being transparent
Manipulativeness	Distrustee's manipulating others or circumstances for their own advantage
Not fulfilling their agreement	Distrustee's not fulfilling what is previously agreed upon
Opportunistic behaviour	Distrustee's taking advantage of the circumstances or others without any regard to them
Overambitiousness	Distrustee's ambitious character or behaviour to an extent of harming others
Politics	Distrustee's partaking in games for power, involving in politics
Promise breaking	Distrustee's not keeping their promises

Unfairness	Distrustee's unfair and unjust treatment and behaviour
Unreliability	Distrustee's lack of quality of being reliable or dependable
<b>Distrustor associated</b>	
Distrustor's propensity	Distrustor's tendency to distrust others
Feeling/Instinct/ Intuition	Distrustor's feeling, gut feeling, instinct or intuition governing the tendency to distrust
<b>Factors influencing distrust development</b>	
Collective distrust	Collective agreement of the other organisational members on the distrustworthiness of the distrustee
Problematic Communication: - Body language	Distrustee's non-verbal communication and cues warranting distrust, having a closed body language, avoiding eye contact, etc,
- Lack of communication	Not communicating
- Not listening	Distrustee's unwillingness or failure to listen
- Not opening up	Distrustee's unwillingness for opening up with personal or confidential information
Problematic cooperation/ collaboration	Distrustee's unwillingness and failure to work together, cooperate, or collaborate
Problematic relationship	Failing to build any kind of relationships and experiencing problems

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Note: The citations with (\*) sign refer to the publications included in the SR.

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