Rooting Futures in Pasts

Women's Accounts of Violence in Multiple Generations of their Families and the Tensions and Symmetry with the Hypothesis of Intergenerational Transmission

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Abstract

Hitherto, the empirical evidence-base has been unable to consistently and conclusively build a persuasive case for the intergenerational transmission (IGT) of family violence. Nonetheless, the hypothesis and associated metaphors, 'cycles of violence' and 'violence begets violence', are pervasive in academic, policy, and popular discourses, and inform responses to violence including psycho-educational programmes and refuge provisions.

In accordance with Social Learning Theory (e.g. Bandura, 1977; 1985), as the leading explanation of 'transmission', research in the field orientates much of its attention toward the family as *'a major socializing institution'* (Black et al, 2010, p.1034). Using methods that facilitate consideration of social ecologies, this present study examines how a cohort of female participants (n=9) construct their accounts of violence within multiple (3-5) generations of their families. Adopting a pluralist qualitative design, alongside in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=15), Genograms (McGoldrick et al, 2008) facilitate an orientation of the family, while Ecomaps (Bronfenbrenner 1979a; 2005) enable a view of systems of influence within and beyond the family.

Discourse Analysis (Alldred & Burman, 2005) demonstrates the tensions and symmetries between accounts of violence in multiple generations and the hypothesis of IGT, and details how the hypothesis is reproduced, reformed, and resisted by participants. Analysis shows how drawing on IGT enlists victims of violence into pathologized self-talk, into claims of complicity, and into enculturation discourses which locate them in passive and docile ways. Conversely, it illuminates how participants' accounts challenge IGT, trouble associated assumptions, and demand a reconceptualisation of violence in multiple generations. Importantly, analysis illustrates the socially constructed nature of IGT; the role individual, family, community, and socio-cultural factors play in intergenerational (dis)continuities. This study demonstrates the need to consider precipitating social influences in their fullest sense and to move away from family-centric IGT frameworks in conceptualising, researching and responding to violence in multiple generations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Intergenerational transmission (IGT) is the hypothesis most widely used to explain the recurrence of violence in families (Black et al, 2010; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Dostal, 1997; Widom, 1989a). At core, IGT is a developmental hypothesis that speaks of one of a myriad of detrimental outcomes proposed to result from early exposure to violence and abuse (Insetta et al, 2015; Widom, 1989a). The impact of childhood exposure has been widely studied and children who grow up in contexts of family violence are reported to be at increased risk of mental health difficulties and psychological sequelae (Bogat et al, 2006; Farmer & Callan, 2012; Jirapramukpitak et al, 2011; Kaufman, 2011; Mabanglo, 2002; Springer et al, 2007; Zerk, 2009), emotional problems (Katz et al, 2007), social difficulties (Strassberg et al, 1992; Suzuki et al, 2008; Wolfe et al, 1985), and behavioural problems (Fantuzzo, 1991; Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1997; Jaffe et al, 1986; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Levendosky et al, 2006; Mathias et al, 1995; Rijlaarsdam, 2014; Schechter, 2011). In addition, children are purported to be at elevated risk of educational difficulties (Busch & Lieberman, 2010; Carrell, & Hoekstra, 2010) with poorer outcomes than their peers (Mathias et al, 1995). They are also reported to be at risk of homelessness and housing issues (Clarke & Wydall, 2015; Tutty et al, 2014), health problems (Bair-Merritt et al, 2006; Insetta et al, 2015), involvement in criminal activity (Besemer, 2012; Cebulla & Tomaszewski, 2009; Maxfield & Widom, 1996), and bullying and/or being bullied (Baldry, 2003). In terms of IGT, studies have reported heightened risk of perpetrating violence in adolescence/adulthood (Farmer & Callan, 2012; Langhinrichsen-Rohling et al, 2004; Pears & Capaldi, 2001; Rivera & Fincham, 2015) and vulnerability to further victimization experiences (Bellis et al, 2012; Casey, 2012a; Finkelhor et al, 2007; 2009; Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2001; Renner & Slack, 2006; WHO, 2007)**.** Childhood exposure to violence is purported to have a detrimental impact on development, and IGT is one of myriad proposed long-term outcomes.

Ideas of IGT of violence are embedded in the public psyche, steeped in public consciousness and, as Nader (1998) suggests, *'[t]he belief that the actions or experiences of one family member are transmitted intergenerationally predates written history and is multicultural'* (p.571).

Understandings about transmission are present in folklore through proverbs such as '*The apple doesn't fall far from the tree'*, and evident in the Bible in which punishment for the sins of the 'fathers' are threatened to befall subsequent generations, 'on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations' (Exodus 34:6-34:7, Krupp, 1998, p.141). In the academy, IGT of violence started to gain traction in empirical and theoretical literature during the 1960s (Renner & Slack, 2006; Smith et al, 2011). Since this time, the empirical, largely quantitative, evidence-base has not been able to consistently and conclusively find support for IGT, it nonetheless extends its theoretical support to the hypothesis as I will demonstrate in proceeding chapters.

Some three decades following its introduction into academia, Herzberger (1990) proposed that 'insensitive dissemination' of research findings has shifted the positioning of IGT from a theory to an assumption, 'distorting' how the effects of abuse in one generation are perceived by professionals and laypeople. Since Herzberger's paper, academic interest has not only continued to flourish but, in the UK, the hypothesis of IGT has become so embedded that it shapes policy and practice. A converging issue is that because IGT is so heavily bound in historic religio-socio-cultural understandings of family legacy, of heritage, of fate, that it seems intuitive (Abramovaite et al, 2015; Baker 2009; 2012; Engel, 2005; Kelly, 1994). It is so entrenched within everyday vernacular and mores it risks operating as an 'absent trace' (Macleod, 2003). This 'intuitive' conceptualisation, taken together with the inconclusive yet largely theoretically supportive evidence-base, translates as a risk that the hypothesis of IGT will continue to evade critique and interrogation (Herzberger, 1990) and continue to inform policy and practice untethered to the evidence.

This present study provides a review of the academic literature and explores the meaning ascribed to the hypothesis of IGT by people affected by violence in the family. In particular, it examines how a cohort of women affected by violence in multiple generations of their families conceive and make sense of the occurrence of violence in their families. A discourse analysis considers how the women construct their accounts of violence in relation to the hypothesis of IGT, including the ways dominant theories, conceptualisations and assumptions of the hypothesis are taken up, employed and resisted by the women in their interview accounts. This study makes an important contribution to the evidence-base in five key ways. Firstly, it makes a necessary qualitative addition to the evidence-base, which is currently vastly dominated by quantitative research. Secondly, IGT of

family violence research typically focuses on the family system, but to ensure families are located and studied in context and to broaden understanding of the interplay of the private-public in intergenerational (dis)continuities of violence, this present study enables a consideration of the role that broader ecological factors play in (dis)continuities. Thirdly, the field has, generally speaking, been informed by positivist ontologies and realist epistemologies, but in order to facilitate critical debate around the hypothesis of IGT, this study is informed by a constructionist epistemology. Fourthly, novel in the field, this study uses discourse analysis to enable exploration of the language and discursive qualities that constitute and construct IGT of family violence within interview accounts. Finally, against a backdrop of largely quantitative research, the pluralist approach to methodology (through the inclusion of visual methods and interviews) is also novel in the field. Together, these five key aspects make this study highly novel in the field of IGT of family violence research.

1.1. Research Aims and Questions

This study adopts a discursive approach to individual semi-structured interviews with women who have experienced violence in multiple generations of their families. Of particular interest are the ways accounts represent and construct: violence within multiple generations; familial and intimate relationships; IGT; and the influences family and systems beyond have on (dis)continuity. The project has five principal aims:

1) To critically analyse recent literature pertaining to IGT and violence in the family;

2) To document and analyse participants' accounts of violence within multiple generations;

3) To document and analyse participants' construction of visual representations of the relational dynamics of the micro-system at two time points;

4) To document participants' graphic representations of broader ecological systems, including mechanisms of support and extra-familial relationships during childhood;

5) To illustrate, via a discursive analysis, how participants' accounts of violence in multiple generations draw upon and are shaped by the hypothesis of IGT

In order to achieve these aims, three research questions have been identified which will guide the study:

1) In what ways do participants from families affected by violence in multiple generations make sense of this occurrence/these experiences?

2) How do participants talk about their family/intimate relationships?

3) How do participants' accounts represent and construct intergenerational transmission? In particular, how do they consider and articulate:

a) Intergenerational (dis)continuity?

b) The role of personal agency and resistance in intergenerational (dis)continuities?

c) The role of factors operating at different levels of the ecosystem (within and beyond the family) in intergenerational (dis)continuities?

1.2. Terminology and Definitions

A number of the terms relevant to this research are contested and, in this section, I will briefly consider the debates associated with some of these key terms ('generation', 'intergenerationality', 'IGT', 'family violence', 'victim', 'survivor' and 'perpetrator') and will outline the terms and definitions this study uses.

1.2.1. Defining 'Generation' and 'Intergenerationality'

There are a variety of different meanings ascribed to 'generation', relating, for instance, to life stage (e.g. 'pensioner'), to social membership of a birth cohort (e.g. 'Baby Boomer'), or to positions within the family (e.g. 'grandparent') (Mannion, 2016; Punch & Vanderbeck, 2017; Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). This present study does not specifically examine generational position, although it does pay greater attention to family positions than it does to birth cohorts or life stages, in so far as it uses visual methods which map family structures locating participants within their family composition. As I illustrate in the literature review, there is a particular 'generational order' drawn on in discourses of IGT which characterise transmission as a process that operates from parent to child. Alanen (2009) defines 'generational order' as 'a structured network of relations between

generational categories [e.g. 'child', 'parent'] that are positioned in and act within necessary interrelations with each other' (pp.161-162). Generational categories do not only demarcate positions, but they accompany corresponding levels of rank, power and agency (Alanen, 2009; Alanen & Mayall, 2001). Intergenerational transmission is commonly conceptualised as a top-down process from older to younger generations (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). In the case of IGT of violence/victimisation, parents are often located as either passive transmitters of violence/victimisation into the next generation or as retaining the power to enact discontinuities in their children's generation. In both of these locations, children are positioned as passive (and powerless) subjects of their parents' transmissions of violence/victimisation. However, this present study does not assume this interaction, and by enabling multi-directional and multi-level dynamics to be represented/voiced, this study acknowledges 'the more fluid and reciprocal nature of intergenerational negotiations and contestations both within and beyond families' (p.6).

Vanderbeck and Worth (2015) suggest that the different meanings given to the term 'generation' has consequently created confusion around the concept of 'intergenerationality', a concept which they indicate has often accompanied a focus on the site of the family, but which 'potentially invokes a wide range of different kinds of relationships, interactions and encounters both within and beyond families' (p2). In this thesis, 'intergenerationality' is used broadly; it may encompass intergenerational transmission, but it is used more expansively than IGT alone, and speaks of relational influences (within and beyond the family) and their outcomes e.g. on (dis)continuity of violence/victimisation. This broad framing allows dynamics/influence/power flowing top-down, bottom-up, laterally, as well as interiorly and exteriorly of the family to be represented.

Most pertinently, in this thesis, I am interested in the ways (dis)continuity of violence/victimisation between members in one generation and the next (e.g. parent-child) are framed discursively by participants. Hence, there is an opportunity for participants to align with and/or to challenge this established conceptualisation of the generational order of IGT of violence/victimisation. This study then avoids perpetuating the image of a 'generational order', naturalising and taking for granted a particular set of power relations between family members; rather, it understands such an 'order' and its normalisation to be socially constructed and reproduced (Punch & Vanderbeck, 2017).

The generational orderings in families affected by domestic violence and abuse may deviate from social norms, for instance, children may take on (of their own will or by request) caring roles for their siblings and/or for their victimised parents, and they may be active and agentic in seeking help, in garnering peer and adult support, and they may even be instrumental in ending violence within the family through familial and extrafamilial channels (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Thus, power relations established in social norms of generational orderings where adults are located as 'doing for' children may be, in some cases and to a degree, reversed in families affected by violence. Therefore, in this present study, participants can (in retrospect) represent their childhood selves (and other children in the family) as actively 'involved in the daily 'construction' of their own and other people's everyday relationships and life trajectories' (Alanen, 2009, p.161), not just passively 'done to' by the adults in their families.

1.2.2. Defining 'Intergenerational Transmission' (IGT) of Violence

IGT of violence has been defined in a variety of ways although in its classic configuration of victim-to-perpetrator, it is often synonymised with the expression 'violence begets violence':

> *The phrases "violence begets violence" or the "transgenerational transmission of violence" center on the relationship between early childhood victimization and future adult offending. (Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008, p.331)*

> *The intergenerational transmission of violence proposition, simply stated, is that children who have been physically abused tend to grow up to be abusive adults.* (Hampton et al, 1993, p.15)

'Violence begets violence' emphasises role-reversal and the mirroring of experience in subsequent behaviour (i.e. the abused becoming the abuser) and, as such, assumes a process of modelling – i.e. social learning via exposure. However, this social learning account contrasts with genetic or biological explanations which would not necessarily require witnessing or exposure to violence per se to see its expression in another generation (although epigenetic explanations might do) (discussed further in Chapter 3). Hence definitions of 'violence begets violence' would exclude genetic and biological explanations. IGT is also associated with the metaphor 'cycles of violence', which implies a recursive pattern of continuity.

Some authors encompass the outcome of perpetration *and* victimisation in their definitions of IGT, such as Westmarland and Kelly (2013) who describe the 'cycle of abuse theory' as '*children who live with domestic abuse [being] more likely to be abusive/abused in their own future relationships*' (p.1107). There is evidence which supports this broader conceptualisation beyond the mere mirroring and recreation of abuse. A host of scholars have found greater associations between childhood exposure and later re-victimisation than for later perpetration (e.g. Cochran et al, 2011; Ehrensaft et al, 2003; Fehringer & Hindin, 2009; Genç et al, 2018; Madruga et al, 2017). This provides support for the inclusion of continuity of victimisation (i.e. the abused becoming re-abused) alongside role reversal (the abused becoming the abuser) in conceptualising IGT. This present study adopts this inclusive conception, enabling consideration of both perpetration *and/or* re-victimisation as possible outcomes of exposure.

The phrase 'intergenerational transmission' of violence implies violence in one generation is 'transmitted' from the prior generation, and therefore that violence in each of the generations is intimately connected. To avoid perpetuating this assumption of a causal link, where possible, I make a distinction between 'IGT of violence' and 'violence in multiple generations'. While 'IGT of violence' sets up an association between violence in each generation, 'violence in multiple generations' more descriptively refers to the 'occurrence' of violence, and refrains from making such causal inferences. Moreover, I use 'continuity' rather than IGT, to avoid the presumption of a familial cause to the occurrence of violence.

1.2.3. Conceptualising Violence

I initially set out to explore the IGT of domestic violence (DV). However, it quickly became apparent early on during the recruitment and interview phases of the study that the violence and abuse participants described was broader than DV and did not fall within the legal definition used in England (the location for this study). Historically, 'DV' had been used to refer to male violence against women within intimate adult-dyadic relationships (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). Recent revision to the English definition of DV resulted in the inclusion of young people (aged 16 or over), but still excludes children below 16 years:

> *Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited*

to the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional [...] (Home Office, 2013, p.2).

While the effects of DV on the whole family is increasingly being recognised (Anderson & Danis, 2006; Anderson et al, 2011; Buckley et al, 2006; Callaghan & Alexander, 2015; Collis, 2013; Edleson, 1999; Holt et al, 2008; McGee, 2000; Mullender et al, 2003; Swanston et al, 2014; Vetere & Cooper, 2001), in its emphasis on adult dyadic relationships, the current legal definition in England fails to do this. Definitions of 'intimate partner violence' (IPV) similarly centre on dyadic relationships, for example violence by a '*spouse, boyfriend/girlfriend, dating partner, or ongoing sexual partner'* (Breiding, 2015, p.11). The portrayal of DV/IPV as being contained by and operating solely within the confines of the adult dyad, presents an artificial construction of familial relationships (Thomson, 2014), concealing 'witnesses', the co-occurrence of DV and child maltreatment (Casey, 2012a; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Geiger et al, 2015; Haselschwerdt et al, 2018; Herrenkohl et al., 2008; Jirapramukpitak et al, 2011; McGee et al, 1997; Murrell et al, 2007), and altogether obscuring potential child-parent (Holt, 2016; Laporte et al, 2011) and sibling abuse. Furthermore, a focus on the dyadic relationship is inconsistent with the purported intergenerational mechanisms of transmission that the hypothesis of IGT assumes.

The association of 'DV' with adult relationships, specifically intimate dyadic relationships, did not fully represent the women's accounts of the types of relationships that violence took place within because they also talked of sibling abuse, child-parent abuse, and child abuse in addition to intimate partner violence. In an attempt to shift away from the historic issues that cloud the term 'domestic violence', and to ensure that terminology appropriately recognises the '*many possible relational directions'* (Asen & Fonagy, 2017, p.7) of violence and abuse in participants' families, in this thesis I use the term 'family violence'. My use of 'family violence' is used as a shorthand for 'violence that occurs within the family', but it should be acknowledged that much like 'domestic violence', there are inherent conceptual issues and historic associations attached to this phrase. Historically the concept of 'family violence' has courted controversy, with a lack of consensus extending from its label and definition through to the way it is researched and intervened in (Loseke et al, 2005). An emphasis on the family, as is commonly associated with a sociological ('family violence') perspective, risks individualised and micro-level analyses of violence (Stark, 2007). There is a danger this promotes a decontextualized view of the family, isolated from its broader ecological and sociocultural context, situating violence as an inherent 'family' problem, of the family's making, to be resolved by the family, and immune to outside intervention (Asen & Fonagy, 2017; Loseke et al, 2005; Rasool, 2016). An area of contention revolves around the catch-

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all conceptualisation of 'family violence' which, although it enables a view of a broad range of phenomena, risks generating *'a picture which is not sharply focused'* (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997, p.151). Thus, it is criticised for obscuring important intricacies such as the direction of violence as well as possible markers symptomatic of social issues, like gender. For this reason, a family violence perspective has received criticism for being gender-blind (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997), and in its portrayal of violence as a gender-neutral phenomenon, it has been contrasted with the feminist endeavour of identifying and illuminating the systems of oppression manifest in male violence against women and also the ways intersecting social structures, e.g. of gender, race and class, implicitly contribute to engendering a society in which violence is facilitated and enabled to flourish (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997; Lawson, 2012; Rasool, 2016). The feminist literature has consistently linked domestic abuse with gender attitudes operating and generated within broader social and cultural spheres (Johnson, 2005; Kelly & Radford, Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007). More specifically, within this body of literature, the disproportionate level of male violence towards women and girls is theorised as emerging from a constellation of aspects that enable differentials in status between men and women to persist (Lombard, 2013; McFeely et al, 2013). Feminist perspectives consider violence to be a marker of gender inequalities, of a patriarchal society and, specifically, of the domination of men and their oppression of women that is both facilitated and accepted in systematic ways within society (Ali & Naylor, 2013; Heise, 1998; Lawson, 2012).

In spite of the oppositions that have been drawn between the major approaches, such as family violence and feminist perspectives, scholars have also identified commonalities. For example, Lawson (2012) asserts that both are united in their rejection of the theory proposed by a psychological perspective, that the perpetration of violence and abuse are a symptom of individual psychopathology. Moreover, various scholars have shown that the theoretical differences are not insurmountable and can be drawn together and integrated through ecological frameworks (Hagemann-White et al, 2010; Heise, 1998; Lawson, 2012; Whitaker et al, 2009; Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019). In this way, an ecological framework can support a gendered examination, as Heise (1998) explains, by recognising the *'centrality and importance of macrolevel factors like male domination, but emphasiz[ing] the interrelationship of patriarchal beliefs and values with other factors elsewhere in the framework'* (p.277). This present research does not seek to provide an explanation of violence be it a family violence or feminist one. Rather what it does is examine discourse related to violence within multiple generations of the family through an integrative

ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a). Feminist works tend to concentrate on macro-level factors in explaining violence against women (Heise, 1998; Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019), and maintain a focus on 'gender as the primary lens of analysis' (Lawson, 2012, p.588). Family violence perspectives, on the other hand, tend to emphasise the microsystem, focusing on the family as the 'primary lens of analysis' (Stark, 2007). However, in examining factors operating at three-levels of participants' social ecologies, this present study takes a broader view than micro-only or macro-only analysis and, accordingly, avoids a singular focus on any one level (such as the family), or any one factor (such as gender) which, as some scholars have indicated, could be insufficient (Ali & Naylor, 2013; Heise, 1998; Whitaker et al, 2009). I adopt an ecological perspective within this present study to consider the interplay of personal, familial, community, and sociocultural systems (Ali & Naylor, 2013; Heise, 1998; Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019). More specifically, I consider the ways discourses involving IGT and family violence are constructed, and the ways ecological systems beyond the family might influence or mediate intergenerational continuity or discontinuity of violence and victimisation within the family system. Thus, my use of 'family violence' is shorthand for 'violence that occurs within the family', but is used with recognition to families' broader contexts, and the ways constructions of IGT operating beyond the family may influence the family, and personal accounts of violence within multiple generations. Adopting an ecological perspective enables examination of multi-level social influences on the (dis)continuity of violence and, importantly, it facilitates acknowledgment to the ways gender operates within discourses of IGT and the women's accounts of violence in multiple generations.

1.2.4. Aggregated Versus Disaggregated Conceptualisations of Violence

Violence research often focuses on disaggregated conceptualisations of violence and abuse, which sees violence broken down into its various discrete typualogies (i.e. physical, psychological, financial and sexual violence and abuse, and neglect). This in spite of evidence to suggest multiple forms of violence and abuse frequently co-occur (Askeland et al, 2011; Finkelhor et al, 2007; Herzberger, 1990; McGee et al, 1997; Newcomb & Locke, 2001; Renner & Slack, 2006; Stith et al, 2000; Thornberry & Henry, 2013; Tutty, 2008; Valdez et al, 2013)**.** The 'isolation' of individual subtypes of violence might make a cleaner research prospect, circumventing the messiness and complexities inherent within this phenomenon. However, Wolfe et al (2003) suggest that '*investigations of any single type of violence face considerable challenges'* (p.172), 'challenges' generated because 'isolation' creates an artificial compartmentalisation of the victimization and perpetration of violence. Similarly, Gelles (1997) suggests '*concentrating on just one form of violence or abuse may obscure the entire picture and hinder a more complete understanding of the causes and*

consequences of abuse' (p.2). The benefit of examining 'family violence' in this present study is that it engenders an aggregated conceptualisation of violence, enables consideration of the co-occurrence and overlap of different forms of violence, and in doing so, avoids the issues associated with the compartmentalisation of violence. This also prevents the need for the study to be prescriptive around what constitutes continuities, and instead it enables the incorporation into analysis of examples from participants' interview accounts of 'homotypic continuity' (i.e. the same violence types between generations), 'heterotypic continuity' (i.e. the vulnerability for different violence types experienced between generations) (Madigan et al, 2019), and discontinuity. As I note later in the methods chapter (Chapter 5), while the study does not disaggregate violence or impose a focus on particular typologies, visual methods allow participants to depict violence and abuse in aggregated and/or disaggregated ways.

In a similar vein to the typologies of violence, distinctions are often made within the literature between indirect (i.e. vicarious observation or witnessing) and direct violence and abuse (Eriksson & Mozerolle, 2015; Kitzmann et al, 2003; Murrell et al, 2007; Saunders, 2003; Wolfe et al, 2003), despite evidence to suggest that they often co-occur (Casey, 2012a; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Fowler et al, 2016; Stark & Flitcraft, 1983; Stith et al, 2000; Valdez et al, 2013) and the effects are comparable (Jirapramukpitak et al, 2011; Stith et al, 2000; Smith-Marek et al, 2015). In this study, distinctions are not imposed between indirect and direct violence and abuse, they are not conceptualised differently but are instead positioned as tantamount; considering indirect violence to be inherently and, therefore, directly violent to those who see or hear it - those who *experience it* (Øverlien & Hydén, 2009). As other authors have advocated (e.g. Herrenkhol et al, 2008), I intentionally use a broad conceptualisation of 'family violence' which enables the inclusion of *any* indirect (i.e. vicarious observation or witnessing) or direct violence, maltreatment, abuse, or coercion within *any* family relationship or intimate partnership.

1.2.5. Victim-Perpetrator Dichotomies and Co-Existing Identities

As has been noted and discussed by numerous authors, there are problems associated with the positioning of those who have experienced violence as 'victims' (Anderson & Gold, 1994; Best, 1997; Komska, 2015; Leisenring, 2006). In an attempt to move away from 'victim' discourses which represent individuals as 'helpless' and 'passive', 'survivor' is often used as an alternative (Leisenring, 2006). This too has received criticism, in part because it risks the location of responsibility and blame with the individual on the receiving end of violence, and gives the illusion,

after the effect, that power was retained in a dynamic of violence, a dynamic typically constitutive of powerlessness (Leisenring, 2006). 'Survivor' might imply that the individual survived through their own personal resources (Komska, 2015). When offset against 'victim', the construction of 'survivor' becomes infinitely more problematic, with the implication that survivors are bestowed with the capacity for resilience and the sheer determination necessary to survive violence – 'survivors' are copers, but victims are not. This reproduces the notion of resilience as an inherent trait which one either does or does not possess. Furthermore, while 'survivor' marks an identity of resilience and empowerment, it remains an identity, which, in the same way as 'victim', is borne out of, and maintains a deep connection to the experience of victimisation.

Victim and perpetrator constructions are frequently dichotomised (Featherstone and Trinder, 1997), and it is common to see them positioned in polarised ways in academic, practice and popular discourses of violence. However, it is important to acknowledge these identities can cross-over or co-exist and supposed 'victims' and 'perpetrators' may occupy dual identities (Forke et al, 2018). Hence the binary constructions may not be particularly helpful when trying to understand the meaning of power and powerlessness in people's lives, and may obscure '*the relational dimension of the phenomenon*' of violence (Nunes et al, 2008, p.136.). Where I use these terms, I do so in the knowledge that 'victim', 'survivor', and 'perpetrator' may represent a transitory state, not only a static identity.

1.3. Thesis Structure

This thesis comprises ten further chapters. The exegesis below provides a guide, giving a brief description of each of the proceeding chapters and outlining how they contribute to the thesis as a whole.

Chapters 2-4 - Literature Review – presents a critical analysis of the recent IGT of violence literature, illustrating the most prominent features of the evidence-base, and providing the rationale for this present study. The review is formed of three chapters:

Chapter 2 – Support for and Representation of IGT - details the literature search and review strategy, discusses the mixed empirical support for IGT, and the discursive representation of the hypothesis within the literature.

Chapter 3 – Risk of Transmission and Proposed Mechanisms – examines the three key mechanisms of transmission to have been proposed, and takes a discursive look at the literature, considering how, in some cases, it is underpinned by notions of heredity and disease.

Chapter 4 – Study Designs and Methodologies – outlines the main methodological issues of the IGT of family violence evidence-base including issues of definition and measurement, and study design.

Chapter 5 – Methodologies – revisits the aims of the research, considers the ontology and epistemology underpinning of the work, outlines study design, and provides justification for the use of visual methods and the format of interviews. In addition, Chapter 5 explains the rationale for selecting discourse analysis to analyse interview accounts, examines the ethical considerations, the recruitment strategy, and introduces the cohort of women who participated in the research.

Chapter 6 – Reflexivity - is a reflexive account which outlines my position in relation to the subject at hand. As well as positionality, I illustrate the risk of reproducing pathologizing transmission narratives through reflexive writing and, proposing a less personal and more political form of reflexive writing, I provide my own reflexivity of conducting this present research which draws on contextualised interpretations of my own experiences, processes, and emotions.

Chapters 7-10 – Analysis - this thesis encompasses four analysis chapters, each representing a key discourse identified in the women's accounts ('*Blind Spots*'; '*The Inevitable, The Avertible*'; '*The Corrupted Self*'; and '*Continuities of Exposure*'). Each chapter (described below) explores participants' accounts of violence in multiple generations of their families considering, in

particular, the ways discursive constructions take up and resist, synchronise and contest with dominant discourses involving the hypothesis of IGT of violence, and also how accounts might be representative of/intersect with broader socio-cultural and institutional discourses.

Chapter 7 – Blind Spots – represents the women's construction of IGT as an unconscious process of enculturation, the consequence of being imbued into the culture of violent families and, importantly, the assumption that inurement to violence is an outcome for members. *Blind Spots* aligns with key features of social learning theory – the assumption that members come to view violence as 'normal', that they become desensitised, and that through this normalisation, 'tolerance' for violence is developed. However, this chapter also illustrates how in subtle but important ways the women challenged these core assumptions of the hypothesis of IGT.

Chapter 8 – The Inevitable, The Avertible – this chapter represents polarities of a discourse which is located on one spectrum. Mirroring the contradictions and binaries of fate and free will, discontinuity of IGT was conceptualised in contradictory ways, as both possible and impossible. Shifting between the inevitability of IGT and possibilities for averting it, the women's accounts speak of transmissions, of the apparent 'replication' of 'family scripts' in their own families, and of their attempts to 'correct' these scripts by re-making family and making conscious choices to 'do' family differently in an effort to halt transmission.

Chapter 9 – The Corrupted Self – represents a discourse of pathology running through the interviews. Reflective of the medicalised lens with which IGT is often viewed, *The Corrupted Self* illustrates the women's location of IGT as a construct of the pathologised self; an outcome of damage, of complicity, and of addiction to the dysfunctional dynamics, behaviours, and the general milieu of violence. In this way, through *The Corrupted Self* discourse, women aligned with victim-blaming narratives in which they assumed responsibility for their own victimisation. The implications of victim-blaming narratives for the perpetuation of IGT are considered, with a particular focus on the risk of the hypothesis of IGT for promoting tolerance and an expectation of subsequent victimisation.

Chapter 10 – Continuities of Exposure – marks an antithetic discourse to *The Corrupted Self*; while the latter saw the women *assume* responsibility for continuity, the former *removed* responsibility and re-located it in systems beyond the family. *Continuities of Exposure* represents women's externalisation of IGT as an issue not of the self, not of the family, but borne in community and socio-cultural level factors that facilitate its occurrence. In this way, it turns our attention away from the family and towards the systems beyond to explain IGT and its contributing factors.

Chapter 11 – Discussion - provides an overarching analysis of the study with consideration to key discourses, to the contribution the study makes to the field, to policy and practice implications, directions for future research, and its limitations.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Part 1

Support for and Representation of IGT

Introduction

The next three chapters provide a review of the IGT of family violence and related literature in the form of a thematic critique. The review presents the most prominent features of the evidence-base, explores findings from IGT research, and considers how the hypothesis is represented and constructed in theoretical, empirical and policy literature. This current chapter details the search strategy and reviews the literature, outlining three areas: the level of empirical support for IGT; the representation of IGT in the literature; and how responses to violence are shaped by IGT.

2.1. Database Search Strategy

In the first year of this study, in order to gain familiarity with the body of IGT of family violence literature, I conducted a scoping search and review using Google and Google Scholar. To enable me to ascertain key debates and contributing authors, at this time, I purposely did not restrict searches by date, type, or methodology. These searches were updated in January 2019 when I conducted a more structured and systematic database search (e.g. Baumeister & Leary, 1997; Cronin et al, 2007; Rozas & Klein, 2010) (search strategy detailed below). This review integrates knowledge developed in my scoping review, subsequent systematic search, any relevant works identified through snowballing, and allows a consideration of different types of literature (such as books and policy reports), as well as earlier seminal works that have informed more recent literature. Much seminal work in the field was published in the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. Gelles & Straus, 1988; Kalmuss, 1984; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Widom, 1989a,b,c), hence there was a strong rationale for enabling the inclusion of this earlier work and, furthermore, it provided some insight into evolution of IGT research (Cronin et al, 2007).

During more structured searches, the following index terms were inputted into databases in systematic Boolean string combinations using "AND" "OR" (Booth et al., 2016): *'Intergenerational transmission', 'transgenerational transmission', 'intergenerational continuity', 'intergenerational discontinuity', 'cross-generational', 'cycle', 'pattern', 'legacy', 'heritability', 'Family-of-origin', 'childhood', 'adulthood', 'later life', 'violence', 'abuse', 'exposure'.* I searched a total of five academic databases (in addition to Google and Google Scholar). They specialised in psychology and counselling, nursing and health professions, social sciences and social work, and included Medline, PsychNET, Social Care Online, Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA), and Web of Science. I conducted 42 individual database searches, yielding a total of 24,314 references before limitations were imposed, and 2,840 afterwards, and of these I retained a total of 313 references. Limitations varied according to individual databases but where possible, in order to review the most recent literature and to ascertain the current state of knowledge in the field, I imposed a 15-year limitation on database searches ranging from 2004 to 2019. Where databases allowed, I specifically limited by month (January 2004 – January 2019). Other limitations included English language, peer reviewed and scholarly or government articles, and I also restricted the presence of my index terms to abstracts or, in the case of Web of Science, in the 'Topic' of articles (encompassing title, abstract, and author keywords). To ensure searches were as exhaustive as possible and appropriately representative of the body of literature involving IGT of family violence, I chose not to set strict inclusion/exclusion criteria relating to methodology, context or participants.

Articles were sifted firstly by title, secondly by abstract, and finally by full-text (Booth et al, 2016). Empirical and theoretical articles were included in the review if they directly related to the IGT of violence within the family. I maintained a search log (see Appendix 1), which captured searches and number of references obtained. Out of the 313 references obtained from database searches, a further two sifts were conducted, discarding references found to be less relevant in each sift. In the first, I divided articles by source type (primary, secondary, conceptual and clinical) (as per Cronin et al, 2007). After the first sift, 166 references were retained. In the second sift, I reviewed each reference again and discarded any not directly relevant to the intergenerational transmission of 'violence in the family', retaining 119 references (90 primary, 18 secondary, 9 conceptual/theoretical, 2 clinical case studies).

During searches, two areas of research present involved more generalised concepts of violence and abuse. These included 'Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)' and 'child maltreatment' (CM). Both of these research fields tap into intergenerationality, however, because they encompass numerous disadvantages and violence/abuse types, it was not always apparent whether articles met my inclusion criteria and focused on violence/maltreatment/abuse/coercion within the family. Where titles/abstracts clearly articulated that violence was familial/occurred within the family context, they were included in the literature review, but where this was not possible to determine, they were excluded. The final selection of articles was reviewed and thematised (Cronin et al, 2007), which involved reading each of the 119 articles and grouping them together based upon their major foci. At this stage I integrated references obtained during my scoping reviews and, as the review evolved, I also added in any snowballed literature identified through reading.

2.2. Thematic Critique of the Literature

As outlined in the Introduction (Chapter 1), the aims and research questions guiding this project are fundamentally concerned with representation and construction: of violence within multiple generations; of family and intimate relationships; of IGT; of conceptualisations of continuity and discontinuity; and of the possible influences within the family and beyond it on dis(continuities). The questions driving the literature review similarly focus on representation and construction; how is IGT conceptualised and constructed? How are affected persons/families represented within the literature? A major challenge I found in reviewing the evidence-base, was the heterogeneity across the empirical research which varies greatly in design, in violence exposure and outcomes investigated, and in populations studied. This heterogeneity is so vast that making comparisons across the literature has been likened, by a leading author in the field, to comparing 'apples and oranges' (Widom, 2017, p.194), an issue of the literature also noted by The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2007). This thematic critique is divided into three chapters, each representing a theme. In this first chapter, I illustrate the mixed empirical support for IGT, and consider the discursive representation of the IGT evidence-base.

2.2.1. IGT Contested

IGT of violence is a vast body of literature (Kim, 2012) and evidence from hypothesis testing shows mixed findings (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018; Nixon et al, 2017). In 'IGT Contested', I consider this lack of consensus and show that while the hypothesis largely receives empirical and theoretical

support, it also receives its challenges, with some researchers finding weak or no association between exposure to violence within the family and subsequent re-victimisation or perpetration.

Papers yielded from my systematic literature searches were predominantly examples of primary research (90 of 119), the vast majority of which were examples of quantitative research (79 of 90). Nearly all of those quantitative studies investigating the relationship between exposure to family violence and subsequent re-victimisation/perpetration found statistical significance in one form or another, with most observing weak-moderate relationships, a finding consistent with other authors' assessments of the literature (e.g. Thornberry et al, 2012). Rivera and Fincham (2015) found that *'[w]itnessing interpersonal violence perpetrated by either parent significantly related to offspring dating violence perpetration and victimization'* (p.895). Similarly, Pears and Capaldi (2001) found that '*parents who reported having been abused in childhood were significantly more likely to engage in abusive behaviors toward the next generation'* (p.1439). Exploring violence within the spousal relationship, Murshid and Murshid (2018) propose that '*marital violence perpetration is significantly associated with childhood exposure to marital violence, suggesting a cycle of violence that is maintained across generations'* (p.211). Black et al (2010) reported 'relatively moderate effects' for witnessing interparental violence in 'emerging adulthood' (18-27 years of age) and the perpetration of violence in subsequent dating relationships (p.1030). Finding an association of similar strength, in their systematic review, Capaldi et al (2012) identified a 'low to moderate significant association' between experiences of abuse and neglect in childhood and subsequent violence in intimate partnerships (p.247). In their meta-analytic review of the IGT of CM evidence, Madigan and colleagues (2019) identified a modest association, suggesting that transmission (occurrence) of CM from one generation to the next was 'more than twice as likely' where parents had experienced CM themselves (p.42). The authors found 'small to moderate' intergenerational associations for homotypic continuity (same type violence between generations) and heterotypic continuity (vulnerability to different type violence between generations) (p.40). Kim (2009) also found support for homotypic continuity, reporting that adults exposed to physical abuse in childhood were five times more likely to self-report engaging in physically abusive parenting themselves compared to those without histories of abuse, and those neglected as children were observed to be nearly three times more likely to self-report being neglectful with their own offspring. Vung and Krantz (2009) detected an association between exposure in childhood and re-victimisation in adulthood, and in their sample of Vietnamese women (N=730),

IPV in adult relationships was found to be three times the rate for those with childhood histories of exposure to violence compared to those without.

Examining the IGT of parental violence, Hellman and colleagues (2018) quantified exposure to violence by severity and observed that the greater the severity, the more likely respondents were to report using violence themselves. They found that 11.3% of the parents in their sample with non-violent upbringings perpetrated violence against their child(ren); 30.8% of parents with histories of minor violence in childhood had been violent towards their own child(ren); and 38.8% of the parents exposed to severe violence exerted violence against their child(ren). The authors concluded from these findings that experiencing parental violence was '*the most important risk marker for exerting parental violence*' (Hellman et al, 2018, p.282). However, they temper this by highlighting that only a minority of parents (1/3) in their sample exposed to violence in childhood enacted violence against their own offspring, whereas the majority (2/3) had not. Thornberry and Henry (2013) similarly caveated their significant findings which showed a moderate association between being victimised and subsequently perpetrating maltreatment, noting that there was no evidence of continuity in a large majority (77%) of those participants previously maltreated.

Others too have been conservative in interpreting their findings, stressing the low strength of relationships/effect sizes, or emphasising the low prevalence of IGT in their cohorts (e.g. Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Stark & Flitcraft, 1983; Suzuki et al, 2008; WHO, 2007). Renner and Slack (2006) provided some support for IGT, but they emphasised that '*[o]nly weak support was found for the transmission of violence hypothesis that maltreated children are more likely to grow up to maltreat their own children*' (p. 599). In a similar vein, a meta-analysis by Stith et al (2000) found small to medium effect sizes between experiencing family-of-origin abuse in childhood and subsequent involvement in a violent marriage. Tentative in their dissemination, they suggested that '*[a]lthough growing up in a violent home appears to have an effect on the likelihood that an individual will become involved in a violent marriage, it is not a strong effect*' (Stith et al, 2000, p. 648). Similarly, in their review, Kaufman and Zigler (1987) estimated that '*about one-third of the parents who have histories of abuse will subject their children to abuse*' (p.186). They observed that this estimation of prevalence was '*six times higher*' than in the general population, but in spite of these findings, the authors emphasised that '*most maltreated children do not become abusive parents*' and that '*[m]any mediating factors affect the likelihood of intergenerational abuse*' (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987,

p186). Likewise, Bartlett and Easterbrooks (2015) reported that approximately 77% of their sample of mothers with histories of abuse and neglect had not gone on to maltreat their own children.

While many authors reported weak or moderate associations as illustrated here, few have reported no statistical support for IGT of family violence. Widom is one such author whose longitudinal prospective study marks a seminal contribution to the field (Widom 1989a,c; 1993; 2017). Findings show 'strong support for the cycle of violence hypothesis' (Widom1989a, p.164) as physical violence and neglect victimisation in childhood were found to increase risk of subsequent arrest for violent criminal behaviour (robbery, burglary, assault and battery etc) by 38% compared to non-exposed matched peers (Widom, 1993; 2017). However, Widom found no empirical support for the victimisation and subsequent perpetration of same type violence, in this case, of child physical abuse and neglect within the family. Rather, the author observed that '*the abused and neglected and control groups had almost identical frequencies of official arrests for child abuse or neglect'* (Widom 1989c, p.363), suggesting that in this particular cohort, exposure was not necessarily the driving risk factor. Capaldi et al (2019) echo similar sentiments and suggest that there is little difference in the rates of perpetration in those who have and have not been exposed to violence during childhood.

Concerns have been raised by some authors about the small effect sizes and weak relationships identified by research in the field. Fergusson and colleagues (2006) maintain that claims of IGT rest upon relatively weak evidence, and Johnson and Ferraro (2000) reported being '*struck by the weakness of the relationship in the studies'* they reviewed (p.958). Various scholars have found the association between exposure and subsequent perpetration/victimisation can be explained by contextual factors. After accounting for ecological and background factors, with the exception of a maternal history of sexual abuse, Sidebotham and colleagues (2001) conclusively determined that a history of abuse was not a significant risk factor for IGT of CM. Similarly, Fergusson et al's (2006) longitudinal study investigated exposure to DV in childhood and later involvement in interpartner perpetration/victimisation/and violent crime. While they reported a weak relationship, they suggested that controlling for confounding variables reduced the effect size, and that the 'weak' relationship they observed could be '*largely or wholly explained by the psychosocial context within which these exposures occurred'* (pp.104-5). Both Sidebotham and Fergusson's findings provide justification for research which acknowledges families' relational, social and material contexts

when trying to develop an understanding of IGT. As will be discussed in the later methodology chapter (Chapter 5), this present study adopts an ecological perspective of IGT, enabling a view of participants' familial, community, and socio-cultural contexts, as well as consideration of the ways they feature in constructions of IGT and intergenerational (dis)continuity.

The IGT evidence base is overwhelmingly populated by quantitative research and, to a lesser degree, conceptual literature. My database searches revealed minimal qualitative studies. Out of 119 references retained from searches, of the 90 primary research articles only 11 were qualitative studies; five with direct relevance to this research and a further six touching upon IGT. This highlights a need for additional qualitative research, which would contribute more contextually sensitive insights into IGT and help to level the proportions of qualitative and quantitative studies in the field. There is heterogeneity in the IGT research, with a great variability in the studies conducted and the emergent findings, ranging widely in strength of support. Thus, hitherto, IGT of family violence has not been consistently empirically substantiated, and scholars are far from unanimous in their support for the phenomenon.

2.2.2. Representations of IGT: The Theoretical Made Substantive

Despite the inconsistent empirical evidence, it seems IGT receives much theoretical support, and is often represented as a taken-for-granted assumption or 'truth' in the literature. This curious issue has not gone unnoticed by others. Stith et al (2000) stated that *'[b]ecause the intergenerational transmission of family violence is supported in a number of empirical studies, it often is accepted as a given' (p.640),* while Thornberry et al (2012) suggested that *'[t]here is a common assumption, in both the popular and the scientific literatures, that child maltreatment begets child maltreatment'* (p.135). In addition, the evidence-base itself is often portrayed as unanimously and unequivocally supportive of IGT. Reporting of this kind does little to keep IGT within the questioning and critical domain of 'theory' and instead prematurely pushes it forth into the realm of 'reality', crystallising it as 'fact' (Pagelow, 1982). Within this section, I explore examples of the over-inflation of IGT evidence within academic and policy literature and consider the possible implications.

As discussed in the prior section, tests of the hypothesis of IGT of family violence are yet to reach consensus and as such have not consistently been able to evidence support for IGT. This does not

necessarily negate it as a phenomenon; it simply means the field is yet to conclusively capture it empirically and, as I discuss in a later chapter, to do this in ways which are methodologically sound. In spite of the inconclusive findings, it is exceptionally common to see the state of knowledge reported on as if it were entirely unanimous and unified in its empirical support. Note how evidence for IGT is framed in the reports below (most pertinent shown in bold):

> One of the most **consistent findings** in the family violence literature is the relationship between exposure to violence in the family of origin and marital violence. (Delsol & Margolin, 2004, p.99)

> Over the past few decades, a large body of research has demonstrated a **consistent link** between exposure to violence in the family of origin and subsequent family violence (e.g., intimate partner violence and child abuse) in adulthood. (Kerley et al, 2010, p.337)

> One of the most **consistent and persistent** findings from research on physical child abuse is the so-called intergenerational transmission of violence. (Hampton et al, 1993, p.15)

These summaries convey the notion that hypothesis testing has consistently withstood the rigours of scientific research. As well as this portrayal of the field being unified in its support, there also seems to be a tendency towards over-inflating the risk of IGT, at least beyond what the field has evidenced. Observe examples below (note, the first three quotes are from academic literature and the last from policy):

> The saying "violence begets violence" is an apt descriptor of the cycle of family violence, as children who witness parental violence are at **high risk** for repeating family violence in their own adult intimate relationships. (Siegel et al, 2013, p.163)

> [Adolescents exposed to violence between parents] are **likely** to carry into adulthood and into future family life an enhanced risk of violent interactions. (Ireland & Smith, 2009, p.336)

> The victims of child abuse and neglect are **likely** to maltreat their own children and so perpetuate the intergenerational transmission of child maltreatment. (Panzer, 2008, p.29)

*Research evidence shows that people who were abused as children have a **higher probability** of living with a violent spouse. These parents **often** abuse their own children and/or fail to protect them from their violent encounters.* (WHO, 2007, p.7)

Summaries such as these are in danger of obscuring the lack of consensus in the field; precluding the studies that reported weak or null findings, and findings from the various meta-analyses and reviews which have shown methodological and reporting issues in the research. Obscuring such findings means that the risk and propensity for IGT of family violence can all too easily be overstated, an issue of reporting which risks the transmission of misinformation (Widom, 1989b).

