DECLARATION

I declare that this research thesis is my own work. It is being submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of the West of England, Bristol, United Kingdom.

____________________
Nadine Riad Tchelebi

____________________
Date
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to take the opportunity to express my boundless gratitude to several people without whom I would not have been able to construct this research.

I was lucky enough to have a highly knowledgeable and experienced supervisory team. I thank Dr. Peter Simpson, Dr. Robert French and Dr. Hugo Gaggiotti for supporting me beyond expectations and together providing a ‘far-more-than-good-enough’ container for my anxieties. Peter has devoted his time and commitment to my progress, and I always felt he did so with genuineness and faith in my abilities.

I am very grateful that Robert has managed throughout the years to put up with my ‘one-way-street’ view of reality and has in fact succeeded in transforming it into something that is beginning to look more like the branching of a cauliflower. He was always willing to balance my impatience with his own infinite patience and to perceive my bombardment of questioning as a sign of hunger for knowledge rather than the irritating act of nagging.

I also want to acknowledge my friend Jörg Aschemann’s help for enabling me to see from ‘the other side’ aspects of our shared experience that I would not have considered otherwise. Bafflement and ‘aha-moments’ initiated by him eventually led me to understand better what I thought I already knew too well.

Thanks are also devoted to our university Chaplain Ian Yemm, who showed great interest in my research endeavour and was more than happy to help me gain access to the convent. He genuinely believed in my ‘cause’.

I was sincerely touched by the unconditional trust and love with which I was welcomed with open arms into the convent community and I am infinitely grateful for it. The Sisters, all 22 of them, have enabled me to savour an unforgettable, extremely rare, and life-changing experience. They have taken a high risk by granting me access into the midst of their lives and I will always be deeply indebted to them for it. Without their commitment to not only preaching but also living their way of life and leading by example, the theoretical advancements of this research would not have materialised.

My final thanks go to my very good friend Charlotte Mackriell, who has, especially during the last six months of the completion of my thesis, found and remained in the perfect radius around me – distant enough to be safe from my mood swings but yet close enough to help me get through them and accomplish my goal.

Thank you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction  
1.1. The Research Aims and Objectives – Lighthouse of the Thesis  
1.2. Theoretical Frameworks: Why Psychoanalysis?  
1.3. Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2: ‘Us versus Them’ – Above & Underneath the Surface  
2.1. Scenes of ‘Us versus Them’  
2.2. Theoretical Frameworks that Dominate the Literature  
2.3. The Need to Have Enemies – Innate to Human Nature  
2.4. Origins of ‘Us versus Them’  
2.5. ‘Us versus Them’ and the Need for Belonging and Not Belonging  
2.6. Drawing in Social Psychology Theory  
2.7. The Social Construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ Groups  
2.8. ‘Us versus Them’ – Social Construct or Innate Need?  
2.9. Psychoanalysis – Taking ‘Us versus Them’ underneath the ‘Surface’  
2.9.1. Splitting ‘Good’ from ‘Bad’  
2.9.2. Linking back to ‘Us versus Them’  
2.9.3. Kleinian Positions  
2.9.4. Insights from the Intrapersonal Perspective for Groups  
2.10. Own Theoretical Framework and Gaps in the Body of Knowledge

Chapter 3: Research Design and Philosophy  
3.1. Overall Research Design  
3.2. Case Study 1: “FutureCo”  
3.2.1. The Organisation and My Role  
3.2.2. Data Collection Methods: Memoirs and Unstructured Interview  
3.2.3. Ethical Concerns  
3.3. Case Study 2: “The Children’s Charities”  
3.3.1. The Charities and My Role  
3.3.2. Data Collection Methods: Observations, Semi-structured Interviews and the SPM  
3.3.3. Ethical Concerns  
3.4. Case Study 3: "The Convent"  
3.4.1. The Convent and My Role  
3.4.2. Data Collection Methods: Participant Observation and the SPM  
3.4.3. Ethical Concerns  
3.5. Ethnography  
3.5.1 The Underlying Research Approach  
3.5.2. Real Proof? Transparency, Validity and Other Concerns  
3.5.3. My Own View on Reality  
3.6. Data Analysis
3.6.1. **Strategies for Data Analysis**  p. 59
3.6.2. **Chang's Analysis and Interpretation Strategy**  p. 60

Chapter 4: Case Study 1 Data Presentation & Preliminary Analysis  p. 64
4.1. Memoires from FutureCo – Retracing 'Us' versus 'Them'  p. 65
4.2. Artefacts of 'Us' and 'Them': Setting the Scene  p. 73
4.3. Task-related and Physical Divisions between 'Us' and 'Them'  p. 74
4.4. Trade Unionism: 'Us' together against 'Them'  p. 75
4.5. Management's Unwritten Rules: Invisible Control  p. 77
4.6. Consequences on the Relationship between 'Us' and 'Them'  p. 80
4.6.1. The Distorted Perception of Self and Other  p. 80
4.6.2. 'Us versus Them': Animosity  p. 83

Chapter 5: Case Study 2 Data Presentation & Preliminary Analysis  p. 85
5.1. The Relationship between the Fun Trust and the Play Trust  p. 85
5.2. Risk Taking – Factors both Organisations face  p. 87
5.2.1. Scarcity of Resources  p. 87
5.2.2. Threatened Sense of Identity  p. 88
5.2.3. Jeopardising Group Cohesion as Container  p. 90
5.2.4. Lack of Information and Uncertainty  p. 91
5.3. Internal Traces of 'Us versus Them'  p. 92
5.3.1. The Horizontal Division between Strategy and Operations  p. 93
5.3.2. The Vertical Division between Fundraising and Practitioners  p. 94
5.3.3. Findings of the Social Photo Matrix  p. 96
5.4. Chapter Summary  p. 98

Chapter 6: Case Study 3 Data Presentation and Analysis  p. 101
6.1. My Welcoming and First Impressions  p. 102
6.2. The Significance of Routine and Structure  p. 106
6.3. Strong Individualism within Group Life  p. 110
6.4. At one with Self and Group  p. 115
6.5. The Role of the 'Other'  p. 117
6.6. Traces of Conflict (Really?)  p. 119
6.7. Contributions from the Social Photo Matrix  p. 121
6.7.1. The Sisters’ Acknowledgement of being Part of a bigger Whole  p. 122
6.7.2. The Sisters’ Resourcefulness  p. 122
6.7.3. The Sisters’ Perception of Circularity
   between good and bad  p. 123
6.9. Chapter Summary  p. 126

Chapter 7: Case Study 3 Aftermath – Matching Theory to Practice  p. 129
7.1. The Context of the Group Setting  p. 131
7.2. Bion’s Groupishness as Paradox  p. 133
7.2.1. *Meness and Oneness as Opposites*  p. 133
7.2.2. *The Tension between Meness and Oneness* p. 135
7.2.3. Turquet’s Concept of Individual Members as Equilibrium p. 138
7.2.4. Affiliation to the Convent Experience p. 140

7.3. Unity as an Alternative to Oneness p. 141
7.3.1. Affiliation to the Convent Experience p. 144
7.3.2. Oneness as Basic-Assumption Mentality and Unity as Work Group Mentality p. 146
7.3.3. The Valency of Oneness? P. 150
7.3.4. Application of Key Modes of Interaction (KiD, KiF/F, KiP) p. 150
7.3.5. Affiliation to the Convent Experience p. 152
7.3.6. The ‘Good’ and the ‘Bad’? p. 153
7.4. Chapter Summary p. 155

Chapter 8: A Second Look – Readdressing and Redressing Case Studies 1 & 2 through Oneness p. 156
8.1. The Hegemonic Power of Oneness at FutureCo p. 156
8.2. Oneness as Defence at the Fun Trust p. 160

Chapter 9: Discussion – the Lighthouse within Sight p. 163
9.1. ‘Us versus Them’ at FutureCo p. 163
9.2. ‘Us versus Them’ at the Children’s Charities p. 164
9.2.1. The Stranger as Enemy p. 166
9.3. ‘Us versus Them’ in the Convent p. 167
9.4. Parallels to Kleinian Positions p. 169
9.4.1. The Oscillation between Kleinian Positions p. 173
9.5. Is the Enemy ‘Real’? p. 174
9.6. Summary of Findings p. 177

Chapter 10: Conclusions – Throwing Anchor p. 178
10.1. Answering the Research Questions p. 178
10.2. Contributions to the Body of Knowledge p. 181
10.3. My Personal Journey p. 183
10.4. Limitations of this Research p. 185
10.4.1. An Assembly of Singletons as ‘No’ Group? p. 185
10.4.2. Related Concepts not Considered p. 186
10.4.3. The Impact of my own Dualistic Thinking p. 187
10.5. What New Questions have Emerged? p. 190
10.5.1. Applicability of the Unity Group to Other Real-Life Settings p. 190
10.5.2. Self and Other as a Western Construct? P. 191
10.5.3. Black’s Contemplative Position – an Alternative p. 192
10.6. Final Words p. 195

References p. 196
### TABLE OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The two components of this research</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The world of 'Us versus Them'</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Theoretical frameworks related to 'Us versus Them'</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Own theoretical framework</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The two components of this research</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Diagram of case studies and applied methods</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Personal research philosophy</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Photograph of the FutureCo compound</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Example SPM photo of family setting (a)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Example SPM photo of family setting (b)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Example SPM photo of office environment (a)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Example SPM photo of office environment (b)</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My weekly timetable</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The community’s weekly timetable</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Example SPM photo for theme 6.7.1.</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Example SPM photo for theme 6.7.2.</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Example SPM photo for theme 6.7.3.</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Diagram of new theoretical framework</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Diagram of tension</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Diagram of tension creating forces</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Diagram showing the links between referenced authors</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Diagram showing the position of Unity</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Diagram showing the ‘space’ of I.M.</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Diagram aligning group constellations to mentalities</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Diagram of Key Modes of Interaction</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Diagram positioning the three case studies in the continuum</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Diagram aligning ‘Us versus Them’ to group constellations</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Aligning the Paranoid-Schizoid &amp; Depressive Positions to the group constellations</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Painting depicting the Sisters praying</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Integrating the contemplative position</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE OF APPENDICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Full theoretical discussion of the Social Photo Matrix</td>
<td>p. 219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Application letters to the convent</td>
<td>p. 233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>Extracts from coding procedure</td>
<td>p. 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Full interview transcript of case study 1</td>
<td>p. 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Table of services of the Fun Trust &amp; the Play Trust</td>
<td>p. 248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
<td>Two examples of the SPM session for case study 2 with free associations</td>
<td>p. 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
<td>Intercessions for Christian Unity</td>
<td>p. 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 8</td>
<td>Two examples of SPM session 1 for case study 3 with free associations</td>
<td>p. 252</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BaD = Basic-assumption mentality Dependency
BaF/F = Basic-assumption mentality Fight/Flight
BaM = Basic-assumption mentality Meness
BaO = Basic-assumption mentality Oneness
BaP = Basic-assumption mentality Pairing
I.M. = Individual Member
KID = Key Mode of Interaction Dependency
KF/F = Key Mode of Interaction Fight/Flight
KIP = Key Mode of Interaction Pairing
M.I. = Membership Individual
S. = Singleton
SPM = Social Photo Matrix
Chapter 1: Introduction

When applying for my Ph.D. bursary, my tireless curiosity for studying the 'Us' versus 'Them' mentality in organisations seemed to have been driven by a very concise and particular experience: the participant observation phase of my Bachelor dissertation in a multinational car manufacturer; the same organisation in which I was trained for three years prior to commencing my Bachelor degree. Despite focusing on intragroup dynamics at that time, I was struck by the obvious enmity between task groups that led to the organisation's segmentation into 'opposing camps'. Much of the discourse I observed on a daily basis directed at other organisational members seemed to show a repetitive pattern: “them over there”, “them up there”, or, “them down there”. It appeared to me as though the unity of the organisation portrayed to the outside world – through the slogan “Wir bei FutureCo” (Us at FutureCo) - was not reflected internally. Furthermore I came under the impression that this organisational ‘falling apart’ led to a great amount of mistrust and resentment between task groups and that this mistrust in turn hampered the organisation’s ability to satisfy its members’ need for identity and belonging as a result of a hostile climate for social relationships.

But not only did I make such observations during my dissertation research. While training in the same plant, I had plenty of opportunities to witness the appearance, conduct and consequences of ‘Us versus Them’ thinking both, from a distance and through personal involvement, and I will share some of these moments via memories in the first case study. I learnt to mourn the canyons such dichotomised thinking created, the segregation and separation, accompanied by a degree of vanishing understanding and misperception for each other’s differences and commonalities, and lastly the complete abandonment of the common goal: the organisational mission.

Instead of a sense of ‘pulling together’, a ‘magnetism’ throughout the manpower due to shared interest in the success of the organisation, and the recognition, therefore, that working together in unity would lead to that success, I experienced the compromising of human well-being in a workplace, where ‘enemy-thinking’ and ‘blame-culture’ had long demolished the spirit of creating something together.

Following on from this experience, I was beginning to enquire into the origins and true motives behind this group dynamic, which seemed to solidify itself in front of me as an urge to differentiate oneself from the Other and simultaneously ‘shine in a better light’ than that Other; the more so as I became more and more aware of the same social
phenomenon among other groups of belonging - students, colleagues, family members, ethnicities and countries at large, only to mention a few.

With this awareness of my own motivation in mind, I started my research journey. It was not until the end of the first year of my studies that I began to ponder further upon, maybe more unconscious motives that fired my interest in this topic. I began to explore how my own life history could be related to my Ph.D. work. The first emotion that caught my attention was my predominant dislike for ethnocentrism. Being of Middle-Eastern origin (the Orient) and having some level of insight into that culture as a 'native' in the scientific sense of the word, but on the other hand having been born and brought up in Germany (the Oxidant), I have witnessed in both settings the 'brick walls' between the 'Us' and 'Them' that ethnocentrism can build among people. Fuelled by a lack of understanding for one another, and more importantly, the failure to acknowledge this lack of understanding, this need to feel superior against some form of Other is, to my mind, a very different embodiment of the very same underlying group dynamic as I have witnessed in the car manufacturer. Now in my early years of adulthood, I am beginning to grasp with great disappointment, the impossibility of both sides ever understanding that we are mistakenly taking our own, subjective frames of references for objective truths. This typically compels us to judge the Other, the 'different from Me' as being 'wrong'.

I have come to believe myself to be in some kind of 'privileged' position, having gotten to know from 'the inside', as a member of two cultures, the Orient and the Oxidant. Whether this position is truly privileged is questionable, however, as it more likely describes a state of 'sitting between two stools'. Volkan, for example, comments that such a position can provoke an inner struggle: "If the ambivalence arises because the individual has identified with more than one ethnic or cultural group, it may become an
issue in itself. When one is simultaneously invested in the relations of more than one
group, his relations and identifications with other adult groups can become
complicated, and his sense of self may suffer.” (1988, p. 50).

Not only does my multi-cultural background provide a possible insight into my ‘Us
versus Them’ interest, but I could also argue to be the embodiment of this
manifestation myself – I have been created by ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. My mother’s family and
my father’s family have been in deep animosity with each other since two months
before my birth, when my father passed away. They have not exchanged a single word
with each other in more than 30 years - I am the only link between these two
frontiers. Experiencing since the very first day of my life (or earlier) this very dramatic
manifestation of ‘Us versus Them’, the strength of boundaries, the depth of canyons it
created, and having to straddle these boundaries without being caught up in either
side, trying to satisfy my need for identification and belonging from both sides, might
in fact have been the strongest, yet unconscious, drive behind my Ph.D. endeavour.

Reflecting on my experiences of friendship and friendship groups in Kindergarten and
school years, I might have brought to my own awareness yet another personal
motivation. I have witnessed ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics in manifestations of
scapegoating, bullying and the formation of ‘in-’ and ‘outgroups’ first hand. This may
have been due to my noticeably Arabic appearance in comparison to the other
children, my dominant and ‘loud mouthed’ personality, or other reasons I am not
aware of.

Consequently, on a number of occasions, I have been someone who is ‘sitting on the
fence’: between the Orient and the Oxidant, my mother’s family and my father’s
family, and childhood friendship groups. Occupying such boundary position is ‘a
dangerous place’, for one is neither belonging nor not belonging, so that one could be
included in either ‘in-’ or ‘outgroup’ or just as likely as one might suddenly be expelled
from it (Shapiro, 1997).

Being so occupied with the dynamics surrounding the creation of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’
groups, I started to detect them more and more frequently. When travelling by coach
on the motorway, I noticed for the first time with great interest and attention, how
coach drivers enthusiastically greeted each other, but not other motorists. There was a
certain ‘technique’ to it. This observation also reminded me of my own behaviour when
riding my motorcycle. What ‘Us bikers’ usually do is greet each other with a nod of the
head - diagonally to the right with a twist of the neck. In both examples, there seems to be an intense feeling of camaraderie. These expressions of ‘You and Me equals Us’ may vaporise as fast as they emerge, but in these fractions of time they are the strongest bond between the individuals involved. It is fascinating and bizarre. For that moment, it does not matter who the other person is: age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religious belief, appearance do not matter; all that counts is that ‘You are like Me’, because you drive a coach or ride a motorbike. There seems to be a common urge indeed to define who we are, and who we are not, with regards to Others.

Why then, have I decided to commit myself to three years of intense research and reflection on the underlying dynamic of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality that is observable in manifestations such as ethnocentrism, scapegoating and stereotyping alike? Was I hoping to heal the world? Maybe it was for purely egotistic reasons, so that fence-sitters like me, who are different everywhere and do not truly belong anywhere, find it easier to satisfy their need for identification.

I am myself still unsure about the ‘true’ motives behind my wish for exploration. However, I am aware of the importance of expressing here openly my perspective on the phenomenon I am investigating. I need to present myself as author and lay open my personal relationship to this study so as to offer the reader insight into my life experience and the patterns of thinking that I bring to this research. After all, I will not claim to present an unbiased explanation of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’ dynamics: my, now partly conscious, antipathy to the literature and cases forthcoming might have inclined me to see ‘Us versus Them’ mentalities in social settings where others conclude they are not present.

This three year project has intensely changed my way of thinking and in turn, this has influenced my writing. I feel that any journey into understanding human nature is also a journey into understanding oneself, for the world is not perceivable other than through one’s own Self in relation to Other (Chang, 2008). As Louis puts it: "I am an instrument of my inquiry: and the inquiry is inseparable from who I am.” (1991, p. 365). In writing up my thesis, I intend to tell my story in a manner that draws the reader "into a collective experience” (Butler, 1997, p. 928), thereby not only emphasising my key findings, but also the process of my work; those Eureka moments just as much as those that led me into great confusion.
Throughout this process, I am constantly and continuously accompanied by the doubt that everything I so passionately and rigorously observe, record, analyse, scrutinise and report, may at the end of the day, only exist in my own head.

1.1. **Research Interest and Objectives – Lighthouse for the Thesis**

This research has been undertaken in order to address two underlying key interests. Understanding better the origins and consequences of the so called ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is one of them. Especially the notion of ‘versus’, sometimes hidden between the ‘Us’ and the ‘Them’ has caught my attention, as the psychoanalytic literature suggests that this ‘versus’ expresses an innate, biological human need to have enemies for the sake of a healthy development of self-identity (see for example Barash, 1991; Duek, 2009; Erlich, 2001; Gold, 2010; Robins and Post, 1997; Shapiro, 1997; Volkan, 1988). The first research objective is therefore divided into three questions:

I. Is ‘enemy-thinking’ an innate characteristic of being human or do we have a choice other than having enemies?

II. If ‘enemy-thinking’ is not innate, what provokes it?

III. What needs does having an ‘enemy’ satisfy?

Since the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is a group dynamic, the second key interest focuses on how individuals relate to one another when forming a group, as well as on how these different kinds of bonding affect the ‘enemy-thinking’ of individuals and the group they belong to. Out of this, the following three questions arise:

IV. What are the differences in the way individuals relate to one another when shaping a group?

V. Do these different kinds of bonding have any impact on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality?

VI. Is ‘enemy-thinking’ exercised on the group level or on the individual level?

1.2. **Theoretical Frameworks: Why Psychoanalysis?**

Before embarking on a thorough and critical review of the literature relevant to my thesis, I would like to make explicit the reasons for my commitment to the psychoanalytic framework as my main perspective of investigation, especially in view of
the chequered and continuously contested reception that this body of knowledge has received (Eisold, 2005a). Where does its value reside for my own research?

Psychoanalysis is a depth psychology (Volkan, 1988) and as such a theory of tension and conflict (Gosling, 1994). It will become evident throughout this thesis that my inquiry is about the nature of human tension and conflict, within the individual as well as between individuals. In this research study, I endeavour to understand what it means to be human more deeply than social psychology or sociology alone would allow. This is not to say that these latter theoretical frameworks do not offer depth; however, if I am to understand better the complex drives behind human behaviour, conscious or unconscious, then psychoanalytic thought cannot be neglected. Austin and Worchel (1986) agree with my approach and declare that by expanding the scope of social psychology theories to account for intrapersonal dynamics – such as considered by psychoanalysis - greater understanding of human relations between the person and the social system (the group) can be developed.

Similarly, Freud himself declared that “much of what happens at a surface level must take account of the hidden structure and dynamics of the human psyche” (1958, p. 153), and Bion proclaims that in order to really understand what is going on in groups, psychoanalysis cannot be omitted (1961). Further emphasising the depth of insight the psychoanalytic perspective offers for understanding organisations, Erlich (1997) believes that in large group dynamics, enmity plays a central role, and early Kleinian psychoanalysts, such as Jaques (1955, cited by De Board, 1990) have identified projective and introjective identification as the two primary mechanisms operating in groups and organisations. Clancy, Vince and Gabriel add that “(p)sychoaalytic literature emphasizes the centrality of unconscious processes and seeks to balance the view of organizations as rational entities with that of organizations as emotional and emotion-generating environments.” (2011, p. 3).

On the other hand, psychoanalysis is often accused of working ‘below the surface’ without ‘coming back up’, hence indicating the lack of integration to other perspectives (see for example Huffington, Armstrong, Halton, Hoyle and Pooley, 2004). It is for this reason that I have drawn on the social psychology body of knowledge as well. With discussions on in- and out-group bias, this perspective has predominantly concentrated on ‘above the surface’ dynamics of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, at the interpersonal and intergroup level. Psychoanalysis, in comparison, has drawn more attention to
dynamics ‘underneath the surface’ of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, which I interpret to be the intrapersonal level of inquiry for my research. As human life is caught in this tension between group and individual existence, it is helpful to consider both approaches as mutually complementary, whereby ultimately, as in case of this research, psychoanalysis proved to be more insightful for the advancement of my argument.

When applying the terminology ‘inner world’ to ‘below the surface’ dynamics, and ‘outer world’ to ‘above the surface’ dynamics, additional authors can be presented in support of this argument. Similar to Frosh (2003), Shapiro explains that psychoanalysis focuses on the internal world of the individual; however, as theoretical advances have deepened, “we have increasingly noticed the influence of the other – the analyst, the family, the larger social network (or any other group) – on that internal creation.” (1997, p. 2). Hence, Shapiro indicates the mutual interconnectedness between inner and outer world and states that “any attempt to separate (them) is artificial; the two are in dynamic interaction.” (1997, p. 2), and Freud already pointed out in 1921 that the individual psychic structure represents relationships between people.

Following this alignment, the main findings of this research will be constructed from two components (figure 1): insight from the intrapersonal angle will be based on prevailing psychoanalytic theories such as splitting, projection and the Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive positions (for example Klein, 1946, 1952, 1959). Together with predominant social psychology concepts such as social comparison and social identity theory (for example Goethals and Darley, 1987; Tajfel and Turner, 1986), as well as theories derived from Bion’s 1961 contributions to group psychoanalysis, primary data will support insight from the interpersonal and intergroup angle. Throughout the development of my argument, both approaches will be aligned into one perspective, thereby emphasising that I am interested not only in the intrapsychic dynamics of the individual and in group dynamics but also in the tension created between them (Bion, 1961).

![Figure 1: The two components of this research](image-url)
1.3. **The Structure of the Thesis**

In the following, I will provide an overview of the thesis structure and the purpose of each chapter.

This introduction has considered the origins and motivation behind this research project as well as my personal attachment to it. The research objectives have been stated clearly and a justification for the dominant theoretical perspective with which they will be explored has been elaborated.

Chapter two will indicate key theoretical frameworks with which the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality has been investigated, thereby highlighting insights gained from the psychoanalytical and social psychology perspectives. This mentality is portrayed as an innate need to have enemies and the intrapsychic dynamics explained. Gaps in the body of knowledge will be identified and articulated.

Chapter three will detail the research design of the primary data collection phase, including a description of the three case study settings, methods applied for each, as well as the integrated approach to data analysis. The underlying research philosophy of ethnography that has informed this design will also be examined.

Chapters four, five and six will offer an extensive account of the primary data of each case study, together with a preliminary analysis. A full theoretical framework, however, will be constructed in chapter seven based on analysis of case study three. This framework will then be used to revisit case studies one and two in chapter eight.

Chapter nine will then summarise the core insights gained from the analysis of the three case studies and relate them to each other. Core findings will be elaborated and reviewed in depth.

Lastly, chapter ten will present a summary of core findings and relate them back to the research questions outlined above. Contributions to knowledge will be made explicit and my own learning highlighted. The limitations of this research will be discussed and suggestions made for possible future research.
Chapter 2: ‘Us versus Them’ - Above & Underneath the Surface

The “‘Us versus Them’ mentality” is a term that I have introduced since it best portrays my own experiences and research interest; it does not exist as such in the literature. However, many authors have used similar expressions to describe this intergroup dynamic – for example ‘We’ and ‘They’ (Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Riketta and Sacramento, 2008), ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ (Gaertner, Iuzzini, Witt and Orina, 2006; Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman and Tyler, 1990) or ‘Us against Them’ (Guidice, Vasudevan and Duysters, 2003) – the literature is yet to offer a concise body of knowledge with an agreed terminology and definition.

Despite varying terminology, it can be argued that the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality has been attracting interest from a wide range of fields from both academic and special interest literature. Since no dominant theoretical framework for it exists, this chapter serves to ‘set the scene’ for this phenomenon and prepare the reader for my own theoretical contributions. Following my own interpretation, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality expresses so called ‘enemy-thinking’, a term indeed applied in the literature, on the intergroup level. This thesis therefore treats enemy-thinking as directly related to it.

In the following, I will give a general overview of the proliferation of literature relevant to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality before focusing in more depth on those approaches that I appraise as most relevant for the advancement of this research.

2.1. Scenes of ‘Us versus Them’

Starting with a renowned perspective is the body of knowledge on ‘new industrial relations’. Experts have long concentrated in depth on the ‘Us versus Them’ phenomenon with the aim of eliminating its deteriorating consequences on industrial efficiency through intervention strategies such as employee involvement techniques (see for example, Coupland, Blyton, and Bacon, 2005; Cronin, 1994; Griffin, 1988; Guest, Peccei, and Thomas, 1993; Kelly and Kelly, 1991). In this case, ‘Us’ most commonly refers to skilled and unskilled labourers, so-called blue-collar workers, and ‘Them’ to management, so-called white-collar workers, of a production-based organisation. One must recall that ‘Us versus Them’ thinking is exercised in a dual manner by two opposing parties, so that ‘Them’ is always relative to ‘not Us’. Many
sources report that the gap between the ‘Us’ and the ‘Them’ remains large, despite ongoing efforts to bridge it (Guest et al., 1993) with even team work on the shop floor, supposed to facilitate consensus with management, failing to achieve its purpose (D’Art and Turner, 2005). Instead, such initiatives continue to reinforce employee resistance to change (Coupland et al., 2005). Bercovitch (1983) and Bassett (1986) suggest that superordinate goals might foster a common sense of identity and hence eliminate animosity within, whereby the focus is shifted away from ‘Us’ as the workers against ‘Them’ as the management, towards ‘Us’ as the company versus ‘Them’ as the competition. So Bercovitch states that when “departments are in conflict, individual members tend to bury their differences and display greater loyalty to their department.” (1983, p. 115). Underlying this argumentation is the assumption that in order to distract from a lower-level ‘Them’, ‘Us’ needs to find a replacement. Along with that, he postulates the constant need for opposition.

Cronin (1994) adds to this line of thought a case study whereby a CEO tries to overcome the danger of management being trapped in an ‘ivory-tower’ perception by including in the company policy the regular participation of members of the corporate offices in a shop floor team. One must note that the formulations ‘shop floor’ and ‘ivory tower’ themselves are terms that emphasise the dividing gap between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in many production-based large organisations, such as the one that will be presented in case study one.

This is not to say though, that ‘Us versus Them’ thinking occurs explicitly in production-based industries. Cilliers and Greyvenstein, for example, describe how the so called ‘silo-mentality’ can contribute to strong feelings of ‘Us versus Them’ (2012). Similarly, Dobson (2000) describes the antipathy of many members of the academic community in higher education institutions towards non-academic staff, and how the term ‘non-academic’ itself is used as an exclusionary expression. Also within the educational sector, Gillispie and Chrispeels (2008) look at a group of teachers and a consulting team, who were meant to collaboratively work on a school district reform, but failed to do so due to ‘Us versus Them’ attitudes.

‘Us versus Them’ dynamics are not merely a topic restricted to the 1980s and 90s, the era of new industrial relations. They must also be taken into account at an inter-organisational level, in the increasingly competitive market with which organisations are faced. This gives it a very different facade and new application indeed, requiring attention to mergers, acquisitions, strategic alliances and inter-alliances (see for
example Guidice, Vasudevan and Duysters, 2003; Shin, 2004; Terry and Callan, 1998; Terry and O’Brien, 2001). Within this perspective, Schaller, Rosell, and Asp (1998) as well as McQueen (2004) highlight how distinctions between groups can negatively influence the integration of these collaborations through ‘Us versus Them cognition’. Case study two will analyse a representative example of this.

Expanding the outlook on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality even further invites the shifting of focus towards society at large. So for example, Southerton (2002) conducts a study in a small town where people identify themselves around class-based social groups and along with that decide who is ‘Us’ and who is ‘not Us’. Moving on to the national and global level, Chattopadhyay (2007) investigates the ‘Us versus Them’ dynamic from a neo-colonialism point of view, identifying the invader and the invaded as representatives of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ parties. Similarly, Kinder and Kam concentrate on the global consequences of ‘Us versus Them’ thinking in the form of ethnocentrism, which they define as “a predisposition to divide the world into in-groups and out-groups” (2009, p.8). Klein (2002) has similar research interests and talks about the phenomenon of consumer ethnocentrism as an animosity model of foreign purchase.

Likewise, Lickel, Miller, Stenstrom, Denson, and Schmader (2006) include the sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland between Protestants and Catholics, as well as the ethnic killings in Ruanda between the Tutsis and the Hutus as global examples of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. Similarly, the Israel-Palestine conflict has been well documented with regards to the ‘Us versus Them’ phenomenon (see for example Berman, Berger, and Gutmann, 2000; Shapiro, 1997). The list of examples on a political scale continues, and so Barash (1991) adds the Cold War, the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis, the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims, with each opposing pair being certain of the ‘Them’ to be following a strategically designed malicious plan for world domination.

This section has given insight into a small selection of examples which illustrate the multi-faceted appearances of ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics in versatile everyday life situations – may these be small scale between two work groups in a company or large scale between nations - and hence stresses the phenomenon’s significance in human interaction in general.

Furthermore, the diversity of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality becomes appreciable when considering its multitude of manifestations. Following such criteria, the body of
literature can be summarised into scapegoating (see for example Eagle and Newton, 1981; Gold, 2010; Kessler and Mummendey, 2001), bullying and ganging (see for example Waddell, 2007; White, 2004) and prejudice and stereotyping (see for example Fein and Spencer, 1997; Newman, Caldwell, Chamberlin and Griffin, 2005). Even racism (Hunt, 2009) and ethnocentrism (Kinder and Kam, 2009) can be derived from the underlying ‘Us versus Them’ dynamic and are provoked by social clues such as, for example, age, gender, profession (see for example Heron, 2006; Parker, 2000), nationality, ethnicity or any other salient trait which can initiate identification of difference (Diamond and Allcorn, 2006; Ostroff, 2000). This complicates the decision process on relevant literature in so far as it is the underlying dynamic that I am interested in, not the above listed manifestations of it.

Despite of these examples occurring in fundamentally different settings with different parties taking on the role of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, they share a common underpinning: it is not rational, external reasons that drive segregation, enemy-thinking and conflict, but, as I will argue throughout this thesis, partly something that underlies all of these; namely, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, or in other words, the need for the identification of an enemy, itself.

Figure 2: The world of ‘Us versus Them’ (Copyright 1986, Paul Conrad for the Los Angeles Times, reprinted with permission of the Conrad Estate).
2.2. **Theoretical Frameworks that Dominate the Literature**

Several theoretical frameworks can be identified that shed light on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality (*figure 3*). Parker (2000) for example, applies an organisational culture perspective to a study which recognizes different categorisational clues (age, profession and space) alongside which ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics have created segregation due to subcultures in organisations. Another framework that engages with this phenomenon is intergroup rivalry (see for example Roberts, 1994) or intergroup conflict (see for example Bercovitch, 1983; Campbell, 2008; Gillispie and Chrispeels, 2008; Thalhofer, 1993). Likewise, several studies were conducted using discourse analysis, implying that ‘Us versus Them’ attitudes stem from the social constructive power of language. Perdue *et al.* (1990), for example, argue that the terminology ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ influences people’s perception of themselves and Others as it leads to group bias and Heron (2006) adds a case example of a film crew team that had divided each other up into the “Lampies” (lighting technicians) and the “Vidiots” (camera technicians). A key article by Leudar, Marsland and Nekvapil (2004) analyses the discourse of Bush, Blair and Bin Laden after the 9/11 attacks and explores ‘the making of the enemy’ by the use of the words ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ of the three political actors involved.

Despite the diversity of approaches that have made the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality subject to their interest, two theoretical frameworks dominate. The majority of authors treating this phenomenon on an international political level do so from a psychoanalytic perspective, often driven by the Israeli conflict (see for example Covington, Williams, Arundale and Knox, 2002; Erlich, 1997; Friedman, 2010; Hicks, 1994; Moses, 1982 and 2002; Nash, 2004; Ostroff, 2000; Ross, 1995). Within the organisational domain, psychoanalytical sources that *explicitly* look at ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics are less frequent, leaving it to the social psychology framework to offer most research insight. Exceptions with high relevance to this research are Daum (2002) who investigates from a psychoanalytic perspective into the hostile relationship between two psychiatric staff teams, Gould, Ebers and Clinchy (1999), who take on the same approach in order to shed more light onto the difficult relationship among three parties of a joint venture, as well as Czander (1993), Lazaar (2004) and Diamond and Allcorn (2006) who analyse case studies of intergroup hostility based on a psychoanalytically informed framework; whereby the latter source is the only one making direct reference to ‘Us versus Them’.
For reasons of completion, I also mention Lewis, Bates and Lawrence (1994), who present a review of 13 research publications that concentrate on the related concept of projection, which, especially since Bion’s application in group analysis (1961), has become a useful psychoanalytic construct for understanding intergroup dynamics. However, although making reference to Freud as originator of projection, these contributions seek the ‘validation’ of projection in a positivistic fashion through laboratory experiments and are hence not drawn further into the body of knowledge that informs this research.

I have included both frameworks, social psychology and psychoanalysis in this literature review for two reasons. First of all, I postulated earlier that the underlying ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is the same, regardless of the setting in which it occurs; an assumption that enables me to embrace in my review those sources that also describe the political, not only the organisational arena. As Bowler puts it, “(i)ndividuals castigate other individuals, groups disparage other groups, societies defame other societies, often hardly recognizing that the focus for their attack might reside in themselves.” (1991, p. 390). Secondly, although I will later solely make use of psychoanalytic theory for building up the theoretical framework of my own primary data, social psychology has offered too much insight into ‘Us versus Them’ thinking to be ignored, even if research within this school of thought is traditionally conducted and presented in a positivistic fashion. In particular, a range of theories of in- and outgroup formation and intergroup bias have been applied to the organisational setting over the last two decades (see for example Duck and Fielding, 1999; Guidice et al., 2003; Ledgerwood and Chaiken, 2007; Perdue et al., 1990).
2.3. The Need to Have Enemies - Innate to Human Nature

There has been a covert debate of an epistemological nature about whether the ‘Us versus Them’ phenomenon is the product of a social construct or the outcome of an innate behaviour shared by the totality of humanity. Generally, the literature can be organised around these two broad and seemingly contradicting assumptions. Since they affect the way in which the phenomenon under investigation is understood, it is important to give these assumptions further attention.

In stark contrast to the constructivist school of thought, most key psychoanalytical thinkers have consistently and confidently come to view that the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is an inborn, biological determinant of human social behaviour (Gold, 2010). Berman, Berger and Gutmann, for example, argue for the understanding of the ‘Us versus Them’ split as a “basic structure of human social organisation” (2000, p. 53) and claim it to be a universal social structure that expresses an instinctive defensive
behaviour of a deeply rooted, unconscious need (see also Duek, 2009). This need can be expressed, so the authors claim, as the need for identity or, synonymously used, the need for belonging. As such, it characterises human society at large and is primal, basic and inborn (Baumeister and Leary, 1995). In line with this, Barash adds that the need for enemies is a natural inclination, comparable to the need for food, sex, sleep, shelter and companionship.

"In brief, I hold that from the very beginning of human evolution, the conduct of every local group was regulated by two codes of morality, distinguished by Herbert Spencer as the 'code of amity' and the 'code of enmity'. There were thus exposed to 'natural selection' two opposing aspects of man’s mental nature.” (1991, p. 68).

Pinderhughes draws related conclusions based on a study in 34 globally dispersed countries and proposes that this behavioural bias is a universal human trait and the need to see another group as the enemy a universal process. He postulates a universal drive to dichotomise under the umbrella of ‘differential paired bonding theory’:

"The principle of the bond formed by having something in common, which has to be defended against outsiders remains the same, from cichlids defending a common territory or brood, right up to scientists defending a common opinion and, most dangerous of all, fanatics defending a common ideology. In all these cases, aggression is necessary to enhance the bond.” (1982, p. 8).

Pinderhughes portrays the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality as globally universal and Gold (2010) makes it timeless, declaring that even ancient cultures functioned in this way. Erlich, another key advocate of this point of view, holds that enmity crucially affects our everyday living and survival: "If there were no enemy”, he claims persuasively, “we would certainly have to invent one.” (2001, p. 126; see also Abecassis, 2003; Boyer, 1986; Eaton, Eswaran and Oxoby, 2011; Finlay, Holsti, and Fagen, 1967; Frank, 1967). Borrowing from the related body of knowledge of scapegoating, Girard (1986) explains that social co-existence would be impossible without a surrogate Other as victim; such is the primacy of self-preservation (Gold, 2010).

2.4. Origins of ‘Us versus Them’

The literature proposes two strands of explanation for the origin of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. First of all, many authors argue for an evolutionary understanding of human behaviour, and there exists a wide array of exploration indicating that the fear
of the enemy and distrust are biologically rooted to survival value. Robins and Post (1997) as well as Barash (1991) and Volkan (1988), for instance, make references to the animal world to explain human behaviour, as the opposing tendencies of competition and cooperation coexist there, too. Accordingly, 'Us versus Them' thinking promotes cohesion among ingroup members, in which chances for survival are greater due to a shared pool of individual resources (Stein, cited by Volkan, 1988; see also Rozenblit, 2008). Eaton et al. (2011) add that the proclivity to distinguish between insiders and outsiders is innate as the establishment of identity facilitates survival. A similar evolutionist perspective claims that just as physical characteristics evolved, so did behavioural ones such as tribalism, which still affect human dualistic thought today and are a common biological thread of humanity (Rozenblit, 2008).

A second strand of argument tries to portray the predecessors of the 'Us versus Them' mentality as the fear of uncertainty and chaos (see for example Gold, 2006). Among others, Berman et al. (2000) describe the fear of annihilation in an undefined space to be responsible for similar detrimental feelings in an anonymous and unstructured crowd without boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them'. Likewise, Bion (1967) refers to this fear of disorder as 'nameless dread' (p. 116), and Kohut (1984) calls it 'disintegration anxiety' (p. 16). Concepts such as 'friend' and 'enemy' can then be seen as measures that organise the threatening chaos into categories of order (Bauman, 1991). A stranger, for example, someone who is neither ally nor enemy, arouses anxiety and hostility, because he or she embodies uncertainty and poses a threat to the clear order of binary opposition.

"Strangers are the premonition of that third element which should not be. These are the true hybrids, the monsters- not just unclassified, but unclassifiable. They question oppositions as such - the plausibility of dichotomy it suggests and the feasibility of separation it demands. They infringe onto the division of things." (Bauman, 1991, p. 54).

Edelman 1983 (cited by Volkan, 1985) draws out that the enemy-category is based on assignments of attributes which often have no resemblance to any demonstrable reality, and hence that 'Us versus Them' thinking does not arise from external, objectively existing differences, but is caused by primal human behaviour itself. Middents (1990) adds that worries referring to some threatening enemy may not even exist in reality. Again, this indicates a certain innate urge for division and differentiation. As soon as a characteristic that could in some way provoke categorisation becomes salient, it is used as a 'justification' to set a boundary between
an 'Us' and a 'Them'. Parker (2000) also states that such artificial divisions are often used as a short-hand for other, underlying issues, further strengthening Edelman’s point of view that the division between 'Us' and 'Them' does not reflect any objective reality. A famous class room experiment conducted by Jane Elliott in 1968 and documented by Peters (1971) supports Edelman’s conclusion by demonstrating how the statement alone, that blue-eyed children are more clever and likeable than their brown-eyed classmates was enough to inflict enmity between these two groups of children within three days. Similarly, in several group relations conferences conducted by, for example, Berman, Berger and Gutmann (2000), members had spontaneously formed into groups of 'Us' and 'Them' and exhibited aggressive behaviour towards each other by accusing messengers of the respective other group of being spies, ordering them to 'get out of here'. Likewise, the classic work of Sherif, White, Hood and Sherif (1961) known as ‘the Robbers Cave Experiment’ demonstrates the degree of animosity humans are capable of displaying, even if in- and outgroups are formed on a meaningless ad-hoc basis with pseudo-tasks: by separating two groups of boys at a summer camp and fostering separate group identities, friendships within groups were severed and intergroup hostility fostered (see also Silverstein, 1989).

2.5. ‘Us versus Them’ and the Need for Belonging and Not Belonging

Underlying much of the above mentioned literature is a fundamental dualism:

“The need for an enemy is coupled with the need for a friend. They constitute two opposite poles of the same continuum and have a contradictory form of coexistence.” (Duek, 2009, p. 71).

In support, Segal (1995) follows Freud’s explication that we can love one another dearly, only as long as we have someone to hate; whereby enmity has subtly been transformed into dependence (Barash, 1991; see also Robins and Post, 1997). The presence of an Other helps provide the social glue that makes for stronger bonding among those who are ‘in’, and Freud already postulated in 1921 that hatred against a particular person or institution might operate in just the same unifying way, and might call up the same kind of emotional ties as positive attachment. He clarified his understanding by referring to ‘the primal horde’ and how it seeks an ‘opposing horde’ (see also Bion, 1961), with each ‘horde’ satisfying its members’ need for identity and sense of belonging; the two may be inseparable (Barash, 1991).
In agreement, Middents proclaims that “Enemy images are created by people as they divide the world into ‘we-they’ polarizations.” (1990, p. 55). Not only does there seem to be a need for belonging, but just as much, for not belonging. A wide range of authors declare that we ‘need’ our enemies, as they offer us a convenient ‘explanation’ of what is wrong with ourselves (see for example, Kohut, 1972) and further support the facilitation of self-definition (Robins and Post, 1997) or self-concept (Barash, 1991). Middents (1990) agrees with this stance, and implies that enemies serve as a focus for aggression which would otherwise be diverted onto internal or domestic conflicts; internal can be understood here with respect to the person, the group, or the organisation. Taking this line of thought further, Gold (2010) explains that violence against an Other as victim has generative energy as it puts to an end the struggle of internal violence. Likewise, Ostroff (2000) declares that Othering is an essential part of self-development. Representing a political psychology perspective, Volkan (1988) declares that enemies are as important to human nature as are allies, and similarly Rozenblit (2008) points out that the feeling of connectedness among the ‘Us’ group is strongest in combat - when faced with the 'Them' group.

With the intention of tracing back to the origins of this duality, Erlich links this behaviour to ‘stranger anxiety’, a phenomenon the infant develops in the eighth month of life and hence declares it to be “undoubtedly universal” and responsible for our adult inclination to treat any stranger as potential enemy (2001, p. 126; see also Ostroff, 2000; Volkan 1988). Hence, there is believed to be a readiness in the human psyche to fear strangers and seek comfort in the familiar. To this Allport adds the tendency that “(w)hat is alien is regarded as somehow inferior, less ‘good’…” (1979, p. 42). Robins and Post (1997) postulate that no one is ever completely free from this paranoid dynamic; it is an innate human tendency. This fear of the stranger and projection of hatred upon the Other form the psychological foundation of the concept of enemy.

Berman and colleagues expand on the notion of duality in ‘Us versus Them’ thinking by drawing reflections on identity theory into the discussion. They proclaim that one needs both, enemies and friends, for identification purposes, as self-identification is a process that occurs through meeting as well as separation and involves elements of ‘similar to me’ as well as ‘different from me’; “It is impossible to formulate and delineate a distinct identity without each of these elements.” (2000, p. 69; see also Robins and Post, 1997). Stein summarises this very well: “We end where they begin.” (1987, p. 109), and Shapiro expresses the same idea in his own words: “enmity is at
the boundary between internal and external reality....” (1997, p. 5). Armstrong (1992) reports on experiences of a group relations conference during which the need for Otherness became very apparent through the participants’ apparent urge to preserve group distances and differences, and Breckler and Greenwald (1986) make sense of this behaviour by concluding that individuals seek to define themselves in terms of their relationships with Others (see also Middents, 1990). Parker (2000) agrees that these divisions function as a way of classifying the identity of self and Other as a means of grounding one’s own distinctiveness. Negative identity, Schafer (1997) remarks – knowing who one does not want to be – is necessary for the construction of oppositeness and just as important for the stability of self-identity as is positive identity (see also Berman et al., 2000; Erlich, 2001; Ostroff, 2000; Robbins and Krueger, 2005; Roberts, 1983); This notion is expressed in a similar manner by Schafer (1997) who states that disidentification, the process of deciding who one is not, introduces the construction of oppositeness. At this point, parallels to Winnicott’s conceptions of ‘me’ and ‘not me’ are transparent (1974). One could argue that although these dynamics were formulated in order to understand better the development of the infant’s psyche, they play a continuing role into adult life, where what is ‘me’ (or ‘Us’) and ‘not me’ (or ‘Them’) has to be re-established and confirmed on a continuous basis.

2.6. Drawing in Social Psychology Theory

The body of knowledge discussed so far is exclusively drawn from a psychoanalytical perspective. In addition, theories from social psychology have helped support the argument for the innate necessity of ‘enemy-thinking’ as well articulating the duality of the process. Whilst applying different terminology, mainly centred on the idea of in- and outgroups, this literature still supports the same argumentation. Allport for instance, declares that “an ingroup always implies the existence of some corresponding outgroup” (1979, p. 41), and Hogg comments that “For group X to exist there must be ‘not X’” (2001, p. 123). Likewise, Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher and Wetherell come to the conclusion that “group formation takes place to the degree that two or more people come to perceive and define themselves in terms of some shared ingroup-outgroup categorization” (1987, p.51), establishing that central throughout all these
As emphasised earlier, both the psychoanalytic and the social psychology frameworks have shown unanimous dedication to the belief that there is an innate need for enemies, or in other words, for an outgroup that can be viewed in a derogative sense and made the target of animosity. Throughout my intense reviewing of the literature, I have only come across two sources that cast doubt on this innateness of need. Gaertner et al. (2006) challenge the long established ‘ingroup-requires-an-outgroup assumption’ and argue that such a stance does not explain group formation in the absence of opportunities for comparison. Although initially excited to have found a source that could counter-balance the one-sided view of the literature on innateness, unfortunately I found myself compelled to reject their contribution. The authors’ interpretation of ‘absence’ itself is problematic, as they restrict it to physical absence and base their conclusions on an experiment whereby participants are placed in separate cubicles and therefore no other aggregate of people – no outgroup – is visible. Comparison, so the authors claim, is hence not possible. However, I find this is a very restricted interpretation of ‘presence of the Other’, as it does not take into account the ‘Other-in-the-mind’; I postulate that Othering goes beyond the visual senses.

Brewer (1999) reviews contributions from laboratory experiments and challenges the inevitability of hostility towards an outgroup by questioning the duality between ingroup love and outgroup hate. He claims that “ingroup favoritism and outgroup prejudice are separable phenomena and that the origin of identification and attachment to ingroups is independent of intergroup conflict.” (1999, p. 430). However, given the construction of my own argument based on the psychoanalytical concept of splitting into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ introduced in the following sections, I disagree with his efforts to separate these two dynamics.

2.7. The Social Construction of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ Groups

Another possibility for finding an alternative voice to the innateness of ‘enemy-thinking’ is to summarise those literature sources that have explored the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality as the outcome of a social construction process.
Volkan, for example, proclaims that “ethnicity, nationality, and similar abstractions are creations of our own psyche and thus it is reasonable to regard the psyche as the creator of the concept of the enemy.” (1985, p. 243). Similarly, Spears, Gordijn, Dijksterhuis and Stapel (2004) derive from their own research that when ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics are drawn attention to, members tend to perceive greater differences between their own and the Other group. Additionally, Riketta and Sacramento (2008) conclude that images of ‘the Other side’ tend to emphasise, exaggerate and even create negative traits, and therefore ‘dehumanise’ the opponent – a dynamic also known as the ‘devil shift’ (Sabatier, Hunter, and McLaughlin, 1987). In a similar manner, Freud (1917) portrayed ‘the narcissism of minor differences’ as the tendency of people to focus on small features that distinguish them from the Other, and in line with this, to exaggerate the size and power of the enemy (Robins and Post, 1997).

Even more critical of the idea of innateness of enemy-making is Abecassis (2003), who detected that enemy development is uncommon among pre-school and young school-age children and becomes more common among middle school children and adolescents; a finding which opposes the idea that humans are born with an innate need for enemies, and especially contradicts the findings of the Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherif et al., 1961). The development of enemy relationships, so Abecassis adds, is likely to depend on several attainments, including a cognitive understanding of what an enemy is, exposure to enemies or enemy images in the media, and general changes in cognitive development that affect the development of peer relationships and expectations of these relationships, such as decreased egocentrism, perspective taking abilities, and development of one’s self-concept; all attributes that can be derived from the socially constructed cultural environment.

Additionally, there are several sources looking at the creation and maintenance of the divide between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ groups from a discourse perspective and further supporting the point of view that such dynamics might be socially constructed. Coupland, Blyton and Bacon (2005), for example, have studied the management rhetoric around expressions of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ in industry and have found these to be responsible for the great divide among shop floor workers. Likewise, Dobson (2000) has concluded that terms that aid categorisation, such as ‘non-academic staff’ can provoke ‘Us versus Them’ thinking. Perdue, Dovidio, Gurtman and Tyler (1990) make the potential of language to influence group dynamics even more clear. They explicate that it is the use of words such as ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ alone that can lead to in-
group/outgroup bias not the other way around (see also Gillispie and Chrispeels, 2008). Leudar, Masland and Vapil (2004) go yet a step further and talk about ‘the making of the enemy’ via strategic discourse.

2.8. ‘Us versus Them’ – Social Construct or Innate Need?