This long-held practice of over-inflating and unifying the messy and contradictory field and its findings has been observed by critics, with authors, such as Herzberger (1990), drawing attention to this problem of 'insensitive dissemination of study findings' (p.542), and Moriarty and Parsons-Pollard (2008) proclaiming it 'disturbing' that 'many authors' 'claim the relationship is sound' (p.335). In fact, there have been challenges to the trend for misreporting IGT research for some time now, and as the date-range of quotes below might allude (1987-2018), these challenges in general seem not to have resulted in change in the form of more balanced and accurate reporting:

*The belief that abused children are likely to become abusive parents is widely accepted. The authors review the literature cited to support this hypothesis and demonstrate that its **unqualified acceptance is unfounded**.* (Kaufman & Zigler, 1987, p.186)

*'The linkage between childhood victimization and later antisocial and violent behaviour is **far from certain**, and the intergenerational transmission of violence is not inevitable.* (Widom, 1989a, p.164)

*Intergenerational transmission theory has enjoyed great popularity despite the rather **inconclusive** nature of empirical tests of its validity.* (Sellers et al, 2005, p.391)

*There is substantial evidence that childhood exposure to DV is associated with future violence perpetration and/or victimization; however, findings are somewhat mixed, and the strength of **the association is weaker than often portrayed**.* (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018, p.4)

The authors here elucidate the problem of misreporting and uncritical acceptance of IGT theories. Others have discussed the implications of this, especially for shaping public and professional understandings of IGT:

> *[...] widespread use of the metaphor of "transmission" introduces a **gross distortion** of the reality of family-of-origin effects on the lives of adult children.* (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000, p. 958)

> *The widespread propagation and acceptance of the cyclical hypothesis during ['the last quarter-century'] **distorted** professionals and lay perspectives on the consequences of abuse victimization. The extent of the damage done will never be known.* (Herzberger, 1990, pp.542)

In a similar vein, Rodriguez and Tucker (2011) suggest that beliefs about the 'cycle of violence' 'permeates lay and professional circles alike' (p.246). Findings from various qualitative studies with professionals and laypeople illustrate how embedded IGT is. Even where such studies set out to explore beliefs about the antecedents of violence, not IGT per se, themes involving IGT emerged. For example, a qualitative study conducted in Canada revealed that survivors of violence had concerns about transmission and made efforts to prevent the continuity of violence in their children's generation (Nixon et al, 2017). A study carried out in Brazil by Nunes and colleagues (2008) looked at the conceptions held by health professionals on violence against children and young people. Some participants suggested that the perpetration of violence was '*part of an intergenerational cycle and due to aggressive experience that parents experienced in the past in their family environment*' (p.140).

Similarly, Edwards and colleagues (2016) interviewed young people (n=74) from rural areas in the US about IPV. One of the key themes observed in the data revolved around IGT and 'cycles of violence'. Participants' beliefs echoed the dominant explanation of IGT – social learning theory - especially around normalisation of violence ('*being abused or witnessing abuse growing up led people to normalize abuse, which led people to become perpetrators of IPV'*) and involving impaired relationships *('people who have "witnessed [IPV] from their families or close ones, don't know a relationship without [IPV]"')* (Edwards et al, 2016, pp.439-440). Also in the US, Maguire-Jack et al (2018) analysed data from focus groups (n=13) with stakeholders (n=107), which comprised parents and a diverse mix of professionals. Participants considered IGT and 'cycles of violence' to

be one of four factors responsible for causing perpetration of CM. Authors report that beliefs expressed by participants centred on the idea of behaviours being 'passed down' the generations through social learning (Maguire-Jack et al, 2018, p.3577).

Research conducted in Canada by Walsh and peers (2007) involved focus groups (n=10) with caregivers for older adults (n=43) and with marginalized older adults (n=77). The study explored participants' perceptions of the constituents of elder abuse. Walsh reports that 'intergenerational cycles' featured as one of four 'major themes' emerging from the focus group dataset (p.492). Participants' quotes paint a rather damning picture with transmission framed as inevitable and unending; with one participant suggesting that when one generation is abusive, the children follow suit; another stating that '*abusive families turn into abusers of older people', 'the cycle goes around and around',* and *'[abuse that has] existed in the past just continues, and perhaps become more profound because of the fact the person becomes more vulnerable (FG15)'* (Walsh et al, 2007, p.499). Not only is IGT drawn upon by the participants to explain violence here, but there is a suggestion that violence may develop in magnitude and be mediated by the vulnerability and/or age of the victim.

Problematising the tendency in academic discourse for 'perpetrators' of DV to be constructed in static and limiting ways which vilify and demonise, and which foreclose debate and 'application of new knowledge', Corvo and Johnson (2003) suggest that 'rhetoric tends to overwhelm science' (p.260). I propose this notion can also be extended to discourses involving IGT, in which theories are overwhelmed by rhetoric; in which the state of scientific knowledge in its fullest (including its mixed findings) are not consistently represented; in which IGT has become so entrenched in public, professional and academic discourses that it is constructed into being, transformed from theory to assumed fact, made substantive and real in social consciousness. As I have demonstrated here, the language used around IGT of family violence, including the taken-for-granted assumptions of it, misalign with the state of empirical knowledge. This illustrates a need for research to attend to the ways IGT is being constructed. This is an important area and yet my literature searches did not yield any research of this nature. This illuminates a gap in the research and builds a strong case for investigating the discursive constructions of IGT. This present study is informed by this rationale, and uses discourse analysis to understand the constructions used by participants, the ways their

accounts move in and out of alignment with dominant discourses, and the ways they employ and resist such discourses when talking about violence in multiple generations of their families.

2.2.3. IGT in Practice

The literature I have identified on IGT in practice is limited. This could be due to the general acceptance of IGT as a real and probable phenomenon and the lack of critical attention it receives. The texts identified are important because they can give us an indicator (empirically and theoretically) of the ways IGT might be informing practice, and the possible impact of this on people's lives. I will illustrate the link between IGT and practice using literature based upon criminal justice responses, and victim and perpetrator provisions.

Theories of IGT are founded upon the notion of future vulnerability ('re-victimisation') and future dangerousness ('perpetration'). Predictions of future dangerousness are in active operation in criminal justice systems in some parts of the world, used to assess IPV perpetrators' risk of recidivism (Williams & Stansfield, 2017), and to make genetic predictions of propensity for offending behaviours (Baum, 2013; Beecher-Monas and Garcia-Rill, 2006). Baum (2013) discusses instances in Italy and the US, where defence cases were augmented around the genetic propensity for offending behaviour. Baum suggests that evidence from genetic testing was not only considered in these instances, but was used to sanction reduced sentencing by removing responsibility for offending, instead framing it as a consequence of the perpetrators' supposed 'genetic propensity'. Beecher-Monas and Garcia-Rill (2006) critique the sanctioning of genetic predictions of 'future dangerousness', maintaining that they are increasingly used and relied upon in the criminal justice system in spite of a lack of 'scientific scrutiny' (p.305) and subject to '*little judicial or legislative scrutiny*' (p.302). Assessment of risk is perhaps most likely to be aimed at offenders, but based upon the presumptions of IGT and the widespread myths of proclivity (as highlighted above), it is not beyond the realms of possibility to imagine how such genetic tests might be extended to target those viewed as being at risk of future dangerousness *or* future vulnerability, such as those exposed to violence in childhood.

As well as criminal justice responses to risk management (via assessments of future dangerousness/proclivity), the principal assumptions of IGT underpin policy and practice in a range of other disciplines. For instance, preventative responses in public health are engaging

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practitioners, such as health visitors, to '*work towards ending the cycle of DVA*' (Dennis, 2014, p.29). Likewise, in order to tackle the effects of DV - proposed to '*cast a long shadow with inter-generational consequences sometimes leading to a repetition of abusive and violent behaviours*' (Guy et al, 2014, p.4) - early intervention proponents call for preventative initiatives to '*arrest the cycle of violence that results in children themselves becoming victims and perpetrators of such violence*' (Lokuge et al, 2018, p.572). The theory of IGT is also drawn upon to inform responses to violence including services for victims and perpetrators.

2.2.3.1. Responses to Perpetration

One of three main aims driving a parenting intervention for IPV victims and perpetrators in Sweden is to '*prevent the violence from following the child into adulthood and affecting his/her own future relationships*' (Kamal et al, 2017, p.313). Thus, the aims of the programme are organised around an assumption; first of the risk of transmission from parents to child; and second, of the potential of the programme to mitigate such risks. Similarly, a Finnish programme for female perpetrators of family violence, informed by attachment theory, posits that victims become perpetrators as a reactionary process to early trauma, and suggest that fear of abandonment or rejection embedded through childhood experiences may result in a violent reaction in adulthood (Keiski et al, 2019). The Swedish and Finnish programmes discussed here are not alone in being informed by IGT. Reviewing 10 interventions for violent fathers, Labarre and colleagues (2016) concluded that while diverse in their approaches, most of the programmes used '*fatherhood and intergenerational transmission of violence as motivational lever to engage fathers in the program*' (p.23), and this was one of the main unifying features of all 10 programmes.

Stakeholders, including delivering practitioners and commissioners of Domestic Violence Perpetrator Programme's (DVPPs), have been found to hold beliefs about the risk of IGT and the propensity of children exposed to violence to perpetrate violence in adulthood. For instance, Pallatino and colleagues (2019) reported that professionals involved in such programmes drew on ideas central to IGT in their interviews: '*that both perpetrators and survivors often witness violence as a child between family members and that this cycle of abuse continues with each generation*' (p.6). They also observed how one of the professionals talked about drawing on IGT in their practice with perpetrators '*[using] intergenerational violence in working with IPV to underscore to perpetrators the impact of violence on their children*' (Pallatino et al, 2019, p.6). Westmarland and Kelly (2013) conducted interviews with stakeholders involved in DVPPs in the UK, including men

participating in DVPPs, their (ex-)partners, delivery staff, and DVPP funders and commissioners. Authors identified a '*strong theme for funders and commissioners*' centred on the assumptions of IGT that '*children who live with domestic abuse are more likely to be abusive/abused in their own future relationships*' (p.1107). Findings from Pallatino et al (2019) and Westmarland and Kelly (2013) illustrate how IGT is informing the design of interventions for victims and perpetrators, and are underpinning practitioners' beliefs and guiding their practice. Assumptions of IGT then are interwoven into the very fabric of programmes targeted at individuals affected by violence. The studies discussed here illuminate an unresolvable conflict in intervention, a mode of support and recovery, being shaped by a concept of future dangerousness and future vulnerability. As these studies suggest, such notions may be present/influence every stage of intervention from funding sources through to programme delivery.

2.2.3.2. Responses to Victimisation

Baker's (2009; 2012) conceptual articles critique the age limitation policies in operation in women's DV refuges where teenage boys are not permitted to stay with their mothers. She suggests that at the core of these policies is the assumption of IGT. Baker argues that the central consequences of IGT informing refuge provisions are twofold. Firstly, that '*teenage boys of violent men*' are located as a potential threat to residents in refuge, '*constructed as 'potentially violent''* (2009, p.435). Secondly, that this discrimination enforces the separation of teenage boys from their families. Baker (2009) troubles refuges' reliance on IGT to govern practice and drive decisions about who can and cannot benefit from support:

> *[...] any theories, including 'cycle of violence' theories, which correlate being a man with being violent, or having a predisposition to be violent because of a violent father, should be treated with extreme caution and scepticism. It is extremely problematic in this author's view, to continue to place any weight upon such theories for the purposes of deciding access to refuges for teenage boys, rather than to try to address the substantive problems which directly impact upon access issues, such as the physicality of refuge buildings themselves, and a lack of funding to sustain specialist service provision for teenagers, or indeed young people as a group within this setting.* (Baker, 2009, p.446)

Baker (2009; 2012) is one of the few authors that adopt a critical edge to IGT, similar to my own. However, in spite of the widespread perpetuation/over-inflation of IGT in academic writings (as illustrated earlier), Baker (2009) suggests that theories of IGT and '*cycles of violence*' are '*out-*

dated' (2009, p.436) and are '*now widely discredited'* (2012, p.265). Similarly, Westmarland and Kelly (2013) attest that '*cycle of abuse theory'* is '*strongly contested'* (p.1107). While these authors call into question the validity of IGT theories, Baker's publications, which bring into view operationalisation around IGT, are demonstrations in and of themselves that IGT is not only subject to uncritical acceptance but that these theories are currently shaping UK practice. This makes it difficult then to simply dismiss the hypothesis of IGT as 'outdated' or 'discredited'. Furthermore, this dismissal might inaccurately lead one to imagine that these theories are becoming less relevant, that acceptance of them is diminishing.

The literature discussed here gives us a glimpse into the possible ways IGT might be informing practice in a range of areas. The few practice-based studies I identified through searches revolved around the provisions for victims and perpetrators. The limited studies in this area highlights a need for further research, particularly which investigates how IGT is overtly and implicitly informing practice and organisational policies, how IGT is constructed by practitioners, and the impact these elements have on practice and on families.

Conclusion

This first chapter of the literature review illustrated the heterogeneity of the evidence-base, the diversity of studies and of the mixed findings. It showed how the evidence-base is formed of studies identifying significant associations between exposure in childhood and subsequent victimisation/perpetration in adulthood, with authors reporting relationships of varying degrees from moderate associations through to null findings. I demonstrated how in spite of the lack of consensus in the evidence-base, representations of the state of knowledge often portray it as unanimously in support of IGT of family violence. I considered how this representation promulgates the notion of IGT as fact rather than theory and, as such, risks promoting the notion that revictimization/perpetration is an inevitable consequence of exposure to violence. I explored in this section how in spite of a lack of strong and consistent empirical support, ideas of IGT are being drawn upon to inform practice in the UK and beyond.

This chapter revealed two main gaps in the evidence-base. Firstly, the current state of knowledge is overwhelmingly based upon findings from quantitative inquiry. Out of 119 references obtained

through searches, 79 were quantitative studies and only 11 were qualitative. This present study aims to address this shortfall in the literature by taking a qualitative approach. Secondly, research, at least insofar as my literature searches reveal, has not explored discursive constructions of IGT of family violence. This chapter illustrated the language employed around IGT and its possible implications, and the issues I highlighted provide strong rationale for future research to examine language and discourse involving IGT. In order to address this gap and start debate around discourse in the field, this present research adopts a discursive approach, looking at participants' accounts of violence in multiple generations. It will examine how the hypothesis of IGT is drawn upon and shapes participants' accounts, including the ways accounts align/reproduce, and resist/challenge dominant discourses involving IGT of family violence.

This chapter marked the first part of the literature review, I explored the level of empirical support for IGT, examined the representation of IGT in the literature, and considered the intersection of IGT in practice. The proceeding chapter marks the second part of the literature review, in it I will explore how transmission is conceptualised in the literature, including the main proposed mechanisms and risks of transmission.

Chapter 3

Literature Review: Part 2

Risks of Transmission and Proposed Mechanisms

Introduction

This chapter explores how transmission is represented in the IGT of family violence and related literature, including the risks and proposed mechanisms of transmission. Formed of two sections, the first looks at the how transmission is represented discursively: the conceptualisations of transmission; the discursive connotations with disease; the framing of continuity and discontinuity; and 'dose-response', a feature of the literature which assumes a positive correlation between extent of exposure and risk of transmission. The second section reviews the main proposed mechanisms: social learning theory; attachment; and biological explanations. I illustrate how the emphasis on transmission in the theoretical, empirical and policy literature is often on the family system to the exclusion of broader socio-ecological systems. Drawing on the gaps in the evidence-base, I build a rationale for examining language and discourse related to transmission, and for developing an understanding of IGT from an ecological perspective.

3.1. Risks of Transmission

3.1.1. Heredity

Ideas around IGT can be traced in a number of public discourses such as folklore, religion, science and politics. If we consider early and founding evolutionary science, for instance, IGT is present through its underpinning emphasis on heredity. Early evolutionary theories on inheritance influenced thought and, subsequently, the political rhetoric and governance in nineteenth and twentieth century England, parts of Europe, and the US (Brysbaert & Rastle, 2009). The fundamental basis for Darwin's evolutionary theory was '*inheritance and adaptation to the environment*' (Brysbaert & Rastle, 2009, p.118), and Galton's theories, similarly Darwinian, were also driven by ideas around inheritance (Brysbaert & Rastle, 2009). Galton's ideas founded the

eugenics movement, and proposed that populations of a nation should be actively shaped by political governance (Brysbaert & Rastle, 2009; Rose et al, 1990; Rose, 2007).

Generating/guided by principles of 'natural selection' and 'survival of the fittest', these evolutionary theories were built around a judgement system of what success looked like and conversely of how failure, defectiveness and deviance appeared – judgements informed by intersecting issues of race and class (Rose et al, 1990; Rose, 2007). Unsurprisingly, a discourse of degeneracy was woven into the fabric of such theories, evident in social Darwinism and Eugenics (Brysbaert & Rastle, 2009; Rose, 2007). The convergence of discourses of degeneracy and heredity are pertinent in this current review because they have historically underpinned understandings of violence and of family 'problems'. Even in the Bible, deviance is linked with the family, with heredity, and with IGT (e.g. 'sins of the fathers'). The connection between these aspects is still being made in the twenty-first century, with various authors observing the trend for perpetrators of violence within the family to be situated as deviant and degenerate (Baker, 2009; 2012; Corvo & Johnson, 2003; Hall, 2011). This, in combination with prevailing tenets of heredity (also underpinning theories of IGT), means that children of perpetrators are by default positioned as potential deviants and, as Baker (2009) articulates, 'potentially violent and dangerous' (p.447).

It is important to acknowledge the parallels IGT discourses have with broader (historic and current) political discourses involving 'problem' and 'troubled' families. To illustrate these parallels, I consider the Cameron Government's 'Troubled Families' (TF) initiative of 2011 (due to run until 2020) and briefly compare with the 'Problem Families' programme of 1950's Britain (Welshman, 2017). The TF programme is of particular relevance to this present research because of the high rates of families affected by DV reported to be on the programme. According to mid-term findings, families who report experiencing DV within 12 months prior to enrolling on the scheme was purported to be in the region of 80% in some locales (see Casey, 2012b cited in Farmer & Callan, 2012), although later reports suggest that nationally this figure was 25% of the families (DCLG, 2018, p.16). Furthermore, nearly 50% of TF Keyworkers reported 'helping the family to manage the impact of domestic abuse' at least once per week (DCLG, May 2017, p.17).

Two narratives that underscore both the Problem and Troubled Families Programmes revolve around heredity (especially inherited disadvantage and deprivation), and personal agency/individual responsibility. To illustrate these points, let us consider two quotes below, both from a midterm report on the Troubled Families Programme produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG):

> *[...] the problems of these families are linked and reinforcing. They accumulate across the life course, **passed on from parents to their children across generations** of the same family.* (Casey, 2012a, p. 64)

> ***It is commonly accepted and evidenced that parents and families are the biggest single influence on children's lives and will to a greater or lesser extent determine their significant relationships as they grow up – and the ways in which those children go on to parent their own children***. *The key problem for these families is that the influence of their families is negative not positive and therefore **breaking any cycle is almost impossible**.* (Casey, 2012a, p.46)

Ideas of heredity are interwoven here with the inference that families are subject to and affected by transmission of parenting, transmission of patterns of relating, and transmission of 'problems' and 'negative' influence. The strong sense of inevitability, of being doomed to transmit, might lead one to imagine that these families are beyond help. The representation of the problems being so embedded that discontinuity ('breaking any cycle') is 'almost impossible', is especially damning. As well as the way heredity is framed here, it is also important to note the neoliberal undertones. By locating intergenerational continuity as an issue (re)produced by/within the family micro-system, responsibility for (dis)continuity is placed entirely with the family, and the possible influence of environmental/contextual factors in the creation/maintenance of 'problems' are elided. This is an individualised, decontextualised framing typically neoliberalist (Bond-Taylor, 2016), a stigmatising construction and a running theme in state discourses which Starkey (2000) also identified in the promotion of the 1950's 'Problem Families' programme.

Starkey (2000) argues that eugenic thinking has historically underpinned state initiatives in Britain for 'problem families'. Discussing eugenics in its extremes, Rose (2007) suggests that the eugenics ideologies of Nazi Germany were realised on the basis of associations being constructed and

intertwined around two principal themes; the first, linked concerns about infectious disease with anxieties involving the threat to racial purity, enabling justification to be constructed around the public health needs for cleansing and eradication of those 'diseased' and 'impure' (Rose, 2007). The second theme, centred around firing up resentment in the population by advertising the costs to the taxpayer of providing education and social welfare to the 'diseased', 'deficient' and 'deviant' (Rose, 2007). I argue that IGT discourses can be linked to these two major themes – disease and costs. Here I discuss the issue of cost before moving on to explore disease in the subsequent section.

Reflecting on the Troubled Families programme, Welshman (2017), reports being struck by the inclusion of a discourse on 'the alleged costs to local services and the taxpayer' alongside the human costs (p.112). Talk of cost not only enables public support to be galvanised, but provides governments with justification for a particular course of action. Simultaneously, it feeds into blaming discourses which legitimise the individualisation and marginalisation of particular groups, while absolving social structures of responsibility to support. The cost of family and intimate partner violence to the taxpayer is frequently cited in policy literature and academic writings. Take for example, the four quotes below:

> *[Children affected by DV] are at risk of developing mental health problems and relationship difficulties in the future – thereby **ramping up the societal costs** of domestic abuse over the long-term. (Farmer & Callan, 2012, p.127)*

> *The **financial cost to society [of domestic abuse] hovers around £16 billion**; the impact upon individuals, families and indeed the **psyche of the nation** is far harder to grasp. (Farmer and Callan, 2012, p.49)*

> *[domestic violence and abuse] comes with **immense costs** – it is estimated that the overall **costs to society** of domestic violence and abuse **stands at over £15.7bn**. (Guy et al, 2014, p.4) (The Early Intervention Foundation)*

> *[...] the cost of domestic violence is **borne by the wider economy and society**, not only the victims (Walby, 2009, p.3)*

What these examples have in common, is that they emphasise society's role in taking the brunt of the economic impact of DV. This inevitably implicates the broader population in bailing out and intervening in those families cast as unable to help themselves. The second quote here creates a link between financial costs and the nation's health, problematising families by promulgating the notion that abuse detrimentally affects the '*psyche of the nation'*. The point I make here is that while responsibility for transmission of family violence is represented as an issue of the micro-system (uninfluenced by external systems), as these quotes exemplify, the costs of violence within the family are set firmly in the macro sphere, with society. Thus, families are located as uninfluenced by broader systems, and yet as affecting broader systems via their drain on the economy. Note, the first two extracts here originate from the policy report '*Beyond Violence: Breaking Cycles of Domestic Abuse'* and so are explicitly linked to IGT.

3.1.2. Transmission and Connotations with Disease

In addition to the costs to society, connotations are often made between transmission of violence and contagion. In a similar way that Best (1997) describes victimisation (and the 'victim industry') being bound up in discourses of professionalism, in IGT, the derivation of 'transmission' from medical discourse and its connotations with disease offer up medical and scientific legitimacy to IGT. This link further reinforces its integrity as a real (and threatening) phenomenon, one requiring eradicative intervention from professionals. For example, note the way that a quote from a department of health report explicitly describes violence in language typically reserved for infectious disease:

> *Much like many **infections, violence is contagious**. For instance, exposure to violence, especially as a child, makes individuals more likely to be involved in violence in later life [...]*
> (Bellis et al, 2012, p.4)

The report is entitled 'Protecting People, Promoting Health', and what is striking about this excerpt is the way IGT of violence is spoken about as a truth (despite the lack of robust scientific evidence for this claim), and secondly, the way it functions to situate 'affected individuals' as carriers of disease. A similar subject position is promulgated in the DCLG report by Casey (2012a), with reference to families being 'plagued' by 'ingrained patterns of behaviour', although Casey does soften this by suggesting that intervention can positively interrupt these 'patterns' (p.64).

Disease and contamination are also threaded through this next passage, ironically from a book designed to function as a self-help programme for survivors to 'break the cycle of abuse':

> *If you were emotionally, physically, or sexually abused as a child or adolescent, or if you experienced neglect or abandonment, it isn't a question of whether you will continue the cycle of abuse or neglect, it is a question of how you will do so – whether you will become an abuser or continue to be a victim. The sad **truth** is that no one gets through an abusive or neglectful childhood unscathed, and an even sadder truth that no one escapes without perpetuating the cycle of violence in some way. In many cases, those who were abused or neglected become both abusers and victims throughout their lifetimes. Although this may sound unnecessarily negative to you, it is the **truth**. Research clearly shows that those who have been abused either absorb abuse or **pass it on**. [...] If abuse and neglect were not **passed down** from generation to generation we simply would not have the **epidemic** of child abuse and neglect we are experiencing today.* (Engel, 2005, p.11)

Here, connotations of disease are made explicit in phrases like 'pass it on' and 'epidemic'. The implication is that those who have experienced abuse are in some way contaminated, fated to infect others, by passing the 'disease' onto their children, their children's children, and so on. The construction of truth (a trope across this text) is problematic not least because there is no attempt to provide evidence to support claims, but also because it prohibits the possibility of affected families envisioning positive futures for any of its members. Johnson and Ferraro (2000) express concern about the implications of metaphors used around transmission, like those used by Engel, because they infer inevitability, that '*violence is inexorably passed on from generation to generation'* (p.958), and risk promoting the notion of resistance and intervention as futile.

The examples discussed above relate to discourses of IGT but, interestingly, Stark (2007) asserts that physical sites of support could contribute to the communication of stigmatising ideas about women victimised by violence. He suggests that refuges, which aside from providing an escape from men's violence, were once a site in which women could join forces, rally against their oppression and create awareness of domestic abuse in their activism. The evolution of shelters which has entailed movement towards professionalisation, Stark claims, has not only hindered activism and camaraderie, but has resulted in inhabitants being situated as infectious:

Shelters remove women to a semi-secret site where they coexist mainly with strangers in a similar predicament, a process that resembles the use of quarantine to combat infectious disease. In the name of creature comfort, "refuge" in England and in several other countries now consists largely of removal to contained units rather than congregate living, eliminating the collective recognition that gave so much vitality to early shelter life. (p.373)

Stark's suggestion here alludes that constructions of contamination and infectious transmission are perhaps not only present in discourse of abuse, but may also be embedded in intervention operating at a community level, in the sites and spaces for victims affected by violence.

3.1.3. Risk of Transmission: Dose-Response

An important aspect of IGT literature, often assumed but not explicitly articulated or critiqued, is theorisation around dose-response. Dose-response explains the relationship between exposure and subsequent outcomes. In the case of IGT, the greater the exposure (in terms of severity/frequency/comorbidity of violence types), the greater the likelihood of transmission is considered to be. Dose-response is evident in the research, as various authors attest that the combination of witnessing *and* directly experiencing violence in the family are more strongly related to involvement in violent relationships in adulthood than either in isolation (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Fowler et al, 2016; Murrell et al, 2007). Bartlett and Easterbrooks (2015) suggest being subjected to more than one type of maltreatment increases the risk of perpetrating maltreatment in the next generation. Likewise, Jirapramukpitak and colleagues (2011) discovered a dose-response for revictimisation, with the combination of witnessing violence and experiencing physical abuse increasing the likelihood of subsequent revictimisation experiences. A number of authors have observed dose-response effects in the level of victimisation/exposure experienced in childhood, and perpetration in adulthood (Capaldi et al, 2019; Fowler et al, 2016; Laporte et al, 2011; Murrell et al, 2007). These findings correlate exposure with IGT propensity - quantifying experience and outcomes by degree - locating those less exposed as less likely to perpetrate violence or to be revictimised, and those exposed to a greater degree as more inclined to transmission. The medicalisation of transmission, symbolised through connotations with disease together with notions of dose-response, frame intergenerational continuity as a passive process. Discussed in the next section is a discourse that runs counter to this, which frames discontinuity as an active process.

3.1.4. The Framing of (Dis-)continuity: IGT as the Status Quo

An interesting feature of the IGT of violence literature is its tendency to implicitly presume that intergenerational continuity will occur if not for an interruption, a 'break' in the 'cycle of violence'. This situates transmission and intergenerational continuity as the status quo, the inevitable result of passivity and, in opposition, frames discontinuity as a consequence of active and wilful resistance.

Hall's (2011) article, '"*It's going to stop in this generation*"', explores the strategies 'ex-abused' women employ to prevent their children's generation experiencing violence and abuse. Hall's work is progressive in that it adopts a strengths-based approach and considers resistance rather than propensity to IGT. However, at heart it is based on the presumption of IGT as the baseline, an inevitable occurrence if not for active resistance to 'interrupt' transmission. Take for example the terminology used around discontinuity:

> *The mothers in my study were strongly **motivated** to end the cycle of abuse in their families.* (Hall, 2011, p.29)

> *[...] I wanted to explore the specific narratives of women who had both lived through abuse and **chosen** a nonabusive parenting styles with their children [...]* (Hall, 2011, p.31)

> *The women who participated in this research represent many other women who have **committed** themselves to ending the cycle of abuse when they become parents.* (Hall, 2011, p.45)

In considering participants' agency in discontinuities, Hall draws on a relatively positive conceptualisation of IGT, one which does not confine victims to a life of revictimisation or perpetration or of 'passing down' these behaviours to their children. Framing discontinuity in neoliberal ways, as driven by individuals' personal resources and will, the women's 'motivation', 'choice', and 'commitment' is a problematic framing, but not uncommon. Suzuki and colleagues (2008) suggested that their participants (adults exposed to IPV in childhood) '*made a strong **commitment** not to engage in IPV'* (p.114). Similarly, Fleckman et al (2018) explored the transmission of abusive parenting practices and, emphasising the role of 'choice', associated discontinuity with '*those parents who **choose** effective, positive parenting strategies to discipline their children*' (p.275). In their study, Hunter and Kilstrom (1979) talked of 'repeaters and nonrepeaters', while more than three decades later Dixon et al (2009) and Jaffee and associates

(2013), using similarly reductive and individualised language, refer to 'cycle breakers' and 'cycle maintainers'. Noteworthy is that Dixon et al (2009) consider risk and protective factors in IGT such as economic stability and social support that operate within the family and beyond it. Discursively though, terminology such as 'cycle maintainers' and cycle breakers' lead us to envisage two things: firstly, that the 'cycle' of transmission is in perpetual motion, that is, until some kind of friction, some kind of resistance, interrupts it; secondly, that personal choice plays a role in (dis)continuity. Those supposedly 'continuing' are allocated passive and inertial subject positions while those discontinuing are situated as active and resistant. In so far as IGT research goes, within the studies mentioned here, participants are framed positively - as potentially having the 'option' and capacity (drive and morality) to resist transmission. However, this simultaneously locates the occurrence of IGT in other families as a failure of will, a lack of motivation and commitment. In framing discontinuity as requiring active resistance from individuals, it automatically locates continuity, IGT, as the default, the status quo. There are implications for this. For example, in Hall's case (the initial set of quotes above), this 'status quo' positions the three women involved in her study as inherently abusive – would-be abusers - were it not for their conscious and active resistance.

3.2. Proposed Mechanisms of Transmission

The previous sections of this chapter explored how transmission and the risks of intergenerational continuity are conceptualised. This section looks at the main mechanisms of transmission that have been proposed and the supporting evidence.

Where research in the field was once concerned with hypothesis testing, in more recent years research into the mechanisms of transmission - an area of study based upon the presumption of transmission – seems to have become more popular. As Haselschwerdt and associates (2018) note, the hypothesis of IGT accompanies a conceptualisation of transmission as linear; a straightforward relationship between childhood exposure to violence and victimisation/perpetration in adulthood. However, the complexities of IGT and the non-linear nature of transmission have been revealed through research (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018; Smith-Marek et al, 2015; Widom et al, 2015; Widom, 2017), and it is perhaps this identification that has inspired investigation into the possible mechanisms and pathways, mediators and protective factors. This re-orientation in the field was evidenced through my literature searches, with mechanism-related articles making up a substantial proportion of references obtained from systematic searches (45 out of 119). It has also

been highlighted by others, for instance, in their meta-analytic review, Johnson and Ferraro (2000) suggest that *'[...] scholars have moved on to assessment of the mechanisms by which "transmission" takes place, in many cases with data that effectively show no "transmission" to begin with'* (p. 958). The evidence-base is yet to build a persuasive case for IGT and *accordingly i*ncreasing orientation in the field towards the presumption of IGT is premature and as a consequence means that the field itself faces a substantive challenge.

A range of mechanisms have been studied, predominantly the relational pathways which centre on more linear interactions between exposure and later victimisation/perpetration. Genetic explanations present an exception to this, as transmission in this case does not rely on exposure. Likewise, trauma-informed explanations are an exception because, although they predominantly hinge on relational pathways, they presuppose an indirect and non-linear explanation of transmission (Schechter et al, 2011; Taft et al, 2008; Volkan, 2001). Various mediators and risk factors have been purported to influence pathways to violence perpetration and victimisation, such as alcohol and drug use (Bellis et al, 2012; Capaldi et al, 2012; Casey, 2012a; Farmer & Callan, 2012), and poverty and deprivation (Bellis et al, 2012; Farmer & Callan, 2012). Protective factors, including social support and positive relationships, have also been put forward as possible moderating factors between exposure and subsequent perpetration (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018; Jaffe et al, 2013; Jaffee et al, 2017; Schofield et al, 2013; Suzuki et al, 2008). In this section, in order to highlight the key debates around the mechanisms and pathways of transmission, I explore three of the main mechanisms proposed in the literature: social learning; attachment; and biological/(epi-)genetic explanations.

3.2.1. Social Learning

Social learning theory is the mechanism most commonly used to explain the IGT of family violence (Black et al, 2010; Corvo, 2006; Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Foshee et al, 1999; Widom, 1989a). Bandura's (1977; 1985) theory appears to be applied most frequently, but Akers' (1973) theory, which specifically focuses on learning deviant behaviour, is also drawn upon to explain intergenerational continuity of violence (Sellers et al, 2005; Wareham et al, 2009). Social learning theory is founded upon the idea that children largely develop to become products of their relational environment. It is also a somewhat naturalised construction, as per Wareham et al's (2009) portrayal *'[a]s the learning mechanisms of life are conveyed to infants from birth, social*

learning is a natural extension of intergenerational transmission since socialization begins with a child's parents and care givers' (p.170). Applied in the context of violence, social learning theory locates the family as a site of learning, a context for the socialisation of next generation perpetrators and victims (Askeland et al, 2011; Ehrensaft et al, 2003; Pears & Capaldi, 2001; Sutton et al, 2014; Tenkorang & Owusu, 2018). It is this behavioural account of processes of learning that underpins dominant conceptualisations of the IGT of family violence (Barnes et al, 2013; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015).

According to Bandura (1977), learning occurs in two main ways: learning by direct experience (e.g. via personal processes of trial and error (which can also be informed vicariously through observing others)); and learning by modelling (e.g. observing others' behaviours and imitating them). Modelling is sited as being the most relevant aspect of social learning in the process of transmission because it is theorised that the symbolic meaning of violence is communicated via observation: children learn to reproduce or 'model' the behaviour of their caregivers. Bandura (1977) proposed that *'[m]ost of the behaviours that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example'* (p.5). Two aspects of modelling via 'the influence of example' are especially prevalent in the IGT of family violence literature: the first centres on the notion that violent behaviours and poor conflict resolution are 'modelled'; and the second revolves around the idea that modelling occurs via a process of enculturation in which violence is normalised and communicated as an acceptable and tolerated behaviour within the culture of the family.

What Does the Research Say?

There are many studies that propose modelling as a possible mechanism of transmission (e.g. Askeland et al, 2011; Black et al, 2010; Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Kalmuss, 1984; Murrell et al, 2007; Islam et al, 2017; Renner & Slack, 2006). Suzuki and associates (2008) suggested that, '[c]hildren exposed to IPV often learn abusive behaviors and responses to violence from modeling and watching their parents problem-solve' (p.104). Research by Black and colleagues (2010) provide support for modelling discrete types of violence, identifying a significant relationship between same-type violence occurring in one generation and the next. Renner and Slack (2006), offer support for the prevalence of childhood and adulthood victimisation, and tentatively suggest that revictimisation might be explained by children's learned helplessness via their modelling of victim-type behaviours.

Modelling poor conflict management through vicarious learning has been identified by a number of authors as a potential mechanism of transmission (Black et al, 2010; Bandura, 1986; Foshee et al, 1999; Murrell et al, 2007; Stith et al, 2000). However, this idea has also been challenged. For instance, Mathias et al's (1995) research illuminated a range of negative outcomes for children exposed to DV, but they also found that when those children were asked to resolve a hypothetical conflict situation, they gave 'significantly more assertive responses and fewer aggressive responses' (p.47). This finding raises two important issues: that children who experience violence might choose to avoid conflict where possible; and that this sample of children were more adept at conflict resolution and negotiation than some of the literature would imply.

Normalisation of violence is proposed to occur through the modelling of attitudes towards violence and via communication of '*moral messages signifying its acceptance'* (Cochran et al, 2011, p.809) that operates in the relational environment from caregivers to child/ren (Barnes et al, 2013; Bellis et al, 2012; Forke et al, 2018; Franklin & Kercher, 2012; Islam et al, 2017; Nunes et al, 2008). Normalisation is posited as the learning or formation of 'distorted views about the legitimacy of violence' (Delsol & Margolin, 2004, p.109) and 'desensitization' towards violence (Valdez et al, 2013, p.139). In this way, living in violent families is framed akin to being 'marinated in violence' (Pizzey, 2014, p.215), creating inurement and desensitisation and making the children of the family 'violence prone'. Transmission then is suspected to occur via the communication of violence as normal and the subsequent play-out of such norms in adulthood relationships (Smith et al, 2011; Wareham et al, 2009).

Relevance to Present Study & Critique

While social learning theory is widely drawn on to explain transmission, some have questioned whether, with its sole focus on the family system, it can fully account for the myriad of dynamic and interactional developmental influences (Corvo, 2006; Schwartz et al, 2006; Smith-Marek et al, 2015). Another issue is that while research can, and does, allude to the prevalence of IGT, what is typically being studied is the occurrence of violence/victimisation in different generations and *not* 'transmission' nor the 'mechanisms' of 'transmission' per se (discussed further in Chapter 4) (Besemer, 2012). Social learning theory relates to a hypothesised process of transmission, but the routine application of theory to data which captures occurrence rather than transmission is problematic. This is because some data might make it more possible to allude to one particular

mechanism of transmission over another (such as social learning theory), but capturing this as a mechanism of transmission in a meaningful way empirically is, at best, challenging. A case in point is demonstrated in a meta-analysis by Smith-Marek and colleagues (2015). Authors found a small relationship between family-of-origin violence and IPV. They acknowledged the correspondence of the relationship with the 'assumptions of social learning theory', but as they identified only a small effect size, discounted social learning theory and instead posited that other factors had contributed to the relationship (p.509). This case demonstrates the ease with which researchers could either apply or reject a theory, and the risk of arbitrary decisions either way. Arguably, this may be an issue particularly pertinent in researching 'mechanisms' of 'transmission', and particularly the case for applying social learning theory. Social learning theory, as Delsol and Margolin (2004) discuss, is extensively applied in the literature, often assumed, but seldom the subject of empirical scrutiny by researchers in the field.

3.2.1.1. Gender

Feminist perspectives have provided an invaluable contribution to violence literature, shaping knowledge and understanding of gendered aetiologies of violence, particularly involving gender-based violence and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). Theorisation of gender in the IGT literature seems, however, to have escaped the more sustained and nuanced inquiry that the literature has received in other areas. This is perhaps in part due to the variability and complexity of gender-dynamics in the family. In addition, examination of IGT is often translated in a narrow focus on the family, to the exclusion of consideration to broader sociocultural influences and macro-level impacts, including gendered socialisation practices. The IGT literature shows a varied picture of the possible ways gender might inform transmission (Stith et al, 2000). Key propositions include: that the gender of the child exposed to violence determines their role in subsequent intimate partnerships, *vis-à-vis* whether they will assume the role of perpetrator or victim; that the gender of the perpetrating caregiver mediates transmission; and that the genders of the child and caregiver interact to determine the prevalence and the expression of transmission.

Social learning theory is often drawn upon to explain gendered differences, with females constructed as more likely to become victims, and males as perpetrators (Forke et al, 2018; Laporte et al, 2011; Smith-Marek et al, 2015), and there is empirical support for this idea from numerous studies (e.g. Laporte et al, 2011; Stith et al, 2000). Smith-Marek et al (2015) identified that the association between experiencing family-of-origin violence and subsequently perpetrating IPV was

significantly stronger for males, whereas victimisation was significantly stronger for females. They emphasised that the magnitude of the gendered effects was small, but tentatively proposed that they might reflect patriarchal socialisation practices reinforcing and facilitative of male aggression and of female passivity.

Various authors have posited that IGT is mediated not only by the gender of the child, but also by the gender of the caregiver victimised by/perpetrating violence. Linked to social learning theory, this gender-specific hypothesis of modelling anticipates that children are more likely to identify with their same-sex parent and therefore are more inclined to imitate their behaviour/s (Forke et al, 2018). In this way, the gendered socialisation practices operating within the broader society feed into the family through social learning between members. Eriksson and Mazerolle (2015) found that witnessing bidirectional violence between parents increased likelihood of their sample (male arrestees) perpetrating IPV by five times, whereas witnessing father-only violence increased likelihood by three times. No predictive association was identified for witnessing mother-only violence and subsequent IPV perpetration. Laporte and colleagues (2011) also observed same-sex parent effects with a greater association between father-only aggression than mother-only aggression for boys' perpetration of dating violence. In line with such findings, through a gendered lens, Baker (2012) posits that IGT is at heart a gendered construction, in which *'children replicate the behaviour of the same sex parent/carer as either a violent (male) perpetrator or as a (female) victim'* (p.266). Conversely, Smith-Marek et al (2015) did not find any statistical support for same-sex gender-specific modelling, suggesting that *'same-sex perpetration was not a significantly stronger risk marker than opposite-sex parental perpetration'* (p.511).

A feminist theorisation situates violence within the site of the family as a translation of social norms operating at macro-level within the family, especially in relation to gender inequalities which enable male dominance and female oppression. Stark (2007) proposes the mechanism for this is relational:

> *Today, education, research, and deterrence convey the same messages: violence against women originates in the microdynamics of human relationships, emanates from individual men, is supported by widely accepted norms to which boys are socialized, is replicated across generations […]* (pp.83-84)

Stark's suggestion here aligns somewhat with a social learning account, although the difference here is that Stark's explanation does not focus only on the site of the family for reproduction or 'transmission' of violence in multiple generations, rather it speaks of socialisation much more broadly. In this respect, it draws our attention to how socialisation happens at *all* ecological levels; the micro-, the exo-, and the macro-level.

Counter to the social learning account of gender, some scholars have found females with histories of violence to be at the same or greater level of risk of perpetrating violence as males with such histories (e.g. Widom, 1993; 2017). Widom (1993; 2017) found that female violence is more likely to take place (and be reported) in the home environment than in the community. Likewise, in their self-report study, Kaufman-Parks et al (2018) observed gendered risks which indicated that females were more likely to perpetrate IPV than men. In one phase of their study, 28% of females and 16% of males self-reported perpetrating IPV, and 20% of females and 32% of males reported IPV victimisation (Kaufman-Parks et al, 2018). Gendered explanations of IGT enable a theoretical connection to be made between socialisation practices and continuity of violence within families. However, it has been argued that a singular focus on gender has hitherto struggled to account for the complex gender dynamics operating within families (e.g. Featherstone & Trinder, 1997; Heise, 1998). (Although, as I discuss in greater depth later on, feminist scholars would argue that violence is not gender symmetrical in frequency, severity, or in impact, and where women do perpetrate violence against male intimate partners, it is most likely to be in response to victimisation (e.g. Hester, 2009; Johnson, 2005; Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007)). Discourses of IGT often de-gender children exposed to violence, prioritising their status as victims rather than gendered subjects. Thus, from a discursive perspective, individuals exposed to violence tend to be situated in the hinterland, occupying the space between victim and perpetrator, always either victim/perpetrator in waiting or victim/perpetrator realised.

3.2.3. Attachment

Attachment theory emphasises the influence of the infant-caregiver relationship in the formation of personality and developmental outcomes (Ainsworth et al, 2014; Baylin & Hughes, 2016; Bowlby, 2005; Tottenham, 2014). Early attachment theorists emphasised the importance of maternal attachment (e.g. Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1958; 1982; 1997), although the theory has since become broader in scope, with reference increasingly made to the attachment relationship between children and their 'parents' and 'caregivers', not only their (biological) mothers. In a

recent edition of the seminal text 'Patterns of Attachment', Ainsworth and colleagues (2014) describe a morphing that has taken place through the misinterpretation of early theories, which conceived of attachment as a systemic, interactive, and transitory process exhibited and expressed through behaviour, but which is often interpreted in an over-simplified and static way, as the 'bond' between mother and infant. Attachment in contexts of violence is considered to be impaired, not only due to the exposure of violence itself, but also because violence impinges on the emotional capacity of caregivers (and infants) to engage in the interactive process of attachment with one another.

What Does the Research Say?

Schwartz et al (2006) describes how behaviours associated with violence (e.g. rejection, punishment, neglect etc) not only impact on attachment, but embed a defective pattern of relating. Similarly, Corvo (2006) refers to the 'deficit[s]' that disturbed attachment creates, an attachment style that not only exists within the caregiver-infant dyad, but which sets the tone for the individual's style of relating thereafter. Disrupted attachment patterns are posited to inform the expectations, anxieties, fears and behaviours exhibited in subsequent attachment relationships, including adulthood intimate partnerships (Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Forke et al, 2018). Thus, early attachment is posited to create a blueprint or 'relational template' (Schwartz et al, 2006, p.216) for later relationships and, as Forke et al (2018) indicate, could explain victimisation and perpetration in adult partnerships.

Studies exploring attachment have proposed a number of ways attachment can lead to violence in adult relationships. For example, both Corvo (2006) and Rodriguez and Tucker (2011) found that attachment variables are equally if not more predictive of violence in adulthood than a history of victimisation to violence in the family-of-origin. Authors identified that '*poor attachment significantly predicted both dysfunctional parenting practices and elevated child abuse potential*' (Rodriguez & Tucker, 2011, p.246). However, conclusions on the relationship between attachment and abuse are undermined by contentious measures of 'abuse potential', because potential for abuse or 'abuse risk' will not necessarily translate to actual abuse.

Sutton et al (2014) also suggest attachment plays a key role in IGT of violence. Authors found, after controlling for insecure attachment and beliefs about conflict, only a small significant relationship

was identified between experiencing hostile parenting in childhood and IPV in dating relationships. They conclude that IGT could partially be mediated by an insecure attachment style and beliefs about conflict for both men's and women's perpetration, and that these factors in combination may together play a more significant role in IGT than issues of attachment in isolation. Similarly, in their longitudinal study Godbout and colleagues (2017) found early exposure to parental violence was predictive of relationship violence but that this continuity was mediated by attachment. They report that violence generated anxious attachment which mediated continuity, but that violence itself did not predict attachment avoidance or continuity. Asen and Fonagy (2017) also proposed that attachment difficulties can lead to violence, but in their theoretical paper suggested more specifically it is the 'loss of mentalizing capacity' (p.6) (which hinders the ability to perceive and interpret intention) *caused* by attachment difficulties that is the mechanism through which familial patterns of violence might manifest.

Relevance to Present Study & Critique

Attachment is described as a biological instinct ('*The parental-child bond is the most natural to develop'* (Forke et al, 2018, p.249); *'just as an infant is predisposed to exhibit attachment behaviour under appropriate circumstances, he is predisposed to form an attachment to a specific figure or figures'* (Ainsworth et al, 2014, p.9)). This alignment of attachment with a naturalised process sets up a normative discourse which implicitly denaturalises difficulties of attachment. Like social learning theory, attachment theory tends to focus on family relationships, specifically between caregivers and children, and so remains firmly in the realm of the micro-system. This emphasis brings a very particular set of family relations sharply into focus and obscures family dynamics, extrafamilial relations, and the interaction between the family and broader exo- and macro-level systems, including those contributing to and intersecting with violence and its continuity.

3.2.4. Biological Explanations

The literature on the biological explanations of IGT can generally be grouped into three categories: the genetic heritability of violence from one generation to another; the transmission of trauma (and related affects) from parent to child; and epigenetic perspectives. A genetic perspective suggests that familial patterns of violence have a biological aetiology rather than a relational one. From a trauma model, 'toxic stress' is proposed to induce symptomology such as anxiety and PTSD (Kitzmann et al, 2003), physiological changes, as well as neurological abnormalities which affect mood and memory functioning. In this case, symptomology is posited to play a role in transmission

by mediating the relationship between victimisation and subsequent perpetration. Epigenetic perspectives examine the interplay of psychosocial and biogenetic factors, considering IGT of family violence as an outcome of this interaction.

What Does the Research Say?

Cordero et al (2012) challenge psychosocial paradigms drawn upon to explain IGT of family violence. They explored the transmission of trauma and potential for violence (*'the traumatic stress-induced violence cycle'* (p.9)), and evidenced a connection between experiences of non-violent trauma and the subsequent perpetration of violence. They identified, in their study on rats, that even in the absence of post-natal contact with aggressive parents, offspring exhibited aggressive behaviours. Authors conclude that this indicates IGT has a biological rather than relational basis. In concordance with this biological perspective, a twin study by Barnes and associates (2013) investigated the possible genetic influences of three variables of IPV. Comparing secondary self-reporting data from monozygotic (MZ) (n=462) and dizygotic (DZ) (n=721) twins, authors found perpetation of IPV could be explained by genetic factors. These factors accounted for approximately 50% of the variance for the forms of violence measured and, furthermore, IPV was not found to be attributed to the shared environment (one aspect of which included environment/context raised in) (Barnes et al, 2013). Conversely, Pittner et al (2019) found that the influence of the shared environment mediated the perpetration of physical abuse, although they suggested that genetic factors significantly accounted for the perpetration of emotional abuse.

Research by Anda et al (2006) drew upon secondary data from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study to explore the enduring effects of various forms of early adversity, including abuse. Authors identified a dose-response effect and as adversities increased, so did impairments, including: impaired 'memory of childhood' (p.181) (indicative of impairments to hippocampal functioning); experiences of panic and hallucinations (suggestive of '*alterations in hippocampal and/or prefrontal cortical function'* (p.181)); sexual behaviours, poor anger control, and perpetration of IPV (which authors suggest may indicate developmental problems with the amygdala brain region). In a similar vein, Bellis et al (2012) maintain the early years are formative for brain development, with experiences 'shaping' children's brains, and adversity impacting on children's '*risks of involvement in violence in adolescence and adulthood'* (p.27). Aligning with these ideas, discussing the potential consequences of extreme stress, Shonkoff and Garner (2012) suggest *'the developing architecture of the brain can be impaired in numerous ways that create a*

weak foundation for later learning, behaviour, and health' (p.236). Like Anda et al's (2006) work, a wealth of literature involving early adversity hinges on the vulnerability-stress framework which emphasises the biological and neurophysiological effects of stress. These investigations typically consider that stress induced by childhood trauma can adversely affect the development, structure, and functional processes of the brain and nervous system (e.g. Frodl et al, 2010; Gillespie & Nemeroff, 2007; Panzer, 2008; Schore, 2001; Shonkoff & Garner, 2012; Van der Kolk, 2003; Vythilingam et al, 2002), and therefore see stress as a mediating factor in children's short-, mid- and long-term developmental outcomes.

Research into the biological effects of childhood trauma highlights the long-term damage that extreme stress during childhood can cause. Evidence from research in this area has filtered down into more accessible, popular literature such as 'Why Love Matters: How Affection Shapes a Baby's Brain' by Gerhardt (2004), further raising awareness of the consequences of childhood trauma and early adversity. The focus on the importance of infancy for providing the foundation for outcomes across the lifespan has become a mainstay of understandings of development, a notion drawn upon in policy and practice, further embedding into public consciousness the detrimental consequences of non-normative childhoods. However, the significance of infancy is, to an extent, challenged by Narayan et al's (2017) work, which found that exposure to interparental violence in infancy (0-24 months) did not did not significantly predict later involvement in relationships characterised by violence, whereas exposure in toddlerhood/preschool (25-64 months of age) did. Other scholars have found evidence indicating exposure to violence/abuse in mid-late childhood is more significant a risk factor than in early childhood for later involvement in violence. For instance, investigating the 'cycle of maltreatment' (defined as physical, emotional or sexual abuse) via prospective data, Thornberry and Henry (2013) did not find 'childhood-limited maltreatment' (from birth to 11 years) to be a statistically significant determinant of later perpetration, whereas maltreatment continuing or beginning in adolescence (12-17 years) was significant.

Within the biological literature, exposure in childhood and subsequent perpetration in adulthood is generally framed as an interaction between genes *and* environment (Kundakovic & Champagne, 2015; Widom & Brzustowicz, 2006), rather than having only a biological basis. This increasingly seems to be the case, perhaps influenced by the burgeoning field of epigenetics, which *'illustrates the processes by which environmental conditions in early life structurally alter DNA, providing a*

physical basis for the influence of the perinatal environmental signals on phenotype over the life of the individual' (Meaney, 2010). Put more simply, Baylin and Hughes (2016) summarise epigenetics as a process in which *'good care and poor care can either wake up or silence genes to orchestrate the structural development of the child's brain in accordance with the nature of care the child is sensing'* (p.13). The consideration of environment and genes and the interplay of both allows the dichotomy of the nature-versus-nurture debate to be traversed, and highlights the complexity and indirect pathways from family biology and family sociology to intergenerational continuity of violence/victimisation (Charney, 2012).

Epigenetics is still in its infancy and, as Kundakovic and Champagne (2015) maintain, the processes and mechanisms that induce and create epigenetic effects are still not fully understood. Interestingly, in their literature review, the authors debate the evolutionary basis for IGT and the possible benefits to survival and maintenance that transmission may have for the family line, for example, helping to prepare offspring to thrive in particular contexts (Kundakovic & Champagne, 2015). Asen and Fonagy (2017) similarly discuss the possible adaptive functions of IGT of aggression, expressed in the parent-child relationship and serving to enable *'the child's mind and body to become prepared for later violent competition for resources'* (p.14). Kundakovic and Champagne (2015) suggest that while transmission might be of a more obvious benefit to *'species with short lifespans'* (p.150), as contexts between each generation are likely to remain relatively stable, it might be of less value to species that live longer, where there is greater variation in contexts between generations.

Relevance to Present Study & Critique

While much of the biological literature appears deterministic in its emphasis on the harms and, in some cases, the irredeemable damage caused by early adversity, some authors have highlighted the role of resilience and possibilities for amelioration. For example, Tottenham (2014) asserts that while development might be subject to particular 'sensitive periods', *'[t]he brain retains plasticity throughout life, so experiences at all ages have the potential to shape neural phenotypes'* (p.122). Biological research comes under scrutiny for its methodological limitations, and scholars Heller and LaPierre (2012) suggest that in terms of understanding biological, physiological and neurological processes, knowledge is limited by *'current research technology'* and thus emphasise the importance of maintaining a *'balanced view that takes into account what we know against what we do not yet know'* (p.93), and so invites such research to be viewed with caution.

Conclusion

Research into the mechanisms and pathways of IGT of family violence makes up a substantial proportion of the literature. This chapter explored evidence for three of the key proposed mechanisms: social learning theory (the most commonly drawn upon mechanism); attachment; and biological explanations. The mechanisms discussed here locate transmission within the family system. Social learning theory centres on the immediate family environment. Attachment theory similarly focuses on the family, but more specifically emphasises the role of the caregiver-infant dyadic relationship for informing later relational patterns. Biological explanations of IGT are more complex and diverse in their focus, but nonetheless (with the exception of epigenetics), generally speaking, hone in on the individual and their early experiences, locating these factors as having the potential to create susceptibility to violence/victimisation. Mechanisms discussed illustrate how explanations for transmission tend to be looked for within the micro-system, at an individual and family level. The result is that transmission is portrayed as a product of the family, a notion which decontextualises families from their historical and socio-cultural contexts. This highlights a need in the evidence-base for research which explores the role that ecological factors might play in transmission. Indeed, this gap in the evidence-base provides the rationale for the present research, which aims to contribute by enabling participants the option to consider contextual factors in addition to family processes in their accounts of violence in multiple generations.

The first section of this chapter examined several of the discursive features of the literature involving transmission and its risks. This included consideration of the way transmission is represented; its connotations with disease, the framing of transmission as the status quo, and assumptions around dose-response which posit a positive correlation between violence exposure and likelihood of transmission. The productive effect of the kinds of language used around transmission is it engenders an individualised and stigmatising explanation of violence within multiple generations. The language used and the implications of it warrant investigation, and yet literature searches conducted as part of this present study did not reveal any research exploring IGT of family violence using a discursive approach. This highlights a gap in the evidence which this present research aims to address, providing a discourse analysis of accounts of violence in multiple generations, considering how they reproduce and challenge dominant understandings of IGT.

This chapter focused on the way transmission is conceptualised, including proposed mechanisms and the risks of transmission. The third and final part of the literature review will follow in the proceeding chapter (Chapter 4), it will examine the methodological limitations of the evidence-base and provide a rationale for the present study.

Chapter 4

Literature Review: Part 3

Designs and Methodologies of Previous Studies

Introduction

One of the central challenges made to the IGT of family violence evidence-base is that it is beset with methodological problems. This has been evidenced in various literature reviews and meta-analyses which have highlighted serious methodological and analytical flaws in the literature (e.g. Abramovaite et al, 2015; Ertem et al, 2000; Haselschwerdt et al, 2017; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Kimber et al, 2018; Thornberry et al, 2012; Widom, 1989b). The field is dominated by quantitative research, and it is this area that largely comes under fire for methodological issues. Quantitative studies are more readily included within literature reviews, and so are arguably more vulnerable to stringent and detailed examination than qualitative studies are. Within this section, I outline the main methodological issues including those involving definition, measurement, and study design.

Several literature reviews have suggested that methodological issues of IGT research are so great they undermine the validity of the research and credibility of findings. Interestingly, it has been suggested by various scholars that studies purporting to have identified significant findings in support of IGT are those most likely to have methodological problems and design weaknesses, whereas those stronger studies are typically less likely to identify significance and are '*less supportive of the hypothesis*' (Abramovaite et al, 2015, p.164). For instance, commenting on the moderate relationship between exposure and perpetration/victimisation often claimed by researchers in the field, Thornberry et al (2012) maintain that *'[w]hen the methodological rigor of this body of research is taken into account, however, the level of support for the hypothesis becomes, in our view, much less certain'* (pp.144-5). Similarly, Smith-Marek (2015) observed that '*as the publication date increased and as study quality increased, the strength of the reported effect sizes decreased*', implying that the more robust the study is, the less empirical support is found for IGT (p.511). Likewise, a meta-analysis by Assink and colleagues (2018) found some support for IGT

but due to the inconsistent quality of studies, authors were tentative in their interpretations. They reported that their *'review showed that study quality is negatively related to effect size magnitude'* (p.143) which, like those cited above, indicates that stronger studies have been less likely to observe significant associations between exposure and subsequent perpetration/victimisation.

Ertem et al (2000) conducted a methodological review of the literature involving 'generational continuity of child physical abuse'. Authors established a framework which consisted of eight methodological standards. This model was hypothetically applied to the articles in order to systematically evaluate the quality and robustness of methodologies used. The eight standards included 'equal demographic and clinical susceptibility', 'clear description of abuse', 'avoidance of recall or detection bias', 'ensuring non-abuse of controls', 'clear definition of outcome', 'adequate control for intervening variables', and finally, 'clear description of person who abused' (pp. 815-816). When set against these 'methodological standards', Ertem et al (2000) identified a number of issues with the 10 articles included in the review; an inconsistency in definitions of abuse, a lack of consideration to whether or not controls had experienced abuse themselves (or at least a lack of reporting of this issue). Additionally, the majority of the papers (n=6) had not provided a clear description of who had perpetrated the abuse, and whether the parents enrolled on the research were victims or perpetrators. This may have been an oversight in the process of reporting, but if it was unidentified and unmanaged in the research process, it could have either facilitated or silenced reports of violence depending on whether the parent accompanying the child was the victim or perpetrator. Authors identified only one article that met all eight standards, and thus called into question the scientific validity, the consistency, and robustness of the continuity of violence literature.

Building on the work of Ertem et al (2000), Thornberry and colleagues (2012) conducted a systematic methodological review of IGT of maltreatment literature. The authors established a methodological framework to assess articles, this included 11 criteria which they attest were '*not overly rigorous*' (p.145), but which encompassed (to name a few), '*representative samples, clear conceptual definitions, measures with validity and reliability, the use of prospective data*', and '*control for obvious confounding variables*' (p.145). The review included 47 articles which predominantly reported significant findings in support of the 'cycle of maltreatment hypothesis' (p.135). Thornberry and colleagues observed that '*few of them satisfy[ied] the basic*

methodological criteria that the authors established; indeed, even the stronger studies in this area only meet about half of them' (p.135). The authors uncovered problems in the field, describing the body of literature as 'methodologically weak' (p.135), and suggesting that it was generally inadequate in its ability to determine IGT. Thornberry et al concluded that the literature *'does not provide a definitive test of the cycle of maltreatment hypothesis'* (p.135), and that in consideration of the issues identified, '*it is very difficult to reach any firm conclusion about the cycle of maltreatment hypothesis'* (p.145). Finally, they pointed out, in a somewhat damning summary, that in spite of the general acceptance of IGT of maltreatment, this theory '*rests on a very shallow body of scientific evidence that suffers from fundamental methodological weaknesses'* (p.145). Thus, according to Thornberry and colleagues (2012), when weighed against the empirical evidence, which has not been able to capture the hypothesis of IGT empirically in ways that are without serious methodological problems, it renders the general level of acceptance IGT receives somewhat disproportionate.

In their review, Moriarty and Parsons-Pollard (2008) suggest that very few IGT of violence articles (2/12 included in their review) were able to meet their criteria for methodological rigour. They suggest that the majority (n=10) were methodologically problematic, '*making the studies less than sound and thus calling into question the findings'* (p.331). This sentiment has been echoed by various authors, for example, Widom (1989a) maintained in her seminal work that '*methodological problems substantially restrict knowledge of the long-term consequences of childhood victimization'* (p.160). Similarly, Abramovaite et al (2015) observes the discrepancy in the apparent empirical support for IGT and the methodological flaws that threaten to call it into question, attesting that under examination, '*it is difficult to conclusively suppor*t' the hypothesis (p.171). Haselschwerdt et al's (2017) attempt at a review uncovered so much 'methodological variability' and 'too little methodological complexity' (p.1), they were prevented from making reasonable comparisons across studies, and so concluded that they were unable to conduct a meaningful review of the literature.

As illustrated here, reviews have unveiled methodological issues and, in turn, undermined supposed significant support for IGT. On the contrary, two authors (Kimber et al, 2018; Madigan et al, 2019) found that for the most part, methodological quality of the studies included in their reviews did not destabilise the significance of findings. Madigan and colleagues (2019) largely

found that '*the strength of the intergenerational transmission of maltreatment does not vary as a function of study methodological quality*' (p.39). The authors suggested that this was the case in relation to articles relating to various forms of violence, but not, however, with the evidence-base involving physical abuse, in which case, as studies increased in quality (and reduced in methodological issues), effect sizes weakened (Madigan et al, 2019). Similarly, Kimber et al (2018) broadly concurred with the significance identified by the majority of the articles included in their systematic review, stating that their '*synthesis reveals a significant and positive association between child exposure to physical IPV and the perpetration of physical IPV in adulthood*' (p.284). They were cautious in this assertion though, making it clear that while methodological issues did not undermine the significance of studies, they did prevent the authors from making conclusive assertions regarding IGT.

4.1. Issues of Definition and Measurement

Criticism has been levelled at the operational terminology relating to violence, with various authors arguing that violence in its myriad of aggregated forms is either defined differently across the literature or is left undefined (Herzberger, 1990; Kimber et al, 2018; Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008; Newcomb & Locke, 2001; Thornberry et al, 2012). As a consequence, the literature suffers from a 'lack of uniformity' because behaviours that constitute, for instance, 'abuse' and 'neglect', are defined differently across studies (Moriarty and Parsons-Pollard, 2008, p.335). This ambiguity hinders interpretations of findings, and the lack of continuity between studies impairs the possibility of making comparisons with other potentially salient research (Thornberry et al, 2012).

Measurement of violence is notoriously difficult using any methodology (Knox & Monaghan, 2003; Jansen, 2012), in part because of the co-occurrence of multiple forms of abuse (Newcomb & Locke, 2001; Renner & Slack, 2006; Tutty, 2008), and overlap with other social disadvantages and environmental risk factors (Ireland & Smith, 2009; Shook, 1999). Quantifying violence - measuring the frequency, magnitude and effects - have also been raised as potential challenges to the validity and reliability of quantitative research (Hogan & O'Reilly, 2007). Furthermore, the complexity of relationships and context is difficult to capture using quantitative measurement and so risks leaving data decontextualised, and obscuring the richness of personal accounts.

Various scholars have bemoaned the lack of clarity given in research into the ways violence and abuse are being measured (Kimber et al, 2018; Thornberry et al, 2012). Criticism of this nature has been aimed at one of the commonly used data collection tools, the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus, 1979). The CTS has been widely used in quantitative violence research (Black et al, 2010; Edwards et al, 2013; Gover et al, 2008; Herzberger, 1990), and in IGT research, where it has been used to capture both 'exposure to' and 'perpetration of' violence. Nearly a quarter of the studies included in Madigan et al's (2019) review utilised 'some variant' of the CTS (p.32); 15 out of the 19 studies included in Kimber and colleagues (2018) review used the CTS; and 15 out of the 16 studies included in Haselschwerdt et al's (2017) review also used a version of the CTS. The CTS (and its iterations) has been subject to criticism for its oversimplification of violence and its inability to capture a range of aspects that together could build a more detailed picture of the process and context of violence (Gadd et al, 2003; Murshid & Murshid, 2018). CTS focuses on discrete incidents of violence, but has sparked controversy for its limited capacity to capture meaning and motive – including whether violence is used in self-defence or in offensive attack (Edwards et al, 2013; Franklin & Kercher, 2012; Gover et al, 2008); and for neglecting severity, frequency and duration of violence (Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Haselschwerdt et al, 2017).

According to Stark (2007), the CTS reflects its ontological roots within a sociological 'family violence' perspective in its emphasis on the family, and by situating violence as a product of dysfunctional family dynamics and pathology, and the family as responsible for violence in subsequent generations. In this perspective, violence tends to be located as a familial issue not a gendered one, the result of which is to position violence as a gender symmetrical issue. The CTS reflects this in its inability to capture the gendered dynamics or directions of violence and, consequently, it perpetuates the notion of violence as equally affecting males and females. The notion of gender symmetry has been strongly countered by feminist scholars who have asserted, with striking clarity, that perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse are most likely to be males (Johnson, 2005; McFeely et al, 2013). As well as gendered differences in the perpetration of violence, a host of authors indicate that such differences are evident in the frequency, severity, types of violence used, and in the impact of abuse (Hester, 2009; Johnson, 2005; Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007).

Stark (2007) suggests that '[t]here is solid evidence that men injure women far more often than women injure men and use the most severe forms of violence much more frequently' (p.97). One such piece of evidence can be found in Hester's (2009) research into police recorded domestic violence incidents. Hester examined records to identify gendered differences in victims and perpetrators. Incidents recorded by police showed that male perpetrators were more likely to use physical violence, verbal abuse, threat, and harassment against their partner than were female perpetrators. They were also more likely to damage their partner's property, whereas women were more likely to damage their own property and to use a weapon against their partner (Hester, 2009). Drawing on these findings, Hester concluded that the women were subject to more severe, more intense, and more frequent domestic violence from their male partners than male victims were from female-perpetrated violence. Lombard (2013) writes of the gendered distinctions in the impact of violence, suggesting it is more detrimental to the 'health, life and general wellbeing' of female victims (p.190). Gendered differences in impact may partially be explained by the context that is created in men's and women's violence. For instance, Johnson (2005) suggests the generation of fear or 'terror' that accompanies male violence towards women is 'quite rare when women are violent toward their male partners' (p.1129). Echoing this, Lombard (2013) states that 'men are less likely to live in fear of violence against them and it does not impact upon their daily lives as it does with female victims' (p.188). The notion of gender symmetry is undermined by feminist scholars in their assertion that domestic abuse is, in a host of ways, asymmetrical - in perpetration and in impact.

Perhaps even less informative than the CTS, is the dichotomous systems of measurement some studies have introduced into their data collection mechanisms. Like the CTS, this method also appears to be relatively commonplace. Nearly a third of the studies (5/16) included in Haselschwerdt et al's (2017) review asked respondents whether or not they had been exposed to violence using 'yes' or 'no' formats. In their interviews with children and young people, Askeland and associates (2011) asked closed questions oriented towards violence in order to code experiences in dichotomous ways – as either 'exposed' or 'not exposed'. The authors considered violence by type, and in relation to physical violence, asked participants *'whether they ever had experienced physical abuse such as being hit, shaken, shoved, pinched, or similar'* (p.1101). Without being able to elaborate on their answers - detailing the perceived motive, the context, and who perpetrated the behaviour - the ambiguity of these questions and their all-encompassing range risks children being categorised as 'exposed' to 'physical violence', even if for example they were pinched by a sibling in play. This binary conceptualisation of violence and abuse as either

experienced or not is problematic because it risks inadvertent miscategorisation, and an over-inflation of numbers of participants exposed. Furthermore, like the CTS, this binary method of categorisation captures and presents an overly sanitised and crisp tale of violence, erasing the messiness, the dysfunction and complex dynamics - the general relational and contextual milieu (Newcomb & Locke, 2001). Lastly, this method creates a framework which neglects to account for severity/frequency/duration etc, and which obfuscates the relevance of these aspects in the outcomes/impacts of violence and the mediating role they might play in continuity.

In its preoccupation with nominal data, the difficulties of measuring violence described here present a challenge mainly for quantitative researchers in the field. As discussed, qualitative research makes up a small percentage of the evidence-base. Furthermore, the voices of those who have experienced violence are generally underrepresented within the body of violence literature, and although there is an increasing focus on qualitative enquiry (Alexander et al, 2016; Buckley et al, 2007; Callaghan et al, 2016; 2018; Collis, 2013; Hester, 2007; Hogan & O'Reilly, 2007; McGee, 2005; Øverlien, 2010; Swanston et al, 2014), in IGT study, the personal accounts of those who have experienced family violence remain relatively eclipsed. This is particularly the case regarding those affected by violence in multiple generations. This present study aims to circumvent the issues of measurement and to address the dearth of qualitative literature in the field by examining personal accounts of violence in multiple generations.

4.2. Study Design: Retrospective versus Prospective

The methodological strength of studies built around retrospective data, such as self-reports and interviews, has been called into question, primarily due to problems associated with memory recall. This is not an issue isolated only to quantitative research. It has also been one of the principal criticisms of qualitative methods, especially interview-based studies which typically rely on retrospective accounts. It has been posited that experiences of trauma may affect memory recall, inducing partial or complete amnesia, denial, or the delayed recall of associated events (Elliott, 1997; Enns et al, 1997; Harvey & Herman, 1994; Swick et al., 2017; Widom & Morris, 1997; Widom & Shepard, 1996). These kinds of impairments in memory and, particularly, memory retrieval, have previously been attributed to the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Caruth, 1995). However, Scheiner et al (2014) propose that psychiatric PTSD comorbidities, like depression, may

exacerbate impaired verbal learning beyond noncomorbid PTSD, affecting the organisation and, in turn, the retrieval of information.

Since memory 'accuracy' is embedded in ideas of truth and reality, it is of greater concern to research adopting a positivist ontological stance, which is dependent upon the accurate recall and measurement of incident, duration, frequency and severity. Challenges in the domain of memory recall have largely been aimed at research reliant upon retrospective self-reports, especially where a significant period of time has elapsed between events occurring and attempts to recall them (Henry et al, 1994; Jaffee et al, 2013; Widom, 1989b). There is some debate around the possible effects retrospective reporting might have on data. Thornberry et al (2012) state that retrospective reports *'are likely to lead to a high rate of false negatives, that is, the underreporting of maltreatment'* (p.137), whereas Moriarty and Parsons-Pollard (2008), suggest that 'overreporting' is a possible consequence (p.343). Henry et al (1994) recommend retrospective reporting *'[...] not be used to test hypotheses that demand precision in estimating event frequencies and event dates'* (p.92). Thus, according to the authors discussed here, in terms of 'accurate' nominal measurement of exposure to violence, as has been the purview of quantitative research in the field, retrospective studies encompass methodological issues that limit what inferences can be made from findings. At a fundamental level, the issue of 'accurate' memory recall is an example of a criticism grounded in a realist objectivist perspective. However, as I will discuss in the subsequent 'Methods' chapter, this present study is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology, and conceptualises reality as multifactorial and discourse as socially constructed. Thus, this study sees interview material not as an example of participants' expressions of reality or articulations of fact, but as a co-production of socially constructed discourses involving IGT. Accordingly, in its relationship to reality, the notion of the 'accuracy' of retrospective memory recall is not a concern of this present study.

In the field of IGT of violence, longitudinal studies, particularly in the form of prospective studies, are held up as the gold standard. Prospective studies track participants 'in time rather than looking back' (Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008, p.343). To a large extent they mitigate the issue of memory recall, and as such are considered more 'accurate' than retrospective studies (Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008; Thornberry et al, 2012). In spite of this, there are relatively few prospective studies investigating IGT of violence (Smith et al, 2011), and instead they are largely retrospective and cross-sectional or correlational in design (Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008; Thornberry et al,

2012; Widom et al, 2015). The most important distinction is that longitudinal and prospective designs enable inferences about causality, whereas cross-sectional studies do not (Black et al, 2010; Forke et al, 2018; Hellman et al, 2018; Murshid & Murshid, 2018; Narang & Contreras, 2005). Cross-sectional studies capture variables at one time, while prospective studies implement data collection across different time points (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Cross-sectional studies are vulnerable to the elision of confounding variables. This is a most significant problem with IGT research and requires a great deal more attention and interrogation than it currently receives. This is problematic because even though causality cannot be determined in cross-sectional studies, a relationship between data no matter how tenuous can be constructed. For example, Howitt and Cramer (2008) maintain that cross-sectional studies '*often seek to explain one variable in terms of other variables [...] they assume that one variable is the criterion or dependent variable while the other variables are predictor or independent variables*' (p.212), and '*the relationships obtained are often used to support potential causal interpretations*' (p.202). Various authors have stressed the importance of adopting a cautious approach in relation to interpreting cross-sectional data and making conclusions around relationships between variables, ensuring that it is viewed as providing a 'snapshot' only (Madigan et al, 2019; Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008). Furthermore, Hellman et al (2018) argues that '*cross-sectional data can neither disentangle the temporal order between exerting parental violence and current sociodemographic variables*' (p.287). As Hellman suggests, cross-sectional data does not provide specific information about the influence of time nor context –the sociodemographic information. Data presented through cross-sectional studies on IGT then is somewhat decontextualised – potentially absent of a whole host of variables - the proximal encounters with violence, the temporal aspects, and of the more distal socio-cultural influences.

Typically assumed, at least in so far as the social learning model, is the relationship between 'exposure' (represented as 'cause') and subsequent perpetration/victimisation (portrayed as 'effect'). Studies designed to explore this supposed cause and effect via cross-sectional studies may only confirm this association and, in doing so, compound troubling dominant assumptions of IGT. By interpreting a linear association, in cross-sectional studies of this nature, it risks obscuring confounding variables and risk factors that might interact and influence this apparent effect of continuity. The danger is that articulating the merest hint of a relationship between exposure and subsequent perpetration/victimisation is an idea susceptible to being filtered into discourses, especially public, professional and policy – discursive arenas where limitations are less likely to be examined (than in academia) and more likely to become mainstreamed. As touched upon in part

one of this review, Herzberger (1990) suggests that the practice of communicating IGT of violence research findings minus the methodological problems has 'seriously affected the thinking of researchers, policymakers, and laypersons' (p.534), transforming a theoretical concept into 'fact', even though the evidence-base is far from persuasive.

This present study takes a qualitative approach to studying IGT and so bypasses issues associated with the collection of nominal data, of determining variables measured, and of making inferences on statistical data. Methods employed traverse some of the common criticisms of research in the field, such as those discussed above. For example, to avoid perpetuating the portrayal of relationships (and violence within relationships) as binary (either violent or not), as static, and of individuals as polarised (victim versus perpetrator), methods for this present study allow a past and present examination of violence within relationships. This enables any changes and evolutions in relational dynamics across past and present timepoints to be documented visually and explored through interview accounts. Moreover, methods are sympathetic to an ecological view, enabling the family to be considered in context, and allowing the possible role of influences, mediating and moderating factors beyond the family to be represented.

4.3. A Social Process Decontextualised

As illustrated in chapter three, the most frequently cited pathway for transmission is social learning. Viewing the family as '*a major socializing institution*' (Black et al, 2010, p.1034), '*the biggest single influence on children's lives*' (Casey, 2012a, p.46), this theory typically has a narrow conceptualisation of social processes, concerned with family but neglecting broader social context operating beyond. This family-oriented focus is reflected in the evidence-base, with a general lack of attention given to sociodemographic and contextual confounding variables (Sidebotham et al, 2001; Widom, 2017). In their meta-analysis, Kitzmann and colleagues (2003) articulated a sense of amazement at the small percentage of articles including confounding variables and risk factors; '*[l]ess than 20% controlled for SES, less than 10% controlled for general stress, and amazingly, 0% controlled for parent substance abuse*' (p.348). Similarly, Ertem et al (2000) observed the lack of attention given to sociodemographic factors, family characteristics, mental illness and foster care (amongst others). Although there is a lack of attention given to contextual factors such as these, a number of authors maintain that they likely play a role in/mediate/explain IGT of violence (Black et al, 2010; Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Farmer and Callan, 2012; Fergusson, et al, 2006; Herzberger,

1990; Moriarty & Parsons-Pollard, 2008; Sidebotham et al, 2001; WHO, 2007; Widom et al, 2015; Widom, 1989a,c). Research into social process has historically had a narrow focus (Parker, 1989), and as Bronfenbrenner (1979b) remarks of Psychology *'[o]ur science is peculiarly one-sided […] [w]e know much more about children than about the environments in which they live or the processes through which these environments affect the course of their development'* (p.844). The individualisation of IGT through family-centric investigations/interpretations means that families are constructed in artificial ways: represented as operating within social vacuums, as separate from the complexity of their ecological systems, only influenced by processes operating within the family, isolated and untouched by wider social and structural processes.

Of the (119) articles retained through systematic literature searches, only a small minority (n=4) claimed to examine violence and IGT via an ecological or multi-level lens. Of these, two applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as an organisational framework for structuring reviews of the literature (Hong et al, 2011; Liao et al, 2011). That is, they both set studies into the various ecological levels for which they pertained (e.g. micro-, meso-, exo-, macro, and chrono-systems). Neither of these reviews considered the interactions between respective levels, e.g. the impact that factors beyond the micro-system had on continuity, rather they only located studies within relevant ecological levels. The other two ecological articles identified were empirical research pieces both of which looked at risk and protective factors (Leve et al, 2015; Valentino et al, 2012). Leve and colleagues (2015) described an examination of risk factors for IGT of maltreatment within participants' social ecologies, but methodologies largely focused on the micro-system through an analysis of 'family contextual risk' (e.g. family income, divorce, involvement in crime), 'individual characteristics', and 'partner risk'. Similarly, Valentino et al (2012) looked at risk and protective factors of the IGT of child abuse within micro- and exo-systems, but honed in on specific aspects operating within these domains, such as 'authoritarian parenting attitudes' (micro-system) and 'community violence' (exo-system). Drawing on their own conceptual/empirical work, a number of scholars have concluded a need for ecological analyses of violence to enable exploration of broader societal, cultural and community influences that might play a role in facilitating violence and its transmission (e.g. Belsky, 1980; Barbour, 2012; Dardis et al, 2015; Herzberger, 1996; Langeland & Dijkstra, 1995; Sidebotham et al, 2001; Widom, 2017). While there is support for a social ecological perspective, I did not identify any research which enabled consideration of multiple levels: their interactions, how factors operating within broader systems might impact the micro-system and more specifically, influence, reinforce or attenuate violence in multiple

generations of the family. Nor did I identify any research that considered how factors in ecological systems are integrated into verbal accounts of violence in multiple generations, as this study intends to do. Exploration of ecologies would ensure that families are located and studied in context, and broaden understanding of the private-public interplay in (dis)continuities.

Conclusion

Methodological weaknesses in the IGT of violence literature predominantly revolve around definition, measurement, and study design. For Moriarty and Parsons-Pollard (2008), these methodological issues undermine the evidence-base to such an extent that 'the vast majority of the research is discounted' (p.335). Thus far, research in the field has predominantly involved nominal investigation, using retrospective data and cross-sectional study design, and in some instances has involved methods which capture histories of violence through simplistic binary 'exposed' versus 'non-exposed' categories. Generally, this quantitative evidence-base leaves respondents' data highly decontextualized. Evidence is individualised, with a predominant focus on the micro-system, often to the exclusion of confounding variables related to socio-cultural influences. This focus is reflective of the theory of social learning which emphasises the family as a site of learning and, as a consequence, represents IGT as an issue borne out of and sustained within the family system alone. This narrow focus of social learning neglects the interconnection and interaction between community, socio-cultural and family processes. Furthermore, it facilitates the pathologisation and problematisation of families affected by violence.

This chapter has highlighted that the principal challenge made to the IGT of family violence evidence-base is that it is beset by methodological problems. In subsequent parts of the thesis, I extend this critique further, beyond the methodological issues of the research, to show how IGT also presents a conceptual and political concern which requires scholars and practitioners in the field to reconceptualize violence within multiple generations of the family, and calls on us to re-think taken-for-granted assumptions of IGT.

Literature Review Conclusion and Rationale for Present Study

This literature review was formed of three chapters. The first, explored the mixed findings in the evidence-base and demonstrated that empirical research has not consistently or conclusively been

able to provide support for IGT. Part One of the review also illustrated how, in spite of the lack of empirical consensus, discursive representations of the evidence-base as a whole, often portray it as conclusive in its support for IGT. This portrayal contributes to the transformation of IGT from a theoretical construction into a taken-for-granted truth.

Part Two explored how the risk of transmission is framed discursively, and highlighted the need for future research to examine and take seriously discourse involving IGT. It considered the mechanics of such discourses; the connotations they have with disease and contagion; how intergenerational (dis)continuity is represented; and how they align with individualised notions of the family. The possible implications of these discourses were considered: for portraying transmission as a real and probable phenomenon for families and as a threat to society; for constructing families in stigmatising and deterministic ways (as inevitable victims/perpetrators and as inevitable transmitters of victim/perpetrator behaviours to subsequent generations); and for precluding the image of positive futures for individuals and families affected by violence.

The third and final literature review chapter provided an overview and critique of the designs and methodologies often adopted in IGT of family violence research. The field in general, suffers from a lack of robust research and this chapter illustrated how serious methodological issues undermine the body of evidence. This chapter began to consider how research in the field is often informed by realist and positivist ontology and by objectivist epistemologies. In considering the limitations of these paradigms for understanding IGT, an argument was made for a social constructionist epistemology.

This present study seeks to address four key gaps and shortfalls in the evidence-base: a lack of qualitative research; a lack of inclusion of participants from families affected by violence in multiple generations; the tendency towards decontextualised data; and the lack of research into the discursive constructions of IGT. This present study will adopt a qualitative approach, interviewing individuals from families where violence has affected multiple generations. In order to counter dominant individualised study/discourse, qualitative interviews will involve visual methods aimed at contextualising family within broader ecological systems. Finally, this present study will adopt a constructionist approach, looking at the discursive constructions of participants' accounts of

violence within multiple generations and, more specifically, the ways they align and trouble dominant discourses and assumptions of IGT.

Chapter 5

Methodology

Introduction

Drawing on the literature review and the resultant rationale for the present study, this chapter outlines the research methods used in implementation. Formed of nine sections, in the first section, in order to provide some context, I revisit the aims and research questions guiding the study. The second section outlines the ontological and epistemological paradigms informing the research. The third, explores the research design and methods. The fourth, details the ethical considerations. The fifth, discusses the context of the service landscape in which recruitment took place. The sixth section introduces the cohort of participants, providing demographic and interview information. The seventh, outlines the procedure of recruiting/conducting interviews. The eighth, describes preparation of research material, and finally, before concluding this chapter, the ninth section provides a description of the analytic process.

5.1. Aims and Research Questions Revisited

This study adopts a discursive approach to individual semi-structured interviews with participants who have experienced violence in multiple generations of their families. Of particular interest are the ways participants construct their personal accounts, and draw upon and resist the hypothesis of IGT of family violence. The five aims and three research questions guiding the study (itemised in Chapter 1) are fundamentally concerned with representation and construction: of violence within multiple generations; of family and intimate relationships; of IGT; of conceptualisations of continuity and discontinuity; and of the possible influences within the family and beyond it on (dis)continuities. The proceeding sections detail the methods implemented in order to address the aims of the research and answer the research questions.

5.2. Ontology and Epistemology

As the literature review demonstrated, the empirical evidence-base for IGT of family violence remains inconclusive, and because it does not persuasively guide us one way or another regarding

the validity of IGT, it cannot be accepted as a universal truth. This present study adopts a cautious approach – neither entirely dismissive nor entirely accepting of the reality/truth of IGT of family violence. To clarify this position, it is important to revisit a point made in the introduction (Chapter 1) where I noted my intention to make a distinction (discursive and theoretical) in this study between 'IGT' and 'violence in multiple generations'. The discursive implications of 'IGT' are that violence/victimisation in one generation is produced as an outcome of violence/victimisation in a prior generation. On the other hand, 'violence in multiple generations' attends to the occurrence of violence in each generation descriptively and avoids linking them together to make causal inferences. Making this distinction prevents the automatic assumption of IGT, moving it into a position where it can be viewed as a theoretical hypothesis rather than a 'truth'.

Relativism would, to an extent, enable a stance neither fully accepting nor rejecting of IGT. Relativism is a philosophical paradigm that assumes there is one reality but does not discount the possibility of more, and which proposes that different versions of reality 'exist' through differing perceptions (Terry et al, 2017). Relativism views realities as constructed and as context-dependent (Kvale, 1994), this is in contrast to a realist (and positivist) ontological paradigm which views reality as stable, knowable and, often, untethered to time and context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Initially I rejected a realist (especially an absolutist) ontological stance and, as it enables an open view of possible versions of reality, I moved towards a relativist perspective. However, this study does not meet two of the main conditions for a relativist conceptualisation of reality. Firstly, it does not automatically assign equal value to different realities, in this case, of IGT**.** The rationale being that the hypothesis already receives a level of theoretical acceptance disproportionate to the scientific evidence and is often subject to truth claims which, as illustrated in the literature review, have implications for policy, practice, and families. Therefore, in avoidance of perpetuating such claims, this study adopts a view critical of 'blind acceptance' of IGT. Thus, it is not founded to maintain a relativist stance because each possible reality of IGT, as a phenomenon or as a construction, is not assigned equal value. Secondly, this study does not entirely discount 'the self'. By giving equal value to each possible reality, a relativist perspective makes it more problematic to make suggestions for social action, because if each reality is given equal credence, it disallows the possibility of favouring/rejecting one version over another (Burr, 1998). It also rules out the self, personal agency, and has implications for the ways we think about social categories (Parker, 1998). Some authors have adopted more tempered relativist positions, such as critical realism, which works to create social change (e.g. multi voice research by Olsen, 2012). This present study does make

suggestions for social action and it also does give (some) consideration to 'the self', that is, mainly to the ways 'the self', agency, resistance etc are constructed in participants' accounts. To this end, a purely relativist position cannot be claimed, and instead the ontological and epistemic stance of this present study might be better categorised as a tempered form of social constructionism.

In an attempt at ontological continuity, social constructionism provides the overarching framework for the study, setting the tone for epistemic, methodological and analytic approaches. For example, epistemology is underpinned by the philosophical assumptions of subjectivist, social constructionism, and considers that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed and reproduced through linguistic processes and communication (Edley, 2001; Gergen, 1973; 1985; 1999; Nightingale & Cromby, 2002; Raskin, 2002). Accordingly, interview material is viewed as a social production, and it is anticipated that the language used by participants when talking about familial relationships, violence within multiple generations, and IGT, as well as the various actors and roles members play (e.g. 'victims', 'perpetrators', 'mothers', 'fathers', 'children'), will be shaped by social constructions and will reproduce dominant discourses involving these aspects (Burr, 1999; Gergen, 1999). Furthermore, in continuity with the constructionist epistemic framings of my research, I consider that the processes (e.g. phases) and products (e.g. knowledge and meaning) of the research will be informed by an intersubjective, co-constructed, and socially constituted process of interaction (Band-Winterstein et al, 2014; Hedges, 2005). Hence, research material is seen as co-produced/negotiated in the context of the interview and the researcher-participant interaction (Kvale, 1994), subject, in part, to a plethora of intersecting factors e.g. the temporal and historic context of the interview, factors pertaining to the interview itself, such as the referral process, interview space, interview questions, and my overt and subtle responses in interview etc. Moreover, research material is viewed as reproduced from social discourses which inform the repertoire available to individuals to talk about violence within multiple generations, and which enable/disable what can/cannot be articulated and known about these aspects. The most pertinent focus of the study is the construction of accounts of violence in multiple generations and not determining the supposed reality of accounts. Accounts are not viewed as doxastic – as evidence of the excavation of participants' beliefs, phenomenologies, internal states, or intrapsychic processes, nor is it considered to be an expression of reality, especially not in absolutist ways, as constitutive of fact. Nonetheless, at key points during the thesis, I do reflect on the distinguishing differences of interpreting interview material through realist (absolutist) and

through constructionist lenses. I do this in order to illustrate the contrasting analyses and meanings that might be generated through these differing views.

5.3. Research Design and Methods

This section will outline the study design and the theoretical basis and rationale for selecting particular qualitative methods. This study adopts a pluralist qualitative design (Frost & Nolas, 2011) using complementary qualitative methods, including two forms of visual methods and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Visual methods, underpinned by systems theory, enabled the symbolic depiction of family composition, relational dynamics, and ecological systems, while interviews captured participants' verbal accounts of family violence. Collectively, methods lent themselves to addressing research questions oriented around the discursive and linguistic characteristics of participants' accounts of violence within multiple generations of their families.

5.3.1. Visual Methods

The present study used two forms of visual methods: genograms and ecomaps. The rationale for selecting these methods centred around two key factors. Firstly, genograms and ecomaps were chosen for their generative capacity; their ability to generate rich material both in raw visual form, and by facilitating participants' verbal accounts. Secondly, they were selected for their philosophical underpinnings, their emphasis on the individual-in-context, which aligns with the social constructionist epistemology of the study. Genograms situate the individual within the relational context of family, and ecomaps provide a mechanism for symbolising the family within its broader social and cultural context. Both visual methods required a symbolisation of people, relationships, and systems. It was anticipated that this symbolisation would help participants to communicate complex information, such as familial and extra-familial systems, rapidly and immediately, preventing the need for large amounts of descriptive information from having to be relayed verbally. This aids practitioners' understandings, supports interpretations and retention of such information and, in turn, positively contributes to the practitioner-client relationship (Altshuler, 1999; Burley, 2014; Mackay, 2015).

5.3.1.1. Genograms

The genogram is a visual depiction of multiple generations of a family (typically 3-5) (Alexander et al, 2018; Iverson et al., 2005). Structured like a family tree, members are positioned in ancestral descent from the earliest to the latest generation running vertically from top to bottom (see Fig. 1 for example, from Alexander et al, 2018, p.2). As well as representing the hierarchy of the family system and the location of members within the structure, genograms can incorporate objective demographic data, and subjective information, such as the relationships between members (Castoldi et al, 2006; Mackay, 2015; Watts and Shrader, 1998). An issue with intergenerationality and IGT more generally is that it is commonly conceptualised as a vertical and unidirectional process from adults to children (Punch, 2020; Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). While genograms are structured in accordance with this kind of intergenerational hierarchical framework, they also enable intra-generational relational dynamics to be documented such as those of siblings. Relational-types can be depicted in bi- or multi-directional ways which means they can capture dynamics running from 'bottom-up' and laterally, not only from 'top-down'. Using genograms together with ecomaps helps to avoid an emphasis on the site of the family that has sometimes been the tendency in research examining intergenerationality, and allows consideration of spaces, places, people, and institutions beyond (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). Genograms have traditionally been used as a clinical tool in systemic family therapy (Mackay, 2015; McGoldrick, 2016; McGoldrick et al, 2008; Rigazio-DiGilio & Kang, 2015), but are increasingly being utilised in other disciplines, including social work (Hartman, 1995; Piedra, 2016), medicine and health care (Leonidas & Santos, 2015; Werner-Lin & Gardner, 2009), and education (Crowell, 2017; Hardy & Laszloffy, 1995; Keiley et al, 2002). Due to their capacity to stimulate and organise information, genograms are increasingly being recognised for their ability to support data collection in research (Iverson et al, 2005; McGoldrick et al, 2008; Watts & Shrader, 1998).