After having presented key sources from both stances, one promoting the universality and innateness of the need for enemies, the other one advancing an understanding for the social construct of the phenomenon, the next logical step in the literature review would be to exhibit my own commitment to one of them. Portraying ‘Us versus Them’ as either innate need or social construct is in so far important as it approximates an answer to the question whether enemy-thinking is innate or not.

However, I will proceed by arguing that these two positions are complementary, not contradictory in nature. In line with this assertion, Robins and Post postulate that “to say that a behaviour is solely a product of social conditioning and individual choice would be to deny much of what we know about evolutionary biology ... But to attribute complex psychological reactions, such as paranoia, solely to evolutionary psychology is to deny what is uniquely human”. (1997, p. 69).

I am hence concluding that the observable manifestations of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality might indeed be discernible as a construct of social interaction; however, one needs to enquire what makes such constructions necessary in the first place. A certain sense of identity might indeed be socially constructed, such as for example nationality or profession (Talbot, 2008); the need to have identity in itself is innate. Along with that, I assume the following thought experiment: categorisations of ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are commonly centred around characteristics such as shared nationality, history, language, religion, age, gender or occupation, only to name a few, or any other characteristic that makes comparing and contrasting possible. I hold the opinion that even if these could be eliminated so as to create a homogeneous group, the innate need for opposition would still lead to the splitting of that group into in- and outgroups, even if differences have to be invented. In agreement, Chang notes that “human beings have always developed mental and social mechanisms to differentiate “us” from “them”. In the process, they develop criteria for other.” (2008, p. 26), and similar to Parker (2000), Diamond and Allcorn (2006) list as examples of such criteria younger versus older, profession versus profession, men versus women, workers versus managers,
and department versus department. This is not to say that any resulting division is ‘real’ or objectively independent from their creators, but what I perceive as ‘real’ indeed is the underlying effort to create and maintain it. And this effort “predates contents, opinions, and ideologies and is impulsive and unconscious in character” (Berman et al., 2000, p. 53). Therefore I agree with the majority of literature subject to this review in their consensus to describe an innate, biologically determined universal need that social constructs are targeted at satisfying – through enemies and allies.

Berman et al.‘s experiment (2000) is a striking example in support of this conclusion. A prompt of different coloured pieces of paper (blue and red, no writing on it) randomly distributed among participants of a large group conference was sufficient to trigger their resignation from a life-long established political animosity only to form new group identities based on the colour of those papers. Unprompted, the members reinforced their recalibrated ‘Us versus Them’ mentality by creating powerful slogans, symbols and metaphors according to the colour of their paper, and eventually even constructed group narratives around it (for example, blue became the symbol of tradition, red that of humanitarianism). Based on the intensity with which these dynamics unfolded, the authors conclude that “the division into two opposing groups precedes the cognitive content that follows it; in other words, ideology and rational discourse are superimposed on this process rather than causing it.” (Berman et al., 2000, p. 73).

2.9. Psychoanalysis – Taking ’Us versus Them’ Underneath the Surface

Having presented an extensive debate on the innateness of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, I will now proceed to discuss the intra-psychic dynamics that I and other authors believe to be underlying it (see for example Abecassis, 2003; Barash, 1991; Bryce, 1986; Erlich, 2001; Klein, 1959; Middents, 1990; Robins and Post, 1997; Ostroff, 2000; Volkan, 1988). I do so following Frosh’s (2003) notion that the outer world is a mirror image of the inner world, and that to understand this outer world, we have to understand our inner psyche first. Perceiving ‘Us versus Them’ thinking as a consequence of inner psychic dynamics, I have found it most useful to link back to Kleinian theories of splitting and projection. The remainder of the discussion will elaborate on these concepts, before establishing their relevance for interpersonal and
intergroup dynamics. Eventually, theories on ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects, as well as the Paranoid-Schizoid and Depressive positions will be drawn into the proposed argument.

2.9.1. **Splitting ‘Good’ from ‘Bad’ and Getting Rid of ‘Bad’**

Within the British school of object relations, Klein explains that the infant is born without the cognitive ability to perceive its physical distinctiveness from its mother, nor make sense of its own emotions (Spillius, Milton, Garvey, Couve and Steiner, 2011). So for example, when the infant feels hunger, it does not know how to find relief and feels threatened in its very existence. This fear of annihilation causes it great distress, for which reason one of the earliest defence mechanisms is brought into action: The baby *splits* off these negative emotions and *projects* them away from itself, onto an external source, which is then believed to be the cause for its despair (Hinshelwood, Robinson, Zarate and Appignanesi, 2006). ‘Out there’, these feelings are easier to process, as the illusion is created that the infant can escape them (Quinodoz, 2005).

The mechanisms of splitting and projection are taking place simultaneously as two sides of the same coin; one does not precede the other, but they are a cause and simultaneously consequence of each other.

Elaborating on the concept of splitting was one of Melanie Klein’s leading contributions to psychoanalytic theory (1946, 1952, 1959), although it had been considered previously by Freud. For Freud, psychoanalysis in general was a conflict theory of the mind. He referred to splitting as a means for resolving ambivalence “by splitting the contradictory feelings so that one person is only loved, another one only hated (like) the good mother and the wicked stepmother in fairy tales” (Fenichel, 1999, p. 157). It is important to note that psychoanalytic thought as developed by Freud was, due to his profession as a doctor, focused on patients with some form of pathology. He was looking at psychologically ‘ill’ people, such as patients diagnosed with neurosis or psychosis. Hence one might be in danger to perceive splitting as being unhealthy; in one of his older uses, Freud even describes splitting as the “pathological counterpart of synthesis” (Lichtenberg and Slap, 1973, p. 772).

On the contrary, I agree with Klein, who interprets splitting as a ‘normal’ psychic function, an organising function, through which the human being perceives and understands his or her environment – even if it does lead to a distortion of reality (Segal, 1992). “It is the splitting which allows the ego to merge out of chaos and to order its experiences....” (Segal, 1988, p.35), and enables the child to internalise and
maintain enough initial ‘good’ experiences to serve as a core around which integration of contrasting aspects of objects and self can be established (Spillius et al., 2011). Bion (1959, cited by Spillius et al., 2011) adds to the differentiation between ‘normal’ and ‘pathological’ splitting and explains that the latter is performed with omnipotence and violence and a resulting loss of sense of internal and external reality.

Likewise, projection, the counterpart of splitting cannot be defined as being purely pathological, but “makes its appearance ... under other psychological conditions as well, and in fact it has a regular share assigned to it in our attitude toward the external world.” (Freud, 1958). This thesis though concentrates on that aspect of projection “by which we attribute our own shortcomings to others as a means of protecting ourselves from threat” (Sherwood, 1979, p. 635). The foundation of this dynamic according to Lewis et al/is then a negative self-judgement which is perceived as stemming from an external source, rather than from within the individual. Along with that, the individual unconsciously defends against aversive self-knowledge and psychologically distances him/herself from it, allowing it to remain unacknowledged.

Next to providing an explanatory framework that suggests a primary splitting and projection process, the British school of object relations also offers insight into the infant’s ability to perceive whole objects. Recalling that the infant is not yet able to grasp its separateness from the mother, it can also not appreciate yet that the mother is a whole ‘unit’ in her own right. Hence, it does not project the above described ‘bad’ feelings onto a whole person, but rather, on parts of it. Klein explains the first object of splitting to be the mother’s breast; the most important object in an infant’s life after birth as it provides food and hence the only object with which relationship formation is possible (Bokanowski and Lewkowicz, 2009). Due to the baby’s underdeveloped emotional apparatus, or in other words, the incapacity for ambivalence, it is not able to make sense out of the fact that one object can simultaneously bring comfort, be ‘good’, i.e. the breast is there to give milk, on the one hand, and on the other hand, bring discomfort, be ‘bad’, i.e. the breast is not there (in time) to give milk.

Consequently, for the baby there are two objects; one it wishes to introject, and one it wishes to reject. One can say that the baby perceives the same breast as two separate objects – it is represented in two parts (Moore and Fine, 1990), the ‘good’ object and the ‘bad’ object. The term part-object was introduced by Abraham (1909, cited by Hilda and Abraham, 1955) and has been assigned a leading role in object-relations theory by Klein. This means that every purely ‘good’ or ‘bad’ object is always only a
part object, and hence splitting is the psychic action of a human being who is struggling to understand the whole; a notion which will become important again in the discussion chapter. Eventually though, this process assists in the development of a boundary with regards to the infant’s understanding of who it is and who it is not.

Out of this primary behaviour, the dualistic world of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is provoked, with pleasant feelings sought after and internalised, and ‘bad’, unpleasant feelings disowned and projected onto an outside object. It also seems plausible to me to draw parallels between splitting and the tendency to dichotomise into absolute forms, whereby ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects are artificially held apart. The two currents of strong feelings which, if experienced together, would result in the anxiety-provoking chaos detailed earlier are separated. As a result, later on in life, an important step in development is their gradual depolarization and replacement with an integrated image that conforms more closely to actual ‘reality’ (Lichtenberg and Slap, 1973). However, the splitting process will continue in ‘milder’ form throughout adult life (Segal, 1988).

Dartington expresses this notion in his own terms and emphasises the link to enemy-thinking:

“So we begin to build an inner world that relates to but not equates with an external world of good and bad objects, that seem to make for delight and frustration, for love and for envy and hate. And then it is a task for the rest of our lives to reconcile these inner and outer worlds. It is in our nature to make this separation of what is I and not-I, what belongs and what does not, and, like the babies we were in our cots, to hold close what is at that moment pleasurable and loveable and to throw out what is to be despised, destroyed, the hated objects to which we have ascribed such awesome power that we are fearful of their revenge.” (2010, pp. 31-32).

2.9.2. Linking Back to 'Us versus Them'

At this point parallels between the splitting and projection of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects and ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics transpire. I will henceforth make these explicit. The intra-psychic splitting process can be applied to the group level in order to make sense of the splitting process into ‘Us’, the ‘good’ group and ‘Them’, the ‘bad’ group. Erlich explains that accumulated negativity is not released through a conscious process, but via projection onto the other group, which he refers to as a ‘self-cleansing’ process. As such, “the ‘enemy’ is nothing more than a paranoid definition of the Other, who can then carry all badness after we have evacuated these parts of ourselves and projected
them onto him” (Erlich, 1997, p. 116). Thus, in encounters with the external world, people are really meeting hidden dimensions of themselves, supporting the notion that the Other as ‘enemy’ exists in both, the inner (the self) and the outer world (the Other), and represents a bridge between the two (Erlich, 1997). This suggests that one possible understanding of hatred against Otherness is that it is a consequence of the failure to cope with one’s own split off and projected ‘bad’ parts.

While discussing object relations theory, Klein also refers to the term ‘ideal object’ (Hinshelwood, 1991), an idea which further supports the interpretation of ‘Us’ as the ‘good’ group. This terminology emphasises the illusory character of the ‘good’ object, as in order for its perception to remain ‘good’, idealisation, the purification from the ‘bad’, has to take place, giving the impression of perfection. In order to maintain the myth, the self has to ‘protect’ it from ‘bad’ characteristics that could lead to the loss of the ‘good’ object. The use of the omnipotent mechanisms of idealisation and denial are the primary drivers of these strong splits (Spillius et al., 2011) and persist beyond infancy. An idealised object of this kind inevitable brings with it the constant fear of a sudden reappearance of a ‘bad’ object ‘out there’ which threatens to stain its purity. The presence of this unavoidable anxiety also serves to explain paranoid ‘enemy-thinking’.

This line of thought can then be brought into conjunction with social psychology theory on in- and outgroup bias in order to understand the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality better. The purified ingroup has become the ideal object of all its members, leaving the task of container for ‘bad’ characteristics to the outgroup. The use of the term bias in social psychology then expresses the distortion of reality caused by the investment of effort to maintain the illusory ideal object, the ingroup.

An important additional feature to note here is that the rejection of unwanted feelings alone is not enough; unwanted attributes cannot just be ‘disowned’, expelled away from the self – they need to find a ‘new owner’, and hence be projected into something or someone. (Spillius, 1988). This externalisation allows an individual or group to disown responsibility and to feel an illusory sense of mastery over its unwanted impulses, or in other words, to blame somebody else for one’s own misery (Bateman and Holmes, 1995). This necessity to identify a suitable container for unwanted attributes could give further justification for the need to have enemies, or at least explain the relationship of co-dependency between self and Other – as those negative aspects that one comes to recognise in the Other, are one’s own; they are
aspects of one’s own identity that are experienced as negative. In other words, they constitute one’s self’s negative identity.

2.9.3.  

Kleinian Positions

Klein sees these paranoid behaviours as characteristics of the Paranoid-Schizoid position, which she portrays as a developmental state of the immature ego (Klein, 1946). Here, the negative and destructive feelings of sources from within that have been directed against an outside object (the schizoid element) still pose a threat to the self; they might ‘come back’ (Craib, 2001) – as described above. Klein explains that such destructive sources are caused by the so called “death instinct”, which forms the prototype for hostile object relations. Simultaneously, the self comprises the so called “life instinct”, which is the parallel primitive source of love and the prototype for loving object relations (Steiner, 1993). It is a typical characteristic of the Paranoid-Schizoid position that these two types of relating of self to other are kept strictly separate; i.e. one object can only be either loved or hated. Based upon this strictly split perception, Spillius (1988a) adds that the features of the Paranoid-Schizoid position comprise the difficulty of achieving a sense of reality, and a potentially narcissistic personality structure. This insight might deliver an explanation for the feeling of superiority of ‘Us’ in comparison to ‘Them’. Because the self’s own destructive drives are being projected to the outside world, it perceives the created threat as being directly targeted against it (the paranoid element) and as a consequence, objects are not reintegrated into the ego, but defended against (Craib, 2001).

In addition to the Paranoid-Schizoid position, Klein also presents the Depressive position, which she describes as being developmentally more advanced (Segal, 1988). Characteristically, the self in this state of mind is able to recognise the Other as a separate object and is able to relate to it as a whole, not only either to its ‘good’ or ‘bad’ attributes. This is accompanied by the development of the ability to tolerate ambivalence; both love and hate towards the same object can be felt simultaneously. Consequently, the world is more richly and realistically perceived, with the interplay between phantasy and reality being balanced (Spillius et al., 2011).

Steiner (1993) explains the core difference between the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive positions to be this degree of integration which enables the self to experience wholeness in both the self and the object. The self is now also comfortable with accepting its own failure to be purely ‘good’; a realisation which is referred to as
the loss of the idealised object (Craib, 2001). The accompanying depressive anxiety results from the fear of one’s ability to destroy the loved object due to the realisation that both instincts, ‘good’ and ‘bad’ originate within oneself and are directed towards the same object (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1985). It is different from paranoid anxiety, which is a concern for the safety of the ego, not the object. Feelings of guilt are a necessary response to depressive anxiety and their recognition helps the self to repair (Craib, 2001). This is accompanied by a shift of the self’s primary concern away from protection and survival in the Paranoid-Schizoid position, towards an interest in the object and the acknowledgement of its co-dependency on it in the Depressive position.

Since Klein’s contribution of these two concepts from 1935 onwards into the psychoanalytic body of knowledge, many authors have explored on the dynamic relationship between the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive positions (see for example, Bion, 1963; Joseph, 1983; Segal, 1983; Spillius et al., 2011) which remains as a tension throughout life. From this point of view, the Depressive position is not perceived as indicating a more developed mind set in comparison to the Paranoid-Schizoid position; rather, there is a continuous, lifelong, oscillating regression between the two of them (Britton, 1998), in childhood as much as in adulthood, as part of normal psychic development. The oscillating nature of the relationship between these positions will be the subject of investigation again in the data analysis of this research.

2.9.4. **Insights from the Intrapersonal Perspective for Groups**

After indicating the dominance of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in social settings, this literature review has predominantly concentrated on the psychoanalytic theories of splitting, projection and the Kleinian positions in order to gain deeper understanding of the intrapsychic predecessors of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. I have thereafter shown how these intrapersonal theories are indeed applicable to the interpersonal and intergroup dynamics that can lead to related concepts of in- and outgroup bias.

Diamond and Allcorn support this development of thought by pointing out that “(d)ysfunction and conflict within organizations are frequently manifested in defensive splits and black and white categorizations, leading to polarizations between groups and their members” (2006, p. 62). Daum (2002) follows the same principle, and next to presenting his own case study, he points out that such application of Kleinian thought to group phenomena has been widely documented, as for example by Jaques (1955), Menzies Lyth (1960), Bion (1961), Alford (1989), Gould, (1998) as well as Gould, Ebers
and Clinchy (1999). Further supporting my own argument, after applying the Kleinian theories of splitting and projection to their own case studies, Roberts (1994) and Lazaar (2004) point out that the efforts for the preservation of self on the group level can fuel suspicion, prejudice, discrimination and generally increase hostility between teams, departments or organisations alike.

I will now use the remainder of the literature review to elaborate more explicitly on this link between the intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup realm of enquiry in order to recognise how the discussed theories from the intrapsychic level apply to the latter. In support of this I will draw on the social psychology theories of social comparison and social identity.

Social comparison theory (Goethals and Darley, 1987) exerts that people strive to compare their opinions to similar Others, so as to arrive at the conclusion that their opinion is correct, or true. This theory therefore contributes to the explanation of the occurrence of group cohesion: people feel attracted to groups that confirm their own opinion so that they can evaluate their own view on the world as being correct, as being reality. Attitude certainty (Brown and Abrams, 1986), a concept that explains the same inclination, refers to the subjective sense that one’s opinion represents an accurate construal of reality. Similarly, feelings of belongingness and the perception that group members agree with one’s attitude confer certainty about the correctness of those positions (Holtz, 2003). According to social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), knowing that one’s own view on the world is correct or true, enforces positive identity and leads to emotions of satisfaction and completeness. This kind of ‘positive projection’ within the group, or onto the ‘in-group’, leads to a new group entity (Erlich, 1997).

The concept of ‘positive projection’, in psychoanalysis referred to as introjection, has to be clarified in more detail. Introjection, a process closely related to identification was first introduced by Ferenczi in 1909 (cited by Laplanche and Pontalis, 1985) and describes the process of ‘taking in’ a part of the outside world (objects). Along with this, it can be understood as the mirror-process to projection, which is also inseparable from splitting; qualities, feelings, wishes or objects, are not rejected and expelled by the individual, but taken in and integrated into the self-concept; they are identified with. As such, introjection and projection can be seen as the two co-dependent mechanisms of splitting. This reasoning can help to understand the expansion of the self-concept to include not only one’s own body, but also the so called ingroup. ‘In-’ in
this case can be perceived to refer to other members of the group that have been introjected by the individual. It is important to note this understanding of self as going beyond a person’s body. In the argumentation of this thesis, ‘self’ can consequently either refer to an individual or to an ingroup, dependent on the level of inquiry. Likewise, the concept of Other can be applied to an individual or an outgroup, depending on the level of opposition that is being discussed. Bowles (1991) for example follows this principle by using Denhardt’s 1989 metaphor of ‘Organization Shadow’ which describes the body of facts that organisations wish to deny and project onto Others so as to maintain a positive self-image towards themselves and others.

In line with this thought, social identity theory explains that one does not only derive identity from within the self as an individual, but also from group membership; it is that part of the self-concept which is based on comparison with other people and relevant to social interaction (Turner et al., 1987). Maslach (cited by Diener, 1980) adds that in so doing, the individual gains a new sense of self, a new identity rooted in the group, replacing their personal identity. Closely related are feelings of strong group unity and perceived similarity to other group members, linking back to social comparison theory. To this notion Singer (1965) adds that lessened individuality within a group is associated with greater liking for the group. This sense of belonging, in turn, justifies ingroup favouritism (Otten and Mummendey, 2000). In other words, people choose to belong to a group that they identify with and that they can introject. It becomes clear at this point that the concept of identification in the framework of social psychology complements the concept of introjection with regards to psychoanalysis: the individual identifies with the group because (s)he has introjected it.

Moving onto the intergroup level, the implications for organisational life are evident: organisations are an endless process of identifications and divisions (Parker, 2000). Early Kleinian psychoanalysts, such as Jaques (1955, cited by De Board, 1990) have identified projective and introjective identification as the two primary mechanisms operating in groups and organisations. In large group dynamics, enmity plays a central role and is the cause for the split into many subgroups; the fragmentation of the whole (Erlich, 1997).

---

1 The question is whether the group is similar to the individual because (s)he has introjected it, or vice versa; attempting an answer would at this stage distract from the main argument and will therefore be left for the discussion chapter.
This group introjection process has consequences on projection dynamics important to this research. As the group, which one claims membership for, becomes part of one’s own identity, projection onto that group in the form of, for example, blame, would resemble projection onto the self. The resulting need for an external ‘owner’ within the organisational setting can hence only be satisfied by an individual outside the group or even another group, the so called outgroup. Other researchers go a step further and claim the necessity of maintaining a derogative image about the outgroup. So for example, social identity theory explicates the “nearly automatic tendency to discriminate against people who can be regarded as belonging to outgroups.” (Capozza and Brown, 2000, p. 85). Turner et al. add to the discussion by elaborating on the provocation of ingroup favouritism:

“Situationally dominant self-categorisations enforce the perception of intragroup similarity and intergroup differences. These circumstances inhibit the person’s ability to perceive intergroup similarities and intragroup differences.” (1987, p. 194).

2.10. Own Theoretical Framework and Gaps in the Body of Knowledge

This review of the body of knowledge relevant to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is inimitable in many aspects. This is, to my knowledge, the first compilation of literature that concentrates solely on shedding light onto this social phenomenon. First of all, this review highlights the ‘current-affairs-status’ of the topic by offering a general outline of its occurrence in versatile social settings. A wide range of applicable theoretical frameworks have been identified, and the two dominant perspectives – psychoanalysis and social psychology – including an emphasis on their mutually complementary nature, have been investigated in detail.

Furthermore, the consensus on innateness of the ‘Us versus Them’ debate has been approached critically so as to present a balanced overview of contrasting perceptions. The Kleinian theories of splitting and projection have then brought the discussion onto a deeper level of inquiry, ‘underneath the surface’, so as to address possible intrapsychic origins for the readily observable ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. Lastly, by emphasising the relation between these intrapersonal theories and their expansion onto the interpersonal and intergroup level, the psychoanalytic principle that the outer world is a mirror of the inner world (Shapiro, 1997) and vice versa has been embraced.
Additionally, this original convergence of the literature has enabled me to recognise the following short-comings. To my knowledge, there are plenty of publications available that presume the Kleinian theory of splitting as a precursor for versatile interpersonal and group dynamics, and key sources have been drawn out here (see for example Alford, 1989; Bion, 1961; Daum, 2002; Gould et al.; 1999; Lazaar, 2004; Menzies Lyth, 1960; Roberts, 1994). However, only a handful of authors before me (see for example Erlich, 2001; Gold, 2010; Ostroff, 2000; Volkan, 1988), have elaborated on the links between Kleinian object relations theory and enemy-thinking in this manner. Along with this approach I have created my own theoretical framework (figure 4).

Moreover, despite having brought together a wide range of sources that commonly agree with great confidence on the proposition that the need to have enemies is innate and universal, I remain in doubt. One might speculate that it is my naïve hope that humanity can do better which drives me to look for alternative explanations. Although not a ‘gap’ in the body of knowledge in the strictest sense of the word (after all, an ‘answer’ has been agreed on), I am left wondering if the need for enemies is really as universal and inevitable as portrayed by the body of knowledge to date. Along with that, the gaps in the literature to date support the case for my underlying research questions proposed in the introduction chapter.

A further drawback of the body of knowledge to date is portrayed by the lack of primary data. Although studies on projections in organisations exist, these have either been gained mainly through clinical group settings, such as is the case for the psychoanalytic perspective (see for example Armstrong, 1992, Greene, Morrison and Tischler, 1979), or through the setting up of laboratory experiments, typical for the social psychology perspective (see for example Perdue et al., 1990; Robbins and Krueger, 2005). However, case studies that concentrate on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality and collect primary data through participation in real-life, ongoing organisational groups from a psychoanalytical perspective remain rare (see for example Coupland, Blyton and Bacon, 2005; Daum, 2002; Gillispie and Chrispeels, 2008; Gould et al., 1999; Roberts, 1994).

During data analysis, I will be drawing into the discussion yet another strand of psychoanalytic literature, which supports my inclination to doubt the ‘no-choice-but-to-have-an-enemy’ assumption suggested so far. It is of note, however, that at the time of reviewing the literature, I was convinced that enemy-thinking, and hence the development of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is unavoidable – after all, the literature
that I had studied for approximately one year at that time explicitly taught me so. This might not be explicitly recognisable anymore, as the literature review evolved during the three year research period.

Figure 4: Diagram of own Theoretical Framework
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

The literature review has enabled me to construct a theoretical framework to explain the intrapsychic and unconscious dynamics of splitting and projection that were depicted as preceding the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. This chapter describes the research design and methodology that has allowed the exploration of these ideas on the interpersonal and intergroup level in three organisational settings (figure 5).

I chose a case study approach (Yin, 2003) as the literature review identifies a lack of data gained from real-life organisational settings as opposed to laboratory experiments (section 2.10). This practical investigation thus makes a significant contribution to the body of knowledge in reference to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. Further, the introductory chapter expresses interest in understanding better the origins and consequences of the phenomenon, for which reason I chose to study it in more detail in its ‘naturally’ occurring forms in and between ongoing, organisational groups. In approaching it in this way I hope that by observing and experiencing the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality first hand, as well as talking to and working with other individuals who were subjected to it, I would be able to formulate well-informed answers to my first three research questions. In so doing, I pay attention to the differences with which individuals in each case study relate to their groups of belonging and not belonging so as to establish possible links to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in light of research questions four to six.

![Figure 5: The two components of this research](image)
This chapter will be structured as follows. First of all, a summative overview of all three case studies and their relationship to each other will be discussed in section 3.1. Thereafter, each case study setting and my role as researcher within it will be presented in more detail, including an outline of the methods applied, as well as a brief illustration of their advantages and disadvantages for this research (sections 3.2. to 3.4.).

The focus will then shift to a methodological reflection of the underlying approach of ethnography, also treating the question of validity and my own philosophical view on reality (section 3.5.). I am aware that it is more conventional to scrutinise research philosophy first and answer ’the big question’ of which paradigm one is committed to. However, this proved to be one of the most difficult stages of the research project for me, and after a year of intense study of versatile philosophical debates I still remained indecisive, for which reason I have chosen a different approach. I carefully determined the most suitable research methods for answering my research questions first, and then reviewed their underlying philosophical stance in the literature. The structure of this chapter reflects this development.

Lastly, section 3.6. applies the established methodological principles to a suitable strategy for data analysis.

3.1. Overall Research Design

Three case studies were chosen to explore ’Us versus Them’ dynamics in progress in very different organisational settings. Case study one treats data gathered during my employment with FutureCo prior to commencement of my academic career (2001-4) as well as during participant observation undertaken in the company for my undergraduate degree (2008). The data for case studies two and three was gathered during my Ph.D. studies in the period 2009-11.

This is a multi-method qualitative research approach (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008) rather than a mono-method approach. Among others, Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) are advocates of this strategy and explain that the applied methods can counteract one another’s’ limitations; they can cancel out the so called ’method effect’ by testing out and hence supporting each other’s findings (Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Saunders et al., 2008). Moreover, this strategy enables me to combine the
three very different case studies into one consistent research argument, expressed by the areas of overlap in figure six. These ‘spaces’ symbolise the communality of all three case studies, namely the underlying methodological approach of ethnography of the research encounter.

In the following discussion I describe the settings of the three case studies in detail and present the research methods used for each of them. Despite the diversity of methods applied, my personal underlying research philosophy informed all of them equally, and will therefore also be explored.

3.2. Case Study 1: “FutureCo”

The first case study, FutureCo, was chosen due to the experiences I had as a member of staff in this company which eventually gave rise to my research interest. As these experiences of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality were very negative, I started the
practical part of my research enquiry with the aim of finding out what provokes it and if it could possibly be avoided.

3.2.1. The Organisation and My Role

FutureCo is a German car manufacturing plant of a multinational business with a man power of approximately 14,000 (in 2008) employees. Out of these, 10,000 jobs are manufacturing related, and 4,000 are administrative and managerial roles.

My relationship to this organisation has developed over time. After a two and a half year on-the-job training in the offices of various departments, where I was trained for versatile clerical jobs, I was offered a position in the public relations department as a PR assistant. I worked there for another six months prior to starting university in 2004.

3.2.2. Data Collection Methods: Memoires and Unstructured Interview

Memoirs: Interest in studying self-narratives as part of the broader trend of the “narrative inquiry” has grown in humanities and social sciences (e.g. Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Ellis and Bochner, 2000), and within that, memoir writing has increased, too (e.g. Baker, 1982; De Beauvoir, 2005; Lamott, 2000). Phifer (2002) explains that memoirs focus on the most important moments in our lives and that this selectiveness makes them different from autobiographies or journal entries.

I present my memoirs in a predominantly descriptive way, focusing on those passages that offer the deepest insights into my experiences of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo. Although, according to Chang (2008), an entire self-narrative is rarely fixed by only one style, my own personal writing style is rather analytic and interpretive. I treat some of these vignettes (Humphreys, 2005) as materials to analyse rather than as a centrepiece to appreciate.

Limitations: No fieldnotes had been taken that could support the memoirs. This is disadvantageous in so far as memoirs can reveal only partial truths as they focus only on certain aspects of an experience. Likewise, memory selects, shapes, limits and distorts the past (Chang, 2008) and reconstructing detail, I can confirm, proved to be very difficult. However, Clandinin and Connelly argue that time passed between an event and the memoir being shaped helps to “smooth out details, leaving a kind of schematic landscape outline” (2000, p. 83). One could also say that given the fact that I remember certain events from my time at FutureCo over others renders them significant to my research, and since I am not intending to present the past as ‘truth’,
but rather welcome the distortion of the past as valuable insight, this limitation is not a matter of concern for my own research design. Moreover, I have chosen to conduct an unstructured interview with another former member of staff of FutureCo so as to compare and contrast my own memories with his.

*Unstructured interview:* The second set of primary data for case study one was derived from an hour long, non-directive informant interview (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005). The respondent, who is a close friend of mine and who has been working for FutureCo for more than five years as an electro-technician, was prompted to share with me his past experiences of the ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics from his perspective.

This approach to interviewing fits the exploratory nature of the research design and enabled me to “find out what is happening [and] to seek new insights.” (Robson, 2002, p. 59), and it allowed me to ask the respondent to build on responses. Especially in this case, it helped me to ‘probe’ and compare my own memoirs with those of my friend. This was important for the rigour of case study one, as my memories are only written from the ‘Us’-perspective at FutureCo. My friend on the other hand, was at the time of employment one of ‘Them’ to me. Therefore, by offering the reader insight into the organisation from both ‘sides’, I portray a more balanced view of what ‘really’ went on between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. Interviewing one of ‘Them’ certainly led me to adopt a more balanced view, as I learnt about aspects of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo that were completely unknown to me before. My being surprised can itself be treated as important information for primary data, as it shows just how big the lack of understanding was between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’.

*Limitations:* As the findings of case study one are solely based on the insights of two individuals, a question of reliability (Marshall and Rossman, 1999) would be concerned with the representativeness of these findings of the entire manpower of FutureCo. However, taking the theory of the Oneness group into account which will be established in chapter seven, one can indeed assume that the voice of one individual is representative of the group in question. Furthermore, my friendship with the interviewee might have influenced his responses, although I feel this was rather advantageous with regards to rapport and trust (Robson, 2002) that had already existed between us.
3.2.3. Ethical Concerns

The interviewee was informed about my research intentions and confidentiality was guaranteed. However, both our contributions are portrayed here without the consent of the organisation in question. As a consequence the name of the organisation and pertinent details have been modified so as to make identification difficult.

3.3. Case Study 2: "The Children's' Charities"

The second case study based on the joint work of two charities gives insight into the phenomenon under investigation in a rather different business environment, namely that of not-for-profit organisations. Here, strong consistency between organisational ideologies and the personal values of staff, as well as the emphasis placed on collaborative working rather than competing constitutes a very different stage for 'Us versus Them’ dynamics to appear on.

3.3.1. The Charities and My Role

Two charities, one local (The Fun Trust), one national (The Play Trust), both providing palliative care to children with a life-threatening illness and their families, were investigating the possibility to collaborate. The Fun Trust employs 22 qualified nurses and children’s nurses, as well as 6 administrative staff. That local team of The Play Trust which would be affected by the suggested collaboration consists of 6 social workers.

I was involved with both organisations during a ten-week full-time research project in spring 2011 as a member of staff representing my university. The project objective, according to the contract was: “To conduct an applied research project which will result in the development of an organisational plan for a single model of support to families from the two models currently operated by (The Fun Trust) and (The Play Trust) in partnership with other service providers.” Based on my collected primary data, I was asked to evaluate whether or not the organisational cultures of the two charities would make for a good collaboration.
3.3.2. Data Collection Methods: Observations, Semi-structured Interviews and the SPM

Observations: I sat in two team meetings held by the practitioners of each charity and collected fieldnotes based on my observations of these. Likewise, I accompanied practitioners of both charities on half-day home visits and had again the opportunity to observe work habits and procedures and took notes. The families were chosen and approached by the charities themselves in order to gain their consent. My adapted role in this case was an ‘observer as participant’ (Gill and Johnson, 2002), which in simple terms describes participation in a passive function as spectator without involvement, but with my research intentions clear to all involved.

Limitations: the data gathered was solely based on my own impressions. Due to my non-participating role this meant that my ability to understand how it really ‘felt’ to work with the clients was restricted (Jorgensen, 1989). Likewise, arranging a further appointment with the practitioners to probe my own impressions proved difficult. The interviews were therefore a valuable means for cross-referencing, and the Social Photo Matrix discussed below was of greater help for probing my impressions. Furthermore, despite no interaction with the practitioners nor the clients during home visits, my mere presence might have influenced their routine procedures.

Interviews: I conducted 16 semi-structured interviews of approximately one hour with members of both charities. The interviews were conducted and recorded in the premises of the respective charity and thereafter transcribed. Confidentiality was guaranteed at all times and consent forms signed by each participant beforehand.

Limitations: The research took place within the frame of a paid, applied project. Therefore, the interviews had a strong focus on results and questions were aimed at certain dynamics that had already been determined by the gatekeeper in advance. Since that gatekeeper was the client to the project and simultaneously the CEO of one of the charities, I was introduced to members of staff as the researcher who would look into a possible collaboration with the other organisation. As such, members of staff might have been suspicious towards me, as they might have perceived me as acting in the interest of the CEO and not as an independent researcher. For the same reason, subjects might not have felt comfortable to disclose information about themselves, which is described by Hollway and Jefferson as the problem of the ‘defended’ subject (Hollway and Jefferson, 2001).
Not considering these dynamics disregards the importance of rapport and its possible affects on the research outcome (Robson, 2002) and its lack could lead to a commonly known problem whereby subjects give the answers they think the researcher would like to hear (Bryman, 2008). I tried to counteract such pitfalls by ensuring that each participant is fully informed about the nature of my research and gave them the opportunity to ask further questions prior to the commencement of the recording. During the interviews I gained the impression that trust had indeed been established between me and the participants, as most of them spoke their opinions very freely with remarks such as ‘this is completely confidential, but...’.

Workshops: Two workshops were held with members of both charities. In the first one, a Social Photo Matrix (SPM) was conducted with 14 participants, and although the second workshop was reserved for presenting the project report, data was gathered here too and contributed to the primary data pool.

The SPM, in addition to incorporating the richness of contemporary visual methods, also entails a psychoanalytical perspective on doing research (Sievers, 2008). Borrowing from Stein’s account on organisational consultancy, many workplace phenomena most often exist outside of the immediate awareness of organisational participants: “The surface picture presented to the consultant often is a symptom and symbol (...). Client organizations often do not know what they, at some unrecognized level, already know too well.” (1994, pp. 8-9). Hollway and Jefferson (2001) have referred to this drawback as “the transparent self problem”. Furthermore, Crociani-Windland (2009) comments that not all experiences can be put into words and Hymes (1996) points out that not all can be found out by asking so that images often provide useful prompts for the ‘unknown known’ (Bollas, 1987). All these points of critique support the SPM as alternative research tool. Given the novelty of this method, I include an elongated discussion on its design, philosophy, strengths and weaknesses in appendix one. Here, I will only give a brief overview. Before the SPM, participants are given a theme and are invited to take photographs of any object they associate with it. A random selection of these photos is then projected in a 60 minute session. By coming together in a matrix, “out of which something new can grow as in a uterus” (Lawrence, 2005), participants are invited to share their free associations, amplifications and link without boundaries, what comes into their minds in view of the photographs (Sievers, 2008). The aim is to expand their thinking, as the photographs capture both, a direct object as well as a memory of
experience (Reynolds and Vince, 2007). The SPM proved to be the dominant tool for confirming interpretations made during observations and the fieldwork of this case study.

Limitations: The concept of free association refers to "the mental process of making associations which the reason does not order, repress, or control (...) in order to gain insight into subconscious processes" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). It is questionable whether individuals are able to ‘switch off’ reasoning in such manner, and Bollas remarks that “(e)ven today, many analysts regard free association as a distant and unrealisable ideal.” (2002, p. 9). Similarly, social pressures from other participants might inhibit participants’ confidence to associate freely, despite the efforts of the SPM’s physical set up to overcome these (Warren, 2012). Likewise, collective unconscious defence mechanisms (Bion, 1961) can prevent the flow of free associations.

With regards to the analysis of the SPM, no suggested procedure exists to date. With the creation of a summative framework, Redding Mersky (2012) suggests a process by which participants can find closure; however, no suggestions to theory development are made. From my own research experience I find that free associations cannot be interpreted independently from the photographs that provoked them, making the moving away from these towards a more concluding stage of analysis difficult. Therefore, interpretation beyond conjectures together with theory building derived from it remains highly tentative and is in danger of falling subject to ‘wild analysis’ which Shafer explains occurs when “what could be the case is taken as what is the case.” (1985, p. 281, emphasis original). This latter limitation is counteracted, as explained previously, by the overall multi-method approach to data gathering. As such, the findings from the SPM do not stand alone but are aligned to former, more rigour outcomes of other research tools.

3.3.3. Ethical Concerns

I was in touch with vulnerable children for which I needed a CRB certificate. I also had to take care to appreciate the trust and confidentiality that was offered to me from the charities and the parents when I was invited into their home to observe practitioners’ visits.

Although each interviewee signed a consent form expressing their voluntary participation, further ethical concerns arise when taking into account that they were
selected and directly approached by the CEO of The Fun Trust and a similarly authoritative figure within the hierarchy of The Play Trust. I do not know whether there were internal political dynamics compromising the staff’s voluntary participation.

Permission to use the data gathered during the project for this research was granted by the CEO of the Fun Trust and the corresponding project manager at the Play Trust. Additionally, all participants were informed that data will also be used for the PhD thesis prior to their involvement in the project. Insight into the research outcome other than the detailed report produced for the two charities was offered at any time but never requested to date.

3.4. Case Study 3: “The Convent”

The setting of the third case study was selected due to my wish to study people who remained permanently in their constellation. I wanted to experience the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality of a group who did not come together only Monday to Friday, nine to five, but is permanently bound together. Underlying this choice was the assumption that certainly I would find the dynamic playing an important role in such setting, too, and hence I could further support my conclusion from the literature review that enemy-thinking is innate. I could not think of any such existing group apart from an exotic ancient tribe or a monastic community. For practical purposes, it was decided to try and gain access to the latter. Additionally, the opportunity to study the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in an environment that was in itself created for the very purpose of forming union, which directly opposes enemy-thinking, was intriguing.

Suggestions for suitable communities were made by the university’s chaplain and access was enquired via letter to six convents, but only the one described here accepted. All research intentions were explained via letter correspondence prior to my entry (appendix 2).

3.4.1. The Convent and My Role

Five weeks participant observation took place in an enclosed and silent, UK based, female convent with a community of 22 professed Sisters. The convent community itself did not ask me any further questions before my arrival but asked that once I enter the enclosure I should remain in it for the duration of my stay. As will be discussed in greater detail in the data analysis chapter, my role in the community was
treated as that of a postulant, a nun in her first year of formation, for which I was assigned a personal mentor.

3.4.2. Data Collection Methods: Participant Observation and the SPM

Participant Observation: I took on my role as complete and overt participant observer (Saunders et al., 2008) and produced primary data in the form of fieldnotes from observations and reflections on these and other experiences, as well as informal conversations that happened spontaneously and irregularly during my stay with various members of the community, despite the order being in principle silent. Kaghan, Strauss and Barley et al. (1999) comment that conversations during participant observation are like an ongoing interview. The relevance and authenticity of data gathered during these is further supported by the fact that in such naturally developing conversation, it is the subjects who decide upon the contents of the ‘interview’.

During my fieldwork, two Social Photo Matrix sessions were conducted with 12 sisters. Secondary data, such as historical information, brochures, prayer books and guidelines about the convent life were also investigated.

Participant observation is a research method that generates interpretative theory grounded in the realities of the here and now of daily human existence (Agar, 1986; Delamont, 2004; Dewalt and Dewalt, 2002). It entails a strategy for gaining access to otherwise inaccessible dimensions of human life and experience and as such enables the researcher to immerse into the social environment of participants, from where it is possible to understand the world from their frame of reference; a state Cooley refers to as ‘sympathetic introspection’ (1969).

Hence, it is a method that brings the researcher closer to the subject’s view on reality, that enables – as best as possible – to gain insight into and from the perspective of the subjects, to see with their eyes, to feel from their point of view, to understand their line of thoughts. The task of interpreting that world, as argued by Manis and Meltzer (1967), can only be achieved through participation with those involved, and only if the language that is used to communicate its meaning is understood (Hall, 1976).

Along with that, one of the core strengths of this method includes its ability to unveil the meanings that people attach to their actions (Delamont, 2004; Diamond and Allcorn, 2003; Waddington, 2004). Likewise, Smith (1981) proclaims that the participant observer can gain further insight into the underlying motives of people’s
actions, because (s)he can ‘feel’ from the standpoint of an insider and explain the subjects’ world of reality, or, in other words, one can understand the frame of reference of the participant in action (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

During note taking I was also concerned with transparency issues, as I wanted to enable the readers of this research account to reconstruct my line of thought during data interpretation and also to come to their own conclusions. Hence, real time documentation of descriptive observations, known as ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), as well as narrative accounts of my own emotional state, namely experiential observations, was essential.

**Limitations:** On the one hand, my being treated by the community as a postulant was a ‘real’ role, showing further the high degree of integration I enjoyed in my research setting. On the other hand, a postulant does not have as many rights in the community as does a professed sister after seven years of formation; so for example, I was not able to attend the weekly community meetings. Whether these weekly meetings would have been a fruitful source for more data gathering I do not know.

Furthermore, being given a mentor had positive and negative effects on my data gathering. On the one hand, I was able to ask questions or clarify my interpretations whenever needed. This gave me ample opportunity to ‘test’ my own interpretations with the subjects, which is suggested by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) to strengthen the validity of an ethnographic finding. However, my mentor also acted as a ‘gatekeeper’ – literally letting me in, but also keeping me out. In the first week or so, some of the other sisters did not talk to me directly, of which I will give a detailed example in the data chapter of case study three.

**3.4.3. Ethical Concerns**

During my stay with the community, each sister was permanently subject to my primary data gathering. Their participation was in so far voluntary as the community as a whole had decided to accept my request of allowing me into their home for five weeks. However, as I learnt two weeks into my stay, there were four sisters who were opposed to my entering. Nevertheless, due to the community’s principle of obedience, once the decision had been made to grant me access, it was supported by all members as though it were their own. Therefore, I never learnt who these four sisters might have been, but one needs to keep in mind that even they were subjected to my observations and data gathering. Moreover, had any of the sisters wanted to withdraw
from the research, this would not have been possible, because there was literally nowhere else for them to go; I was a constant present in their own home. The only place where I could not observe the sisters was in their own private ‘cells’, as it is a rule of the convent life that sisters are not allowed to visit each other in the cells.

I was aware of the potential for my presence to interrupt the order and calmness of the convent life. This was a cause of concern because the nuns’ spiritual life is centred around the stability of a strict routine and the management of daily tasks with great calmness, efficiency and discipline. It stands out rather drastically if any one member of the community does not ‘pull their weight’, as it would affect, not to say even upset, the functioning of the whole community.

3.5. Ethnography
3.5.1. The Underlying Research Approach

Above, I have presented each applied research method in detail for the three case studies. I will now turn to discussing the underlying approach into which these methods can be summarised, namely ethnographic research. This is advantageous for emphasising the underlying methodological consistency throughout the entire research design. In the frame of the ethnographic approach to my research, I am going to discuss the relevant concepts of Verstehen, countertransference and affect, intersubjectivity and ‘going native’, thereby paying particular attention to the relationship between the researcher and ‘the researched’, as well as the mode of reflexivity that comes with this relationship.

Verstehen, empathetic understanding & Nacherleben. I feel that adding principles of Verstehen to the discussion will help clarify my personal methodological stance that has shaped my research practice. Primarily, Verstehen has a concern for the subjective state of human kind and how people in life give meaning to the social world around them (Weber, 1962). It is the process of interpretive understanding through the empathetic examination of social phenomena, making empathy a key dynamic of the sense-making process. In 1924 Dilthey introduced Verstehen into sociology as a first-person participatory perspective in the theoretical frame of hermeneutics (cited by Harrington, 2001) and thereby opposed the external objectifying third-person perspective of explanation (Erklärung). Although I am not presenting this research from a sociological perspective, the same principles of Verstehen and empathy pertain.
By applying empathetic understanding to fieldwork, Martin (1980) differentiates between three forms of empathy. Next to having knowledge of something (for example knowing that a certain ingroup is opposed to another outgroup) and adaptation of that knowledge (being opposed to that other group oneself), he postulates that it is assimilative empathy that the participant observer seeks, for if possessed, the researcher can “get around in the group easily, speak their language and is on joking terms with them...” (Martin, 1980, p. 110). He links this to a new understanding of ‘going native’ (Becker, 1958) and explains that it is the assimilative sense of going native, whereby the researcher operates in the community with ease, comfort and familiarity, with so called ‘social know-how’, that the participant observer benefits from, rather than the adoptive sense. This distinction is important when understanding through the process of reliving (Nacherleben) (Dilthey, 1989).

Chang (2008) adds that a true understanding of others requires empathetic understanding, based on principles of Verstehen. According to him, this entails an act of putting aside one’s own framework and “seeing others’ experiences within the framework of their own” (Geertz, 1984, p. 126). In the Malinowskian-Geertzian sense, this empathetic understanding is achieved from the ‘native’s’ point of view, and although ‘perfect Verstehen’ is beyond human ability, attempts to incorporate the underlying philosophy can prevent premature judgements about others and enhance rich understanding of the ‘unknown’. Therefore, Lingerfelder (1996) postulates that the participant observer needs to deny his/her own self so as to immerse with and in others. Along with that, the genuine effort to Verstehen others often engenders crossing between self and Other (Chang, 2008).

In case study one, I am bringing to the fore my own Verstehen of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality as one of ‘Us’. The fact that I am analysing my own memoirs shows that I cannot separate myself from the one-sided perspective given. In case study two, on the other hand, I am trying to achieve this sense of ‘empathetic understanding’, by getting to know the charities very well, getting a ‘feel’ for the way they ‘do things around here’ and simultaneously to get to know the Other from their perspective – in contrast to case study one, it is their Other that I am investigating, not mine.

Countertransference & affect. In line with the above principle of Verstehen, psychoanalytical thinking does not only outline a theoretical framework through which the human world can be understood, but also its own methodological approach through which such a world can be investigated. Transference and countertransference
constitutes the notion that an individual does not exist in emotional isolation; rather, emotions experienced by one individual are the result of dynamics caused by one or more other individuals.

Hinshelwood and Skogstad (2000) refer to countertransference as the process of the researcher becoming a subject to their own studies, and proclaim that this is in so far advantageous as their own emotional reactions can now be investigated to gain understanding of the situation. Schwartz and Schwartz (1955) refer to this dynamic as ‘sympathetic identification’ and add that “since the investigator has control neither over his affective responses nor their effects on this observations, he must contend with his feelings as part of his data” (p. 99). Again, it will become evident during data presentation that I did indeed gain insight from such dynamics.

As Hinshelwood (1991) states, it is unavoidable to be emotionally involved in a participative study (see also Schwartz and Schwartz, 1995). Linking this back to the concept of transference and countertransference, it is these projections which are seen as a means of communication on a non-verbal, emotional level, whereby the researcher introjectively identifies with the subjects (Hinshelwood, 1991). In other words, the emotional state of the researcher, the countertransference, can be understood as a reaction to the subjects’ transferences (Diamond and Allcorn, 2003). In reference to this notion goes the psychoanalytical understanding of empathy (Bion, 1963), and Van Maanen (2011) stresses that this is a special personal quality of the ethnographer.

Taking an empathetic stance is one of the core elements of psychoanalytically informed research, and the investigator’s self-awareness becomes a means for interpreting transferences and countertransferences, “revealing the subjective and intersubjective world of work” (Diamond and Allcorn, 2003; 496).

The implications for my primary research were the acknowledgement that I was not separable from the subjects of my studies but inescapably became part of it, making the crossing between self and Other as described by Chang above, an emotional one. Considering the way I, as part of the group in all three case study organisations, was influenced in my emotions and thoughts then led to valuable insight into the subject matter under investigation. Examples of these will be given later during data presentation.
**Intersubjectivity.** The discussion so far leads to another relevant principle of participative studies, that of intersubjectivity. Benjamin (1994) defines intersubjectivity in terms of a relationship of mutual recognition, where each person experiences the Other as a 'like subject', another mind who can be felt with, yet has a distinct, separate centre of feeling and perception. It is this principle that I will now turn to in some detail in order to further explain my choice of research methods.

Modern psychoanalysis has assumed individuals to be discrete entities that act externally upon each other (Schulte, 2000). Post-modernity, however, has witnessed a deconstruction of this 'sovereign self' (Cavell, 1991) whereby the initiative behind human behaviour does not solely spring from an individual’s inner world, but resides in a network of feelings and thoughts for ourselves and others that make it part of our lived social world. Along with this, Modell concludes that “psychoanalysis is fundamentally intersubjective.” (1997, p. 44). The post-modern development is also recognisable in Heidegger’s notion of Dasein and Mitsein, of ‘being-in-the-world’ with Others (1993). Therefore one could argue that although our inner life is subjective to ourselves, it also entails a public character; it was evoked by dynamics external to our psyche. Consequently, subjectivity shifts with context (Schulte, 2000) and the meaning of our behaviour is only interpretable within that context.

Stern (1985) and Crossley (1995), for example, explain that the ‘intersubjective capacity’, the capacity to experience one’s self with Other is a primary, innate psychological need through which security and attachment needs can themselves be met. Consequently, intersubjective capacity requires a shared framework of meanings and allows the recognition that an experience can overlap with that of another person.

In agreement with the above, Coelho and Figueiredo (2003) stress the need to recognise Otherness as one of the elements that constitute singular subjectivity and acknowledge this psychoanalytical notion as being in direct contrast to the ‘I’ as self-constituent unit and the classical subject-object opposition of modern thought.

As mentioned earlier, intersubjectivity helps me to understand the importance of the relationship between the subjects of my study and me. By recognising that research subjects can contribute as much value to data collection as can I, I allow for inclusion of their own interpretations and my ability to alter my understanding of the research environment according to the insight they give me.
Going native. The increasing consideration of intersubjectivity in social science research has had great implications on the objective-subjective debate of whether the researcher should avoid or strive towards ‘going native’.

Advocates of the modernist school of thought have traditionally warned that involvement is a threat to objectivity, as the research gets contaminated by subjectivity. In the same line of thought Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) alert the researcher of not ‘succumbing to affect’; Wax (1971) in yet other words, stresses the importance of avoiding ‘becoming the phenomenon’. McCall and Simmons (1969) add accounts whereby participant observation was accused of observer bias, personal equations and ‘hearsay’ without rigour.