Figure 1. Example Genogram
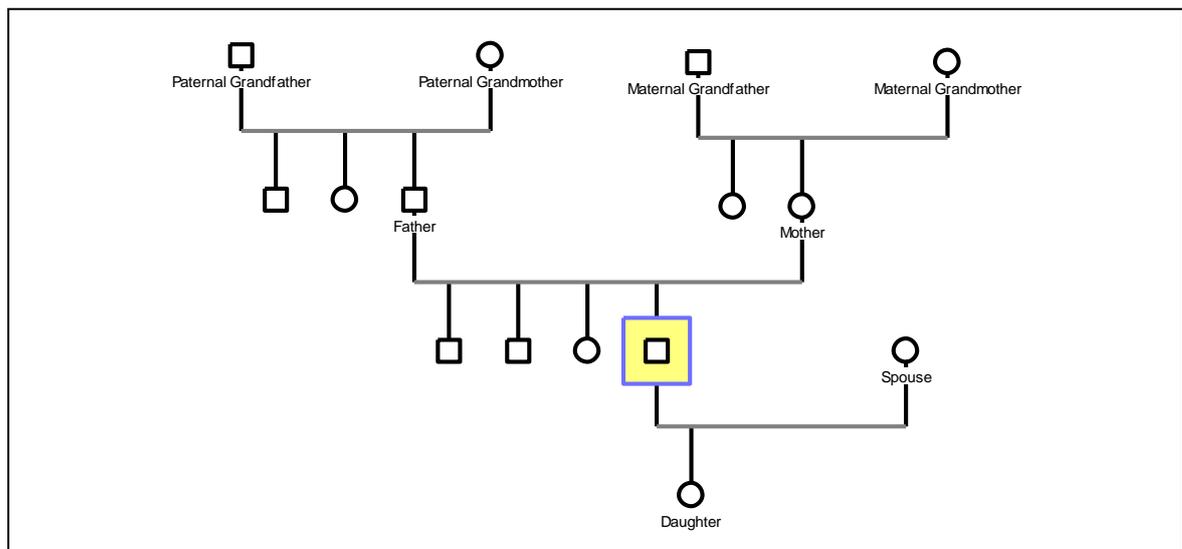
In this present study, genogram construction involved depicting family structure and the relational dynamics between members. Relational dynamics were, to an extent, informed by the genogram software I used. GenoPro (2011 edition) was used to electronically recreate participants' hand-drawn genograms as it enabled me to anonymise electronic versions, omitting all names and identifying information, while ensuring continuity in symbols and structures across participants' genograms. The symbols available to participants to represent relational dynamics were determined by the pre-set GenoPro Legend (Appendix 6) which encompassed 36 'emotional relationships' such as 'harmony', 'close', 'distant', and various forms of violence and abuse (aggregated and disaggregated) (see Appendix 7 for an example of a completed genogram by participant 'Sue'). While the software included a wide-range of relational-types, participants did not always feel able to represent their complex and changing relationships using these symbols. I discuss these restrictions, alternative notation techniques, and participants' reflections of genogram construction in a separate article (see Alexander et al, 2018).

Genograms provide a snapshot of a given time and, as such, are somewhat static, unable to capture fluctuations in family structure or relational dynamics over time (Deacon & Piercy, 2001; Friedman & Krakauer, 1992). In this present study, to enable transitions to be made visible and to avoid perpetuating notions of violence in families as enduring and static, I invited participants to create two genograms: one 'Retrospective', representing family during childhood; and another 'Active',

depicting the family at the point of interview. In addressing the key concerns of this study, it was hoped that temporal identification would provide dual benefits in the research process. Firstly, exploring how transactional dynamics and familial configuration might have shifted across two time points enabled participants to identify and reflect changes. Secondly, making participants aware of the static nature of genograms made their limitations transparent and inhibited the risk of emotional upset such an image could invoke (discussed further in 'Ethical Considerations').

5.3.1.2. Ecomaps

Ecological maps, otherwise known as 'Ecomaps', visually depict social systems in symbolic form (Baumgartner et al, 2012). They were originally developed by Hartman (1978) as a mechanism for social workers to assess families' support networks and gaps in support. They are rooted in ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner 1979a; 2005), which acknowledges '*life space*' (Germain, 1977; Hartman, 1978) – the contextual and environmental factors operating externally to, but influencing human development. Ecomaps represent systems operating on multiple levels, and the specific type/number of systems included can vary according to what is being examined. They often depict between three-five systems and incorporate 'Micro-' (individual, immediate familial), 'Meso-' (extra-familial, and community), 'Exo-' (organisations and services), and 'Macro-level systems' (broader institutional socio-political and economic) (Bennett & Grant, 2016; Bronfenbrenner 1976; 1977; 1979a; 1986; Pallatino et al, 2019; Woodgate et al, 2017), although there is variation around the aspects that each level encompasses. The theoretical underpinnings of the particular ecological model might determine the form ecomaps take. For example, Bronfenbrenner (1979a) envisaged 'nested' interconnected ecological systems, whereas others have conceptualised more interactional 'networked' models (Watling Neal & Neal, 2013). Ecomaps might be structured accordingly, using either an 'interacting' system of circles or 'nested' concentric circles.

As this study adopted Bronfenbrenner's model of ecology, in order for participants' self-system positionality to be clear within the final imagery, I decided to locate systems within the nested framework. Ecomaps were retrospective, aligning with the timeframe of participants' retrospective genograms. They were structured using three concentric circles, with the smallest, central circle representing individual and immediate family; the middle identifying extended family, community, services; and the largest, exterior circle representing broader socio-cultural systems (see Fig. 2 for example). As participants had gained familiarity using the 'emotional

relationships' of the GenoPro Legend, the same symbols were available for participants to use when constructing their ecomaps. They could use these symbols to connect systems, to show relationship type and strength, or alternatively, they could make their own textual notes (Hartman, 1978) (see Appendix 8 for an example of a completed ecomap by participant 'Amy').

Figure 2. Example Ecomap
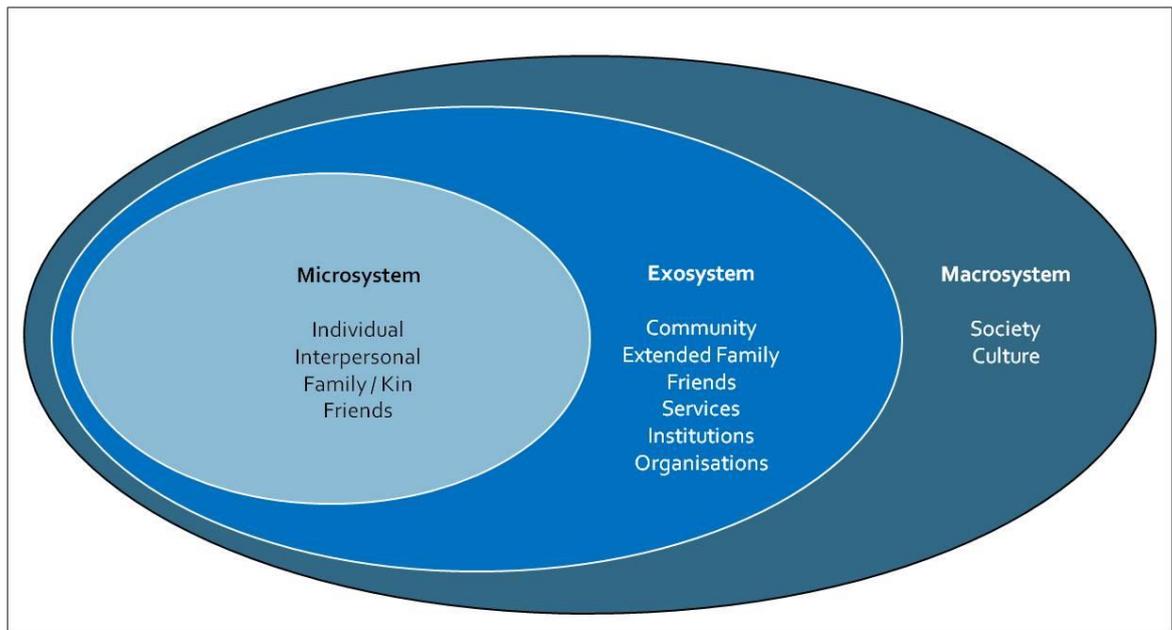
Ecomaps have a number of things in common with genograms. They both operate around conceptualisations of scale; genograms locate family members in a predominantly vertical hierarchy while ecomaps structure social systems as nested yet discrete, and interactional processes as operating horizontally. Marston and colleagues (2005) turn our attention to the problems associated with conceptualisations of scale. Focusing in particular on theorisation of social relations and processes, they critique the polarisation inherent in micro-macro conceptualisations (such that ecomaps are constructed upon), and suggest that it risks giving the impression of fixed boundaries/territories that do not necessarily exist in actuality. In research, (re-)producing the notion of separateness and segregation, marking differences and distinctions between things/phenomena/levels/systems/spaces/people etc, theoretically risks enabling political exploitation of such differences (Marston et al, 2005). However, with consideration of these issues, because discourses involving IGT of family violence persistently and pervasively focus on the family (as a distinct system occupying a distinct territory), what is most pertinent to this study is not so much the conceptualisation of scale, rather that space is opened up to participants;

that their accounts are not constrained by a sole focus on the family, but that they are able to draw upon the protective and precipitating factors beyond but influencing the family.

Various authors have advocated the combined use of some/all of the methods selected for this study (Iverson et al, 2005; Olsen et al, 2004; Rempel et al, 2007; Woodgate et al, 2017). In combination, genograms and ecomaps are complementary, each off-setting the limitations of the other. For example, because ecomaps are inherently concerned with the integration (and interaction) of the family system within its broader ecological constellation, they help to temper the risk of individualisation and the portrayal of the family as independent of socio-cultural and political influences that could result from a singular focus on the family (i.e. using genograms alone). Using genograms and ecomaps together helps maintain fidelity to the philosophical paradigms underpinning the current study. Iverson et al (2005) promotes their combined use as a mechanism for engaging with social constructionist understandings of reality, moving away from more realist perspectives. They maintain that when used together, genograms and ecomaps can promote greater 'systemic contextualisation' and, as such, greater understanding of and sensitivity towards people's own realities. Moreover, adopting an ecological approach through the use of ecomaps uncovers participants' positionality of self and other, providing a more 'situated understanding' (Woodgate et al, 2017) of violence within the family.

From an objectivist lens, genograms and visual methods have generally been criticised for being open to the subjective interpretation of the analyst (Banks, 2012; Rohrbaugh et al, 1992). Informed by the philosophical underpinnings of this study, research material is viewed in constructionist rather than realist ways. Visual methods were designed to function as graphic elicitation tools, used to anchor participants' interviews on intergenerationality and ecological contexts. They were not intended to be constructed for the purpose of analysis and are not analysed in isolation. Rather, they are indirectly embedded in interviews and analysis through the interaction that took place between verbal and visual methods during the interview process. In addition, some statistics from visual methods are provided later in this chapter.

5.3.2. Interviews
Interviews were chosen for their capacity to generate rich, detailed and nuanced material and for their ability to capture the kind of sensitive and complex material this study was concerned with

more readily than other methods, such as questionnaires would have capacity for (Forsey, 2012; Mason, 2006; Rabionet, 2011). Interviews were semi-structured (Mason, 2006) or 'open-ended' (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), and the interview schedule reflected this, encompassing four broad items and a total of 16 prompts (see Appendix 5). Questions invited participants to talk through their genograms and ecomaps, to reflect on relational dynamics within the family, their ecologies, and to share their thoughts on the occurrence of violence in multiple generations, IGT, and (dis)continuities.

Kvale (1994) suggests that some of the key criticisms of research interviews stem from the dichotomies of the quantitative-qualitative debate, debate emergent and reflective of the polarisations of objectivity and subjectivity rooted in western thought, debate which has historically prioritised positivist ideologies and the supposed 'objectivity' of quantitative research. One such criticism of interview-based research relates to the fallibility of memory recall in retrospection (as discussed earlier in this thesis – Chapter 4). This criticism stems from a particular ontological view of reality and of the value placed on memory 'accuracy' and, directed at qualitative research, it is an example of the projection of a realist/objectivist perspective onto a typically subjectivist paradigm. This study prioritises the construction of interview accounts of violence rather than determining constituents of 'truth' or 'accuracy' – which would be the purview of essentialist ontology and objectivist epistemology. Nonetheless, it could be argued that through the use of pluralist methodology and, in particular, visual methods, issues of memory were alleviated. They have the potential to evoke embodied memory (Mitchell et al, 2011; Prosser, 2013); genograms acting as a symbol of family; and ecomaps tapping into the spatial location and relational interactions between self, family, community and society. In this way, visual methods become relational and material anchor points from which memories of the family-in-context, and the '*affective memory of family ties*' could be stimulated (Fiaschini, 2017, p.94). Moreover, genograms and interviews allowed representation of circumstances at the time of interview, enabling examination of the 'here and now' not only the retrospective 'there and then'.

Kvale's (1994) criticism of interview research is that it is acontextual and individualistic, that it '*focuses on the individual and neglects its embeddedness within networks of social relations [...] it focuses on individual experiences decontextualized from their culture and history*' (p.171). This criticism further supports a case for the combined use of interviews with 'situational' visual

methods, such as genograms which locate the individual within the history of their family, and ecomaps which acknowledge the individual within its broad social and cultural ecological contexts. Without participants' verbal interview accounts though, neither of the visual methods are able to sufficiently provide the depth of information required to answer the research questions. The rationale then for adopting a pluralist study design (Frost & Nolas, 2011) is that visual methods supported interviews, generating research material, the detail and specificity of which may not be captured without them (Bennett & Grant, 2016; McCormick et al, 2008; McGoldrick et al, 2008).

5.4. Ethical Considerations

Research which explores violence brings with it inherent ethical concerns which need to be managed in study design and as the research process unfolds in order to reduce risk of harm and emotional distress to participants (Langford, 2000; Sullivan & Cain, 2004; WHO, 2001). This study was granted ethical approval by the University of Northampton's Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, and was accepted by the University of Stirling when the study was transferred there in 2017. The research itself was conducted in England and the PhD was transferred at the point of write-up. I adhered to the ethical standards of the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2009), and stored data in accordance with UK Data Protection Act (1998). To ensure participants were fully informed, prior to giving their consent, I met with each individual in person to explain verbally and in writing the purpose of the study, what participation would entail, and the ethical rights and protections they would be afforded.

5.4.1. Minimising Risks to Safety and Wellbeing

In violence research, the primary ethical concern is for the physical safety of participants and researchers who may be vulnerable to retaliatory violence if persons using violence against participants should discover disclosures of violence (Langford, 2000; Scerri et al, 2012; Sullivan & Cain, 2004; WHO, 2001). As this project required participants to share material of a highly personal nature, there was a risk that evoking unprocessed material involving traumatic events might be retraumatising for participants or cause emotional distress (Carter-Visscher et al, 2007; Fontes, 2004). However, various authors suggest that while research interviews might induce a low level of distress, quickly afterwards participants typically recall their experiences positively (Bunnell & Legerski, 2010; Carter-Visscher et al, 2007) and may even find talking about their experiences cathartic or healing (Ellsberg & Heise, 2002; Hutchinson et al, 1994; Newman et al, 1999). Mindful

that the material *could* be emotionally challenging, women were offered breaks at appropriate intervals in the research process, or where signs of upset were visible. Women were also invited to spread interview and the construction of visual methods across a number of sessions.

Another ethical issue, noted by Ellsberg and Heise (2002) and Langford (2000), is that administering participant materials, paperwork or pamphlets relating to violence might compromise safety and, as authors indicate, they *can*, and *have* put victims at further risk of violent attack. This present study involved three inclusion criteria: participants should be 18 years or over; experienced family violence themselves and in one or more generations of their families; and that they were 'immediately safe' (Sullivan & Cain, 2004) and living away from violence. While participants were required to be safe at the point of interview and, where relevant, deemed by agencies working with them as such, as an added precaution, unless they requested it, they were not given participant information sheets to take away with them. Anonymised electronic versions of participants' completed genograms and ecomaps were sent (from an anonymous email address) to participants post-interview if they wished and only once they confirmed their email address was safe to use (i.e. private and unshared).

5.4.2. Ethical Considerations of Visual Methods

Visual methods bring their own ethical challenges to the research process (Banks, 2012; Wiles et al, 2012), and those selected for this study, especially genograms, raised a number of ethical challenges that needed to be addressed (discussed further in Alexander et al, 2018). Genograms can be a co-construction of several family members, but they tend to be individually constructed by one person. Even when they are created on an individual basis, genograms represent and therefore involve, by proxy, immediate and extended family members and (ex-)intimate partners who are not consulted in how they are represented, nor made privy to the consent process (Fontes, 1998; Langford, 2000). As genograms incorporate details about a particular group of people, it may increase the risk of identification and to ensure participants' and their family members' identities are protected, stringent measures need to be taken in anonymisation (McGoldrick et al, 2008). To reduce the risk of identification, during this thesis, I provide extracts of anonymised genograms and refrain, where possible, from including entire genograms.

As discussed, current use of genograms is grounded in social constructionism. This has implications in research as it jars with more dominant and culturally constituted individualised understandings of the self. As such, it might require participants to make a philosophical leap, from seeing themselves as an individual, somewhat distinct from their family, to envisioning themselves within the network of their family system and its history. The risk of such a view is that genograms appear to reveal 'intergenerational trends' and this could be a possible source of distress for participants. Being transparent about the limitations of genograms in representing family-in-context, in reflecting temporality, and the evolution of families etc, functioned to dispel any myths about genograms, perhaps relating of their apparent ability to depict 'family patterns', or even as oracular/predictive of participants' own futures (Alexander et al, 2018).

5.4.3. Post-Interview Support

Ellsberg and Heise (2002) maintain that researchers have moral and ethical obligations to attend to when conducting violence research. These include: sign-posting and referring participants for onward support, and ensuring risk of harm to participants and the research team is minimised. With the exception of one woman, at the time of interview, all were either receiving or had previously received support from specialist DV services. The majority were in receipt of DV support (two were living in refuge), or were attending counselling, or had access to emotional support via less formalised mechanisms of support e.g. via church or peer groups. Through their involvement with specialist DV services, the majority of participants were integrated into strong, close-knit communities of women who had also experienced violence. As such, not only did they have ready access to peer support, but were in environments where they were familiar with speaking to others about their histories of violence. Where necessary, I sign-posted participants to support services: one to a DV counselling service, another to a rape counselling service, and in one case, additional support was sought via a DV service. In terms of minimising risk to myself, in my role as a researcher I had access to a supportive supervisory team who were responsive and prompt to any safeguarding queries I had in relation to (potential) participants. I was also in close contact with several DV agencies and could contact them for advice if necessary. As such, while I was responsible for managing safeguarding, I was able to share any concerns with highly experienced practitioners and researchers working in the field.

5.5. Context and Recruitment

The recruitment phase for this study coincided with my involvement in a separate DV research project (UNARS – see Callaghan & Alexander, 2015) for which I was based in a DV centre. The centre provided support primarily for women and children but also offered intervention for couples, and for men who had used violence. I was located in an office with Advice Workers who provided telephone and face-to-face advice to prospective and existing clients, to external practitioners, and to internal refuge staff. While based within the centre for UNARS, my main responsibility was to recruit a sample of UK-based children and their carers who had experienced DV. Recruitment of this target sample is fraught with complexities. For families fleeing violence, the fear of being found by the person using violence against them is real, and the desire to protect identity is strong. The families accessing support from the centre were in a state of transition – fleeing violence, living in short-term or emergency accommodation, or being relocated to resettlement housing. Many were in crisis, without financial means, and having to visit the job centre, food banks, doctors' surgeries and schools, shortly after first visiting the centre. The enormity of the issues facing families accessing DV support means participation in research is unlikely to feature as a priority in their lives. In view of the complexity of recruitment, being based on site helped to minimise additional barriers and ensure I was present at an accessible place and time for people interested in taking part. My involvement in DV projects during my doctoral research also helped to establish contact with a network of professionals working in the field, who supported recruitment and offered spaces within their centres in which to conduct initial meetings and interviews.

This present study focuses on discourses of IGT and the dynamics of violence within the family. Recruiting by gender was not seen as pivotal to achieving the aims of the study and, accordingly, it was open to people of all genders. Both men and women can be affected by violence, however, as discussed earlier, there is strong evidence to indicate gender asymmetry in perpetration and impact. Females are statistically more likely to experience violence than men, and violence is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men (Dennis, 2014; Gover et al, 2008; Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007). Johnson (2005) takes this gender disparity further, stating that the type of abuse most commonly associated with 'domestic abuse' *'is almost entirely male perpetrated*' (p.1128). According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2017), in England and Wales in 2016/17 1.2 million women aged 16-59 experienced DV compared to 713,000 men. Moreover, women are more likely to be revictimised and injured in their intimate relationships than men (Gadd et al, 2003; Lombard, 2013). Challenging the evidence of gender asymmetry, some

scholars have proposed that the available statistics do not account for reporting issues and differentials in the way men and women perceive and report violence (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). While I did not actively recruit by gender, the spaces I targeted were predominantly aimed at women. I anticipated that there was the potential in these spaces for practitioners to refer men they were working with or for clients to refer male members of their families (such as brothers or grown-up children). Furthermore, a major barrier in recruiting men is that specialist services to support them are few and far between. Reporting for Mankind, Brooks (2017) suggests that there are only 23 organisations across the UK offering refuge and safe housing provisions to men experiencing DV compared to an estimated (in 2010) 400 services dedicated to women. In terms of gender, the recruitment strategy did not bring any heterogeneity in the final sample and it consisted of women only. However, the systemically-informed data collection processes (such as genogram production), enabled participants to represent, from their perspective, the experiences of females *and* males within their families and so gave an indirect communication of violence of different genders.

During the recruitment phase, I contacted a total of 12 organisations providing either DV or family support. I informed the organisations about my research and requested support with recruitment by telephone, email and, in nearly half of the cases, in person. I also posted an advertisement for interviewees in the DV centre in which I was based and emailed it to other agencies. The advert called for participants who had experienced DV in childhood and in one or more generations of their families. In this scenario, it was anticipated that in childhood participants would have experienced DV between parents, which would be the equivalent of exposure to violence in two generations (parent/child). It was envisaged that adverts placed in DV centres would attract those who also experienced violence in their adult relationships which, if they had children, would potentially constitute a third generation exposed to violence. As the project evolved, adaptations were made to the advertisement and information sheet, for instance, from the original focus on 'domestic violence' to 'family violence' and extending the timeframe given for visual methods and interviews from '90 minutes' to '3 hours' (see Appendix 2 for Advertisement; Appendix 3 for Participant Information Sheet; Appendix 4 for Consent Form; and Appendix 5 for Interview Schedule). Recruitment was, to an extent, guided by the referring organisations, as practitioners brokered contact between clients and myself. They identified clients meeting the inclusion criteria, informed them about the study, and referred those interested directly to me. I followed up by telephone, summarising the purpose of the study and describing what participation would entail.

If they were interested in knowing more, we arranged to meet in person to discuss further. On meeting, in addition to informing prospective participants about the nature of the study and their ethical rights, I provided an explanation of the interview schedule and visual methods. They were shown an example of a genogram (produced electronically using GenoPro) and an ecomap, and provided with an explanation of how they were constructed and how they would be used to guide the interview. They were given an opportunity to ask questions about the research and their involvement and, if they decided to proceed, we arranged a mutually convenient time for the visual methods/interview to take place. Interviews were conducted in a DV centre or university setting, with the exception of one which was held in space provided by a local Fire Service who were supporting the family. Two DV agencies were particularly engaged in the referral process and as a result, the majority of participants (n=7) were recruited via these agencies, others (n=2) were recruited via professional networks.

As the study focused on a sensitive topic and a specific target sample (i.e. those with experiences of violence in multiple generations), I anticipated that these factors would limit recruitment and, accordingly, I aimed to recruit a small sample size (<15). I was mindful too that the inclusion of in-depth interviews and multiple visual methods required a lot of investment from participants, and so could also act as a barrier to recruitment. There is support for small sample sizes in qualitative research, with some authors suggesting smaller samples might be more effective than larger ones. For example, Crouch and McKenzie (2006) suggest that interview-based research benefits from a greater level of investment from the researcher, helping to develop rapport and enhance understanding of participants' contexts and circumstances. They maintain that small sample sizes (<20) might be more manageable, enabling the researcher to more effectively invest the resources in the development of the researcher-participant relationship and, in turn, facilitate the generation of good quality research material. In a similar vein, reflecting on their large-scale study with a sample of 60 women, Guest et al (2006) found that by six interviews the basic elements for metathemes were present, and by 12 interviews they had reached theoretical saturation. In this present study, I remained open to interviewing participants on more than one occasion. In practical terms, this allowed visual methods/interviews to be spread across a number of sessions or to finish/reflect/follow-up on the first interview, but it also helped to generate a greater level of complexity in accounts representative of family and intimate partner violence (Aparicio, 2017). In total, four participants attended once, four attended twice, and one participant attended on three occasions.

5.6. Participants

In total, 15 in-depth semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with nine women. Participants were aged 22-50 years, eight were White British and one, White Italian. Five women were single, three had partners, and one was married. Table 1 (below) details participants' demographics, and provides nominal and summarised information included in genograms and ecomaps. In summary, women depicted violence in a mean average of four generations of their families. Six women represented violence in four generations of their families, two represented five generations, and one represented violence in three generations. As well as identifying general violence/abuse, and the constituents of violence (such as control and manipulation), women depicted violence across their families in its disaggregated forms: emotional abuse (n=7 women); physical abuse (n=7); sexual abuse (n=6); neglect (n=2); and financial abuse (n=1). In terms of gender and the direction of violence, in total, the women's genograms depicted violence in: 74 male-female relationships; 22 male-male relationships; 17 female-male relationships; and 13 female-female relationships. The information on the direction of violence by gender represented in the women's genograms did not capture motive, meaning, or other contextual information. Nor did it capture incident-based information on frequency or severity, nor outcomes-based information on impact and experience. The women's genograms showed a far larger proportion of male-perpetrated than female-perpetrated violence which concurs with literature on the gender asymmetry of violence indicating that violence is not mutual nor symmetrical across genders (e.g. Gadd et al, 2003; Johnson, 2005; Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007). Even though it marked a smaller proportion of the violence represented, applying the literature on gender asymmetry, tells us that the female-perpetrated violence the women represented may not be comparable to the male-perpetrated violence because of the frequency, severity, and impact differentials which are claimed to be exceeded by a greater extent in men's violence against women (Hester, 2009; Johnson, 2005; McFeely et al, 2013).

Valdez et al (2013), note that in their research sample of women with childhood histories of violence, 70% had been in a number of abusive intimate partnerships. Similarly, in this present study, three of the women symbolised on their genograms having multiple (three-four) abusive intimate partnerships in adulthood. As Table 1 illustrates, ecomaps captured precipitating and protective factors. Visual methods included subjective information about the people/aspects

participants chose to include, but it should be noted that they did not incorporate the wealth and richness of information spoken about in interview. Interviews enabled the 'gaps', the people/aspects missing from visual methods, to be articulated. Therefore, the numerical information in Table 1 should be viewed with this in mind rather than through a realist lens.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Participant No.	Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Children	Intimate Partnership	No. Generations (Genogram)	Types of Violence Depicted (Genogram)	No. of Violent Relationships (By Gender of Aggressor-Victim) (Genogram)	Protective Factors (Ecomap)	Precipitating Factors (Ecomap)
1	Kerry	28	White British	0	Married	3	Violence Abuse Emotional Abuse Manipulation Control	M–F: 6 F–M: 1 M–M:3 F-F:1	**Micro:** 'The Church' – Church Friends; Sisters; Friends; Pet Dog **Exo:** Youth Theatre; Song; Poetry; Art; School	**Macro:** Millennium 'Height of Capitalism'
2	Bettina	45	Italian	2	Single	4	Abuse Physical Abuse Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Manipulation Control	M–F:6 F–M: 1 M–M:6 F-F:2	**Micro:** Grandparents: Auntie & Uncle; Cousin; Best Friend; Teacher; Pet Cat **Exo:** Church; School; Friends; Neighbour; Gymnastics	
3	Naomi	22	White British	1	Single	4	Violence Physical Abuse Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Manipulation Control	M–F:8 F–M: 3 M–M:3 F-F:2	**Micro:** Mum; Dad; Brother; Pet Dog. **Exo:** Childminder; Army; Horse Riding Club; Neighbours; School	**Macro:** WWII

4	Jenny	50	White British	3	Long-term Partner	4	Violence Abuse Physical Abuse Sexual Abuse Neglect	M–F:7 F–M: 1 M–M:1 F-F: 0	**Micro:** Music; Carer to Mum **Exo:** Children's Home (1st); Neighbours; Mum's Friends; Head Teacher; Swimming; Life Guard	**Exo:** Brownies; Masonic School
5	Isla	47	White British	5 (4 living)	Single	5	Physical Abuse Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Control	M–F:11 F–M: 4 M–M:2 F-F:2	**Micro:** Best Friend; Catholicism; Circus; Music & Dance **Exo:** Neighbour; Girl's Brigade	**Exo:** Social Services; School **Macro:** WWII
6	Georgia	26	White British	1	Single	5	Abuse Physical Abuse Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Financial Abuse	M–F:8 F–M: 6 M–M: 0 F-F:3	**Micro:** Friends; Pet Dog	
7	Sue	46	White British	6	Partner	4	Physical Abuse Sexual Abuse Manipulation Conflict	M–F: 7 F–M: 0 M–M: 0 F-F: 0	**Exo:** Maternal Grandmother; Neighbour; Friends; Brownies; Middle School	

8	Claire	31	White British	3	Partner	4	Violence Physical Abuse Emotional Abuse Manipulation	M–F: 5 F–M: 0 M–M: 0 F-F:1	No ecomap constructed	
9	Amy	31	White British	1	Single	4	Violence Emotional Abuse Sexual Abuse Neglect Manipulation Control	M–F:16 F–M: 1 M–M:7 F-F:2	**Micro:** Sister; Brothers; Friends **Exo:** Auntie; Street Kids; Mum's Friends; Neighbours	**Micro:** Foster Family; Father; Mother's Partner **Exo:** Social Services; Church; School; Street Kids **Macro:** WWII; Class Divide; DSS - Welfare State; Thatcher Government; Government 'Attack' on Single Parenthood; Council Estate Culture; Attitudes to Gender; Attitudes to Divorce

5.7. Procedure

After providing their informed consent, participants were invited to choose drawing equipment and paper from a selection of stationary made available to them throughout interviews. I planned for visual methods to be constructed prior to interview with the Retrospective and Active genograms constructed first, followed by the ecomap. In practice it became, in some cases, more of an iterative process, with participants adding to their genograms and ecomaps as we moved along in interviews, and as they spoke and recalled other influential people and pertinent information etc. I provided step-by-step help to enable participants to represent relationships technically accurately according to the conventions of genogram construction, i.e. to represent marriage, separation, divorce, children etc. Nonetheless, the technical construction provoked a low level of anxiety in a few participants, and in these cases I offered to draw the genograms while participants talked me through the family composition and relational dynamics. Following interviews, I debriefed each participant, reminding them about the anonymisation/use of data, and the withdrawal process. I made participants aware that reflecting upon past experiences can sometimes raise difficult emotions, and if they needed help to work through them, they could either contact the service they were working with or I could refer/sign-post them into a DV/relevant agency.

5.8. Preparation of Interview Material

Generally, interviews were long, detailed and dense, and this was reflective of my experience of conducting research in other violence projects. The richness of interview accounts did vary between person though, with some interviews exceptionally dense (e.g. Kerry, Amy and Sue) and others a little thinner (e.g. Claire and Isla). The opening item on the interview schedule asked participants to reflect on their genograms, and their rationale for selecting particular symbols/notations. This elicited lengthy responses from participants as they described the key 'actors' in their families, and talked through family composition, relationships and the occurrence of violence. There seemed to be a nice rapport between myself and participants, demonstrated through seemingly uninhibited and free-flowing information, often unsolicited and unprompted (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018). On occasion I was challenged to maintain a balance between free-flowing discussion and keeping interviews focused on the research topics at hand. Talk relating to genograms (i.e. family, intergenerationality, and historic/current events) seemed to dominate interviews, with ecomaps featuring to a lesser degree. In relation to this point, generally ecomaps were not as densely populated as genograms and this is perhaps a result of their order in the

interview process, coming after genogram construction. However, as genograms situated participants within the contexts of their families, it automatically seemed to spur verbal accounts of their ecological, physical, material and temporal contexts.

Women participated in one to three interviews (Table 2 provides interview information). Combined, women's participation in interview/s ranged from 52-319 minutes. Approximately 60-120 minutes was spent on visual methods. In the majority of cases, taking place prior to interview, the practical construction of visual methods was not routinely audio-recorded, but as construction seemed to become an iterative process, additions to genograms were integrated into interviews (and captured in recordings), as were reflections of visual methods and their construction. Interviews were audio-recorded, in total amounting to 21.05 hours (1,263 minutes). Audio recordings were transcribed, totalling 541 A4 pages of textual research material.

Table 2. Interview information

Participant Number	Pseudonym	No. Interviews	Duration of Interview/s (Combined)	Textual Material (No. Transcribed Pages) (Combined)
1	Kerry	2	3.22	74
2	Bettina	2	3.04	80
3	Naomi	1	1.29	32
4	Jenny	2	1.41	39
5	Isla	1	1.17	51
6	Georgia	1	0.52	23
7	Sue	2	1.52	53
8	Claire	1	2.07	74
9	Amy	3	5.19	115
Total:		15	21.05 hrs	541

Jeffersonian-style transcription was considered but, for its accessibility, verbatim transcription was settled upon. I anonymised transcripts and visual methods, replacing names and locations with pseudonyms or omitting them, and disguising identifying information. A total of 299 changes were made to anonymise research material (see Table 3). Despite changes, I have tried to ensure the nature and essence of the material remains intact.

Table 3. Anonymisation information: Changes made to research material

Participant No.	Participant	No. Pseudonyms - Names	No. Pseudonyms - Locations	No. Pseudonyms – Identifying Characteristics
1	Kerry	29	31	12
2	Bettina	11	15	10
3	Naomi	6	4	1
4	Jenny	28	11	9
5	Isla	3	2	0
6	Georgia	6	2	5
7	Sue	26	5	1
8	Claire	38	6	0
9	Amy	28	8	2
TOTALS:		175	84	40

5.9. Analytic Process

5.9.1. Rationale for Analytic Method

This present study uses Discourse Analysis (DA) to analyse interview material. The rationale for using DA is three-fold. Firstly, as elucidated in the literature review, in spite of the relevance of language and discourse in representations of IGT, it seems not to be studied using discursive methods, indeed, I did not identify any such works during searches. Hence, attendance to the discursive formation and representation of IGT of family violence enables a gap to be addressed in the evidence-base. Secondly, because DA '*[a]sks questions about how language is used*' and '*investigates what is said as well as why it might be said*' (Frost, 2011, p.4), it was selected for its sensitivity in analysing language and vernacular formation and, as such, its ability to address the study aims and research questions which relate to how participants construct accounts of violence within multiple generations. Thirdly, DA is rooted in social constructionism, and as Stainton-Rogers and Willig (2017) suggest, '*discourse analytic research presupposes that discourse constructs rather than reflects versions of reality and that language-in-use is performative*' (p.9), and this positioning of reality is compatible with the ontological framing of this present study.

Discursive representations of IGT of family violence often construct families in decontextualised ways, situating them as somewhat untethered to the social, cultural and historical influences that govern them. DA mitigates this somewhat by being rooted in social constructionism, viewing

discourse as socially and contextually constituted. A key criticism of DA relates to this point, that in focusing too heavily on the political, it risks ignoring the personal (Thompson & Rickett, 2018). However, as established in the literature review, neoliberal and individualised understandings of the 'self' plague discourses of IGT of family violence. Thus, its ability to focus a lens on possible political and institutional ideologies and agendas means DA enables scrutiny of such decontextualised understandings of the self (Alldred and Burman, 2005; Bailey, 2005).

5.9.2. Foucauldian-Informed Discourse Analysis

This study draws on Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) to interpret interview material. When first exploring discourse analysis, I was struck by the amorphous nature of it. There are no agreed rules, procedures, techniques or methods established for discourse analysis generally, least Foucauldian variations (Alldred & Burman, 2005; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008). Moreover, FDA is drawn from readings of Foucault, but many and varied interpretations have been proffered on his writings and, some 36 years after his death, his works are still being interpreted, re-interpreted, and contested (Flaskas & Humphreys, 1993). However, what discourse analysis, and FDA specifically, teaches us is that words are veiled, they are a thin crust atop a river of molten lava, suffused with meaning and charged with power. Discursive approaches are based on the premise that to develop an understanding of the social world we need to unpick and dismantle language (Alldred & Burman, 2005), to critically examine it, and attend 'to every word with a suspicious eye' (Parker, 1992, p.124).

Theorising 'The Self'

Although debated, there is a particular conceptualisation of the individual 'self' that is associated with Foucauldian discourse analysis. This involves the rejection of a foundational subject, and the uptake of a view of the 'individual' as socially constructed (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008) and, more specifically, the view that 'the self is constructed through discourse' (Bailey, 2005, p.537). Carrying this theorisation of the self through into the research process means that, for instance, interview accounts would be regarded as the available and accessible repertoire, symbolic of the realms of reason and inclusive of what is possible to *know* and *say* (Alldred & Burman, 2005; Cousins & Hussain, 1984; Hacking, 2004; Nash, 1994). Bailey (2005) suggests *'people's sense of who they are, of what is possible for them, and of how they act does not operate in a vacuum but rather comes from a shared understanding of these parameters'* (p.537). It is within these boundaries, these 'parameters' that, according to a Foucauldian approach, people draw available discursive repertoire and knowledges from. In this way, talk is seen as a coproduction of the

interview context and, more importantly, a product of broader socio-cultural discourses. This contrasts with positivist approaches, more inclined to conceive of interview material as direct expression of individual perception, symbolic of the self (Alldred & Burman, 2005).

The preoccupation with external social influences in Foucauldian discourse analysis risks translating in an obfuscation or a total denial of 'the self' and of individual agency. Authors have debated Foucault's theorisation of agency, e.g., 'the death of the man' (as discussed by Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p.106), and 'the death of the subject' (as discussed by Hacking, 2004, p.288) and, in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (2011) himself writes of the metaphorical death of the speaking subject:

> *Must I suppose that in my discourse I can have no survival? And that in speaking I am not banishing my death, but actually establishing it; or rather that I am abolishing all interiority in that exterior that is so indifferent to my life, and so neutral, that it makes no distinction between my life and my death? I understand the unease of all such people. They have probably found it difficult enough to recognize that their history, their economics, their social practices, the language (langue) that they speak, the mythology of their ancestors, even the stories that they were told in their childhood, are governed by rules that are not all given to their consciousness; they can hardly agree to being dispossessed in addition of that discourse in which they wish to be able to say immediately and directly what they think, believe, or imagine […]* (Foucault, 2011, p.232)

Locating the production of people as an exterior rather than an interior exercise prioritises the 'exterior', casts persons as products and constructs rather than as individuals, and effectively 'eliminates a social actor' (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p.106). Writing of the tension that emanates from a deconstruction of discourse and the inevitable dismissal of an agentic self, Foucault theorised that analysis reveals the connection of discourse to something bigger beyond the individual and more specifically, as I will come on to discuss shortly, it indicates the conditions with which particular discourses are not only enabled to operate but actively facilitated:

> *I know how irritating it can be to treat discourses in terms not of the gentle, silent, intimate consciousness that is expressed in them, but of an obscure set of anonymous rules. […] How unbearable it is, in view of how much of himself everyone wishes to put, thinks he is putting of 'himself' into his own discourse, when he speaks, how unbearable it is to cut up, analyse,*

combine, rearrange all these texts that have now returned from silence, without ever the

transfigured face of the author appearing [...] (Foucault, 2011, p.231)

The radical location of the speaker as conceptualised above is an aspect of Foucauldian theory that is not taken up by this present study. Instead, the position I adopt aligns more closely with Ian Hacking's (2000; 2004) conceptualisation of the self as described in his theory of 'looping effects'.

Like Foucault, Hacking (2000; 2004) discounts the notion of a foundational subject, at least not one stable and complete. However, in somewhat of a deviation, Hacking proposes a 'choosing self' with capacity for agency, autonomy, and choice, but subject to restrictions and constraints and available opportunities which limit these capacities. Hacking's theory on looping effects has two elements; the first is based on the notion of people as socially 'produced' and shaped by their relational and material contexts, and centres on the 'interactions between classifications of people and the people classified' (Hacking, 2004, p.279). The second aspect, more readily focused on the 'looping' dimension, is the notion that those classified and subsequently shaped by their classification then feed back into and influence the classification. For Hacking, the 'self' is effectively storied into being through classifications and labels which denote expectancies and anticipated outcomes and, consequently, induce self-fulfilling prophecy-type responses. He termed this interaction between people and labels 'making up people', and his general principle of discourse as potentially prophesising in its construction of people is concordant with Foucault:

[...] discourse which in prophesying the future not only announced what was going to

happen but helped to make it happen, carrying men's minds along with it and thus

weaving itself into the fabric of destiny. (Foucault, 1970, P.54)

The sense within which discourse has the potential to '[weave] itself into the fabric of destiny', as narrated by Foucault here, is a most fundamental aspect of Hacking's theory and his work explores how classifying people determines their opportunities - shutting down some possibilities and revealing others, - shaping a person's self-concept and self-image, informing their choices, and ultimately creating a set of circumstances and inducing particular behaviours that go towards making people into their classifications (Hacking, 2004). For instance, using an example of deviance and delinquency, Hacking suggests *'[c]alling an adolescent a juvenile delinquent is something that goes into the making of the young person into a juvenile delinquent'* (Hacking, 2004, p.296). Behaviours, as denoted by the classification then, risk becoming 'radically enforced' by the label

itself (Hacking, 2004, p.298). Other authors have presented theses of a similar nature, exploring the linkage of labels to contexts and processes, and the ways persons are shaped according to the labels assigned to them (for examples see Bailey, 2005 and Vandekinderen et al, 2014).

As discussed in the ontology and epistemology section (5.2), this study acknowledges 'the self' as well as individual agency, although theorises that both will be subject to framings maintained within discourses of IGT. This position is intended to allow recommendations for social action, possibilities which would otherwise be hindered by a location which erases a social actor and agent. Importantly, in its examination of participants' social ecologies, this study avoids falling into the dualism of viewing individuals as, what Hacking (2000, p.15) calls, 'self-subsistent atoms', distinct from society. Parker (1992; 1999) adopts a critical realist approach, and although this differs from the stance taken here, he makes an important argument for why an ecological examination is useful for discourse analysis; helping to avoid, for instance, individualised explanations common in psychological understandings of cognition, and disconnected models that 'focus either on the individual *or* the social' (1992, p.88). By undertaking a discursive examination of IGT through an ecological lens, this present study situates people within their relational and material contexts, thereby supporting an examination of IGT beyond decontextualised analyses of the individual. This allows consideration of the ways discourses and 'knowledges' of continuities of violence in multiple generations might be produced, (re)constructed, and communicated within and between a network of interrelating systems (and at multiple levels of the ecological system), as well as the implications such knowledges and discourses may have on the subjectivities and behaviours of individuals and families.

Conditions

Foucauldian theory facilitates an analysis of the conditions that (re)produce particular discourses (Flaskas & Humphreys, 1993), and of the practices that help to construct particular subjectivities, 'objects, concepts, and strategies' (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008, p.99). Discourse analysis enables consideration of the relationships that are established and challenged through discourses, for example, of the possible investments and interest institutions may have in (re)producing discourses. Foucault (2011) proposed not that discourses be viewed as 'imposed from the outside on the thought of individuals' per se, for instance as a symbolic manifestation of the control of institutions, rather that they are envisaged to constitute 'the set of conditions in accordance with which a practice is exercised' and 'in accordance with which that practice gives rise to partially or

totally new statements' (p.230). Discourse analysis then, enables interpretations to be made on what Foucault termed 'genealogy'. Foucauldian genealogy involves an examination and critique of the 'conditions' - the given context; the temporality, historicity and possible strategic utility of discourses - and the associated practices that facilitate the (re)production of particular discourses (Cousins & Hussain, 1984). In this present study, Foucauldian-informed discourse analysis will examine how the hypothesis of IGT of family violence is constructed; how it is employed, supported and challenged within participants accounts; the contextual and temporal conditions that might enable it; the social practices that support the construction; and the institutions that might be invested in perpetuating or silencing discourses of IGT.

Knowledge, Practice and Power

For Foucault, knowledge is intimately linked to practice. In their analysis of key Foucauldian works, Cousins and Hussain (1984) discuss this issue and state 'the tendency to treat knowledges purely as theoretical architectures […] leads to a general philosophical distinction between a realm of ideas and a realm of action' (p. 87). The proclivity to align knowledges with ideas locates knowledge within the minds of individuals and, as Foucault (1970) argues, artificially divorces knowledge from practice, the effect of which is to obscure the leverage social practices have on the production of knowledge. Discourse cannot then be analysed in individualised ways that locate words, their meaning, and all that they symbolise with individual agents. Instead, as Foucault suggests, knowledge and reason are wrapped up in discourse, and examination of this relationship through analysis enables consideration of the ways discourse, discursive practices and discursive rules might be borne from and sustained through the exercise of power.

In Foucauldian theory then, power is connected to discourse and language (Gergen, 1995). Power is not envisaged to be something that operates independently, nor something that one either does or does not possess, but rather power is contextually informed and relationally-situated and is, therefore, transient and movable (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Flaskas & Humphreys, 1993; Gergen, 1995). Foucault's theorisation of power is systemic and, according to Flaskas and Humphreys (1993), is 'radically relational', tied into and present within 'everyday social relationships' (p.5). In their eloquent exploration of Foucault's conceptualisation of power, Flaskas and Humphreys (1993) write:

> For Foucault, power cannot be seen as something in itself, but rather "shows itself" through the evidence that can be found in everyday interactions, in institutionalized social practices,

in discourses, in the objects that are chosen for study, in the knowledges that come to exist, and in subjectivities, or the ways we are able to think about "the person." (p.4)

In this theorisation, power can only be understood in terms of the particular context and relations in which it operates and, accordingly, discourse analysis needs to attend to the possible social practices, the locations and movement of power, and the implications this has on discourses, knowledges, and subjectivities. The Foucauldian theorisation of power as relationally and contextually situated aligns with a social constructionist epistemology in its attendance to relatedness (Gergen, 1995), thus is compatible with the present study which explores participants' social ecologies. In Foucauldian theory, power is not only imagined in negative terms, as a repressive force of domination, or as an internalisation of repression (i.e., via self-monitoring, self-regulating and self-forming practices (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Bailey, 2005; Foucault, 2011; Parker, 1994)), but also positively, as productive, and as providing a pivot point for resistance (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Flaskas & Humphreys, 1993; Gergen, 1995; Parker, 1996). In alignment with a Foucauldian framing, this study recognises power in both negative and positive terms, as oppressive and as liberatory (Flaskas & Humphreys, 1993).

The Foucauldian-informed theorisation of power used within this present aligns with some feminist analyses of power in that it conceives of power as relational rather than as a possession. According to Kelly (1988) '*power in feminist analysis is not a property but a relation which structures interactions between men and women in all areas of social life'* (p.26). This Foucauldian theory has been taken up by some feminist authors, and conceptualising power as relational rather than in resource theory terms has marked a transformation in feminism, moving away from analysing 'power as something men possess to suppress or dominate women' (Cooper, 1994, p.439) and 'the binarism characteristic of feminism (dominators versus dominated)' (Lloyd, 1993, p.444).

Power is often theorised in ways which locate it as entirely oppressive, for Foucault though, power was not conceived of in unidimensional terms, instead, framed as potentially positive *and* negative (Cooper, 1994; Lloyd, 1993). As Lloyd (1993) suggests in her paper exploring the synchrony of Foucauldian and feminist theory, the 'prohibitive or oppressive' exercise of power is 'always susceptible of subversion by resistant bodies' (p.450). Similarly discussing Foucault and feminism, Cooper (1994) proposes that power instigates agency and therefore resistance is *always* intimately

tied to power, not operating independently, but part of it. Various authors discuss the reconceptualization of power that has occurred in feminism following the uptake of Foucauldian thought, which changed the vision of power from something negative, to be neutralised or dismantled, toward an image of power as always present and laying '*at the heart of all social relations and practices*' (Cooper, 1994, p.435); as having the capacity to be both oppressive and liberatory (Cooper, 1994); and '*depend[ent] on context and on the position of the observer/participant*' (Lloyd, 1993, p.448). This present study similarly draws on this conceptualisation, locating power as relational, always present and context dependent, and as repressive/inhibitory as well as productive/liberatory.