Promoted predominantly by the Chicago School, the ‘pioneer’ of sociological anthropology, the researcher was encouraged to maintain a separation towards the observed so as to not endanger the objectivity of the scientific enterprise. Pollner and Emerson explicitly state that “the very notion of a science is possible only to the extent that these distinctions (between the observer and the observed) can be sustained” (1983, p. 251). Along with that, irrational feelings failed to become subjected to analysis. Later, symbolic interactionists acknowledged the affective role of the researcher, such as his/her own anxieties, confusion or loneliness, but still regarded these as a hindrance to unbiased data (Hunt, 1989).

By assuming ‘neutrality’ the researcher is expected to report from an Archimedean standpoint of objectivity in order to preserve the validity of findings. However, this position does not exist but denies the very essence of being human, namely, to be influenced and constructed by feelings and emotions. The approach taken in this study is directly concerned with the interrelationship of the researcher and the researched and what impact the quality of this relationship can have on the entire research process. It is more fruitful for my own research intentions to acknowledge that the researcher is always within discourse and unable to escape it. There is no neutral ground outside it which would enable a so called meta-analysis (Fleetwood, 2005), no ‘view from nowhere’, no ‘God’s eye view’ (Reichenbach, 1959).

Post-modernist advocates have argued that the fantasy of an ‘objective’ stance denies the very fruitful source of the researcher’s own emotions as primary data. Kreb (1999) for example introduces the term ‘edgewalker’ to describe those researchers who have
significant lived experiences with different communities through which they develop solid cross-cultural competence while maintaining a healthy understanding of self.

Hence, a method that brings the researcher closer to gaining insight into and from the perspective of the subjects, to see with their eyes, to feel from their point of view, to understand their line of thoughts, was sought after when deciding on an appropriate method for my primary data gathering. The task of interpreting that world can only be achieved through participation with those involved (Manis and Meltzer, 1967) and only if the language that is used to communicate its meaning is understood (Hall, 1976). Accordingly, during my research, I endeavoured to immerse myself as closely to the subjects’ way of life as possible. In case study one, this was easy as I am reporting from my own memoires. In case study two, I had to probe my interpretations of data on frequent occasions with the subjects, and in case study three, I strived to imitate a nuns’ daily life as best as I could.

*Principles of reflexivity.* Having made the distinction between opinions on the usefulness of going native along the extremes of objectivity and subjectivity, I will align my position on research reflexivity within the same argument. Haynes defines reflexivity as

> “an awareness of the researcher’s role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes.” (2012, p. 72).

In agreement, Weick states that reflexivity can serve to deepen critical thinking as it becomes itself an additional ‘data platform’: “it is about seeing oneself in the data.” (2002, p. 894).

Johnson and Duberley’s (2003) differentiation between three types of reflexivity is useful to make my own stance clear. Methodological reflexivity, so they state, is understood as a research tool that helps the management researcher to sustain objective inquiry (Mulkay, 1992) and to retain social and intellectual distance (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Such attitude towards reflexivity would promote the earlier discussed objectivist belief that ‘going native’ is to be avoided. Hyper-reflexivity, on the other hand, results in a potentially endless spiral of introspective reflexive iterations, thereby lacking discursive closure. The repudiation of any separation of subject and object (Chia, 1995; Kilduff and Mehra, 1997), which is characteristic for this perspective on reflexivity, brings along with it the transfer of authorship and
control of the research away from the researcher to the researched. A complete immersion with the researched and the striving to ‘going native’ are promoted.

Lastly, Johnson and Duberley (2003) introduce the term epistemic reflexivity, which I believe to be the closest stance to my own. Here, the major challenge remains that of achieving democratic co-operation between researchers and researched; however, no matter how much the researcher engages those being researched in writing up, his/her status as author is maintained, thereby engaging into a ‘hermeneutic relationship with reality’ (2003, p. 1289).

Reflexivity and autoethnography. Especially the data collection method of memoirs, reflections on my own feelings and reactions during fieldwork, as well as principles of countertransference and intersubjectivity remind strongly of the focus on self advocated by autoethnography, and as Humphreys points out, “the use of vignettes is explicitly (self-)reflexive.” (2005, p. 852).

Along with that, my research approach does indeed contain elements of autoethnography, but does not adopt a sufficiently strong emphasis on introspection to be classed as one. Such introspection would be achieved by Johnson and Duberley’s above portrayed hyper-reflexivity (2003), which, in Lynch’s words, runs the danger of turning into a process of reflections ‘ad infinitum’, symbolised in his argument by “a hall of mirrors” (2000, p. 28) due to the iteration of recursive pattern (Collins and Yearley, 1992). Emphasising the disadvantage of such a radically introspective approach to reflexivity, Weick adds that the focus would be on me as researcher rather than on the objects under investigation, whereby “(a)ttention to self-as-theorist can become a drag on theory development, when that attention becomes an end in itself.” (2002, p. 893). Likewise, Lynch expresses the same critique in a yet stronger metaphor by stating that “reflexivity is (in this case) likened to a demonic machine that, once set in motion, devours everything in its path and then turns on itself.” (2000, p. 46).

Further, autoethnographic reflexivity has often been criticised for assuming that by being reflexive, superior insight, the minimisation of bias, and consequently an approximation to ‘truth’ can be achieved (Lynch, 2000, May, 2000). In disagreement with this notion, I have presented my own researcher bias by clearly articulating in the introductory chapter the influence of my life experience and patterns of thinking prior to commencing this research on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, which was predominantly based on negative experiences of group life. I argue that if one takes
bias out of the equation – which is of course never possible – one is left not with truth, but with nothing.

3.5.2. Real Proof? Transparency, Validity and Other Concerns

A lot of discussion around the concepts of validity, reliability and generalisability has been provoked by the urge to fit their positivistic definitions into a relativist social science (Ellis and Bochner, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985), for example, have tried to solve this problem of incompatibility of ontological presuppositions by introducing new alternative terms, such as trustworthiness, credibility, dependability and confirmability. In 1993, Lather contributed to the pool of concepts with ironic, paralogical, rhizomatic and voluptuous validity. Overlooking these discussions, Kvale (2002) stresses that a critical attitude towards knowledge claims is indeed a necessity of scientific research practice. However, when such a critique is extended to a sceptical level where it dominates research discourse, the quest for validity may prove self-defeating. Rather than questioning the research throughout, he recommends approaching the research process in such a way as to guarantee transparency of data gathering and interpretation procedures. I have tried to incorporate this principle throughout this research by disclosing my own preconceptions of the 'Us versus Them' mentality created by my rather negative past experiences of group membership. Additionally, I will present as much of the primary data as possible as well as creating a narrative that leads from preliminary reflections on that primary data through to theoretical conceptualisations inspired by it.

In line with the ‘emotional turn’ in social science research (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009; Kets de Vries, 1995) the benchmark against which to measure validity has been challenged, namely objective reality. Validity, from this perspective, is not an absolute but relative concept, understood and adhered to in relation to the scientific paradigm that informs the research agenda. So, for example, Ellis and Bochner hold that for gaining validity, the told story needs to have verisimilitude and evoke ”in the readers a feeling that the experience described is life-like, believable, and possible.” (2000, p. 751).

In addition to the demand for a new interpretation and application of validity, Bochner (2001) argues that reliability is anchored through a narrative that is interconnected with life and Denzin and Lincoln (2011) add that reliability need to reflect honesty and truthfulness. Likewise, Ellis and Bochner suggest that generalisability is tested by
readers as they determine if the narrative ‘speaks’ to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know. Lastly, Stake (2005) adds that such generalisations carry a sense of empathetic understanding from one social world to another, providing a representative experience for the reader.

McCall and Simmons (1969) on the other hand, understand ethnography as a method that is indeed suitable for generating new empirical generalisations. For instance, Suttles’ participant observation of a slum (1968) resulted in general theories of community behaviour. Irwin’s prison study (1970) led to a universal critique of contemporary prisons. Likewise, Goffman’s hospital enquiry (1961) gave birth to his renowned theory of ‘total institutions’.

Postulating a more general perspective, Martin (1980) declares that the quality of a study is dependent on how well the researcher ‘gets on’ with the informants. Similarly, Tsai (in progress) introduces the term ‘relationality’ as a means to verify ethnographic findings and presents it as a measure of being connected to one’s informants in dialogue and affect. It is this kind of ‘relational validity’ that I strive to achieve.

3.5.3. My Own View on Reality

My research design and chosen research methods clearly fall within the paradigm of social constructionism (figure 7).
In order to communicate my own private views on the nature of reality and knowledge in more detail, I will differentiate between radical social constructionism and moderate social constructionism (Elder-Vass, 2012). Smith (2010) elaborates on a similar division and uses the terminology strong and weak social constructionism. The radical/strong classifications deny completely the existence of any objective reality (Gergen, 2001), and claims that everything that exists in the world does so depending on the way we think about it. Moderate/weak social constructionism, on the other hand, is more compatible with a realist understanding of the social world (see for example Nightingale and Cromby 1999; Sayer, 2000) and distinguishes between elements of the world which are dependent on our thinking about them, and others, which are not. Therefore, moderate social constructionists, to which I align myself, believe that any of the former elements can be socially constructed, any of the latter, however, cannot. My research interest in the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality makes up such a socially constructed element.

I believe that the meaning of our social world is indeed the result of a human construct, for it is human beings who make sense of it, each individually, and subjectively, and sense-making can be a synonym of sense-giving. Hence, I hold the opinion that it is individuals’ realities, and the underlying, often unconscious reasons for how they were derived that are much more ‘sense-full’ and worth investigating than trying to ‘prove’ that a reality is objectively valid by testing its generalisability and universalism. This is to say that while I am convinced such objective external reality does exist, it will only ever be perceivable to us as human beings through the social construction of our own knowledge (Girod-Séville and Perret, 2001) – unfortunately, there is no more ‘direct route’ to it: “…the social world is already interpreted before the social scientist arrives.” (Blaikie, 2007, p. 36)

Within this perspective, Girod-Séville and Perret (2001) further explicate that the social world is fabricated as people within it interact with each other, which brings along the importance of emphasis on shared meaning and intersubjectivity in research that I have discussed in detail: “Society is indeed built up by activity that expresses subjective meaning.” (Berger and Luckman, 1966, p. 18). Drawing the same conclusions and further supporting my research design, Weick (1995) urges that the intensive examination of a smaller number of cases is preferable to the selective examination of a larger number.
3.6. **Data Analysis**

Qualitative data analysis is the process of systematically searching, arranging and making sense of the data (Creswell, 2002). By doing so, it became evident to me very quickly that it is not a distinct phase from data collection but is a simultaneous and continuous process (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). Miles and Huberman (1994) note that the act of capturing data may shape what is said and in turn influence how it is analysed, and following the same line of thought Richardson adds that “writing is not just a mopping-up activity at the end of a research project’ but ‘a way of ‘knowing’ - a method of discovery and analysis.” (1990, p. 516). In agreement with this notion, Chang points out that moving on from data collection with the aim of gaining a meaningful structure out of a “messy pile of fragmented bits” (2008, p. 126) is a difficult endeavour and requires a comprehensive approach. He also advocates that the commencement of data analysis and interpretation does not necessarily bring along the abandonment of data collection; rather, this is likely to continue when the author tries to fill gaps and enrich certain accounts.

While the analysis of interviews of this research clearly followed after these were transcribed, the texts I constructed during memoire writing, observations and participant observation are themselves a mixture of descriptions of experiences on the one hand, and interpretations and analytic attempts of these on the other hand. Consequently, as also supported by many sources (see for example Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Schatzmann and Strauss, 1973) data gathering and analysis are not separated, and neither is their representation in this thesis. Chang picks up on an important characteristic of this kind of approach: I as author of this research am simultaneously data generator, collector and interpreter. Consequently, the fieldwork is not left behind with a concluded narrative that can then be analysed using techniques such as narrative analysis. As Denzin and Lincoln explain: "The processes of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation are neither terminal nor mechanical. They are always emergent, unpredictable, and unfinished.” (1994, p. 479).

Van Maanen (2011) adds to this that the ethnographer’s task is to ‘recontextualise’ the gathered data, thereby presenting and analysing it at the same time. And even while still in the field, deciding on what and what not to record is a process already saturated with interpretation (Atkinson, 1992). Furthermore, Chang elicits that data analysis and
interpretation itself cannot be distinctively divided but remind more of the act of ‘gear shifting’ within an underlying, joint process. While analysis urges the researcher to stay close to the data and work with it, interpretation shifts focus to finding meaning beyond data (Creswell, 2002). Chang clarifies that

“(w)hen you classify and connect fragmented data according to themes [...] you are still doing data analysis [...]. When you search for connections between your data and sociocultural contexts, you have moved on to data interpretation.” (2008, p. 129).

3.6.1. Strategies for Data Analysis

After conclusion of the fieldwork I was faced with the task of constructing a storyline through the data, sufficiently rigour to replace mess (Marcus, 1994) with structure. However, I sought to achieve this whilst retaining the richness of my experience through the very same effort of constructing its authentic representation, without which the reader would not be able to “come away with a sense of what it must have felt like.” (Ellis and Bochner, 1992, p. 80).

Determining an appropriate strategy for data analysis was consequently difficult as many theoretical approaches and their definitions, as well as distinctions among them are not commonly agreed on and often overlap in practice (Jupp, 2006). Saunders et al. (2009) for example, present three different approaches that contain elements consistent with the approach to data analysis taken in this research study:

1. Grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 2008),
2. Template analysis (King, 2004),

These three approaches are similar to the extent that they emphasise the condensation, grouping and ordering of meaning (Saunders et al., 2009). Their main difference lies in the degree of flexibility in their set procedure. Grounded theory, for example, is suitable for this research as it supports the generation of theory around a core theme. However, its systematic, inflexible procedure as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (2008) means that any deviation from it makes the results questionable.

Template analysis is in comparison more flexible, as amendments to categories and the hierarchy of sub-categories is welcomed throughout data analysis (King, 2004) and has happened so also in this research (appendix 3). However, it assumes that there actually exist higher and lower order categories, restricting the possibility of recognising a reciprocally balanced relationship between these. Lastly, analytic
induction also assumes a less defined explanation of a phenomena (Yin, 2003) and intends, through purposefully selected cases, like in this research project, to explore these more. The danger of this approach is, however, to assume in general that other cases with the same conditions would lead to the same phenomena.

Jupp (2006) offers a summative definition of these approaches under the term 'thematic analysis'. Other sources also refer to this as content analysis, although the latter was originally thought to be a purely quantitative method (Czarniawska, 2004). Accordingly, templates, or themes, denote a list of codes and categories that represent themes as they are revealed from the data, as well as the relationship between them. This method allows for a flexible approach to data analysis in the frame of interpretivism and induction; without assuming less analytic rigour (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996).

Additionally, such procedure allows for a combination of induction and deduction, whereby the researcher has clear theoretical concepts in mind but remains open to the possibility that these might change. As evident in the literature review, I started the research with a more deductive preference, convinced that the need for enemies is indeed innate to human nature. It will become clear that unexpected findings have forced me to expose such assumptions to further, more inductive scrutiny based on primary observations and experiences.

3.6.2. Chang’s Analysis and Interpretation Strategy

After sighting of the above broad approaches to data analysis, I have chosen to approximate my strategy to Chang’s (2008) ten suggested steps, as his framework offers me a rigorous and more detailed approach to analysis. The ten steps also present a suitable mixture of inductive and deductive approaches, with the earlier ones oriented closer towards analysis and the later ones more targeted at interpretation:

(1) Search for Recurring Topics – categorical labelling of frequent patterns
(2) Look for Cultural Themes – identification of overarching themes

These two steps were conducted together during the initial reading and re-reading of the primary data (Maxwell, 2005). I thereby kept memos of my impressions of salient patterns so as to code and organise my data as suggested by Chang (appendix 3). Eventually this led me to derive at key themes as units of further analysis.
(3) Identify Exceptional Occurrences – Discovering of new perspectives

The interviewee’s use of metaphors in case study one, as well as my experiencing of conflict within the convent community of case study three are examples of such exceptional occurrences that incited me to put into question my own preconceptions about the phenomena under investigation.

(4) Analyse Inclusion and Omission – questioning the absence of data

Especially during the fieldwork for case study three I had to eventually admit that the reason for why I could not witness the group dynamics I was expecting to find was due to my inflexible understanding about the nature of the meaning of ‘group’ itself.

(5) Connect the Present with the Past – Establishing a connection to past data

I omitted this step.

(6) Analyse Relationships Between Self and Others – Considering the interconnectivity

This step is of importance for my approach as I have gained significant insight into the phenomenon under investigation due to reflection on my relationship to the subject groups of all three case studies. Likewise, the applied principles of Verstehen and intersubjectivity introduced earlier lend themselves to this step.

(7) Compare Cases – Identification of differences and similarities

The insights gained from all three case studies are considered together in the summary chapter. However, such a comparison did not take place consciously and explicitly during data analysis.

(8) Contextualise Broadly – Interpretation of events within their environment

Although I did not focus on this step in great detail during the data chapters, I did consider the different environments of all three case studies in the summary chapter.

(9) Compare with social Science Constructs – Concepts to explain social phenomena

(10) Frame with Theories – Establishing the theoretical framework

These last two steps were conducted together, whereby Bion’s concept of groupishness offered a starting point into applicable literature, and contributions from,
above all, Turquet (1975, 1985) provided the main theoretical framework for this research. As a consequence, my theoretical understanding was mainly advanced by the primary data gained from case study three. However, through the establishment of this framework, I was then able to 'take a second look' at case studies one and two so as to gain a deeper understanding of the case materials through application of the new framework (see Chapter eight).

I chose this method for the following reasons. First of all, in agreement with Chang (2008), I do not perceive my primary data as a finished or completed text that is separated from me, which I can then return to and analyse ‘from the outside’, such as would be the case in forms of narrative analysis that concentrate more on the ‘how’ than on the ‘what’ (for example a structural or somatic analysis). Rather, the reading of my own writing catapults me back into the field, may that be FutureCo, The Fun Trust or the convent, for which reason the analysis does not only grow out of the recorded primary data, but also out of my memories evoked by their sighting. Along with this line of thought, I see thematic analysis as a means to present to the reader the case material as it develops from its gathering, through its presentation, to its analysis; an approach Emerson, Fretz and Shaw refer to as ‘integrative strategy’ (2001).

A thematic analysis is also useful for theorising across a number of cases (Jupp, 2006), such as is subject to this research project. While I do not intend to make cross-references between the three case studies before chapter eight, this type of analysis will enable me to compare themes in the data gathered through different research methods within each case study, such as for example participant observations, interviews, the SPM sessions and secondary data. Therefore, I believe thematic analysis also to be consistent with the chosen multi-method approach of the research design.

**Limitations.** The most dominant drawback of thematic analysis, formulated by Rorty (1991), is the assumption that language is an unambiguous route to meaning, and hence the function of representation is not challenged. In this research I address this issue to an extent by an awareness of ambiguity and through rigour in seeking transparency of my own words to myself. As explained earlier, I am not able to separate myself from my writing so as to analyse what hidden meaning I as author might have placed behind the choice of my words – this is not within the frame of the objectives of this research.
I want to avoid the impression that concentrating on the content of the narrative, rather than 'how' it is told means I am trying to represent the 'truth' in my fieldwork. I have stated in the introduction that this research is influenced by my life story, therefore avoiding the "It-is-true-because-I-was-there" attitude of naïve realism (Czarniawska, 1998), while simultaneously emphasising that it is my truth, however subjective or biased it may be. This stance enables me to take the written word as meaning and neglect its representational function, because I have written it. As Emmerson et al. state: “fieldnotes are selective, purposed, angled, voiced, because they are authored.” (2001, p. 106). Along with this, Johnson and Duberley’s (2003) epistemic reflexivity applied during data gathering is maintained as well throughout the analysis.
Chapter 4 : Case Study 1 Data Presentation & Preliminary Analysis

'Clericals’ versus 'Industrials’ at FutureCo

To my own astonishment, constructing and working through my memories as well as conducting the interview with an Industrial (a term I apply to refer to factory workers, one of 'Them’), led me to insights into the 'Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo that I had not considered before, despite my former three-year employment with the company. As an addition to my memoires, the interview enabled me to piece together a more balanced and detailed image of the dynamic that includes accounts from the Other’s perspective.

The analysis will be presented in two parts. This chapter will depict accounts of two individuals; me on the one hand as representative of the 'Clericals’ (a term I apply to refer to office workers, one of 'Us’), and the Interviewee on the other hand as representative of the Industrials. My memoires will be shared in full, as this will help ground the reader in my experience. Extracts from the interview (appendix 4 shows the full transcript) with the Industrial will be added in order to support the deduction of the following five key themes:

4.2. Features of the 'Us versus Them’ mentality that are readily observable,

4.3. Task-related and physical divisions between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’,

4.4. The role of the trade union in creating and driving the split, as well as

4.5. Management’s involvement in it.

In a summative manner, the consequences of the dynamic will be discussed with regards to the severity of the animosity caused, the unconscious conforming of both parties ('Us’ and ‘Them’) to it and the resulting distortion in perception of self and Other (section 4.6.).

In the later chapter (“A second look at Case Study 2”), I will revisit the data at hand by applying a newly constructed theoretical framework. I have chosen to structure this research in this way, as that framework resulted directly out of the working through the primary data of case study three; I was therefore not knowledgeable about it at this stage.
4.1. Memoires from FutureCo – Retracing ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’

‘Us versus Them’ thinking was a permanent companion of every-day life at FutureCo and of how it used to ‘feel’ working there. I can recollect plenty of concrete examples where this becomes apparent, and would like to share them here as individual memoires.

Memoire 1: Lunch time in the canteen

Five past twelve. I open the big double doors, and step into one of the six huge dining halls that can easily seat 300 people each. Immediately, I am greeted by a cool draft. The path runs along the middle of it, lengthwise, to meet another fire door marking the opposite end, the second entrance. Tunnel vision. The food counters are located in the centre of this hall, half way down the walkway - runway. I continue to enter, hectic as usual, picturing the huge pile of paper work awaiting me on my desk. I brace myself for choosing a dish, queuing to pay for it, finding a seat, eating and returning back to my office, all within 40 minutes (it takes five minutes to get back). Trying to breathe calmly and relax. My high heels are clicking on the concrete fast paced and determined while my gaze stares straight ahead.

Despite my stubborn focus (I might be frowning), I cannot help but be distracted by the dynamics of the location, only a couple of seconds and metres into the hall. Something is tearing at my steady straight walk. To my left, I have approximately five long table rows full of (mainly) men, all dressed in the predominantly grey with bits of blue factory floor health and safety uniforms (overall and jacket, fire proof) – like a bunch of soldiers. Some of them have newspapers resting next to their plate or are reading them – literally all the same, the ‘Bild’, but certainly most of them are staring right at me, not necessarily into my face, and not necessarily with a smile. The way they are sitting is rather chauvinistic, portentous; certainly making me feel even more edgy, or at least uncomfortable.

To my right, more people. The first few table rows empty – buffer zone -, and then, a safe distance from the Industrials, the Clericals are sitting down, many of whom I know, even if only superficially; more scattered around than the large groupings of the Industrials. No loud laughing, much more contained body language. Not only newspapers, predominantly the ‘Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung’, but all kinds of paper work. Some with laptops, some writing, some discussing one-to-one what seems to be a business matter. There are many more women on this side. All are sophisticatedly dressed, in suits, just like me. They also seem to talk more, much more conversations going on here compared to over there among the Industrials. I certainly feel much less noticed here, at least I do not ‘feel’ any X-rays scanning me. I do not feel out of place in this part of my walk for food. Somehow I feel I belong here. Even before I get my food on a tray, I have made up my mind about where I am going to sit to consume it in a friendly environment.

---

2 Equivalent to ‘the Sun’
3 Equivalent to ‘the Times’
Memoire 2: Sharing lunch with one of ‘Them’

Clericals sit on the same table row as Industrials extremely rarely, and if so, then only on either ends of the row, creating a ‘safe’ distance of a good few metres. It seems to be a very important task to do so. I am not aware of this decision but rather do so automatically, guided by some other decision-maker. The divided atmosphere in the hall is so great, I do not really have a choice – it is not a question of choice in the first place. However, there was one specific occasion when I did make a conscious choice:

Coincidently, I have known one of the Industrials privately for more than 10 years; we went to school together. While I am doing an on-the-job training in the ‘office world’ of FutureCo, he is an apprentice, learning to become an electro-technician and hence wearing the factory uniform. Last weekend we made plans to meet up in the canteen, so I come looking for him. I wave at him when I spot him (is this appropriate?) and go to get my food, clicking on the concrete and all. As I return carrying my tray, aiming my movements towards my friend, I feel something really unusual, unsettling. I feel as though I am breaking some kind of rule the moment I put my tray on the table and pull the chair out – directly opposite my friend and only a few meters away from the rest of his group. We are sitting in the buffer zone, in ‘no man’s land’. It feels as though I have ‘upset the apple cart’, and as a response, the whole canteen stops talking, stops chewing, stops reading, stops breathing, and turns its frowning face at me, eyes squinted, mouths wide open in a state of horrified disbelief.

Memoire 3: Food for all

During primary data collection for my bachelor dissertation, I had the opportunity to ‘swap sides’ and become one of ‘Them’ during eight weeks of participant observation in the production lines.

For heaven’s sake, lunch break, finally. I am so bored, I actually feel depressed, numb, dumb. And damn hungry, I have been hearing my stomach rumbling for the past hour. I’m tired. Exhausted, my body is heavy. I just need some food in me. Me and my group stroll around the corner, the food shop is only a minute’s walk away. Thank goodness for that, 40 minutes are not enough to go all the way to the big canteen, queue, stuff your face, and rush back. There would not be a minute left to have a rest.

I’m queuing. Four people in front of me. What am I going to have, I am wondering. I have a look along the counter, the choice is the same everyday: Fries, Frankfurter sausages, meatballs in a bun, boiled eggs, fried eggs. Very hearty dishes. Plastic bottles of ketchup and mustard on the side. A basket with bananas and apples next to the till.

There are not many people around, nobody is talking really. In the background the even humming of the machinery, interrupted by an even rhythm of deep thumps, noticeable through your feet and into the hips – the press. Not much lighting, not much room, so everyone carries their food back to the group’s break room. Despite a
huge cleaning gang, dirt assembles into a place polluted by industrial repetitive noise and smell, with little day light and the domination of inhuman robotics.

It’s my turn. I order a boiled egg and a sausage in a bun, pay – oh, surprisingly cheap, and squirt some mustard onto the bun. Then I carry my cardboard plate back to the group’s break room where I will try to collate some of the strength I have left over for the rest of the late shift. No one is talking. It’s 7:45pm. Another two hours. Next week is worse, night shift from 10pm - 6am before early shift again 6am-2pm the week after. I feel lethargic, got nothing to say.

*Portraying a typical lunch break in my usual job looks quiet different:*

It’s past 2pm, and I haven’t had lunch yet. I ask my colleagues if anyone is up for a bite to eat, two join me. We pace down to the canteen and get there about five minutes later, haven’t got much time though. I think to myself, well, if I am few minutes late it doesn’t really matter; at the end of the day I very often don’t take my lunch break at all, and I have long lost track of my overtime. It’s kind of an unwritten rule, and you know you are expected to work as long as it takes to get the project done. I am investigating the meal offers. A selection of sophisticated world food and delicatessen; Indian cuisine, Mexican cuisine, Thai... as well as a salad bar. It is quiet dear, but definitely worth it; I have to watch my weight.

We chose a table by the great windows; day light is streaming in. Ambient music playing in the background. Time to relax with some good food. I needed that, who knows what time I will leave the office tonight. Markus starts asking me advice on his current project.

*Mempire 4: A trip downstairs*

It’s an average stressful day in the office. This morning we had an enquiry from a journalist who is interested in interviewing one of the foreman concerning leadership skills. Clearly a case for public relations. I volunteer to take care of this enquiry and my boss asks me to ‘go down and check out that foreman, make sure he’s clever enough to be ‘let loose’ on the journalist without telling stories we don’t want anyone to hear’. I grab my boss’ car keys and off I am, down the three flights of stairs – have to keep fit somehow.

I do need to go by car, as it would take approximately half an hour to walk from one end of the rectangular factory floor to the other. There is a clear divide between the manufacturing halls (the factory floor) and the administrative and executive offices which run alongside the front length of the rectangle on three storeys. I believe I know where the cabin I am looking for is located, so I am driving on the main road alongside the factory and the office buildings. Right in the middle of that length, on the third level, are the offices of the executive team, surrounded by the supporting staff units, where I have just come down the stairs from. As a member of the public relations team, my office is located here, too, in the ‘brain’ of the factory, which is also referred to as “the White House”, equipped with prestigious furniture, luxurious and
minimalistic meeting rooms. The smell of fresh coffee throughout. And apart from the occasional door opening and closing, followed by some concrete clicking, absolute silence (figure 8).

Sector five, it must be here somewhere. I park the car and walk back into the building, crossing the staircase hallway that leads to the administrative offices. At the end of the corridor is a large and heavy fire door, which separates the office environment from the factory floor. ‘Swusshhhhh’ – as soon as I step a foot beyond that door, I nearly get run over by a fork lifter – noise, smell, heat. It feels as though I have just entered a city within the factory complex. Bicycles, fork lifts, brand new cars and little transportation vehicles – some manoeuvred remotely, are all driving back and forth in an order that looks more like an ant’s nest to me. It’s hard to believe we are on the first floor of inside a building.

Some of the Industrials are on foot, wearing the usual health and safety uniforms. Crossing my path directly. I look at them shortly, but as soon as our gazes cross, I look away again, and so do they. We don’t greet each other. I never greet an Industrial, just stare right ahead of me or look to the side, depending on where they are – it’s a bit awkward because I’m trying to make it look as though my gaze naturally falls away from them -, and they do the same to me. When I come across another Clerical though, I am quite happy to smile at them or even make sure there is appropriate eye contact to exchange greetings. I feel it has to be that way, it would be rude if I didn’t greet one of ‘Us’.
Memoire 5: Twisted perceptions

When working on the shop floor in the frame of participant observation for my Bachelor dissertation (the Industrials did not know about my previous 'Clerical history' with FutureCo) they shared one of their favourite jokes with me.

We are having our lunch break in the group room, and a Clerical passes by outside the window front, staring straight ahead and not paying us any attention. One of the female Industrials of our group suddenly declares, giggling: “Look, there is another clone warrior, did he get lost down here or what?!?”. When she sees my questioning face – I obviously don’t understand the parallels between a Clerical and a clone warrior, she continues: “Well, they all look the same, don’t they – tie, black shoes and always carrying a briefcase. And as soon as one is shot down, he gets replaced by another one, you see.”

I don’t believe my own ears. I smile, continue to chew on my meat ball sandwich and hide my perplexity. For me, it is exactly the other way around - for me it is the Industrials who look alike, given that they are required by company policy to wear identical uniforms, including safety shoes, occasionally gloves, and even the T-shirt underneath. And they also behave alike with their ‘Bild’ newspapers and loud-mouthed attitude. The only difference between them is the cleanliness of each overall and the different degrees to which the colours have been washed out.

I ask another female colleague about the new group work programme, resulting in her face turning into stone and her talking through her teeth: “they (the management) have no idea about our (the Industrials’) job and what we actually do everyday down here. They don’t really care about us. They just sit up there in their offices and make decisions and clap themselves on the shoulder for how great they are, although what they do is not really that great for us at all. But they wouldn’t know that, would they. It’s not that they come down here and check, do they. Ah, forget it.”

Memoire 6: Confronting ‘each Other’

My boss, one of the spokesmen of the organisation has asked me earlier today to accompany him to an important meeting with some other heads of departments. Now we are driving in his car on the factory premises, trying to find the building in which we are supposed to meet and which is detached from the main factory. Of course, after a few minutes, we get lost. It is a bit like a maze down here. Even after years of employment, my boss only knows about half the factory.

We enter an area that, as we learn in the aftermath, is used to store crashed cars of prototype testing and is hence highly secretive. We soon notice it leads to a dead end, and as we are turning the car around, an Industrial approaches us fast paced and rudely demands to see our staff identity cards. Immediately I feel insulted and simultaneously surprised by his demand, although I should know it is perfectly genuine. Never before had an Industrial questioned my authority. I look over to my boss and notice his raised eyebrows. He raises his voice also at the man in front of us,
letting him know with gravity that he (The Industrial) certainly is not in a position to
ask him (my boss) for his ID card, and 'who would he think he is'. The Industrial looks
stunned, maybe unsure of how to react; maybe a bit gutted. He tries to explain that
this is a restricted area and nobody without special permission is allowed to enter, but
my boss counters immediately. He knows the rules perfectly well, he shouts; after all,
he is one of them who put them into place. The Industrial does not apologise, but
remains standing in his spot, still startled, staring after us, as my boss continues to
bring the car around and accelerates away.

Memoire 7: Trade Unionism

In Germany, trade union representation is not organised around profession, but
depends on the industry sector the employing company is in. Therefore, 98% of all
14,000 FutureCo staff are organised through the same representative body, Industrials
as well as Clericals. Exempt are those members of Clericals whose salary has exceeded
the negotiated pay scale between management and trade union. Every three months,
the factory is put on hold for four hours, and it is officially required for all members of
staff, whether member of the trade union or not, to attend these so-called 'general
assemblies'. Anybody who wishes to speak can register to do so; however, the bulk of
the time is taken up by the report of the chief executive, followed by a speech of the
elected head of trade union.

I am sitting in the vast production hall. The ceilings are tremendously high, a cold and
fierce draft is sneaking through the legs of all seated. I feel small. Intimidated. Rows
and rows and rows of chairs. How many thousands are sitting here, I wonder. Behind
me, at the very back of the space, some huge transportation containers. I can see a
train wagon parked next to it. Of course, transport has been stopped for the general
assembly, and I wonder how long it took them to get all those containers out of the
way and clear the space; we are in the middle of the train loading area, the chairs
partly crossing rail tracks. I learnt about all this in training, didn't I – lean
management. I don't know what's so lean about storing that many containers in here
though.

I always sit towards the front. But not the very front, I don't feel yet entitled to, in a
way. After all, I'm not that high up in the hierarchy yet. But I know for sure I will be
one day. The fist row is reserved for the executive board, but I can see them very
clearly from where I sit. Admiration interweaves my gaze. Next to the stage is the
massive screen, I guess people in the back want to see the speakers' faces, too.
People in the back. I know who is sitting there even before turning around. The
Industrials, as always, and they don't really need a screen as they are more interested
in today's 'page three girl'. They are reading, chatting or simply sleeping; just rude.

The chief executive is on the podium on stage. He really is such a nice person, but
giving speeches is not one of his strengths. He concentrates on the performance of the
factory in numbers and statistics, followed by strategic implications for the future; his
monotonous voice is so boring that even I struggle staying attentive. The atmosphere
is dull. I’m sure most of us know about the organisation’s performance anyway. At least the ones in the first few rows.

Next, after a ten minute interval it’s time for the head of trade union’s show. As he climbs up the steps to the stage, a roar of applause is released from the back rows. I remember my first general assembly; I was so surprised by this that I turned around hastily to see what on earth was going on. Now that I am used to it, I exchange glances with my colleagues and we roll our eyes, waiting for the show to be over. I’ve got a pile of work waiting for me at my desk.

As usual, the head of the trade union endeavours to elaborately portray the board of executives and the management in general as some sort of evil, cold-blooded and greedy enemy whose only interest is their own welfare at the cost of the workers – apparently all of us - who do ‘the real work’. He frequently supports his arguments with examples of pay rise struggles, where unacceptable suggestions from management were haggled upwards by the trade union with great effort of negotiation and threats of strike. His message is clear: If it wasn’t for him and the trade union, we would all be lost. During his speech he gets louder and louder, addresses the chief executive directly by name with accusations and demands and involves more and more facial and bodily gesturing. Finally, with his index finger raised in the air, he makes some kind of climaxing demand with great skills of rhetoric and then zips at his glass of water.

Behind me, I can hear a gigantic wave of roaring, applauding, feet-stamping, clapping and whistling flooding the room, in its wake releasing the built up tension of the speech. Again, we do not pay much attention to this explosion, but I remember the intimidation that creeped up in me on my first participation in these assemblies.

Now, however, all I can do is roll my eyes once more and push out a sigh; for I work in the public relations department, which is also responsible for internal communications, and hence I know better. ‘It’s all fake, calm down!’ I want to exclaim. The chief executive and the head of trade union exchange their speeches weeks in advance of each assembly, so as to prepare counterarguments. No change will be made to the speeches thereafter without the consensus of the other party; and it was my department’s responsibility to make sure the chief executive won’t experience any surprises.

Regardless of my background knowledge of the situation in front of me, it feels like a great stand-up between two arch-enemies sharing a long history of conflict. The head of the trade union confronts the chief executive as though he is a profit-seeking monster and the trade union the hero that leads the suffering manpower out of Egypt. I am of course also a member of the trade union – I was basically hassled into it after three visits of a trade union representative within my first month of working for FutureCo, advising me that it could have bad consequences for my career if I didn’t sign – but for some reason it feels less to me like being in Egypt, and more like being in a ‘good-enough’ Israel already.
The head of trade union typically starts a new argument with 'My dear Comrades', expressing great unity with all 'his' members. Generally, it is policy within the trade union to address each other with 'Du', instead of 'Sie', which is the informal use of 'you' in the German language. Non-members of the trade union are addressed with the usual 'Sie'. Most of us don't care, we still say 'Sie' to him.
4.2. Artefacts of 'Us' and 'Them': Setting the Scene

The primary data brings to the fore strong visible clues making 'Us' immediately distinguishable from 'Them'. Differences in dress code stand out the most. While the Clericals are not officially obliged to adhere to one, formal clothing such as suits seems to be the standard expectation (1-35). The Industrials, on the other hand, are bound by strict health and safety regulations to wear fireproof factory clothing (1-22). The interviewee's comments emphasise that clothing serves as an important identifier for 'Us' and 'Them':

"... a foreman comes through the production line and you hear: 'There comes a white frock, there comes a blue frock'. Whites are the ones from R&D, and Blues are the foremen...” (2-31).

"If we would do this thing like some schools in other countries, where they all dress the same, then it would be very different. Because then you wouldn't know right from the beginning who is an Industrial and who is a Clerical...” (2-27).

Likewise, Industrials have given Clericals the nickname 'Clone warriors', as "they all look the same – tie, black shoes and always carrying a briefcase...” (1-152). Clothing seems to serve as an identifier of who is 'Us' and who is 'Them', and determines who Clericals and Industrials interact with each other. So the interviewee shares: "So when I go up there without my overalls, then they approach me completely different. All of a sudden they know how to greet!” (2-81).

Additionally, artefacts such as different newspapers, with the Industrials commonly reading the 'Bild' (1-24), and the Clericals mainly reading the 'Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung' (1-32), as well as gender inequality (1-21, 1-34), and food choices (1-71, 1-93) are clear demarcations of the boundary between who is 'Us' and who is 'Them'. These examples indicate that Clericals and Industrials are immediately recognisable to each other, as differences between the two groups are salient. Simultaneously, similarities among Clericals as well as among Industrials respectively, are elevated.

The literature review has discussed how the salience of different characteristics of 'Us' and 'Them' groups, as well as similarities within each group can provoke intergroup bias, whereby similarities within the ingroup are emphasised and differences towards the outgroup exaggerated (see for example Capozza and Brown, 2000). In case of FutureCo it can be assumed that the visible differences in artefacts further enforced
the tendency towards intergroup bias. It is this permeating presence of the division into my entire FutureCo experience that I want to shed further light on.

4.3. Task-Related and Physical Divisions between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’

The distance between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ is often perceived through signs of spacial separation, which could be interpreted as a further artefact. The manufacturing hall is separated from the office buildings and is where

"...dirt assembles into a place polluted by industrial repetitive noise and smell, with little day light and the domination of inhuman robotics...” (1-81),

as opposed to the office environment that is

"...equipped with prestigious furniture, luxurious and minimalistic meeting rooms. The smell of fresh coffee throughout. And apart from the occasional door opening and closing, followed by some concrete clicking, absolute silence...” (1-121).

The divide between these two places of work is clearly described in my memoires and only partly task-related. While it is plausible that all manufacturing-heavy production line work has to be spaced together for reasons of lean management and other practicalities, there is no such reasoning for why all administrative and managerial buildings are grouped together the way they are, a great distance from the production halls. Additionally, the division of the nature of the task, on the one hand, manually building the product, and on the other hand, administering and managing that process, involves employing and training staff in different professions. Hence, the Industrials are predominantly skilled in manual professions, such as mechanics or electricians or are unskilled labourers. The Clericals have absolved one of two possible clerical trainings or hold a university degree.

Based on his own research, Bercovitch (1983) points out that structure itself can trigger intergroup conflict between different task units, especially when, as is the case at FutureCo, physical and communicational barriers are high. Following a similar line of thought, Daum (2002) contributes with his own findings of a case in which a shortage of interaction between staff from two health care teams characterised a hostile relationship to each other. With a task-division as strict as at FutureCo, he describes a strong split between community-based service practitioners and hospital-based
practitioners. I find while the division of staff according to their task is plausible, this alone does not explain or justify in any way the hostility witnessed between them.

More importantly it is to point out here that this physical separation contributes to a 'separation-in-the-mind', of which a consequence could be the reinforcement of intergroup bias, or in other words, ingroup and outgroup stereotyping (Turner et al., 1987). This becomes evident in the following extract: "...At the end of the corridor is a large and heavy fire door, which separates the office environment from the factory floor..." (1-126). I can still picture these fire doors right now, and crossing them invoked in me the same feeling as when I was looking across the mine field guarded by soldiers and watch towers that separated the East and the West of Germany. I am mentioning a similar borderland by the use of the words “buffer zone” and “no man’s land” (1-57).

Additionally, the interviewee chose to emphasise the divide between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ with the help of metaphorical expressions: "...there was this total wall between the Industrials and the Clericals! It was as though one would break a taboo if one sat down with them..." (2-9); "...Here, two worlds crash into each other..." (2-72). This links in with the everyday use of language describing space in relation to ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. The words ‘up there’ or ‘down there’ are repeated several times (1-112, 153, 174, 176, 184; 2-46, 51, 80, 87).

One might speculate whether group pressures to conform cause Clericals and Industrials alike to adhere to these divisions and reinforce them through such conforming behaviour. As the interviewee and I portray, both parties are voluntarily choosing to maintain the distance between each other: "...And then you don’t want to behave different from everyone else, so you stick to your own squad..." (2-18; see also 1-28 and 2-24). I will discuss the issue of conformity in more depth shortly.

4.4. Trade Unionism: ‘Us’ together against ‘Them’

After illustrating some examples of the manifestations of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo, I will now focus on possible drivers behind it. The trade union seems to play a significant role in the creation of the divide, or is at least fuelling its maintenance. First of all, I will outline what kind of division the trade union is driving. As my memoire states, the trade union’s mission is to represent the interests of all
employees of the organisation whose salary does not exceed the negotiated pay scale with management. This means that the majority of the man power (98%), consisting of both Clericals and Industrials, is indeed registered with the trade union (In Germany, trade union membership depends on the industry of the employer organisation, not the profession of employees).

However, the following examples suggest that the Clericals do not ‘buy into’ the trade union’s strategy; when reading them it has to be remembered that I perceive my own impressions and reactions to be representative of the Clericals’ at large:

"...the head of the trade union endeavours to elaborately portray the board of executives and the management in general as some sort of evil, cold-blooded and greedy enemy whose only interest is their own welfare on the cost of the workers – apparently all of us - who do 'the real work'...”(1-234),

"...His message is clear: If it wasn't for him and the work committee, we would all be lost...”(1-240),

"...Now that I am used to it, I exchange glances with my colleagues and we roll our eyes, waiting for the show to be over...”(1-231).

My observations of the Industrials though, portrays a more supportive response to the trade union leader’s speech:

"...Behind me, I can hear a gigantic wave of roaring, applauding, feet-stamping, clapping and whistling flooding the room, in its wake releasing the built up tension of the speech...”(1-246).

Reasons for the strong support for the trade union among the Industrials and lack of it among the Clericals might reside in the perceived difference in career opportunities. For Clericals, career paths are following a transparent and linear path towards the top of the hierarchy (1-214), whereas Industrials seem to perceive a ‘glass ceiling’ effect:

"...And all the "ATler"#, they are all Clerical. You can't become an ATler as an Industrial. For the Clericals, they have more open-ended opportunities towards the top. In order to step up, you need to wear a suit...”(2-112).

This extract points out the Industrials’ perception that they have to become one of ‘Us’, or, from their perspective, one of ‘Them’ – to ally with the enemy – in order to progress within the company.

---

# AT: abbreviation for ‘Außer-tariflich’; “out of tariff” meaning those who earn so much that they are off the scale which has been negotiated by the trade union.
Along with that, the head of trade union strengthens the bonds to those parts of the workforce whose support he already has; those who feel unfairly treated by the system – the Industrials. In his speeches he constructs management as a threat, and with great rhetorical skills, such as the use of the word ‘Du’ to address his followers (which in German is usually strictly reserved for family and close friends), he creates an atmosphere of camaraderie against a common enemy – the management:

"...it feels like a great stand-up between two arch-enemies sharing a long history of conflict. The head of the trade union confronts the Chief Executive as though he is a profit-seeking monster and the trade union the hero that leads the suffering manpower out of Egypt...” (1-258).

I am reporting from the actions of the trade union still in my role a one of 'Us', a Clerical. When composing my memoires, I was drawn back into my time of employment with FutureCo, and my past opposition towards the trade union was evoked anew. In order to offer a balanced discussion of possible drivers of the 'Us versus Them' mentality, I will consider the role of management as counterpart to the trade union in the following section.

4.5. Management’s Unwritten Rules: Invisible Control

Considering management, a sub-group of ‘Us’, as a possible diver of or contributor to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality required me to view the case material in a new light. I experienced greater difficulties constructing this part of the argument, as despite suspecting that there is some deeper meaning behind ‘Our’ and ‘Their’ conforming behaviour, I could not quite ‘put my finger on’ what that was. When writing and reading my own memoires and comparing them with the Interviewee’s response, I kept asking myself “Who told 'Us' not to talk to 'Them'?“ (1-136). “How did 'We' know to keep some distance between where 'They' sit and where 'We' sit?” (1-42). “Where did this agreement on some sort of unwritten rules come from?” The interviewee shared this perplexity when stating: "But they are normal codes of conduct there. No idea where they come from, it's like Loch Ness- no one's ever seen it, but everyone believes in it...” (2-90).

I started my memoire with an indication of how deeply embedded the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality had become at FutureCo: "...'Us’ and 'Them’ thinking was a permanent companion of every-day life at FutureCo and of how it used to 'feel’ working here...”
That this conforming behaviour is somewhat unconscious but yet persuasive becomes apparent in the following extract:

"...I am not aware of this decision but rather do so automatically, guided by some other decision-maker. The divided atmosphere in the hall is so great, I do not really have a choice – it is not a question of choice in the first place...” (1-44).

Even when not conforming to these unwritten rules, the awareness of ‘doing wrong’ transpires: when sitting down for lunch with my friend, an Industrial,

"...I feel something really unusual, unsettling. I feel as though I am breaking some kind of rule the moment I put my tray on the table and pull the chair out – directly opposite my friend and only a few meters away from the rest of his group. It feels as though I have ‘upset the apple cart’, and as a response, the whole canteen stops talking, stops chewing, stops reading, stops reading and turns its frowning face at me, eyes squinted, mouths wide open in a state of horrified disbelief...” (1-54).

The interviewee confirms the same feeling of discomfort:

"...it was as though one would break a taboo if one sat down with the Clericals...” (2-10).

It transpires that these ‘unwritten rules’ reinforce the division between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ and that the adherence to these rules is vital: "...once I was on a training course in the IT department, and there we learnt together with the Clericals. But we were not even allowed to take off our overalls!...” (2-14). Here, the concept of positive and negative identity (see for example Berman et al., 2000; Erlich, 2001; Ostroff, 2000; Robbins and Krueger, 2005; Roberts, 1983), which was explained in the literature review helps to clarify this irrational behaviour. Given that the Industrials in this incident were on an all-day IT training course in the office building, no rationally justifiable reason existed to be forced to remain in health and safety uniform, especially given that the Clericals participating in this training were dressed ‘normally’. This might suggest an investment of effort into preserving clear self-boundaries that span the ingroup. To maintain the clear visual distinction that clothing guaranteed between Industrials and Clericals can be understood through Winnicott’s notion of the duality of ‘Me’ (Us) and ‘not Me’ (not Us) for the concept of self: "We end where they begin" (Stein, 1987, p. 109).

At this point, the theoretical concepts of unconscious assumptions help to understand why I was not able to explain the reasoning behind my own behaviour. Schein (2010) states that our basic underlying assumptions gradually come to be treated as an
unquestioned reality. Because of their taken for granted nature and, for this case study especially important, because of their being shared between all members of the same ‘social unit’ (in this case Clericals or Industrials), opportunities for reality testing become unlikely. “Basic assumptions (...) tend to be nonconfrontable and nondebatable, and hence are extremely difficult to change.” (Schein, 2010, p. 28). Morgan (2006) adds that due to the lack of questioning of underlying assumptions, humans get trapped in shared constructions of reality that give them a skewed grasp on their environment.

While offering a suggestion for why neither the interviewee nor I could explain our own behaviour, the discussion so far is still to make clear who caused these behavioural patterns in the first place. Freud explicates that the super-ego holds the role of censor or judge of our behaviour through the internalisation of figures of authority (1986). It is possible that management has been internalised, making the following of its rules unconscious; it looks like an automated behaviour. The separation of the work force into opposing ‘camps’, however, is not in the interests of management. As described in the introductory chapter, ‘Us versus Them’ thinking can melt the ‘glue’ that supposedly holds an organisation together (Parker, 2000), leading to a distortion of the overall organisational goal, as it is replaced by a drive to oppose whatever the goal of the Other is. I therefore propose that not only the learning of unwritten rules by the manpower, but also the creation of them by management is driven unconsciously.

Gramsci’s concept of hegemony (1929-35, cited by Alvesson and Deetz, 2005), or cultural hegemony, as Connell (1976) calls it, supports this argument. Hegemony can be defined as a “web of conceptual and material arrangements producing the very fabric of everyday life.” (Alvesson and Deetz, 2005, p. 77), which links to Schein’s notion of reality construction (2010). In conjunction with the psychoanalytic theory of unconscious dynamics, the concept of hegemony helps indeed to further understand what went on at FutureCo. Angus (1992), for example, states that the activity of hegemony is based on both, dominant and dominated parties to produce some sort of consent – a process which is unconscious in its nature. Clegg adds that “paradoxically, (individuals) know not to want to act (...)” (1989, p. 29). But since the spreading of hegemony also involves the dominated party’s compliance, many authors (see for example, Burawoy 1985, Deetz, 1995 and 1998, Willmott, 1993) emphasise that employees initiate their own subordination and therefore support the dominant system,
despite this being against their own interest. Lukes comes to a similar conclusion when he states that “perceptions, cognitions, and preferences (are shaped) in such a way that (people) accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they view it as natural and unchangeable…” (1974, p. 24). These processes are, in my view, motivated unconsciously.

Clegg and Hardy (1999) further add that such hegemonic tendencies can even be embedded in the historically grown organisational structure itself, according to which hegemony could be interpreted as being responsible for the strict structural divisions kept between Industrials and Clericals. Whilst the explanation I gave in my memoires, namely, that the machine cycles determine the work patterns of the factory, sounded realistic at the time, I am now wondering if it was not the unconscious anxieties of management of losing control over organisational processes that provoked this hegemonic structure. After all, Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis (2005) identify hegemony as a form of ‘soft domination’. This notion could also explain my perception of not having a choice of where to sit in the canteen. In his elite model of the relationship between power and structure, Clegg tellingly formulates that

“For free to choose they may be, but what they can choose from is already chosen: Not specifically by anyone but by default…” (1989, p. 29).

One point of disagreement that I have with Clegg here is that he believes this restriction and domination of choice to be a conscious decision of the dominant group – in this case management, whereas argue for the unconscious nature of such dynamics supported by a psychoanalytic perspective.

4.6. Consequences on the Relationship between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’

4.6.1. The Distorted Perception of Self and Other

Part of the alteration of perception of reality that hegemony evokes is the distortion of how Clericals and Industrials alike perceive themselves as a group and the other group. The interviewee’s responses insinuate on a number of occasions his feeling inferior to the Clericals. His comparison of the relationship between Industrials and Clericals to that between the Chinese and the Americans during the time of railway construction emphasises this:
"... Like in America, where all the Chinese were let down in baskets into the tunnels, and if the people on top didn't pull fast enough, then those down there exploded along with the bombs..." (2-79).

Along with this, he does not only classify his own profession as 'lower', or as being of less value than that of the Clericals – he does this again when stating "...*It is where dirty meets clean..." (2-78) - but also expresses the sense of being surrendered to the mercy of the Clericals with no other option than to comply.

It seems as though the interviewee’s self-esteem has been lowered as a consequence of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, too. So he reported with astonishment about his exceptional treatment by a Clerical and shows great appreciation for it: "...*that was quite something, if someone in a suit shakes your hand (...) I thought that was awesome..." (2-88). This gives the impression that he did not see himself worthy of a Clerical’s handshake while simultaneously placing so much importance on the fact that his hands were dirty (2-95). I am sure that the interviewee would not have shown the same degree of astonishment and gratitude had he met an individual in a suit outside of the FutureCo environment who wanted to shake his hand. In fact, as a friend I can confirm that he is a very confident person with high self-esteem outside the company.

In line with his self-perception of inferiority comes the idealisation of the Clericals: "...*Oh look, he is wearing a tie, he made it..." (2-110). No further thought is given for the actual hierarchical positioning of a Clerical within the wider organisation – he or she has made it, simply by adapting the outer appearance of a Clerical. I wore a suit from the very beginning of my employment at FutureCo. I was clearly a Clerical; however, at the beginning of my career, I was predominantly occupied with making photocopies and adjusting my coffee making skills to the preferences of my superiors. How this fits into the general perception of the Industrials that 'I had made it’ I do not know, and I certainly earned far less than the average Industrial. But according to the data at hand, I was still treated as ‘something better’ by the Industrials, for no other reason but being a Clerical.

The distortion of perception of self and Other is also denoted in the case material from the side of the Clericals. My line manager’s and my feeling insulted when requested by an Industrial to show our staff cards makes that clear, especially given the fact that the Industrial acted according to *official* rules:

"...*Immediately I feel insulted (...) by his demand (...). Never before had an Industrial questioned my authority. I look over to my boss and notice his raised
...People in the back. I know who is sitting there even before turning around. The Industrials, as always, and they don’t really need a screen as they are more interested in today’s ‘page three girl’. They are reading, chatting or simply sleeping; just rude...” (1-219).

As illustrated in the literature review, Riketta and Sacramento (2008) conclude that images of ‘the Other side’ tend to emphasise, exaggerate and even create negative traits, and therefore ‘dehumanise’ the opponent, which might explain my tendency to devalue the Other which in this case is embodied by the Industrials as the outgroup.

In fact, the described hegemony seemed to distort reality perception of Industrials and Clericals so successfully, that it even overrode my friendship with the interviewee. Thinking back of the lunch we had together (1-48), I did feel reluctant to sit with my friend, and it cost me some determination to overcome the described feeling of awkwardness. I suddenly felt superior to him because I wore a suit whereas he had to wear overalls. The question is here whether we were ‘taken out’ of our roles as friends and ‘put into’ the roles of representing the collective ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ respectively? I will come back to a deeper analysis of this kind of ‘group mind’ in the chapter “A second look at case study 1”.

Reflecting on why I had difficulties in composing this section provides further insight into the gravity of hegemony’s effectiveness: until commencement of this data analysis, I was firmly convinced of the trade union being the source of the division. Despite having parted from FutureCo more than eight years ago, it still took my supervisor three meetings to persuade me to at least consider the possibility that management – one of ‘Us’ - could have contributed to the situation. My reluctance to regard management to be possibly ‘at fault’ can be interpreted as a result out of my still being influenced by this hegemony, with my perception of ‘how things really were’ still heavily determined by my being part of ‘Us’. Being able to acknowledge management’s role in the creation and upholding of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, proved to be a real epiphany. It felt as though my thoughts had been untied, but little did I know that they were tied down in the first place. I will come back to this self-
reflection in the chapter ‘A second look’ in association with the new theoretical framework from case study three.

4.6.2. ‘Us versus Them’: Animosity

I want to finish this chapter outlining the striking animosity between Clericals and Industrials permeating daily work at FutureCo as a consequence of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. An Industrial made this clear:

"…they have no idea about our job and what we actually do everyday down here. They don't really care about us. They just sit up there in their offices and make decisions and clap themselves on the shoulder for how great they are, although what they do is not really that great for us at all. But they wouldn’t know that, would they. It's not that they come down here and check, do they. Ah, forget it…”(1-163).

The interviewee accounts of incidents that suggest hostility between Clericals and Industrials:

"...you also hear things like "Hey, he is cheating" (...) if you do get a job up there, or you are asked 'what do you want up there?' That is the general perception...”(2-46).

Cheating is a severe accusation of breaking a trust relationship, being disloyal and unfaithful. It inflicts in the ‘cheater’ the feeling of having let the ingroup down like a traitor. It also might lead to a sense of confused identity. Having learnt to hate the enemy, one is now being forced to become one of the enemy. Likewise, the humorous nicknames for Clericals such as “Schlipstraeger” (2-109) are derogative in nature.

Such traces of hostility, it has to be pointed out, were not only identifiable from sides of the Industrials, but also from sides of the Clericals. For instance, I describe in my memoires my unwillingness to greet any of ‘Them’ (1-136). The exchange my line manager and I had with an Industrial foreman shows these dynamics, as our over-reaction is somewhat hostile, too. Unfortunately, such strong antipathy against each other created a distance so great between Industrials and Clericals that the two sides rarely met. This remoteness comes to the fore when considering, for example, the use of the word ‘alien’ to describe a Clerical sighted along the productions lines (2-24), and more strikingly, the interviewee’s astonishment about the ‘normality’ of interaction possible when encountering a Clerical:

"The surprising thing is, if they talk to us, I experienced that myself – you can talk with them completely normally...”(2-80).
One question that I have formed while working through this data analysis is whether these enemy creations are based on a ‘real’ reason, something rationally justifiable, or whether they are constructions of myths that have ‘real’ consequences solely because people believe them to be ‘real’. With regards to the case study at hand, I ask myself, “what were the ‘real’ differences between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, such as for example, the divided nature of the organisation’s task of manual labour on the one hand, and clerical work, on the other hand?” “Were these enough to justify enemy-thinking, or was this mentality enforced by intrapsychic processes of splitting and projection?” I will come back to this reflection on myth and reality constructions in groups in the discussion chapter.
Chapter 5: Case Study 2 Data Presentation & Preliminary Analysis

Collaboration or Competition between the 'Fun Trust' & the 'Play Trust'?

While case study one investigated the 'Us versus Them' mentality within an organisation, case study two enquires into the dynamic between two organisations. The interviews, SPM session and observations have revealed a diversity of factors that could have evoked a tendency towards 'Us versus Them' thinking. Following the same structure as case study one, this chapter will present the eight most salient themes in detail, before the newly constructed theoretical framework of case study three will be applied in the chapter “A second look at case study two”.

In order to bring to the fore the interconnectedness of the identified themes, they will be presented within three 'umbrella-topics':

5.1. The relationship between the Fun Trust and the Play Trust,
5.2. Risk taking, and
5.3. Internal traces of 'Us versus Them'.

The summary (section 5.4.) will draw together the main characteristics of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in this case study. Along with this composition, the mentality will be scrutinised on two levels: as a relationship between the two organisations on the one hand and as an internal dynamic within either of them on the other hand.

5.1. The Relationship between the Fun Trust and the Play Trust

Researching the organisations showed that on a few occasions, members of staff already had had the opportunity to work together on family visits. Additionally, the chief executives of both charities know each other through their roles as Trustees for another organisation. Apart from that, no further communication has taken place between the charities. The majority of interview respondents reveal concern with regards to a possible collaboration. Staff comments from both organisations are, for example:

"I can't see how it would all work organisationally (and) I don't think the current structure is stable enough to make such a change." (J3 169),

"I have seen organisations who get too big for their own boots." (J5 76), and
"I think there will be lots of funds spent for developing externally where there is a lot of need internally." (R3 43).

Furthermore, it transpired that while both organisations emphasise awareness of possible risks and difficulties that collaborating with each other entails, the Fun Trust indicates a more suspicious and sceptic stance towards the project than the Play Trust:

"...So do we have two fundraising teams? What about job security?..." (J7 133),
"...are we going to have a Fun Trust left at the end?..." (J3 183), and
"...Who is protecting the Fun Trust that we have?..." (J7 142).

This difference in attitude is understandable in so far as the Fun Trust takes a bigger risk if the collaboration plans are put into practice. As suggested in the presentation of the research design, only one regional team of the Play Trust, which is a nationally established charity, would be affected, whereas the Fun Trust, being only a small local charity, would invest its entire workforce into the project. If the collaboration is unsuccessful, this would have a grave impact on the Fun Trust’s financial resources, while the Play Trust has the possibility to fall back onto subsidiaries from other regions.

Remarks from Fun Trust workers denoting an aversion to the other charity include

"...I don't want the quality of our service to be diluted." (J4 65), and
"The Play Trust stretching too thinly is a worry." (J2 118).

These quotes indicate a mistrust in the other charity’s capabilities which could be interpreted as a group projection of their own worry of not being able to deliver. Gould (1999) reports from his own consultancy project similar to the dynamics at hand, in which members of one organisation frequently made their concerns about the other organisation’s ability to take on such a big project heard. Additionally, it was conspicuous that staff of the Play Trust felt the need to point out how professional they are on numerous occasions. Given that these comments were made with the possible collaboration in mind, they seemed somewhat defensive to me. Such attitude was not mirrored by the Play Trust:

"... We struggled and worked hard to show that we are not just a baby-sitting service, but professional. That still is in the memories of the care team, the organisation, and we have worked very very hard to come away from that reputation, to become professionally acknowledged..." (J1 146).

In general, it can be observed that the Fun Trust perceives the prospect of a collaboration as more threatening due to higher risk it poses for them, resulting in a
more anxious and suspicious attitude. In a case study similarly occupied with an imminent collaboration, Roberts (1994) points out that the smaller organisation felt more vulnerable to being exploited by the larger organisation. Likewise, Terry and O’Brien (2001) have conducted research which shows that ‘high-status’ professionals, in this case the Fun Trust’s nurses, displayed more biased intergroup perceptions than did the ‘lower-status’ professionals, in this case the Play Trust’s social workers. In this case study, high-status can be understood as being derived from the fact that nurses have more specific medical training than social workers, and in particular reference to the home visits during which the two charities would collaborate, this means that nurses are allowed to conduct medical procedures on the children, while the social workers are not. Such perception of superiority and inferiority is a common problem of the health care sector in general. Egan and Kadushin (1995) for example, report about ongoing sceptical perception of nurses and social workers towards each other that create a relationship of competitiveness where there is sought to be alliance. Robins and Post (1997) describe suspicion as the hallmark of paranoia, and while calling the Fun Trust paranoid would be an exaggeration, the possibility of a tendency towards it will be kept in mind throughout this data analysis. The argument will now continue into a more detailed reflection on risk factors that provoke this suspicion.

5.2. Risk Taking – Factors Both Organisations Face

5.2.1. Scarcity of Resources

Given the fierce climate for not-for-profit organisations in general, both charities are experiencing an economically pressing period and face a struggle for survival on a daily basis. All interview respondents indicate worries about financial resources and future uncertainty, and expose a working atmosphere of felt threat and elevated anxiety. Referring back to Robins and Post (1997), they argue that scarcity of resources can increase paranoia tendencies such as suspicion and scepticism. This is intensified by the fact that recently, the Fun Trust had to undergo a redundancy and the Play Trust had to close one of its facilities:

"The atmosphere is not great at the moment. (...) We had a redundancy of a post last year and also financial pressures (...). Nobody knows what is going to happen – are there going to be more redundancies, etc...” (J3 119, 123, 127),

"...And especially this year is very critical, there are concerns and nervousness, as we are under budget...” (J7 72),
"...The voluntary sector is much more 'dog eat dog'; we are forced to prove why we are the best..." (R1 111), and

"...The respite houses closed last year, there was a lot of frustration..." (R3 41)

are representative extracts.

5.2.2. Threatened Sense of Identity

One of the most striking insights gained from the fieldwork was the great emphasis on pride each respondent places on their organisation and their role within it. A true sense of solidarity, commitment and devotion towards the organisational mission and personal attachment to its success transpires:

"...I value working for the charity, I feel very proud [...] It is an honour to be part of the Fun Trust and support the staff..." (J6 110, 162),

"...Good nurses are artists. It is an art to provide good care..." (J6 54),

"...I think we are a very good organisation. We give very high quality support to families, and I am very proud of that..." (R1 58), and

"...we do the right thing..." (R2 33).

Other contributions stress that the staff of the Fun Trust is still very attached to the organisation’s history and has a personal share in the ‘fight’ through some struggles of earlier years, since many members have been with the organisation since its inception (J1 4, J3 8, J5 22).

Along with that, employees have developed astonishingly strong passion for their respective organisation with their own personal values clearly matching those of the organisation. In order to bring across the strength of this relationship, I am including several quotes from both charities here:

"...the passion that people bring to the service and really genuinely care about the quality of service..." (J1 51),

"... there is an extremely close match between my personal values and the organisational values..." (J1 54),

"...My beliefs are the Fun Trust’s beliefs..." (J6 147),

"... I am passionate about the job, and I have a belief in the cause..." (J7 44),

"...There is a drive behind everybody to help the families..." (R3 21) and

"...I was looking for something that I really believe in..." (R4 16).
The above comments show how strongly the organisational purpose is intertwined with the individuals’ identity, as they are identifying with what they do and therefore have a specially personal investment in the success of their respective organisation. It follows that a further risk factor causing scepticism towards collaborating is the simultaneous threat it poses to individuals’ well established sense of identity with regards to an unknown future. After conducting research into a collaborative project of three organisations, Gould (1999) concluded that the re-positioning of organisational boundaries, such as is necessary in prospect of a new collaboration, gives rise to the threatening possibility of losing the familiar, and along with that, one’s identity; a notion which will be analysed in more detail in chapter seven.

The literature review explains how through introjection of the group of belonging, which in this case is either the Fun Trust or the Play Trust as a large group, self-boundaries can extend so as to include that group of belonging (Otten and Mummendey, 1998). The motivation to protect one’s self concept then also includes the preservation of the group of belonging, or, to continue the terminology set out in the literature review, the ingroup (Robbins and Krueger, 2005).

Integrating this line of thought with the previously identified suspicion of the Fun Trust towards the Play Trust, the discussion can now make use of intergroup bias theory (Perdue et al., 1990). Throughout the literature review it has become evident that as well as a need for distinction, there is also the tendency to view one’s own group of belonging in a more positive way and the ‘Other group’ in a more negative light (see for example Robins and Post, 1997). This often leads to a distortion of reality in so far as it provokes intergroup bias. Social identity theory makes this point, too, by emphasizing the “nearly automatic tendency to discriminate against people who can be regarded as belonging to outgroups.” (Capozza and Brown, 2000: 85). Hence, the Fun Trust’s negative perception of the Play Trust could have been provoked by the need for positive self-preservation of the ingroup; members of staff were clearly questioning the professionalism of the Play Trust.

Additionally, a big part of the described pride is based on the assumption of uniqueness of the organisation and their contribution to society: "...one of the core values is that the Fun Trust is unique...”(J7 59), and "...we (the Play Trust) are almost unique...”(R1 60). The two charities have so similar mission and vision statements that their uniqueness is in question, and the prospect of losing this status might also be one of the causes of scepticism towards the collaboration.
5.2.3. Jeopardising Group Cohesion as Container

Interview responses and my own observations of team meetings as well as the SPM session have alluded that strong group cohesion within both organisations serves as an informal coping mechanism for the emotionally difficult primary task. It can even be argued that the mutual support members of staff provide for each other is more effective than are the formal processes put in place, such as weekly supervision meetings with a clinical psychologist, as respondents explain. Assertions such as the following make this point clear:

"...there is a lot of mutual care and support, people recognise if someone is having a rough time...” (J2 81),

"... I feel like we have a heart, a centre, the support for each other...” (J6 171),

"...We often have stepped up to the mark and have become supporters for each other...” (J7 85), and

"...We have got very open networking within the team. When they see a family which is a bit intense, they call each other...” (R2 60).

It is suggested that the family visits, during which service delivery is taking place, are psychologically stressful: "...It is a very emotional place to work given the nature of the work... “(J2 100). Both organisations make use of war metaphors, further expressing the emotional strain of the task: "...as they had front line contact at the beginning...” (J1 7), and "...we are up for the fight, to go out there...”(R8 10) are examples. In addition, practitioners expressed that they often feel isolated with these emotional experiences during home visits: "...We are a team; but because of the nature of the work, we are out there on our own...”(J8 73). One can argue that the working through these difficult emotions happens once the ‘front line’ has been left behind, when practitioners come together again in the back office and can take ‘refuge’ in the safety of the group. Along with that, the group offers a dense support network and a holding environment that is, I assume, vital for the retention of the high service quality, without which the success of the organisations cannot be achieved.

In her famous case study of a London teaching hospital, Menzies-Lyth (1960) demonstrates how an organisational system can act as a defence against anxiety. The strong group cohesion of the Fun Trust and the Play Trust alike can be viewed as such a system. However, in contrast to Menzies-Lyth’s example, the practitioners of these two charities could not rely on routine to provide for a suitable source of containment, as it is exactly their ability to flexibly respond to the needs of individual families that
gives them their competitive advantage. Likewise, depersonalisation, one of the core coping mechanisms listed by Menzies-Lyth would go directly against the Fun Trust’s and the Play Trust’s core values of service delivery. In light of this lack of opportunity to ‘use’ the overall organisational system as a means of defence or containment, the role of the practitioner group to take over this part becomes even more evident.

Considering group cohesion as an important cornerstone for the effective functioning of both charities makes it plausible that members of staff are protective of it and encounter any alteration to it, such as collaboration with another group, with scepticism and apprehension. One contribution points out that the tender group dynamics can be unsettled rather easily: "...It is such a small office, so if somebody is coming or leaving, that can make a real difference..." (R3 26). The fusion of two groups of practitioners might be perceived as a threat and therefore as highly risky.

5.2.4. Lack of Information and Uncertainty

To my own astonishment, the interviewed practitioners of both charities revealed a great lack of knowledge with regards to the Other organisation and the enquiry into a possible collaboration itself. Most respondents explain that they have heard rumours about future plans, but no concrete information has been shared with them:

"...I'm not very clear if the collaboration would only happen in the X area or families in Y as well? (J 166),

"...will there be shared offices? Will there be redundancies from both organisations to select the best staff for the new organisation? (J3 173),

"...I would have to ask about the Play Trust first, what do they do?...” (J5 70),

and

"...I'm not 100% clear on what the Fun Trust does. I guess they are similar to us?...” (R4 70).

As the literature review has investigated, uncertainty, in this case caused by missing information, is perceived as a possible threat (Gold, 2006) and can therefore increase scepticism as a form of defence. Hence, there is believed to be a readiness in the human psyche to fear strangers and seek comfort in the familiar (Ostroff, 2000). In this case study, the majority of members of the Fun Trust and the Play Trust are strangers to each other, and according to Bauman (1991) their presence arouses anxiety and hostility, because they embody uncertainty. Robins and Post (1997) add that no one is ever completely free from this tendency towards paranoia; hence the
'unknown Other' becomes the 'opponent' through the projection of our own assumptions about them. I will come back to this thought in the discussion chapter.

Considering together these four factors that pose risk might offer a plausible explanation for why the charities and the Fun Trust in particular anticipate a possible collaboration with great caution. It is important to emphasise that neither the Fun Trust nor the Play Trust as such are the source of any of these four factors; in other words, scepticism is not due to any known fact about the other organisation but is an outcome of a defensive reaction to the perceived risk. To make the case for a rational argument, it needs to be taken into account that there are more families in need of the service offered than either organisation is able to provide for individually. Together with the comparison of services (appendix 6) this makes clear that the organisations are not in direct competition with each other, but rather complement one another. The breakthrough into a new area would also require both organisations alike to employ more staff for fundraising as well as service delivery, making redundancies highly unlikely. Yet, while it would be exaggerated to talk about the manifestation of an 'Us versus Them' mentality in the form of enemy-thinking, feelings of suspicion and scepticism towards each other have permeated the entire process of data gathering and indicate a relationship characterised by opposition between the Fun Trust and the Play Trust.

While the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality could only be identified in very mild form as an interorganisational dynamic – suspicion and scepticism rather than enemy-thinking such as in case study one – I will now shift the focus of analysis onto another level and look at traces of ‘Us versus Them’ thinking within each charity.

5.3. Internal Traces of ‘Us versus Them’

It was fascinating to learn that internally, both organisations experience the same splits, although their intensity might differ. These are manifested along two divisions, a) horizontally between strategic and operational levels of hierarchy, and b) vertically between the fundraising and practitioner teams. I will discuss these observations in depth.
5.3.1. The Horizontal Division between Strategy and Operations

I perceived the first indicator of a split between strategy and operations when asking senior members of staff of both organisations about their opinion on a possible collaboration. In stark contrast to the interviewed practitioners, these were very positive and welcoming the plan:

"... the services are complementary; they provide social care services, i.e. transport, care for siblings, we care for the sick child..." (J2 112),

"...I think we would work together pretty well and complement each other beautifully..." (J6 191), and

"... I feel very positive towards collaborative work..." (J5 73).

These also denote that members of staff of strategic levels of both charities are better informed about each other’s organisations and the advantages and disadvantages of working together than the operational staff.

Reflecting on the communication flow within the hierarchy of the Fun Trust in general, there seems to be a certain degree of disruption between the strategic and operational level. The chief executive, for example, only receives information with regards to operational matters through the care team manager, and is usually not involved in day-to-day matters: "...the CEO we don't seem to see that much, he (...) sits in that room..." (J3 154). I question whether the adherence to such strict procedures is necessary, given the relatively small size of the organisation with 22 members.

Working through secondary data that revealed further organisational processes and procedures, reminds more of the bureaucracy of a medium or large sized company. Additionally, it transpires that the Trustees of the Fun Trust communicate regularly with the chief executive and the care team manager, but are unfamiliar with the practitioners themselves (J5 60). Again, I found this unexpected given the size and nature of task of the charity.

Enquiring deeper into the history of the Fun Trust reveals possible reasons for its bureaucratic processes:

"...There was a really sticky time when it became clear that we need good operational management; systems and processes became too much for the care team. That was a very challenging time (...) Then we had an operational manager, but the next step was clearly to address the strategic need, so a chief executive was employed..." (J1 89).
This ‘natural’ development seems to have replaced flexibility within the system with which communication ways can be more effective, due to the effort to create a structure rigour enough to support growth. Drawing back on Menzies-Lyth’s findings (1960), one could argue that the tendency for the Fun Trust to be more sceptical and anxious towards a possible collaboration than is the Play Trust corresponds well with their relying more on bureaucratic structure, as this is exactly what Menzies-Lyth indicates when presenting organisational systems as means of defence.

The Play Trust seems to have had similar problems with such kind of horizontal divisions in the past, but is more actively and successfully working on abating them. Many intervention plans have been put into practice to bridge the gap between strategy and operations:

"...I am the head of care services and head of care strategic.[...]. My role was created because one of care needed to be on senior management level [...] So that’s why the representation on the board was so important, it took care up to a more even level...”(R1 11, 20),

"...We are trying to break down the hierarchical structure; no management in the ivory tower – although we have an open plan office. We are working hard on our open door policy and transparent decision making...”(R1 85), and

"...It is all about listening, being inclusive. Everybody across the board knows where we want to go [...] the management wants feedback and is very keen to know what works and what doesn’t...”(R4 37).

5.3.2. The Vertical Division between Fundraisers and Practitioners

Next to the horizontal division that was more salient in the Fun Trust, a vertical division within the operational level became evident between the fundraising team and the practitioners. Again, this dynamic is present within both charities and is the strongest embodiment of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. The primary data also reveals that this split is capable of resembling a bigger hurdle for a successful collaboration than do ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics between the organisations.

First of all, given the fact that service delivery happens on home visits, fundraisers and practitioners rarely see each other (J7 63). However, even during office times, a division between the two teams is observable. One nurse explains: "... Because I have been here so long and done lots of things, I seem to be very interested (...), so I will go down to fundraising and say 'hello’... “(J3 153). This is surprising given that the fundraising team sits only three metres away from the practitioners.
It seems that the divide is driven mainly by the importance placed on each task within the organisations, which in turn inflames an internal competition over the distribution of scarce financial resources. A member of the Fun Trust states:

"...there was also the growing fundraising team to support the growth of the organisation [...] there was a little tension as money was going into the fundraising team, when more nurses were needed – but how to get the nurses without the funds?..." (J1 93).

In the Play Trust, the emphasis appears to be inverted:

"...this is always the problem with voluntary organisations: what is more important, are you service-led or fundraising-led? There can be a tendency on the care side of the organisation that thinks fundraising is the only thing that matters, fundraising gets everything [...] It’s down to a lack of understanding probably, hostility with a small h..." (R1 15).

It is generally recognised that one part of the organisation is not able to function without the other; yet, the feeling of competition and separation is more prevalent than an impression of collaboration and complementarity.

Following on from this division of the primary task, is the resulting organisational structure which is formed in such a way as to support each aspect of that task. So for example, within the Fun Trust, the practitioners have their own administrative support, whereas the fundraising team has not. As a consequence, tendencies towards ‘Us versus Them’ thinking are further aggravated. This becomes evident in the following responses from staff:

"...fundraising is welcome to come [to the clinical supervision sessions], but the development of the core clinical team is the focus ...” (J1 23),

"...All is centred around the care team...” (J1 27), and

"...A lot of focus here is on what the care team needs. And not on the fundraising...” (J7 105).

Turning the focus of analysis to the Play Trust, it emerges that similar to the horizontal split, this charity has been more actively trying to address and overcome the divide between their teams of fundraisers and practitioners. Interviewees report:

"...as the PR executive, I am responsible for the relationship between (...) family support workers and fundraising. (...) I make sure that all the care teams have an update for each other, as you don't want there to be two sides of the organisation. We are all working together, so you need to know what the others are doing. This has improved motivation...” (R3 14), and
"...We have a buddy system in place. Each member of the fundraising team is coupled with a member of the care team and they meet 2-4 times a year to catch up with what each of them is doing. So some of the fundraisers go out with the care team and vice versa. It means that there is not a massive gulf between the two teams...” (R4 49).

This is not to say that the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality has been eliminated completely:

"...there is a lot of internal communication need. To communicate to work as ONE charity. There can be a divide between fundraising and care; the fundraisers sit at the desk, where as the care teams go out. I know that one couldn’t work without the other, but in the moment there is fundraising there and care here... (R3 43).

5.3.3. Findings of the Social Photo Matrix

Drawing in to the discussion the data of the SPM session, the strength of this split is further brought to the fore. Although most participants report from a split between service delivery and ‘back office’, the findings can be aligned to the detected vertical split, as fundraising is the largest part of that ‘back office’. Furthermore, in contrast to the interview data considered so far, the SPM indicates that the vertical split between fundraising and care is equally as strong in both organisations. In general the findings of the SPM highlight this split.

The division is evident on two levels: firstly, in the photographs themselves; all of them without exception showed either a family setting, where the service was being delivered, or the administrative office environment, where fundraising sits (figures 9-12). Had I not known who sent me the individual photographs, I would have not been able to differentiate the two organisations. The same observation was expressed by several participants after the free association session:

"The photos were all in half, the first half showing the family orientation, and the second half showing the more business-like procedures.” "You couldn’t know from which organisation the photos were.”
Secondly, the associations made to the photographs were split along the same pattern ([please see appendix 7 for two examples of photographs with full transcription of free associations]). To describe the photos showing practitioners with family and/or children, the words most frequently evoked were:

- love
- sharing
- together
- happy
- safe
- trusting
- proud
- patience
- opportunity
- hope
- connection
- fun
- inclusive.

Associations were almost exclusively referring to positive emotions. I found this rather unexpected, given that the reality of the task is to care for a child that is eventually going to die - regardless of the practitioner’s efforts. The earlier discussed function of the strong group cohesion of each charity might be reflected here, as practitioners ‘hold on’ to their sadness until in the containing environment of the group in order to guarantee the high degree of professionalism and quality of service.

In line with this thought, the words used to describe the photos showing administrative offices or work utilities were predominantly strong negative associations around feeling pressure at work and wishing to be able to escape:

- work (this was not even used once with the first set of photographs!)
- busy
- chaotic
- regulations
- empty
- hectic
- pressure
- captive
- loneliness
- overload
- trapped
- stressful.
As pointed out before, this split or opposition was presented within both organisations equally. However, between organisations, there was no split – they mirrored each other through photographs and associations alike. Indeed, participants who did not recognise the content of any particular photograph were unable to identify which organisation it represented.

Still elaborating on the division between fundraising teams and the service delivery teams, the transcripts show that the different tasks also attract different types of personality:

"...I represent the fundraising team, we are generally very positive and upbeat; it’s a different personality to the care team, the care team is sort of more practically orientated. We are a bit more ‘whohoo’..." (J7 66), and

"...The care team is very skilled and trained. Fundraisers are loud, gregarious, they need to be, they are not afraid to go out and talk to anyone who can give money. That is quiet brash. They have very different personalities...” (R4 45).

5.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has investigated the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality on two levels: externally, as an interorganisational dynamic between the Fun Trust and the Play Trust on the one hand, and as an internal dynamic within both organisations, on the other hand. The ‘Us versus Them’ mentality between the two charities is very weak, with a manifestation of scepticism and suspicion towards each other rather than enemy-thinking. However, the same underlying dynamics exist as in case study one, only they are weaker. Robins and Post’s (1997) notion of paranoia was used to explain this development of suspicious attitude, which was identified to be stronger within the Fun Trust than the Play Trust.

The data then showed four different circumstances that can elevate the anticipation of risk and danger, which in turn can lead to an interpretation of suspicion as a mild defence mechanism. These factors were the scarcity of resources, strong identification with the charity of belonging, the importance of strong group cohesion to high quality service delivery and a great lack of information among practitioners with regards to the project and the proposed partner organisation. Since the Fun Trust would have a proportionately greater financial investment into the collaboration than has the Play Trust, the risk is higher for them and can explain their higher aversion to the project.
A surprising outcome of the data analysis is the detection of two internal divisions, with a horizontal split between the strategic and operational levels, as well as a vertical one between the fundraising and practitioner teams of both organisations. Along with that, strategic members of staff were more positive towards collaboration than operational staff, coupled with a lack of communication between them.

The division between fundraisers and practitioners of each charity proved to be the strongest manifestation of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, and although talking about enemy-thinking would still be an exaggeration, the ‘chicken and egg’ relationship between the two parts of the organisation has created competitive rather than supportive thinking between them. The predominance of the divide is also supported by findings of the SPM session.

In conclusion it is important to assert that despite the two internal splits being present in both organisations, the Play Trust has been trying more actively and successfully to overcome these, leaving them stronger within the Fun Trust due to its more rigour bureaucratic processes. Simultaneously, it is the Fun Trust who is more sceptical and hesitant about collaborating. Drawing Menzies-Lyth’s conclusions (1960) back into the discussion provides helpful in clarifying the link between these two findings, as she explains that organisational structure can serve as a defence against anxiety. With the Fun Trust having experienced more financial difficulties in the past, its more rigour structure can be interpreted as having such a defence function, especially in the face of expecting yet another financial threat caused by the suggested collaboration.

Another underlying question has transpired through this data analysis: is the suspicion on the side of the Fun Trust based on ‘real,’ objective ‘facts’ that are logically comprehensible, and hence any tendencies towards ‘Us versus Them’ thinking are justified, or is it rather caused by intrapsychic dynamics such as irrational paranoia that creates opposition and aversion due to a distorted and defensive view on reality? The development of this line of thought links well to the first three research questions of this thesis (1) Is ‘enemy-thinking’ an innate characteristic of being human or do we have a choice other than having enemies? 2) If ‘enemy-thinking’ is not innate, what provokes it? 3) What needs does having an ‘enemy’ satisfy?) Questioning whether the enemy is ‘real’ or the result of paranoid perception has significant indications on all of these questions and further reflections on this relationship will be considered in the discussion chapter.
In relation to this development of thought stands the interest for the conversion of the ‘unknown Other’ into a ‘known Other of opposition’. Inspired by this case study analysis, the discussion chapter will also include a reflection on the tendency to manage uncertainty by turning something that is unknown or strange to us into something certain and ‘bad’.
Chapter 6: Case Study 3 Data Presentation & Analysis

‘Us’ without ‘Them’ in the Convent

In this third case study I will present and analyse data gathered during participant observation in a closed and silent convent, whose community members are committed to a rather different purpose: being together in union. In fact, my initial efforts to find clear indicators of ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics failed, and I therefore had to rethink my very understanding of group conflict – even more, of what the term ‘group’ actually meant to me. In the following, I will try to communicate this development of thought as inspired by my experiencing and observing. The reader will soon learn that this chapter concentrates on the development of my own questioning, leaving the formation of possible answers to these questions to later chapters.

By doing so, I will first try and reconstruct some of my initial impressions when joining the community, as well as what I perceived to be typical characteristics and dynamics of convent life. Along with this, I will concentrate on my integration into and my changing role within the community:

6.1. My Welcoming and First Impressions

6.2. The Importance of Routine and Structure

Following this, I will present four key themes that are prominent in my fieldnotes and the SPM transcriptions. These are:

6.3. Strong Individualism within group Life

6.4. At One with Self and Group

6.5. The Role of the ‘Other’

6.6. Traces of Conflict.

Supportive examples from the SPM sessions will be illustrated in section 6.7. Lastly, in section 6.8. ‘Me and the Group – a Case of Idealisation?’ I will shift focus to my role as researcher before summarising key outcomes of the analysis in section 6.9.
6.1.  My Welcoming and First Impressions

In the following I will present the first entry from my fieldnotes that I made one hour after my arrival in the convent in the hope of being able to take the reader with me into the strict enclosure:

“After a two and a half hour journey, the rest of it through idyllic countryside, I arrive in the village. I find the convent and drive straight past it. On a nearby car park, I stop and collect my thoughts. I stuff the rest of the pack of my favourite chocolate biscuits into my mouth, take a few deep breaths and then head back towards the convent. Beautiful building, incredible. Looks really old, authentic, but well maintained and looked after. Like a fairytale building. The spire is disappointingly small. I step out of my car and approach what looks like the main entrance, a massive wooden door, three steps leading up to it. There is a bell, and a sign right above: ‘worry not – you cannot hear the bell, but we can.’ Ok then, so I ring it. Nothing indeed... ...still nothing... minutes pass...I’m gazing around...then footsteps coming closer from beyond the wood. The door opens with a squeak, and I find myself staring at a nun. Oh dear. She stares back, mumbling a ‘good morning’. ‘Good morning’, I answer, ‘my name is Nadine, I've come to stay with you for five weeks’ (what else am I gonna say). ‘Sorry who?’ she asks, and I repeat my name. After a few seconds of prolonged mutual staring, her face becomes softer, ‘oh yes, oh yes, that’s right, that’s right’ she mumbles. ‘Do you have a suitcase?’ I point to my car, and upon her request to bring my luggage, I get my two suitcases out of the boot. She pulls one of them, me the other. Up the three steps, through the wooden door and into a huge dark cold hall in which every move I make echoes with great awe. Another squeak, the door slams shut. Oh dear. I follow her through the hall, feeling small. We enter another door, ‘new parlour’, into a large room with plenty of chairs and tables. And a piano. Looks like a friendly place for tea and biscuits. That’s what the tea rings on the wood tell me. At the end another door, ‘No entry – enclosure’. Oh dear. The nun asks me to wait here and disappears. I look around and can see an inner yard. Everything looks old, but in a nice authentic, cute way. Lots of character, atmosphere. Kind of homey. A few moments later the door opens again, three other nuns emerge. ‘Good morning Nadine, it is so nice to meet you - we are very pleased to welcome you - oh you must have left very early this morning - how long did the journey take you - we hope it was not difficult to find us - do you have all your luggage with you...’ and each of them gives me a firm and long hug. I don’t know what to say or how to behave. I feel awkward is an understatement. In we go, each of the nuns grabbing a suitcase. Down another small corridor and onto a larger hall with a staircase. Something tells me this is quite a central place to the whole building. Echoes everywhere. There are lots of them whizzing about, all smiling at me, greeting without interrupting their calm haste. They look so hugely happy. One of the three nuns shows me to my room –cell they call it- I can’t remember any of their names anymore. There is a sign at the door ‘Welcome Nadine’ with a picture of a flower. The room is lovely; simple, small,
but all I need. Comfortable single bed with two pillows, small desk with chair, sink in the corner with soap and cup, a cupboard with three shelves and a curtain covering them, a granny-style arm chair. A vase with fresh flowers on a bedside table together with a lamp and a kettle. I love the flowers, I’d say they are from their own garden...but it’s January (?). I am given half an hour to unpack. Then one of the nuns picks me back up and gives me a grand tour of the house. I can’t remember anything though, am completely lost – this place is huge, and it doesn’t help that there are two floors and three different ways to get from A to B. On our way, we meet lots of other nuns, Sr. F., the one showing me around, is knocking on their cell doors (they still look like normal cosy rooms to me, without much resemblance to a cell) and every single one of them comes out. They welcome me, ask me questions, tell me something about them, crack some jokes (witty humour, great!), some anecdotalism, and long and firm hugs. I just got here, but I feel as though everybody is really happy to have me.” (1-1).

The events of this first day helped to alleviate my worries about my mere presence being a major disruption to this community’s life. So for example, next to having my own cell on the corridor among the nuns, I was introduced to my weekly task router after dinner, which listed the contributions I had to make to the everyday running of the household, including cooking, gardening, and cleaning, as well as my own study time (figure 13). This plan had been prepared before my arrival, and since I took over most of the tasks of a Sister that was leaving the next day for one month on her home visit, I felt as though I was going to genuinely make a contribution; tasks had not just been ‘invented’ to keep me busy.

Likewise, I was given my own place in the refectory and the chapel among the Sisters. My place in the refectory was set identically to those of others with plate, bowl, mug, glass and cutlery. I felt especially honoured by the seat given to me in the chapel, which was also fully equipped with my own cushion, kneeling stool, prayer books and bible. Furthermore, I joined in all community tasks, such as knitting and choir rehearsals, cutting vegetables, and of course, praying.

What struck me the most was the unconditional trust I was offered by the community as a whole, and how quickly and thoroughly, namely from the first day onwards, the Sisters ‘swallowed me’, assimilated me into all aspects of their life without any signs of suspicion or reservation; at least they were not noticeable to me. They made me feel as though I was an ‘equal’ member of their community. In fact I was so integrated into the Sisters’ daily routine, had I not ‘pulled my weight’ appropriately, I would have caused a significant disturbance to their peace of mind; a responsibility I certainly felt
on my shoulders at all times, as peace of mind and routine seemed to be one of the cornerstone of the community’s spiritual life. This is not to say, of course, that I felt to be an equal to them – it takes seven years of formation to become a professed nun of this order – but I certainly felt completely accepted. It was as though I had been with them for several months already.

In the remainder of this section, I will reflect on the changing nature of my role within the community and along with that, how my relationship to it has become stronger. As I learned on the second day, it had been decided by the community prior to my entry to treat me as a postulant, a community member in the first year of formation. Therefore, I was not required to wear a habit as this was only necessary from the second year of membership onwards, and I was not allowed to attend the weekly community meetings called 'chapters' that lasted between one and two hours. This was a privilege only reserved for Sisters after their first three years of formation. Additionally, I was given a mentor, Sr. F. who was the Sister that had shown me around on the first day.

To begin with, a minority of the Sisters took this mentor role very seriously and talked to her if they wanted to address me. My following fieldnotes give a good example of the awkwardness this caused for me:

"This morning it was my task to clean the chapel. No later than all of the Sisters had left after Terce, I headed towards the back room to grab the broom and Hoover. Sr. F. called my name just loud enough for me to hear and approached me to tell me that Sr. X. had requested I do not touch the organ while cleaning
Towards the end of the first week, the interpretation of my role, and hence the behaviour of the community towards me changed and made me feel even more integrated. For example, I was not asked anymore numerous times per day if I were OK, and I generally received less unprompted explanations about ‘the way we do things here’ from the Sisters. Questions were addressed directly at me, and seven of them let me know how well I integrated into their life without causing any disturbance. Such remarks of relief led me to believe that my perception of immediate acceptance and assimilation was the result of hard work on sides of the community to mask their worry about my potential to disrupt their life. They must have been anxious about my arrival, yet, they did not let any of it show.

Ten days into the participant observation, my role in the community developed further. I had observed that next to the officially scheduled daily tasks, of which I had my own assignments, the Sisters were very often busy with rather ad-hoc work, or in other words, trouble-shooting. In these times, for example some times in the afternoon, when I was officially given time to study, I felt less like a useful member of the community. It so came then that unfortunately, Sr. X. started to suffer from intense back pain and needed to be driven to the doctor. Since I had travelled to the convent by car, I offered my services as a driver to her and some Sisters after that. Similarly, I was made responsible for picking up medication from the pharmacy. Most importantly, however, Sr. X. needed taking care of, as she was bound to her bed, which also offered me an opportunity to make myself more useful, by, for example, bringing her afternoon tea every day and keeping her company in that half hour per day in which talking was officially permitted. I welcomed this additional task as it meant that I could embody another characteristic of convent life: being constantly busy. Lastly, I was asked by the abbess to write the monthly community newsletter that would be sent to the other two convents of the order, which I interpret to be another sign of trust and integration. During the last week of my stay, she said to me: "We are going to miss you when you leave”.

If I compare this experience of being a ‘newcomer’ in a group to those I had in the past, I can say that I felt much more welcomed and accepted, without any major adjustments on my side being necessary to ‘fit in’. The whole experience was, put in

the chapel. What bizarre behaviour - Sr. X. was practically standing next to me only a minute ago and could have told me herself! I will just have to reluctantly take it as it is, saying it’s such an old rule. Luckily most of the Sisters don’t stick to it.” (1-27).
simple terms, easier, and along with that went exactly against my expectations. With a group that is so ‘tightly knit’ together, so dependent on each other for the functioning of the whole, I expected it to be rather difficult to be accepted and find a role among them, to be truly ‘let in’. At the very least, I expected them to be more suspicious of me. In this respect I recalled my experience of friendship groups, who by far do not spend as much time with each other as do the Sisters, and also very likely do not know each other as well – yet, it is extremely difficult for a newcomer to break into a circle of friends or clique.

On the one hand, it could be argued that my acceptance was lucky due to the norms and values of the community that I happened to share, as well as similarities of personalities. However, this was rather unlikely. On the other hand, one could look for reasons for my seamless assimilation among the group itself and ponder upon what it is that makes them different from other groups that I have become a member of – even if only temporarily – in the past. Alone the fact that I am a Muslim, but the sisters never cared to even ask me about this despite my obvious Middle-Eastern appearance, shows that my unproblematic assimilation did not happen thanks to our mutual ideologies but for reasons that are driven by the nature of this group of women itself. I shall come back to this reflection in the next chapter, when drawing on the theory on group dynamics in order to shed more light onto possible reasons for the unusually welcoming attitude with which this group meets outsiders. It has already become obvious though that I thought this group to be, in relation to my own personal experiences, unusual, without being able to ‘put my finger on it’ yet.

6.2. The Significance of Routine and Structure

The importance to adhere strictly to a set routine and rigorous structure of daily life was one of the most striking observations I made throughout my participant observation. I started collecting field notes on it as early as 5 hours into my stay:

"...Everything is done with precision...before the meal we came in and stood behind our chairs – the tables always stay set, the seats are assigned to each nun every few years. A bell sounds, one nun starts speaking the first prayer phrase, the others join in from the second phrase. Then we sit down. Absolute silence. The bell rings again, five nuns get up and go behind the food counter. They grab a white apron each from the shelf behind and put it on. Then they pick out serving spoons from the trays. They come to a standstill positioned precisely behind the still empty placemats. In the meantime, another nun has
opened the heating cabinet and takes out the oversized pots and pans full of food, catching them vigorously with both hands, oven gloves protecting her. Once that’s done, she sits back down. Silence. Then the rest of us take our plates and queue for food. Then we sit down and eat. The bell rings again, and the whole routine repeats itself, this time for desert – I’ve just managed to finish my mains. Then the bell rings yet again – I’ve just gulped down the last bite of my cake. One nun fills four plastic basins with hot water, passes them in turns to two others who put them into assigned positions across the refectory. Around them, groups of nuns form, one washes, one dries, one puts away. Another one is going around the tables collecting the left over drinking water into the larger jugs so as to fill it back into the giant water heater. Another one goes around and wipes the tables. Another one is collecting the little pots of compost and throws them in the large compost bin. At last two nuns empty the basins of water and dry them. Another one dries the places where those basins were only a second go. She then folds the towels and puts them back into place. Then everyone goes back to their place and stand behind their chairs. Only three minutes have passed since we got up. Silence...” (1-2).

At that moment in time, and long after I had left the community again, I could not make sense of the reasons behind this emphasis on strict routine; but somehow I became aware that it played a decisive role in the community’s life. This became even more evident when I disrupted this well-rehearsed routine that seemed to be led by an invisible hand on the second day after supper:

“I wanted to be helpful, so I got up, took a towel and started drying. I made the mistake of not differentiating between the cutlery – I must have assumed they are all the same. Although very friendly and helpful, I could see Sr. F.-J. in clear distress over which of the two knives I had handed to her was hers (they looked identical to me). I was very sorry but didn’t know what to say.” (1-4).

Since I want to ground the account here deep in my own experience, I will present two more extracts of my fieldnotes that describe the structure and precision with which routine tasks were conducted by the community. While I am fully involved in the first extract, the second extract is taken from my passive observation of another Sister.

Every morning after Terce prayer, I was involved in preparing raw vegetables for the kitchen team to cook:

"...six of us stream into the second kitchen. Aprons are behind the door, we grab a cutting board from the shelf and a knife from the draw underneath the centre table – I must make sure I get myself a sharp one, not easy – and take position around the table. Sister F.-J. always sits on her walking aid by the left. In the meantime Sister P. has brought in buckets full of veggies. Usually people try to stay away from the onions, apart from Sister F.-J., she gets right in there.
I don’t mind either – haven’t worn make-up for ages, so no danger of smudging. Sr. P. is the one judging the quantities, so she tells us when she thinks it’s enough – until then we keep going, two for the potatoes, two for the cabbage – one halves the leaves, taking the stem off – that’s me, and then Sr. M. chops the leaf into 1-inch pieces, Sr. A. chops the carrots and Sr. F.-J. never cries over the onions. Potatoes have to be peeled, making sure all the dark eyes are removed. The two outer layers of the onions have to be disposed of; they will be too hard for some of the Sisters to chew, even after cooking. The cut carrot pieces usually fly around the table and everyone tries to catch them – quite comedic, so there is always a lot of giggling involved. Piles of cut veggies and compost grow on the table. Sister M. is humming a melody. Then we are done. The cut vegetables go back into the buckets – Sr. P. lifts them into the front kitchen. Sr. F.-J. has moved her walking aid to the sink and is receiving the dirty equipment we have been using. Sister A. is pushing the waste cuts into the compost bucket, Sister M. is wiping the table with a cloth after her, I am sweeping the floor, starting from the far corner, Sister Am. Is already waiting with a dustpan and brush. Aprons off and back behind the door. I look around, everyone is gone, apart from Sr. F.-J. who is now humming the same melody and drying the cutlery.” (2-28).

The whole procedure took ten minutes. Reading this extract, and especially my involvement in it, might give the impression that the Sisters’ daily routine is rather rushed. Indeed I felt rushed everyday and all day; however, this was due to me not being used to the physical work. When watching others work rather than participating, I perceived a great calmness in their movements and concentration on their task. Although work was done with strictness and rigour, the speed never seemed hectic or stressful, but calm and smooth. This became evident when watching Sister G., the refectorian going after her work:

“Sister G. is busy tidying the refectory. Within a couple of minutes she turns it from tea to supper layout. She moves swiftly back and forth, with a concentrated gaze, a strong sense of determination, completely ignoring me. There is no time-wasting here, no ‘hanging around’. She does not look up, does not smile, but does not look unfriendly. Back and forth, two biscuit boxes onto the tray, the tray behind the wall. The giant water heater turned off and refilled twice with a jug. All the tea assortments put in order next to it, likewise the instant coffee. The cupboard closed. The long counter wiped. She doesn’t need to stop and search. The two bread boxes from the corner onto the counter, back to back, one filled with white, the other with brown bread. A chopping board in front of each, together with a long knife. The butter (lightly salted) and diet margarine along the table. I can barely hear her footsteps. Jam assortments close by. The bowls ready on the trolley for later and pushed aside. She is done, she is gone.” (2-40).
The above extract is a good example of the many that I gained during my five-week participant observation. I won the overall impression that all members of this community who were physically capable were in a constant state of concentration, during prayer just as much as during physical labour. Idleness did not seem to exist in their daily routine, as even recreational time and resting periods were structured (see figure y). Everything they did in their waking hours was done with strong sense of purpose and direction. When I shared this impression with one of the Sisters, she commented: "We are creatures of habit, and the routine is good for us; idleness is the enemy of the soul. (...) Our work is like prayer to us." (1-18).

![Figure 14: The community’s weekly timetable](image)

The fact that I was given a weekly timetable dated 2006 (figure 14) added to my impression that I ought to reflect further on the function routine fulfils for this community. A later incidence clarified to me that this routine did not only take effect on timetabling, but also on the distribution of responsibilities as well as communication routes. One of the visiting priest’s speech had fascinated me, hence I asked Sr. F., my mentor, if it would be possible to talk with him about it. Two days later,
“at morning prayer, Sr. G. entered the chapel and I could see her placing a small note on Sr. A.’s chair. When leaving the chapel, Sr. F. approached me with that piece of paper, which read ‘Father K. Saturday 11am ok?’, and she advised me to confirm with Sr. M. Before I had opportunity to do so, Sr. P. found me and said that I have to let the priest know where to meet, although Sr. M. informed me this will happen in the old parlour. However, Sr. P. insisted I let Sr. G. know. At this point I was silently chuckling away at what was happening here, and when I asked Sr. G. if she could shed light onto this confusion, she explained ‘we are very clear about who does what; Father K. approached me first, and since I knew it was not my responsibility, I passed the message on to Sr. A.; Sr. P. gives the priest spiritual direction, so they must have been talking about it then. And Sr. M. brings him food every day. I am responsible for the parlour bookings, and I assume since Sr. A. was involved because she is the abbess, and well, Sr. F. because she is your mentor...” (2-57).

Having acknowledged the importance of routine and structure to the community, I was left puzzled about reasons for this. Despite being aware that the management of a large group entails structure and rule, the extent to which this was followed seemed to me to be driven by graver underlying reasons. I will reflect further on such possible reasons with the help of relevant theory in the next chapter.