A criticism of the Foucauldian theory of power is that at minimum it may not sufficiently account for women's experience of being an oppressed group and, at worst, may perpetuate inequalities and further subjugate women (Hartsock, 1990). Various authors exploring the concordance between Foucauldian theories and feminism consider Foucault's conceptualisation of power to fail to sufficiently attend to systematic inequalities of power, such as gender inequalities (Bailey, 2005; Hartsock, 1990; Lloyd, 1993). Despite the positioning of Foucault's work as 'top-down' (Hacking, 2004), and focused on context (Nash, 1994), this criticism may, in part, be driven by what is interpreted to be Foucault's tendency towards individualisation. Foucault's location of the individual as involved in its own production, e.g., via self-monitoring, self-regulating and self-forming practices (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008; Bailey, 2005; Foucault, 2011; Parker, 1994)), frames individuals as furnished with the power to resist or to comply, and implicates individuals in their own circumstances be them positive or negative (Lloyd, 1993). As Lloyd (1993) suggests, this individualisation has been raised as a concern by feminist scholars (e.g., Hartsock, 1990) because it risks establishing an argument that '*women are somehow responsible for their situations*' and '*that the victims of power are to blame for their predicament*' (p.440).

A second concern for feminism, as Nash (1994) points out, is the theory 'that everything is discursively constructed' (p.71) (from knowledge and reality, to identities) which, consequently, undermines the notion (and experience) of women's oppression. This, Nash (1994) proposes, creates a relativist image 'that one gender identity is very much like another – they're all equally constructed', the effect of which is to trouble the claim of oppression to such a degree it dissolves it away into nothing. However, these criticisms have been identified as being driven by a

misreading of Foucault. For example, countering the suggestion of Foucauldian theory as gender-neutral and unable to recognise systematic inequalities of power, Lloyd (1993) argues that while patriarchy, as a concept, is missing from Foucault's work, '*his method of analysis itself does not deny the existence of systems of domination in the social world*' (p.456). Lloyd provides a detailed account of how Foucault's theory of power can be applied to attend to inequalities and systematic oppression, such as that of women, and advises that Foucauldian-informed analyses need not automatically accompany a denial of the 'gender asymmetries of power' (p.456). This present study takes an integrative ecological approach, and this aims to support a contextualised view of the individual. A view of participants' relational and material social ecologies supports consideration of the experiences, discourses and practices operating at multiple-levels as well as the possible implications of them.

5.9.3. Analytic Procedure

The procedure I used for analysing participants' transcribed interview accounts was informed by the 12 stages for conducting DA as itemised by Alldred and Burman (2005) (with reference to Burman 1992;1996; & Parker 1992;1994). These stages provide guidance toward a comprehensive process of analysis: beginning with the production of a transcript; familiarisation of text; elucidation of objects and subject positions; the relationships, meanings and understandings between/informing objects/subject positions; the possible intended audience/s; agendas and investments; the institutions that are supported/reproduced and troubled through discourses; and the possible power-relationships – the 'hierarchy', 'knowledge' and 'authority' within and between discourses (Alldred & Burman, 2005, p.187).

Alldred and Burman (2005) advocate working with others in the early stages of analysis, particularly when first trying to make connections or 'free associating' with the text as it '*helps researchers to notice the particularities of their own perspectives*' (Alldred & Burman, 2005, p.184). Similarly, Parker (2014) recommends sharing texts and emerging discourses with others unconnected to the project. Accordingly, my preliminary analysis was discussed in a range of settings: at reading and research groups, at conferences, and at my transfer seminar (which involved community professionals/practitioners and academics from different disciplines). Furthermore, as part of the doctoral process, I reflected on early analysis with my supervisory team, and during the preliminary stages, two members of my supervisory team and I each cross-coded an extract of the same 39-page transcript, sharing our observations and codes during supervision. Through these processes I

developed an awareness of the 'particularities' of my own perspectives. Perhaps because all of my prior analytic experience had been focused on thematic analysis of psychologically-informed research, I was familiar with coding in individualised ways; coding participants' supposed internal states – attitudes, beliefs, motivations, perceptions etc - and conceiving of speech as an expression of such internal states.

In relation to this point, a criticism of qualitative research more generally is that it sometimes inadvertently falls into positivist ideologies through its realist understanding of the research material, i.e. analysing it as if it were evidence of reality, rather than a construct governed by other constructs/contexts (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997; Nettleton et al., 2012; Pillow, 2003). Burman (2003) notes a similar issue with discourse analyses which sometimes presume *'the transparency of the account'* (p.3), denoted through the use of inner states language, and which imply that researchers can access participants' inner states through their personal accounts. Burman supposes this is indicative of the importation of the researchers' 'everyday language practices' (p.3). Exploring preliminary analysis with others in and outside of this present study helped to elucidate this tendency in my own practice, and to make a shift to viewing talk not necessarily as an expression of an individual, nor as evidence of their perspective (Alldred & Burman, 2005), but rather considering participants' talk as a possible reproduction; *'shaped and constrained by the meanings which prevail within the larger society'* (Taylor & Littleton, 2006, p.22); and *'the result of a practice or production which is discursive, material and complex and always inscribed in relation to others'* (Featherstone & Trinder, 1997, p.152). DA then is a mechanism to unveiling social and cultural conceptualisations of family violence, of violence within multiple generations, and of IGT, as well as taken-for-granted assumptions and truth claims of each of these aspects.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the ontological and epistemic paradigms informing the present study and illustrated the compatibility of selected methods with these paradigms. It described the technical design and procedural elements of the project, and provided a context summary of the service landscape from which I recruited. This chapter also introduced the cohort of participants, detailing demographic information and material drawn from visual methods. Information from genograms illustrated the types of violence symbolised by participants to have affected their families and the directions of violence by gender. Information drawn from ecomaps represented symbolised

precipitating and protective factors by system. In this chapter, I discussed the rationale for using discourse analysis and the process of coding textual interview material. In the proceeding chapter I provide a reflexive account of my positionality and my engagement in the research process.

Chapter 6

Reflexivity

Introduction

In this chapter, I argue for a written form of research reflexivity that is contextual and constituted at multiple social levels. I illustrate how without this, research reflexivities risk reproducing pathologising transmission narratives. This chapter is formed of four sections. Using examples from the literature, the first section problematises a form of reflexive writing, common in sensitive research, for its representation of the research encounter. The second section proposes a representation of the research encounter that is interactive and contextually-situated, providing a less personal and more political form of reflexivity for sensitive research which grounds researchers' feelings, often interpreted to be 'transmitted' by the participant, at multiple socio-ecological levels. The third section lays out my position on IGT and details the precursors to the development of this project. Finally, the fourth section provides my own reflexivity of conducting this research, drawing on contextualised readings of my own experiences, processes, and emotions.

This chapter critiques a trend for written reflexivities in sensitive research which centre on the emotions emergent in the research encounter. In particular, I argue that such reflexivities risk reproducing harmful transmission narratives. I make a distinction between reflexivity in practice and reflexivity as a product. In practice, reflexivity facilitates an ongoing iterative cycle of reflection, examination and engagement at all stages, informing the research as it evolves. As a product, reflexivity provides dissemination, in written or spoken form, of the process of research. Here, it is the product, the form of particular written reflexivities, that I critique and illustrate the implications of, rather than reflexivity in practice. Thus, while my critique here relates principally to the representation of emotions, feelings, and symptomology 'emergent' in the research encounter within reflexive writings, it is important to note that it does not deny the *presence* nor the *impact* of researchers' emotions in research. Nor does it deny the presence/implications of other factors, such as social positions; for instance, of my own racialised (white-British), gendered (female), classed (working-class - although I do not subscribe to the notion that social class is static)), and aged (40) social positions in/on the research – at every stage.

My critique here is extended in a separate paper which argues that such subjectivities cannot be transcended or bracketed (Pillow, 2003), or their impacts neutralised simply by articulating them in written reflexivities. Moreover, I argue, as others have done before me (e.g. Koch & Harrington, 1998; Dowling, 2006), that attempts to 'bracket' are discordant with interpretivist research and align more readily with a positivist paradigm whereby the researcher strives for objectivity, part of which requires them to be written out, seen as a non-effecting entity in the encounter. Researcher erasure is an aspect of what I term a 'participant-effecting, researcher-affected' account of the research dyad and it, I argue here, unhelpfully contributes to harmful representations and, in turn, to stigmatising transmission narratives about populations involved in sensitive research. Accordingly, as is the import of this study, I focus only on the representation of transmission implicit within particular written reflexivities on emotions.

6.1. Representing the Research Encounter

In preparing to write this chapter, in order to get a sense of the form of written reflexivities, I began informally exploring the literature. The more I read, the more I became aware of a style of writing, an apparent trend that seemed to be present particularly in reflexivities involving sensitive research for representing what I term a '*participant-effecting, researcher-affected*' account of the research encounter. Within this form of reflexive writing, there is an emphasis on the researcher's personal experiences with a tendency to interpret and represent encounters with participants as emotionally, physically, or psychologically detrimental. What is most marked is the representation of the encounter as a uni-directional process which situates researchers as an affected and yet non-effecting presence in the research and which implicitly casts participants in pathologising ways. Most pertinently to this present study, I propose that through this representation of the encounter, this form of reflexive writing feeds into and perpetuates transmission narratives of the kind that this present research aims to examine.

6.1.1. Transmission Narratives: Pain creating Pain; Trauma creating Trauma

In written research reflexivities, the *process* of reflexivity and its *dissemination* are often not demarcated as separate activities. However, here, I make a distinction between reflexivity in *practice* and reflexivity as a *product*. In *practice*, reflexivity facilitates an ongoing iterative cycle of

reflection, examination and engagement at all stages, informing the research as it evolves. As a *product*, reflexivity provides dissemination, in written or spoken form, of the process of research. Here, it is the *product,* the form of particular written reflexivities, that I critique and illustrate the implications of; *not* the practice of reflexivity itself and also *not* the acknowledgement of distress that research can cause researchers.

The possible impacts on researchers of conducting what might be deemed 'sensitive' research have been well reported (Carroll, 2013; Dickson-Swift et al, 2007; 2008; 2009; Hubbard et al, 2001; Rager, 2005a,b). *Participant-effecting, researcher-affected* accounts report the impact of encountering participants and their material in such ways it implies the occurrence of transmission from participant to researcher, for instance, participants' pain creates researchers' pain, participants' trauma creates researchers' trauma, and so on and so forth. This section explores examples from the literature and considers the implications of drawing on such narratives for the representation of participants and researchers.

6.1.1.1. Pain creating Pain

The trope in reflexive writing focuses on the research encounter through an emphasis on the negative effects experienced by the researcher; the potential costs to their emotional, psychological and physical health. This seems to be prioritised over and above the positive emotional responses research might induce in the researcher. Reflecting on her interviews with women with breast cancer, and drawing on notions of vicarious traumatisation, Rager (2005b) states:

> *When I reread my journal, I was amazed at how sick I was through most of the process. I was experiencing real and psychosomatic symptoms on a regular basis, including breast pain, abdominal pain, and problems with my digestive system. I also noted in my journal that my health improved as soon as the interviews were complete.* (p.426)

As well as the symptoms described here, Rager (2005b) also notes that others involved in her research (the transcriber and the peer-reviewer) also experienced emotional reactions and psychosomatic symptoms. In a similar vein, Dickson-Swift et al. (2009) indicate that the public health researchers participating in their study reported experiencing symptoms related to engagement in 'emotion work', including '*difficulties sleeping, anxiety, gastro-intestinal upsets and depression'* (p.71). Likewise, reporting their embodied experience of conducting research with

women in poverty, Krumer-Nevo and Sidi (2012) contemplate the abdominal pain that followed an interview with one particular woman, 'Michelle':

> *What does the interview with Michelle address? What is its central content? Is it the story of deviation or psychopathology? Is it the story of poverty and deprivation? Or is it the story of motherhood as a vehicle for rehabilitation? I learn about the most disturbing nature of its content through my stomachache, which suddenly comes on after I arrive home. It records an experience of life endured with great pain. I feel it clearly, in a concrete way, in my stomach. The source of my physical pain is the combination of listening to Michelle's story, becoming aware of the fragility of her motherhood, the fact that she does not prevent Sheila [daughter] from listening to the grueling things she tells me, and the little girl's pain, whose eyes, look at us with what seemed to me as great fear, haunt me as I read the transcribed interview. In her mutterings recorded on the tape, I discover direct responses to things that she heard and understood. There is pain in Michelle's life, and there is pain in Sheila's life. I am a witness to this pain, and I feel it forcefully for a moment, for a few hours or days.* (p.306)

Pain here is represented as a direct provocation of the encounter with Michelle, the participant, the woman in poverty. This interpretation is not demarcated as such, instead it is made real. The language used ('*records an experience of life endured with great pain')* transforms what is an interpretation into documentary evidence of the transference of symbolic and embodied pain from participant to researcher. This account is constructed in such a way that the only possible explanation of the stomach ache is the encounter. As I will discuss later, this kind of realist stance is problematic in interpretivist qualitative research and in reflexivities (Finlay, 2002; Gemignani, 2016; Holmes, 2014; Pillow, 2003; Sandelowski, 2002). This is not only because it undoes the epistemic integrity, but also because interpretations which are entirely spawned of subjectivities are given the gloss, the illusion, of objectivity. This is particularly troublesome when these interpretations, presented as fact, locate participants, and the groups they may come to represent, in pathologising ways which contribute to stigmatising identities.

Boden et al (2015) are explicit about the paradigms shaping their research practice and interpretation. They propose that whilst countertransference is a useful theoretical model for analysing feelings, they were guided by the concepts of intersubjectivity and intercorporeality for

their capacity to attend to context, focusing a lens on feelings and acknowledging the complexities, intertwinement and co-construction of the research interaction. The tone of their resulting interpretation though is strikingly similar to examples above – with an emphasis on the ways that the encounter with participants elicit unfavourable physical and emotional effects on the researcher:

> *In the telling, Sue's story seemed raw and precarious. I felt a background feeling of volatility [...] Sue's interview lasted several hours and during the whole time I felt the need to be very still, as if I could anchor her through my stillness and somehow provide a sense of stability that seemed to be missing. I noticed I had both feet flat on the floor, perhaps attempting to ground us both. Outside I was still, but inside I felt unnerved. I left the interview desperate to write down the chaotic feeling that was threatening to engulf me. My stomach felt tight, I was exhausted and my muscles were aching. By writing these feelings down, I wanted to purge them out of me, where they felt alien; too much, too unrefined and too chaotic to understand.* (p.7)

Noteworthy here is not only the physical symptoms that are interpreted as a result of the encounter, not only the sense of being overwhelmed, 'engulf[ed]' by 'chaotic' feelings emergent from the encounter, but the seemingly urgent desire to expel these feelings. This is not expressed as a desire for bracketing, nor a desire to contain emotions in an attempt to prevent them distorting interpretations, but to '*purge them out*'. Purging has connotations with cleansing and purification, a desire for which would indicate feeling sullied, toxified. In Boden's quote, the connection established between the interview and the desire to purge creates a transmission narrative, a cause and effect. In this transmission narrative, by implication, Sue, the participant, is located as the source of contamination within the research dyad. This desire for cleansing has been articulated by various authors. In the example below, Elliott et al (2012) proposes mechanisms to 'detoxify' the impact of participants' projections:

> *This material is an example of how the anxiety arising from emotionally charged issues for the mother (own mother's death, her health problems, which she feared would affect her unborn baby) can be projected into others, with varying consequences but allowing the mother to remain seemingly unruffled. This is an example of how the unconscious aspects of emotional communication are as much part of the emotional work of research as the more conscious ones. My fieldnotes as well as discussion in supervision allow us to see how this happens, to detoxify its impact, and forestall any unhelpful reactions.* (p.436)

Parallels are often drawn between research and therapy, both in terms of practice and of emotional impact, and they are increasingly affiliated (Shaw, 2011). Boden and Elliott (above) highlight how 'self-care' strategies, which have long been routine practice for therapists (e.g. Iliffe & Steed, 2000) as a mechanism for moderating the impact of difficult material and emotions, are also being advocated for and by researchers. Self-care strategies largely rely on cathartic activities which have a confessional quality: writing, engagement in diarising or journaling, talking, counselling, supervision, peer-support, debrief etc. (Boden et al, 2015; Carroll, 2012; Dickson-Swift et al, 2009; Koch & Harrington, 1998; Rager, 2005). This desire to eliminate difficult feelings is consistent with the ideologies of a therapeutised culture, in which negative emotions are remonstrated, pathologised, located as offensive things to be exorcised through therapeutic or medical means (Craib, 1994; Dineen, 1999; Frances, 2013; Parker 1998; 1999; Smail, 1998; Szasz, 2007).

The examples here are implicitly underpinned by transmission narratives, narratives which interweave with contagion, disease and toxicity discourses. Other research though is more explicitly driven by these narratives note, for example, this reflexive writing of the supervisory process:

> *Two supervisors were involved in the work of validating interpretations in interviews with domestically abusive men. The different ways they chose to engage the material was partly their reaction to the toxicity of the material and partly their own personal positions at multiple levels of engagement (i.e., personal and professional).* (Garfield et al, 2010, p.1)

> *[...] The article concludes with how painfully those [supervisor and supervisee] relationships may be stretched when working with such toxic material and the necessity to maintain a complex set of boundaries, all in the service of analytic integrity.* (Garfield et al, 2010, p.1)

Importantly, Garfield and colleagues give prominence to the intersubjectivity of the encounter through a consideration of the intersects of participant material and supervisors' subjectivities. However, 'toxic material' is not defined, which means the reader is called to assume, without question, that it is the participants' material that is 'toxic'. 'Toxicity' has overt associations with disease and contamination and the terminology used here reduces participants to mere

transmitters, and researchers as at risk of transmission. Particularly noteworthy is the last quote which positions researchers (and their supervisors) as the necessary protectors of the research, as contamination control, framing boundaries as necessary mechanisms to contain the toxicity from leaking into the research and affecting 'analytic integrity' (I discuss this issue in a separate paper, considering how 'participant-effecting, researcher-affected' accounts are constructed as demonstrations of researcher engagement, aptitude and objectivity – see Alexander, 2020 – in preparation). What both Elliott and Garfield's quotes (above) allude is that researchers need to play an active role in batting off the effects of participants, to be ready and on guard to neutralise participants' toxicity in order to prevent it impacting on the research and the researcher.

6.1.1.2. Trauma creating Trauma

In the same way they do with pain, 'participant-effecting, researcher-affected' accounts also construct trauma as a subject of transmission. Dickson-Swift et al (2009) define vicarious trauma as *'the process by which individuals listening to and working with the traumatic experiences of others begin to experience the effects of trauma themselves'* (p.72). The risks of vicarious or 'secondary' traumatisation have long been a concern of practitioners working with clients who are suffering or presenting challenging material, and these risks are increasingly made known to researchers. One such avenue is through training workshops on the risk of vicarious trauma which are targeting post-graduate researchers and their supervisors.

Conceptually, in its construction of the transfer of trauma from one individual to another, 'vicarious trauma' provides an example of a transmission narrative which, in the context of research, situates participants as possible transmitters of trauma to researchers. This has implications. For example, in anticipation of vicarious traumatisation, Gemignani (2011) reports adapting his interaction with participants in an effort to shield himself:

> *Initially, I kept myself somewhat detached from the participants' narratives and experiences. I tried not to immerse myself too deeply for the sake of data "purity," indulging my "hangover from beliefs about scientific objectivity" (Holloway, 2001, p. 16), and, even more significantly, fearing the unsafe role of empathy in vicarious traumatization.* (p.702)

Gemignani's commentary tells us something valuable about the prevalence and the power of the concept of vicarious traumatisation; here it is anticipated and feared before it is experienced, and

it is conceived as requiring the implementation of an avoidance strategy (detachment). On encountering participants, there is a risk that, as Gemignani describes, researchers are already anticipating (and may even receive training to anticipate) the negative effects participants may have on them, viewing them as possible sources of pain, as damaged and damaging, well before they experience any distress or pain.

Below, Gilgun (2008) details her experience of secondary traumatisation induced by her research with men who had perpetrated interpersonal violence:

> *I experienced intense anxiety. All of a sudden, I felt I was high in the sky, as if tethered to a helium-filled balloon. I looked down at the two of us sitting at the small round table, engaged in conversation Mental health professionals call this an out-of-body experience, linked to disassociation, which is a way of distancing ourselves from stressful and perhaps traumatic experiences. In my case, this response was secondary traumatization or vicarious traumatization that can happen when persons are exposed to the traumas that others have suffered (Bride, 2007; Campbell, 2002; Cunningham, 2003). Apparently, I had entered vicariously into the experiences of the women and children whose victimization a perpetrator had described in detail.* (pp.186-187)

Gilgun's experiences of vicarious traumatisation described here resonate with Gemignani's quote (above). In both, the participant is only visible as a source of trauma, and the researcher only visible through the effects of the participant. That is, somewhat in accordance with a positivist (and objectivist) paradigm, the researcher is written out, seen as a non-effecting entity in the encounter. The many and varied possible interpretations of the researchers' and participants' (un)conscious responses - embodied, felt, verbalised or otherwise, the transference and countertransference - are reduced to a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account of the dyad, a version which situates the participant as an inevitable threat, and the researcher as inevitably threatened.

The *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account of the research dyad is problematic in two key ways. Firstly, it predominantly portrays the costs to the researcher, omitting gains. This neglects the intersubjectivity of the interaction and the 'construction of knowledge' (Pillow, 2003, p.178). Secondly, this portrayal risks vastly devaluing and dehumanising what is often a very

moving human experience, replacing it with a power dynamic that locates the researcher as vulnerable to being made vulnerable by the vulnerable participants –as if vulnerability can be caught, like flu.

6.2. Contextualising the Encounter

If we present a one-sided, harms-centric account (such as the *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account) of what participants do to researchers, we risk neglecting what Gordon (2008) calls the 'complex personhood' (see also Wilson's (2018) discussion):

> *Complex personhood means that all people (albeit in specific forms whose specificity is everything) remember and forget, are beset by contradiction, and recognize and misrecognize themselves and others. Complex personhood means that people suffer graciously and selfishly too, get stuck in the symptoms of their troubles, and also transform themselves. Complex personhood means that even those called "Other" are never never that. Complex personhood means that the stories people tell themselves, about their troubles, about their social worlds, and about their society's problems are entangled and weave between what is immediately available as a story and what their imaginations are reaching towards. [...] At the very least, complex personhood is about conferring the respect on others that comes from presuming that life and people's lives are simultaneously straightforward and full of subtle meaning.* (pp.4-5)

Neglecting acknowledgement to the multi-layered complexities of person, context and identity mean that our representations are not likely to reflect participants in holistic ways and, as such, risk feeding into stigmatised ideas about the populations we conduct sensitive research with. As Wilson (2018) suggests, individualised accounts fix our attention on 'problematic people' and their 'problematic lives', and diverts it away from structural disadvantage and ingrained social inequalities, and this prevents dialogue into how these issues might be tackled. Correspondingly, the achievements of a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* endeavour are limited. They may raise awareness of the damage caused to participants by particular phenomena, but the orientation and reorientation from participant to researcher brings attention to individuals only, it does little to inspire or to galvanise, in any meaningful sense, social action.

As discussed earlier, 'self-care strategies' are often promoted as mechanisms for undoing the impact conceived to have been triggered by participants. I argue that far from cleansing ourselves, ridding ourselves of the pain of stories or whatever it is we conceive to have been 'transmitted' in the research encounter, we should instead be aiming to harness and utilise such responses. Discussing Gordon's (2008) notion of 'haunting', Wilson (2018) maintains that researchers have an obligation to present their work in impactful ways, ways that stay with and 'haunt' the audience and which can action social change. I take this a step further and suggest more specifically that, in relation to our responses and our reporting of them, we perhaps have an obligation to use what 'haunts' us to 'haunt' others. That is, I propose in sensitive research especially, we have an obligation to question the stigmatising stereotypes of the populations we conduct research with, to avoid perpetuating them in our representations of our encounters with participants, and to consider how the feelings, emotions and symptoms we envisage to have emerged/been 'transmitted' in the research encounter/process connect not only with participants' ailments but with social ills. Discussing 'haunting', Gordon states:

> *Haunting is not the same as being exploited, traumatised, or oppressed, although it usually involves these experiences or is produced by them. What's distinct about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely.* (p.xvi)

'Haunting' then requires a shift in focus, from self to society, from that which pained *me* as a researcher, to that which should pain *us all*. This requires us to look at and beyond the emotional, physical and psychological responses we conceive to have been induced by research encounters, considering them not only as transmitted to us, not only pertinent to us, but embodying issues beyond us, beyond participants. If we can envision our responses, not as something to be purged, dissipated, but to be valued and harnessed, they re-emerge as a powerful research tool, with the capacity to help our research reflexivities become more impactful, to help us more effectively voice participants' stories, and to make more compelling cases for social action.

6.3. Positionality

The inception of the study was driven by a convergence of two factors: my academic interest in intergenerationality, and my research experience on a DV project. Prior to commencing my doctoral studies, as part of my undergraduate Psychology programme, I conducted two

independent pieces of research that explored intergenerationality, family dynamics, and education/occupational trajectories through a realist lens. After graduating, I began working on a European research project led by Professor Callaghan (supervisor to this present research), which investigated children's capacity for resilience and agency during and after living in situations of DV (UNARS - *'Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies: Children in Situations of Domestic Violence')* (see Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). In its focus on resilience, over and above pathology, UNARS marked a departure from the broader body of DV literature which is overwhelmingly pathology focused (see Callaghan, 2015; Callaghan et al, 2016; 2017; 2018; and others making a similar challenge e.g. Katz, 2015; Øverlien & Hydén, 2009). It facilitated the articulation of violence, not only of victimisation but also of resilience, resistance and agency – the experience/response to violence in its fullest. The contrast between dominant DV discourses and UNARS participants' stories of resilience was striking. This contrast stimulated my critical thinking around IGT and the sense of determinism it is based upon, calling me to question if/how the theory makes sense to those affected by violence, as well as its possible implications, for instance, for challenging victims' capacity to conceptualise themselves as resilient or agentic, or for closing down possibilities to envisage positive futures.

Examples of the *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account I observed in some of the reflexivity literature chimed with an expectation I experienced in my own research practice. In dissemination activities, the response to this present study and other violence projects I have been involved in has been interesting. Like no other projects, I have been asked, with a level of expectancy, about the emotional toll that interviewing people affected by violence had on me. In my research career so far, I have interviewed people who have undergone all kinds of difficult and distressing circumstances in their lives - those who have experienced arson, people who have gone through the care system, young people excluded from mainstream education, vulnerable first-time parents - and not once been asked about the emotional toll the research/participants had on me. I found this kind of preoccupation with the burdensome effect of victims of violence curious. While I do not deny the impact of hearing stories of trauma and distress, I wonder at what point the expectation on me to present reflexive stories of the harms that conducting research caused me, becomes voyeuristic, feeding into stigmatising and deterministic ideas about this particular population and their inevitable trauma-traumatising cycle and propensity for 'transmission'. Vandekinderen and colleagues (2014) voiced similar expectations on them, inside and outside of the academy, to reproduce deficit and damage-focused narratives about their participant.

In line with my epistemic and methodological approaches, my own position of violence in multiple generations of the family is not one that assumes IGT, nor that the presence of violence in each generation is directly connected, nor that assumes continuity is inevitable. Rather, my interest is with discourse, the ways participants speak about violence within the family, how they construct accounts of violence within multiple generations, and how the hypothesis of IGT and its core assumptions are deployed and challenged. As such, contributing to cyclical narratives of trauma creating trauma in my dissemination of this present study would be discordant with the framing of the study, marking collusion in dominant discourses of IGT rather than an enquiry into them.

6.4. Reflexive Interpretations of an Interactive, Contextual Process

In this section I discuss my reflexive interpretations, and illustrate the research encounter as interactive and contextually-situated.

6.4.1. Intersecting Accounts of Violence and Insufficient Support

The interview schedule was designed to avoid focusing on incidents of violence. Nonetheless, participants did talk about the harrowing brutality they had suffered, and I found this material especially difficult. Some of the descriptions they gave were vivid and explicit, and conveyed the level of horror the women had experienced. In somewhat of a contrast to dominant representations of victimhood, the women I interviewed simultaneously articulated vulnerabilities *and* resilience/resistance of harm. One woman directly resisted the advances of a group of men who couched sexual exploitation in gang initiation. Another woman instructed Police checks on her new partner. Another, made space for herself away from the violence and hostility of her family through immersion in drama, literature, and art.

As observed in other violence projects I have been involved in (see Callaghan and Alexander, 2015), there was an interesting lightness about many of the interviews, and in a couple of cases in my research here, the women happily commented on their prior expectation to cry but the lack of tears that came. Other interviews were cutting at times, punctured with intensely painful moments, and with participants' tears. As I listened to the women, I was struck by the frequency

with which their accounts of violence were interwoven with a lack of support and/or barriers in the pursuit of support. The women reflected on moments when they had unsuccessfully tried to access social, peer or formal help or where these attempts actually exacerbated their circumstances. On leaving care at 16, one woman described being bought a mattress and dropped off outside a squat by her social worker (where she eventually met her abusive partner), and describing herself as a 'sitting duck', she suggested that she was vulnerable to victimisation and disadvantage *('I was a young girl, nowhere to live properly'; ' 'I hadn't got anyone to say to me…"You need to get out of this relationship, he's abusive"')*. As women recalled times in their lives when they had been mistreated, neglected, and let down by others - others they trusted, others in power, - in line with Hochschild's (1985) theory of emotional labour, I had to steel myself not to show shock or upset. As Dickson-Swift (2009) identified, this showing and hiding of emotions often proves tricky for researchers to navigate, and the same was true for me. My tears came later, hidden from the view of the participant, and in my own time. On reflection, not displaying my upset marked a slight paradigm shift, more in keeping with research taking an objectivist stance. However, my interpretation of my own distress was not that these feelings were 'transmitted' from participants per se, which would align with a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account, but rather that they resulted as a consequence of the context and the events generating distress and trauma in participants, channelled in the co-production of interview.

What I found most difficult is that in their elucidation of what in some cases appeared to be systemic failures, participants' accounts seemed to paint social structures as oppressive, unyielding, and all-powerful in decisions to provide or withhold support. I felt the sting of injustice, the frustration of a seemingly divided and inequitable society, a society unable or unwilling to protect its people on the edge. This not only tapped into my keen sense of justice, but elicited moments of existential angst – bringing into focus my own purpose and meaning. The juxtaposition of the fragile physical self with the unmoving, monolithic structures highlighted my impotence to change things for participants, and called me to question the level of social action that could be instigated by research. In these moments, I reminded myself of four things.

Firstly, I reminded myself that the sense of injustice marked a desire for justice, an artifact of a romanticised utopian ideal, a fantasy, better hoped for but perhaps not expected. Secondly, that various aspects of the study, such as its focus on violence, and recruitment of participants (largely)

through services, may have better facilitated articulation of difficulties over and above advantages. Thirdly, I reminded myself of boundaries, of my duties and responsibilities as a researcher to reduce risk and to take action if danger becomes evident. The desire that was elicited in me to protect or advocate, to 're-mother' (Burman and Chantler, 2004) extended researcher-participant boundaries, and situated myself and participant in problematic ways. As Burman and Chantler (2004) maintain, their role as researchers was not to '`re-mother' or offer corrective or reparative experiences...' (p.39. This 're-mothering' stance problematically positions the researcher as necessary protector and activist, and the 'vulnerable' participant as defenceless child, in need of looking after, unable to bat against any kind of injustice without the enablement of the researcher. It is a stance that inadvertently colonises participants' narratives, and risks colluding with oppressive practices and inequities of power.

Finally, I reminded myself of the contrasts between cultural understandings of language and the self, and that of the study's epistemic framings. Because of the nature of the study, it would perhaps have been easy to succumb to the distress of the accounts, to run with them in uncritical ways. However, to maintain epistemic integrity it was important to remember that there is a culturally ingrained propensity to understand people's talk as an expression of reality and as evidence of phenomenologies, of inner states, of intrapsychic worlds (Gergen, 2015; Hedges, 2005). At all points of the study, I observed this to be my own default, but as it is antithetic to the study epistemology, and in order to adhere to a discursive approach, I had to remind myself to think about the production of language and, especially, language of the self in more critical ways. This switch was tricky at times and demanded a concerted effort, but it was important, having a fundamental impact on my line of questioning in interview, on the production of interview accounts, and on analysis.

While these 'reminders' served to reaffirm a critical position around the discursive research material, the benefit of a realist reading of accounts, such as the material described here in which participants' accounts of violence intersect with insufficient support, is that it allows us to view accounts as evidential; pointing to areas in need of social change, and directing possibilities for action. This reading establishes a conducive platform from which to draw on Gordon's (2008) and Wilson's (2018) notion of 'haunting', from which to illuminate the need for social change and instigate social action.

6.4.2. 'Honouring' or 'Analysing' Accounts?

In addition to the pragmatic attendance to my responsibilities as a researcher, such as ensuring participants' rights, I felt a moral responsibility to appropriately honour participants' accounts. There is a tension between *honouring* and *analysing* accounts; *analysis* functions to critique and dismantle rather than maintain the narrative integrity and cohesion of accounts, as *honouring* might imply. Nonetheless, I felt a responsibility to honour participants' accounts through careful negotiation of the presentation of material and my interpretations of it. At times, I felt this sense of responsibility more keenly than others, and in the case of one particular participant, Bettina, I felt especially anxious about ensuring I was honouring her account.

Like the other women, Bettina's interview material was interspersed with accounts of being let down by others. More than this though, she voiced feeling that her story of violence had been exploited by an organisation she had received support from. She talked about the various fundraising activities she engaged in on behalf of the organisation, how she participated in an extreme physical feat to raise funds, how she agreed to stand in the street with a bucket to raise money, how she told and re-told her story to a range of audiences and through a myriad of mediums in an effort to raise awareness of DV and of the work of the organisation. Bettina valued the organisation and the support they provided, that is until she began to feel that her story was being co-opted, without her involvement, as a means of marketing the organisation.

> *Bettina: This organisation [...] at one point they asked my permission for their fundraising for this [member of staff] to go out and discuss about my story. I'm asking them, can I go and see this event? They always refuse. I was feeling at one point, again like they were using me.*

To avoid feeling exploited any further, Bettina eventually declined support and withdrew contact from the organisation. My interpretation of my own anxiety around honouring her account *perhaps* corresponded with the anxiety Bettina herself experienced, for instance, in telling her story again (during interview) and the possible risk of it becoming colonised, and the possible erasure of her that might ensue as a consequence. I do not interpret my anxiety to have been 'transmitted' to me by Bettina in the context of the interview. Rather, that the context in which her story had become colonised and colonisable, had created fragility around her story, making it

less solid, perhaps even less certain. Re-envisioning her story as something that can exist without her narration, which can be told, changed and edited by others, perhaps transforms her story from a source of empowerment into a possible source of anxiety, and the telling of it as anxiety-provoking.

Through this interpretation, a thread emerges which links together multiple socioecological levels: my anxiety, Bettina's (possible) anxiety invoked by the sharing of her story, the colonisation of her story at an organisational level, and the marketing, campaigning and fundraising activities of the service. More broadly, it speaks of the funding pressures on DV services in England, the constricted statutory funding, and the need for agencies to fundraise independently (Bowstead, 2015; Harwin, 2017; Sanders-McDonagh et al, 2016). The anxiety I experienced around 'honouring' Bettina's story then can be interpreted as a symptom of the ecological context in which Bettina's own anxiety was borne, a context affecting DV services, a context in which the stories of clients can be transformed into currency; marketing the service, raising its profile, generating income, ultimately enabling the service to continue operating. Thus, rather than locating my anxiety as a result of transmission from Bettina, which would be in keeping with a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected account*, and which would only result in a pathologised view of Bettina (as well as the population she represents as a 'victim' of violence), considering how the anxiety might be channelled, emerging in the co-constructed process of interview, opens up space for us to think about how Bettina's story might indicate possible areas for social action. It allows us to draw upon Gordon's (2008) and Wilson's (2018) notion of 'haunting', to consider how what haunts us can haunt others, elucidating a need for social action, creating/contributing to dialogue around it, and potentially instrumenting change.

This is one of many possible interpretations of the anxiety I felt around honouring Bettina's story. It is an interpretation that requires a realist reading of her interview material, a view that material shared in interview is a reflection of her lived experience. An alternative reading might be that the articulation of her historic experience of her story being colonised simply instigated a desire in me not to recreate this and anxiety around trying to ensure the integrity of the story. Either way, my interpretation of my anxiety can be connected to the context articulated by Bettina, and the to the DV funding landscape as illuminated by others (e.g. Bowstead, 2015; Harwin, 2017; Sanders-McDonagh et al, 2016). Thus, interpretation of my anxiety need not, perhaps best not, be read as

a direct transmission from Bettina, but rather produced in the context in which her own anxiety was generated, and channelled in interview.

6.4.3. The Research Encounter as a Bi-Directional Process

As highlighted earlier in this chapter, one of the distinguishing features of a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* representation of the research encounter is the way the dyadic participant-researcher relationship is framed as a uni-directional process, which obscures the possible effects the research/researcher has on participants. As I discuss in a forthcoming paper (Alexander, 2020 – in preparation), this sets up, rather ironically, an objectivist framing of qualitative research/researchers as distant and uninfluencing. In order to dispense with the perpetuation of this kind of framing and the detrimental ramifications of it (i.e. perpetuation of stereotypes, pathologisation and stigmatisation), it is imperative that researchers write into their reflexive disseminations the possible effects they and their research have on participants, not only the effects they conceive participants to have had on them. With that in mind then, let us consider an example of a possible effect of this present study.

As outlined in the method chapter, during genogram construction, participants were asked to symbolise their families and intimate (ex-)partners as well as the relational dynamics between individuals, and interviews explored these relationships. Genograms promote the idea of connection in the relationships and types of dynamics between people and across generations. A risk of using them then is that supposed inter- and intra-generational 'trends' or 'patterns' might begin to seem apparent, and that this, in turn, has implications for the way individuals conceive of their relationships. During interview, one of the women, Claire, articulated this sense of a transition, a reimagining of her relationship with her current partner, provoked through the very act of depicting and talking about her relationships:

> *Claire: Talking about this, I'm thinking bad about Jacob now, I'm going to think negative about Jacob, but I don't want to because I know I've not got that— Nah, he would never hit me.*

This quote illustrates the fallacy of a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* portrayal of the research encounter. Just by inviting participants to talk about their lives and aspects like, for instance, their relationships, creates an opportunity for reflection, to call into question, and to stimulate change. In essence, involvement in research has the potential to affect participants

equally if not more so than researchers. In order to avoid pathologizing transmission narratives, an acknowledge of the bi-directional (or indeed multidirectional) and interactive nature of the encounter, including the possible effect of research/researchers on participants needs to be more readily acknowledged in reflexivities.

Conclusion

It is necessary and important that the distress of conducting sensitive research is acknowledged, and that the possible tolls on researchers are considered and managed in the same ways they are with participants. However, in this chapter I argued that reflex disseminations, that is reflexivity as a *product*, need to move beyond a sole focus on the costs and labours of conducting research for the researcher if they are to effectively support social action. I critiqued a form of reflexive writing in sensitive research, for representing what I term a *participant-effecting, researcher-affected* account of the research dyad. Using examples from the literature, I illustrated how this portrayal locates participants as *transmitters* of distress. With its emphasis on the researchers' feelings, by all accounts born out of contact with participants and their material, this account risks contributing to pathologizing transmission narratives and also compounding stigmatising ideas about the populations participants may represent. This risk is exacerbated through the practice of reporting individualised accounts of the ways conducting research induces trauma or pain in researchers, and through uni-directional and decontextualised representations of the encounter. This neglects to acknowledge the researcher as a co-producer in the research, obfuscates the possible effect the research/researcher has on participants, and also omits consideration of the broader societal, cultural, or existential issues that might underpin participants' and, in turn, researchers' distress. As I attempted to demonstrate through interactive and ecological readings of my own experiences/processes/emotions of conducting this present research, acknowledgement of the possible contextual aspects of distress reframes participants as *channels* of distress rather than *transmitters*. In theory, this would raise awareness of the possible social issues affecting participants and, in turn, reduce the stigma of individualised explanations of distress.

Chapter 7

'Blind Spots': The Opacity of Violence, and Transmission by Enculturation

Through the analysis of women's interview material, four key discourses were identified: *'Blind Spots'*; *'The Inevitable, The Avertible'*; *'The Corrupted Self'*; and finally, *'Continuities of Exposure'*. Each of these discourses will be presented in the proceeding four chapters; here we begin with *'Blind Spots'*.

Introduction

For substantial parts of their interviews, women talked in detailed and nuanced ways about violence within the family, about the complexities of familial and intimate relational dynamics, and about their feelings towards these aspects. In this way, they positioned themselves as acutely aware of self-other relations, of violence, and with capacity for critical reflection. However, these empowered narrations of awareness and lucidity were contrasted with antithetic accounts of incognisance and impaired perception of violence. In this chapter, I demonstrate how such accounts of incognisance resonate with notions of enculturation characterised in social learning explanations of IGT.

'Blind Spots' is formed of four sections. The first, *'Transmission by Enculturation'*, represents a discourse of 'normalcy' which situates family members as so inculcated into the ways of violence, so embedded in the culture of a violent family, that they conceive of violence as 'normal'. The second section, *'Blind Spots: The Opacity of Enculturation'*, demonstrates the resemblance of the women's accounts with an aspect of social learning theory, the idea that enculturation into family violence is so insidious and opaque a process it creates 'blind spots', clouding members' perception of violence. In the third section, *'Blind Spots Illuminated'*, I consider how women position their own awareness and insight into violence outside of the self, provoked only by external sources. The

women's interview material does not only align with social learning theory, but as I illustrate in the final section, 'Challenges to Enculturation Discourses', it also troubles ideas around enculturation.

7.1. Transmission by Enculturation: Synchrony with Social Learning Theory

Conceptualisations of IGT of family violence are often underpinned by the notion of enculturation, which envisages that members reproduce the violence/victimisation of prior generations through processes of learning. This establishes the family as a site of learning, and violence as a mode of 'family culture' in which new members are automatically conscripted into. Social learning theory is an example of such an 'enculturation' discourse and one which, as the prevailing explanation of violence within multiple generations, continues to be drawn upon and influence understandings of how and why violence appears to repeat in different generations of the same family.

Various authors propose that exposure causes those affected to form 'neutralising' or 'normative' beliefs and attitudes, desensitising victims to the impact and threat of violence (Asen & Fonagy, 2017; Kim et al, 2014; McCollum, 2015; Valdez et al, 2013; Vung & Krantz, 2009; Walters, 2017; Wareham et al, 2009). Others suggest attitudes, especially acceptance, significantly predict subsequent violence (Eriksson & Mazerolle, 2015; Franklin & Kercher, 2012), while Walters (2017) proposes perceptions '*play a key role in the cycle of violence'* (p.16). In a similar vein, Asen and Fonagy (2017) suggest that children exposed to family violence are '*more likely to tolerate violence inflicted upon them later in their lives'* and '*to view violence as a "normal" means to assert power'* (p.8). Likewise, Smith et al (2011) propose that '*youth who grow up in violent families normalize such experiences and may be more likely to resort to violence in relationships as part of their available behavioural repertoire'* (pp. 3723-4). Similar ideas of normalisation, enculturation and inurement could be observed within the women's accounts:

> *Bettina: ...if the mum and dad they hurt each other they will hurt the children too, and the children will hurt other children, they will be – because this is the way they grow. They think that is **normal**. A child, when it's a child sees mum and dad do that, because they respect mum, they think mum do – and dad – they do the right thing. But no, not all the time.*

*Isla: ...obviously I thought it was okay when I saw my mum and dad. I thought it was **normal** for the bloke to be dominant and the woman to be always doing what the bloke says. I just thought that was it, so that's how I've always been in my relationships. I've always been that sort of woman that will do anything to please. But not now (laughs).*

*Amy: It was very **normal** at the time, and it's weird when you hear people say it's **normal**, because you know there's something wrong, you do know that it's abuse, but it's also your reality and anything else is not.*

There are apparent differences in the examples here: Bettina speaks of transmission via a linear parent-child hierarchy; Isla speaks of the transmission of patriarchal gendered norms - male dominance and female subservience; while Amy situates abuse in contrasting ways, as overt/known and yet as simultaneously oblique/unseen. What connects all three quotes about violence and its transmission is a discourse of normalcy. Georgia (below) similarly talks of normalisation as a consequence of exposure and, like the other women here, links normalisation with intergenerational continuity of family violence. More than this though, Georgia suggests that normalisation facilitates continuity by inhibiting resistance:

Int: Can I ask you why you think domestic violence might repeat in generations? So I know you said about 'witnessing domestic violence' and—

*Georgia: Yeah. I think it's because people don't break the cycle. They witness it and they see it as **normal**, because if you witness it, you don't know any other. It's like if you see a healthy relationship, obviously that is **normal** reality, but if you just grow up and see it from someone and so on, you start to begin to think it's **normal**. It goes from probably down the line, even from my Nan. My dad's mum was with her first husband, beating her up, then people seeing that as **normal**. One of my dad's stepbrothers was very abusive to his mum, my Nan on my dad's side, so I think basically it's just gone through generations, and generations starting to think it's **normal** to see it.*

Theorised processes of social learning such as normalisation and inurement infer an unconscious process, impervious, by nature of its unavailability/invisibility, to resistance. Georgia's quote is consistent with this as enculturation ('*[t]hey witness it and they see it as normal*'; '*it's just gone*

through generations, and generations starting to think it's normal to see it') is cast as creating a 'blind spot', rendering the atypicality and indeed the immorality of violence invisible. However, there is some dissonance here, as she also locates the power for resistance of continuity *with* the individual. That is, *'it's because people don't break the cycle'* infers possibility for resistance of continuity i.e. that people *can* but *do not* 'break the cycle'.