6.3. Strong Individualism within Group Life

One of the outstanding overall dynamics that I observed during my stay left me perplexed from early on. These relate to strongly communal features of the convent life on the one hand, contrasted with individualistic traits on the other hand.

With regards to the first cluster of observations, each nun has her fixed task and place in the community, and since they are mutually interdependent, each is necessary for the well-functioning of the community as a whole. For example, if the laundry or cooking is not seen to as planned, there would be detrimental consequences on the routinised tranquillity described in the previous section that the community flourishes on.

It became transparent early on in my stay that the sisters live as part of a bigger whole which they constantly strive towards renewing and maintaining, and their principle of Christian Unity reflects this (Appendix 7). Looking at the sisters’ outer appearance makes this togetherness in union visible. Along with their formal and work habits, they do not possess any clothing that might differentiate them from each other, such as an
accessory or the like. Their fundamental belief of obedience is targeted at preserving the prioritising of the collective above individual needs. Along with that, so states their constitution, the Sisters give up their free will when entering, which speaks of a very strong devotion to communion indeed. Likewise, they accept a new identity by replacing their birth name with a religious one.

Similarly, the principle of poverty supports the principle of putting the collective first: Prior to becoming a member of the community, a Poor Clare has to give up all her personal belongings and thereafter does not own anything by herself. I have learnt about this as one of the sisters inherited money from a family member, which was used to build a hermitage in the convent garden for the community’s use.

Furthermore, I became convinced that the sisters had grown into a tightly knit family supporting each other with genuine love. This became evident in the continuous care for the elderly members of the community, and in general a constant willingness to help (1-39). I witnessed an exemplary display of their affection for each other two days after my entry. Four of the nuns were about to visit another order for a few days. All sisters assembled at the enclosure’s main entrance to give their blessings to the travellers. The goodbye ceremony was so intense, with some sisters getting teary, I was certain they were leaving the community for several years. When I was told that they would be back in four days, I was left astonished about how close the sisters had grown (1-7) and I remembered the words of one of the sisters: “Love. To be loving with one another is really the hallmark of our life.” (1-43). In a similarly intimate manner, during recreational time, where talking is allowed, sisters share openly with the community problems with family members they are occupied with. For example, one sister expressed her most private feelings and the latest news about her mother who suffered from Alzheimer. The community carefully listened with great empathy (1-44). Routinely, the people who share their sorrow with the community are included in the prayers of the day.

For the sake of pointing out the link between the identified themes, I can add that in general, thanks to the adherence to the strict structure and routine, the nuns interacted and collaborated so smoothly like cogs of a big machine, so flawless and efficient, in attunement with one another. They appeared to me like a choir of professional singers, not only in the chapel, but in daily life, constantly harmonious.
I will now shift focus to the second cluster of observations, where opposing this solid image of togetherness, is another key characteristic of the convent life, namely the strong individualism of each member. The nuns spent a lot of their time by themselves. Solitude seemed to be a welcomed state of being and I frequently encountered behaviour and opinions that made me realise the importance the sisters placed on solitude. Several years ago, the community had decided to introduce a ‘desert day’ on Wednesdays, when rather than being with each other, the sisters had the choice to take their supper to their cells and remain in solitude until the next morning’s Holy Mass. This also meant not having night prayer, office readings and morning prayer together in the chapel, but in solitude in their cells. I chose to sit in the refectory on Wednesdays to see who would prefer to eat in company instead, but the most I ever saw were a maximum of five people (1-6).

Likewise, recreation time which is scheduled twice a week, lasts one hour only. Usually on a Sunday, there is additional TV time together scheduled; however, if possible, the community prefers to bring forward night prayer instead and retreat to their private cells half an hour earlier. Singing practice on a Wednesday is scheduled for one hour. When it was cancelled on a number of occasions, the sisters made their relief over this decision clear. One could now argue that they just did not enjoy singing, but taking into consideration the other examples I have given, it becomes clear that the community strives to spend as much time in solitude as possible. Furthermore, retreats for individual sisters were organised frequently, whereby the Sister in question was able to spend a consecutive 24 hours on her own, either in her cell, or in the garden, without being disturbed.

I remember not finding much understanding for the sisters’ constant urge for being alone, because I very much valued the time spent in the group. I remember looking forward everyday to tea time at 4pm, where for half an hour talking was officially allowed and I would have the chance to mingle with the others. But then I was disappointed as good as every day, since, as the participation in tea time was voluntary, the vast majority of the community chose to continue going about their individual tasks instead. There was this constant longing for social contact from my side, for bonding with others, whereas the nuns’ need for fulfilment seemed to be of an inherently different nature. So it came that none of the sisters displayed the same amount of enthusiasm for that half hour of the day when coming together for a ‘chat’ as I did.
I began to wonder which personality traits it were that differentiated us so greatly in our longing to search for the proximity of Others, not with regards to our belief system – these differences were obvious – but with regards to those elements which we shared as human beings. Why did I feel this great urge for immersion in the group, while the Sisters were content with keeping some sort of separation from it as well as not seeming to need some form of constant confirmation of their membership of it?

One could argue that the nuns’ wish to withdraw is only natural given that they are confined to each other in a comparably small space for the rest of their lives. This is a plausible argument; however, the nuns have chosen this way of life and confirmed their decision in a seven-year journey to becoming a professed nun of this order. Moreover, it is the nuns’ highest aspiration through this way of life to create and live together in union, as well as leading by example of that union. Hence I believe it to be valuable to look further into the reasons for why they spent so much time in isolation.

An example for how the value of solitude is accommodated for, is the way the convent space facilitates each sisters’ independent identity. In addition to their own cell, each sister has a hobby room in which she pursues different arts and crafts, such as woodcraft, tailoring, wax painting, candle-making, and knitting. Some of them love cooking, and some writing, and some flourish their individuality in gardening (2-47). It is clear that despite the tightly-knit community life and its duties, each sister has ample opportunity to develop as an individual.

Next to the preference for solitude, the degree of differences of personalities among the sisters stood out. It seemed to me as though despite living together for several decades, the Sisters were still strongly individualised beings, without diffusion of their sense of independent self. Despite their dependency on each other for the daily running of the convent and community, the sisters remain heterogeneous and differentiated from each other. This as such was astonishing to me given my previous knowledge of social psychology theories such as deindividuation. Deindividuation is a state in which the self is subjectively less differentiated from Other persons in a group (Diener, 1980) and that behaviour appears to be highly normative (Spears, 1994). In other words, I expected to find a group with members that had become similar to each other in behaviour, opinion and attitude, especially given the amount of time they had been together. Their similarities, however, do not go beyond their outer appearance.

In character, as I have argued, they are very different beings indeed.
It so came that for more than half of my time in the convent, I was accompanied by the creeping suspicion that I was failing as a researcher, because I was becoming more and more convinced of missing out on those significant moments when the nuns spend time together and when, as I believed at the time, those group manifestations of ‘Us versus Them’ thinking that I had come to study were readily observable. I felt as though I was never in the right place at the right time and commented on this in my fieldnotes:

"I have been here for nine days now, but I’m still worried as far as my research is concerned. I can’t be everywhere at once. Yet the nuns are scattered around everywhere most of the time, so how am I supposed to study their GROUP-dynamic? They spend most of their time either in their cell or working somewhere on their own. So I feel like calling my supervisor and shouting ‘there is no group, it’s all a bunch of individuals, I’m done here!’” (1-38).

It took me a lot of time to accept the fact that this is a group other than my common understanding of a group – one that is always together, but rarely physically. One that has learnt to adjust to each other and to live as a unit, yet one that is highly individuated, and hence far from showing any forms of group cohesion or conformity. Rather, the Sisters left the general impression on me that they were strongly opinionated individually and confident in making their own voice heard. With the layout of their daily lives, the community seemed to have achieved that balance between separateness and togetherness that Bion described as a paradox (1961).

Only much further into my stay, a coincidence made me realise that my worries were unsubstantiated because the nuns genuinely spent that much time by themselves in private: I was going for a walk in the back garden, taking a break from my observations and reflections. Dusk had settled in, and when I turned the corner and my gaze fell back at the convent building, I realised that I could look straight into most of the sisters’ cells. Despite the feeling of being intrusive, I continued to observe, and so I saw that all that time, I had not missed out on anything, no hidden agenda - they were all there, by themselves on their cells, either reading, writing, working through papers, sorting the room, or going for a walk on their own - just like me.

This experience proved to be a milestone in my fieldwork, as I realised that this is a group different from those I had witnessed in the past and which made up my very understanding of the meaning of ‘group’. These individuals did not need to be together physically to create a bond – the elements of their particular way of life, for example, the routine and structure as well as the three pillars of obedience, poverty and chastity
presented in section 6.2. seemed to be enough to create a tightly-knit union. The influence of routine and structure on this community’s group dynamics will therefore be discussed in more detail in chapter seven.

6.4. At one with Self and Group

From the discussion so far, one might have gained the impression that individual aspects and group aspects of the nuns’ life are independent from each other or even, to use Bion’s terminology, ‘at war’ with each other (1961). However, this is not what I have come to conclude. It became clear to me from the information the sisters provided that their individuality and their group life are in fact mutually dependent on and not separable from each other. I will try to make this clear in the following.

It seemed to me that the time the nuns spent in solitude served their concentration on their own inner selves. An advice one of the sisters gave to a visitor reminded me of this strong inwards focus, this paying attention to ‘self’:

"You have to pull off the layers of the onion, and you get a bit closer to the centre; don’t be frightened of it, look forward to it, because it’s a wonderful experience to come to know the real person that you are." (1-18).

In the same line of thought, the sister further suggested that "you have got to mother your inner child and grapple with your own inner daemons." (1-19).

It was at this point that I started to wonder what implications a stronger relationship to one’s own self would have on one’s relationship to the Other and hence the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. As I have emphasised in the literature review, the Other is often used as a container for one’s own split off and projected ‘bad’ parts. If, however, those ‘bad’ parts are not split off in the first place but rather contained (grappling ‘with your own inner daemons’), would that make projection onto a suitable Other unnecessary, or at least less likely? For example, the principle that “we can accept ourselves as who we are” (1-33), as explained to me by one Sister, indicates that projection of negative parts as a defence is not needed as they are not perceived as a threat: they are accepted. One can also argue that the Sisters use another channel through which to, in Erlich’s (2001) words, self-cleans: While the ‘rest of us’ project our bad parts away, they ask God for forgiveness, and since “God can be found in silence” (1-17) and this is a silent order, one might speculate that this self-cleansing is an ever ongoing process.
Another conversation that I had with one of the Sisters supports this line of reasoning, as she even talks about projection herself:

“The people that annoy you most – they are projections of yourself that you haven’t dealt with. They have a gift for you, because they have something in them that you are not understanding.” (1-63).

Similarly, another member of the community tried to explain the same principles to me:

“what’s out there, is in here. If I try to only deal with the good, I’d burst one day; God loves the mixture! I have to own the ‘dark’ side too, befriend it, embrace the shadow (...) Christians are constantly challenged to grow into integrated human beings that way...” (3-5).

Thereupon I was prompted to have a look at the ‘Parable of Weeds’ from the bible, which mirrors this principle:

“...The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared. (...) The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest’...” (Matthew 13:30).

A research question that emerged from this case study was whether it is this awareness of the tendency to project and the ability to contain one’s own ‘bad’ parts that make this group of people so different from those I have got to know in the past. One can say that they might be able to recognise such naturally prone tendencies due to their increased self-awareness, and hence stop themselves from acting it out. While they might still have been inclined to identify an Other, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality did not develop to any observable amount. I will now draw connections between these intrapsychic dynamics and how they might impact on interpersonal dynamics.

The sisters explained they feel more united with their inner self if they are in unity with others:

“If one of our relationships in the community is not right, then our prayers are not right. Because our human condition is such that if we are trying to become whole, all parts have to be harmonious. In prayer, one can come to see his own part in a dispute and then be reconciled.” (1-62).
I understand from this that prayer is that form of meditation for the nuns which allows them to focus their gaze inwards, in a self-reflective way, and to strengthen their self-awareness – to become ‘one’ in themselves. The quote above shows that this is not possible if they are not ‘at one’ with everyone else around them that makes up the praised universal unity. One sister formulated this notion well in her own words:

"Through any relationship we are growing through love into self-awareness."

(1-63).

6.5. The Role of the ‘Other’

Since I could not let go of my impression that the sisters contained ‘bad’ parts of their experience without acting out any projections onto a suitable Other, I conducted a thought-experiment, whereby I went through what I perceived to be possible targets for such projections. Especially given that the literature reviewed states clearly that there is an innate human need for enemies (see for example, Bion, 1961, Erlich, 1997; Volkan, 1988), I had expected that as soon as any difference in characteristics of a group of people became salient, it would serve as a ‘justification’ to attract an ‘Us versus Them’ boundary (Middents, 1990); in other words, if individuals or a group of people is significantly different, it would, so I thought, very likely be made target of projections.

I imagined, for example, that the outside world as such would be kept ‘at arm’s length’, with the convent being strictly isolated from it, so that the ‘rest of the world’ in general could serve as the ‘Them’ formation. I was convinced another obvious target would be atheists, or members of other religious groups. However, my assumptions did not materialise.

I then thought of any of these ‘outsiders’ being made the target of projections, as this would be the easiest explanation for the lack of projections within community. However, again I could not identify any such intergroup bias dynamics. The community treats other orders as being one of ‘Us’, following the principles of their constitution (article 216): ‘Although made up of autonomous monasteries, our whole order forms one family.’ (1-53). In one of the dominant prayers repeated on numerous days a week, the text reads "Let us also remember our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters." (1-57), showing their commitment to other religious groups, too. Likewise, no differentiation is made to other nationalities, as the community prays for "churches all
over the world”. I have to stress here, that these are not just written principles. During my stay I could witness a true commitment to put these principles into everyday practice.

They also embrace members of the parish with their daily integration into prayers, making it not a privilege of their own to be allowed to speak the prayers. Next to daily integration into prayers, there was a monthly evening prayer during which the union with the parish became particularly transparent:

“Today is the first Friday of the month, and at 7:15pm a very special prayer started. There was a large wooden cross laid on the floor in the middle of the chapel, in the front part that usually only the nuns and I access, but today the members of the parish were invited to sit around it, among the sisters. We started preparations half an hour earlier, and the main task was to arrange all the sisters’ chairs and the two front benches into a large circle with the cross in the centre. Then we put incredibly many candles all round the chapel, it was so atmospherical. Then we had to make sure that the right prayer books were distributed among all seats. When the visitors arrived, they sat down in-between the nuns and sang along with them. The readings were also held by members of the parish, which is actually not that special because it happens all the time. But the sitting in the circle together, the sisters with all the 'normal' people as one, praying and thanksgiving as though they were no different, is what struck me most.” (1-55).

Given that I could not discover any obvious external Other, I focused my search inwards, onto the intragroup level of the community, where I then expected to find a readily observable indication for some kind of segmentation or splitting. After all, I included a lot of examples in my literature review which indicate that without an outgroup, or enemy, the ingroup will split into subgroups in order to re-establish the duality (Robbins and Krueger, 2005). But I could not observe any dynamics that hinted towards 'Us versus Them' thinking, such as the formation of sub-groupings. One sister informed me about the community’s take on friendship, which could explain my observation:

"It is human nature to be drawn to somebody more than to others, but we are called to love all; it’s when we are drawn to a person that makes the love exclusive to the rest of the community. We have to work to also love the one’s we are not inclined to.”(1-62).

And in another conversation, a sister noted:

"exclusion is against our principle of love.”(1-34).
This goes in line with the fundamental Christian belief that portrays unity as the highest state of being. And although this unity can only be fully achieved after death, in resurrection, when all of humanity is reunited in God, the sisters worked very hard daily on approximating this state in the here and now. One of the sisters explained that "...actually we are all connected to each other." (1-43, 57), (see also Appendix 7).

Having defined the whole of humanity as 'Us', this led me on to look for something inhuman that could form the counterpart 'Them', to enable me to hold on to the idea that the presence of an 'enemy' is an innate human need. The devil, source of all evil came to mind immediately. It can be seen as one of the biggest projections as it is commonly blamed for the evil of humanity, a great scapegoat indeed: 'It must have been the devil in me.' However, reflecting further on the sisters’ belief system, I learnt that even the devil is accepted as one of the big 'Us', who through love will be turned to good; by, according to St. Augustine of Hippo, 'hating the sin but loving the sinner' (in Azkoul, 1991). One of the regular priests added that “by behaving lovingly, inclusively, the enemy [them], is turned into one of ‘us’.” (1-57) and as one of the visiting brothers explained to me, "we are asked to love the enemy." (3-6).

6.6. Traces of Conflict (Really?)

I want to avoid the impression that I have idealised the group of sisters by being ‘blind’ to their discrepancies and disagreements. Talking about this group as only being harmonious without any occasion of friction would indeed be uncritical, for on a number of occasions, I did witness abrupt language and body language that suggests some form of controversy. However, while observing these incidences, I started to cast doubt on whether they were the traces of what I was looking for. I realised that my own perception of conflict was very different from the community’s understanding. I was looking for some sort of split in the community, some grouping, ganging, exclusive friendships or even scapegoating or bullying – any kind of formation or behaviour that could hint towards ‘enemy-thinking’ exercised on the group level as suggested by the literature I had studied.

While I certainly found conflict in the sense of individual disputes, this was not acted out by the group as a whole. The dynamic that is so commonly observed in other organisations such as schools or businesses, namely the clustering of other members around those individuals who had the conflict in the first place, did not occur. Hence,
disagreements remained an issue between individuals and did not turn into a group phenomenon whereby the community split into subgroups along the lines of the controversy and amplified it through the display of 'Us versus Them' mentality. So for example, I witnessed on rather coincidental occasions that one Sister would be upset with another one due to an action or lack of it (shrinking of a pullover in the wash, forgetting to pass on a message, misplacing an important item) and expressed her feelings openly and directly. But after the other one had explained her own stance on the matter and apologised, the incidences were soon forgotten.

Not only do I intend to record these observations of conflict but also my own experience of such examples. On one occasion, I had insight into the struggle one has to undergo with oneself in order to preserve the good of the community:

"... It's 6:30pm, but I have got absolutely no idea what day it is; I lost count a long time ago. I am completely agitated and emotional, I even feel like crying believe it or not. (...) I feel hugely agitated by Sr. X, and that probably since yesterday, but today it reached the peak. Sr. X was not present at the introduction to the SPM (...). So we agreed that I would fill her in the next morning. (...) (S)he really did not make any effort hiding the fact that she can absolutely not be bothered with my project. When I said 'well, it would not really work if you only gave it five minutes to do the photos' she answered, 'well that is all the time I would spend on it'. I know she probably doesn’t mean it, but I have noticed (...) that she can be that stroppy with a lot of people. (...) Anyway, just an hour ago then the final straw: I am standing in front of the notice board discussing the SPM with Sr. Y, (...) Sr. X passes by and stops, and when Sr. Y said 'she is ever so good at explaining', Sr. X answered: 'Well it's only in her own interest'. That infuriated me hugely. What an unfair and rude comment. First of all, I never made a secret out of how helpful it is for me, I have more than shown my appreciation. And I think (...) that I give something back, too, and everybody can see that I am trying very very hard – I am literally breaking my back in the garden after all. Anyway, this did give me a different flavour of community life, and I could finally relate to what one of the nuns said a while back, that here you cannot just run away from problems, you have to sort them out. And that is quite literate: The strict schedule means that privacy can only take a maximum of two hours at a time. I cannot simply decide to remain in my cell and sulk. I have to pull my weight, pull myself together and do my part for the community. If I didn’t, it would unbalance the whole group that’s for sure. This was the first time I felt a pressing on me and an urge to go for a long walk, to have a time-out, just to get away. My head was spinning. I really had to compose myself, was kind of shouting at myself in my own head. I felt quite claustrophobic. Wanting to tell Sr. X how I really felt about her mean comment came over me. But then I wanted to retreat like a snail would into its own shell." (2-37).
Let me emphasise that I am neither concluding that the sisters have no need for Otherness, nor am I praising Christian principles as being enough to overcome the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. But yet I could see that they worked for this community. I have shown that conflict does occur as a normal dynamic of everyday convent life, and as one priest explained to me:

"This community is unusual; they deal with stuff. It struggles, it wrestles, we see the result of hard personal work – working on the self and the community.” (3-6).

As stated in the clarification of the research design, this community was also the only one out of the six applied to that accepted me into the enclosure, further stressing their unusualness. It has also become clear during my stay that the Sisters have a strong sense of identity with regards to their Christian principles and what opposes these principles. Nevertheless, this strong sense of distinction did not develop into a sense of ‘Us versus Them’ towards those who are not in agreement, such as foregoes enemy-thinking. Rather than ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’, the nuns have, through their tolerance and understanding for self and Other – shown in this analysis to be two mutually dependent constructs -, developed the ability to hold an ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, or ‘Us’ with ‘Them’ mentality.

This notion then leads to a further discrepancy: The wide range of literature I am aware of that concentrates on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality has announced the innate need for enemies. Due to my convent experience, I have begun to wonder if this is necessarily true, and if it is not enough to proclaim the need for ‘Otherness’ to be innate – but that this Other does not necessarily have to be labelled ‘enemy’. Other sources have expressed that we cannot love someone without having someone to hate (Segal, 1995), again displaying this inner need for animosity. However, one of the community’s fundamental principles would make the hating impossible: ‘We are asked to love our enemies’. Because my convent experience did not meet my expectations formed previously by the literature I had studied, I will continue into a more theoretical analysis of and distinction between ‘versus’ and ‘and’ in the next chapter.

6.7. Contributions from the Social Photo Matrix

During the two SPM sessions conducted (appendix 8 shows two examples of transcribed free associations), the following key themes kept resurfacing among the
free associations: (1) the Sisters’ acknowledgement of being part of a bigger whole, (2) their resourcefulness and (3) their perception of circularity between good and bad. In the following, I will give some examples of these free associations and try to interpret their meaning in context of my own experiences.

6.7.1. The Sisters’ Acknowledgement of being Part of a Bigger Whole (figure 15)

Throughout both SPM sessions, the Sisters made reference to the relationship between themselves as individuals and the whole group that constitutes the community. Free associations in words or phrases included:

“Parts of the whole”, "It’s a kind of choreography”, "New wood added to old to keep it on its feet – just like us”, "One thing made of many ingredients”, Every yoke is unique, separate, yet together”, "United, yet each individual”, "Dependence”, "Synergetic”.

These contributions remind strongly of the paradox I have began to formulate in this section; namely that of the Sisters having left behind their own life so as to create unity through dedicating themselves to the group on the one hand, whilst nourishing their individuality and own separate identity from that same group on the other hand. Along with this outcome of the SPM sessions, I find myself even more encouraged to investigate this paradox further by drawing on the theory of group dynamics into the later discussion.

6.7.2. The Sisters’ Resourcefulness (figure 16)

It astounded me to witness the Sisters’ ability to find purpose in any kind of objects encountered. An atmosphere of opportunity and possibility was therefore created; nothing ever went to waste, and the nuns were exemplary in finding as many uses as
possible for all utensils in their everyday lives. However, it was not until sighting the free associations of the SPM sessions that I became fully aware of this pungent community characteristic:

"Helpful wheels", "everything has purpose and every space has a use", "Everything has meaning", "The organic nature of life, nothing is wasted", "The immense variety for use of electricity", "...continuity and using things until they are used", "the usefulness of what is very humble", "recycled grass", "A place of possibilities", "full of possibilities".

One could interpret this attitude not only in a religious sense, following which the Sisters’ maximum exhaustion of resources could be seen as a sign of their appreciation for God’s creations, but also as a sign of their superior imagination, inventive character and creative abilities. I can now see this as a further unique character that distinguishes this group from others I have experienced in the past and will therefore give attention to the concept of creativity in the discussion chapter.

6.7.3. The sisters’ Perception of Circularity between Good and Bad (figure 17)

The final salient theme that became transparent due to its emphasis and frequency of occurrence is symbolised by references made to the mutuality of life and death, good and bad, or beginning and end. Such free associations were for example:

"The compost nourishes the flowers", "We need to be muddled down", "good from rubbish", "Resurrection", "Transformation is 95% decay", "the older, the newer", "Those who went before us", "you can't get away from the messy part of life", "from ashes, something lives anew", "Life, even from the barren rock", "The path coming from and going to", "Sometimes you have to have the mess and mud to let the beautiful grow".
These examples can be seen as reminiscent to my earlier supposition that the nuns of this community are capable of accepting and holding within themselves, both, good and bad parts of their selves without feeling threatened by them, so that projection onto an outside Other is less likely to be necessary. Following this comparison, parallels can be drawn to the earlier presented discussion around the ‘Parable of Weeds’ (Matthew 13:30). I will come back to this line of thought in the discussion chapter to give it a more theoretical underpinning.

6.8. **Me and the Group – a Case of Idealisation?**

Having initially stated my wish to avoid the impression of having idealised the group, by now I have accepted that this might indeed be what I did. Another researcher with different life experiences might have come to an alternative evaluation of the community’s functionality. A participant observer with more pleasant past experiences of group dynamics might not have been as astounded about the harmony this group displayed as I was. In the introduction, I have illustrated that my interest into the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality was driven by negative encounters with groups. I therefore commenced my research with the intention in mind to investigate what it is that goes ‘wrong’ in groups so that an ‘Us versus Them’ mentality is evoked. That this experience at hand was very different from the ones I had in the past becomes evident in many of my fieldnotes in which I pay particular attention to the harmony and generosity I witnessed among the Sisters.
Next to my previous examples of their care for the elderly and their display of affection when four of the nuns visited another order, I describe on a number of occasions in great detail the altruistic help the sisters offer each other unprompted:

"In the chapel this morning, it must have been seconds before Sr. A. was about to ring the gong, Sr. G. spilled her glass of water (she typically makes too many erratic movements). As she jumped up and headed for the door – I guess to fetch a cloth or the like – it was actually Sr. P. who caught my attention. As soon as the spill had happened, she grabbed her cardigan from behind her and started to dry up the puddle. She lifted Sr. G.'s books that had been splashed, one after another, and with great care and diligence made sure she wiped them completely dry. But there was something more to it: It was her face that I remember so vividly, her smile, the calmness, the love that spoke on her face while clearing up Sr. G.'s mess – with the only cardigan she possesses. As I am writing this entry into my diary, a few hours after this has happened, I'm thinking: Not even a bystander effect in this group – something that I previously thought of occurring whenever a group of people come together.” (1-40).

I report of a similar scene when Sr. F. succumbed suddenly to vehement back pains, and two other sisters volunteered to move the entire contents of her cell – furniture as well as personal belongings – to the ground floor so as to rid her of the chore to climb the stairs:

"I am having a rest after lunch in my cell, exhausted with weighty eyes as usual, when I hear some very heavy breathing, some 'one-two-three-hepp' followed by the sound of squeaking and cracking and the pushing of something big, and then some heavy puffing again. It comes closer and closer, and when I poke my head around the corner (after all I enjoy my legitimacy to be nosy) I see how Sr. F. and Sister L. were pushing a wardrobe (!!!) down the corridor. I do offer my help, and my concern is probably visible on my face, as they stop to smile at me explaining their endeavour with obvious enthusiasm. Admittedly I am glad though about their insisting that they do not require my help – I can hardly keep up with the hard work of their daily routine as it is.” (1-61).

The fact that I have given these two examples, among many other similar ones, so much attention in my field notes might indicate that I am unfamiliar with groups that exert so much unconditional support for each other. My reference to the 'by-stander-effect' shows indeed that my expectations of group dynamics rather point to the lack of action than to action. This could have consequently led me to idealise this group by lending more emphasis and attention to these – to me - new and positive characteristics of group life over the more – to me – ordinary and difficult ones. To illustrate my astonishment at the harmony of this group in particular, I will share the
fieldnotes that I recorded after the very first Holy Mass eight hours into my stay with them:

“The bizarrest thing ever happened. Just then in Mass, first I was a bit indifferent, because I still don’t fully buy into it. The priest was praying and we were singing all together. The room sounded full, warm, harmonious... I remember feeling like this on Christmas Eve when I was very little... And then, it started upon his request to ‘give each other something’. I had no idea what on earth he meant, but basically all of a sudden everybody turned to each other broadly smiling, nuns as well as members of the public and I was overwhelmed by the genuineness in their eyes; we all hugged each other and said ‘God bless you’ and I somehow knew that these women, who I have had never seen before and who knew nothing about me, really meant it. Then we were asked to hold each other’s hands, and all of a sudden the whole chapel looked like a bunch of school children on Pancake Day. During this whole scene we were still all singing together and the atmosphere was so smiley and happy, innocent, naïve, childlike, trusting, so eventually I couldn’t hold back my tears, which resulted in me being squeezed even more.” (1-5).

Since this deeply impacting experience, which by far exceeded my expectations of how welcoming the nuns would perceive me, happened on the very first day of my participant observation, it is indeed a plausible critique to state that I have idealised the group. I want to stress, however, that this circumstance in itself carries with it potential insight into just how unique a group this convent community is. Additionally, one needs to bear in mind that I only spent five weeks in the convent, which is a short amount of time with respect to the Sister’s lifetime commitment. Had I joined them for longer, or even a different time, my impressions might have been different.

6.9. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have presented and analysed seven key themes as they have become transparent to me through the thorough reading and re-reading of my fieldnotes. I have further cross-referenced to these themes with the help of the findings from the SPM transcripts. I want to conclude this section by reflecting further on the interrelatedness of these themes with the prospect of filtering out the main surprises of my experience which, as I will show, have altered my understanding of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, and what a ‘group’ actually is.

I want to start the summary with the third key theme ‘Individualism within Group Life’, as this has proven to be the biggest surprise for me. I have portrayed the dependence
of the community as a whole on every single member as part of that larger whole. Simultaneously I have shared fieldnotes that clearly emphasise the independence of each sister within the community. Along with that, I have illustrated the development of a paradox in my understanding: on the one hand, no Sister could achieve without the group what she has given up her free will for, namely, to create union with Others, and on the other hand, the community placed great importance on the individualistic and independent personal development of its members. Rather than fulfilling my expectations of having become similar to each other due to personal adjustment and compromise, the community remained strongly pluralistic in character.

In the consecutive section ‘At One with Self and Group’, I have then tried to shift my understanding away from the metaphor of paradox, in which contradiction is at the core, towards mutual dependency of the two components of the convent life. I was therefore able to perceive the necessity to develop individually as a prerequisite for the development of the group, and vice versa, rather than seeing them as hampering each other. This shift in perspective further enabled me to understand the ‘Role of the Other’ in a new light, which I discussed as the fifth key theme.

Here, I tentatively developed the thought that I cannot observe or experience any projection behaviour of the nuns onto each other or an outside group, because their being ‘At One with Self and Group’, or in other words, their acceptance of both ‘good’ and ‘bad’, seemed to deem its acting out unnecessary. This proved to be the second big surprise for me, as I had not previously considered the possibility of humans being able to withhold from projection behaviour. I was desperately looking for the Sisters’ ‘Them’ but could not find it. Such development of thought then enabled me to make more sense of the first presented key theme, namely, my being assimilated into the community without any reservation or suspicion: if the Other is not met by someone in need of projection or self-cleansing, then suspicion towards an ‘unknown Other’, in this case me, was also less likely.

While analysing these themes, particularly when discussing my welcoming into the group, the development of my relationship to it, and my idealisation of it, a constantly underlying question developed and gained urgency: compared to my other past experiences of groups, such as family, school, friends and work, and those in case studies one and two of this research, this group was different. Along with this explanation, one can understand that the welcoming and integration I perceived was another big surprise of my experience. There was something unusual about them.
Without being able to fully identify or comprehend what this something was, it led me to idealise the group. And still without grasping what it is, I suspected that reflecting further on it will help me understand why conflict in this group looked so different from what I was used to observing.

I will leave this analysis now, without conclusion, and develop the discussion to include the theory of group dynamics in order to offer some possible interpretations of the ‘something’. Along with that I will demonstrate how I eventually could make sense of the importance of routine and structure to this community (key theme two), which was another source for my astonishment but at this point of working with the case material was still mysterious to me.

In summary, the four surprising experiences that came out of case study three were:

1) The community’s ability to embrace individuality and pluralism
2) The trust with which I was welcomed and my instant assimilation into the group
3) The absence of projection behaviour and an obvious ‘Them’
4) The emphasis on strict routine and structure
Chapter 7: Case Study 3 Aftermath – Matching Theory to Practice

So far, the development of my argument in this research has undergone a sequence of three epiphanies. The first major change in my thinking occurred during the sighting of relevant literature, when I shifted from concentration on a social psychology framework to including psychoanalytic theory, as well. I incorporated into my thinking the principle that an understanding of interpersonal and intergroup dynamics in the external world is inevitably linked to an understanding of intrapsychic dynamics in the internal world.

During the fieldwork for case study three, I found the foundations of my underlying assumptions shaken a second time. Informed by the literature to date, I had commenced data collection with the firm belief that the need to have enemies is innate and hence inevitable in group life. Additionally, my research agenda was at that time still fuelled by predominantly negative impressions of group dynamics. However, due to my experiences I was brought to alter my understanding of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality and question, in particular, my underlying assumption of its innateness. This development of events reminds strongly of Clancy et al.’s notion that when qualitative researchers come to the conclusion ‘that’s interesting’, it is “a clue that current experience has been tested against past experience, and that past experience has been found wanting.” (2011, p. 6).

Lastly, after conclusion of the fieldwork, I was forced to draw in theoretical concepts not considered before to make sense out of the surprises of case study three. This incorporation of new theory led me to the third shift in my conceptualisation and I will start my theoretical reflections with this last epiphany presented in four interdependent propositions (figure 18):

a) Turquet’s concept of Oneness is not a fourth basic assumption but the equivalent to basic-assumption mentality itself.

b) McMillan’s concept of Unity is the equivalent to work group mentality.

c) The three group states equivalent to Bion’s (1961) trilogy of basic-assumption mentality are in fact Key Modes of Interaction (Ki) and can be classified as: Key Mode of Interaction Dependency (KiD), Fight/Flight (KiF/F) and Pairing (KiP). Based on whether a group is in a state of Unity or Oneness, they are either supportive or inhibitive of the primary task.
d) Turquet’s concept of Membership Individuals (M.I.) describes the frame of mind of the majority of members of a Oneness group, while that of Individual Members (I.M.) depicts that of the majority of members of a Unity group. That of Singleton describes the frame of mind of the majority of members of a group who seek to deny their affiliation with it altogether.

In order to make the thought process by which I arrived at these propositions transparent, I will examine the following matters: First of all, the group context within which I place my own theoretical contribution will be defined (7.1.). Thereafter, with the presentation of Bion’s groupishness as paradox as starting point, Meness and Oneness as opposites, the tension caused between them, as well as Turquet’s concept of I.M. as equilibrium state in this tension will be discussed (7.2.). Lastly, the argument will continue to present Unity as an alternative to Oneness (7.3.), following which Oneness will be reinterpreted as being basic-assumption mentality itself, and Unity as being work group mentality itself. This leads on to the application of key modes of interaction (KiD, KiF/F, KiP) to the Unity group and the Oneness group. A final section will summarise the main arguments (7.4.).

Although this chapter aims at theoretical advancements in the body of knowledge to date, I will continue to highlight affiliations to case study three so as to communicate that these theoretical reflections have been directly inspired by the primary data collected during fieldwork. In the consecutive chapter, I will then also make use of my newly established theoretical understanding to revisit case studies one and two.
7.1. The Context of the Group Setting

The key authors whose work I refer to in the consecutive argument have established their theories in different group size contexts. As Palmer (1999) points out, there are considerable variations concerning the boundaries of the word ‘large’ with regards to group size. According to the group relations conference tradition, a group of 30-100 people is considered large, and Turquet (1975), reporting from the same tradition, explains that within the range of numbers between 20 and 80, observed phenomena do not vary but in their intensity. The earliest definition of a small group was given by Bales in 1950 (cited by Hare, 1994), under the criterion that after a face-to-face interaction, each group member should be able to remember something about every other member. Turquet (1975) agrees and states that if face-to-face interaction cannot be maintained and the group is hence not encompassable anymore by each member, then it is to be called ‘large’. With 22 members, the convent community is a large group.

My dilemma lies in the following: Turquet’s theory of a fourth basic assumption (1985) that I will make use of in this chapter has been derived from the context of small groups. Likewise, as Turquet reminds us, Bion’s concepts of work group mentality and basic-assumption mentality which I will refer to, are also theories established within the small group context. However, I will also draw on Turquet’s ideas of Singleton, I.M. and M.I. states, which he clearly defined within the frame of the large group of a traditional group relations conference. Turquet warns that in large groups, “the presence of other phenomena intrude on the characteristics of the small group.” (1985, p. 71), clearly making the case for the necessity to distinguish between them. McMillan, however, another key author for my own argument, seems to be of the opinion that Turquet’s abstractions on small groups apply to large group settings, as well. She explains: “Translating the small group phenomena (...) into the large group must be done with caution as different dynamics come into play. The argument will be, however, that basic-assumption oneness has great relevance to the large group and represents a dynamic that cannot be ignored (...).” (1981, p. 476). In agreement with this assertion, Gould (1999) adds that while size and scale of a group influence the intensity of phenomena occurring within it, the same ones can nevertheless be observed in any group setting. Adopting this reasoning, I am going to apply concepts gained from both, small and large group contexts to the convent case study at hand.
Furthermore, it is important to shed light onto the interest with which researchers have encountered the groups of their study, especially since Palmer (1999) postulates a tendency to overgeneralise from studies conducted in specific contexts to groups in general. Many of the authors quoted have a therapeutic background which might incline them to investigate into group dynamics with the intention of healing. Bion, for example, focused his theory of basic-assumption mentality on patients in group therapy, and his entire strand of group psychoanalysis stems from his work with traumatised post world war two soldiers (1961). Similarly, Hopper (2003), while claiming relevance of his theoretical framework for all group sizes, presents his ideas as a consequence of traumatogenic process and Gustafson based his findings on research into family relations of schizophrenics (1979). To that Palmer (1999) adds in a summative manner that psychoanalysis in general has mainly focused on small therapeutic groups, with little emphasis that observed phenomena can also occur in ‘everyday’ groups. One needs to recall though that while Freud’s insights are based on psychotic and neurotic patients, they do tell something about all of us (Craib, 2001).

While the majority of key authors I make reference to in this section focus their work on abnormalities in groups, I approach the phenomenon under investigation from the point of view that it is a ‘normal’ part of every group’s life, not only of those who are subject to or in need of therapy. Along with that, I am not looking for a specific cause of the ‘problem’, but am rather interested in understanding groups better in general.

Lastly, the perspectives with which referenced authors have approached their studies differ. Turquet (1985) presents his concept of Oneness as a state of a group, while his continuum of Singleton, I.M. and M.I. describes states of individuals within a group. Lawrence, Bains and Gould (1996), concentrate their contribution on the relationship between the individual and the group, while Bion (1961) addresses the mental activity of groups⁵. As pointed out in the introduction chapter, these different angles from which to view the same phenomena are easily combined into a single approach. In support, Bion remarks: “I am impressed (…) by the fact that the psycho-analytic approach, through the individual, and the approach (…) through the group, are dealing with different facets of the same phenomena.” (1961, p. 8).

⁵ This assertion is not widely agreed on by the body of literature following Bion’s steps. In this research, I will adhere to French and Simpson’s (2010) accord and use the terms ‘work group mentality’ and ‘basic-assumption mentality’ to address the mental activity of the group in different constellations.
7.2. **Bion’s Groupishness as Paradox**

When remembering the first surprise of my convent experience, namely that of the contradicting elements of the nuns’ lives, being officially committed to the group, yet preserving a strong sense of individuality, Bion’s concept of groupishness comes to mind. Borrowing from Aristotle, he declares that the human being is a political animal at war with his or her own groupishness. He goes on to state that “for a (hu)man to lead a full life the group is essential” (1961, p. 53) as he “cannot satisfy any emotional drive without expression of its social component.” (1967, p. 118). He then adds that on the other hand, “all groups stimulate and at the same time frustrate the individuals composing them; (...) (for they are accompanied) at the same time (...) in this aim by the primitive fears that the group arouses.” (1967, p. 188). Along with this depiction of contradicting desires, Bion emphasises the constant conflict to be part of and apart from the group, which I perceive to be very illustrative of my experience of the convent community, although my elaboration on the interdependence of their being at one with self and Other shows that the two desires were not ‘at war’ with each other. Turquet adds to the same struggle by stating that “essentially, the single individual who joins a group is in a dilemma. He wishes to be part of the group and at the same time to remain a separate, unique individual. He wants to participate, yet observe; to relate, yet not become the Other; to join, but to preserve his skills as an individual.” (1985, p. 85).

7.2.1. **Meness and Oneness as Opposites**

Two other theories which are based on Bion’s above understanding of the duality in group behaviour are the basic-assumption mentalities “Oneness” (Turquet, 1985) and “Meness” (Lawrence, Bain and Gould, 1996). They help in making further sense of the above described dilemma. Turquet picks upon Bion’s principles of the group-seeking element of groupishness and formulates that there is a “need of individual members to search for and find an encompassable whole.” (1985, p. 71). In fact it was Bion (1970) himself who suggested a fourth basic assumption based on the illusions of fusion and Oneness experienced by an infant who needs to protect against the anxieties associated with becoming a separate object outside the mother (See also Armstrong, 1992). Turquet then introduces as an addition to Bion’s three basic assumptions modes (Dependency (BaD), Fight/Flight (BaF) and Pairing (BaP)) a forth one: “basic-assumption oneness group” (BaO), “whose members seek to join in a powerful union with an omnipotent force, unobtainingly high, to surrender self for passive
participation, and thereby to feel existence, well-being, and wholeness.” (1985, p. 76, emphasis added). “The group member is there to be lost in oceanic feelings of unity or, if the oneness is personified, to be part of a Salvationist inclusion.” (1985, p. 79, emphasis added; see also Cialdi, Brown, Lewis, Luce and Neuberg, 1997).

Gustafson’s contribution can be added to this discussion as his introduction of ‘pseudomutuality’ (1979) resembles the idea of BaO (see also Lazaar’s use of ‘pseudo-unity, 2004, p. 146). The main principle of this pseudomutuality, so he says, is the blurring of distinctions, differences and boundaries, such as, for example, the obscuring of internal disagreement and opposition, as the group perceives this to be catastrophic. Evident and distinctive boundaries within a group are interpreted as confrontational behaviour and ‘threats’ of individuation - “everyone must be ‘equal’ and ‘equal’ means identical.” (Mosse and Zagier Roberts, 1994, p. 153). He summarises that “this pseudomutual defence against differentiation (...) relies (...) on camouflage.” (1979, p. 70) and draws further on Laing and Cooper who have described the same defence as “the resistance of the survival group against separationist action...” (1964, p. 135). Similarly, Bercovitch indicates the presence of Oneness in his own observations by reporting that “when departments are in conflict, individual members tend to bury their differences and display greater loyalty to their department.” (1983, p. 115).

On the other hand, Lawrence et al. focus on the separation-seeking aspect of Bion’s groupishness. They introduce a fifth basic assumption, Ba “Meness” (BaM) and proclaim it to be the opposite of BaO: “baM equals ba not-O” (1996, p. 31). They explain that when the individual feels threatened by social dynamics, a retreat into the inner world becomes a comfortable solution that offers refuge and shelter. Hereby, “the individual loses faith and trust in any structure, (...) that is greater than the individual.” (1996, p. 32). McMillan describes in her own words the forces of Meness as “an attempt to openly assert independence from the group by a member” (1981, p. 479). Lawrence and colleagues then go on to portray a rather negative image of an individual in BaM, with diagnosis such as selfishness and paranoid tendencies towards the group, with the exception that BaM can have its temporary uses for the ultimate advancement of the work group. They say that “there is a necessity for all of us to withdraw deeply into ourselves (...) in order that we can reengage with the external environment”. (1996, p. 44).
7.2.2. The Tension between Meness and Oneness

The relationship between BaM and BaO needs to be further investigated. Bion describes it as a dilemma by stating that the human being "wishes to be part of the group and at the same time to remain a separate (entity)...." (Bion, 1970, p. 85). And Lawrence et al. express the idea that BaM and BaO are two opposing forces in their formulation “...ba M equals ba not-O” (1996, p. 31). Understanding the two forces as not being able to occur without the other, like two sides of the same coin, creates tension that pulls the individual into and back out of the group. For clarification purposes, I am illustrating this idea in figure 19:

Turquet stresses the oscillating nature between these two extremes, with the position from which both individual as well as social needs of the group member can be satisfied, as constantly being lost and ‘re-found’. On the one hand, there is the pull towards “I-ness” (Turquet, 1975) at play which strives to preserve the individual identity of personhood from annihilation of the group. Borrowing the terminology of Turquet (1975) I shall label this force ‘pull towards idiosyncrasy’. On the other hand, there is the pull towards group membership which is easiest attainable by getting ‘lost in the crowd’ and serves to protect the group from the idiosyncrasy of the individual. By so doing, the group’s aim is to create homogenisation, “that is, survival by all being alike, sinking or swimming together.” (Turquet, 1975, p. 92). Again borrowing from Turquet, I shall call this force ‘pull towards homogeneity’ (figure 20). Please note that this diagram stresses the idea that the two forces take effect on the group member in any position along the spectrum, not only at its extreme ends of Meness and Oneness; in other words, an individual in BaM will still experience a pull towards homogeneity and an individual in BaO will still experience a pull towards idiosyncrasy.
There are a handful of other authors (figure 20) who have tried to link BaO and BaM together in a single model, and although partly declaring to argue against each other, an intense analysis has led me to conclude that the main difference between contributions is the use of terminology to describe the same underlying dynamics, rather than any disagreement on theoretical grounds. Indicating that the literature centred on these dynamics is not conclusive, Scharff and Scharff (2003) point out that the distinction between the dynamics described by the following contributors remains problematic (cited by Hopper, 2003).

It was Bion himself who, without using any concrete terminology, made the inescapable connection between these dual forces clear: “The group is often used to achieve a sense of vitality by total submergence in the group, or a sense of individual independence by total repudiation of the group...” (1961, p. 91). Similarly, based on three case studies of groups, Cano (1998) unites both BaO - driven by the fantasy of seamless union - and BaM – driven by the fantasy of self-sufficient individualism - as subordinated counterparts of the same basic assumption that she names ‘Grouping’ (BaG). However, she sees these dynamics as only occurring in groups where formation, reformation or dissolution is imminent, while I understand them, as stated earlier, to be part of everyday group life.

In 2003, Earl Hopper contributed a further suggestion to extend Bion’s original three basic-assumption mentalities which is, to my knowledge, the most detailed elaboration besides Turquet’s. Hopper introduces his own terminology to express his idea of interplay of two opposing group defence forces against annihilation anxiety on the one hand, and separation anxiety on the other, based on cohesion and incohesion. Fear of annihilation, so he explains, is interlinked with the fear of separation as “separation from an object with whom one has fused is likely to be felt as losing a part of one’s self.” (2003, p. 54). Such anxiety, he argues, is experienced as the fear of intrapsychic fission and fragmentation, which in turn evokes the defensive response of introjective fusion and confusion. The outcome of this dynamic is a group regression into a state of mass. Here then, Hopper postulates, new anxieties are provoked such as fear of suffocation, being swallowed or becoming a puppet. Such felt threat is now defended against via the formation of or retreat into an aggregate, which is presented by Hopper as the bi-polar counterpart of the regressed state of mass. However, in this state, the sources of anxiety are reversed yet again and the members of the aggregate are
experiencing fission and fragmentation anxiety anew. This leads to a self-repeating, self-reinforcing and infinite oscillation pattern.

In summary, Hopper’s definition of aggregate is characterised by too much individuality, an excessive degree of role differentiation and no sympathy among members with regards to shared beliefs, norms and values. Such constellation is intertwined with ignorance, misunderstanding and normlessness, whereas a mass on the other end of the spectrum, is characterised by a loss of individual identity, minimal role differentiation and a shared illusion of solidarity with respect to beliefs, norms and values, in which it is impossible to cherish individual skills and idiosyncrasies (2003).

Robert’s observations during an organisational consultancy project illustrate what this latter state can look like in practice (see also Diamond, 1998). He reports that “the whole team was anxious to maintain their hard-won cohesiveness, hence the decision to work generically. In the process, they had obliterated differences in skills, training and experience among members (...). There was a chronic ‘running cost’ in that the denial of differences disabled individual members from using their special skills (...). Anything which could not be done equally well by everyone could not be done by anyone.” (1994, p. 193).

The two different states of aggregation and massification are resulting out of the same underlying defence mechanism like two sides of the same coin. Hence they are both together summarised by Hopper into one basic assumption: incohesion aggregation/massification (Ba) I: A/M. It is this emphasis he places on the duality in nature of the two anxieties provoking aggregates and masses that makes his contribution easy to align to Turquet and Lawrence et al. He describes a constant struggle away and towards the group, which is also easily brought into relation with Bion’s concept of groupishness. Both must be understood as one dual process, as incohesive groups tend to oscillate between the bi-polar states of aggregates and masses in a pendulum-like manner.

Morgan-Jones (2010) agrees and sees Hopper’s explanation of ‘masses’ equal to Turquet’s BaO, and Hopper’s explanation of ‘aggregates’ equal to Lawrence and colleagues’ BaM. Hopper even points out his agreement of the oscillating relationship

---

6 Turquet and Hopper have both also used the term ‘kaleidoscopic’ synonymous to ‘oscillating’ and ‘pendulum-like’ to describe the relationship between the two opposing extremes of their respective continuum. However, I think that a kaleidoscopic process is of a very different nature, for which reason I have omitted the term here.
between the two by stating that “it is indeed important that Oneness and Meness should be considered together” (2003, p. 49), and that Meness is a defence against annihilation anxiety as much as Oneness is one against separation anxiety.

7.2.3. Turquet’s Concept of Individual Member as Equilibrium

A separate contribution by Turquet helps to further make sense of the tension the nuns accomplish. In his chapter on large groups (1975), Turquet does not talk of two positions of the individual (either member of the group or not), but rather of three different states of group membership: The Singleton (S.), the Individual Member (I.M.) and the Membership Individual (M.I.). With this model, Turquet postulates that the individual arrives in the group as a Singleton, independent of the group that he or she thereafter tries to become part of and relate to, and with a strong sense of a ‘stand alone’ self. The presence of the group though, with all its attraction of being able to satisfy the individual’s social needs, forces the Singleton into a process of transformation, whereby he or she becomes ‘converted’ into an I.M. with an altered and unique group role, which still differentiates him or her from other group members. This process is in itself difficult as it involves the individual to recognise his or her sense of self beyond the usual parameters of separate individuality, and the successful managing of this transition then results in a new personal I.M. definition.

Now in the I.M. position, so Turquet goes on to explain, the individual has to fend off the threat of annihilation that is posed by the group of belonging, whereby the group will try to make him or her a M.I., with the group dominating over his or her individual self-definition and self-needs. Having become ‘the tool of the group’, or, ‘the consultant’s puppet’ are expressions Turquet uses to clarify this notion, and along with that, a link becomes clear to Hopper’s earlier introduced work who talks of masses as provoking anxieties in the individual of becoming a puppet (2003).

Next to a relation to Hopper, a link between Gustafson’s and Turquet’s thoughts can be established, and Gustafson himself has expressed these. So he points out that those group members that take part in the illusive creation of pseudomutuality are M.I.s. His explanation then goes on to include the possibility of ‘rapid splintering’ as a last resort, should the efforts to maintain the pseudomutuality fail; a state that would certainly pull the group members into the Singleton state, following the “enormous yearning to ‘be oneself’, to feel the clear outline of oneself in motion, rather than the blurring of member into member.” (1979, p. 75).
Portrayed as an equilibrium position in which both forces of idiosyncrasy and homogeneity are successfully balanced, the I.M. state allows the individual to be both at the same time: part of the group, yet having separate identity from it, and therefore being able to form an answer to the question, “How can I remain the same in the midst of the other?” (Modell, 1997, p. 51). However, as emphasised earlier, rather than being a stable position, the I.M. is subject to a constant struggle to maintain this balance. “Fusion/separation is thus an ever-present dynamic, the former leading on to M.I. and the latter leading back to a Singleton state.” (Turquet, 1975, p. 98).