Some of the women situated the likelihood of enculturation as a driver to their resistance. For instance, both Naomi and Isla suggest that the risk of their children being enculturated into the 'normalcy' of violence, prompted them to leave their violent partners:

> *Isla: I left the property because I was running from the perpetrator and I just thought, I don't have to be treated like I'm nothing and I've got to do something about it, otherwise my three children as well are going to be suffering from similar things, because they'll think that that's **normal.***

> *Naomi: I thought, I don't want my son to think that hitting another woman is okay. I don't want my son to think that. I don't think the way that his dad spoke to me, I don't want him to grow up and think that was okay. Not just that, the way his family spoke to each other as well, I didn't think that was **acceptable behaviour**, I didn't want my son to grow up thinking that was acceptable behaviour. I don't want my – you know, him to go through what my brother went through, being hit and things. I didn't want that to be a possibility for my child. I wanted him to have more than that in his life, so it was definitely a conscious decision.*

Both women make an implicit link here between the 'normalisation' of violence (conceiving of it as 'normal' or 'acceptable'), and the risk for subsequent perpetration/victimisation. Isla suggests that by remaining, her children will *'[suffer] from similar things'* as a consequence of conceiving of violence as '*normal*'. Similarly, Naomi implies that normalisation presents a risk not only of perpetration (*'I don't want my son to think that hitting another woman is okay'),* but also re-victimisation (*'being hit and things').* Thus, leaving violence is framed as a way of disrupting transmission, preventing violence/victimisation in their children's generation. What is especially interesting about Naomi's quote is her simultaneous contestation and concurrence with social learning theory. She discounts her own enculturation (*'I didn't think it was acceptable behaviour'),*

locating her father's and intimate partner's violence as acutely unjust and unacceptable. Yet, enculturation is situated as a possibility for her son, rendering him passive and eliding possibilities for his resistance/discontinuity.

The women occupy empowered subject positions here, through which they locate themselves as capable of halting transmission. Other qualitative researchers have observed similar accounts of resistance to normalisation by survivors of abuse. Insetta (2015) reports, *'[w]omen expressed worry that their children would accept the behaviour they had witnessed as normal interaction between partners and emphasized their desire to counter this message'* (p.710). Isla and Naomi's descriptions of resistance do not mark a challenge to social learning explanations of IGT per se, rather they centralise the expectancy of social learning/enculturation in their actions to prevent it. Thus, the women's talk of their conscious and purposeful attempts at resisting transmission are based on the premise that resistance is required to avert transmission which, in turn, locates IGT as a default, the status quo, and discontinuity as an effect of resistance.

Section Summary

Under social learning explanations, the family is problematised, framed as creating a kind of training ground, producing a conducive environment for the reproduction of violence, an environment in which family members, to coin a phrase by Pizzey (2014), are 'marinated' in violence. The idea that families are encultured into violence to such a degree that members are blind to alternative realities/possibilities of family, and passively fall into replicating the violence/victimisation of previous generations, by implication presumes continuity as a default of enculturation. This not only excludes possibilities for an absence of violence/victimisation but also of discontinuity-by-resistance.

7.2. Blind Spots: The Opacity of Violence

Social learning accounts of IGT situate enculturation as an opaque process that impairs perceptions of violence and hinders capacity to identify it as such. Similarly, trauma-based perspectives also propose opacity, conceiving of a lack of awareness or insight as symptoms/protective mechanisms, for instance of dissociation (McCollum, 2015; Zamir et al, 2018) or of 'betrayal blindness' (Freyd & Birrell, 2013; Hulette et al, 2011; Kaehler et al, 2013). This section demonstrates the resemblance

between women's accounts of being 'blind' to violence and social learning and trauma-based explanations of IGT.

Note how Georgia alludes to a process of enculturation, and of the blindness to violence created through this process:

> *Georgia: It's basically like any Disney love story where the wicked witch... casts a spell on the princess or whatever. Really, that's the only way to phrase it. You don't see it because you're that **blinded to the world**. You don't realise what's going on.*

Through her romanticised narration here, 'the perpetrator' is absent, replaced with a fairytale-esque construction which casts her as the Disney princess, and her '*blindness to the world'* and to violence as caused not by an abusive 'perpetrator' but by a Disney witch. This gives us an image of an animation rather than of a human horror story – a more palatable image that could be read as an attempt to safeguard the researcher/audience and Georgia herself. Of pertinence to the trope of this section is the way Georgia synonymises being 'blinded' here with the casting of a spell, which infers that violence is afforded invisibility through a rapid loss of consciousness to it.

The sense of being 'blind' to violence that Georgia speaks of aligns with trauma-based discourses, in which a lack of cognisance to traumatic incidents is interpreted as evidence of symptomology of trauma. For instance, McCollum (2015) suggests that dissociative responses at the time of trauma, can affect 'conscious awareness' during the traumatic event and the memory of it afterwards (p.565). In their study Hulette and colleagues (2011) observed a positive correlation between betrayal trauma ('*trauma perpetrated by someone with whom the victim is very close*' (p.217)) and dissociation, indicating a potential relationship between exposure to trauma and perception of it. In a similar vein, Freyd and Birrell (2013) posit that betrayal trauma can induce 'betrayal blindness' where victims '*don't acknowledge the mistreatment or notice betrayal'* (p.ix) and '*do not or cannot see what is there in front*' of them (p.4). They maintain that '*unawareness is a powerful survival technique when information is too dangerous to know'*, thus betrayal blindness is positioned as a protective mechanism (Freyd & Birrell, 2013, p.x).

Other women talked of being blinded in similar ways to Georgia, but they went further, suggesting violence only became visible after leaving the context in which it was taking place. Note, an excerpt from Claire's account:

Claire: I was just the muppet that stayed with him [...]

Int: Hmm. Why do you say that?

Claire: What, that I'm a muppet?

Int: Yeah.

*Claire: Because **I can see it now**. I can look at it now and **it's just so obvious**.*

Claire's articulation of being able to '*see [violence] now*' implies that she was unable to 'see it then', at the point of violence. This changing 'visibility' of violence and abuse that the women speak of here could be interpreted as an issue of 'naming' violence rather than an issue of 'seeing' violence. Writing from a feminist perspective in her seminal research, Kelly (1988) talks of the difficulties of 'naming' violence and abuse, especially in the context of 'close' relationships between victim and perpetrator. Of the women interviewed in Kelly's study with histories of rape, incest and/or domestic abuse, '*60 per cent did not define them as such at the time'* (p.140). Kelly notes how the women's definitions changed over time; with some defining their experiences during a period of violence, but many more labelling their experiences as violence retrospectively after abuse had ended. The women participating in this present study do talk of the difficulty of naming violence at the time of victimisation (as per Kelly), but the metaphor of being 'blind to violence' comes through strongly, which discursively locates the issue as one of 'visibility' not only of 'naming' violence.

Claire's articulation of '*it's just so obvious*' functions as a point of self-blame, further crystallised in the use of '*muppet*' (repeated on four occasions during interview). This use of '*muppet*' is especially interesting. On the one hand it serves to enact self-blame, but on the other, through the affiliation with the puppet characters 'The Muppets', '*I was just the muppet*' and '*I'm a muppet'* construct Claire as a marionette, mere reflexive behaviours, non-sentient, and controlled by a puppeteer.

While this subject position speaks of an annihilating influence over her capacity for agency and resistance, discursively, her position of non-sentience, could be read as resisting rather than claiming responsibility for victimisation. Thus, while Claire might first appear to locate herself as culpable, her account of passivity – of blindness and incapacity – enables her to shift blame away from herself and towards the other actor in her account, '*him*'.

In terms of enculturation, both Georgia and Claire (above) build a picture of the general atmosphere of violence as one of opacity, an atmosphere that clouds consciousness and visibility of violence, an atmosphere which only becomes transparent (Claire: '*just so obvious*') retrospectively after violence. Other women interviewed articulated this same sense of the process of enculturation as being opaque, although they framed transparency as running *concurrently* with violence (rather than retrospectively) presented through opportunities to make comparisons between their own and other families:

> *Int: And when you say that you knew something was 'wrong', are you able to explain that?*
>
> *Amy: I think it's that thing of **you go to your friends' homes, that's probably the biggest identifier,** you go to other people's homes, the way the outside world treats you, so other families. There were a lot of people trying to do their Christian duty by us. So you are made to feel as an outsider by others.*

> *Kerry: [...] I think I no longer accepted [father's] behaviour and I suppose **I was becoming aware that it wasn't normal**, even more so **because I was involved at this point with my best friend's family**, which we can get on to, the Hendersons, and they had a very different relationship. Not a perfect relationship by any stretch of the imagination. They used to argue like blazes, but there was an honesty there that wasn't in my family at all. Real cloak and daggers it always felt like a little bit with my family. I suppose it's that upper middle-class sort of stiff upper lip mentality really. A lot of stuff didn't get talked about, or it was talked about in kind of code. So I was starting to stand up to him, particularly about his treatment of mum and of me, and I would call him out on it.*

There are clear distinctions between Amy and Kerry's quotes. Amy talks of transparency as produced by the responses of others (*'the way the outside world treats you'; 'you are made to feel as an outsider by others'*). Kerry ponders whether the opacity of violence in her family was a product of social class (*'I suppose it's that upper middle-class sort of stiff upper lip mentality really')*. While these differences exist between the two women's quotes, they are linked by the notion that the opacity of violence can be subverted through comparisons with others. Seeing the spatial (*'you go to your friends' homes': 'you go to other people's homes'*) and relational (*'best friend's family'; 'they had a very different relationship')* aspects of friends' homes and families enable comparisons, and it is these self-other/family-other differences made known through comparisons that are framed as instigators to the visibility of violence. Kerry sets up a relationship between the visibility of violence and her ability to resist her father's behaviours. To an extent this is in accordance with a social learning account which implicitly alludes that through enculturation, violence becomes hidden through the supposed 'normality' of it. However, her talk of consciousness and insight into the violence (*'becoming aware'*), the immorality of it (*'it wasn't normal'*), and of resistance to it (*'starting to stand up to him'; 'I would call him out on it'*), indicate the uptake of an empowered subject position, which subverts the position typically written into IGT discourses in which 'victims' are situated as blinded to violence through a) the normalisation of it or b) the trauma of it. For both Amy and Kerry though, insight is framed as an outcome of self-other comparisons, rather than as generated entirely by/within the self.

Linked to processes of enculturation, normalisation, and inurement, the notion of 'blindness' to violence is pertinent in discourses of IGT. This is because failure to 'see' violence assumes failure to recognise it, failure to position it as unjust, and failure to resist it. More than this though, is that failure to 'see' violence is assumed to enable continuity. As McCollum (2015) proposes, betrayal blindness *'leads to the failure to avoid it and, hence, to continued revictimization'* (pp.568). In accordance with this notion, observe the way Kerry talks of enculturation and its consequences for her own Mum:

> *Kerry: I don't think [Mum] would have been able to articulate anything against her mum at that point. She can now, but at that point she was still fused, if you like, into the abuse cycle*.

The sentiment of being 'fused' is synonymous with being 'part of', 'connected to', and the inference here is that enculturation into the 'abuse cycle' rendered the abuse invisible, disabling articulation of it but also preventing assimilation of her experience with abuse.

Feminist research has identified that naming violence and, more specifically, women naming men's violence, to be a highly complex and multi-layered process. Kelly (1988) and Kelly and Radford (1996) theorised that invisibility of violence and its silencing involves a myriad of factors: men's deflection of responsibility and location of blame for abuse onto women; women's changing perceptions and redefinitions of their experiences; social tolerance for violence against women and girls; policy and law, and criminal justice processes; as well as systematic minimisation of women's experiences. One particularly interesting dimension as articulated by Kelly and Radford (1996) is that structural gender inequalities mean that women may have a vested interest, due to possible repercussions, in either *minimising* or *not* naming men's violence. This is relevant to the 'Blind Spots' chapter because it might mean that, counter to the discourse here, violence is known, recognised and seen by the women and girls, but owing to the inequitable distribution of power, a discourse of female 'blindness to violence' is prioritised over a discourse indicative of female awareness and insight into violence.

Section Summary

'Blindness' to violence is a deficit discourse which constructs the victim of violence not only as lacking cognisance of violence but as being primed to re-enact dysfunctional/violent relational patterns in their subsequent relationships (Hulette et al, 2011; McCollum, 2015). Responses to trauma, such as dissociation, are posited to put victims indirectly at risk of IGT, via their own vulnerability to victimisation, and their offspring's exposure to victimisation (Hulette et al, 2011; McCollum, 2015). This section has illustrated how a discourse of being blind to violence present in the women's interview material aligns not only with social learning in its account of enculturation, but also with trauma perspectives which locate impaired perception as a symptom of trauma.

7.3. Blind Spots Illuminated: Visibility and Resistance Externalised

In this section, I look a little more deeply into an aspect of the research material touched upon in the previous section; the significance of the external source in women's accounts of the visibility of violence. Drawing on examples from interviews, I consider how transparency is positioned as

generated outside of the self, provoked by external sources. I consider the discursive implications of this account, how it constructs victims as unable to see/identify violence themselves.

7.3.1. DV Courses –Making the Hidden Visible

For several of the women, the DV courses accessed via the centres they attended were positioned as the external source pivotal in unveiling violence, making it transparent and visible:

> *Georgia: ... if you don't break the cycle, the abuse is going to carry on. I'm referring back to when I did the [name] course. We learnt about breaking the cycle there. If you don't break the cycle, the cycle of abuse is going to carry on.*

> *Int: How can you break the cycle?*

> *Georgia: Even going to the Freedom Programme and [course name], courses like that to **help you see the signs of domestic abuse**. It can happen to any of us. Or even counselling, **to realise it isn't normal.***

There are two aspects of pertinence here: the (in)visibility of violence; and the construction of (dis)continuity. I will discuss each separately and consider how they interlink. Firstly, let us examine the last three lines of the excerpt to consider the way invisibility and visibility are constructed. External sources, in this case DV/therapeutic provisions ('*Freedom Programme and [course name]';* '*counselling'*), are heralded for their ability to make what is obscured visible (*'to help you see the signs of domestic violence')*. Victims are cast as requiring an external agent to pierce the metaphoric bubble of incognisance.

The ordering here is also noteworthy. Observe the succession: 'seeing' the signs of violence and realising 'it isn't normal'. This chimes with an aspect of dominant discourses involving IGT discussed in the prior section, in which 'blindness' and 'normalisation' to violence are connected to intergenerational continuities ('transmission') and, by contrast, visibility and transparency pivotal to discontinuities (no 'transmission'). Georgia's quote tells us something of the relevance of this notion in DV practice, but it has also been evidenced in Wagner et al's (2019) examination of practitioners' perceptions of IGT. The authors found that '*[t]he majority of participants [practitioners providing services to victims and perpetrators]'* '*believed that where*

intergenerational domestic violence is an issue in adulthood, it relates to the normalisation of abusive behaviour and consequently a lack of ability to recognise and identify behaviour as abusive' (Wagner et al, 2019, p.45). Hence, the idea that violence creates enculturation and perception deficit which, in turn, sets up IGT, is, according to Wagner's study, in operation in practice contexts. Returning to Georgia's excerpt, a last point here is that the invisibility of violence is positioned as a problem of the individual's faulty perception, rather than, for example, the 'mystification' that might be generated in the context of violence (Laing, 1985). Interventions are framed as a remedy to this through the re-programming of perception.

Next, let us draw our attention to the first few lines of Georgia's quote to explore how discontinuity and continuity of IGT are constructed. The repeated phrase, '*if you don't break the cycle, the abuse is going to carry on',* interconnects with a discourse in the research material which forms the focal point for the following analysis chapter (*'The Inevitable, The Avertible'*), which illustrates the contradictory location of IGT as simultaneously inescapable and avoidable. Of most salience to this present section, is the inference of continuity as the status quo if not for active resistance. It is my observation that IGT is often framed in this way in the literature (as discussed in earlier review chapters). If we view Georgia's quote as a reproduction of the messages of the course she speaks of ('*I'm referring back to when I did the [name] course. We learnt about breaking the cycle there'),* it might lead us to conclude that 'continuity of transmission as the status quo if not for active resistance' is not only a discourse within academic literature, but is also reproduced within the institutional context of DV services (operating at exo-level).

Under this framework of 'continuity as the status quo', victims are called upon to actively resist continuity to prevent transmission. However, the institution, as reproduced through Georgia's account, delivers a double-bind, locating responsibility with victims to resist, to 'break the cycle', whilst situating them as blind to violence, requiring 'help to see the signs', and in need of help 'to realise it isn't normal'. Here, resistance and discontinuity are intimately woven into the fabric of the institution by the institution. Capacity to resist is rendered impossible without the help of intervention, which means that in this particular construction, victims are dependent upon the institution for resistance and for discontinuity of IGT. Discursively, this stripping of power from individuals and its relocation with institutions, aligns with the theories of other authors in

reference to the self-perpetuating nature of 'helping' industries (see Dineen, 1999; Rose, 1985; Smail, 1998).

Isla also linked DV courses with the changing perception of violence from something invisible to something transparent:

> *Isla: I'm scared to have a relationship, so I wouldn't have one.*
>
> *Int: You're scared, why, because you think it might turn out to be abusive?*
>
> *Isla: Yeah, because **I wouldn't be able to see the signs. That's why I'm on these courses now, to help me.***

Resonating with Georgia's quote, DV courses are positioned as enabling a clear perspective on violence. The possibility of developing an intimate relationship is described as something fearful, interestingly not because it might turn out to be abusive, but because Isla '*wouldn't be able to see the signs'.* The supposed blindness to violence, the incognisance of it then, is prioritised as the thing to fear, to resist, and to combat, before any potentially abusive intimate partner is.

Through this construction of blindness to violence, Isla portrays herself as inherently untrustworthy, incapable of recognising, perceiving or sensing violence. When set against her interview, Isla's portrayal of incognisance undermines her accounts of instinct and awareness of danger and risk. Aside from multiple resistances, she described being prompted (on the strength of her concerns and a 'feeling' in her 'tummy'), to take a partner to a police station to find out if he had a recorded history of abuse. Further into their relationship, he became violent towards her and, moreover, she discovered that he had previously perpetrated rape. Far from being incognisant, oblivious to violence, this account arguably paints a picture of a woman intimately attuned with her feelings; to sensing risk, to sensing the potential for violence. Consulting the Police could be interpreted as an attempt to relinquish identification to a higher power, an authority. While this might indicate a *lack of trust* in her awareness of violence, it does not indicate a *lack of awareness* of violence, its threat, nor impaired capacity to perceive it. This is somewhat consistent with findings by Haselschwerdt et al (2018) who suggests that those exposed to violence may be *'vigilantly aware of violence and abuse warning signs'* (p.16), although it challenges more mainstream theories such that *'repeated violent victimizations may lead to diminished perceptions*

of threat via desensitization and normalization of violence' (Valdez et al, 2013, p.138). From an intervention point of view, the 'blind spots' construction calls into question Isla's ability to 'see the signs' of violence, to the point of instilling fear and setting a hiatus on relationships. In doing so, it *engenders* distrust and, in turn, *compromises* rather than *supports* agency and self-trust.

Like Georgia and Isla, Jenny placed great store in the ability of intervention to make violence transparent:

> *Int: How do you make sense of intergenerational transmission, generally?...*
>
> *Jenny: Because people don't get it. Because all this* **cover** *that he's got I didn't get it until now, thirty years later, or until I went on the – until I started doing the Freedom Programme and stuff like that. That Freedom programme explains it in so much detail and – but in a short way. This is the effects on children, they're liars, they're persuaders,* **so I can see all this.**
>
> *Int: So when you say 'cover', what do you mean?*
>
> *Jenny: It's all like because you don't – because* **if you haven't done the Freedom programme you don't necessarily get what's happened to you.**

In spite of spending considerable time during her interview talking about the varied ways she fled, made disclosures, and generally resisted violence in childhood and adulthood, in this quote Jenny draws on a 'blind spots' construction, locating her insight and awareness as products of the intervention ('*I didn't get it until now, thirty years later, or until I went on the – until I started doing the Freedom programme'; 'if you haven't done the Freedom Programme you don't necessarily get what's happened to you')*. Jenny talks passionately about the intervention for its ability to educate and enlighten, and while this is positive it is an important point of analytic discussion that in her articulation of meaning-making of IGT, intervention is exalted for its capacity to make violence visible and known. The effect of this is two-fold: it reduces Jenny to the state of 'blind' victim, and marks a contradiction to her more empowered accounts; obfuscating the multiple ways (throughout her life-course prior to intervention) she recognised and resisted violence, and sought to avert continuity in her adult relationships and in her children's generation.

Although the transformation from the opacity of violence to the transparency of it was more frequently credited to be a product of institutions, via DV interventions, other external sources were cited by the women. Take for example, Kerry's excerpt, in which her own husband is located as a necessary barometer:

> *Kerry: [...] So I feel sorry for [mum] because she's had a hell of a life. She's been abused by her mother and by her husband. She's now disabled because of the stress her body has come under over the course of her life. She's virtually housebound. She's in a horrible, horrible place that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. So I don't hate her. I love her. But I also know that she's not good for me. And so I have to be careful. And **my measuring yard for that is my husband.***

This quote connects with several pertinent issues. Firstly, it positions mum as a victim on multiple different levels, and Kerry as empathic of this. However, the lengthy description of her mum's difficulties, which locate her as passive, are undercut by Kerry's suggestion that 'she's not good for me' and that she has 'to be careful', which frame her mum as risky. The ordering of this quote, which moves from victimisation to risk, resonates with social learning explanations of transmission, whereby victims are considered to transition from 'at risk' to risky. The notion of enculturation to violence is also present here but implicitly, through the need for caution and resistance. For instance, having 'to be careful' is positioned as resistance to being drawn into mum's risky influence. In terms of 'blind spots', unlike the previous quotes we have seen which more overtly site external sources in the 'visibility' of violence, Kerry's quote does this more implicitly, conscripting her husband to be her 'eyes' on risk. By implication, the need for her husband as a 'measuring yard' situates her own capacity to perceive violence and sense risk as impaired, in need of an external source to make danger visible, known. By constructing victims as untrustworthy, as incapable of detecting the possibility/threat of violence, 'blind spots' facilitates a complete abandonment of judgement, in Kerry's case, to her husband, a position arguably more conducive to victimisation.

Section Summary

The 'blind spots' discourse constructs violence as opaque and victims as blind to it. This discourse relates to IGT in a myriad of ways; by locating victims as incognisant they are assumed to be at risk of subsequent victimisation, to exposing offspring to violence, and as unable to resist violence and its transmission. The excerpts discussed here illustrate the significance in the women's accounts of

the external source in making violence 'visible'. This locates discontinuity of violence outside of the self. Also, as exemplified here, the voice of institutions at exo-level loomed large in the women's accounts. In these examples, programmes were heralded for their ability to make violence transparent. The discursive implications of this are three-fold. Firstly, it presents women's insight and ability to perceive, sense, and feel violence as in some way inadequate or faulty. Secondly, it ties the women's capacity to 'see' violence into the intervention programme, locating intervention as a necessary mechanism for the visibility of violence. Thirdly, conceptualising the intervention as a necessary means of 'seeing' violence has implications for the way possibilities for resistance to violence/transmission are viewed. For if violence is invisible and unseen, it renders resistance to it an impossibility, that is, without the transparency that the intervention brings.

7.4. Challenges to Enculturation Discourses

Throughout this chapter so far, I illustrated the resonance of women's accounts with social learning explanations of IGT. In particular, I considered the assumption of enculturation, impaired perception, and the opacity of violence. In this final section, I consider the dissonance in women's interview material, and demonstrate how accounts marked a direct challenge to social learning explanations.

7.4.1. Incompatibilities: Tensions Between Accounts of Violence and Social Learning Explanations of IGT

The women's accounts simultaneously synchronised and contested social learning explanations of IGT of family violence. This contradiction can be observed even within small passages of text, where the accounts move in and out of support for social learning. As an example, let us consider an extract from Naomi's interview in which tensions between the two positions are resolved through a kind of re-framing, a re-negotiation, which sees her taking up the subject position of an anomaly in the social learning/transmission 'rule':

> *Naomi: I do believe that it's kind of stuck in a cycle. I think once it happens to someone it's kind of that person's taken it as learnt behaviour...I think it's the atmosphere that you've been around, it's kind of like all you kind of know sort of thing. But then that's kind of thingy because I've had it all round me but I don't see myself as someone that's neglectful or abusive or manipulative. I don't see myself as that sort of thing. And I've never been told that I've been like that towards someone...I think I'm kind of the oddball that's looked*

in at it and been round it and seen it so much. And also, I've had it done to me as well and I kind of just – I don't believe in violence.

Here, Naomi proposes that through her discontinuity she is an anomaly ('the oddball') amongst victims. For others, the continuity of violence is represented as a product of enculturation and a process of learning that happens via a cycle of seeing, learning and repeating, but not for Naomi. Her location as anomalous enables a subversion of the typical framing of perception; exposure to violence is framed here as *sharpening* her perception of violence, as opposed to the social learning account of *dulling* and *desensitizing* perceptions. While she begins to talk about IGT and the continuity of violence using a social learning account, it becomes insufficient in explaining her own discontinuity. The social learning account crumbles under her enquiry; perhaps because of its prevalence and dominance it renders alternatives unspeakable. Naomi falls into disfluency as she struggles to find words to represent anything other than social learning – resorting to 'that's kind of thingy' to explain the disjuncture with her own acute awareness and resistance of violence.

In Sue's account too, social learning theory fails to explain discontinuities, i.e. the absence of perpetration following exposure and, vice versa, perpetration without prior exposure:

> *Sue: Why does [step-father] have to abuse when he's never been abused in his time or in his family?*
>
> *Int: So there's lots of questions.*
>
> *Sue: That's why I can't understand it.*
>
> *Int: So there's lots of questions for you about why abuse happens.*
>
> *Sue: Because they say – I'm not sure if it's true – but they say if it's happened to the person, it will happen in life. But it's happened to me and I've never done it to anybody [...]*

Social learning is by nature concerned with the reproduction/continuity of behaviours through learning. It is less focused on discontinuity or explaining the advent of seemingly 'new' behaviours like, for instance, the perpetration of abuse in the absence of victimisation. This elision in understandings of IGT render abuse in the absence of exposure a challenge to comprehension and to language. To this end, drawing on a social learning account renders Sue's circumstances (i.e. abuse by someone not previously exposed, and her non-abuse following exposure)

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incomprehensible (*'I can't understand it'*). One of the criticisms of the hypothesis of IGT is that it sets up a ready-made defence for the perpetration of violence by those previously exposed, releasing them from blame and responsibility (Burman & Chantler, 2005). Accordingly, for Sue, perpetration following exposure is framed as understandable, excusable even, whereas perpetration in the absence of exposure cannot even be comprehended through a social learning framework.

7.4.2. The Visibility of Violence: *'I could see that something here was wrong…'*

As illustrated in *'The Opacity of Violence'*, enculturation discourses frame victims as incognisant through the impaired perception that manifests as a consequence of exposure to violence. While there were instances in the research material where women's accounts touched upon the notion of 'diminished perceptions' (Valdez et al, 2013), there were also examples that troubled this discourse through the women's subject positions as conscious and insightful of the violence. Note for example, Kerry's heroized account below, which positions her as highly cognisant to the injustice of her father's violence:

> *Kerry: ... And I suppose, in a way, [relationship with dad] was a power struggle. You know, I suppose I'm quite a strong person myself. I wasn't prepared to let what he was doing— I think, deep down, there must have been part of me that **knew what he was doing was wrong** because, otherwise, how could I have stood up to him. And so I think because **I could see that something here was wrong**, but she was obviously not able to – my mum, sorry, for the tape – my mum was not able to do anything about that or not willing, or whatever, either because **she'd been in too long**— It was almost like **she couldn't see clearly** what was really happening, or she could but she wasn't prepared to accept what the consequences of that might be at this time. That's how I felt.*

There are several aspects of Kerry's extract that chime with a social learning account: the notion of enculturation and inurement (*'my mum was not able to do anything […] because she'd been in too long'*), and the notion of diminished perception and being blind to violence (*'It was almost like she couldn't see clearly what was really happening'*). Also, noteworthy here is the assumption of dose-response (discussed in the literature review), the correlation made between the duration of exposure (dose) and impact (response) - in this case 'response' relates to the effects on perception and tolerance of violence and on possibilities to enact personal agency.

The propensity of dominant and historic understandings of violence to implicitly blame victims for their own abuse is echoed in Kerry's quote, as she relies upon prevailing constructions of victimisation by centring the problem of inaction with her mum, rather than as a symptom/construction of violence. Interestingly, while her account is consistent with a discourse of 'normalcy' in her framing of her mum as passive and incognisant, it also challenges such discourses through Kerry's subject position as conscious of the violence (*'part of me that knew what he was doing was wrong'),* with clear visibility of it *('I could see that something here was wrong'),* and intolerant and resistant (*'[relationship with dad] was a power struggle'; 'I'm quite a strong person myself'; 'I wasn't prepared to let what he was doing'; 'stood up to him').*

Like Kerry, Amy also occupied a subject position as someone conscious of the violence, and aware of the danger it posed:

> *Amy: And the thing is, it was getting harder and harder to invite [best friend] round to my home because things were getting more and more volatile and I didn't want people there and it was – when you live in such a dangerous home life you don't want people in your home. It's very difficult to have friendships really.*

Through an account of risk *('things were getting more and more volatile'; 'when you live in such a dangerous home life you don't want people in your home'),* this extract challenges the notion of 'diminished perceptions of threat' as proposed by Valdez et al (2013, p.138). Rather, it builds a picture of acute awareness of violence and its hazards. In a similar vein to Kerry, Amy provides a heroized account, in which she is portrayed as necessary protector, ensuring her friend's safety. Thus, these accounts are more consistent with findings from other authors which indicate that individuals exposed to violence may actually be '*sensitized*' to abuse (Fleckman et al, 2018, p.278) and '*particularly cautious and attuned to the nuances of violence and abuse*' (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018, pp.22-3).

7.4.3. Resistance

Enculturation discourses locate victims as susceptible to further victimisation experiences due to normalisation and inurement of violence (e.g. Asen & Fonagy, 2017; Kim et al, 2014; McCollum, 2015; Valdez et al, 2013; Vung & Krantz, 2009; Walters, 2017; Wareham et al, 2009). The women's accounts challenged this through constructions of resistance. For instance, in an account of

intense, volatile and violent interparental relations, Isla positions herself as the instigator to action, to her mother leaving, and the catalyst to her parents' eventual separation:

Int: What was your dad's relationship like with your mum?

Isla: It was a love-hate relationship. They were either lovely to each other or literally killing each other.

Int: What, physical abuse?

Isla: Yeah. My dad used to beat my mum up lots of time. My mum wouldn't stand up for herself, until we got a bit older.

Int: Okay. And then what happened?

Isla: Well, I made her leave.

Social learning explanations of IGT of violence frame victims as enculturated; implicit is victims' passivity, their 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' of violence, which enable its continuation and perpetuation through non-resistance. This is a paradox that simultaneously strips and locates power; on the one hand situating victims as passive, without power, unable to resist, while on the other, emphasising their role in continuities of violence and, in turn, their power in discontinuities. Locating herself as the pivotal influence of change, establishes Isla as aware of the violence and its effects, and through her act of resistance ('*I made her leave'*), she emerges as intolerant to the violence, not inured and not inculcated into the supposed 'normalisation' of it. This short extract provides a direct challenge to representations of victims as made 'blind' and tolerant to family violence by normalisation and social learning processes.

Unlike the extracts previously explored in this section where the women cultivate heroized, active, and agentic accounts of themselves, below, Jenny disavows responsibility for the aversion of a potentially catastrophic event in her teenage years:

Jenny: [...] I got quite close to him and then he said to me, "Do you want to officially become my girlfriend?" And I was like, "Yeah, yeah, all right then."

And then he said, "You do realise if you become my official girlfriend you have got to sleep with the rest of my gang." And he said, "It's all right because they only do it once and then you're mine again." So you think of all the words he's used there, you've only got to do it

once, then you're mine again. I would know that straight away now because of the Freedom Programme and that. But when you're sixteen you don't pick up on those one liners. So he said, "It's all right because then if anything happens to me they will always look after you because you will be part of this now, this will be your family." And what I actually said to him was, "No, no, I can't be doing with that, we'll just be friends […]

Challenging the proposition that repeat victimisation leads to reduced '*self-protective behaviors in interpersonal relationships*' (Valdez et al, 2013, p.138), Jenny describes directly resisting the advances of a group of men, a potential pseudo-family, who couched sexual exploitation in gang initiation. Discursively, the ordering of the three key elements of this extract is especially interesting: the threat of sexual exploitation articulated in the first few sentences *('you have got to sleep with the rest of my gang'; 'then you're mine')*; talk of retrospective incognisance of violence and enlightenment brought about by intervention ('*when you're sixteen you don't pick up on those one liners'; 'I would know that straight away now because of the Freedom Programme'*); followed by Jenny's act of resistance in the last sentence ('*what I actually said to him was, "No, no, I can't be doing with that, we'll just be friends'*).

Reflecting dominant discourses, Jenny retrospectively constructs herself as being unaware, incapable of identifying violence. However, her resistance tells a different story, one which required the ability to anticipate threat and envision the possibilities for violence, to interpret and reject what was sold as undying 'family' loyalty and enduring support (*"they will always look after you because you will be part of this now, this will be your family"*). The interweaving of resistance with talk of intervention ('Freedom Programme') shifts power from Jenny towards intervention, constructing the Freedom Programme as the significant external source in transforming violence from something opaque to something transparent, something visible and therefore something resistible (note alignment with the prior 'Blind Spots Illuminated' section).

Jenny's extract challenges enculturation discourses in a similar vein to the other women's accounts that we have explored in this section, but her quote also marks a contrast with their heroized subject positions. What I think is pertinent about this contrast is the inclusion of talk of intervention in Jenny's account. The centralisation of the intervention accompanies a de-centering of the self, that is, as the intervention is foregrounded, Jenny and her agency become marginalised. This sees

her falling to dominant victim discourses of incognisance and 'blindness' to violence, nullifying her resistance and transposing it onto the intervention. This is despite her resistance being activated decades before she received intervention, at least as far as events are structured in her story.

Section Summary

In this section, I considered three main areas of challenge to enculturation discourses within the research material: the incompatibility of social learning theory with the women's accounts of violence within multiple generations of their families; the consciousness/insight into violence and the moral injustice of it; and finally, the women's accounts of resistance. The presence of each of these three areas in the research material trouble prevailing discourses of normalisation, of desensitisation and of tolerance.

Conclusion

Enculturation discourses cultivate an image of members of families as blind in their fall to intergenerational continuity of victimisation/perpetration. This squeezes out possibilities for constructions to be built around the self as lucid and capable of awareness/insight into violence. Moreover, the blind victim construction undoes the self as reliable and trustworthy in its sensory perception of the world. The fundamental ability to receive and process information, to communicate and relate to the world, are rendered unreliable through the framing of these senses as impaired, defective, or faulty. The descriptions of normalisation, internalisation, and replication present within the women's interview material resonates with the prevailing explanation of IGT - social learning theory. However, in this chapter I also illustrated how in subtle but important ways the women's accounts challenged this theory. Through their accounts of resistance, the women emerge as cognisant and intolerant to violence; they speak of insight into difference, not of normalisation; and talk of what is wrong illuminates (im)morality and injustice, not desensitisation nor inurement.

Chapter 8

Transmission: The Inevitable, The Avertible

Introduction

In 'The Inevitable, The Avertible', I demonstrate how the women's talk involving IGT of violence encompassed competing discourses. At times, IGT was cast as an entirely rational expectancy in families where violence had existed, and this was often articulated to me with much certainty and assuredness. However, the weft of seemingly concrete constructions of IGT as an expectancy, an inevitability, would every so often catch on the splinters of a competing discourse which conceptualised IGT as an *avertible* phenomenon. Thus, we are confronted with two polarised notions of IGT, each troubling the legitimacy of the other. From a discursive perspective, this may illuminate that IGT is bridged across two discourses, neither of which have the ability to sufficiently encapsulate the experience of violence within multiple generations of the family.

I draw upon the concepts of 'replicative' and 'corrective scripts' from family systems theory (Byng-Hall 1985; 1995; 1998) to entitle and contextualise these sections. John Byng-Hall, a prominent author in systems theory and, specifically, family scripts, describes the latter as '*family scenarios with a common script*' and the '*circular sequence of family interaction*' (1985, p.301). Family scripts provide a useful framework to consider the ways participants characterise their own adult intimate relationships, their parenting, and decision-making, as well as the connection these aspects bare to prior generations. Structured according to the competing 'inevitable-avertible' discourses, this chapter is divided into two sections; the first, 'Replicative Scripts', represents the women's accounts of expectancy and inevitability of transmission; and the second, 'Corrective Scripts', explores research material pertaining to the possibilities for discontinuity.

8.1. 'Replicative Scripts'

'Replicative Scripts' is formed of three parts: 'The 'Truth' of IGT'; 'IGT as an Explanation of Violence in Multiple Generations'; and 'Dual Identities and Continuities'.

8.1.1. The 'Truth' of IGT

As I noted earlier in this thesis, and as several of the more critical authors in the field have pointed out (Abramovaite et al, 2015; Baker 2009; 2012; Engel, 2005; Herzberger, 1990), the concept of IGT of violence is so embedded in popular, professional and academic discourse, so intwined in understandings of fate, of legacy and heritage, that it appears to be entirely intuitive that a phenomenon such as violence would repeat generation after generation in families. The women's accounts were underpinned by such notions of common-sense. Take, for example, a quote by Kerry in which the repetition of 'family scripts' is naturalised:

> *Kerry: ... [husband and I] both came from abusive backgrounds, so I think both of us were faced with this **truth** that it does unfortunately seem to repeat patterns throughout families*

The use of 'truth' here locates IGT as incontrovertible, as 'fact', yet 'seem' functions as a softener. While 'truth' speaks of continuities, 'seem' allows room for discontinuities, and for other possible truths/futures. This quote is consistent with the systemic concept of 'replicative scripts', in which each generation repeats, in one way or another, the scripts of the prior generation/s. Only, in Kerry's quote, the emphasis is not on the persons as agents of repetition/replication (as with the systemic concept), instead, by framing replication as a fundamental and naturalised consequence of abuse (*'[abuse] does unfortunately seem to repeat patterns throughout families'*), the responsibility for repetition is untethered to any persons, rather it lies with the experience of abuse itself.

In a similar vein to Kerry, at times Isla conceptualised IGT as a natural prospect. Following up on her account of her daughter's experiences of violence in her own intimate partnerships, I posed Isla a theoretical scenario. Her response definitively situates IGT as a certainty for those exposed to violence in childhood:

> *Int: Okay, so how about if we had a family where there's been no domestic violence and then a couple got together and there was abuse occurring within that relationship; what happens to the next generation? What do you think happens?*
>
> *Isla: If they [parents] carry on being abusive, one of those [children] will end up in abusive relationships.*
>
> *Int: Okay. So it will continue?*

*Isla: Yeah, it **definitely** will.*

While abuse might be an anomaly in terms of the history of a family, Isla envisages that the occurrence of abuse in one generation would set up a perpetual pattern of IGT. Interestingly though, according to this particular projection, only one (or perhaps at least one) of the imaginary children are doomed to a fate of violence in their own relationships *('one of those [children] will end up in abusive relationships').* Perhaps this theorisation was informed by the intimate relationships of her own children, where only her daughter went on to experience violence in adulthood, and where her two youngest were spared. This aspect of Isla's quote is very subtly echoic of Biblical scripture, situating the 'one' child as the sacrificial lamb, as a necessary karmic repayment for the 'sins of the fathers'.

Another important aspect of Isla's excerpt is the connection to 'dose-response' theory. Although rarely explicitly articulated as such in the literature, 'dose-response' is often assumed to be a factor in IGT; as the extent of exposure to violence ('dose') is seen to have a direct relationship on transmission ('response'). Through her emphasis on continuity of abuse ('*If they [parents] carry on being abusive'*), reflecting much discourse, Isla situates IGT as a product of temporality, of the duration of exposure, rather than, for example, a consequence of the frequency or severity of violence.

8.1.2. IGT as an Explanation of Violence in Multiple Generations

The violence the women experienced, was cast as a result of unconscious processes operating in their own/partners' families, involving social learning, and an unconscious draw to 'replicating' scripts established in prior generations. For instance, note how Bettina draws on a classic social learning account of transmission:

Int: Did you ever confront your mum at all about [her 'controlling' behaviour]?

Bettina: Yes, I did. And I carry on doing it now. And she says that this is the way that she had been brought up by her mum. Her mum was hitting her and this is what she has to do to her daughter too.

There is a field of research which looks at the IGT of parenting. It marks a slight deviation from the primary focus of this present study and so was a topic I excluded in my literature review.

Nonetheless, Bettina demonstrates an intersect here between parenting styles, 'discipline', abuse, and the apparent 'replicative family script' running in her family from mothers to daughters. To be considered in this brief interaction as well is the possible implication of my question which, although it was not my intention, could be interpreted as meaning that the onus *should* be on Bettina, as the victim of her mother's control and abuse, to create change in the dynamic. As I discuss in the proceeding 'Corrupted Self' chapter, the emphasis for change often evades persons using violence and is placed on the victim. If my question was read by Bettina in these terms, social learning theory becomes a useful tool for her to draw upon to divert my attention away from any possible accusation of her as a potential but 'impotent' agent for discontinuity, and move it towards the entrenchment, the embeddedness of violence within her family. This functions to illustrate discontinuity as an endeavour weighed down by the history of the family, and not something that can be swiftly and sharply counteracted by simply *'confronting her mother'*. Bettina's response to my question then is a powerful rejection of all that the inadvertent naivety of it implies and of how that implication frames her. Demonstrating the history enables alignment with her family to be retained, enabling an account of herself as a victim amongst victims, rather than as a necessary anomaly, a conduit for change, as my question might imply that she *should* and *could* be.

Georgia also draws on a social learning account to explain the recurrence of violence in her family:

> *Georgia: ...it seems whatever way you look at it on my mum's side and my dad's side, it looks like there's always been abuse there throughout the years.*
>
> *Int: How do you make sense of that? Why do you think that is?*
>
> *Georgia: I think it's basically the cycle. It's witnessing the abuse as well. Obviously I didn't witness it between my mum being the perpetrator on my dad, but it's still been there...so something there must have triggered it and rubbed off.*

There are a couple of particularly interesting features of Georgia's text. Firstly, her explanation of IGT ('the cycle') is augmented around social learning and specifically 'witnessing' as a mechanism for the transmission in her family. This is despite never having witnessed her mother's abuse of her father *('[o]bviously I didn't witness it').* Secondly, although the central characteristic of social learning ('witnessing') is articulated and then rendered irrelevant in her case, Georgia concludes that transmission occurred through a kind of unconscious intrapsychic process which 'triggered'

and 'rubbed off' the 'family script' of violence/victimisation to her. The production of Georgia's account here is one which attempts to maintain an alliance with social learning, a dominant transmission discourse, but one which only results in an illumination of the disparities, and therefore inadequacies, of this discourse as a tool with which to explain the recurrence of violence in her family.

Amy envisaged IGT to be partially determined by the formation of habitual 'patterns of behaviour':

> Int: I just wonder in terms of intergenerational transmission, so that idea that domestic violence repeats in generations and is transmitted through the generations, how you make sense of that?
>
> Amy: I do believe it happens, that is something I believe. […] So on a conscious level I'm very aware of the situation but habitually I fall back into the same patterns of behaviour. And I think that's what's happened down the line. I had not really a very good understanding of my family history, really until my mum died, I think that was where I got a much stronger idea of the fact that it had been coming down the line, it wasn't just from my mum down to our generation.

The suggestion that abusive relations are engaged in through habit is pertinent because it links in to what I term an 'addiction' discourse (discussed in more depth in the 'Corrupted Self' chapter), which perversely centralises blame with the victim for having some kind of sadistic 'craving' to be the subject of abuse, and engagement in abusive relations as some kind of 'relapse'. As I discuss later on, addiction discourse is fundamentally a victim-blaming discourse which problematises the victim while obscuring the perpetration of violence. Amy's emphasis on her own behavioural patterns also has the same effect of situating blame with herself as a victim, while obfuscating those who have used violence against her.

Amy suggests here that even though she may be 'conscious' of the similitude between her intimate relationships and those in the history of her family, awareness does little to prevent her from being compelled to replicate the family script through the 'fall' into 'the same patterns of behaviour'. For two of the women in particular, consciousness seemed to be an important issue in relation to (dis)continuity. Terms relating to 'consciousness' (i.e. 'unconscious', 'subconscious', and 'conscious') appeared a total of 34 times across Amy's three interviews and a total of 23 times in

Kerry's two interviews. The frequency with which this term was used may relate to the notion of 'diminished perception' (Valdez et al, 2013) (discussed in the prior 'Blind Spots' chapter), which presumes those exposed become less conscious of violence, and are less able to identify/avoid future encroachment. The way Amy constructs her level of awareness/cognisance in her excerpt here is, to an extent, in accordance with this notion of 'diminished perception', as she locates herself as simultaneously conscious and unconscious; aware of abuse but unable to prevent a draw to the family script.

8.1.3. Competing Identities and Continuities

While much of Kerry's account aligned with the hypothesis of IGT, at times she battled with the irrationality of intergenerational continuity, particularly the notion of role reversal i.e., the classic configuration of IGT, the victim becoming the perpetrator of violence:

> *Kerry: [...] I'm not sure – on a head level, I'm not sure how it is that you can go from being abused to abuser, that kind of logic has never entirely – I've never entirely understood that, because you would have thought that it would develop empathy. And yet somehow it doesn't seem to. And I think where it really frightened me was when I started to notice it in myself. So like it starts with manipulation I think. So there's been a couple of times where I've realised, oh golly, I've actually really manipulated Martin into doing that because I wanted him to do it. So I think it comes from control and then the more that that control is satisfied the greater it gets.*
>
> *And I think that probably what's happening – and again, like I say, I'm no psychologist, but I think probably what's happening is that if you have been out of control what is the one thing you're going to desire, control, which leads you to be a controlling person. (Laughs) Which leads you in turn to make somebody feel out of control, who then in turn wants to demand control back. So I think that's probably how it works. Which is incredible, because it's totally – well, it's not illogical I suppose, but you would think that the one thing you'd want to do is never, ever do that again, to never cause that situation. And on a head level that's absolutely what I want, and yet I catch myself being phenomenally good at manipulating people at times.*

Kerry's detailed analysis conveys a sense of having tried to comprehend the violence in multiple generations of her family and the apparent IGT. Her reference to 'it', recurring across her interview, transforms IGT into a noun, positioning it not as a theory but as an existing entity, operating

independently to the will of the self, yet governing self and family. '*I've realised… oh golly, I've actually really manipulated Martin*' and '*I catch myself being phenomenally good at manipulating people*' cast IGT as a surreptitious influence, one she is only intermittently aware of, post-manipulation. Kerry's account is disturbing, threaded through with the ingredients of a horror film; the sense of being entirely overwhelmed by a malevolent entity, the object of a puppet-master, and moving in and out of absolute and zero control. Yet, it is an 'intellectualised' account, devoid of the emotional expression one might anticipate in the relaying of such horror. From a discursive perspective, the subject position Kerry occupies is one passive to a force more powerful than her. The self is constructed in governance to IGT, which overwhelms and, at times, entirely consumes her.