My main analytic advancement so far has been to draw parallels between Turquet’s, Lawrence et al.’s, Hopper’s, Gustafson’s and Cano’s contributions to group dynamics theory (figure 21). Hopper made the links explicit himself by stating that in order to achieve his suggested optimum degree of cohesion in a work group, “the majority of participants must have become 'Individual Members'.” (2003, p. 42). He further explicates that in the state of aggregate, “people tend to be (Singletons)” (2003, p. 72), and during a mass constellation, “people tend to be 'Membership Individuals'.” (2003, p. 72).

Before I extend my own argument further, I need to point out some contradiction of my interpretation of Turquet to that of Lawrence and colleagues. The later authors clearly state in their work that they are adding a distinct additional stage to Turquet’s three stage continuum of Singleton - I.M. – M.I., namely the element of ”Me-Singleton”, and they thereby differentiate it with emphasis from Turquet’s “I-
Singleton”. They explain that their reason for doing so is because it is the “Me” part of the “I”, which puts the individual in such a basic assumption state that they do not want to form a relationship with other Singletons in the first place: Meness “hates the idea of ‘we’.” (1996, p. 32). Bains makes this explanation clearer by adding that in BaM, individuals behave via emotional distancing “as though there was not a group present” at all (2005, p. 33). They contrast this to Turquet’s description of Singleton state, as here the individual is looking to form a relationship with other Singletons in the group. However, if we look at Turquet’s description of occasionally uprising “I-ness” of the individual, he does actually touch upon the very same explanation as do Lawrence at al.: “The exercise of such choice [to be an I.M., a Singleton or to opt out of the group], whether consciously known or not, is the occasion for the expression of individuality, of ‘I-ness’. (…) these transitional states may allow (the person) to re-assert his own particular individuality (in a) sudden upsurge of ‘himselfness’, a state of ‘I-ness’.” (1975, p. 96). So Turquet does indeed cover with the ‘I-ness’ element of his Singleton terminology the wish of the individual to opt out from the group completely, and along with that, I do not find it helpful to distinguish between Turquet’s I-Singleton and Lawrence and colleagues’ Me-Singleton in order to further my own argument.

7.2.4. Affiliation to the Convent Experience

Referring back to my observations of the convent community, the ‘oceanic feelings of unity’ Turquet uses to describe BaO are the very aims of a nun’s purpose in life; to strive towards union is their raison d’être. The personification of the Oneness as indicated by Turquet is also represented in the community’s belief system, as the Sisters strive towards their communion by acknowledging their being part of the body of Christ. When praying together in silence, the nuns also resemble the passive participation in a powerful union with an omnipotent force that Turquet depicts; at least this is the impression I gained. Nevertheless, beyond the sheer definition of Turquet’s BaO, its application to my own observations becomes problematic for two predominant reasons. First of all, he states that since Oneness is a basic-assumption mentality, the group has come away from fulfilling its primary task. However, it is the primary task of the convent community to create union. Secondly, he continues to declare that as with all basic-assumptions mentalities, the group behaves like a closed system with the sole purpose of its existence stemming from within the group.
Following my fieldnotes though, the community’s integration with its environment mirrors an open system.

Similar difficulties restrict the application of Lawrence et al.’s concept of BaM to the case study material. Although I have witnessed on a number of occasions the nuns’ appreciation for isolation and retreat, this does not supersede their prioritising the well-functioning of the group, nor did they display paranoid tendencies towards the group, as Lawrence et al. proclaim. However, their proposition that “there is a necessity for all of us to withdraw deeply into ourselves (...) in order that we can reengage with the external environment”. (1996, p. 44), does seem to come close to the Sisters’ frequent concentration onto their inner selves.

Since the application of Oneness to my experience of the convent community proved somewhat problematic, McMillan’s related concept of Unity will be drawn into the discussion in the following.

7.3. **Unity as an Alternative to Oneness**

The convent community’s concept of Oneness is very different from the one Turquet explicates. This is predominantly so because the group Turquet describes, perceives any kind of differences among members as a threat. It is hence intolerant of any such differences that weaken the sought after homogeneity. The Oneness as the nuns understand it entails more tolerance of difference. Here, union is not achieved through homogeneity, but through shared interest and belief. Difference is therefore seen as a necessary ingredient of a healthy community.

McMillan introduces her understanding of Unity as being similar to Oneness, yet sufficiently different to award it its own status. She proclaims that Unity results in synthesis from the bringing together of diverse elements, and has to be distinguished from Turquet’s description of Oneness as boundaries between members remain clear and distinct (1981). Turquet did not make such distinction as for him, unity was a core characteristic of Oneness – it was ‘oceanic’. Along with this, McMillan portrays Unity as a group constellation in which the wholeness composed by diversity of members guarantees its commitment to learning and growth. Along with this, every encounter with difference is taken as an opportunity for reintegration.
McMillan (1981) emphasises that Unity results in synthesis from the bringing together of diverse elements. This diversity in Unity is capable of recognising both, the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ in objects and also within the Unity itself. We have seen from previous extracts from my fieldnotes that this, the recognition of the ‘whole’, is a dominating principle of the convent community (“God loves the mixture”), which has been used in this research as an example of a Unity group. McMillan contrasts this to those constellations which deny the existence of evil, or in fact, deny the existence of difference per se. This denial of the ‘bad’ then makes up the emotional basis for Oneness.

McMillan’s idea of recognising both ‘good’ and ‘bad’, owning it as one’s own responsibility, rather than trying to find the source of it in some outgroup, explains the lack of projecting of a Unity group. She further includes one of her own case studies, in which a very fragmented group due to their members’ being from different nationalities and backgrounds, had found a way to overcome their disintegration anxiety by forming a Oneness group and creating an external ‘bogey’ onto which bad feelings were projected: One member introduced her recent experience with the CIA which led her to have feelings of distrust with regards to revealing her feelings, and in the development of the session, this story turned into a general atmosphere of distrust carried by the entire group. The group pulled together in Oneness against a common outside enemy. McMillan interprets this ‘bogey’ of a CIA agent as an attempt to identify a cause of doubt within the group about whether their task could be achieved onto a source outside the group.

The issue of difference in groups is an important one. Since its investigation from the literature on ‘extended community’ brings additional understanding to the primary data of this research, I will include some key sources here. Next to Peck’s notion that a real community tolerates difference (1987), Greene’s definition of the ‘extended’ community is characterised by being “attentive to difference, open to the idea of plurality” (1993, p. 17), and grounded on “the desire to extend the reference of ‘us’ as far as we can” (1993, p. 18). In the same line of thought Thayer-Bacon and Bacon explain that:

“The extended community redefines the division of “us and them” and expands the boundaries to treat former others of difference as new others of similarity. In this case the notion of community is no longer founded on mere common characteristics, among members, but on the shared ideology of democracy and inclusive wills.” (1998, p. 109).
I will draw in a further source to make the distinction between Turquet’s Oneness and McMillan’s Unity apparent. In a paper that reports from a religious perspective, Vieten, Amorok, and Schiltz (2006) describe the concept of Oneness in very similar terms to Turquet. Here as well, characteristics such as interconnectedness with Others and a sense of interpersonal unity, as well as fusion with and dissolving of boundaries between self and Others are presented as common features of Oneness. Likewise, feelings of alignment with a greater force are described. However, the authors also emphasise that such a state of Oneness does not involve a feeling of selflessness. This is a key assertion. The self remains clearly defined, but now through the relationship with Others rather than as an isolated existence; a state that makes the theoretical link to Turquet’s portrayal of I.M.

Along with that, despite using the term Oneness, Vieten et al.’s description reminds more of McMillan’s understanding of Unity, and I have added it here because I also understand it as such.

The idea of preservation of clear self-boundaries is an important and reoccurring one. For example, Turquet explains that for a Singleton to be successful in navigating the transition into I.M. without succumbing to M.I. is that it first has a clear boundary which both defines and limits itself, or, to refer back to Winnicott, to know what is ‘me’, and to know what is ‘not me’ (1987). It might be that the nuns use their time in isolation to constantly re-establish their inwards gaze so as to renew their self-boundaries. This notion would certainly go in line with my observation, and this process in turn could equip them for the constant struggle of remaining in I.M. without succumbing to M.I. According to Turquet, while remaining within one self’s quietness, one can truly be a Singleton (1975).

To apply Turquet’s definition of the I.M. and combine it with Vieten et. al.’s assertion, he stipulates that, despite the usual parameters of separate individuality having been transcended, the I.M. is a state in which boundaries still both define and limit the individual. The new role as I.M. does not involve a feeling of selflessness, as enough opportunity for self-expression is given within it (figure 22).
7.3.1. Affiliation to the Convent Experience

The nuns’ group constellation is a closer resemblance to the Unity group than to the Oneness group; it is the “synthesis of a dialectic.” (McMillan, 1981, p. 480). By striving to connect with all humanity through ‘the Body of Christ’, the community creates a union that grows through principles of plurality. Tolerance of difference is their hallmark, turning every encounter with an Other, such as for example my entry into their life, into an opportunity for learning. In contrast to a Oneness group, they do not become selfless individuals and neither do they feel threatened by annihilation of the group and retreat into the Singleton state (Turquet, 1975).

This emphasis is in so far important to make, as religious communities are often believed to adhere to totalitarian cultures. Diamond and Alcorn’s publication (2006) helps to counteract this common belief. Without explicitly using the terminology Oneness group and Unity group, they separate organisational groups into these two states. They postulate that on the one hand, some groups promote communication and performance by “acknowledging differences, new ideas, challenges to the status quo, and conflicts…” (2006, p. 55), and are capable of containing the paradox caused by plurality, diversity and complexity; a description which equates to the convent community as a Unity group. On the other hand, the authors depict some groups that are totalitarian-like closed systems, relying on submission and domination to “reinforce ideological homogeneity, uniformity and simplicity” (2006, p. 55), rendering them incapable to tolerate difference; a description which equates to a Oneness group and is therefore not applicable to the convent community.

I believe that the nuns were constantly working at maintaining the equilibrium between idiosyncratic and homogenetic forces by balancing the tension between them.

Figure 22: Diagram showing the position of Unity
They have committed themselves to a life of constant readjustment to Turquet’s position of I.M., which allows them to live in Unity – not in Oneness. As stated earlier, this position is an ideal one and due to the constant tension difficult to maintain. I therefore suggest a ‘space’ rather than a ‘spot’ (or position), within which the convent community oscillates (see figure 23).

Having applied the discussion on the balance of the tension between idiosyncrasy and homogeneity to the convent community, I can now also make sense out of the Sisters’ heavy reliance on their strict daily timetable. Comparing all activities they have to undertake on a daily and weekly basis shows that the schedule supports the balancing act of a Unity group. It is possible to class activities into those which support idiosyncrasy, such as for example, individual meditation and time for the pursuit of individual arts and crafts, and those that foster homogeneity, such as for example, prayers in chapel, choir rehearsals and the group recreational times.

Since I am not as mature as the Sisters, I can contribute one of my own experiences of oscillating beyond the boundaries of I.M. during my stay with the community (figure 23). In the data presentation chapter I share an extract from my fieldnotes, in which I describe an episode of ‘conflict’ I had with one of the sisters. As has become evident from the description of my own feelings, I was pulled into the Singleton state, where I wished for nothing more than to escape from the other members of the community and withdraw within myself ("I wanted to retreat like a snail would into its shell." (2-37)). However, my need for belonging superseded this defensive retreat and led me to confide my frustration in another Sister. After sharing my emotions and listening to her advice, I felt drawn into the group again (surprising given I only stayed there for five weeks).
Moreover, my general perception that the Sisters stayed strongly differentiated from each other without any signs of deindividuation further designates the community’s commitment to plurality. Difference is not perceived as a threat. Along with that, my welcoming and seamless assimilation into the group as opposed to my past experiences of being a newcomer can be scrutinised with the notion of Unity rather than Oneness. The Abbess explained to me that having me living and sharing with the community is a great opportunity for them to learn. This emphasises anew their commitment to learning, growth and tolerance, as the former two cannot be achieved without the support of the latter.

7.3.2. Oneness as Basic-Assumption Mentality and Unity as Work Group Mentality

The discussion so far has tapped on Bion’s notions of work group and basic-assumptions group mentality, and since the similarities in definition between Oneness and basic-assumption mentality, as well as between Unity and work group mentality are striking, these will now be made focus of attention.

A handful of authors have attempted to distance themselves from the idea that Oneness is an additional basic assumption. McMillan (1981), for example, postulates that it actually manifests itself before any of Bion’s other original three basic-assumption mentalities, as the group first has to feel conform, such as is the case with a Oneness group, before moving into Dependency, Fight/Flight or Pairing – these are behaviours exercised by the group as one body. Conformity is a key term here. Oneness, which I present to be the group constellation of a majority of individuals in M.I. state, is not an extension of the three basic assumptions Bion originally formulated – it is basic-assumption mentality itself. In reviewing Hopper’s argument, Schermer agrees and states that (Ba) I:A/M “is not an ‘assumption’, but is a ‘pre-assumption’ (...), establishing the very primitive boundary conditions that enable basic assumptions to occur in the first place.” (2003, p. 173; emphasis original. Note that he is referring to Dependency, Fight/Flight and Pairing when talking about ‘basic assumptions”).

As stated excessively in the literature, in any of Bion’s basic-assumption mentalities, the group has come to a common belief of a distorted reality. The according emotional state is therefore shared among group members; they feel and act as one, even if unconsciously (Miller, 1998). In accordance with this notion, Sutherland (1985) comments that individuals lose their distinctiveness to other group members when being in basic-assumption mentality. He states that “in the work group, individuals
remain individuals and co-operate, whereas in the basic assumption group they are swept spontaneously by the ‘valency’ of identification, into the undifferentiated unity of the group in which inner realities overwhelm the relationship with the real task.” (1985, p. 64). This is the exact same dynamic with which McMillan describes the group myth of Oneness.

Clear parallels between characteristics of a group in work group mentality and a Unity group, as well as characteristics of a group in basic-assumption mentality and a Oneness group have become evident. Miller (1998) draws similar conclusions and also disregards presented attempts at expanding the ‘list’ of basic assumptions on the basis that even Hopper’s work still refers to the relatedness of the individual to the group rather than concentrating on an investigation into the group dynamic itself. He exempts from his judgement Turquet’s Oneness – and exemption that I would not make. My argument depicts Oneness as basic-assumption mentality, not even pre-basic-assumption mentality.

This however, does not necessarily pose any contradiction to Bion’s original thoughts, but rather involves a re-reading of his work with different emphasis. In order to do so, French and Simpson (2010) were instrumental. They present some of Bion’s notions from a novel angle which brings to the fore that he was already familiar with the dynamic of Oneness. So they assert that the tipping over into basic-assumption mentality is “somehow agreed by the group without being aired…” (2010, p.1863, emphasis added). They explain that this somehow agreed ‘as-if’ decision then guides group behaviour, and that, most important to stress for my own line of thought, “such a group does indeed appear to be of one mind.” (2010, p. 1863). Eisold quotes Bion in a similarly helpful way while reporting of his own observations: “I realize I am expressing my feeling, not of the group’s disharmony, but of its unity. (...) for every attempt I make to get a hearing shows I have a united group against me.” (Bion, 1961, p. 52, quoted by Eisold, 2005b, p. 359). Eisold then elicits from this Bion’s ‘discovery’ of an unconscious group collusion.

Seeing a selection of Bion’s contributions reiterated in such sequence does indeed strongly resemble the characteristics that Turquet ascribed to Oneness. Miller adds to this Bion’s formulation of “a state of fusion without purpose” (1998, p. 50), indicating the deviation from the primary task. Likewise, the notion that “the group’s behaviour then makes it look as though, what has actually been assumed in fantasy only has been agreed in reality” (1998, p. 50, emphasis original), and, “the ‘as-if character of
basic-assumption mentality means that (…) something else appears to be – is 'assumed' to be – more 'real'.” (French and Simpson, 2010, p. 1868) resembles the portrayal of McMillan’s group myth of Oneness presented earlier.

Lastly, Fraher (2004) is helpful to support my argument: She states that Oneness should not be understood as an extension in numbers to Bion’s original three basic-assumption mentalities; together with the counterforce Meness, with which it creates an inseparable tension, it describes an ever present force that binds and separates the individual from the group, and plaits itself along the dimensions of Bion’s groupishness. As established earlier, Oneness, a state in which the majority of group members have become M.I.s, is the group state of basic-assumption mentality.

Unity on the other hand, which is the group constellation of the majority of members in the I.M. state, is characterised by development, learning and growth through creativity, for which diversity and pluralism is the main driver. Such are also the characteristics of a group with work group mentality (figure 24).

![Diagram aligning group constellations to mentalities](image)

Figure 24: Diagram aligning group constellations to mentalities

I concluded earlier that conformity is the predominant characteristic of the Oneness group. Since this dynamic ‘prohibits’ diversity, it is the direct opposite to the tolerance of difference of the Unity group. In the following, I will elaborate further on this characteristic, as it will support the case for attributing work group mentality to the Unity group and basic-assumption mentality to the Oneness group.

Tolerance and intolerance of difference has been identified as one of the major distinguishing characteristic for the concepts of Oneness and Unity (McMillan, 1981). Similarly, French and Simpson state that work group mentality is characterised by the capacity to accept “the tension between shared intention and individual differences.” (2010, p. 1868). They further refer to Lawrence et al., (1996) who emphasise that in
order for work group mentality to be established, ‘people with minds’ are necessary; not a ‘group-mind’. Likewise, they add Armstrong’s notion that basic-assumption mentality is hampering creative space (2005); hence, creativity cannot flourish. Shotter and Gergen (1989, cited by Lazaar 2004) add that such lack of creativity due to the need to ‘flee’ from the acknowledgement of difference can lead to a ‘lock-step’ type of organising.

Coming back to Bion’s original work, he does report of individuals’ assertions that they ‘cannot think’ in the group and hence wish to withdraw themselves from the rest (1961, p. 95). Similarly, in depicting Oneness, Hayden and Molenkamp explicate that “(m)embers of oneness groups appear to lose their capacity to think and instead get filled with a sense of being merged with each other.” (2004, p. 143). This does strongly resemble outcomes of the group phenomenon called conformity, or ‘group think’ (Janis, 1972), whereby group members lose the ability to exercise individual judgement. This in turn, is another principal characteristic of Oneness, and it has to be emphasised here that conformity is portrayed as an unconscious dynamic, differentiating it from those occasions when an individual consciously chooses not to speak up so as to not stand out from the group. In a state of Unity, however, such creativity-harming and difference-suppressing conformity characteristics do not occur, as group members are a collection of I.M.s.

According to Gabriel, in a state of conformity, “(e)verything comes under the sway of the group, which precludes spontaneously acting on our desires and the individuality and initiative that grow out of that spontaneity” (2004, p. 67). This description of power that the group holds over its members, together with its intolerance of individuality, difference, disagreement and criticism (Janis, 1972) does indeed resemble one of the principle conditions of Oneness, and so does Gabriel’s notion that members of such group will experience themselves as being like everyone else in their group (Janis, 1972). Illustrating clinical examples of conformity, Schafer adds that individuals in an conforming state “shrink their potation for using inner life creatively in work, love and play.” (1997, p. 29). The assertion that members have a vested interest in and are striving towards maintaining the group which has become an idealised entity (Manz and Neck, 1997) also shows parallels to the wish to fuse with oceanic unity in the Oneness state (Turquet, 1985). And as McMillan (1981) and Hopper (2003) pointed out, so does Gabriel (2004) conclude that groups of conformity are only cohesive in fantasy. Smith, Hogg, Martin and Terry add that “Conformity creates intragroup...
consensus, agreement and uniformity, and it produces a shared expectation of agreement.” (2007, p. 773).

Another psychoanalytic contributor, Morgan-Jones, adds that “fusion and pseudo-solidarity turn Singletons into anonymous homogenised group members...” (2010, p. 87). Differences are actively, though not consciously ignored, with the result that the group, which is really incohesive, acts “as if” it is strongly cohesive. Hartman adds that despite strong adhesive attachments, integration is low, making an ‘adhesive’ group less cohesive than a ‘cohesive’ one (1981, cited by Hopper 2003).

7.3.3. The Valency of Oneness?

Re-interpreting Oneness to be basic-assumption mentality itself also calls for a revisiting of Bion’s idea of ‘valency’. Bion (1961) borrowed the term from the discipline of Chemistry, in which it determines the number of bonds an atom can form with other atoms so as to create higher order chemical units. In his own use, he defines it as “the capacity of the individual for instantaneous combination with other individuals in an established pattern of behavior.” (1961, p. 175). Hereby each individual has a different valency or disposition for forming one of Bion’s three basic assumptions with other group members, but he never established any differences or a ‘typology’ of valencies.

This definition is in so far compatible with my new interpretation of Oneness as basic-assumption mentality per se, as it draws attention to the ‘degree’ of bond between group members, rather than to what type of bond they are developing. Delivering the counterpart to this drive to bonding is Hafsi, who postulates a “minus valency” (2006, p. 34) that has the reverse function of valency. Rather than drawing individuals to each other, this drive resembles the idiosyncratic forces described earlier in so far as it annuls and works against any interpersonal bonding. Such comparison provokes the question whether there are people who are more prone to succumb to conformity, described previously as being a typical characteristic of a Oneness group than others.

7.3.4. Application of Key Modes of Interaction (KiD, KiF/F, KiP)

I have claimed that Oneness is the equivalent to basic-assumption mentality. In other words, for either BaD, BaF/F or BaP to occur, Oneness needs to manifest itself first. While being confident in these findings so far, I am simultaneously faced with a contradiction: the nuns were not in Oneness, and yet I have made clear observations of what I know as BaD dynamics. So for example, submission to an omnipotent Other
is at the core of the community’s principles. In order to lead my analysis out of this confusion, drawing French and Simpson (2010) back into the discussion proved to be enlightening:

French and Simpson’s core argument is that Dependency, Fight/Flight and Pairing can be either inhibitive to or supportive of the group’s purpose. They give examples for this from their own research, when these dynamics were indeed necessary to achieve the primary task. Along with this, they have opened a previously hidden door to a drastically new way of thinking about Bion’s contributions: They have ‘divorced’, to my knowledge for the first time in the existing body of knowledge, the notions of D, F/F and P from the concept of basic-assumption mentality and given them an important ‘status’ by themselves. D, F/F and P are now ‘Key Modes of Interaction’ (KiD, KiF/F and KiP) that can occur both, in groups in work-group mentality, in other words Unity groups, as well as in groups in basic-assumption mentality, in other words Oneness groups.

The core difference lies in the purpose these states are serving. If they serve to progress the primary task, they can be understood as having the function of containment of anxieties and other group emotions. Even the unpopular action of procrastination, an example given by the authors themselves as putting the group ‘off task’, I can now see as supportive of the primary task. However, if these key modes of interaction are fulfilling the aim of defence against a felt threat – avoiding or covering up difficult emotions, for example, - then this will have rather disruptive consequences on group development and the pursuit of the primary task (figure 25).

![Diagram of Key Modes of Interaction](image-url)
Following this line of thought, I can now suggest that the Unity group also creates that containing environment, or, to use Winnicott’s terminology (1974), potential space, which is necessary to tolerate the ambiguity caused by creativity – trying out new, unfamiliar things –, diversity – with the possibility of disagreement and conflict –, and learning and change – referred to by the community as spiritual growth. Within a Unity group, each member can accept that there is "no resting place for identity (...) but a great need to tolerate ambiguity, tension and deferral of closure." (Schafer, 1997, p. 34).

7.3.5. Affiliation to the Convent Experience

The novel approach to understanding Bion’s original contribution suggested by French and Simpson has such relevance to my own argument as I am now able to understand the Sisters’ Dependency (KiD) within the construct of the Unity group. Submission to authority, a characteristic that Gould (1998) has claimed to be key for Dependency, is unquestioned in the convent, driven by the awareness of their dependency on God’s will and on each other; obedience is one of the three pillars of their life: “If one of our relationships in the community is not right, then our prayers are not right.” (1-62). However, despite the acknowledgement of this relationship, the nuns are not in basic-assumption mentality; their perception of reality is not distorted by some unconscious defensive wish for fusion, but rather, the creation of union is a conscious decision and itself their primary task.

Likewise, KiF/F is vital to the community’s commitment to learning and growth. My frequent observation of them sharing honestly and openly with their fellow Sisters their opinions is an action that opposes conformity. In the section ‘Traces of Conflict’, I have discussed a few incidents where this open sharing comes to show. It seems that similar dynamics are present during the weekly chapter meetings. Although I was not present at these meetings, many of the Sisters explained to me that they can occasionally be somewhat fierce, when people openly declare their disagreements and worries. I believe that such sharing supports the maintenance of a multiple perspective on their life, preventing the community from falling into ‘one best way of doing things’. As such, their attitude reflects their idiosyncrasies and passion for learning and growth.

Lastly, KiP can also be detected within the primary data. Some of the daily tasks, such as for example gardening, require two Sisters to work closely together. Similarly, the Abbess will often ask the advice of the Vicaress, and the two of them will be better
able to come to difficult decisions. Additionally, the chapel choir is headed by two lead singers without a conductor, and I was fascinated in the first week of my stay about how incredibly well they are attuned to one another despite the inability to talk; they use their eyes only.

7.3.6. The ‘Good’ and the ‘Bad’?

According to most scholars, the nature of basic-assumptions mentality is described as being counter-productive to achieving the primary task of the group, or at least inhibitive of its pursuit. Since Oneness has been set equal to it, it is useful to reflect on the common interpretation of ‘bad’ due to its inhibitive character of the primary task.

Hopper (2003) for example, describes it as a state of ‘social paralysis’ and Gustafson (1979) portrays it as preventing development. Some authors do allow for the possibility of temporary benefit of basic-assumption mentality, but with their emphasis on ‘temporary’, they agree it is to be avoided. In this line of thought, Gosling states: “I noticed that what crept into my discourse was a faint suggestion of: “Work Group – good; Basic Assumptions Group – bad.”” (1994, pp. 1-2). Hence, Gosling brings to the fore what many authors implicitly believe. However, Gabriel points out that “(t)he issue of whether and how basic assumption behaviour may be constructively channelled are not conclusively resolved.” (2004, p. 125).

By referring back to Bion’s original work, French and Simpson (2010) support the negative ‘taste’ of basic-assumption mentality: They explain, for example, that it ‘diverts’ from the group’s purpose so that touch with it will be lost, from which the outcome is ‘stagnation’ of development. They also make clear that basic-assumption mentality ‘distracts’ or ‘obstructs’ progress with a change away from purpose. Since this happens on an unconscious basis, basic-assumption mentality also indicates a lack of reflexive awareness which is again ‘opposed’ to development.

I will now make my own stance on the ‘goodness’ and ‘badness’ of basic-assumption mentality clear. During the last few supervisory meetings, I was asked to occupy myself with the question whether the states of work group mentality and basic-assumption mentality are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or whether they are rather just present always. My supervisors remarked that it was rather ‘misleading’ to think of one state as ‘good’ and the Other as ‘bad’, as this would automatically lead to the assumption that one should be avoided. Their assertion goes in line with contributions from Bion himself, who used the terms work and basic assumption group to refer to two
descriptions of the very same group... “the two groups are in existence simultaneously. There is therefore no Work Group activity totally without signs of the going-on typical of a Basic Assumption Group...” (1961, p. 48). Likewise, Gosling concludes, “As there is no Work Group without some kind of Basic Assumption Group running concurrently, work cannot be performed efficiently unless the Basic Assumption culture is kept appropriate in kind and in amount.” (1994, p. 5).

French and Simpson quote (2010) refer to Bion and others to illustrate the ‘binary structure’ of basic-assumption and work group mentalities. They state that this coexistence is only separable in theory and both parts offer an unconscious complement to one another. This interplay can then indeed ‘further’ work group development, rather than hamper it. Armstrong agrees and adds: “we are fated to experience the tension between the two, here, now, and always. Anything else is an illusion.” (2005, p. 141). “Basic-assumption mentality is, using Bion’s formulation, the “dual” of the work group.” (2005, p. 143).

I find it helpful for the support of my own argument to reproduce my answer to my supervisors here7. First of all, I propose that whether one believes that the mentalities are good and bad or not, does not mean they cannot always and simultaneously coexist – these are two separate matters. I think the states of work group mentality and basic-assumption mentality do not always coexist – my aligning them with Turquet’s positions of Singleton, I.M. and M.I. turns them into a question of either/or indeed. However, in the terminology introduced earlier, the pulling forces towards either of them always exist; hence the tension between them does so, too. It is therefore not a question of whether the pull should or should not be avoided – because it cannot – and it is also not a question of whether this pull is ‘good’ or ‘bad’ – because it just is – but, the question of whether its ‘extremes’, namely the states of Singleton and M.I. are ‘bad’ and should be avoided, I would answer clearly with yes.

I have illustrated in this chapter that the Oneness group is characterised by conformity and the myth of complete cohesion. Such state leads to stagnation and an illusory perception of reality: total merger with the group. Any key mode of interaction in this position is anti-developmental. I am struggling to see the ‘good’ in the basic-assumption mentality of the Oneness group as I have constructed it in this research.

---

7 This proves to be difficult due to the difference in use of terminology. Whereas my supervisors apply the concepts of work group mentality and basic-assumption mentality, I have introduced the terms ‘Unity group’ and ‘Oneness group’.
7.4. **Chapter Summary**

The theoretical framework developed in this chapter concentrates on the pendulum-like nature of group life. The concepts of BaM, Singleton and aggregates were presented in a combined manner as one extreme end of a spectrum, opposing BaO, M.I. and masses as the other extreme. Above all, the tension between these two positions has been emphasised and the equilibrium state of I.M. elaborated, where the tension between the constant pull towards homogeneity on the one hand, and idiosyncrasy on the other hand are balanced.

Along with that, the interpretations were concerned with an underlying matter: the degree of bond between individuals and the group itself that the individuals have formed, together with the question of where the boundaries between these lie.

The most valuable insight that came out of this discussion is the development of the concepts of the Unity group, aligning to Turquet’s I.M. position, and the Oneness group, mirroring Turquet’s M.I. position. Not only did these notions help to make more sense of my convent experience, but they also supported my understanding of the relationship between individuals in a group with work group mentality and with basic-assumption mentality.

It follows from these developments that Oneness *is* basic-assumption mentality, and in order to achieve and preserve work-group mentality, participants in a group, such as the convent community, have to be able to create Unity. In such Unity group, any of the three Key Modes of Interaction (KiD, KiF/F and KiP) can foster learning and growth, and hence the advancement of the primary task.

This chapter comprises the core theoretical contribution of this research to the body of knowledge to date and is in turn based on my experiences of fieldwork in the convent community in case study three. In the following section, I will make use of my newly gained perspective and revisit case studies one and two. My aim is to combine insights from all three case studies so as to provide an integrated response to my research questions.
Chapter 8: A Second Look

Readdressing and Redressing Case Studies 1 & 2 through Oneness

Since my experiences and observations during fieldwork for case study three have remarkably altered my understanding of and underlying assumptions about the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, I decided to return to the primary data of the previous two case studies. It was not until after my stay in the convent that I could turn my practical experiences into a significant advancement in my theoretical knowledge and I therefore wanted to seize the opportunity to apply this newly gained insight to the already familiar.

8.1. The Hegemonic Power of Oneness at FutureCo

The data presentation and preliminary analysis of case study one has identified a strong presence of hegemonic influence within the organisation which led to the instigation of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality from sides of the Clericals and the Industrials alike. The case study has enriched my understanding of these dynamics through versatile examples of how hegemony can manipulate self-perception and the perception of Others in such a way that the boundaries between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are continuously and unconsciously fortified. Along with that, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo has been portrayed as permeating the very texture of what it ‘feels’ like to work there. Mistrust, suspicion and hostility towards the Other were companions of everyday life.

It was further established that this hegemony manifests itself through unwritten rules which dictate individuals’ behaviour, opinion formation and perception. As such, hegemony has a stronghold over employees, as they conform to these unwritten rules unquestioningly, treating them as their own. The discussed notion that management rules have been introjected into the superego of employees offers an explanation to this feeling of ownership and conformity to it (Freud, 1986).

The concept of Oneness introduced in the previous chapter has already claimed conformity as its predominant characteristic. In the following, I will integrate this new framework with the concept of hegemony and apply it to case study one so as to understand the forcefulness with which the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality at FutureCo was experienced.
The Oneness group cannot tolerate diversity. Any difference among members is interpreted as idiosyncratic movements threatening to disintegrate the group (Hopper, 2003). People making up such a group are M.I.s (Turquet, 1975), thinking and speaking as one with the aim of constant agreement rather than learning. Smith, Hogg and Terry point out that “Conformity creates intragroup consensus, agreement and uniformity, and it produces a shared expectation of agreement.” (2007, p. 773). The resulting loss of individual distinctiveness and ability to exercise individual judgement (Sutherland, 1985) leads to some of Bion’s group observations of members complaining about not being able to think (1961).

Such dominance of the group as a “thing-in-itself” (Lazaar, 2004, p. 140) over its members is also present at FutureCo. The memoir and interview do not only recall incidents of mine and the respondent’s behaviour, but also of Clericals and Industrials at large. The refusal to greet one of ‘Them’ (1-123), the efforts to maintain a ‘buffer zone’ in the canteen between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ (1-25), and informal dress codes (1-31) differentiating ‘Us’ from ‘Them’ visually are but few examples of how both “groups-as-a-whole” in their own rights (Bion, 1961) interact with each other. Deviations from these group norms are unusual, and if they occur, they attract great attention due to their rarity. The interviewee’s expression of gratitude for being offered a hand shake by a Clerical (2-88), the feeling of breaking a taboo when having lunch with me (2-10), as well as the accusation of cheating aimed at an Industrial who collaborated with a Clerical – the ‘enemy’ (2-46), support this assertion. The last example also shows what happens to a member of the Oneness group ‘Industrials’ who dares to ignore group norms: collaborating with a Clerical does not align to ‘the way we do things here – we don’t talk to Clericals’; being called a cheater equals the emotional expulsion from the group, in which case the M.I. is ‘degraded’ to a Singleton.

Out of this discussion, hegemony can be seen as a ‘control tool’ of the Oneness group against desintegration anxiety, undermining any threat to its cohesion – illusory as it might be - that might be caused by idiosyncratic agendas of its members. Therefore, I do not portray management to be in control of hegemony as described in the literature (see for example Angus, 1992; Clegg, 1989); the remote control is not in the hands of management. Rather, they are themselves part of the Oneness group ‘Clericals’. It is the ‘group mind’ itself (Lazaar, 2004) that holds the reigns, and management is just as unconscious of this as other Clericals. Confirming such ability of the group itself to be in control, Ezriel (1952) adds that individuals in a group can be driven by forces
beyond their control, as if the group has an agency apart from the members composing it. Due to the unconscious nature of this dynamic, the state of M.I.s is a relatively stable one. The questioning of reality has become impossible (Schein, 2010), further stabilising the group myth of Oneness (McMillan, 1981).

This line of thought contrasts Stacey’s understanding of group-as-a-whole, who states that “(f)ar from being lost, individuality is always constituted in a group. If one takes this perspective then there is no place for the notion of the ‘group-as-a-whole’ as an explanation of human action.” (2005, pp. 1-2). Case study one has indeed shown through real-life examples and in line with the theory of Oneness group how individuality can be consumed by the group. I would therefore suggest rephrasing Stacey’s contribution in such a way as to say that in a Unity group, “individuality is always constituted....”, but not in a Oneness group.

It follows from this an important notion about the nature of the enemy-image as it has manifested itself in FutureCo. The Other, be it Clerical or Industrial, is not the enemy of the individual, but rather the one of the Oneness group. The dualistic character of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality has been elaborated in the literature review. Duek, for example, states that “The need for an enemy is coupled with the need for a friend. They constitute two opposite poles of the same continuum and have a contradictory form of coexistence.” (2009, p. 71). Opposition in this case study defines the relationship between two Oneness groups, not individuals; however, it is important to repeat that it impacts so strongly on individuals’ interaction that it is now the group who determines the outcome, not the individuals themselves.

I am therefore postulating that if a Clerical and an Industrial meet, so as did my friend and I for lunch in the canteen, it was not our individual ‘selves’ that identified as enemies, but rather our groups of belonging as we were acting as representatives of them. It was our group identity that undermined our individual identity and led us to feel as though we were breaking a taboo by not conforming to the unwritten rules. Although we met as two individuals, we were also embodying an intergroup action.

However, it is important to emphasise that despite my feeling awkward, triggered by some sense of guilt or ‘wrong doing’ when interacting with my friend who was in that instance predominantly signified as being one of ’Them’, I did chose to ignore these pressures and act according to my own will. This might be an indication that my valency for Oneness, as introduced earlier, is very low, for which reason I was still
able to meet with my friend, while individuals with higher valency for Oneness might not evade conformity dynamics.

So far, the concepts of Oneness and hegemony have been aligned and their wide overlap emphasised. While this explains the development of ingroup stereotyping, it does not account for the tendency towards outgroup stereotyping and intergroup bias described by Perdue et al. (1990) with the resulting strong degree of enemy-thinking. That these dynamics were present in FutureCo, is mirrored for example by my boss’ devaluative mistrust regarding the Industrials’ professionalism in general (1-99) and likewise by the aggression with which Clericals are accused of not caring for Industrials (1-159). In fact, my entire account of both groups is stereotyped, and so are the interviewee’s assertions.

Borrowing again from the theoretical framework of case study three, McMillan’s (1981) comparison of Unity and Oneness helps to bridge this gap in explanation building. According to her, diversity as well as commitment to learning on which Unity is based enable the group to recognise both, the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ elements of one’s own actions. She contrasts this to those constellations that deny the existence of evil, making up the emotional basis of Oneness. Applying this intolerance of the Oneness groups ‘Clericals’ and ‘Industrials’ to contain the ‘bad’, the urge for self-cleansing (Erlich, 1997) can reveal the groups’ tendency to project their own ‘bad’ parts onto the Other group, making their own respective ingroup all ‘good’, and the opposing outgroup all ‘bad’ – it has been turned, via projection, into the enemy.

As previously, the discussion steers towards the underlying research question whether there is a ‘real’ enemy out there, wanting to do harm, or whether this enemy is the result of a distorted concept of reality. The analysis of the FutureCo case study supports the latter claim, enemy as distorted perception due to projection. Since the psychoanalytic body of knowledge portrays such intrapsychic dynamics as innate, the answer to my original research question would be that we do not have a choice but to have enemies, with FutureCo being a prime example. However, the data gathered during my convent stay in case study three contradicts this conclusion. Hence this confusion will be made subject to further scrutiny in the discussion chapter.
8.2. **Oneness as Defence at the Fun Trust**

The data presentation and preliminary analysis of case study two has identified a generally sceptical and apprehensive attitude towards the suggestion for collaboration in both charities which was linked to four predominant risk factors. This suspicious state of mind was perceived to be stronger on sides of the Fun Trust, and the fact that the organisation would have to invest proportionately more resources into the project and therefore face higher risk than the Play Trust, was declared to be the underlying, ‘real’ reason for this observation. With support of Robins and Post’s notion of paranoia (1997), the Fun Trust was then portrayed as being defensive towards the prospect of collaborating as well as displaying behaviour of intergroup bias by portraying the Play Trust in a more negative light. I will now combine these preliminary findings with the theoretical insights gained from case study three so as to derive at a more thorough understanding of the Fun Trust’s and the Play Trust’s mistrust.

Scarcity of resources has been a constant problem for both organisations, not only in the current economic climate, but also, as interview responses show, since their foundation (J1 89, J1 146). Threats to survival are incidences that pave each charity’s history. Such times of crises could have provoked feelings that Hopper conceptualised as fragmentation and desintegration anxiety (2003), since the ceasing of an organisation equals desintegration of the group. Although I have previously postulated that Hopper’s insight does not only apply to traumatised groups, one can say that these two organisations have been through a lot of traumatic experience indeed. As a consequence of these anxieties, according to Hopper, the group regresses into the constellation of a mass and finds refuge there. As affirmed in the previous chapter, such state equals the constellation of the Oneness group.

Since these traumatic experiences have been so frequent in the past and the ‘fighting through’ them has become such a significant part of the organisations’ identities, I speculate that the sheer prospect of having to face such risk again is enough to trigger the same defence pattern whereby the groups fall back into Oneness. My observation that the Fun Trust displayed more defensive behaviour than did the Play Trust leads back to the fact that there is more ‘at stake’ for them in case the proposed collaboration does not succeed. I was further convinced of this finding when comparing interview responses with regards to their opinion about the collaboration: Without exception, all eight interviewed staff out of the 22 employed told me that on the one hand, they are worried about the Play Trust diluting their professionalism and service
quality standards (for example: "the Play Trust spreading too thinly is a worry.." (J2 118)), while simultaneously stating that they hardly know that organisation (for example: "I'd have to ask first about the Play Trust, what do they do?..." (J5 70)). Informal conversations with three further practitioners on home visits and team meetings reiterated these statements. Such agreement could be interpreted as indicating a conforming group mind and the loss of individual judgement, which are the most striking character traits of a Oneness group.

Two other circumstances that have been drawn out from the preliminary data analysis can be brought into conjunction with Oneness. Firstly, the strong overlap between employees’ values and the charities’ vision typically found in not-for-profit organisations creates an ideology manifesting itself in staff members’ identity as many of them have been part of their organisation since its inception (J1 4, J3 8, J5 22). Staff made a life commitment to the organisation, which is also a shared commitment between all of them: “People here really believe in what they do...” (R3 19). This passion for creating something together, accompanied by a readily observable ‘we-spirit’, might create a group cohesion so tightly-knit, that it brings the group very ‘close’ to Oneness. Therefore, it only takes a slight increase in anxiety levels, such as provoked by the prospective of an advancing risk, to ‘tip over’ the group into Oneness.

The second circumstance builds upon the strong group cohesion of the first one and refers to the dense support network that both groups have created through it. The preliminary data analysis has illustrated that strong group cohesion is vital for the maintenance of high service quality, as it acts as container for difficult emotions. When on their own ‘out there’ on home visits, practitioners cannot work through these emotions but do so once back in the ‘refuge’ of the group. The resulting sharing of emotions and experiences might have additionally elevated group cohesion to such extend that the group is very ‘close’ to the state of Oneness.

Lastly, the Fun Trust, the more sceptical charity with regards to the collaboration, has displayed more behaviour indicating the idealisation of the ingroup and intergroup bias than has the Play Trust. In a team meeting, for example, one nurse reported with great dislike that practitioners of the Play Trust had laid PVC flooring in a client’s kitchen during a home visit, and that she would never do such thing. This can be understood as a projection behaviour, like in case study one, aimed at idealising the ingroup and derogating the outgroup.
An outcome of this ‘second look’ is then that in case study one, Clericals and Industrials were presented as groups that had long been in a stubborn state of Oneness, whereas in case study two, the Fun Trust as a group showed tendencies towards Oneness characteristics such as conformity and a common aversion towards the Play Trust, but did not seem to have regressed to this defensive state completely. Simultaneously, the FutureCo case study presented strong patterns of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in the form of enemy-thinking, while such assertion for case study two would be an exaggeration of the situation. Having established this connection, the consecutive discussion chapter will investigate deeper into the parallels between Oneness and the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality.
Chapter 9: Discussion – The Lighthouse in Sight

I set off into this research project driven by the wish to gain deeper insight into the dynamics surrounding the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality in organisations. I selected three case studies in different contexts, namely, the manufacturing plant of a profit-driven, multinational company, the collaboration plans of two local service orientated not-for-profit organisations and a religious order, so as to pave the way for experiences as versatile as possible. Figure 26 summarises these different experiences of ‘Us versus Them’ with alignment to the theoretical developments from chapters seven and eight. In the following, I will clarify the different shapes of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality I witnessed in these real-life settings further and demonstrate what learning came out of this for me.

Figure 26: Positioning the three case studies within the suggested continuum

9.1. ‘Us versus Them’ at FutureCo

Case study one revealed an extensive amount of artefacts that made ‘Us versus Them’ highly visible to the observer. This did not only refer to clothing and other physical items, but also, and more importantly, to the behaviour of people involved. The dynamic left a strong flavour of mistrust and animosity in the mouths of all employees, accentuating the ‘versus’ that separated the ‘Us’ from the ‘Them’. The “we-spirit” communicated by the company slogan “Us at FutureCo” was suffocated by intergroup bias and hostility, making any hope for exchange and empathy utopian.

Few, ‘rational’, circumstantially driven reasons were suggested that could have induced the divide between Clericals and Industrials, such as for example, the split nature of the task at hand into manual labour and administrative processes, as well as the
separation of physical space for production lines and offices; however, these circumstances did not account for the powerful opposition that marked the relationship between Clericals and Industrials.

The case study also detailed power imbalances between Clericals and Industrials, brought about by the fact that decision-makers within the organisation – management – were Clericals. Industrials were restricted in their career path with regards to progression up the hierarchy, a dilemma of which the Marxist body of knowledge reports plentiful. However, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality witnessed in this setting construed reasons reaching beyond the imbalance of this power aspect, as even I, the ‘coffee-maker’ and ‘dish-washer’ at the very bottom of the organisational hierarchy, was subjected to the same animosity as my fellow clerical colleagues. To ‘Them’ (Industrials), we were all the same, and to ‘Us’ (Clericals), they were all the same.

Clericals and Industrials alike did not only stereotype each other, but simultaneously embodied their own stereotype so that conformity was a dominant characteristic of both groups. Without awareness, group members followed so called unwritten rules, not questioning their purpose, consequence or origin. Along with that, distance between them was created in two dimensions through differentiation and discrimination: On the one hand, horizontally by a drifting apart based on the exaggeration of perceived differences due to intergroup stereotyping, and on the other hand, vertically by a drifting apart through the idealising of the Clericals and the devaluing of the Industrials. These dynamics were so permeable that they led to a distorted perception of reality on both sides, whereby Clericals felt superior and omnipotent and Industrials lost their sense of self-worth. In fact so much distance was created – referred to as ‘Grand Canyon’ in the introduction chapter – that no opportunity for learning about each other and alteration of perception of the Other was possible. Instead, Clericals and Industrials alike ‘stuck to their own camps’, thereby confirming their perception of the Other to be reflecting the ‘truth’: The enemy was real. It is therefore necessary to include in the discussion a reflection on how and why difference mutated into opposition at FutureCo.

9.2. ‘Us versus Them’ at the Children’s Charities

In contrast, case study two offered a much milder experience of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. Here, the phenomenon was experienced as scepticism and adverseness of
the Fun Trust towards the Play Trust more so than the other way around. I found this much easier to sympathise with, as the rationale for opposition seemed plausible, given the actual threat to the survival of the organisations posed; bankruptcy would result in the ceasing of the charity, and desintegration anxiety was hence based on something circumstantially driven and ‘real’. This is the most significant difference to case study one. Moreover, my engagement with the organisations could have led to an intensification of these anxieties, as I might have been perceived by the interview participants to be a promoter of the suggested collaboration, and hence making the threat more eminent.

Next to these logic, circumstantially driven justifications for a cautious attitude, however, the analysis also protruded a tendency to perceive the ‘unknown Other’, in this case, the other charity, as a threat in a paranoid manner. Taken together, this perceived threat pushed staff into conformity, noticeable to me in the interviews, when all respondents raised the same concerns regarding the other charity despite admittedly lacking information about it. Their behaviour spoke of a group that had regressed into Oneness as a collective defence mechanism in the face of desintegration anxiety.

This summative discussion of the first two cases outlines a development of thought with regards to myth and reality: Were there rational, circumstantially driven reasons at play that resulted in intergroup hostility, in other words, was there a ‘real’ enemy, or was the enemy-image a result of paranoid, disowned projections and hence only existed in the group’s phantasy? I will come back to this question shortly. It can further be drawn out of the discussion of the presented data that in case study one as well as in case study two, there was significant psychic distance maintained between the two groups making up ‘Us’ and ‘Them’, in the sense that knowledge about each other was meagre and opportunities to interact with each other overall lacking. This feeds further into the question around myth and reality, as an ‘unknown Other’ cannot logically also be classed as an ‘opposing Other’; if a person is unknown to me, there cannot exist any rational reasons for their being perceived as opponent. Yet the tendency persists, as outlined by the literature on stranger anxiety (see for example Volkan, 1988). I will henceforth draw contributions from the literature on the concept of stranger into the discussion to advance this development of thought.
There is a body of knowledge dealing with this inclination to turn the ‘unknown Other’ into an enemy, whereby the literature refers to Other also as ‘stranger’, and both terms are used interchangeably. This might in so far be understandable as the self maintains a psychical distance to the Other, who then does indeed remain unknown and strange. The term stranger itself, however, does not imply animosity. According to the Oxford English dictionary, a stranger is defined as “a person in a place or company that he does not belong to ....”. The term ‘enemy’, on the other hand, generally refers to a conscious and defined Other with whom there are reciprocal relations of opposition, struggle and hostility.

Ostroff (2000) elaborates on this deviance in definitions more and points out that the meeting with people who seem significantly different is often accompanied by perceptions of threat, inflicting a tendency towards prejudice, fear, anger, hatred and hostility. Furthermore, Fornari (1966) talks about the previously mentioned stranger anxiety of the child as the first conceptualisation of the Other as enemy (see also Volkan, 1988). He emphasises that the child is responding to someone with anxiety who it has never met before, and hence never had negative experiences with. Accordingly, the “original establishment of the other as enemy is comprehensible only in terms of (projection) onto the stranger of a bad internal object.” (1966, p. 162), and Erlich (1990) adds that there has always been a great readiness to project onto the stranger the role of the enemy, “the destroyer of peace” (1990, p. 199). It is also interesting to note that the word ‘hostile’ derives from the Latin ‘hostis’, which originally referred to ‘stranger’ (Barash, 1991).

There is also an extended body of knowledge discussing the closely related concept of Othering as a process, which will briefly be outlined here. Chang for example, differentiates between ‘Others of difference’ and ‘Others of opposition’. He states that the “perception of difference may play just as powerful a role as actual difference....” (2008, p. 26, emphasis added) and explains that if this difference is perceived as threat to the self, the ‘Other of difference’ transforms to ‘Other of opposition’. These Others, Chang continues, “are regarded as “enemies”....” (2008, p. 26). Canales (2000) uses a similar typology and introduces her ideas of inclusionary Othering, making the Other one of difference, and exclusionary Othering, making the Other one of opposition.
Baumann presents a possible interpretation of this dynamic by explaining that the stranger provokes hostility because of the degree of uncertainty embodied and consequently upsets the clear order of binary opposition:

“Strangers”, he says, “are the premonition of that third element which should not be. These are the true hybrids, the monsters— not just unclassified, but unclassifiable. They question oppositions as such - the plausibility of dichotomy it suggests and the feasibility of separation it demands. They infringe onto the division of things.” (1991, p. 54).

He further declares that they stand against the ‘cosy antagonism’ of this dichotomy and that against

“this conflict torn collusion of friends and enemies, the stranger rebels. The threat he carries is more horrifying than that which one can fear from the enemy. The stranger threatens the sociation itself - the very possibility of sociation. And all this because the stranger is neither friend nor enemy; and because he may be both. And because we do not know and have no way of knowing which is the case.” (1991, p. 55).

One could argue that enemy projections onto the ‘unknown Other’ - the psychically distant Other - are easier justifiable to the self, and in one sense, the maintenance of distance to the ‘unknown Other’ is useful for that self who is in search for a suitable target of its projections. Bowles (1991) adds to this notion that the stricter group boundaries separate people, the easier it is for projections to be made. Applying this line of thought to case study one, one can speculate that as long as Clericals do not meet and get to know Industrials and vice versa, they can hold on to their phantasies of each other; the distance between them eradicates any opportunity to be proven ‘wrong’. Likewise, in case study two, the Fun Trust ‘knew’ that the Play Trust would have difficulties matching their own high quality service and professionalism – a phantasy retained, despite the acknowledgement that information about the Play Trust was lacking that could justify their reasoning. This development of thought makes evident the need for a further reflection on the ‘reality of an enemy’, which will follow below.

9.3. ‘Us versus Them’ in the Convent

Case study three brought the focus of enquiry into the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality onto a new level in so far as my experiences forced me to question the actual ‘versus’
between the ‘Us’ and the ‘Them’; I simply could not find a ‘Them’. My immediate assimilation into the group meant that in stark contrast to my past experiences as ‘newcomer’ to a group, I was welcomed as one of the ‘Us’ into their midst.

Moreover, group members stood out as individuals, highly differentiated from each other, opinionated, strong-minded and willing to share openly any disagreement. As such, they opposed directly the conforming behaviour I had documented in case studies one and two, which led me into a reflection on my very understanding of the term ‘group’. This thought process resulted in the differentiation between a Unity group and a Oneness group; the latter of which I had witnessed plentiful throughout my life.

Two findings in particular have come out of this surprising experience, and stressing the link between them is insightful: Firstly, there is the preservation of the individual within the group, and secondly, the absence of a ‘Them’. It follows then that the success of this group to maintain the balance between their individual and their group selves reflects positively on their ability to tolerate difference and ambiguity. Maintaining a ‘healthy’ sense of individuality within the group enabled them to engage in the necessary self-reflection in order to recognise that the splitting of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ is illusory and that containing the wholeness of their personhood, without succumbing to the urge of projecting away those ‘bad’ parts onto a suitable Other, who then becomes the enemy in this myth of self-cleansing, is a healthier way of being and interacting with the worlds. The ‘bad’ stayed within and was embraced by the group.

Consequently, a Unity group is able to deal with and preserve the ambiguity that the stranger – the ‘unknown Other’ could be either a friend or enemy, enabling them to take opportunities to get to know and learn from that Other and grow with and through her/him. Differences are acknowledged, but not devalued or labelled ‘bad’. An important implication for the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality which was introduced into and treated by this research as a relationship to the Other characterised by ‘Us versus Them’ is, in this case study, actually one of ‘Us and Them’ (figure 27).

---

The sources included in the literature review have not made this distinction explicit – the words ‘and’, ‘versus’ and ‘against’ are used interchangeably to express opposition.
Such distinguishing automatically calls into question the confident assertion proposed by the psychoanalytic literature that there is an innate need compelling humanity to having enemies without which a healthy sense of identity cannot be maintained. Allport, for example, states that "hostility towards out-groups helps strengthen our sense of belonging, but it is not required." (1979, p. 42, emphasis added). I therefore proclaim that the identification process requires a 'different from me or Us', but not a 'worse than me or Us', and that it is the need for differentiation which is innate to humanity, not the need for having enemies. Enemy-thinking does not make the distinction any more profound; it is rather the opposite: combat brings more closeness (Kohut, 1972).

This is not to say that in a Unity group, there is no tendency within individuals to create enemy-images through projection; however, the ability to self-reflect and contain, and along with that become aware of one’s own role in this very process of enemy-creation obviates this tendency from turning into a reality. That this takes a lot of effort becomes evident in the nuns’ repeatedly emphasising that they have to work hard every day to maintain the community. The important deduction out of this elaboration however, is that we do have a choice in the matter.

9.4. Parallels to Kleinian Positions

The discussion on paranoid tendencies of the Oneness group and its primary concern with self-preservation reminds strongly of the restricted perception of part-objects in the Paranoid-Schizoid position. Likewise, the ability of the Unity group to contain ambiguity and its drive to integration draws significant parallels to the relation to whole objects typical of the Depressive position. Although the following will only be a
tentative comparison with a basic reiteration of Kleinian thought, the theoretical elaborations of this research would be incomplete without referring to their interconnectedness; the parallels are simply too evident. The Kleinian positions were outlined in the literature review, hence I will proceed directly to discussing them in conjunction with Oneness and Unity.

Since I have introduced the concepts of the Unity group and the Oneness group as my own contributions to the related body of knowledge to date, literature drawing parallels between these and Kleinian positions does not exist. There are sources though that apply Kleinian thought to organisational intergroup dynamics in general (see for example Diamond and Allcorn, 2006; Jarrar, 2003; Raeve, 2009; Schafer, 1997). Additionally, two authors, Gosling (1994) and Gould (1998) have most extensively elaborated on the links between Klein, Bion and Bion’s basic-assumption mentalities, which have been brought into relation with Unity and Oneness groups. However, since their argumentation is incompatible with mine, I have refrained from detailing their work here. McMillan’s original explication of Unity (1981) and Hopper’s (2003) and Fraher’s (2004) general discussion on Klein and Bion proved more relevant, and I will draw on these sources for my own argument.

Both Klein and Bion have adapted an object relations theory stance on the development of their ideas. Klein did even frequently mention the term Oneness, or, being ‘at one’, when describing the infant’s sense of fusion with the mother (Fraher, 2004). Bion also made explicit that he believes the behaviours of basic assumptions (I am resorting back to his own terminology here) to be ‘anchored’ in Kleinian part-object relations. So for example he points out that basic assumptions are developing from states when the infant still perceives its environment as an assembly of part-objects and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification are dominating (1961).

Bion further explicates that his three basic assumptions are best understood in terms of the interplay between the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive position: “I think that the central position in group dynamics is occupied by the more primitive mechanisms that Melanie Klein has described as peculiar to the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions (...) and the interplay between them.” (1961, p. 188). Hopper contributes to this Bion’s implications that dependency develops from idealisation associated with the schizoid element of the Paranoid-Schizoid position, and fight/flight from denigration associated with the paranoid component. Moreover, pairing sexualisation as a manic defence, according to Bion, can be interpreted as targeted
against anxieties arising in the Depressive position. Indeed, Bion aimed to apply the Kleinian psychoanalytic insights into the individual’s early development to the group setting. He explained that what goes on in groups often closely mirrors very early part-object relations, a state others have referred to as regression (see for example Sutherland, 1985). I am aware that in his later career, Bion diverts from Kleinian thinking (Symington and Symington, 1996), but for the purpose of my own argument, I will focus my references to the period during which Bion still pursued alignment to Kleinian models of the mind.

Gould (1988) adds that Bion made parallels between his understanding behind basic assumptions and Kleinian positions explicit, using the metaphor of ‘binocular correspondence’, but has never progressed to elaborate in more detail on these. A quote from Hopper, who also occupies himself with bringing to the fore the links between the Kleinian positions and Bion’s three basic assumptions explicates:

“In any group, all three basic assumptions and combinations of them emerge kaleidoscopically, as do the correlates of the Paranoid /Schizoid and Depressive positions on which they are based. For example, when the basic assumption of Pairing fails as a defence against depressive anxieties, certain kinds of Paranoid / Schizoid anxieties are likely to emerge, associated with denigration, which in turn, generates the basic assumption of Fight/Flight. However, when other kinds of Paranoid / Schizoid anxieties emerge, associated with idealisation, the basic assumption of Dependency is likely to follow.” (2003, p. 34).

Referring back to McMillan’s earlier presented case study example strengthens the already drawn parallels between Oneness and the Paranoid-Schizoid position. A common fear united this group and served against fragmentation anxiety. This simultaneously meant the group had regressed into the Paranoid-Schizoid position, where it was primarily concerned with blaming some form of Other (outgroup) for the source of ‘badness’; any ‘badness’ that might disturb the tight knit of Oneness will be projected outwards, onto an outgroup or other suitable Other. This is the account of a group in the Paranoid-Schizoid position. In the same line of argument, Fraher states that “the ba group (a group in basic-assumption mentality) finds its roots in the Paranoid-Schizoid position” (2003, p. 35), where the primary task is to fend off anxiety provoking ‘badness’. Likewise, Diamond and Allcorn (2006) indicate that human relations in organisations frequently regress into the Paranoid-Schizoid position, where multiple splits break social structure into ‘Us versus Them’ relations. Along with that, so the authors explain, “open conflict and confrontation are … typically avoided in favor of scapegoating and blaming others usually outside the group.” (2006, p. 69). In
contrast, a Unity group resembles more characteristics of the Depressive position where rather than blaming the Other and being paranoid of her/his retaliation, the primary task is acknowledgement of one’s own weaknesses and reparation (figure 28). Supporting this commended portrayal of the Depressive position, Jarrar (2003) as well as Raeve (2009) argue that it is the foundation for better group integration and intergroup relationships.

It is important to note that the discussion so far has not considered the Singleton state (no group) in the continuum. This is in so far plausible as Bion’s basic assumptions mentality describes a group dynamic. I am expounding though, that parallels can also be drawn between characteristics typical for the Singleton state and those typically ascribed to the paranoid-schizoid position. The significant difference to those parallels drawn between the Oneness group and the Paranoid-Schizoid position is that here, the typical behaviours of splitting and projection are carried out by the individual, so on an interpersonal level, as opposed to an intergroup level. In other words, while a Oneness group directs projections onto an ‘external’ Other, Singletons will find that Other – or many Others – within the group; hence the urge to distance themselves from it. Using conformity and individualism terminology, Schafer comes to the same conclusion and explicates that “extreme conformists (Membership Individuals) as well as extreme individualists (Singletons) seem to be fully situated in what Melanie Klein (…) designated the paranoid-schizoid position....” (1997, p. 29).

Figure 28: Aligning the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive Positions to the group constellations
9.4.1. The Oscillation between Kleinian Positions

Not only do parallels exist between the Kleinian positions as a model and the model of Oneness group, Unity groups and Singletons (no group), but also between the oscillating relationship within each of these models. Numerous authors have elaborated on the oscillating nature between the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive position, and Klein herself explains that the dynamic relationship between the two continues as a significant force in adulthood (1959). Steiner adds that the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive positions create an equilibrium-like situation within which the tensions force the individual to continuously move from one to the other; without neither of them dominating “with any degree of completeness or permanence.” (1985, p. 2), a relationship which resembles the tension between idiosyncratic and homogeneitic forces. Bion (1963) expressed this graphically with P/S <-> D.

Hopper described the driver behind this process as a regressive one, and there has been a discussion in the literature about the relation between regression and development with regards to the Kleinian positions. I am aiming to present with this discussion that it equally applies to the oscillation dynamic in Turquet’s continuum. Bion (1965; cited by Grotstein, 2007) compares the oscillating movement between the Paranoid-Schizoid and the Depressive position (P-S <-> D) to processes of disintegration and reintegration, experienced by scattering or splitting in one direction, and coherence in the other direction, which is already presented by Hopper’s pendulum-like relationship of Aggregates and Masses (2003). Steiner (1985) likewise adds that a shift towards the Depressive position occurs during periods of integration, and the opposing movement towards the Paranoid-Schizoid position when fragmentation and disintegration dynamics are present.

It has to be noted that Klein herself commented on the ‘interchangeable’ aspect of the positions. She says that they are not confined to certain stages of development, like Freud explains them, but rather refer to specific groupings of anxieties and defences (1948, cited by Spilius et al., 2011). Klein states that even those who manage a thorough integration of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ objects may resort back to binary splitting in stressful situations. “Complete and permanent integration”, she says, “is in my view never possible.” (1959, p. 233). The Kleinian positions are far more complicated than elicited by me here in the literature review and this analysis section. For example, anxieties of a persecutory nature do exist in the Depressive position as well (Steiner,
However, the existing stringent parallels to the Singleton, Unity and Oneness group make a comparison obvious.

9.5. **Is the Enemy ‘Real’?**

One underlying question that has evolved throughout this chapter is whether hostility towards an Other springs from ‘real’, rational, circumstantially driven reasons on the one hand, or originates internally through paranoid projections on the other hand. In case study one, the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality seemed to be fuelled predominantly by paranoid projections of one Oneness group onto the Other, whereas in case study two, more circumstantially driven causes were assumed.

I therefore pose the question: Is the enemy reality or phantasy? Sandler (1988) for example, explains that we hold mental representations of our environment created by our projections onto these, and postulates that how we perceive the world to be is not necessarily how it is. Similarly, as mentioned in the literature review, Dartington explains that “… we begin to build an inner world that relates to but not equates with an external world of good and bad objects....” (2010, p. 31). Jung (1969) adds to this that projections can isolate us from our environment as we indulge into illusory relationships with these rather than with the real objects they represent, and, as mentioned in the literature review, Bion (1970) states the same idea in even stronger words, that pathological splitting leads to the loss of a sense of reality.

Moreover, it is a fundamental psychoanalytic principle that the world is apprehended via introjections and projections, and it is intriguing to apply this tenet to enemy-thinking. Do I dare to speculate that enemies are always at least partly created through our own paranoid projections when there have been more than 14,600 wars since the beginning of recorded history (Kutash, Kutash and Schlesinger, 1978)? To this question of ‘mix’, Robins and Post (1997) answer that the enemy is never a complete delusion, but always contains some distortion of truth. and Stein remarks that “we cultivate our enemies.” (1986, p. 195). He explains that they do not emerge externally, although the unconscious might believe so, but are a consequence of our projections, whereby our perceptions then confirm these. In a similar notion, Buber (1960) warns that one needs to acknowledge that conflict between oneself and the Other resembles the repercussion of internal conflict of the self.
Bringing this argument into context with the previously analysed readiness of the Oneness group to project onto a suitable Other its own split off ‘bad’ parts, Miller explicates that “the group’s behavior makes it look as (if) what has actually been assumed in fantasy only, has been agreed in reality.” (1998, p. 45), emphasising that the ‘as if’ assumption of the Oneness group is always a myth. Consequently, one can assume that when a Oneness group acts ‘as if’ there were an enemy, this is also based on a shared group myth (McMillan, 1981). Supporting this argumentation, Smith and Berg (1987) declare that the shared phantasy of the Other group as being fundamentally different, usually in terms of negative attributions, plays a vital role in the development of a differentiated group identity, to which Skolnick and Green add that “the threatened loss of the denigrated unconscious fantasy of the “other” through increased transactions across boundaries may threaten the fabric of the paranoid processes that have sustained identity since human time began....” (2004, p. 132).

I therefore assert the necessity to distinguish not only between Unity and Oneness groups, but also between their ‘enemies’. As the Unity group has been set parallel with the Depressive position, and the Oneness group with the Paranoid-Schizoid position, it suggests itself to assume that the enemy of a Unity group is created predominantly by circumstantially driven reasoning, while the one of the Oneness group is mainly provoked by paranoid projections identified in the literature review as the “pathological counterpart of synthesis.” (Lichtenberg and Slap, 1973, p. 772). Such differentiation also reflects the situations of case studies one and two as an intolerance of diversity and ambiguity of the Oneness group and explains how and why difference in case study one was mutated into opposition, and why ‘real’ risk coupled with paranoia tendencies in case study two led to increased scepticism of the Fun Trust towards the Play Trust.

In association with the latter group state, Lazaar (2004) recommends to overcome these projections in order to be able to enter into a peaceful relationship with the Other. However, his argument denotes that all enemies are projections, leaving no room for the possibility of the enemy to be ‘real’. I, on the other hand, have developed the notion of ‘mix’, with which the enemy always contains elements of both, reality and phantasy, and have explained how this mix can consist either preponderant of circumstantially driven or internally projected causes, depending on which of the Kleinian positions the group is situated in (whether it is a Unity or a Oneness group).
Consultancy projects directed by Daum (2002) and Gould (1999) indicate that the question whether an enemy is ‘real’ or not is indeed a difficult one to answer. So Daum points out the limitations of his own findings by stating that

“(t)o what extent this threat is grounded in reality or merely a collective phantasy was a dilemma at the heart of this research. The challenge has been to work with the complexity of the interplay between phantasy and reality, projection and the-way-things-are.” (2002, p. 127).

Further portraying this complexity of ‘mix’ of reality and phantasy, Gould reports from his own observations of intergroup working that

“positive, reality-based aspects of the relationships, were constantly intruded upon by the paranoid concerns they stimulated (...). While agreeing in principle, the groups formed numerous reasons to be sceptical.” (1999, p. 709).
9.6. **Summary of Findings**

In the following, I present a table that summarises the main findings supported by the different theoretical frameworks discussed in this research. Leading this alignment is the introduction of the Unity group and the Oneness group:
Chapter 10: Conclusions – Throwing Anchor

This research endeavour has been inspired by my own life experiences of hostile intergroup dynamics with regards to family, friendship groups and work place settings, in which a vanishing understanding and misperception of self and Other with no opportunity for a coming together marked human relationships. I developed a tireless curiosity for the underlying origins driving the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality and wanted to understand better the intrapsychic motivations behind it which appeared to me to be so interwoven with human nature that they present a permanent companion of social life in general.

Volkan (1988) identified psychoanalysis to be a depth-psychology of tension and conflict (Gosling, 1994), and accommodating for the wish to include an investigation into origins of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality which may be hidden ‘underneath the surface’, it was the predominant theoretical framework supporting the sense-making of this research encounter.

Supported not only by a theoretical literature review, but also by three real-life organisational case studies, the development of the argument has undergone three key epiphanies. Next to the combination of the psychoanalytic and the social psychology frameworks, the innateness of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality so thoroughly defended in the body of knowledge was contested and a new understanding of Oneness elaborated. Out of this progress, particularly the theoretical advancements of chapters seven, eight and nine, the six research questions can now be answered.

10.1. Answering the Research Questions

I. Is ‘enemy-thinking’ an innate characteristic of being human or do we have a choice other than having enemies?

‘Enemy-thinking’ is not an innate characteristic of being human. We have a choice other than having enemies.

II. If ‘enemy-thinking’ is not innate, what provokes it?

‘Enemy-thinking’ investigated in this research is provoked by psychotic projections of the Oneness group.
III. What needs does having an ‘enemy’ satisfy?
Having an enemy satisfies the Oneness group’s need for ‘self-cleansing’ as a ‘suitable’ Other contains its psychotically split off and projected ‘bad’ parts.

IV. What are the differences in the way individuals relate to one another when shaping a group?
In a Unity group, Individual Members maintain the balance between their individual and social needs. In a Oneness group, individuality is lost and Membership Individuals form a higher-level entity, the group as a ‘thing-in-itself’.

V. Do these different kinds of bonding have any impact on the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality?
In the Oneness group, the relationship to an Other is characterised by ‘Us versus Them’. In a Unity group, ‘Us and Them’ better describes the identification process with the Other.

VI. Is ‘enemy-thinking’ exercised on the group level or on the individual level?
Enemy-thinking is exercised by the Oneness group as a ‘thing-in-itself’, not by the individuals containing it.

My research encounter was guided by two underlying key interests. Understanding better the origins of the so called ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, thereby questioning their innateness as claimed in accordance by psychoanalytic literature, was a motivation summarised into the question: Is the need for an enemy really an innate characteristic of being human, and do we therefore have no choice but to have one?

Informed by the primary data and theoretical reflections of this research, I can now confidently answer this question with ‘No’. The data tells not of an innate need to have enemies, but rather of a drift to succumb to such projection behaviour due to the same reasons that render it a struggle to maintain the equilibrium between forces of idiosyncrasy and homogeneity. If one fails to balance these, the transformation happens from Individual Member to either Singleton (no group) or Membership Individual (Oneness group), were those paranoid-schizoid projections are active that cause enemy-thinking.

Next to questioning the innateness of the need for enemies, this project investigated into the dynamics that unfold between individuals when forming a group. I wanted to scrutinise the different constellations individuals might create and thereby understand the very meaning of the word ‘group’ better. The research led to the establishment of the Oneness group and the Unity group, and could be brought into direct connection
with the first key interest: In the Oneness group, strong conformity pressures and the regression of the group as a whole into the Paranoid-Schizoid position overthrows individual autonomy and impedes on members’ ability to contain ambiguity so that the *tendency* towards enemy-thinking turning into a *reality* cannot be prevented. Paranoia does indeed lead to a distortion of reality and the need for a suitable Other that can be made target of the group’s projections.

The Unity group, however, is not in need of such target, as the ability to contain their own ‘bad’ parts deems such projections unnecessary and paves the way for tolerance of ambiguity and diversity, as well as the ability to learn, be creative and work through difference for the purpose of growth. Since it occupies a state more similar to the Depressive position, primary concern is for reintegration and reparation, not for paranoid self-preservation.

Therefore, this research has developed the argument that enemy-thinking is a direct result out of the failure to balance and provide for both, individual and group needs of the self. The constantly oscillating nature between Singleton state, the Unity group and the Oneness group also implies a laborious and endless process to maintain the ‘middle ground’; however, the main implication is yet again that no matter how laborious and reiterative this process might be, we do have a choice in the matter, and the ‘need to have enemies’ is consequently not innate. Enemy-images are always a mix of ‘real’ threat and illusory paranoia, and if one manages to recognise one’s own role in this construction, intergroup relationships might be able to advance from an ‘Us versus Them’ to an ‘Us and Them’.

Skolnick and Green occupy a more pessimistic opinion and conclude that “despite remarkable advances in science and technology, dominant cultures of the world and their interactions remain characterized by and mired in primitive paranoid schizoid processes that stultify growth.” (2004, p. 134). The authors call for groups to develop the capacity to acknowledge and free themselves from the fixation in the Paranoid-Schizoid position. This research has supported the argument that with regards to psychic maturity, the Depressive position does not outperform the Paranoid-Schizoid position, but rather, that both continue their oscillating relationship throughout life. Hence my response to Skolnick and Green would be that groups should indeed be motivated to avoid being trapped in the Paranoid-Schizoid position; abandoning it permanently though, is not possible. Since projections in the latter are paranoid in nature, it becomes evident that the need for having enemies is directly related to the
Kleinian positions, with which the conclusion that the need is not innate is further supported.

Consequently, the question of innateness has to be re-drawn. It is now the possibility of progressing permanently out of the Paranoid-Schizoid position and into the Depressive position, or in other words, of a group managing to permanently remain in Unity and not fall into Oneness or apart into Singletons, which has to be questioned. The discussion on the holding of the tension between forces of idiosyncrasy and homogeneity has shown that this is possible, but realistically rather difficult to achieve and likely to be a permanent task. Along with that, one can conclude that the working against the need to have enemies is also a constant and never-ending challenge of being human. A group such as the convent community of case study three has provided a prime example of how Unity can successfully and durably be maintained, but its applicability to other group environments is questionable.

10.2. Contributions to the Body of Knowledge

The literature review of this research presents the first comprehensive compilation of the most relevant frameworks regarding the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. The term itself has been used demotically, but an academic, summative definition and body of knowledge on it has not existed before, making this research an inimitable contribution. Furthermore, the ‘current-affairs-status’ of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality and its manifestations in versatile social settings has been emphasised, making the necessity of its study more poignant.

Likewise, the data collection methods of this project have provided a significant contribution to knowledge, as to date, with only a few exceptions (see for example Cilliers and Greyvenstein, 2012; Czander, 1993; Daum, 2002; Diamond and Allcorn 2006; Gould, et al.; Roberts, 1994) case studies that offer in-depth insight into ongoing, real-life organisational settings are scarce.

This research has constructed several contributions for the psychoanalytic body of knowledge. First of all, by arguing that the need to have enemies is not innate to humanity, this thesis offers an alternative to the strong agreement among psychoanalytic sources that have made ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics subject to their investigation. Among others, Abecassis (2003), Barash (1991), Baumeister and Leary
Along with the declaration of this alternative positioning, this research has shifted attention to our own involvement in enemy-construction: the process is now not a predetermined development which we can only helplessly and passively watch unfolding and determining how we interact with each other ("it is innate, we have no choice"), but rather, my findings call for the acknowledgement of our own agency in the matter and therefore demand to take responsibility for it ("it is not innate, and we have the choice to work on it"). By discussing the occurrence of ‘enemy’ with regards to reality and illusion, the task is given to actors to challenge their own perception of that enemy.

Underlying the conclusion for the need to have enemies, the literature review has indicated two lines of argument that psychoanalytically informed authors have used to explain its innateness. On the one hand, biological and evolutionary reasons were given, such as tribal and survival instincts that provoke us to distrust strangers. On the other hand, the inability to tolerate or contain ambiguity caused by a stranger were said to be causes for the 'Us versus Them' mentality. The findings of this research have shown that the latter reasoning is more insightful in explaining enemy-thinking. It is indeed the inability to contain diversity and ambiguity, as typical of the Oneness group, that leads to paranoid projections onto an Other who is then turned into enemy.

Secondly, but not independently from the first conclusion, this research has established a novel approach to viewing group dynamics and has combined contributions mainly from five key authors (Bion, 1961, Hopper, 2003, Laurence et al., 1996, McMillan, 1981 and Turquet, 1975 and 1985) into a single model, headed by the terms ‘Unity group’ and ‘Oneness group’. Along with that, manifold interpretations of the dynamics between individuals and the group consisting of them have been brought together into a coherent framework. While those individual interpretations independently hold a lot of explanation power for depicting group dynamics, their lack of agreement on a common terminology and a common framework made the joint effort of advancing Bion’s original work rather complicated, so that there is still no consensus on a fourth
basic assumption despite versatile efforts to establish one (Scharff and Scharff, 2003). I hope that by having constructed my own framework closely along the above mentioned authors’ ideas, I have been able to bring them closer together, rather than adding to the confusion of use of terminologies.

Since the concepts of Oneness group and Unity group were introduced for the first time here, their alignment to and discussion together with the Kleinian positions and Kleinian concepts of psychoanalysis in general forms another contribution to knowledge of this research. Eliciting that Oneness is basic-assumption mentality per se and that the Oneness group is a group in the Paranoid-Schizoid position has made it possible to explain the paranoid projection behaviour that is known from intrapsychic theory and apply it to the group level. This itself has been done before (see for example Cilliers and Greyvenstein, 2012; Czander, 1993; Daum, 2002; Diamond and Allcorn 2006; Gould, Ebers and Clinchy, 1999; Lazaar, 2004; Menzies-Lyth, 1960; Roberts, 1994), but not in combination with the frameworks subject to the theoretical advancements of this research.

Lastly, with the perspective taken in this thesis, I have readdressed the importance of the individual level in group dynamic studies. Alford declared in 1994 that the group is the basic state of human existence. It is certainly true that the individual would not exist without the group and is therefore never independent from it, and XX reminds us of the original meaning of the word individual: Not separable from the group (XXXX); however, focus should not shift entirely onto the group level but remain a combination of both, so as to be able to also take into account the dynamics that unfold between each individual member of a group. Especially the discussion on Bion’s concept of valency has shown how important the inclusion of the consideration of the latter is to understand group life itself. Accommodating for this principle, this research has concentrated on both, individual and group levels and as such has scrutinised the tension that exists between both which determines our essence as being human.

10.3. My Personal Journey

I hope I have succeeded in my efforts to structure and narrate this research in such a manner that the development in my own thinking has become transparent to the reader. Next to the three epiphanies I have detailed in chapter seven, the enquiry of the last three years has had influence on my more personal thoughts, too. Despite
having shown my awareness of the interconnectedness between this research and my
personhood right at the start of the thesis (chapter one), I was at times left astonished
about the insights that my research offered to me into my own perception of the
world.

Foremost, I was ‘forced’ to develop rather quickly more thorough reflexive abilities that
would include a focus on myself as researcher and researched of my own inquiry. I
had argued the necessity for such approach with detailed theoretical elaboration
(chapter three), but actually putting these principles into practice proved indeed to be
challenging for me. I had to learn to acknowledge the value of my own experience as
rich data, which demanded a certain willingness to disclose and share – something
that, as it turned out, did not come naturally to me.

In many instances during the composition of this research, I gained insight into my
own relationship to groups and my role within them in general, and especially during
the three case studies, I ‘lived through’ Hopper’s notions of fusion and confusion
(2003). Among numerous other thoughts, I started questioning whether Bion’s notion
of valency (1961), with which he expresses that some individuals are more prone to
adopting certain behaviours during basic-assumption mentality (for example leading or
following) than others also applies to the concept of Oneness, and whether I in that
case have a particularly ‘low’ valency to Oneness. Such speculations helped me to
make sense of, only to name a few examples, my reoccurring role of whistle-blower
and fence-sitter in groups, as well as being the only person in a large group relations
event who kept pointing out over and over again that we are going more and more off-
task.

Especially given my past affiliation with the organisation subject to case study one, I
could appreciate how this thesis offered me the opportunity to not only look at
Oneness as a theoretical concept from a researcher’s perspective, but also reflect on
my practical experiences of it as a participant. Not only did I describe the theoretical
tension between forces of idiosyncrasy and homogeneity on the Individual Member,
but I could also reflect on my own experiencing of these. So for example, when
reporting to my Director of Studies that it was the trade union who was the cause of
the split between Clericals and Industrials, I automatically and without awareness fell
back into the language of ‘my’ past Oneness group, reporting in a derogative and
emotional manner about ‘Them’. As previously mentioned, it took my supervisor
several conversations to convince me to at least consider the involvement of
management itself (one of ‘Us’) as a driver of this harmful split, and finally being able to follow his advice did indeed feel as though I had just escaped the claws of the hegemonic Oneness group and regained my individual ability to think.

Another major personal realisation refers to my own projection behaviour and my tendency to construct a dramatised image of opposition, where there really was only little. Along with that, this research enquiry also incited me to explore my own past experiences and inner motivations for such attitude, of which I have shared some with the reader (chapter one), thereby pointing out how they formed the entire underlying perspective for my investigation into the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. I will come back to this significance when discussing the limitations of this research.

10.4. Limitations of this Research

10.4.1. An Assembly of Singletons as ‘No’ Group?

I have started the data analysis chapter with the realisation that not only did I have to rethink my perception of the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality, but also of the very understanding that I have of ‘group’. My theoretical advancements in this regard have been to differentiate between two types of group constellations, namely ‘Unity group’ and ‘Oneness group’, together with the imminent thought that I had more life experiences of the later than of the former. However, this argument would not be complete without including reflection on the Singleton state and the type of group it represents.

Pine explains that rather than the object of ‘group’, the action of ‘grouping’ as an active process should be subject to investigation, suggesting the dynamic rather than static nature of the meaning behind ‘group’. This fits with the discussion in so far as a group has not been presented as a stable state but a pendulum-like fluctuation between three states, equivalent to the ever changing relationship between the group and the individuals constituting it.

Brown defines a group to exist “when two or more people define themselves as members of it” (1988, p. 2). Palmer agrees and notes that the existence of groups comes about when individuals indulge in activities of definition and recognition. He adds that individuals define themselves as belonging to a particular group, even in its absence. The term belonging, or the related sense of affinity, seems to be key in this
kind of definition, and along with this criteria, I speculate that Singletons can indeed be perceived as ‘no group’. The essence of this state is the unconscious denial of any connection to other individuals, without which a sense of belonging or affinity is not possible. Schafer (1997) adds that individualists, or adhering to Turquet’s terminology Singletons, are driven by the wish to construct oppositeness as a steady state. Palmer (1998) suggests that if this sense of belonging, recognition or affiliation is not present, the term ‘cluster’, such as can be found at a bus stop is more appropriate than the term ‘group’.

It follows from this that in the Singleton state, none of the Key Modes of Interaction identified in chapter seven are possible because there simply is no group. The psychological bond between individuals has been lost that is the very foundation of a group. Bain supports my assertion by adding that in BaM, individuals behave via emotional distancing “as though there was not a group present (at all)” (2005, p. 33).

During my data collection of the Fun Trust, it became explicit that one member of staff did not agree with the organisation’s ‘way of doing things’ and opposed these openly. This individual was further noticeable to me as (s)he did not seem to form the same close relationship with the other members of staff typical of this organisation, and on a number of occasions her/his opinions and actions showed strong disagreement with the organisation. Half a year after the conclusion of my primary research, I was informed that that member of staff had left the organisation. I feel that this is a good example showing that the ‘no’ group character of the Singleton state does indeed materialise; if a significant majority of staff would have acted in the same way, the organisation would have ceased.

10.4.2. Related Concepts not Considered

There have been a number of other related concepts touched upon during the development of this thesis which could be related to the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality. Although a detailed analysis of these would lead the argument off topic, they need to be mentioned in brief.

For example, envy (Mouly and Sankaran, 2002) and narcissism, have been identified as a driver behind intergroup bias, since the narcissistic mind cannot tolerate its own imperfections (Chasseguet-Smirgel, 1984; Gardner and Pierce, 2011). Among others, Kohut (1972) explicates that narcissistic beliefs lead to putting ‘Us’ up and ‘Them’ down (see also Stein, 2000). Similarly, Moses (1982) concentrates on narcissism as a reason
for paranoid projection and explores the resulting dynamics on the individual and group level.

Additionally, the concept of guilt can be discussed in conjunction with the Oneness group and the Unity group in such a manner that would depict the former as lacking the ability to accept guilt and hence inhibiting its own opportunities for healing. Fraher (2007) has also made use of this concept to investigate into the changes in constellation of basic-assumption mentalities.

Likewise, literature on ‘the Other’ and the process of Othering has only been touched upon briefly, but a more in-depth discussion of this concept will lead to more insight into the ‘Us versus Them’ mentality from an additional perspective (see for example Canales, 2000, Frosh, 2002).

Shifting focus of analysis from projection and identification towards projective identification might help to further clarify the duality of the identification process – the need for belonging as much as the need for not belonging (Daum, 2002) – as it emphasises the fact that one still identifies as much with that part that has been projected away (Sandler, 1988) as with that part that is introjected. It brings to the fore that despite emphasising how much something is ‘not me’ or ‘not Us’ it still is ‘me’ or ‘Us’.

Moreover, literature concentrating on Winnicott’s ‘potential space’ (1974) and Bion’s related understanding of ‘holding’ (1970) can help advance the understanding about the creative and holding capacity of the Unity group and the Oneness group’s lack of it. Especially in conjunction with the presented concepts of Key Modes of Interactions (French and Simpson, 2010) this potential space in the Unity group is created, and Diamond and Allcorn (2004) emphasise its indispensable role for productive groups.

10.4.3. The Impact of my own Dualistic Thinking

After having intensely occupied myself for the past three years with the study of the relationship between the individual and the group traits of human nature, I still find myself slipping into doubts, asking whether we are either predominantly independent individuals or group animals. I am still perplexed about how both parts ought to exist evenly and simultaneously, while standing in direct contradiction to each other. It is, to me, a paradox. Thereby I seem to be driven by the urge to find an answer to this
question, a solution to this ‘problem’, even though accompanied by a lingering
disappointment due to the awareness of such quest’s impossibility.

This awareness comes out of the realisation that the discrepancy does not reside in the
answer, but in the question itself: Despite having established that dichotomising the
world into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ results in an illusory perception of reality, the construction
of this thesis’ main argument can be viewed as being dichotomised itself. I have
portrayed Unity, and along with that the Depressive position as all ‘good’, and
Oneness, or the Paranoid-Schizoid position as well as everybody who dislikes difference
as all ‘bad’. Consequently, critics could regard the presented model of Singleton, Unity
and Oneness as the manifestation of my own paranoid splitting tendencies, hampering
my ability to contain that ambiguity that enables to experience the ‘real’. From this
point of view, Unity and Oneness are nothing more than symbols of my own internal
representations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’. I had already pointed towards this matter of
insecurity in the introduction chapter when stating that throughout the process of
writing up, I was constantly and continuously accompanied by the doubt that
everything I so passionately and rigorously observed, recorded, analysed, scrutinised
and reported, so as to share it with the reader as a ‘thing’ that really is, may at the end
of the day, only exist in my own head.

‘Soothing’ this rather harsh self-critique are my occasional indications towards
contingencies within the suggested model, with which a tendency away from systems-
thinking towards process-thinking is, even if only tentatively, surfacing (Stacey, 2007).
So for example, I express that the positions of Singleton and Oneness group are
extremes along the continuum and the Unity group the middle of these, but this is not
to exclude an uncountable number of other positions along the continuum; in fact, the
use of the word continuum itself suggests room for further possibilities. In line with
this notion, I explicate that a group can indeed portray characteristics of, for example,
Unity and Oneness at the same time, such as did the Fun Trust in case study two. This
consideration for simultaneity counteracts a critique on dualistic grounds as for
example formulated by Stacey (2007). Beyond this accommodation though, I have
difficulties incorporating the notion that a participant in a group can simultaneously be
in any of the states of S., I.M. and M.I.. Likewise, I have emphasised that even in the
extreme positions of Singleton and Oneness group, the forces of idiosyncrasy and
homogeneity are both just as active as in any position along the continuum. However,
there are also included in the model those ‘pure’ extremes which I have scrutinised
intensely in chapter seven. And as Weick (1995) states, sometimes it is necessary to study the extreme to make sense of the usual; what one must remember to avoid by doing so though, is to confuse the models we construct for the very reality they serve to explore (Wozniak, 2010). I constructed the 'pure' states of Singleton, Unity group and Oneness group theoretically, so as to understand the reality of groups which might at any given be anywhere along the continuum between these theoretical positions.

Turning back to the underlying problem of paradox, the question is then whether the relationship between individual and group aspects of the self is one of tension that allows for co-existence, or one of paradox, which demands an either/or solution. This dilemma is also a recognisable theme throughout the literature.

Bion (1961) for example, talks about these two elements of the human as being “at war” with each other, clearly indicating a win/lose situation. Explicating the same impossibility of co-existence, Modell adds that “the self is fundamentally paradoxical (as it is) contradictorily both private and social.” (1997, p. 47, emphasis added).

Similarly, Stacey points out that according to the entire Freudian tradition (including Klein, Bion and the Tavistock Institute at large), “the internal world of the psyche is structured by the clash between individual instinct and the group.” (2005, p. 189, emphasis added) and he thus concludes that Freudian thinking is characterised by an artificial duality of individual as separate from group (see also Elias, 1991). It is important to note here that the construction of this research is based on the same underlying assumption of individual and group as being two separate aspects of the self. Stacey’s critique therefore applies to the entity of my findings.

In contrast, Winnicott calls for a change in our understanding of the meaning of ‘paradox’ and explains that “(m)y contribution is to ask for a paradox to be accepted and tolerated and respected, and for it not to be resolved. By flight to split-off intellectual functioning it is possible to resolve the paradox, but the price of this is the loss of the value of the paradox itself.” (1974, p. xii). Rather than paradox, Winnicott’s explication resembles my understanding of tension as portrayed in the presented model of this research, describing the constant battle for balance between the two elements of being human. As established earlier, the Unity group has the ability to live with and tolerate this tension and the ambiguity that comes through it. Modell (1997) even goes so far as to define this ability as a measure of mental health.
10.5. **What New Questions have Emerged?**

10.5.1. **Applicability of the Unity Group to Other Real-Life Settings**

I have established above that the Unity group is a theoretical state only, which helps to understand, but is not reality. Having said that, I also believe that the convent community is an exception in so far as in this case, the theoretical concept of Unity group does match the reality of the group of Sisters very well; after all, it was this real-life case study which led to the establishment of the concept in the first place. The question is now whether the concept of Unity group helps to understand realities that are not exceptions. Can it be applied to groups which do not live in enclosure, whose members are not committed for life towards the same goals and whose tasks do not provide for an optimum balance between isolation and union?

For example, it stands out that neither the division of task outlined in case study one, nor the scarcity of resources, which was a decisive factor in case study two, applies in case study three. As reported, due to their primary task of creating union, working together as a whole presents conditions very different from case study one. Likewise, the Sisters’ principle of restraining themselves from materialistic attachments means their needs are provided for within the community. Additionally, they are not in direct competition with each other such as are, for example, the employees of the organisation in case study one or both organisations in case study two. Therefore, a new research project could explore how the principles of Unity as they have been witnessed in the convent community might apply in the ‘outside’ world, where competition and rivalry dominate most working relationships.

It would also be interesting to study real-life organisational settings in which the nature of the task itself makes group members highly prone to homogeneitic forces. Watching the Olympic synchronised swimming teams gave rise to this suggestion. In such case, I postulate it is not necessarily individual valency that determines the likelihood of a Oneness group to occur, but contextual and environmental circumstances.

Lastly, the reviewed literature as well as this research have concentrated on the ‘Us versus Them’ dynamics between two parties, meaning one group represented ‘Us’ and one group took on the role of ‘Them’ respectively. It would be interesting to investigate into a case study in which more than two groups interact with each other, as this is often more representative of real-life situations. In the political arena, for example, where ideologies partly overlap and are partly incompatible, who is like ‘Us’ and who is
not like 'Us’ is often not as clear or might fluctuate frequently. Additionally, one ingroup might be faced with two outgroups. Who is the enemy in such case?

10.5.2. **Self and Other as a Western Construct?**

Throughout this research, the differentiation between self and Other has been highlighted as an important function for identification. However, further research could add insight from a non-western cultural environment. In Western societies, the self is traditionally understood as a unique and separate identity. Although post-modern psychoanalysis has acknowledged the interconnectedness of self and Other through, for example, principles of intersubjectivity and the emotional turn (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009), the commonly notion that self is defined by the boundaries of skin still prevails in Western understanding (Wilber, 2001). The question is therefore if the findings of this research are also applicable in societies in which collectivism is stressed over individualism.

Malina (1993) for example, investigates into cultures with strong group orientation. Likewise, Young (1999) studies the issue of diversity by concentrating on how societies deal with heterogeneity. Based on Levi-Strauss research (1992), he thereby differentiates between two different types of societies. Anthropophagic are those societies who deal with strangers and diversity by 'swallowing' them, taking them in and turning them, similar to Greene’s account of an extended community (1993) into one of ‘Us’. Modern Western societies, in contrast, are anthropoemic, as they ‘vomit out’ the stranger or the one who is different, keeping them at safe distance to who is ‘Us’. It would therefore be interesting to investigate into a case of intergroup relations in of members of a anthropophagic society to see if they have to undergo the same struggles and difficulties to stay in Unity.

The ‘Us versus Them’ mentality might also have other manifestations or not occur at all in non-Western societies that have strong collective values. The Buddhist philosophical principle of ‘Indra’s Net’, for example, holds that infinitely repeated mutual relations exist between all members of the universe which render them all interconnected (Cook, 1977). Such believe goes directly against the separation into ‘Us’ and ‘not Us’ and it would be interesting to have an investigation into a case study whose members follow this belief.
10.5.3. Black’s Contemplative Position – an Alternative

One of this thesis’ major theoretical advancement has been to emphasise the parallels between Kleinian theory and group dynamics theory as presented by Turquet and other authors inspired by Bion. Along with that, I have emphasised the common characteristics of a Oneness group and a group in the Paranoïd-Schizoid position, as well as those of a Unity group and a group in the Depressive position. Although I have presented a sound argument with this line of thought, it is possible to draw in an alternative theory in order to shed light on the convent community’s lack of need for an enemy. Abiding to the notion of developmental positions, Black (2006) tentatively adds a third one: The Contemplative position.

He bases this contribution on the grounds that it is more helpful to understand consciousness as continuity from unconscious to conscious, rather than two absolute states of either complete consciousness or complete unconsciousness as portrayed by Freud (Craib, 2001). Black then explains that the Kleinian positions are only two points on this continuum, and hence many more, such as the Contemplative position, can be added to portray lesser or higher degrees of consciousness. Such notion accompanies for Stacey’s above detailed critique of dichotomised systems-thinking (2005) as it allows for fluidity of one position shading with another one. Black further asserts that the Contemplative position is one “from which the experience of being alive in the world can be perceived and thought about without the need for immediate action.” (2006, p. 75), enabling the individual to exert greater tolerance of frustrations, anxiety and excitement with a willingness to contemplate on these feelings, rather than to act upon them with a sense of urgency; a definition which reminds strongly of ‘negative capability’ (French and Simpson, 2006).

Black goes on to postulate that such state of consciousness touches upon the proto-verbal phase of psychic development during infancy (12 to 15 months), when verbalised thought does not yet force the brain into dualistic thinking and categorisation – a time when language is not developed yet and hence cannot distort or dilute experiences (see also Crociani-Windland’s discussion on the limitation of language (2009)), which might make knowing beyond words possible (French, Case and Simpson, 2012). Because such states of consciousness go deeper into the unconscious realm, they are much harder to access and maintain, as they “reach deeper than the verbal levels to contact implicit emotional memories of a stable ‘contentless’ togetherness...” (2012, p. 75).
This is a state that very much reminds me of the convent life. Being together in silence might be understood as a conviction towards achieving and maintaining this state of consciousness. Black does make explicit that religious groups derive at the Contemplative position through prayer and meditation, as the impulse to immediate action response is stilled. I did on a number of occasions try to describe something about the nuns’ behaviour which I perceived to be unusual, but the closest I could get to was “they are hesitating, they do not react immediately, they are so tolerant and patient”. Hence, Black’s notion helped me to articulate my perceptions in more precise terms, and it was like another Eureka moment when I learnt about his theory.

In chapter six I described my astonishment for the proportionately little time considered by the timetable for the physical coming together of the community, whereby most of that time is spend during the seven daily prayers in chapel. The nuns have referred to these assemblies as the core of their live, and explained that "day after day, when you pray with the Sisters, it’s like we build something together." (1-21). I still have difficulties understanding in full how building something together can happen without verbal communication, but Black’s contribution helps me to at least theoretically make sense out of the nuns state of mind during prayers. To me it looked as though the Sisters were standing in front of God as individuals, each connected with Him separately from each other. However, their principles do not agree with my observations. A painting that one of the Sisters drew for the second SPM session talks of an opposite message than the one I perceived and stresses the interconnectedness between the nuns into which Christ is brought (figure 29).

Figure 29: Painting depicting the Sisters togetherness during prayer
An exception in my own observations is noticeable when reporting of their singing together, as here I gained the impression indeed that through their different voices and lines, they were creating something together that cannot be brought to life by any one of them individually.

Through contemplation, as Keating (1992) explains, self-knowledge, the coming to consciousness of the dark side of one’s personality in addition to the light side which is easier to own up to, is accomplished, thereby enabling the individual to accept oneself as who one really is; a process he also refers to as ‘the unloading of the unconscious’. This explanation echoes the conversations I had with the convent community and might enable the nuns to come to a deeper understanding of their inner thoughts and feelings, even if these might resemble the need for an enemy, and to ‘re-own’ these projected ‘bad’ parts, so that the need for an enemy is abolished. In agreement with this reasoning, Black lists, among other changes, the withdrawal from projections in the Contemplative position. Lastly, he adds that the proto-verbal state of experience in the Contemplative position grants the individual “some degree of independence from the glamour of group membership.” (2006, p. 75).

I tentatively want to link the theory of the Contemplative position to Stacey’s earlier critique of dualistic thinking that I have applied to my own work so as to offer an alternative interpretation of the group dynamics model suggested by this research. I have noted that the strict division of the suggested Unity and Oneness groups into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ might be the result of my own paranoid-schizoid dichotomisations, which led me to lack exactly that ability to tolerate confusion and anxiety necessary to prevent dualistic thought processes. If I would be able to approximate a Contemplative position with a higher degree of negative capability – which I am, at least at this stage of my life, by far not – then maybe my diagrams would look more like figure 30:

[Diagram of the Contemplative Position]

Figure 30: Integrating the Contemplative position
10.6. **Final Worlds**

As outlined in the introduction chapter, this thesis was occupied with investigating into the tension and conflict of being human. Lazaar (2004) points out that Klein’s theories of splitting and projection together with Bion’s contributions of basic-assumption mentality cover the main aspects of the field of human conflict rather well. And although Bion (1961) stresses that we cannot possess absolute knowledge about human relations, this research has advanced our knowledge about it.

Furthermore, the literature identifies Bion as the most significant contributor to the body of knowledge on group psychoanalysis. Lawrence and colleagues, for example, describe his 1961 book as “a landmark in thought and conceptualization of the unconscious functioning of human beings in groups” (1996, p. 28), and Hopper is even more explicit: “Experiences in Groups (Bion 1961), which includes all Bion’s papers on group dynamics, constitutes a time marker in the psychoanalytical study of groups that should be known as ‘zero’, all previous studies to be dated ‘BB’ and all subsequent ones ‘AB’.” (2003, p. 29, emphasis original). I am therefore hoping that this research is accepted as a milestone along this timeline, reading ‘51 AB’.
List of References


Sievers, B. (2008). Perhaps it is the role of pictures to get in contact with the uncanny: The social photo matrix as a method to promote the understanding of the unconscious in organizations. *Organisational & Social Dynamics,* 8 (2), pp. 234-254.


Appendix 1: Full Theoretical Discussion of the Social Photo Matrix

**The Social Photo Matrix: A Visual, Integrative and Psychoanalytical Research Tool**

Visual research has been well established in anthropology and sociology, but has yet to come to the fore in organisation studies (Warren, 2009). Visual practices refer to image based methods which include drawings, photographs, video or film and internet pages (Meyer, 1991). We are living in an image-rich society in which ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ (Langer, 1957) and where the visual forms part of everyday life’s symbolism, making it sensible and necessary to include it in research practices. Further, pictures provide more insights than rational discussion and reveal part of the ‘unthought known’ (Bollas, 1987), therefore offering a promising method for enquiring into the unconscious.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the use of visual methods developed from being embedded in a strongly scientific-realist approach, towards a more reflexive approach (Pink, 2007). The difference between these two perspectives is expressed in the use of the photographs. On the one hand, they are used as data itself, representing a reality. On the other hand, they are used as a means of generating data (Warren, 2009). Here, emphasis is not given to what is actually shown in the picture, but rather, what it means to the viewer (Harper, 2005).

The SPM, in addition to incorporating the richness of contemporary visual methods, also entails a psychoanalytical perspective on doing research. Borrowing from Stein’s account on organisational consultancy, many workplace phenomena most often exist outside of the immediate awareness of organisational participants: “The surface picture presented to the consultant often is a symptom and symbol […] Client organizations often do not know what they, at some unrecognized level, already know too well” (1994; 8-9). As an innovative action research method that pushes the boundaries of creativity and open-mindedness towards a new edge, the SPM is a suitable research method to make accessible for examination such unconscious processes, as have done the conceptual frameworks of organisational diagnosis and interpretation of organisational text before (Diamond and Allcorn, 2003).

It was pioneered by the German professor of Organisational Development, Burkhard Sievers, in 2005 and is a further development out of the combination of social dreaming and role analysis traditions. As such, it is promoted as a means of getting ‘beneath the surface’, and understanding the unconscious in organisations (Sievers, 2007). By coming together in a matrix, “out of which something new can grow as in a uterus” (Lawrence, 2005), participants are invited to share their free associations, amplifications and link without boundaries, what comes into their minds in view of the photographs. The aim is to expand their thinking, as the photographs capture both, a direct object as well as a memory of experience (Reynolds and Vince, 2007). To ‘see the unseen’, and to ‘think the unthinkable’ (Sievers, 2008), and to reveal “inner psychic model(s) of (organizational) reality” (Sievers, 2008; 236) can enable change on a deeper level through awareness, insight and mutual understanding.
After having published the experiences of the first SPM with students of a university in 2005 (Sievers, 2008) and of the second with inmates of a prison and students in 2007 (Sievers, 2009), the SPM was repeated on numerous occasions in other institutions. In the subsequent discussion, I will explain in more detail the procedure and aims of the SPM, before discussing both, the strengths and weaknesses of the method. By so doing, I will draw on my own experiences of hosting SPMs, participating as a subject, as well as on related published research. At this stage though, articles on this novel method are only available from Sievers, the pioneer himself and Warren (2012) who takes a critical stance on the method.

Set up and course of action

Undertaking a SPM comprises of three distinct phases. First of all, participants are being given a theme, which should be discussed in some depth so as to ensure that each participant has made sense of it, however individualistic that sense might be. Ideally, such theme is formulated memorably, for use as a trigger or reminder in later phases in order to re-establish focus. Participants are thereafter instructed to reflect on the theme and to take photographs of anything of their choice that is related to or resembles the theme visually. Sievers encouraged participants to provide such photographs that will show what in the organisation is normally not seen (2009).