Noteworthy, is that her quote calls into question the binary victim-versus-perpetrator dichotomy frequently employed in DV discourses. The heroisation of 'victims', and the villainisation of 'perpetrators', may not only be unhelpful, but the dichotomy oversimplistic (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005). Unprompted, five of the nine women I interviewed spoke about times they had been violent, in offense rather than defence and without provocation. This constructed the women as moving between competing identities at different times in their lives; between being the subject of violence and enacting it. For Georgia, being violent was constructed as a resistant strategy consciously designed to avoid victimisation:

> *Int: I know we've spoken about the intergenerational repetition of domestic violence, but I just wondered if you think it's inevitable?...*
>
> *Georgia: It can happen, obviously, because of my mother being an abuser towards my dad. It can happen. The child either can become the perpetrator or the victim. I swore blind I would never become a victim, and I became a perpetrator myself in my teen years. I used to bully people then...I said I would never become a victim of abuse because of what happened to my dad and what happened to me as a young baby because I didn't want to be that pushover that I thought my dad must have been. [...]*
>
> *Int: Is there anything in particular that you did to avoid becoming a perpetrator or a victim?*
>
> *Georgia: It's just a victim. I didn't care what I became, as long as I wasn't going to be a victim. If it meant beating people up and not letting people treat me that way, it meant*

that. I feel so guilty about it looking at it now, how I was back then... I thought, yeah, no one's going to bring me down. I'm not going to be that victim my dad was.

Georgia describes a strategy simultaneously corrective and replicative of her family script; resistance of her father's victimhood through engagement in antithetic ('corrective') behaviours, which 'repeat' her mother's violence. In Georgia's account, the motivation not to be a 'victim' ('*I swore blind I would never become a victim'; 'I didn't care what I became, as long as I wasn't going to be a victim'; 'I'm not going to be that victim my dad was'*) and the antithetic behaviours she suggests followed, can be read through a systemic lens as an attempt to 're-write' the family script. Ensuring the replication of her father's victim role is avoided, enables her to create 'systems change'/discontinuity within her own small micro-system, even though the script is inadvertently replicated through her adoption of her mother's role (Byng-Hall, 1995).

Isla described her perpetration of abuse as triggered by the threat of coercion and control from intimate partners. Unlike Georgia, this is framed not as conscious but rather as 'dysregulated physiological arousal' (Scerri et al, 2017):

> *Isla: If people don't deal with it and either talk about it or get counselling for those things, they do end up having another relationship which can turn abusive from either side. It can be the woman or the bloke, because I know that I've had a couple of little relationships in which I've been quite abusive. Do you know what I mean? Because they've started to try and control me, I've just flipped. That's it.*

The first sentence here reminds us of a point illustrated in the Blind Spots chapter, in which external interventions in some mode or other (such as 'counselling'), were located by some of the women as necessary for discontinuity. The implication of this framing is four-fold, inferring that: continuity is inevitable without disruption; responsibility for disruption lies with the subject of abuse; discontinuity can only be galvanised by an external source; and finally, discontinuity requires engagement in some kind of emotion-/self-work. In verbalising her own perpetration of abuse, Isla's excerpt not only acknowledges shifts in power, but marks a departure from static and binary labels. The women's accounts of being both violent and the subject of violence, and of moving between these subject positions, are not well represented in the static labels frequently used to describe the actors in violence ('victims' or 'perpetrators'). As Georgia and Isla's quotes indicate, such labels may not sufficiently or accurately capture the complexities of violent relational

dynamics (Dutton & Nicholls, 2005) and, therefore, may risk closing down talk integral to understanding the experience in its fullest.

While Isla's disclosure of perpetration here might be read as an example of the gender symmetry of abuse, a feminist reading would challenge this. Isla is not speaking of perpetrating unprovoked violence, rather she speaks of violence as a reaction to feeling constrained, to being oppressed and controlled by her intimate partners. If we draw on Johnson's (2005) typology of domestic violence, we can interpret her reaction as 'violent resistance'. This form of violence, as Johnson envisages it, is similar but somewhat distinct from 'self-defence'. 'Violent resistance' may occur as a result of systematic and routine domestic abuse. Due to the insidious but sometimes seemingly innocuous nature of domestic abuse, 'violent resistance' might appear an exaggerated reaction and, as Johnson (2005) suggests, because of this it may misalign with legal definitions of 'self-defence'. Applying Johnson's (2005) theory, Isla's account of being violent here should be understood in the context of her violence as a direct response to her subjugation.

Section Summary

In this section, I explored the presence of 'replicative family scripts' in the women's accounts of violence in multiple generations. Points of discussion included: the definitive positioning of IGT as a 'truth'; the naturalisation of continuity of the family script; and the replication of violence. This section illustrated how some of the women claimed to play a part in continuity, more specifically in 'replicating the family script', via role reversal - transforming from the subject of violence to using violence. They conceptualised this in different ways: as irrational but compelling; as conscious and adaptive; and as an unregulated emotional response to violence.

8.2. 'Corrective Scripts' and the Role of Resistance

'Replicative Scripts' represented the women's concrete constructions of IGT which, consistent with much dominant IGT discourse, situated continuity of violence/victimisation as an expected if not inevitable phenomenon for those exposed to violence. In somewhat of a contrast, this section shows how discontinuity is situated by the women as possible and achievable. Their framing of working to create discontinuity, an absence of transmission of violence, through a process of resistance, is reminiscent of the systemic concept of 'corrective family scripts', in which the apparent recursive family narratives of the past can be edited and re-written (Byng-Hall, 1985;

1998). This section is formed of two parts: 'Transmission as the Status Quo'; and 'Making and Re-Making Family'.

8.2.1. Transmission as the Status Quo

As exemplified in 'Replicative Scripts', and as I go on to illustrate in this 'Corrective Scripts' section, the women's accounts involving IGT located them in both passive and agentic ways. Crucially though, their accounts *always* located IGT of violence, that is *continuity* of violence, as the status quo - a phenomenon that, unless resisted, continues to perpetuate through the generations. As noted in the literature review (Chapter 3), this is a key assumption of dominant discourses involving IGT. If one envisages transmission to be the status quo, inevitable without resistance, the implication is that the possibilities for discontinuity and the responsibility for resistance become the problem and occupation of the family. In theory then, the burden to resist and discontinue the 'family script' of violence would potentially rest with each new generation yet to 'transmit'. The women I spoke to talked explicitly about this sense of being burdened. Note for instance this extended excerpt from Kerry's transcript:

> *Int: And you say it's a 'cycle'. Do you see this [refers to Genogram] as a cycle?*
>
> *Kerry: Yeah, I think so. I think it perpetuates because you effectively learn behaviours, don't you, from your parents. So my mum has learnt to be manipulative from her mother...And I am very aware that there are aspects of that behaviour, that manipulative behaviour, that exists in me too, and I have to **fight** them because I've been taught by them. And I have to learn how to have a relationship with my husband that is not impacted or, as much as is humanly possibly, is not existing in this state of affairs, in this kind of context. And you have to **fight** for that. Together, you have to **fight** to make something new […] So you try and seek truth. You try and differentiate between what was really happening and what is a **perception problem** because of the **filters** we have **inherited.** And you can only do that through conversation and through trying to be really, truly honest with each other about what you're feeling and why you're feeling that way. And if you speak it out, it doesn't have power over you anymore. It doesn't have power over your relationship. Because I think I view a lot of the problems in the previous generations being because nobody spoke honestly about what was happening. So we would describe ourselves as brutally honest with each other, and that's very deliberate. That was a decision we made when we first got together, that there would be no holds barred. Like we say it how it is. If we've hurt each other, we articulate why we've hurt each other. We try and decide where the roots of that are coming*

*from, decide whether it's real or not real, or whether it's **because of habits that we've***

***formed** before. And **we try and correct bad habits** in each other.*

Some of the issues this excerpt raises have been discussed in earlier sections/chapters, for instance the notion of a 'perception problem' which fundamentally clouds judgement (discussed in 'Blind Spots'), and of continuity born from 'habits', which link to a discourse of addiction (to be discussed in detail in the 'Corrupted Self'). Furthermore, this quote resonates heavily with social learning theory as ways of relating are posited to be informed through learning processes, shaped by the relationships in prior generations. Interestingly, it is the women in the family that are cast here as the transmitters, as talk is focused on manipulation in the maternal line (*'my mum has learnt to be manipulative from her mother')* rather than on the physical violence in the paternal line. By doing this, as far as this extract goes, Kerry discursively eradicates the male influence in transmission, rendering it a female issue. The omission of the male role in transmission coupled with an emphasis on the female role, as presented here, means that women are made culpable for intergenerational continuity of violence/victimisation while males are rendered invisible and, therefore, blameless in the process. This gendered framing of the responsibility of IGT is especially striking given the gender disparities of violence, which has been identified as overwhelmingly perpetrated by males against females (Gadd et al, 2003; Johnson, 2005; Lombard, 2013; Lombard & Whiting, 2017; McFeely et al, 2013; Stark, 2007).

Kerry describes a purposeful ('deliberate') attempt to create a dynamic in her marriage which opposes the relationships within her and her husband's families-of-origin. She talks of implementing a strategy to be '*brutally honest'*, to engage in a 'purging' through an exhaustive analytic and reflexive discussion on the interactions and conflicts in the dyadic relationship and to deliberate on the causes ('roots'). In itself, 'brutally' is an interesting turn of phrase, indicative of an extremely painful process – different to abuse, instead more penance-like; self-induced, self-controlled pain. This strategy, described to oppose historic 'family scripts' and prevent continuity of violence in the marriage, aligns with psychotherapeutic ideology, where talk is situated as a strategy for transcendence; as cathartic, and also as having the capability of linearly relaying internal worlds externally.

Kerry's excerpt enables us to explore a myriad of possible interpretative avenues, but most salient here, is the location of IGT as the status quo, inevitable without resistance. This is evidenced in the

level of resistance she implies is required to prevent continuity of violence and the 'replication' of her 'family script' in her own marriage ('*I have to fight*'; *'you have to fight for that*'; *'[t]ogether, you have to fight to make something new')*. Like Kerry, Amy's material was also interwoven with a sense that resistance is necessary for discontinuity, and she similarly talked of a push back against continuity as demanding a great level of labour:

> *Amy: I think…it's body language and behaviour that is passed down. So it's not setting up going, oh, I was abused, so my children are going to be abused. I think **it takes a lot of hard work** to try and break those patterns of behaviour. And it's something I'm really conscious of with my son. And it's – to be honest, **it's very exhausting**, because **I am so painfully aware** that my behaviour has an impact and effect on him, which means that I have to try and behave outside of what it normal for me, and that takes **a huge amount of energy**.*

Amy's account of trying to prevent transmission to her son's generation, speaks of an exhausting and extremely taxing process. The sense of effort and exertion required to resist IGT, as articulated by Kerry and Amy, synchronises with what seems to be a recurring thread in the literature. Exploring *'participants' **efforts** to break the cycle of child abuse and neglect'* (p.607), Aparicio (2017) suggested that participants *'were **working tirelessly** to avoid maltreating their children'* (p.614). Similarly, Haselschwerdt et al (2018) write about how participants *'were **actively working** to break any potential cycles of violence'* (p.25). Discontinuity then is situated as an exception to the rule of transmission, positioned as counter to the natural course of events and this, in turn, illuminates a fundamental assumption of IGT of violence, that transmission will occur if not for resistance. Interestingly, in the academy, because the presumption of continuity as the status quo drives and underpins a vast majority of IGT work, there is an endemic failure to include a term to describe an absence of transmission, a term which does not infer that absence comes from resistance. The prevailing explanation of IGT – social learning theory – is also present within the women's accounts of discontinuity here. As social learning theory sets up a connection between violence in *each* generation, *all* violence is envisaged to be a consequence of the transmission of dysfunctional behaviour. Learnt behaviour then is situated as the problem and the focus for systems change (in the micro-system), as Kerry and Amy's extracts demonstrate.

8.2.3. Making and Remaking Family

'Making and Remaking Family' represents the women's accounts of finding non-violent ways of relating within their intimate partnerships and families, which contrasted with the relational dynamics of their pasts. This chimes with Byng-Hall's (1985) metaphor of the 'corrective script', whereby each generation tries to oppose the mistakes they envisage were made by prior generations in an effort to resolve and correct them in the family system. Finding different ways of relating was characterised by the women as an active and conscious process which included seeking out positive relationships, managing conflict, and establishing structure and stability for their own children. Underpinning this research material was a notion that to have non-violent relationships, different to their historic experiences of relationships, new ways of relating have to be constructed, to be actively sought and implemented. This keys in to IGT as the status quo, by assuming that without active pursuit of alternate ways of relating, the scripts of past relationships will play out in a recursive cycle.

Kerry made a general comment on her and her husband's attempts to create a positive partnership:

> *Kerry: There's a sense in which you always kind of live under it [the victim identity]. We can't erase this, but there's a sense in which you can allow it not to be who you are. Like some of the stuff is sometimes to just be involved in other things. You know, be involved in other people's lives that have had very different backgrounds. You know, we do a lot of stuff. We're climbers, we walk. You know, you engage your energies in actively existing in good and positive ways. And we have a right to that, I feel, you know. And that doesn't mean you're suddenly miraculously perfect or that none of this stuff— You know, that you're good people and they're [family] bad people, or anything like that. It's about, okay, can we make something that's different, that isn't aggressive, that isn't controlling, that's based in mutual understanding and value, any of the negative things.*

The history of victimisation is characterised here as omnipresent. The turn of phrase '*you always kind of live under it*' is especially noteworthy, for being *under* it portrays a sense of weight of the family history, and implies being 'beneath', being dominated by it. Activities (i.e. engaging positively with others and involvement in activities) are positioned as creating a context for positive ways of relating, counter to those in their families-of-origin. Together, the omnipresence of the family history and its weight on current relationships destabilises the desired outcome ('*mak[ing]*

something different, that isn't aggressive, that isn't controlling'), locating this not so much an outcome as a continuous and unending job of resistance.

Jenny talked about finding non-aggressive ways of managing conflict in her intimate partnership:

> *Jenny: So, with Brian [partner] I always say we look after each other...we've had to work at our relationship and balance it out if you like. Consequently, Brian has done the Freedom programme...Not in a group, I've done the Freedom Programme with Brian, he's read the book, and he gets it. And when we have an issue and it gets a bit heated, we've learnt to deal with that in a non-aggressive manner.*

Jenny's attempts to 'balance' the intimate relationship and manage conflict are focused on containment; containing heat, containing aggression. The voice of the DV service (exo-level) is also present through the positioning of the 'Freedom Programme' as the remedy for healthy relational management and non-abusive interaction.

Research material related to seeking non-violent ways of interacting with others predominantly centred on parenting differently, and this was articulated by the mothers in the cohort. For instance, Jenny talked of correcting the 'scripts' of the past in two ways; by relating to her abusive ex-husband (children's father) with love, and by establishing a 'no-violence policy' in the family home:

> *Jenny: [...] But through all those emotional setbacks the one thing that me and Brian have continued to do is never, ever slag their dad off...so I will say, ..."You go and see your dad, you make the most of it and then when we haven't got contact with him we say a prayer for him and we send him love." So by doing that I have broken the cycle of violence.*

> *Int: Is it a conscious thing for you?*

> *Jenny: Definitely. Definitely. So Ruby and Finlay when they were younger used to fight, like all children do, you know, and I would not go in there angry and pull them apart. I would pull them apart and I would say to both of them, "We do not use violence in our home, it is wrong. I know you're angry with each other but when you're that angry you need to remove yourself and do what you've got to do." So Finlay learnt to play a guitar. And if he was angry that guitar was bloody loud.*

Relating to her ex-husband in peaceful and non-violent ways is framed here as pivotal in *'[breaking] the cycle of violence'*. This is somewhat consistent with research which indicates that following exposure, a persons' capacity to forgive may mediate IGT of violence (Rivera & Fincham, 2015). The transformative effects of forgiveness are also echoed in various discourses, for example, in a myriad of faiths and in therapeutic discourse, through which forgiveness is envisaged not only to transform negative or hostile emotions held towards the transgressor, but also to release the victim from the ill-effects of the transgression.

In the last paragraph of this excerpt, Jenny talks of drawing clear boundaries in the family home, disallowing any use of violence (*'[w]e do not use violence in our home, it is wrong')*. The measures Jenny describes are definitively framed as consciously corrective of historic relational dynamics, that is, they are positioned as purposeful strategies intended to prevent violence in her children's generation (fourth generation) and to instigate discontinuity (*'by doing that I have broken the cycle of violence')*.

Naomi suggests that fleeing her abusive ex-partner was motivated by her desire for her son to have a non-violent upbringing:

> *Naomi: …for me, I've looked at it [violence in the family] and I've definitely thought – and I want to break the chain, I want to be different, I want my son to have a different lifestyle, better. And I think definitely by leaving my son's dad, that was the biggest way of me saying, "It's not right, I don't want it anymore."*

> *Naomi: If it was me, him and his dad, I have no doubt in my mind we would be in a terrible place. It'd be another cycle repeating itself.*

Naomi's desire to safeguard her son against exposure to violence in his generation is consistent with findings by other authors in the field. For instance, Hall (2011) found women with histories of victimisation and maltreatment in the family-of-origin made concerted efforts to try to ensure their own children were raised without violence. In Naomi's text, there are a couple of points I think are salient. The first relates to the link she makes between violence in different generations through the 'chain' metaphor (*'I want to break the chain')*. The connection that is presumed here between violence in different generations, is reminiscent of causal relationships often made in IGT research. As I pointed out in Chapter 4, it is the *occurrence* of violence commonly studied rather than the

causal association (i.e. 'transmission') (Besemer, 2012). Thus, while 'the chain' interlinks her and her partner's histories of abuse with any potential abuse in her child's generation, the presence/type/form of abuse in different generations of the same family cannot automatically be assumed to be connected.

Secondly, Naomi situates IGT as a product of exposure and a probable outcome for her son, had she remained with her ex-partner *('[i]t'd be another cycle repeating itself again')*. This assumes exposure is predictive of intergenerational continuity. It also assumes that continuity is the status quo, likely without active intervention to avert it (e.g. fleeing; *'leaving my son's dad'*). Furthermore, it draws on a dose-response discourse, which takes for granted that the greater the duration of exposure, the more likely transmission is to occur, and by reducing exposure, it reduces risk of transmission and of continuity. Bettina similarly draws on this discourse:

> Bettina: ...when you are in an abusive relationship, it's one side, the perpetrator, that wants to give the wrong way; a mother wants to give the right way. This is what I do with my children. I am teaching them the good way to have respect because when they are adults and will have a girlfriend, they will know how to respect a girlfriend and not use— If they carried on living with my ex, I'm sure they would go his way.

Bettina adopts an empowered subject position as central in the remediation of her ex-husband's damaging influence and her children's vulnerability to IGT. This is not about parenting differently to her own parents but rather parenting her children differently to her husband (children's father). *'If they carried on living with my ex, I'm sure they would go his way'* illustrates an expectancy, similar to Naomi, that IGT will result from exposure. This assumption of dose-response, of a positive correlation between duration of exposure (temporality) (dose) and extent of damage (response), is axial in responses to violence. It is also at the heart of victim-blaming discourses which locate mothers as equally if not more harmful than perpetrators for not protecting their children by leaving violent contexts.

As well as talk of doing family differently, major life decisions in several of the women's accounts were also characterised as a means of preventing IGT and the continuity of violence/victimisation. One such example, volunteered by two of the nine women, involved reproductive decision-making and, specifically, choosing to be child-free. Isla talked of subtle ways of making decisions around

family and of deciding family futures. When constructing her genogram (see Fig.3) prior to her interview, she talked about decisions made by two of her children to be child-free, choices she suggested were informed by the history of violence within the family, something she raised again during interview *('They're not having children'; 'My son is adamant that he's not going to have any children...and my daughter as well'; 'they're not having kids').*

Figure 3. Excerpt of Isla's Genogram Depicting Third-Fifth Generations

Son and daughter Isla identified as making decisions to be childfree
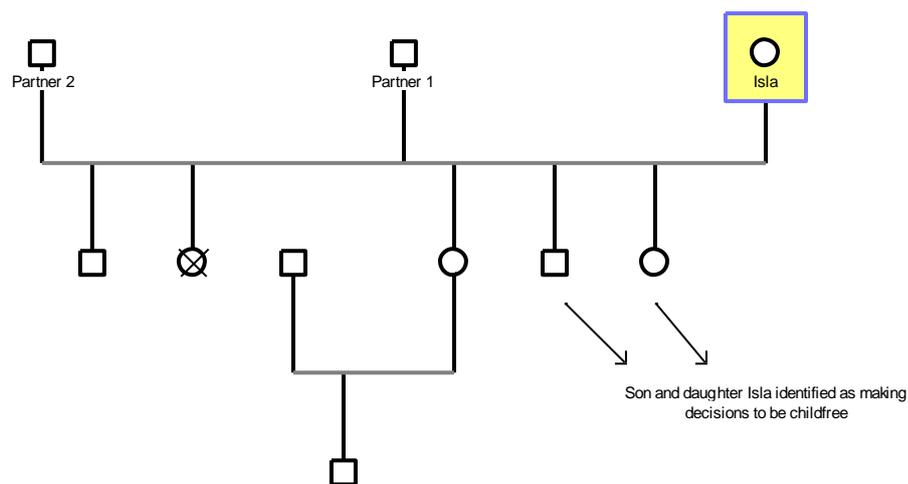
For Kerry, choosing to be child-free was framed as a mutual decision made by her and her husband:

> *Int: So you are consciously trying to avoid repeating these cycles.*
>
> *Kerry: Yeah, yeah, and we've made a very clear decision not to have children…*
>
> *Int: Why?*
>
> *Kerry: Because you can maintain it in partnership with each other...[t]his kind of honest and more whole environment.*
>
> *Int: What do you mean 'whole'?*
>
> *Kerry: I suppose it's safe. This relationship is my safe place. It's my home, in the fullest sense of that word. So you can maintain a more holistic environment, a wholer relationship, a relationship that's based on trust and love and mutual respect. Something*

that's good, something that's fundamentally good, you can maintain that status quo between each other. If you bring a child into that, I think that really makes that relationship difficult because your focus, your energies, have to be on that child and it's like we haven't got enough energies to do that as well. We've got enough energies to manage to hold what we're holding in tension, but I think to bring a child into that would not be a good idea. And he feels the same.

There are two intersecting points of interest in this extract: choosing to be child-free as a resistance of transmission; and choosing to be child-free in order to maintain the integrity of the intimate partnership. I will address each of these issues in turn.

In the first two lines of the extract, (interviewer question and participant response inclusive), Kerry makes a connection between her and her husband's decision to be child-free and the apparent 'cycles' of violence in the family. Being child-free then is represented as being informed by a need to interrupt transmission ('cycles') through 'conscious' avoidance of it. Kerry and her husband's decision hinges on the assumption of the inevitability of IGT, an assumption which forecasts risk, locating intergenerational continuity of violence as the status quo, if not for resistance. Under this assumption, resistance through the decision to be child-free marks the ultimate form of resistance of transmission because it theoretically cuts off all possibilities to transmit to the subsequent generation. By envisioning that continuity is inevitable, choosing to be child-free emerges as the only rational decision, as all other possibilities like, for example, intergenerational discontinuity, are delegitimised.

In the remainder of this extract (beyond the initial two lines), maintaining a positive relationship is framed as labour- and energy-intensive, and available resources to undertake the constant emotional exertion necessary for maintaining the relationship are represented as limited, able to extend to supporting the marital relationship only ('*you can maintain that status quo between each other*'; '*[w]e've got enough energies to manage to hold what we're holding in tension*'). A third person to their dyad is positioned as a potential threat to the integrity and cohesion of their marital relationship, and as such, choosing to be child-free, for them, is a means of maintaining the integrity of the marriage. Choosing to be child-free then functions as a protective strategy: preventing IGT and ensuring the stability of the intimate partnership. Prior sexual health research has made a link between IPV/DV and reproductive decision-making/behaviours, including around

access/use of contraception (Alio et al, 2009; Maxwell et al, 2015; Stephenson et al, 2008; Tsai et al, 2016; Williams et al, 2008), and elective sterilization (McCloskey et al, 2017). However, the literature searches conducted for this present study did not identify any publications on the possible influences of IGT in motivating reproductive choices/behaviours, which may point to an important area for future research.

Section Summary

The women interviewed spoke about finding new ways of relating within their intimate partnerships and families which were non-violent and contrasted with relationships of their pasts. Consistent with findings of others in the field (e.g. Aparicio, 2017; Fleckman et al, 2018; Hall, 2011; Suzuki et al, 2008), the mothers expressed a desire to parent differently and to create non-violent environments in which to raise their children and, also, to avert transmission of violence in their generation. As discussed in 'Blind Spots', victims of abuse are often characterised as blindly falling into abusive relationships and blindly 'transmitting' violence/victimisation to subsequent generations. This section illustrates how the women represented 'doing family differently' as a conscious and active process which required ongoing emotional labour and, consistent with Fleckman et al (2018), were framed as being motivated by a 'direct rejection of intergenerational transmission' (p.280).

Conclusion

This chapter drew on the systemic concepts of 'replicative' and 'corrective scripts' to contextualise the binary interview material representing IGT of family violence as 'inevitable' and 'avertible'. These polarisations may mirror macro-level discourses; accounts of inevitability resemble ideas of legacy and fate, while accounts of averting transmission hark to neoliberal and meritocratic possibilities (and personal responsibilities) for renewal, remaking and rebuilding. The 'Replicative Scripts' section illustrated how IGT was represented in definitive and concrete ways. The 'Corrective Scripts' section considered how family histories and IGT were intersected in the women's accounts with life decisions and finding different ways of relating. In 'Corrective Scripts' I demonstrated how, at the core of the research material shown, lies the presumption of IGT as the status quo, i.e. that continuity is positioned as inevitable if not for resistance, and how this notion of resistance as an essential factor in discontinuity resonates with an assumption which pervades IGT literature. For some of the women, resistance was represented as an ongoing and

taxing chore, and the need to resist was framed by some as a constant burden, and something they needed to do to protect their children or the next (unborn) generation. Through their accounts in 'Corrective Scripts', the women emerged not as passive and unconscious recipients/transmitters of violence (as characterised in the 'Blind Spots' chapter), but as active agents, purposefully trying to resist IGT in an effort to 'correct' rather than 'replicate' historic family and intimate partnership scripts, engaging in a variety of strategies: fleeing violence; establishing a no-violence policy in their home; choosing to do family differently to their own upbringings; and through reproductive choices.

Chapter 9

The Corrupted Self

Introduction

The women's interview accounts were interwoven with a discourse I term '*The Corrupted Self*' which, as the phrase infers, involved the uptake of a pathologized subject position of the self as damaged. Through this position, the women located themselves as perpetually vulnerable to victimisation, a draw for further damage, and a propagator of continuities of violence. *The Corrupted Self* is formed of three strands: '*"The Problem with Me is…": Complicity in Victimisation*' represents the framing of the self as culpable in victimisation by moving towards or attracting violence. '*"I shouldn't but I can't help it…": The Addicted Self*' intersects with *Complicity in Victimisation*, but draws on a particular therapeutic form of language typically reserved for addiction, portraying a deficiency of will, compulsion, and an inability to resist engagement in abusive relationships. Finally, '*Bad Apples and Apples Made Bad*' denotes the uptake of a subject position of the self as intrinsically corrupt, or as acquiring damage as a consequence of violence.

In the literature review (Chapter 3), I demonstrated how discourses involving IGT commonly draw on notions of disease, contamination, and degeneracy. Moreover, I observed the centralisation of victims that has historically plagued DV and IPV discourse and which has the effect of implicating victims in their own victimisation. In this chapter, I argue that the synchrony of the women's accounts with these broader individualised and pathology-focused discourses of complicity and disease, illustrate how such discourses shape and constrain conceptualisations of violence in multiple generations, and inform the repertoire available to represent those affected by violence.

9.1. *"The problem with me is…"*: Complicity in Victimisation

Historically, one of the key controversies surrounding DV and IPV, underpinned by misconceptions of violence, has been the emphasis on the actions and perceived inactions of the victim (e.g., for remaining in violent relationships) instead of the person/s using violence (Burman & Chantler, 2005; DRIVE; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Kelly, 1988; Lombard, 2013; McGee, 2000; Tranchese & Zollo, 2013; Zust et al, 2018). Resonating with this, one strand of the 'Corrupted Self' is the

women's claims of complicity in their own victimhood. While the women did not overtly link complicity to IGT, it was implicitly connected to their histories of abuse, through the notion that exposure to violence increases susceptibility to further victimisation. Thus, complicity speaks of vulnerability to revictimisation (i.e., victim becoming revictimised) more so than to IGT in its classic configuration (i.e., victim becoming perpetrator). This account was present in the interview material as the women claimed complicity in their own revictimisation in four key ways: by attracting abuse; by seeking out violence; by emitting their vulnerability; and through an inability to set boundaries.

Kelly (1988) similarly observed that the women participating in her sexual violence study engaged in self-blame. It is noteworthy that some three decades later, this present study shows that claims of complicity continue to permeate women's personal accounts of violence victimisation. Kelly (1988) proposed two key influences on victims' self-blame. Firstly, that the socially entrenched view of women as responsible for men's abuse was internalised by women, and this manifested in self-blame. Secondly, shining a light on the mechanisms of abuse, she suggested that as part of their grooming processes, men committing abuse and incest against the women and girls of the family exploited opportunities to instil blame on victims while absolving themselves. While women's self-blame is present in this study, as it was in Kelly's (1988) research, there is an important conceptual distinction between the two in the interpretation of such material. Drawing on a social constructionist epistemology and a discursive approach, this present study is most interested in the dominant discourses involving violence in multiple generations that are present within the women's interview accounts, and the ways such discourses are employed and resisted. In the case of The Corrupted Self, most pertinent is the *prominence* of the complicity discourse in the women's accounts, the *meaning* ascribed to complicity in their accounts of violence in multiple generations of the family, and the potential such a discourse has on *perpetuating* continuity of violence/victimisation. The operationalisation of a discourse which locates victims as complicit in their own abuse and, more specifically, their own continued victimisation and intergenerational transmission then is more important to this present study than, for instance, analysing self-blame in realist terms, e.g., as a phenomenon resulting from the contexts and tactics of abuse (as per Kelly). From a discursive perspective, the presence of self-blame in women's accounts of violence across different studies conducted more than three decades apart illustrates just how entrenched this victim-blaming narrative is.

9.1.1. Attracting Abuse

The body of violence literature is awash with work purporting victims' susceptibility to revictimisation (e.g. Finkelhor et al, 2007; 2009; Laporte et al, 2011; McCollum, 2015; Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2001; Valdez et al, 2013; Wareham et al, 2009; Widom et al, 2008). The women's accounts were threaded through with talk which positioned them not only as susceptible to abuse, but as active agents in drawing abuse toward them. Take for instance, Bettina and Isla's quotes:

> *Bettina: [...] I don't know if I draw them in (laughs). I don't know, but yeah.*

> *Isla: [...] I have done it for years in every relationship I seem to pick, or meet up with the partner that's going to abuse me.*

> *Int: Why do you think that is?*

> *Isla: I don't know. I think maybe I do like somebody (laughs) that can get— Or maybe I come across like I'm someone that can just be told what to do and I'll do it. Maybe I give the wrong impression. I'm not sure. I'm not sure (laughs).*

Here, Bettina questions whether she plays a role in attracting abusive partners. Her laugh could be interpreted as one of sarcasm, a laugh at the irony in this suggestion, and an indication of her disbelief in it. The reiteration of '*I don't know*' following the laugh though, might indicate her own perplexity at the apparent recursive nature of abuse in her intimate relationships. Isla's extract is also punctuated with laughter and scattered with similar sentiments of uncertainty (*'I don't know'; 'I'm not sure. I'm not sure').* She centralises herself here, and the possible role she plays in her own victimisation. Note the claim to actively choosing abusive partners (*'I have done it for years'*; '*in every relationship'*; *'I seem to pick'),* and moreover, observe the claim to attracting abuse *('maybe I come across like'; 'I give the wrong impression').* While she softens her own account of actively selecting abusive partners (*'I seem to pick'*) with a more passive statement *('meet up with'),* Isla's claims of complicity in her abuse are evident.

In their accounts of multiple experiences of victimisation, the women maintain an inward gaze, a critical examination of the self. Through their talk of *attracting* or *drawing in* abusive partners, discursively the women situate themselves in their encounters with others as recruiters, actively enlisting abusive partners into a relationship with them. Rather than locating abuse as something

which is enforced and enacted upon them by another, claiming complicity perversely locates the women as actively choosing victimisation. This positioning bears a striking resemblance to broader historic DV and IPV complicity discourse which individualise the problem of violence to the victim, which centralise and locate blame with the victim, while omitting the perpetration of abuse and obscuring those who use violence, thereby stripping them of any accountability (Burman & Chantler, 2005).

9.1.2. Seeking out Violence

While some of the women talked about their propensity for attracting abuse, others talked about seeking out violence. This strand of the complicity discourse involved talk of actively creating scenarios and engaging in relationships that increased the risk of abuse. For instance, both Kerry and Claire suggested they sought controlling people as a reaction to their histories of being controlled:

> *Kerry: [...] there's also something around the way that you will tend to repeat bad context for yourself. So if you're somebody who – particularly at first, because I was so used to being controlled, I actually sought out controlling people for a long time, because it meant I would be told what to do. Because actually I'd so grown up in that that when I first went to university and I suddenly had complete autonomy I went into the darkest depression I have ever known in my whole life. I could barely get out of bed, because I just didn't know what to do with myself, I didn't know how to be in that scenario, I didn't know how to make choices actually quite often. [...] the problem with that is that you can very easily fall prey to the very wrong kinds of people that are going to reinforce all of your baggage and schemas and bad stuff that you're trying to get rid of.*

> *Claire: I think I like that bit of control over me. But then when it gets too much— I don't know. I don't know.*

Conveying a sense of being compelled to seek out the familiarity of 'controlling' people *('I actually sought out controlling people')* in order to be attuned with the relationships in her family-of-origin *('I'd so grown up in that'; 'I was so used to being controlled')*, Kerry gives voice to the systemic concept of 'replicative family scripts' (as discussed in '*The Inevitable, The Avertible'*). Linking her early relationships with her desire for controlling relationships in adulthood, Kerry creates a

connection between victimisation and susceptibility for re-victimisation, an association she alludes occurs via a vulnerability pathway ('*you can very easily fall prey to the very wrong kinds of people'*).

The desire Claire expresses for control is different to the one Kerry narrates. Claire taps into superannuated heterosexual discourses of femininities and masculinities, which prioritise male dominance and female subservience. Her version, at first glance, is seemingly more fetishised, and her talk of liking control appears to be an eroticisation of this dominant-subservient dynamic, with masochistic undertones (Jackson, 1996). Although '*bit of control'* and *'[b]ut then when it gets too much – I don't know*', could be read as tempering; not expressing a desire *to be controlled* per se, but perhaps rather a desire not to be *out of control*.

There are two issues of relevance in relation to this. Firstly, this account of desire perversely locates the women as *wanting* to be controlled and, furthermore, as instrumental in creating scenarios and contexts in which controlling and abusive relationships occur and flourish. Secondly, as with the notion of attracting abuse discussed in the previous section, through accounts of seeking control, the women lay claim, at least partially, to their victimisation. Such suggestions of complicity heavily chime with dominant discourses which push responsibility and blame towards victims.

Such notions of victim complicity are not only a feature of *historic* DV/IPV discourse, they continue to persist, even in academic literature. For instance, Wareham et al (2009) suggest that processes of social learning, '*may lead some individuals to seek out relationships with other persons or forms of media that endorse a lifestyle of dysfunction similar to their family-of-origin*' (p.171); McCollum (2015) reports that traumatised individuals '*may display such a failure to protect themselves from subsequent abuse that they may appear to have an unconscious wish, or even a compulsion, to be reabused'* (p.568). The apparent desire for risky relations purported by authors here, and the 'chronic risk exposure' that McCollum (2015, p.568) discusses, should not be discounted, for it speaks of the detrimental impact of trauma and abuse and the high costs for victims. Discursively though, the productive effect of this account of the expectancy and desire for revictimisation has implications. Aside from those issues already raised, most problematically it situates victims as engineering scenarios in which abuse can manifest. According to such an account, a single incident

of abuse is transformative. As a victim, an individual is constructed as someone that actively pursues violence, and thus are cast as complicit in their own victimisation thereafter. In terms of IGT and continuities of abuse, this constructs victims as perpetually moving towards violence, perpetually vulnerable to revictimisation and, moreover, at risk of exposing their offspring to violence.

9.1.3. Emitting Vulnerability

The women drew on the kind of expert formulations promoted by authors like Finkelhor et al (2007) and, in accordance with the concept of 'poly-victimisation', they suggested past victimisation made them prone to future victimisation. For two of the women, past and future victimisation was linked through the mechanism of vulnerability, as they constructed vulnerability as something visible, and the visibility as placing them at risk of further violence:

> *Amy: I think there's that whole thing of sometimes you feel like you're walking around with a neon sign saying 'victim'. So I do think there are behaviours and there are predatory people who look for vulnerable behaviours in others, there clearly are, because these kind of relationships wouldn't have happened. But I think the detailed minutia you wouldn't necessarily know, sitting here.*

> *Georgia: Obviously the perpetrator always sees vulnerability.*

Both extracts discuss an interrelated dynamic; victims are represented as emitting vulnerability while perpetrators are cast as seeking out and detecting it. This idea holds a number of contradictions and conflicting subject positions. At once, the victim is exonerated and yet centralised, while the perpetrator is both centralised and veiled. In both quotes, the perpetrator is cast in an active role, as predator, hunting out vulnerability, and accordingly victims are assigned a passive position, as prey. Conversely, the perpetrator's role in victimisation is rendered passive through its obscurity, while through their 'emission' of vulnerability, victims are assigned a central role in their own victimisation.

Amy's account of exhibiting '*vulnerable behaviours'* and of '*walking around with a neon sign',* and likewise, Georgia's account of visibility, speak of stigma (Goffman, 1990), the retention and the inscription of victimisation within and on the body. It is about embodying the scars of victimisation,

the visibility of emotional wounds. This brings into focus the physical self; the somatic experience, the corporality of victimisation. If we trace to the nth degree Amy and Georgia's suggestion that victimisation is detectable by 'perpetrators', we can see that the discursive effect is a dislocation, an alienation of the victim from their own body. Through its expression of victimisation, it is the victim's body that betrays the victim, acting as a projection, a symbol of prior abuse, and a beacon for further victimisation. In this way, the body is located as complicit in abuse, conspiring with the perpetrator. The centralisation not of the victim per se, but of the victim's body, allows it to slip under the radar of victim-blaming as it emerges in the guise of the effects of violence. Nonetheless, it presents a complicity discourse that situates some degree of responsibility with victims for their victimisation.

9.1.4. Inability to Set Boundaries

Another strand of the complicity discourse present in the women's accounts revolved around boundary setting. By constructing themselves as unable to set sufficient boundaries, the women positioned themselves as tolerant of abuse and, in turn, as colluding in its continuation. A trope across Amy's interviews involved her supposed problematic boundaries ('*boundaries*' were referred to 17 times across her three interviews). Below, I consider how her talk enlists her as a complicit party in the violence enacted against her, and how collusion in this complicity discourse repels kinder, more empowered self-talk:

> *Amy: [...] I don't think I set the right kind of boundaries for people. So either my boundaries are too high or too low. [...] I think I set low boundaries for the wrong people and then very strong boundaries for people who could essentially help me.*

By suggesting her boundary setting is deficient, Amy automatically centralises her own behaviours and (in)actions, which has the effect of de-centring the harmful others. Emphasising her own inability to set appropriate boundaries draws her into a complicity discourse which sees her actively permitting harm and actively resisting positive relationships. This account conveys a sense of the therapeutic self and, interestingly, she linked her conceptualisations of her relational particularities with the therapy she was undertaking at the time of interview:

> *Int: Let's talk about that. So in terms of that resistance, so your son picking up on your behaviours and then repeating those, if that's how you think that intergenerational transmission happens, what are the kinds of things that you do?*

> *Amy: Well, I think it goes back to boundaries and routines, and going back to talking to a counsellor…we've been focussing a lot on boundaries. Because I clearly have boundary issues in the way that I behave, probably particularly with men. So she started every counselling session, she starts by asking about my son and asking about the boundaries I put in place for my son. So boundaries and routine.*

The voice of the professional looms large here as Amy's account of problematic boundaries is intertwined with her description of her counselling sessions. Interestingly, sessions are portrayed not only as a reification of her supposed 'boundary issues', but as an examination of the impact of these 'issues' on her son. The directive beginning of the sessions and the principal focus on her parenting ('*[s]o she started every counselling session, she starts by asking about my son and asking about the boundaries I put in place for my son*') pushes Amy's counselling out of the realms of a therapeutic endeavour and moves it towards a regulatory practice which problematises Amy and brings her parenting capacity under scrutiny. Crucially, under this construction of 'problematic boundaries', not only is Amy implicated in her past and future victimisation, but she is located as a potential propagator of IGT, with the power to prevent or facilitate continuities of violence/victimisation in her son's generation. Amy's excerpts here exemplify how women's accounts of the victimised self, of violence within multiple generations, and of the risk of IGT - issues historically framed as produced within the confines of the micro-system - were frequently underpinned by conceptualisations communicated by organisations/practitioners operating at an exo-system level.

Section Summary

Parker (2014) suggests '*[d]iscourses both facilitate and limit, enable and constrain what can be said (by whom, where, when)*' (p.xiii). Accordingly, the complicity discourse facilitates talk of roles and responsibilities in victimisation, but constrains articulation of resistance and resilience, and closes down empowered self-talk. Victim-blaming discourses are prevalent in the reporting of violence against women (Benedict, 1992; Callaghan, 2015; Easteal et al, 2018; Meyers, 1996; Tranchese & Zollo, 2013), and the women's accounts illustrated in this section resonate with such discourses, as the women claimed responsibility in four key ways: by attracting abuse; by seeking out violence; by emitting their vulnerability; and through an inability to set boundaries. By locating prior victimisation as a mediator to re-victimisation, connections were implicitly drawn between histories of abuse in the family-of-origin and the violence experienced in adulthood.

9.2. *"I shouldn't but I can't help it...":* The Addicted Self

A strand of 'The Corrupted Self' is an 'addiction' discourse I term 'The Addicted Self'. This was present in some of the women's accounts of violence/victimisation, and involves talk typically ascribed to drug/alcohol/substance dependence and associated phases of recovery, abstinence, relapse and rehabilitation. 'The Addicted Self' is a complicity discourse which implicates the women in their own victimisation by framing them as vulnerable to violence by their own hand; namely by locating abusive relations as a subject of addiction and the women as wantonly moving towards violence, governed by their supposed compulsions and cravings for relationships characterised by abuse. 'The Addicted Self' intersects with issues raised in the previous 'Complicity' section. However, as it draws on a particular therapeutic form and vernacular, it warrants a section of its own to mark this delineation, although I will point to the intersects as I move through. 'The Addicted Self' relates to IGT through the women's representation of enduring vulnerability to violence, and the portrayal of a recursive 'script'.

9.2.1. Compulsion and Craving

Isla's quote conveys a sense of being compelled towards particular relational dynamics of power in her relationships:

> *Isla: ...I come across in the wrong way to people sometimes. I'm too forward, maybe. Sometimes I'm overly friendly, really overly friendly. I'm a people pleaser. I'll do anything to please, help anybody, you know, whereas sometimes I shouldn't be like that, and I know that I shouldn't but I can't help it.*

Even though Isla suggests adopting a self-sacrificing, subordinate role in her relationships might be unhelpful to her, discursively, adherence to this role is framed as more of a compulsion than a choice. The ordering of the last part of the final sentence here is especially noteworthy. While resistance is situated as a possibility *('...I shouldn't be like that, and I know that I shouldn't...')*, this potential is overridden, immediately followed with a statement expressing a sense of compulsion against will *('...but I can't help it')*. Moreover, in occupying a subject position as the creator of her own vulnerability, *'I can't help it'* infers that future vulnerability is inevitable, constructing her as complicit in past abusive relationships and tying her into this explanation of complicity in any future victimisation she encounters. Viewing this material in a realist way, self-sacrifice, self-destructive behaviours, and a lack of self-care have been identified as 'symptoms' of trauma, indicative of the

organism's attempts to regulate the nervous system (Fisher, 2003; van der Kolk & Fisler, 1994). Examined through the lens of a trauma perspective then, Isla's behaviours would likely be interpreted as symptomology.

Nettleton et al (2012) conducted a discourse analysis of heroin users' accounts, and Coxhead and Rhodes (2006) explored smoking among mothers of children with respiratory illness. Note the similarity between Isla's quote and the ways participants from these two studies talk about addiction:

> *Isla: ...I know that I shouldn't but I can't help it.*
>
> *I know it's [smoking] bad but I can't stop* (Coxhead &Rhodes, 2006, p110)
>
> *I'm so sick of it [heroin] and yet I run to it every time* (Nettleton et al, 2012, p.181)

These quotes are in alignment with discourses around addiction which conceptualise it as a compulsion, '*a failure of the self in its imperative to exercise control over bodily desires and functions'* (Bailey, 2005, p.539). Such discourses frame persons with addiction as subject to their craving, governed by it, and therefore lacking self-control or self-governance (Bailey, 2005). As an ungovernable subject then, the individual with addiction is positioned as risky, deviant and, as Nettleton et al (2012) suggests, '*is positioned in a marginal space and rendered as a social problem in need of treatment and rehabilitation'* (p.176). I argue that the similitude of Isla's quote pertaining to ways of relating and those from substance use disorder studies, may speak of the broader location of victims of violence; indicating their marginalisation and characterisation as a 'social problem in need of treatment and rehabilitation'.

In a similar vein to Isla, Claire expressed a sense of vulnerability in her encounters with others:

> *Claire: [...] as my mum calls me, I'm a wanker magnet (laughs).*
>
> *Int: Does it feel like you're a magnet?*
>
> *Claire: Yeah. I think it's just the style that I go for as well. I mean, I like the bad boy kind of look and the chav kind of bad boy, which I shouldn't really, should I? It doesn't get me nowhere in life.*

Claire makes an interesting shift here from a passive position of inadvertent 'magnet', one her mum narrates, and one she takes up in response to my question (Int: *'Does it feel like you're a magnet?'*; Claire: *'Yeah').* The shift though comes as Claire moves from the one who *attracts*, to the opposing active subject position of the one who goes *towards* (*'I think it's just the style that I go for')*. There are a couple of points to note in relation to the masculinities presented here. 'Chav', a classed construction, is affiliated with young, white working-class people (Hayward & Yar, 2006; Hollingworth & Williams, 2009; Le Grand, 2013), with a particular aesthetic (as Claire makes reference to - '*the style I go for'*), and [m]ale chavs in particular, *'are often associated with violence such as football hooliganism and with minor forms of antisocial behaviour such as vandalism, assault, and muggings'* (Le Grand, 2013, p.220). In a similar vein, the 'bad boy' term has become code for passion, excitement, unpredictability, a socially acceptable way of romanticising machismo and, especially, male disrespect against women. Simultaneously, it marks an infantilization; the use of 'bad boy' rather than 'bad man', with its connotations of being childlike, removes responsibility and accountability. '*Chav kind of bad boy*' in Claire's case though is a euphemism for a violent man. As in Isla's quote, a sense of compulsion is also notable in Claire's excerpt although, as indicated by her rhetorical question, her articulation is more tentative *('I shouldn't really, should I?')*. The subtext of Claire's quote relates more to desire, veering towards 'I shouldn't like this but I do,' whereas Isla's is more about compulsion, 'I shouldn't do this but I don't know how to stop'.