Further, participants will need to learn in advance that despite the initial instruction to take as many photos as wished in order to get used to the task and not to prematurely ‘shut the door’ to new discoveries, eventually, they will have to chose a small number of their favourites, usually between three and five photographs. Additionally, participants have to be made aware that they are only going to work with a small selection of the created pool of photos, which is determined by randomness and time restraints, rather than purposeful favouritism. Moreover, the issue of ownership has to be dealt with before research commences. Participants need to understand that although each of them will certainly take a photograph with a specific reason in mind, this will not be discussed in later phases of the SPM; who took the photo, where and why will be irrelevant and any revealing information omitted. If not made explicit beforehand, this might lead to disappointment pervading the SPM.

The second phase embodies the one hour free association session. The randomly chosen small selection of photos need to be projected on a big screen, as this makes the presentation to the participants easier. Each photo should be shown for approximately ten minutes, depending on the development of the session, i.e. how many contributions are being initiated. Long pauses should not give reason to proceed to the next photograph prematurely.

Throughout the matrix, participants are encouraged to let go of inhibitions as much as possible and to share freely, the associations they make in view of the photos, cognitive ones and emotional ones, as well as amplifications and links that come to mind not only with regards to the photos, but also as responsive reactions to other participants’ contributions. It is helpful to make participants aware that contributions are not being judged, there are neither right ones nor wrong ones. They can be made
in single words, fragments of sentences or whole sentences, but the session is not the place for a fully fletched conversation.

In addition to guaranteeing that each participant has unrestricted view of the photos, the set up of chairs as a so called ‘snowflake-pattern’ (Lawrence, 2005) is further aimed at helping participants to free themselves from group pressures of conformity.

In the third and final phase of the SPM, attention is shifted away from the photographs and towards the newly inspired thoughts and emotions that were provoked by them. Hereby, the participants and hosts turn towards each other in a circular set up so as to reflect together and exchange impressions gained. Traditionally, this phase has been split into three parts by Sievers, concerning a) the photograph with biggest impact, b) new thoughts and emotions experienced and c) how these can be linked back to the theme, so as to provide us with a new understanding of the theme.

I perceive the third reflection question to be of most value, as it aligns the newly gained insight to the research theme and therefore allows for some form of joint analysis. Personally, I found it fruitful to write down all contributions of participants myself as they were being made during the matrix; it was indeed possible to pick up on commonalities among them from the second photograph onwards. During the reflection session, I was then able to ‘propose’ commonalities that I believed to have become aware of, to offer them at the participants in a probing manner, inviting them to discuss my suggestions among themselves, agreeingly or disagreeingly. However, the host can chose to not guide the discussion in any such way at all.

If the research setting allows, the second and third phase of the SPM should be repeated four times in weekly intervals. Along with that, participants have the opportunity to become familiar with the method and might integrate more openly, and the pauses between sessions allow for more space for the development of thinking (Sievers, 2008).

**Strengths of the SPM**

The SPM is not only an extremely creative and integrative action research method, but also one of the few that concentrates on unconscious dynamics for data generation. As expected, any novel research method does not only pave the way for new opportunities, but also confronts the researcher with new concerns. In the following, I am intending to cover most of them as completely as possible.

*Philosophical underpinning.* With the aim of expanding thinking beyond rational discussion (Sievers, 2008), the SPM embodies the philosophical urge to overcome the limiting half-truths of the rational mind. Opposing the Cartesian duality of the body and mind, whereby thinking is the sole product of rationality, the SPM follows the demands of the ‘emotional turn’, also referred to as the ‘epistemological turn’ of the 1990s (Clarke and Hoggett, 2009). The research endeavour of the SPM aspires to a more holistic view of the research subject, including not only its conscious, rational parts, but also its unconscious, emotional ones, as rationality has traditionally been ascribed to the conscious part of the Super-Ego, and irrationality to the unconscious part of the Id.
(Craib, 2001). Along with this notion, Schwartz (1995) explains that saying something is irrational is not the end of the story, but its beginning.

*Participant involvement.* The SPM turns every participant into a researcher. Power irregularities are minimised, if not overcome completely, as the researcher is ‘degraded’ to an initiator and host of the SPM. The participants in turn are assumed to be in no lesser position to produce valid insight as is the researcher. These prevailing power structures have previously been a major point for critic of conventional social research methods (Hollway and Jefferson, 2005).

During data analysis, maximum participant involvement and empowerment is maintained. Data analysis takes place intersubjectively during the reflection session, whereby interpretation is not targeted at ‘solving the problem’ or ‘finding the answer’, but at opening up further possibilities of thought. The aim is to open, to widen the newly known further, rather than closing or narrowing down with the effect of losing richness, for the primary and secondary associations, could be extended continuously. Drawbacks of such open-mindedness will be discussed later.

Along with the ‘everything goes’ attitude, the SPM welcomes with open arms contributions of any kind, emphasising that there is neither a wrong nor a right one. Such open-mindedness allows for free development and can be seen as extending the social science methods continuum, starting from structured interviews, over semi-structured and unstructured ones, towards the SPM. The advantage of the unstructured interview, namely, to accommodate for the possibility that the respondent might add to the data collection themes that otherwise would not have been touched upon is multiplied.

However, one needs to bear in mind that meaning is not to be understood as consensus; agreement as such is not encouraged. Rather, it is emphasised that the SPM is a matrix, not a group, where no pressures to conformity dominate the development of new insight. The Sanskrit origin of ‘matrix’ means mother, or also whom, “out of which something new can grow” (Lawrence, 2005). Schulte offers, in my opinion, an excellent account of the essence of a matrix constellation and its ability of bringing unconscious ‘knowns’ into the conscious realm. He explains:

“The matrix can be described as the slowly developing common pool of feelings, experiences, ideas, transactions, stories, images, metaphors, dreams and associations in the life of the group that forms the shared set of references and points of contact between the group members. They are the phenomena through which the multiple subjectivities of the group intersect, and which thus provide the ground of intersubjectivity in the group. [...] the group provides the setting within which these ‘autistic’ – or cryptic – phenomena can unfold publicly, between people, and thus have the potential to become meaningful. [...] (through) a new kind of conversation, one that makes meaningful and able to be *articulated* aspects of ourselves that had previously been *unthinkable.*” (2000; p. 540, emphasis added).
The limitations of language. The SPM meets the need to overcome the limiting nature of social research also on another level, the language level. As Crociani-Windland (2009) noted, sometimes words are not enough, as the essence of what it means to be human and have human experience cannot be expressed with words alone. According to her, an experience will always be richer than its representation. The SPM can hence be perceived as a means by which the gap between an experience and its representation is filled a little bit more by making the representation ‘richer’. This is not to say thought, that the photographs replace language; rather, they facilitate it and enforce the appearance of words in a so called ‘photo-text’ (Warren, 2009).

Not only does the SPM offer a method to shift the barrier between the conscious and the unconscious further into the unconscious psyche by calling into awareness the unnoticed, but it also accommodates for the increasing importance of our visual world and imagery (Warren, 2005), as well as the significance of other artefacts in our everyday lives. Mersky (2012) points out that the SPM can help organisations to increase their capacity to think about difficult realities they face instead of suppressing them, which would lead to the unconscious acting out of these in other parts of the system. Increasing awareness for the particulars of the environment also comes to show that the SPM is a method that does not only adhere to the idea of the co-creating nature of the inner and the outer world, but also explores this mutual relationship; disclosing our inner pictures of our outer environment.

Weaknesses of the SPM

As mentioned earlier, every research method has its own limitations. When dealing with a novel research method, unfamiliar pitfalls have to be considered and accommodated for. In the following, I will try and raise some concerns regarding the conduction of the SPM and ponder upon ways of how these can be circumvented without jeopardising the rich value of this method.

Free Association. To start with, the very idea of free association is ambiguous. The term describes “the mental process of making associations which the reason does not order, repress, or control [...] in order to gain insight into subconscious processes” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010). Note here that this definition differs to some degree from Freud’s German ‘freier Einfall’; free idea. As Bettelheim explains, “associations are not free, but are always conditioned by or related to something;” (1983, p. 94), they are usually logically and consciously connected with their stimulus. On the other hand, ‘free idea’ refers to something that suddenly occurs to one’s mind, and which was previously external to the participants, as opposed to ‘hidden inside’. The implications for the SPM might then be to add to the instruction of free association also the question “what ideas pop into your mind when seeing that photograph?”

According to conventional literature, thought, a free association is perceived as a voice originating in the id, the suppressed emotional part of the inner psyche. Building further on Freud’s second structural model of the self, the repression or control of such emotions would be exercised from the super-ego, since this part of the psyche forms the moral judge, the censor through which every expression, be it verbal or non-verbal, has to ‘pass’ in order to be communicated to the outside world. The task of
freely associating according to this line of thought demands from the subject to ‘switch off’ their super-ego, to deliver less of this, but more of the id instead. This would technically imply the necessity to ‘remove the super-ego’ from the inner world. Such endeavour is of course, by its nature of being unconscious, impossible.

Additionally, one needs to scrutinise the taken-for-granted assumption that free associations are expressed verbally. If it is the id that we want to ‘hear’, it is not enough to concentrate on words. Similarly, pauses of silence might have significant expressiveness, or, in Siever’s words, “Schweigen hat Inhalte”; silence has contents.

**Social pressures.** In addition to one’s own censorship, participants might hold back associations out of fear of being ‘disclosed’ in front of others or even judged by other participants of the SPM. Sievers reports on participants’ feedback “you are afraid to say the wrong thing” (2009). Urges to conformity and acceptance might lead to ‘group think’ (LeBon, in Wren, 1999), despite the great emphasis on individual thought throughout the introduction of the SPM. The fear of being ‘misunderstood’ or possibly insult one another, breaking a cultural taboo due to ‘inappropriate’ associations, might additionally inhibit the free flow of thought and emotion. Likewise, the urge to establish the truth might not be as easy to overcome as implied by the method, for it seems natural to human beings to reify their own truth about the world as being objective. Such wish to ‘stick to the truth’ might be evident when participants insist on the photograph ‘showing, just what it is showing’.

Despite such strong critical voice, I can contribute to the discussion form my own experience, that the SPM at least rises awareness of issues that were not ‘known to be known’; that were evident but yet unrealised and unused. Further, it is helpful to differentiate between the social and the private part of free associations; those that we share, and those that we keep to ourselves.

Further, shared meaning, although explicitly discouraged by the SPM, seems to be an attractive escape from anxiety provoking uncertainty and is rather difficult to avoid. Who has not experienced the comfort of hearing that someone else has had the same thought. Social comparison theory has long shown that individuals seek comparison with similar others and avoid comparison to different others so as to increase opinion certainty (Turner, Brown and Tajfel, 1979). Differences between one’s own opinion and the ones of others, in this case expressed by free associations, might then be overcome via purposeful agreement. Moreover, organisational groups that are participating in a SPM are likely to be long-term groups with some elevated need for group cohesion (Karau & Hart, 1998), enforcing the need for belonging and conformity. Warren (2009) adds that organisations are “serious places, where emotions are normally suppressed” further hampering the implementation of the SPM.

Hence, the so called snowflake-pattern according to which the seats are arranged during the free association session can be understood as a means by which to ‘free’ the individual mind from group pressures. Lawrence (2005) explains that the setting, whereby participants do not directly face each others’ gaze as in a circle, facilitates the workings of the matrix by breaking the patterns of the group and creating a freer thinking enclosure. On first thought one might be rather sceptical against such
attempts to free one’s mind. Especially Warren (2012) understandingly raises critique in this direction, proclaiming that an effort of seat arrangement alone is not enough to overcome prevailing group pressures. While sharing Warren’s worry, I can draw back on my own experience of being a participant in an SPM, and in self-reflection, I did notice strongly the change of my emotional state when sitting in the matrix constellation throughout the free association session, as compared to when sitting in a circle in the following reflection session.

A sceptic only needs to draw on teaching experiences in a class room. What difference it makes to the reactions and behaviour of students when they enter a class room in which the usual row of chairs and tables are altered into a circle, the tutor sitting among them. Actor network theory has long recognised the agency of objects and how they impact on humanly behaviour (Latour, 2005).

More on social meaning. It is the endeavour of the SPM to derive hidden social meaning as it is put into thoughts and consecutively words, inspired by photographs. This is indeed very different from the notion of consensus. The former is reliant on individual contributions, whereas the latter emphasises agreement via group conformity.

Social meaning in the SPM is achieved by communication of individual inner images of reality in the form of free association, and by paying careful attention to the nuances of unconsciously shared thoughts, feelings and experiences in the workplace (Diamond and Allport, 2003). This process is based on the psychoanalytically informed assumption that internal realities originate from and are influenced by external reality. So for example, taking up a role in an organisation requires the role holder to introject its parts (Sievers, 2008). Therefore, externalising them, making them heard, explicit, can foster understanding the meaning an individual or a group of individuals attach to the environment. Along with this line of thought, photographs of an institution are perceived as a means of explicating the representations of the ‘institution-in-the-mind’ (Armstrong, 2005). The underlying notion of social systems proclaims that an individual’s experiences and resulting thoughts relate to the whole context in which they were created.

Since each individual might have gained different perceptions and understandings of the same, shared environment (this is most likely to be the organisation of role holders), it is important to provide for a setting throughout the free association session, which allows for all individuals to express their own, personal and unique inner images. It is in line with this argumentation that Sievers, and Lawrence before him, utilizes a matrix set up in contrast to a group setting, as a more democratic environment.

When warning of the tyranny of the group and the urge to conformity, Sievers refers to the tendency of individuals to find security and defend against anxiety by ‘hiding’ behind others, and simply agree. Such dilemma could materialise itself, for example, when the establishment of a leader is allowed in a group setting, and as a consequence, other participants contribute with similar thoughts rather than bringing to the fore their own free associations.
Certainly, in the reflection session, where participants come together in a circle, the tendency to draw conclusions makes the avoidance of consensus impossible; however, by that time, inner meanings have already been ‘extracted’ and are ‘out in the open’. During the free association session, each individual participant (ideally) contributes one piece of a puzzle; a puzzle whose final image has remained unknown throughout. Sievers describes this development as “something under construction”, without being able to know exactly what is being constructed. In the eventual reflection session, focus is shifted to gaining overview of the whole puzzle, even if it is not ‘completed’. Only now are participants reflecting collectively on the newly discovered meaning that has been created in-between and amongst them.

**Boundaries and creativity.** The SPM is nourished by ‘boundariless’ creativity which is in so far infinite and free, as there are now boundaries set to the free associations. However, this also means that there is a very wide focus given, if any at all, often only formulated as a general topic. Although this is facilitating richness and thoroughness of data, the danger lies in the inability to fit such freedom of outcome to an open but yet clearly formulated research question. Although I am intentionally refusing to draw up a clear set of research questions and rather plan to let the question become concrete during the research encounter itself, I do have a clear area of interest. While the SPM accommodates for the researcher’s wish to offer flexibility for themes developing in the here and now – Hollway and Jefferson (2005) pointed out themselves that the theme, as well as the method, should only be developed in the field, so as to guarantee fit fur purpose (please refer to the section on participant observation for further justification) - it also comes with the danger of generating data which is too loosely bound to the topic, not to say unrelated.

It is therefore vital to articulate clear boundaries with regards to the focus of the SPM, within which, and only within which, creativity can be unleashed. This focus needs to be grounded in theory and might even contain the research question itself, which should have been formulated at that point. As discussed previously, such focus must have already been given at the commencement of the research encounter, even before participants set out to take photographs. I also recommend to repeat the task, or the theme sentence on one slide just before the first photograph is being projected, explaining: “this is what I asked you to do….”.

Likewise, data analysis might be rendered difficult, if not impossible, due to the generation of a vast scope of data. The lack of a framework through and against which to evaluate data might be accused of wild analysis (Freud, 2002). Novel insights might not be able to be linked back to existing theories so as to develop on from the existing body of knowledge. With this aspect in mind, Sievers himself has added his own, individual data analysis in addition to the group reflection sessions and thereby did offer some form of ‘closure’ (2008). Such analysis includes tentative relations back to psychoanalytical theory.

**The role of the host.** To establish and maintain such clear focus is but one task of the host. In more abstract terms, it is the host who is maintaining the equilibrium of rationality and irrationality, for neither one of them is able to make sense without the
other, the host allows for irrational free associations but keeps them within rational boundaries. Along with this, I do not mean to restrain the free flow of creativity and associations; I rather want to guide them, to channel them with clear direction, so as to provide the derived linkage making to the theme with more validity. It is important to justify the identification of links by making them clearly retraceable. Also, set boundaries during data gathering might prove helpful when grounding conclusions in theory. I am of the opinion that without such boundaries, grounding is not possible at all.

One must not forget that participants are less likely to be familiar with this novel method as they would be with, for example, a more conventional method such as interviews. Leading back to the problem of anxiety levels caused by a perceived threat of the unknown, such boundaries in form of clear directions or guidelines to purpose could serve as a means of containment and might prevent the problem of the ‘defended subject’ (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005). Along with this, associations would still be free in the sense that participants are not restrained directly in what they are allowed to say or supposed to say, however, given the photo instruction in advance is a form of ‘setting the stage’.

The role of host as container is an important one. The SPM is a research method which empowers the research participants and grants them a lot of initiative throughout the entire process of sense-making. Not every participant will be comfortable with such freedom and lack of instructions. One might not know what to do with that freedom. Detailed instructions at the outset of the SPM can indeed clarify certain expectations but are not enough to lover anxiety levels, also referred to as performance anxiety (Hollway & Jefferson, 2005) to a workable level. Rather, hosts have to provide for a facilitating environment throughout. By so doing, they act as a container onto which participants can project anxiety, rather than making the photographs targets of their projections or even keeping them inside, running the risk of Bion’s basic assumptions (1961). This anxiety, if not taken in by the host, who in turn emotionally ‘digests’ it (Diamond and Allcorn, 2003) and offers it back to the participants in a more manageable form, can lead to defence mechanisms capable of haltering the entire matrix and preventing associations of any kind from taking place.

Some collective defence mechanisms. In the first SPM I undertook, I could witness with my entire body such defence mechanisms at work. I noticed that the majority of participants directed their free associations at me, by keeping looking at me, seemingly so as to get some kind of confirmatory signal reassuring them that they are doing ‘the right thing’. This made me feel uneasy, because I suspected that this was the very same feeling some of the participants were experiencing. I did catch myself occasionally answering those questioning looks with a smile and nod— the strong transferences compelled me to do so.

Apart from addressing the free associations at me, I observed that some participants formed their own little subgroups in which they started to whisper their free associations to each other and then evaluated them by either laughing or frowning.
Unfortunately, those contributions were not recorded by the Dictaphone used in the very first SPM I conducted.

Laughing and frowning was present throughout the SPM with regards to all participants, too. At times the joking comments became so strong that the whole group burst out in laughter. The humorous element is indeed not a negative point, and during subsequent SPMs I witnessed the same amount of laughter; however, in this very first one, the laughter and joking was evidently serving as a distraction from actually doing the task at hand.

Bion’s basic assumptions model (1961) is a useful theory to shed light onto such dynamics. When the shared anxiety of a group reaches a certain level, three different emotional responses could occur as a means of defending against anxiety. “The more disturbed the groups, the more easily discernible are [...] primitive phantasies and mechanisms;” (p 165). Such anxiety could have been caused by the task formulation to freely associate, since it was an unfamiliar method for all participants; it might have been perceived as a threat.

When I felt compelled to reassure the group of doing the ‘correct’ thing, the group embodied the basic assumption of dependency. Here, they sought a leader who relieves them of their anxiety. I felt so much pressure, because the group expected me as leader, to be experienced, to know the truth, to be omnipotent.

Pairing, the second basic assumption, could explain the whispering of two members to each other. According to this theory, those two members were engaged in a sexual fantasy of creating a child, a messiah figure, which would save them from the threat posed by the group task. It does help to come to terms with this explanation when thinking of the hope one feels when being engaged in a conflicting discussion; the hope to find a relief-bringing solution.

Also the third basic assumption, fight or flight, is applicable as it helps to understand the deviation of the groups into making jokes. The group fled the task by reconfiguring it, i.e. turning the task into an entertainment exercise in which everybody has to make funny jokes.

I could add a fourth observation to these three basic assumptions as defence behaviour: A minority of participants did not make any contribution at all. The anxiety level in these individuals might have been so high that they simply did not dare to say anything, but rather wish they could ‘disappear’. It is possible to explain such behaviour with Bion’s basic assumption of fight or flight, but I find it appropriate to refer to the concept of social loafing (Latané, Williams and Harkins, 1979) here. According to this group theory, individuals will withhold effort (loaf) when they do not expect any consequences for such behaviour, or when they feel that their effort would not contribute to the overall group outcome.

Winnicott expresses Bion’s idea of the container as ‘holding’, whereby the participants are reassured that it is ‘ok’ to ‘let go’ – they are in ‘save hands’. He also suggests that ‘play’ is necessary before any free association session so as to create an intermediate
space within which feelings can be explored that are otherwise hard to deal with (Ogden, 1985). Along with such reassurance, the participants’ capacity of being alone is strengthened and they can ‘regress’. In previous SPM sessions, Sievers has utilised drawings prior to the beginning of the SPM. One might also think about taking Winnicott literally and actually playing a game before photographers are being sent out. This might further lower anxiety levels, help participants to feel more comfortable and stimulate creativity.

Drawing back on Winnicott’s theories of the mother and infant dyad sheds more light on the role of host in the SPM. Referring to such early child development concepts is in so far appropriate, as in a group setting with elevated anxiety levels during the SPM, regression into a more developmentally immature level of mental functioning takes place collectively and is regarded as one of the mechanisms of defence (Arlow, 1963).

According to Winnicott (1965), it requires a ‘good enough mother’ to provide sufficient security in which the child can freely develop. ‘Holding’, the maternal provision of a facilitating environment for the dependent child can create that necessary security and comfort.

I have already illustrated in a previous example how increased anxiety levels of a participant group led them to fall into the basic assumption state of becoming dependent on the host as a leader (Bion, 1963). Winnicott’s concept could then be translated into a ‘good enough host’, on which the outcome of the SPM depends. Thereby the host, like the mother, provides for ‘potential space’ – actually a playground - a hypothetical area of mutual creativity between mother and infant (Winnicott, 1974), or host and participants, and so the baby can in later developmental stages re-create this potential space between him-/herself and other objects; likewise, participants re-create it between themselves and the photographs.

Although the application of Winnicott’s concepts is fruitful for understanding the unconscious dynamics between host and participants, one needs to bear in mind its limitations. These are mainly centred around time constraints. Winnicott bases his developmental theories on observations done across several years of a child’s early life. An SPM only lasts a few hours.

In comparison to more controlled research methods, the SPM comes with a lot of uncertainties and does require from hosts not only to deal with the anxiety of participants, but also with their own. As Lawrence postulates, the matrix “demands a different kind of leadership – one inspired by the recognition of the infinite, on not-knowing, of being in doubt and uncertainty, as opposed to knowing and repeating banal facts.” (2005, 40). Being able to deal with uncertainties, is what the Poet John Keats refers to as ‘negative capability’, the ability “...of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” (French, 2003). Later, Heidegger (1993) incorporates these principles into his concept of ‘Gelassenheit’ (I would translate this into English as meaning ‘serenity’), to describe the very same intentional open-mindedness without being terrified of gaps in one’s knowledge. Such negative capability is a requirement addressed at hosts; likewise, it is that they transfer their ability to the participants. Negative capability provides the room
for insight, the flash of suddenly understanding opposes the premature and anxiety driven determination to come up with a creativity diminishing, cognitive solution that might even black out vital information for the sake of illusive certainty. Contrastingly, the SPM makes room for different modes and kinds of knowing; not just either knowing or not knowing.

Rather than being based on principles of rationality, thinking in the SPM, like the concept of negative capability, is based on the notion of ‘play’ as a mutual creative process in the potential space (Winnicott, 1974). Hereby, it is the host’s role, as it is the therapist’s role in a clinical setting, to bring the participants (the patients) into a state of being able to play. It could be argued that in adulthood, such ability is indeed forgotten, as the super-ego takes over the role of rationalising our behaviour.

Winnicott goes on to stress that when a patient (participant) cannot play, attention has to be drawn to this major symptom before any interpretation of behaviours can take place. Applying this principle to my research would mean that I first need to establish a reliable, ‘good enough’ relationship with all participants, or, in the language of participant observation, rapport. Milner (1952) understands play as a creative relation to the world, whereby the individual is free to be creative; and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the true inner world.

It requires not only the participants but also the host to adhere to the fundamental rule of psychoanalysis, namely, to suspend of any conscious kind of control (Moore and Fine, 1990). As discussed in depth earlier, the participants of the SPM follow this principle by means of uncensored free associations. The host adheres likewise by embodying the mirror-image and shows so called evenly-suspended (or elsewhere poised) attention (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1980). Borrowing from Freud, it is the analyst’s (host’s) task to “catch the drift of the patient’s (participant’s) unconscious with his (or her) own unconscious” (1923; 239). This involves the renunciation of the immediate recognition of links of associations. “Free-floating attention provides, so to speak, a storeroom of impressions from which later knowledge will suddenly emerge (Reik, emphasis added). Being able to keep in mind such multitude of apparently insignificant elements whose correlations are only to emerge later on, demands exactly that kind of rejection of restructured knowledge that is described by the principles of negative capability.

Such suspension as explained by Freud includes everything which normally focuses the attention: Personal inclinations, prejudice and theoretical assumptions and leads to the only truly objective attitude (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1980).

When applying the principle of evenly-suspended attention to the SPM, the host has to bear in mind that it is an ideal state of the mind of the analyst and as part of the limitations of being human, impossible to reach. One should nevertheless strive towards it so as to avoid jumping to conclusions prematurely and being accused of ‘wild-analysis’.

The agency of sense-making. Further attention has to be paid to the matter of agency with regards to the creation of meaning. Sievers explains that it is the viewer of the photograph that creates the meaning by perceiving it in a certain manner. Hereby it is
assumed that the free associations of participants reveal something about their projections onto the photographs, and the photographs are understood as containers for ‘mental raw material’ (Sievers, 2007). One might want to reflect further on the origin of this meaning production. “a photo cannot tell what it is showing” (Sievers, 2010) is a thought indicating the sole agency of the viewer as generator of meaning.

However, whereas Sievers only sees the photo as an incentive, a means by which new ways of thinking might be stimulated, there is the possibility that the photo itself as object holds some form of agency as has been promoted by actor network theory (Latour, 2005). Along with this perspective, one might agree that a different set of randomly selected photographs would have led to the generation of different associations and meaning, just as much as would have been the case if the same set of photographs were viewed by different participants. In line with this notion, Sievers advises to take care when choosing the first photograph in the free association session, is it can ‘set the tone’. It might even be possible that the photograph itself can transfer the mood the photographer was in when taking it, as a person in a depressed mood might chose different objects or angles to capture than does an upbeat person. Such perspective does not only agree with the idea of intersubjectivity, whereby meaning is created together by the object, subject and researcher, but also gives some more presence to the initial photographer, who has so far been expelled from the meaning generating process. Along with this line of thought, the framework of actor network theory promotes the agency of the photograph as object, and psychoanalytic thought promotes the photograph as medium for transferences and countertransferences. In order to further ponder upon the agency of meaning generation, it is worth drawing attention to figure 1, in which I have tried to illustrate different sources of agency as they come together in the process of sense-making.

Leading on from the question of agency, critique has been raised by participants who felt that the predominantly negative contributions of other participants influenced their own associations. One participant reported of “feeling drawn into the negativity”. MacCurdy (1999) states this is due to being in connection with the unconscious. The stronger this link, the more negative associations become, so he claims. Likewise, Douglas suggests that “the black hole of the past is impossible to avoid” (1985, in Hunt, 1989). Critics might argue that it is the method itself which implies negativity, as participants with a lack of containment might perceive it as a rare opportunity for dumping feelings whereby previously held inhibitions about one’s real inner life become obsolete. Associations from this point of view could then be seen as representing an image in the mind which is more pessimistic than necessary. Here again, the role of host as container is emphasised, who can use agency to prevent the SPM turning into a dumping place of suppressed sorrow and aggression.

Even the host’s cheerful personality can reflect positively on the SPM conduct, following Foulkes explanation that the group reflects the personality of the conductor (1964). I can report from own experiences as host that there certainly is a fun element to the sessions, and that associations need not necessarily be negative. To me it seems as though there are just as many positive as negative contributions; however, it
is the negative ones that seem to stand out. This might be due to the fact that in an everyday environment, individuals prefer to avoid negative elements of exchanges.
Appendix 2: Application letters to the convent

Dear Abbess,

My name is Nadine Tchelebi, I am 28 years old and in the first year of my Ph.D. studies at the Bristol Business School, University of the West of England. I am writing to you to enquire with the utmost respect and sincerity, whether there might be any chance of my becoming a temporary member of your community. This would represent a unique and precious experience for me. Please allow me to explain the motivation behind my wish in some detail.

My Ph.D. topic centres around ‘Us-versus-Them’ mentalities in organisations, such as blaming others in search for a scapegoat. Such behaviour does not only reduce efficiency, but more importantly, also impedes healthy social relationships. Instead of working together with mutual support, organisational groups often develop ‘enemy-thinking’ towards each other, creating a work atmosphere overshadowed by resentment and mistrust, compromising the well-being of the individual.

In order to explore this social phenomenon in depth, my intention is to become a temporary member of two organisations with different group dynamics. Before commencing my studies, I worked at x in x, x, my place of birth, and I am planning on including this company as one of my research sites. Here I could witness in the past, what devastating consequences the above described group dynamics can lead to. Management’s genuine improvement plans to enhance conditions of production line workers, were doomed to failure by exactly such resentment and mistrust that was directed against them.

As a result of these experiences, I will be approaching both organisations with a lot of questions on my mind: How is daily living and working together organised? How is a productive ‘we-identity’ maintained? How do people relate to one another? And by turning to your convent, I am asking myself what richness of insight is there for me to experience in your community, with the possibility in mind of sharing what I have learnt from you in order to improve human relations in the organisational world?

With these reflections in mind, I would very much appreciate the possibility of joining your convent in the autumn time for approximately five weeks, not only living with you, but also working and praying with you. At the moment, I am studying the ‘Rule of St Benedict’, because if you do allow me into your community, I would like to at least have a sound basic understanding of your history, values and beliefs.

I hope that I have been able to convey my intentions and that I have awakened your interest in my work. With excitement I am looking forward to hearing from you. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time should you wish to discuss matters further. Please also find attached a supporting letter from my supervisor, Robert French, and from our Chaplin here at the University of the West of England, Ian Yemm.

With my best wishes,

Nadine

Email:

Phone:
Dear Mother Abbess,

As Director of Studies for Nadine Tchelebi, I am writing to support her request to join your community as a part of her research into the dynamics of groups and organizations.

Nadine came to the Bristol Business School from x for her undergraduate degree course, sponsored by her employer, x. She was very successful in her degree, receiving the award for the best “International Business Studies” student of her grade. She then taught here for a year, before being accepted as a PhD student here at BCLOE (the Bristol Centre for Leadership and Organizational Ethics).

She is a highly intelligent, committed and hard-working young woman, who brings an open and enquiring attitude to all she does – and she has developed a great enthusiasm for this project. We believe she would gain a great deal from spending time in your community, but also that the questions she is pursuing about the nature and impact of group dynamics and organizations is a very important one, so that what she learns in this time may also, in time, be of benefit to others.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have any questions about Nadine herself or about her programme of study.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Robert French
Reader in Organization Studies
Bristol Business School
University of the West of England
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QY

Email:
Phone:
Dear Mother Prioress,

I am writing to introduce you to Nadine Tchelebi, who is a PhD student at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

Nadine is engaged in important research at the University which will have a wide application to a diverse range of organisations. I have been fortunate to be introduced to Nadine recently and to experience her group work first hand.

I have no hesitation in recommending her to you and I hope that you will feel able to respond to her request with your characteristic [hospitality. I know that she would like to have a properly integrated experience of your life and the opportunity for some group work; she and her supervisor will be best placed to tell you more.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Yemm
Chaplain
The Living Centre
University of the West of England
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol
BS16 1QY

Friday 23rd July 2010
Appendix 3: Extracts from Coding Procedure

a) Extract from memoirs for case study 1
b) Extract from interview for case study 1

one corner and the others from the offices in another corner, like some invisible division. Or maybe it wasn't like that? I'm not sure, what is your opinion?

Haha, there was this total wall between the Industrials and the Clericals: It was as though one would break a taboo if one sat down with the clericals. That was much provoked by the overall structure of the company, how they cope with it, and already starts during the training? If one would work in a more integrative way? for example, I remember once that I was on a training course in the IT department, and there we learnt together with the Clericals. But we were not even allowed to take off our overalls! But then it worked, so once you are in it, then it is not that of a problem, so to say....

There was simply less people, and I think it is always dependent on the group dynamic -- you come into such a room, and you have the same image as in the canteen: to the left is one squad, to the right is another squad. And then you don't want to behave different from everyone else, so you stick to your own squad...

So what are you saying? Did you adjust your own behaviour? Also, you talked about an image -- what is that image exactly?

Well, I meant exactly like what you said at the beginning, well, the thing is it's not only an image, but it is really like it -- you enter somewhere, here are the Industrials and over there are the Clericals. And it does indeed always look like an alien if there is a Clerical with his suit entering the production area for something that you know. Think this has to do with the fact that it is the actual separation... And I would not say that everyone knows every country, where they all dress the same, then it would be very different. Because then you wouldn't know right from the beginning who is an Industrial and who is a Clerical.

That's like with the foremen, they have this in-between thing, but it already starts there: a foreman comes through the production line and you hear 'There comes a white frock, there comes a blue frock... White are the ones from R&D, and blues are the foremen... such things I

1 Industrials translated from the German 'die Gewerbetreibende' and clericals from 'die Kaufmannschaft', referring to staff doing manual labour and staff in administrative or managerial positions respectively.
2 Generally in Germany, an employer may provide vocational training for at least two years before a permanent contract can be offered. It is very rare to get any job without such formal qualification.
3 Translated from the German "Häupter": The team leader of a group of workers who has got additional qualifications such as being able to train and supervise others.
4 The thing is, the foreman also wears a grey suit but if he goes somewhere, then he says 'oh, I have to throw on my blue frock' &

But well, I guess you need that in such a huge industrial company. You enter and then you want to know immediately, oh yes, that is such and such person, I have to go there, I have to...
c) Apriori themes that have emerged for case study 1

Artefacts of ‘us’

> transitional space / no-man’s land <

Artefacts of ‘them’

feelings / perceptions towards ‘the other’

➔ behaviour of ‘us’
➔ behaviour of ‘them’

possible reasons for the segmentalism
d) Extract from interview for case study 2

```
Everybody across the board knows where we want to go.
They always try and develop the staff, they are keen on keeping the staff.
They also have an annual employee survey which I know they take very seriously.
The management wants feedback and is very keen to know what works and what doesn’t.

Is there a difference between the care team and fundraising team?

The care team is very skilled and trained, I have a lot of sympathy.
Fundraisers are loud, gregarious, they need to be, they are not afraid to go out and talk to anyone who can give money. That is quiet brutal. They have very different personalities.
We have a buddy system in place. Each member of the marketing/fundraising team is coupled with a member of the care team and they meet 2-4 times a year to catch up with what each of them is doing.
So some of the fundraisers go out with the care team and vice versa.
It means that there is not a massive gap between the two teams.

Can you describe the organisational culture?

Hmmm, I can answer that question for fundraising, but could I do it for care?
They are incredibly passionate, whatever anyone’s job is.
Everyone is very hard working. I don’t see anyone who isn’t prepared to put in additional hours.
We are all happy to help each other, for example, in a big event run-up, all think then, what can we do to help?
Although everybody is focused on their own task, we pull together as a team.
The fundraising and marketing team is very creative.
I guess because there is so much passion, tensions can run quiet high, but we can always sort it out.
But a fact is that there is enough open communication that we can get on, it is how things get sorted, creating some interesting debates.

Do you think collaboration is a good idea?

I think 100% clear anything.
I think they are similar in that.
If it is around supporting the family unit as a whole, its great they provide the medical side, but there has to be a combination of both.
```
**e) A priori Themes that have emerged for case study 2**

1. **Scarcity of resources**
   - The 'unknown' Other
   - Lack of internal communication
   - Lack of knowledge of the other
   - Scepticism

2. **Pride in the...**
   - Uniqueness
   - Life commitment
   - Identity

3. **Group cohesion as coping mechanism**

4. **Horizontal divisions, internal**
   - Operations and Strategy

5. **Vertical divisions, internal**
   - Funding and care
     - The task
     - The culture
   - Back office and front office
     - War metaphors
   - (Geography (only RB))
   - (Core and extended team)
Included by a regular prayer to still a

careful of info for all conversations. At formal

even in the presence of people who don’t believe

could not join the brothel & mistress, as they did
to pass the said that there really are racially

different people on earth, the hand never met

VERSUS THE

...
g) Apriori themes that have emerged for case study 3

Diary entries

Religious principles <-> Reference to group characteristics

Principles of community functioning

Relationship between life and death

Resourcefulness:
- no waste
- sense of purpose

Negative associations / doubt

Their fundamental beliefs

Unity
Conflict

Their structured life
Written rules

Their behaviour

My emotions
-> My doubts

Our relationship
Appendix 4: Full interview transcript of case study 1

Well, I was wondering if you could recall for me some impressions that you might have gained when working for regarding a possible difference between employees who work in the production lines and those who work in administration and management. To clarify what I mean, let me give you an example of my own experiences: Back then I found it very crass, for example when I entered one of the canteens, then you had all the people from production in one corner and those from the offices in another corner, like some invisible division. Or maybe it wasn’t like that? I’m not sure, what is your opinion?

Haha, there was this total wall between the Industrials and the Clericals! It was as though one would break a taboo if one sat down with the clericals. That is very much provoked by the overall structure of the company, how they cope with it; it already starts during the training if one would work in a more integrative way there... for example, I remember that once I was on a training course in the IT department, and there we learnt together with the Clericals. But we were not even allowed to take off our overalls! But there it worked, so once you are in it, then it is not really a problem, so to say....

There it was simply less people, and I think it is always dependant on the group dynamic – you come into such a room, and you have the same image as in the canteen: to the left is one squad, to the right is another squad. And then you don’t want to behave different from everyone else, so you stick to your own squad.

So what are you saying? Did you adjust your own behaviour? Also, you talked about an ‘image’ – what is that image exactly?

Well, I meant exactly like what you said at the beginning, well, the thing is it’s not only an image, but it is really like it – you enter somewhere, here are the Industrials and over there are the Clericals. And it does indeed always look like an alien if there is a Clerical with his suit entering the production area or something like that, you know. I think this has a lot to do with the dress code, it’s the optical impression. If we would do this thing like some schools in other countries, where they all dress the same, then it would be very different. Because then you wouldn’t know right from the beginning who is an Industrial and who is a Clerical.

That’s like with the foremen, they have this ‘in-between-thing x, but it already starts there: a foreman comes through the production line and you hear “There comes a white frock, there comes a blue frock”. Whites are the ones from R&D, and Blues are the foremen. Such things I mean. The thing is, the foreman also wears a grey suit but if he goes somewhere, then he says “oh, I have to throw on my blue frock”.

---

9 Industrials translated from the German “die Gewerblichen” and Clericals from “die Kaufmannschen”, referring to staff doing manual labour and staff in administrative or managerial positions respectively.

10 Generally in Germany, an employer will provide vocational training for at least two years before a permanent contract can be offered. It is very rare to get any job without such formal qualification.

11 Translated from the German “Meister”: The team leader of a group of workers who has got additional qualifications such as being able to train and supervise others.

12 Identical to all other production line workers.
But well, I guess you need that in such a huge industrial company. You enter and then you want to know immediately, ah yes, that is such and such person, I have to go there, I have to talk to him, and so on and so forth. I think this way it is easier to steer people.

I see, so can you tell me more about the dress code you mentioned?

Well, I can see that there are certain rules of the game at 

Well, there are some people who only want to work for money. And then there are others who want to progress, but they bad-mouth everything, like when they say “but for that you need this and this qualification, it’s impossible to get”. And then there are some others who see the prospects of a career. Well, at 

you see some prospects which are simply not achievable. Then we are back at the canteen, where the splitting already starts. If they would all mingle among each other, then you wouldn’t see them as so far away from you. Then you would think it is achievable.

And then you also hear things like “Hey, he is cheating” if you do get a job up there, or you are asked “what do you want up there?”. That is the general perception.

Ok then, so I don’t want to put words in your mouth, but from what you tell me that sounds quite extreme, don’t you think? – Would you say that there is some form of animosity involved or am I exaggerating now?

Down in the general mass definitely. But that is the image which is being carried through.

By whom?

I would say by the management. Take for example my first day. Break times. They are arranged in such a manner for the Industrials, they are different from the ones for the Clericals, because, I assume that is the way it has to be due to the machine cycles. Well, and then the Clericals have those big canteens, and we are all dispersed among the little SB shops. And the Clericals can nicely stuff their faces in the big canteens, and for us they just throw such little SB shops into the middle of the production. And they can always sit there in the front on the clean benches and stuff their faces x. Well, but that is envy. So either I come to terms with it, or I do something so that I also get there.

Hhmm. I see. Would you like to give me another example to make your point clearer?

Yes, for example, it already starts on the first day. You go into the canteen, and there you immediately get the picture. The cutting time is 15 minutes, when the break times of both the Industrials and the Clericals overlap, and then you see it immediately on the first day.

From the foremen onwards, it is different. That’s what they say themselves, they sit between two chairs. On the one hand, they have to be with the Clericals, they go to meetings and promote their interests, but they also have to stand behind their workers and lead them. So they have to get along well with their workers, and simultaneously they get given targets from above that they have to meet. So they have this key position. Here, two worlds crash into each other.

13 Translated from the German “fremdgehen”: the act of cheating on one’s sexual partner
14 These are little containers placed at various points in the production and function as little kiosks.
Hhm. Interesting. You said "here two worlds crash into each other". Are the differences between Industrials and Clericals really that big? Can you explain that in your own words, so that even somebody who has never been to the company can understand?

It is where dirty meets clean.

Where lower work is met. Like in America, where all the Chinese were let down in baskets into the tunnels, and if the people on top didn't pull fast enough, then those down there exploded along with the bombs.

Well. So this is the lower, manual work, the dirty one. And on top was the clean work. Those on top are the 'licked-clean' ones, an the other play in the dirt. Unfortunately that is the way it has been fastened into their heads.

The surprising thing is, if they talk to us, I experienced that myself – you can talk with them completely normally. And the other way around, too. So when I go up there without my overalls, then they approach me completely different. All of a sudden they know how to greet! Normally they can't even shake hands. I remember when we met the head of the training department, he was wearing a suit and said hello. He didn't only offer his hand to my foremen, but also to all the apprentices. Well, that was quiet something, if someone in a suit shakes your hand. Normally you are left out. So he came to me and stretched out his hand to me, so I said "oh no, my hands are very dirty" and then he simply replied, " Yeah, never mind, we all work here". Afterwards he wiped his hand on his trousers, but I thought that was awesome.

So I assume that was an exception, because you remember it so well and in detail?

Yes, of course. It was an exception. But that are normal codes of conduct there. No idea where they come from, it's like Loch Ness- noone's every seen it but everyone believes in it”.

Aha, very interesting. Let me give you an example of my own experiences, and I would appreciate your comment on it. For me, as a former Clerical, the Industrials all look the same – after all, you are all wearing exactly the same clothes, you are the ones with the uniforms! But when I was working in the production line to do research for my Bachelor dissertation, and the workers didn't know that I was a former Clerical, they told me that they call the Clericals “clone warriors”. I was completely confuse, so I asked why and the answer was: "Because they all look the same; briefcase, tie and suit. And if one is shot down, the next one replaces him”.

Haha. Yeah, we also call them the “Schlipstraeger”\(^\text{15}\). Well, there is a culture developing. There are so many people, it's like a city. One also says, "Oh look, he is wearing a tie, he made it". Or an Industrial gets a job on a project in a foreign country, and when he comes back, he is a Clerical. And all the "ATler"\(^\text{16}\), they are all Clerical. You can't become an AT as an Industrial. For the Clericals, they have more open-ended opportunities towards the top. In order to step up, you need to wear a suit.

Hhm. Thanks ever so much for that. Could you briefly summarise for me when you worked for company and where exactly?

\(^{15}\) Literally translated: tie-wearer; derogative expression for someone who has to wear a suit for the job.

\(^{16}\) AT: abbreviation for ‘ausser-tariflich’; "out of tariff" meaning those who earn so much that they are off the scale which has been negotiated by the trade union.
I started my apprenticeship in 1998, and finished in February 2002. Then I worked in sector 5 for half a year, in body work. After that I had to do my civil service, and when I came back at the beginning of 2003, I was stationed in the cellar, rear portal. For me as electrician that was better, because there were a lot of robots that we worked with. Then I did the additional training, and then, before I left completely, I spent three months in the radiator department, which is in an extra hall, off the main hall.

But the split is the same everywhere. You know where it mingle a little bit, in the general assembly. Because on the way there, everyone is going together. But well, actually, once they sit down, you have the same again. Industrials here, Clericals there. It is always going to be this way.
### Appendix 5: Table of Complementary Services of the Fun Trust & the Play Trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Fun Trust</th>
<th>The Play Trust</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respite care at home</td>
<td>Practical support in the home (including household duties)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific nursing care, administration of medication and medical procedures such as suctioning and tube feeding</td>
<td>Transport and accompany to hospital and other appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal care at home</td>
<td>Hospital support (comprising of emotional and practical support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play and stimulation</td>
<td>Sibling support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereavement support up to 5 years after death</td>
<td>Bereavement support for several years after death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional support for parents and siblings</td>
<td>Emotional support for parents and siblings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation of social events, such as family days and Christmas parties</td>
<td>Short breaks at local amenities (e.g. ice-skating, horse-riding)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Two examples of the SPM session for case study 2 with free associations

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Fluffy pencil case
- Work
- Busy
- Chaotic
- Studies
- Care quality commission
- Regularities
- Window outside
- Empty
- Busy
- Hectic
- Technology
- Clutter
- Pressure
- Tea mugs
- Complicated work
- No chair
- Notes, detailed notes
- Communication
- Sustenance
- Multi-tasking
- Multiple inputs
- Confused
- Confined
- Help!
- Busy
- Administration
- Face to face
- Day light
- I want to go home
- Lack of space
- Miss-match
- Deserted
- Information overload
- Trapped
- Colourful personal items
- Sharing
- Eating on the run
- Ownership
- Day light
- Detail
- Mind bubbling
- Compliance
- Deadlines
- Captive
• Play room
• Music
• Musical instruments
• Fun
• Attention
• Rolling
• Laughter
• Happy
• Safe
• Participation
• Busy
• Protected
• Comfort
• Sensory
• Busy
• Togetherness
• Colour
• Patience
• Padded
• Achievement
• Time
• Chilled out
• Special
• Space
• Stressed
• Balls
• Special
• Bonding
• Bright
• Inclusive
• Special toys
• Shoe-less
• Communication
• Relaxed
• Resource
• Choice
• Fun at home
• Homely
• Comfortable
• Joy
• Vulnerable
• Trust
• Opportunity
• Sharing
• Inclusive
• Communication
• Family
• Curtains
• Children playing
• Comfortable
• Fun
• Safe
• Happy
• Active
• Stimulated
• Hands-on
• Value
• Expensive
• Commitment
• Worth every penny
• Opportunity
• Participation
• Priceless
• proud
• Inside
• Investment
• Multi-purpose
• Rewarding
• Achievement
• Responsive
Appendix 7: Intercessions for Christian Unity

INTERCESSIONS FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

R/S May we all be one.

18th 1) 'Father may they be one in us, as you are in me, and I am in you'. Let us pray that we may be truly one in Jesus through the uniting love we have through him, asking Him to send His Holy Spirit on all the members of the Arundel churches. We pray as brothers and sisters in our longing for unity.........

19th 2) 'May they be so completely one, that the world will realise that it was you who sent me' Let us pray in repentance for the times in our past history when we have been the cause of scandal to the world, and guilty of causing pain, torture and even death to each other. We ask the Lord to heal our wounds, and forgive any prejudice, bigotry or pre-conceived ideas that block the movement of His Holy Spirit. We pray in our sorrow. .............R/s

20th 3) 'I pray not only for these but for those also who through their words will believe in Me' Let us pray for all those of the great monotheistic religions, remembering our Jewish and Moslem brothers and sisters. May they come to know and accept the love of God in His Son Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, and live in peace and harmony. We pray in hope asking for peace and acceptance............R/s.

4) And there are other sheep that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well.

21st They too will listen to my voice Let us pray for all who seek the truth, remembering those who seek for enlightenment through the religions of the East. May the Spirit of truth guide them in their quest and bring them to Jesus the Light of the World. May we too acknowledge the goodness that lies in the Eastern Religions. We pray asking for light in our darkness. R/s

22nd 5) 'I tell you solemnly, anything you ask for from the Father, He will grant in my name.' Let us pray in thanksgiving for all those who have prayed and worked for the unity of Christians in the past, and for all those who continue this work today in faith and love. We pray, In Faith and Trust knowing that God keeps His promises........R/s

23rd 6) 'There is one body and one spirit as there is one hope held out to you by your call' Father look with love on your people and pour on them the gifts of your Spirit. May they grow in the love of the truth as study and work together for perfect unity among Christians. We pray especially for those involved in the work of ARCIC.....R/S

24th 7) 'We can know that we are living in Him and He is living in us because He lets us share His Spirit' Lord, fill us with the love your Spirit gives, and help us to bring all your people together in the unity of Faith and the fellowship of Peace. ...R/s

25th ALL INTERCESSIONS INSTEAD OF BREVIARY

Let us pray together the prayer that unites all Christians; the prayer that Jesus Himself taught us. Our Father.
Appendix 8: Two examples of SPM session 1 for case study 3

- Behind the scenes
- The organic nature of life, nothing is wasted
- Cabbage leave
- Light coming from all angles
- Reflections
- Our Lady, the stature
- Our Lord working with us
- We would never see the choir form this angle, would we?
- Lots of life in little space
- We need to be muldged down
- Life under death
- A breviary
- Two different settings, but each has its beauty and purpose
- Me and you together
- Finding God in more things
- Emptiness
- Nothing in our lives is horrible; it can all be composted to become beautiful
- To bring life
- The Lord works in our silence
- Good from rubbish
- Nothing is wasted
- I can just about smell it
- Are we wasting our lives?
- The chapel looks empty, static, but once we are in it, its heaving
- A ‘silence-organ’
- The compost heave is full of life
- God brings good from evil
- Decomposing to new life
- Transformation is 95% decay
- The lack of music without Sister Fidelis
- Let go of who you are
- Resurrection
- Death
- The work of the veg-team
- Community
- Everything has meaning
- Working
- The cabbage leave says: “is this why you created me?”
- Waiting to be filled by the sisters
• Many chickens
• Golden
• Morangs
• What are they?
• Egg yokes
• Oh I thought it was a kind of facial disease
• Every yoke is unique
• Synergetic
• Miracle of creation
• They symbolise life
• Separate, yet together
• And one of them is broken
• Yet useful
• No two are exactly the same
• Slightly different shapes
• Just like us
• That’s cos they are squashed together
• Might become a delicious pudding
• A willingness to be used

• The community on the outside, and the Holy Trinity in the middle
• Cosy
• Unity
• Keeps you going
• Touchy
• Hens in the garden
• The hands who cracked the egg
• Faith
• Marzipan
• Confined space
• I’d like more