Nonetheless, later in her interview, Claire went on to describe a sense of despair at the apparent trends in her intimate partnerships:

> *Int: What does 'muppet' mean to you? What does that mean?*

> *Claire: Stupid. A stupid person...because I still keep doing it...I still keep getting into that same relationship, and I don't know why.*

In both Isla and Claire's excerpts, they claim complicity for their interactions and encounters with others, the vulnerability that this produces and, in turn, the victimisation that follows. Claire, berating herself signals the uptake of a position of responsibility, claiming complicity not just for entering into an abusive relationship, but for what seems to be a recursive pattern of relating in her intimate partnerships (*'I still keep doing it'; 'I still keep getting into that same relationship')*.

During her interview, Claire contrasted her relationships with 'bad boys' with a more stable, less chaotic intimate relationship she had with a man named Craig:

> *Claire: I could've had a good life with Craig. I had it all, but I just wasn't happy with him. He was too boring for me, if you know what I mean. There was no excitement. Yeah, okay, we did things with the kids and what have you, but I just wasn't happy in the relationship because— I don't know. Something that I'm not used to...*

The inference here is that relationships with 'bad boys' make the predictability of other relationships seem 'boring' and lacking 'excitement'. Observe a similar concept conveyed by two of the persons who use drugs participating in Nettleton et al's (2012) study:

> *Luke: [...] there's a bit of me I think thrives on the chaos. When I start doing normal stuff; I fear the normality. [...]* (Nettleton et al, 2012, p.181)

> *Stefan: [...] I suppose I found it hard to relate and socialize with normal everyday life because my life had been so chaotic. [...]* (Nettleton et al, 2012, p.182)

This idea that experience of other-inflicted 'chaos' creates a desire for self-inflicted 'chaos' keys into a dependence discourse which alludes that early experience of high arousal establishes a need/desire for high arousal thereafter. It also connects with several other overlapping discourses. Firstly, it links to an enculturation discourse explored in *'Blind Spots',* and the idea that early experiences of violence create normalisation, whereby victims are constructed as inevitably orienting towards the familiarity of violence (ibid) (e.g. Claire's move towards *'bad boys'* and away from *'...[s]omething that I'm not used to...'*). Secondly, the idea that risk-taking behaviour is engaged in as an adaptive attempt to regulate affect in dysregulated neurobiological systems, born of early trauma, is rooted in developmental neuroscience (Fisher, 2003; Schore, 2001; van der Kolk & Fisler, 1994). Proponents suggest self-harming behaviours, re-victimisation, aggression, substance use and addiction may signal attempts to cope with trauma and regulate the nervous system (Fisher, 2003; van der Kolk & Fisler, 1994). While it is subtle, this notion of 'self-regulation' keys into a discourse of dependence; moderation of arousal is *dependent* upon intervention on a malfunctioning regulatory system. This locates the trauma-experienced individual as adaptively and necessarily active in gauging/regulating the nervous system.

9.2.2. Habit

In considering the social construction of addiction, Bailey (2005) notes how views about consumption have evolved historically. Discussing opiate intake in the 19th and 20th centuries, Bailey observes how what once would have been regarded as 'habit', has been drawn into a construction of addiction. Various scholars have also noted the tensions, evolving moral discourses and changing usage of terms relating to consumption, e.g. 'addiction', 'habit' and 'dependence' (e.g. Bancroft, 2003; Maddux & Desmon, 2000). In light of the changes and conflations in the use of language around addiction, it is important to acknowledge some of the women's talk of 'habits' in relation to violence/victimisation.

During her interview, Amy described the intergenerational continuity of violence/victimisation within her family as a consequence of habitual patterns of 'damaged behaviour'. She characterised her role in continuity as an inevitable 'transmitter' of historic family patterns. This constraining and deterministic account was punctured intermittently with one which framed 'rehabilitation' a possibility:

> *Amy: [...] Everything I do I have to be **conscious** of, everything I do I have to be **conscious** of the effect of—*
>
> *Int: Does it feel like a burden to you to resist the history?*
>
> *Amy: Yes, oh God yes, because it's so much easier, it's **habit**. This is a word that I keep coming back to, it is, it's **habit**. It is deeply engrained in me as it was my mum, and as it was my grandparents, it's just **habit**. And **habits** are the hardest things to **break**.*

'Habits' are situated here as the vehicle for intergenerational continuity and, correspondingly, the breaking of habits is framed as the key to discontinuity. This is positioned as attainable through conscious observation of and resistance to such habits. Amy makes reference to her collective 'grandparents' as she talks about 'deeply engrained' habits, but particularly notable is her emphasis on the women of the family; her and her mum (a gendered account of IGT similarly told by Kerry in Chapter 8). If we look at an extract of Amy's genogram depicting gendered trends in violence (Fig 4.), we see the notation of 13 counts of male-female violence (three counts of male-female hostility; three counts of male-female coercion; two counts of male-female violence; five counts of male-female abuse), and only one count of female perpetrated abuse (female-female).

As depicted by her genogram then, overwhelmingly, violence in the family is *male* violence against *women*. It is interesting in the context of this that 'habits' are largely ascribed to the women. This might imply that the habits relate to the women's supposed propensity for victimisation (through engagement in abusive relations) rather than the males' violence. In light of the predominance of male-perpetrated over female-perpetrated violence, the location of IGT of violence as a female issue of victimisation rather than of male perpetration that is evident in several of the women's interview accounts is most striking. This gendered framing firmly positions women as responsible for intergenerational continuity and, by default, for discontinuity in subsequent generations. Simultaneously, it eliminates the male influence in continuity and, in turn, removes culpability for instituting discontinuity in their offspring's generation. This gendered framing raises a question about whether the discourse of IGT of violence might be operating as what feminist scholars have referred to a 'patriarchal discourse' (Kelly & Radford, 1996), which functions as a mechanism for female oppression and blame and as facilitative of male dominance.

Figure 4. Excerpt of Amy's Genogram Depicting Historic Gendered 'Patterns' of Violence and Victimisation (See Appendix 6 for Legend)
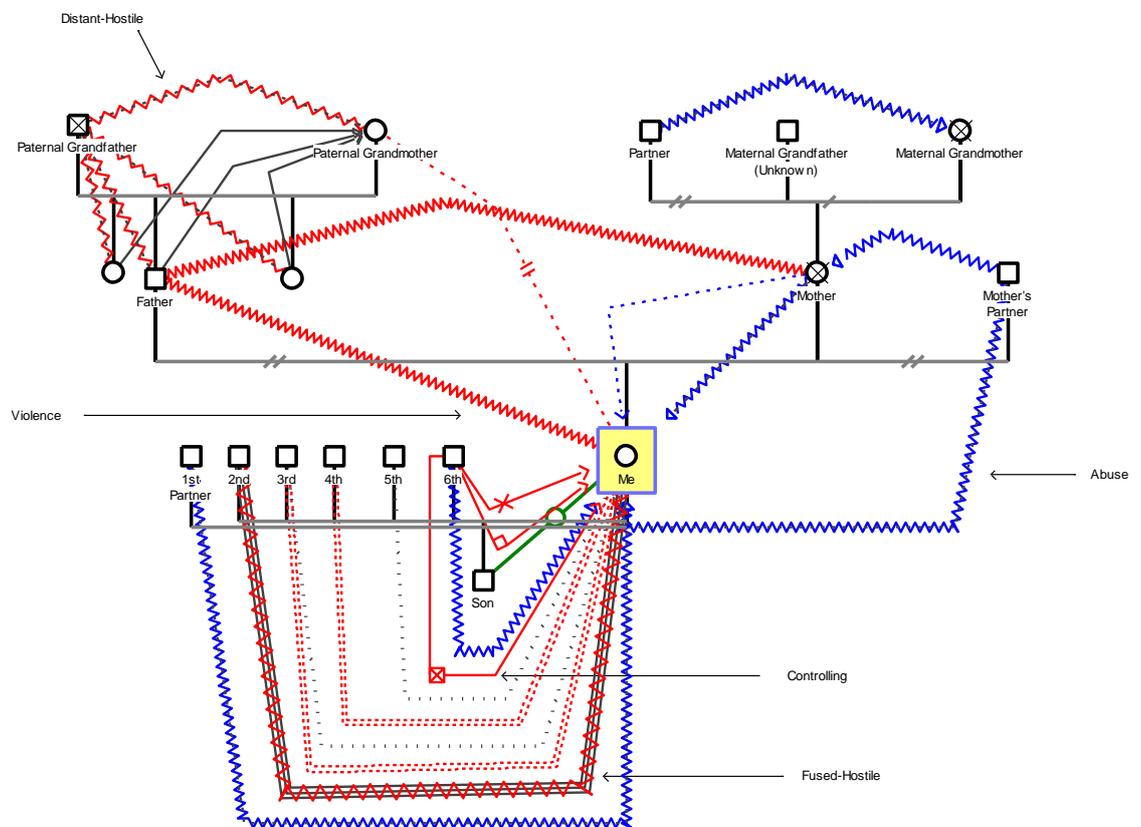
The conscious observation of behavioural habits, in view of their mitigation, as described by Amy, was similarly articulated by Kerry:

> Kerry: [...] I know what my incompetencies are, I'm trying to do something about them, but it's still a **conscious** decision, I'm still having to think about it and I'm still having to engage in particular behaviours. My hope of course is that there will be a day where I don't have to think that hard about it, where it becomes natural. Where I'm not having to work quite this hard to **break patterns** of behaviour.

> Kerry: So you have to fight for normalcy. You have to **relearn habits** of behaviour. You have to relearn how to be and how to exist in a normal way. And that's a challenge.

Asen and Fonagy (2017) propose that families characterised by violence may seem to have an *'"addiction" to engaging in emotionally or physically abusive interactions'* (p.11). This notion aligns with both Amy and Kerry's accounts, in which they locate family 'habits' as the vehicle for intergenerational continuity of violence. Habits are situated in competing ways, as both conscious and unconscious. The movement between these two positions makes agency slippery, within the grasp and yet beyond the reach of the individual. While the unconscious position frames intergenerational continuity as an inevitability, a consequence of unconscious habit; the conscious positioning frames discontinuity as possible through resistance of compulsion, achievable via observation and management of 'habitual' behaviour.

Section Summary

An addiction-centric conceptualisation of violence was present within some of the women's accounts of IGT. This implicated the women in their own victimisation by inferring that they create their own vulnerability through their supposed compulsions for relations characterised by abuse, or via the continuity of family 'habits'. Using language of addiction locates victims as complicit in their victimisation, locking them into processes of micro-analysis, censorship and regulation of their own behaviours, while constraining talk around the perpetration of violence.

Moreover, the addiction-centric conceptualisation of violence frames victims as in need of 'recovery'. Theoretically, within this conceptualisation, entering into an abusive relationship would constitute a relapse through a failure of will. Recovery, and the transition from 'deviance' to a

'normal state', is theoretically possible for persons with a drug/alcohol/substance dependence (Nettleton et al, 2012, p.177). However, unlike rehabilitation targeted at other forms of addiction, which emphasise the behaviours/agency of the person who has an addiction, under this framework, 'recovery' for victims of violence is determined by and dependent upon not their actions, but the actions of others (e.g. intimate partners). Thus, rehabilitation is only possible in abstinence of victimisation, which is only achievable without violence inflicted by others. This has the potential then to locate victim status with some permanence and in ways which make 'recovery' unattainable, and which position victims as always risky.

Parallels could be drawn between the addiction discourse present in the women's accounts and those used in institutional discourses involving DV. Take for example the names of just a few UK-based recovery programmes aimed at female victims of DV: 'The Freedom Programme', 'Freedom Forever', and 'The Stay Free Programme'. These programmes are aimed at helping women to be free of abuse, but if we consider their names at the most basic discursive level, we are confronted with a discourse which could equally be transposed to addiction rehabilitation programmes. This perhaps warrants further exploration to consider if/how addiction-centric discourses might have inadvertently become woven into the fabric of institutional language around violence and if/how it plays a role in conceptualisations of IGT and revictimisation/perpetration.

9.3. Bad Apples and Apples Made Bad

This section of 'The Corrupted Self' draws on the 'apple' metaphor, a somewhat curious reference to IGT which can be traced in folklore through proverbs pertaining to transmission ('one bad apple rots the barrel') and specifically to *intergenerational* transmission ('the apple doesn't fall far from the tree'). Similarly, it is present in academic works; used to entitle IGT literature (e.g. Thornberry's (2009) 'The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from The Tree (Or Does It?)' paper); and drawn upon to label observed transmission phenomena (e.g. Carrell and Hoekstra's (2010) 'bad apple peer effects' (p.22), relating to children exposed to DV 'transmitting' adverse effects to their school peers). In this section, I illustrate two strands of the material pertaining to the bad apple metaphor: women's talk of being inherently bad or rotten ('Bad Apples'); and women's talk of having been damaged by violence, and violence as a consequence of damage ('Apples Made Bad').

9.3.1. Bad Apples

While only one woman interviewed made specific reference to the term 'bad apple', others drew on this type of account by portraying themselves as inherently bad. In total, a third of the women related 'badness' not as something they acquired, but as a stable and inherent part of the self. Consider Claire's extract:

> Int: Is there anything else you want to add to what we've discussed?
>
> Claire: No. We're just like a good family with just a bad apple. There's always one, isn't there?
>
> Int: Is there? You consider yourself to be the bad apple of the family?
>
> Claire: Yeah (laughs).
>
> Int: Do you?
>
> Claire: Yeah.
>
> Int: Why?
>
> Claire: Because none of the rest are like me.
>
> Int: What's 'like' you? What does that mean?
>
> Claire: Just got a shit life. Choose the wrong choices.

There is an interesting contradiction in Claire's explanation. While 'bad apple' implies someone inherently bad and her supposed badness a fixed quality, talk of 'wrong choices' is more agentic. By implying that choices determine 'badness', it renders 'badness' impermanent, subject to change. As discussed earlier, one of the key controversies surrounding DV/IPV has been the emphasis on the victim's responsibility to leave an abusive relationship, rather than on the person using violence to desist (Lombard, 2013). This has established a particular conceptualisation of victims, framing them as retaining power to either choose to leave, or choose to stay. A context within which violence is situated as a choice, renders not only victim's 'choices' as 'bad', but so too, the 'chooser'. Claire's portrayal of herself as a 'bad apple' because of her supposed 'wrong choices' echo this discourse.

Like Claire, Isla referred to herself in damning ways, describing herself as a 'wrong 'un':

> *Int: What's 'wrong 'un'? What does that mean for you?*

> *Isla: Well, just— Well, I don't know. It's confused. That I'm not fitting into their [parents]— The way their idea of how a person should be, I'm not fitting into that. So if I'm not fitting into that, I shouldn't be around to affect anybody else like that.*

Isla and Claire represent themselves in relation to their micro-systems. If we envisage the family as a site of regulation and a training ground of 'good' citizens, accounts of badness ('bad apple' and 'wrong 'un') and differentness ('none of the rest are like me' and 'I'm not fitting into that') might signal that within the institutions of their families, Claire and Isla are positioned as dissenters – even though violence has been a familiarity within their families. Drawing upon individualised, regulatory discourses which locate a 'choice' for violence as a 'choice' against good obedient citizenship, could theoretically provide a rationale for marginalisation. The last sentence of Isla's quote taps into a discourse of regulation in which her 'deregulation' (*'So if I'm not fitting into that...'*) and her capacity to transmit 'deregulation' (*'...affect anybody else like that')*, are situated as just cause for segregation from the system (*'...I shouldn't be around...').*

Drawing on a biological explanation, Kerry conceptualises IGT as a phenomenon that occurs via genetic heredity. Through this explanation, as a descendant of an abusive father, she situates herself as always potentially abusive:

> *Kerry: I don't really believe in people being fully evil or fully good, I think we both have the capacity for great good and great evil. I know it in myself, you can see when you do something and it hurts someone, you can see that. So either you want to try and stop that or you don't. And for me, I don't want to be somebody looking out from these eyes into the eyes of somebody that I'm hurting, I don't want to be that person. And yet, my biological makeup is fifty percent my father, so it's in me, that anger, I feel it at times, it's like in my stomach.*

Here, Kerry presents herself as a kind of Jekyll-and-Hyde character, with the good and evil parts of herself in battle, and in flux. Striking, is the way she situates resistance against evil, resistance against hurting others, resistance against the 'fifty percent', as necessary to prevent it prevailing. In talk of violence, the polarisation of abusive and non-abusive persons is common (Corvo &

Johnson, 2003), and this kind of villainisation and heroisation was apparent within the women's interview material. As other authors have observed, the risk of this polarisation is that it has implications for how children of abusive/abused parents conceptualise their own biological makeup (Callaghan & Alexander, 2015). Kerry's genetic lineage is not only polarised here, but totalised with the fifty percent genetic transmission of her paternal line reduced to 'all bad'. The conflict of the parental relationship is mirrored, located as an embodiment within the child. Despite alluding to possibilities for resistance ('*So either you want to try and stop that or you don't'),* the end of this extract has an air of inevitability about it ('*I don't want to be that person. And yet...*'), as Kerry infers an inherent predisposition to feeling anger and inflicting hurt.

Kerry's sentiments resemble those reported by other qualitative researchers in the field, with Hall (2011) maintaining that one participant in her study articulated a '*fear that she was "biologically predestined"'* to be abusive (p.33). Moreover, various authors have proposed genetic influences in violence. In their study, Barnes et al (2013) maintain that genetic factors explained '*24% of the variance in hitting one's partner, 54% of the variance in injuring one's partner, and 51% of the variance in forcing sexual activity on one's partner*' (p.371). However, biological and genetic research has stimulated controversy for perpetuating the nature-versus-nurture dichotomy, and for neglecting the possible '*environmental factors related to the physical, social, and psychological environments shared by family members*' (Joseph, 2004, p.2). Biological understandings risk locating children of abusive/abused biological parents in determinist ways, as inheriting predispositions for victimisation/perpetration. In line with the focus of this section, this view situates predispositions as an inherent quality that descendants embody.

9.3.2. Apples Made Bad: The Psychologised and Medicalised Victim

'Apples Made Bad' represents accounts which situate the women and/or family members as having been damaged by violence, and/or which locates violent behaviour as a consequence of damage. The women's talk around the impact of violence and, in some cases, their susceptibility for involvement in abusive relationships, was underpinned by ideas of pathology from psychology, neuroscience and biology. Observe, for example, how both Claire and Georgia draw on a psychological discourse, albeit in code, to articulate the ill-effects of violence:

> *Claire: **It's messed their [children's] little heads up**. I know it has.*

*Georgia: With me, I'm afraid **it messed me up that badly in the head**, even now **I'm messed up in the head**, that you begin to think it's normal.*

The prominence of psychology, the myriad of awareness-raising mental health and wellbeing campaigns, together with a well-established field of research focused on the psychological effects of violence and trauma, converge to draw consciousness to and facilitate talk of the psychological effects of violence. This enables attendance to and talk of mental distress not just mimetically, i.e. using academic or professional language but, as these quotes exemplify, through symbol and metaphor, by using language that pulls attention to the site of distress i.e. 'the head'. The reference to violence having 'messed' their heads situates the subjects (Claire's children/Georgia) as damaged by violence as well as distressed by it. Finally, note the intersection here between 'The Corrupted Self' and 'Blind Spots' discourses, exemplified by Georgia's '*I'm messed up in the head, that you begin to think it's normal',* which links mental damage and distress with the notion of normalisation of violence.

Drawing on a trauma discourse, Bettina understands the psychological effects of violence through their physical manifestation in the symptoms she experiences:

> *Bettina: Forgive because you want to get better, because if you don't forgive, you have hurt issues, no sleep at night, worry, anxiety, blah, blah, blah. Forgive is this. Forget is you put all that's happened behind in your head. And when I say forgive, forgive for me means in a spiritual way. It means, yes, he was nasty to me, but maybe he suffered too. Maybe he was a victim from his mother, from his dad. We don't know, he never disclosed that, you know. But until you forgive, you will carry on staying in no sleep at night, worry, anxiety [...]*

Unlike the previous quotes, Bettina proposes a means of preventing symptoms through forgiveness. Forgive* was mentioned 16 times forming a trope across her two interviews. If we consider the context of her upbringing and her circumstances at the time of interview, the prominence of 'forgiveness' in her account makes sense. She was raised in a family practicing Catholicism, and her first interview was conducted at a time when she was receiving victim support from a Christian faith-based charity. This was similarly the case for the majority of the women I interviewed, and they were either raised in religious families, were of faith themselves, or received

support from faith-based agencies. It was not uncommon for faith or spirituality to be raised by the women during interview. However, as a point of difference, forgiveness was either not mentioned or did not feature for the other eight women as it did for Bettina. The heavy presence of forgiveness in Bettina's account could be reproduced from the faith-based discourses she was familiar with. Potentially, the presence of 'forgiveness' is performative, marking an intentional draw on this account, as a demonstration of her commitment to the Christian organisation, of her gratitude and receptivity to the support.

Burman (1996) suggests that the *'Christian origins of charity are more linked to saving one's own soul than saving another's skin'* (p.177). In a similar vein, Bettina's extract here does not advocate forgiveness in an entirely altruistic way, for instance, for the sake of the man who abused her, rather she emphasises the benefits of forgiveness for herself, as the victim (*'[f]orgive because you want to get better')*. In relation to the hypothesis of IGT, her ex-husband's abuse is excused through her theoretical positioning of his violence as a reaction to his own victimisation, as she locates him as having diminished capacity (*'yes, he was nasty to me, but maybe he suffered too'; 'Maybe he was a victim from his mother, from his dad')*. As noted earlier in this thesis (Chapter 2), because it is based upon an expectation of 'future dangerousness', one of the major drawbacks of the theory of IGT is it enables a defence to be established for the perpetration of violence. Moreover, her quote is consistent with the gendered framing of IGT discourse as observed by Burman and Chantler (2005), in which men who use violence are positioned as '*victims of having grown up in a violent household'*, the implication of which is to '*absolv[e] them of any responsibility for violence'* (p.63). Thus, while Bettina's excerpt removes responsibility from her ex-husband for his abuse, by framing forgiveness as a tool for managing the effects of violence (*'until you forgive, you will carry on staying in no sleep at night, worry, anxiety'*), discursively victims are once again centralised, made responsible for their own suffering and recovery.

In the literature review, I explored the predominant mechanisms of transmission that have been proposed and which continue to garner support, including, social learning, attachment and biological theories. The women's accounts chime with these explanations of IGT. Through an account of a recursive script in her attachment relationships, and the construction of a neglectful attachment figure, Georgia's quotes key into attachment theory:

Georgia: I've always felt, growing up, all my life, that I have got this empty space inside me that has never been filled, and I thought, with Greg [abusive ex-partner], that might fill it. It didn't.

Georgia: I think it's basically because I never had that love from my mum. I wanted that love more than anything. I had that empty space that I spoke about and I wanted it to be filled. It [relationship] didn't fill it.

Drawing on attachment theory allows Georgia to locate the early mother-child relationship as corollary to her adult partnerships, thus observing symmetry between her parental and intimate attachment figures. This account serves a key function, for it enables sanctuary from a complicity discourse which would find her responsible for her victimisation in adulthood. However, the disadvantage of this subject position and the individualising attachment discourse, is that Georgia is instead located as damaged and incomplete *('I had that empty space'),* and made vulnerable to unhealthy relationships due to her unsatiated desire for fulfilment *('I wanted it to be filled'; 'I wanted that love more than anything').*

In accordance with a biological explanation of IGT, in her excerpt, Amy talks of the detrimental effects of abuse on the brain, and the transmission of such 'damage' to subsequent generations:

Amy: [...] I've been in domestic abuse services for a year or so now, so I've kind of – reading about things and finding out about things. But for years I used to say that abusing a child is the equivalent to brain damage because there are certain pathways you don't form in your brain. It's not to say that you can't form them, I think it's much harder to form them as an adult.

Int: How do you understand that?

Amy: Well, it's hard for me to say what it is that I'm missing because I'm missing it so I don't know that I'm missing it. But I think in the way that you maybe approach other people, approach relationships, towards people, the approach that you have towards yourself, even I would say in terms of intellect, I think it does a huge amount of damage to that – the learning abilities and cognitions, those sorts of things. So I do, I think it affects all areas of the brain because these are all – problem solving skills and so on and so forth. You can go on and on about different areas to the brain, but if you don't have those correct

attachments and then you have these abusive behaviours on top. So all the normal
childhood development markers you are missing or you were not able to – it's hard to say
[...]

Amy: …I think there are very subtle things you pass on down the line and you almost don't
– you – it goes back to that whole idea of it being brain damage and not really knowing
what it is that is damaged. So the damaged behaviour passes on and you don't realise that
you're passing it on, because you don't realise that you're behaving like that. So there's
almost – it's not something that's overt I think is what I'm trying to say and I think that's
where it comes from. I think familiarity is a huge part of intergenerational transmission.

A wealth of studies involving childhood experiences of trauma and abuse are based upon the vulnerability-stress model, which emphasises the biological and neurophysiological effects of stress (as noted in Chapter 2). Various scholars investigating the biological impact of childhood trauma have reported abnormalities in the brain structures of those with histories of abuse and neglect (e.g. Frodl et al, 2010; Vythilingam et al, 2002), and so Amy's talk of damage to the brain does bear some relationship to the empirical research. In her excerpts, Amy presents herself as corrupted by violence; as brain damaged and impaired in a myriad of ways (developmentally, socially, intellectually), resonating somewhat with Shonkoff and Garner's (2012) suggestion that under extreme stress '*the developing architecture of the brain can be impaired in numerous ways that create a weak foundation for later learning, behaviour, and health*' (p.e236). In the literature review I argued that the idea of detrimental consequences of non-normative childhoods, including childhoods involving stress, trauma and abuse, has seeped into the public sphere. Amy's account of brain damage ('*there are certain pathways you don't form in your brain*'; '*it affects all areas of the brain*') as an effect of exposure to violence, resonates with biological discourses and exemplifies the filtration of such discourses into lay conceptualisations. However, the ordering of Amy's excerpt; her reference to DVA services ('*I've been in domestic abuse services for a year or so now*') followed by her description of brain damage and IGT, denotes the presence of the institution, and therefore the exo-system, in her articulation of the detrimental effects of exposure to violence, in her construction of violence within multiple generations of her family, and in her framing of IGT.

The focus on the importance of the early years for providing the foundation for outcomes across the lifespan underpins understandings of development. Amy's reference to developmental milestones - the established gauge of normal childhood development - and her location of the victim as, not only unable to achieve these markers but simply missing them altogether (*'[s]o all the normal childhood development markers you are missing'*), discursively pushes victims of violence outside the range of 'normal' in their developmental capacity (Burman, 1992). This is similarly the case with her account of the effect of violence on the development of the brain, in which the structure and functionality of the brain is framed as compromised *('there are certain pathways you don't form in your brain').* Moreover, her account shifts between talk of brain damage and talk of 'missing' pathways *('[w]ell, it's hard for me to say what it is that I'm missing because I'm missing it so I don't know that I'm missing it').* While 'damage' implies possibilities for recovery, 'missing' speaks of a fundamental absence, of being incomplete, and less than whole.

A trope across Amy's interview, and as exemplified in her quotes above, revolved around the idea that the IGT of violence occurs through the passing on of 'damaged behaviour' from one generation to the next (*'the damaged behaviour passes on'; 'there are very subtle things you pass on down the line').* Interestingly, damage from violence is located as so profound it prevents any cognisance to what it is that is damaged and its transmission (*'the damaged behaviour passes on and you don't realise that you're passing it on, because you don't realise that you're behaving like that').* This 'incognisance' taps into a 'Blind Spots' discourse, that is, the notion of victims' perception deficit, and victims' blindness to the very phenomenon they experience, embody, and suffer from. The discursive implications of this are that the victim is so corrupted by violence that they are dislocated from themselves, and cannot trust their experience or perception of violence. It is a construction that locates the victim as passive in their encounters with violence, with those who use violence, and in their 'transmission' to the next generation.

Section Summary

Drawing on the metaphor of the bad apple, this section illustrated women's accounts of inherent or acquired badness. Accounts aligned with dominant psychological and developmental discourses, and resonated with explanations of IGT such as attachment, trauma, and biological-based mechanisms of transmission. I demonstrated how some of the women located themselves in damning ways, as so profoundly damaged by violence that they were rendered incomplete.

Others described the physical manifestation of psychological effects of exposure, and of their vulnerability to further victimisation.

Conclusion

'The Corrupted Self' is a pathologized discourse that resonates with broader violence and IGT discourses in four ways: by centralising the role of victims in violence and locating them as complicit; by locating those exposed to violence as perpetually vulnerable to continuities of victimisation/violence; by portraying victims/victimisation using a disease/medicalised framework; and by associating victimisation with contamination. Through their accounts of complicity, damage, and addiction, the women cast themselves as corrupted by the violence in their family histories and intimate partnerships. More pertinently than this though is that IGT was principally bound up in the self; in their damaged state, they situated themselves as a draw for further damage, susceptible to further abuse, and a potential propagator of exposure in their children's generation. This positioning means that theoretically *The Corrupted Self* discourse comes with a high cost and great risk, because the potential implication of it is that the responsibility for *any* future victimisation can be oriented towards the victim, and even perhaps claimed by them. Thus, while *The Corrupted Self,* to an extent, presented the women in a passive position which spoke of the damage and harms that exposure caused, constructions which made a discursive equation between damage and vulnerability, saw the women taking up active subject positions, claiming complicity to victimisation through their supposed susceptibility to it.

There are two other influences to consider in relation to the complicity material presented here. Firstly, in the context of the research interview, self-blame may serve a particular discursive function, offering the women a means by which to evade any accusations they anticipate the researcher/audience having. Exploring the linguistic function of 'defectiveness', Xanthopoulou (2010) suggests that *'[...] self-blaming remarks are produced and utilized as ways of evading accusations'* (p.687). In this way, self-blame may offer a means to claim responsibility before accusations are imposed by others, and perhaps also a way of claiming some specified rather than total responsibility. Secondly, it is important to recognise that victims' complicity in violence and their pathology are not only discourses, but they are also used as tools of violence, for example, through so called 'gaslighting' in which 'badness, shame, and/or guilt' may be communicated to victims during abuse (Valdez et al, 2013, p.138) as a mechanism for those using abuse to 'deflect

responsibility for their violence' (Kelly, 1988, p.211). Accordingly, as well as situating themselves as complicit and damaged, in their interviews the women did also talk about how they were *made* to feel this by those using abuse against them. It is imperative then that recognition is given to the blame and responsibility for victimisation that was placed with the women in their abusive relationships and the possible impact this had on their accounts of complicity discussed in this section.

Chapter 10

Continuities of Exposure: Influences Beyond the Family

Introduction

In '*Blind Spots',* I considered the ways the women interviewed located IGT of family violence as a product of the micro-system; a consequence of being enculturated into a family in which violence and victimisation was entrenched in the very practices of doing family. In '*The Inevitable, The Avertible',* I explored the tensions between talk of intergenerational continuity and discontinuity of violence, and the discursive ways that power in discontinuity was framed as slippery, fluctuating within and beyond the grasp of the women. Like '*Blind Spots'*, in '*The Inevitable, The Avertible',* IGT was constructed as principally a family affair. '*The Corrupted Self'* represented the sense of ownership of/complicity in victimisation that the women narrated in their accounts. In this discourse, IGT was predominantly bound up in the self; the damaged self as a draw for further damage and a propagator of continuities of violence. Even though the women's accounts were at times underpinned by the conceptualisations/language of institutions and services (operating at an exo-level), fundamentally, these three discourses ('*Blind Spots'; 'The Inevitable, The Avertible'; 'The Corrupted Self'*) locate IGT within the micro-system, at an individual and family level. Conversely though*,* this present chapter, *'Continuities of Exposure',* emphasises the social construction of continuities and presents a discourse which directs attention to the role exo- and macro-level processes play in exposure to violence and abuse, and in IGT.

Throughout this thesis, I have illustrated the relevance of exposure in IGT discourse and the way it is located as the principal contributing factor in transmission. In social learning explanations, exposure is seen as a precursor to transmission, affecting the likelihood of behaviours being learned and replicated in each new generation. Similarly, dose-response theory assumes a positive correlation between exposure and the likelihood of IGT. *'Continuities of Exposure'* reflects dominant cause-and-effect type discourses involving IGT such as dose-response and social learning theories, which imply that the greater the exposure (in terms of duration/severity/frequency/comorbidity of violence types), the greater the impact. By relating exposure (dose) to IGT (response), it means that in our scientific endeavours to understand more about IGT, all possible factors that either maintain or increase exposure need to be recognised

(Widom, 2017). In order to take seriously the women's descriptions of factors that facilitated exposure, it requires an uncritical view of this material through a realist lens. Hitherto, this thesis has adopted a purely discursive approach to analysis, but due to the prominence of dose-response in IGT discourse, the presence of it within the research material, and the need to recognise all factors involved in exposure, this chapter takes a two-strand strategy to analysis. Through a realist lens, I consider the women's accounts of the aspects that maintained/increased exposure; and I explore the women's discursive constructions and subject positions afforded through an account which locates continuities of exposure beyond the family. This chapter comprises three sections: *'Idealisation of Normative Family'*; *'Interpretations of Religion';* and *'Responses to Family Violence'*.

10.1. Idealisation of Normative Family

Despite the diversity in family structures and increasing acceptance of this diversity (Cherlin, 2009; Zartler, 2014), ideologies of the nuclear family model still persist. The nuclear family, also described as the 'standard family' by Scanzoni (2001) and the 'traditional family' by Segal (1983), typically assumes '*a combination of marital and blood ties'* (Collins, 1998, p.62), formed of two heterosexual parents and their biological children (Bengtson, 2001; Rasool, 2016). Zartler (2014) maintains that the nuclear family serves '*as an ideological code along the dimensions of normalcy, complementarity, and stability'* (p.604). This 'ideological code' could be traced in the women's interview accounts in a number of ways: through talk of loyalty and family cohesion; through their framing of composition and roles; and through talk of desiring/creating their own 'normative' family in replace of non-normative family-of-origin. In this section, I argue that the 'ideological code' of nuclear family, Zartler speaks of, was cast by the women as regulatory and had the effect of maintaining exposure to violence and risking the exposure of subsequent generations.

10.1.1. Family Cohesion

Reflecting upon the model of nuclear family, Scanzoni (2001) suggests that its autonomous structure determines its isolation and insularity from other structures, which is upheld by a '*high level of privacy'* and, moreover *'because its boundaries were deemed sacrosanct, happenings within the household were concealed from the eyes of outsiders'* (p.689). This sense of privacy and insularity was represented in the women's talk of 'codes' of silence operating within their families, governing privacy and restricting disclosure of the 'happenings' of violence and conflict within the household:

> *Naomi: Like my family were more we closed the door when – what happens there happens, so we don't talk about feelings, we don't talk about what's going on. We keep ourselves to ourselves sort of thing and everything bottled up, which is like our main problem. I know that from experience, that's our main problem.*

The code of silence here relates to outside the bounds of the household ('*closed the door', 'what happens there happens'*) as well as within it, with an embargo on the expression of feelings ('*we don't talk about what's going on', 'everything bottled up')*, and a sense of disconnect between members of the family *('[w]e keep ourselves to ourselves'*).

Talk of family codes, particularly around loyalty and solidarity, punctuated discussions of violence and conflict:

> *Georgia: Yeah, our family is very strict on **loyalty**. We've always been a **very loyal family.***
>
> *Naomi: And I think now there is a positive thing there because we are a **close family** and we are there for each other…*

Here the women articulate qualities synonymous with the 'nuclear family'; closeness, cohesion, support, and loyalty. Interspersing talk of non-normativity in the form of violence with talk of normativity in the form of nuclear family, provides a platform from which to resist a stigmatised identity, ensuring normative status is not entirely rescinded.

Women's accounts were heavily entrenched in Western conceptualisations of 'family', what 'family' should be, and how theirs deviated. Even in constructing their genograms, most of the women either commented on how 'messy' (words to the effect of) their families were, or asked me how their families compared with those of the other women participating in the study, and if theirs looked 'worse'. This notion of supposed messiness, and the production of anxieties and comparisons around that, is important because it lifts a veil on the essence of prevailing discourses of family and imperatives for 'neatness'. Observe Sue's quote below, which shows her caught in a strong discourse of family 'neatness' which proves unable to articulate the complex relational dynamics within the family:

> *Sue: I didn't want to tell anybody because I didn't want my family to be split up. After all, they are family.*

> *Int: .. What does that mean to you? What does 'family' mean?*

> *Sue: Flesh and blood. Love. Well, it's supposed to be love, isn't it? It sounds weird, doesn't it? How can I not hate my brother? How can I not hate Bob [step-father and ex-partner]? How can I not hate my mum? Because you only get one dad, even though he's not my dad. You only get one mum. And my brothers, you know, they are family. I cannot split my family up. We were a big, supportive family together. Supposed to have been. But a lot of people saw us a big family and we were out there to look after each other. This is why I never told anybody.*

Even though she catches herself during the telling of this idealised account of family, adjusting and retracting her own claims ('*Love. Well, it's supposed to be love*'; '*you only get one dad, even though he's not my dad*'; '*[we] were a big, supportive family together. Supposed to have been*'), Sue persists with its narration.

In accordance with nuclear family ideals, cohesion and its maintenance are prioritised in Sue's account, casting the family as inviolable, regardless of individual member's infringements *('I didn't want my family to be split up').* In her interview, Sue described making a conscious decision early in her childhood not to disclose the abuse she was suffering, verbalising two reasons for this: threat from her sexually abusive step-father; and experience of a friend being removed into care. She reflects on this, below:

> *Sue: ...when I was ten, eleven, twelve, whatever age, and he started making love to me, it was, "If you tell anybody, you'll split the family up." And I didn't want to do that, being that I saw somebody else in a similar situation and her family did get split up. All you do is you want to protect your family. That's my family; why would I want to split my family up?*

Sue's non-disclosure is described as resting entirely on ideologies of 'family', which are exploited by her step-father as a mechanism to silence her. If we consider from a realist perspective the relevance this has for exposure: it prolongs her exposure to her step-father's abuse; and it also means that her children (third generation), conceived through this abuse, were placed at risk of exposure to her step-father's/their father's abuse. The idealisation of 'neatness' in the form of family unity and cohesion, provide a basis for the silencing of disclosure and risks contributing to

continuities of exposure. Sue's quote illuminates the power of discourses involving 'family' and the strength with which they compel conformity, even where it might be harmful. Her account is made more disturbing because it intertwines family idealisation with family abuse. Sue's reference to the sexual abuse of her 10-year-old self as 'making love' is horrifying in its incongruity. A psychological explanation might conclude this to be the language of an individual suffering from Stockholm Syndrome (Cantor & Price, 2007), and a product of long-term coercion and grooming. However, from a discursive perspective, anchoring the abuse in love, instantly illuminates that her account is bridged across two discourses, neither of which have the ability to comfortably provide words for her experience. This discursive formation was a feature of Sue's interview which was speckled with very subtle affectionate references to her step-father, in spite of her recognition of, and action against his injustice (instigating criminal and child custody proceedings). The purpose of this discussion is that Sue's repeated syntactic formation, the linguistic anchoring of her abuse in love and endearment, highlights the strength of dominant discourses involving family and, so too, the scarcity of language available to describe abuse in families. As such, her experience in its totality cannot be articulated, the narration of abuse becomes disabled, 'unspeakable' (Callaghan et al, 2015), and stifled in her verbal biography, only part of it, 'love', can be voiced. In their feminist thesis on the invalidation of women's experiences of sexual violence, Kelly and Radford (1996) suggest the implications of a woman or girl naming the abuse perpetrated by a family member *'also means naming their male relative an abusive man, an 'abuser''* (Kelly & Radford, 1996, p.50). Domestic abuse is often represented as occurring in a love 'vacuum', and conversely 'family' is often portrayed as entirely unified and loving. To be able to name abuse within the family then requires individuals to *'struggle with the dissonance'* (Kelly & Radford, 1996, p. 50); to traverse the polarised images of the 'loving family' and 'loveless abuse' in order to construct alternative pictures (and words) for ambivalence. Sue's material above demonstrates these complexities involved in naming violence and abuse within the family context, as she navigates the terrain of describing love in a relationship characterised by abuse.

There were other instances in the research material where accounts of nuclear family intertwined with talk of continuities of violence. In these cases, non-disclosure (as a product of family cohesion and privacy) was framed as having repercussions for exposure:

> Sue: [the court] didn't take it any further. [...] because **my sister, bless her, didn't want to split up the family** any more than it already was, otherwise it could have gone further. I

already spoke to a police officer this year about it and he turned round and said, "If your sister had gone further a bit more, then he would have been put away."

*Naomi: I mean, there are still times where I see that with [father's] girlfriend – you see things like little bits where like, you're [father] a bit controlling, a little bit jealous there, and **you do wonder. But it's one of them things. Closed doors and all that lot.***

These excerpts may seem to speak of an apparent 'family code' of privacy (micro-level), but more pertinently they speak of the potential power of privacy and cohesion as mainstays of the nuclear family (an ideal operating at macro-, exo-, micro-level), in prohibiting disclosure. In terms of exposure and IGT, if we consider the scenarios described by Sue and Naomi using a realist framework, it is possible to interpret direct links between non-disclosure and continuities of violence/exposure. Firstly, in Sue's quote, her sister's restricted disclosure corresponds with a lack of evidence to find Sue's step-father/ex-partner guilty of abuse. As a consequence, he retains custody of their children, potentially putting the third generation at risk of exposure to abuse. Secondly, Naomi describes the prioritisation of family privacy over intervention in possible abusive relations, enabling exposure to controlling/abusive behaviours to continue. The presence of normative and nuclear family ideals, through talk of cohesion, privacy and loyalty, is pertinent because of the way this informs non-disclosure, non-intervention, and facilitates continued exposure.

10.1.2. Family Structure

The presence of the nuclear family in the women's accounts surprised me somewhat. I suppose I took it for granted as an outmoded understanding of family, superseded by more diverse and inclusive conceptualisations (Zartler, 2014). Moreover, not all of the women in the sample had grown up in nuclear family structures with two biological, married parents, and the discordance in family relationships (violence/conflict/estrangements) were polar opposites of the characteristics associated with the idealised nuclear family. Under the moralising code of nuclear family, perversely, an abusive family is privileged over and above a broken one, as Weima (2012) suggests:

[...] the nuclear family will always be considered "more normal" and "more ideal" when compared with any other family structure. Consider, for instance, that a nuclear family struggling <u>privately </u>with abuse, for example, will always <u>appear</u> more "ideal" and

"normal", versus a non-nuclear family who is not struggling with abuse. (Emphasis on underline) (p.43)

Consistent with this, some of the women expressed a desire to retain or create normative family structures in spite of/because of the violence that had occurred within their families. For several of these women, trying to retain normative family structures and keep them intact put them at risk of continued exposure of abuse due to the dynamics operating within the family. Consider an excerpt from Bettina's interview, in which she describes actively trying to maintain the status quo of the family, despite the high costs this accompanies:

*Bettina: Yes, recently something happened that I know was happening and I cut off the conversation with my parents for six days. And after I realise that maybe it was me. I know that it wasn't me, but **for the health of the family** I said, "Okay, let me talk with them again." And my mum, of course, again she say, "Well, I was expecting your call because I am your mother." Still now, she was in the wrong and she was supposed to say sorry to me, but it has to be me says sorry to her when I did nothing wrong.*
Int: So you felt that actually she should have been saying sorry to you and apologising?
Bettina: Yeah.
Int: But you were the one to say sorry?
*Bettina: Yeah. I did this for the **health of the children**. **She is still my mother, their grandma.***
Int: And when you say do it 'for the health of the children', what do you mean?
*Bettina: It means that **I don't want the children growing up without a grandma**, you know.*

To establish some context here, in her 'Active' genogram (depicting family at the time of interview), Bettina represented her mother as 'emotionally abusive', 'controlling' and 'manipulative' towards her, a dynamic she alludes to in her excerpt here. Her reconciliation is framed as being motivated by 'the health' of the family, even though apparent unity requires conforming to existing dynamics, dynamics which challenge her sense of justice. Moreover, through a realist reading, reconciliation risks continued exposure to her mother's abusive and controlling behaviours.

Like Bettina, Naomi expressed clear ideas about what constitutes the ideal family:

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Naomi: …in my head I had it that I had to be a family unit, I had to have me, him [partner], my son. We had to have a house, we had to have jobs, we had to support him, we had to be a kind of a unit and to support each other, and that it wouldn't be right to have my son on my own.

Int: Was there a stigma for you then about being a single parent?

Naomi: I think it was – in my mind, I think me being a single parent would definitely be a disappointment to all my family.

Weima (2012) attests '*[a]s the internalized social ideal, there is a need to attain, maintain, assimilate, or at the very least, strive for the nuclear family form*' (p.53). This ideation of nuclear family is clearly traceable in Naomi's extract ('*I had to be a family unit*', '*[w]e had to have a house, we had to have jobs, we had to support him [son]*'). I think what her account here illustrates is the double-bind the normative conceptualisation of family puts people in, especially when those people are trying to fit together non-normative pieces of a jigsaw to create a normative picture of family. So while she envisaged consequences for her son (third generation) of trying to create normative family with an abusive partner, she also speaks of the consequences of not doing normative family for the damning way she might be viewed by her own family-of-origin ('*disappointment to all my family*'). This latter point alludes to a regulatory aspect, ensuring normalcy is a goal strived for by all members. Concern about her infant son's exposure to violence was described as eventually informing Naomi's decision to leave her abusive relationship, but if we consider her quote from a realist perspective, maintaining a normative family structure translated to the continuation of Naomi's victimisation and risked her son's exposure to violence.

Kerry's account was interwoven with a thread about imitating the nuclear ideal by constructing her own substitute family, one that possessed the qualities of normative family:

Kerry: So I would gravitate as a younger person towards families that I felt had a positive ontology. And I would insert myself into those familial circumstances because it filled a hole that I had for love, positive affirmation, affection, honesty, fun, you know, my family was quite serious, it was quite a serious affair doing family at home. So sometimes just to kick about and just to be silly. And I would find places to be that I could create home in.

Int: Surrogate families [repeating Kerry's earlier use of this term].

Kerry: And I still do that, even now. Especially with men, older men. I usually form a father like attachment wherever I go. So I have multiple surrogate dads, and they know that, I'll

joke with them and say, daddy one, daddy two, are you playing daddy today? (Laughs) You find it where you need it. But in people that you can trust. So it's like you don't get to choose your family but you can choose those people.

Kerry's description conveys a pragmatic functionality in the way she selects kin-replacements for her unsatisfactory biological father. Discursively, Kerry's construction of family might at first appear a freer, more inclusive iteration, an alternative to the nuclear family. In its requirement of a father though, it conforms to patriarchal nuclear structures, requiring a male to head the family (Collins, 1998). Similarly, the idealised conditions/dynamics of family *('love, positive affirmation, affection, honesty...')* also tap into normative conceptualisations of the sociology of the family and what it should generate/produce between/within its members, and speaks of the links between 'personal happiness', 'family relations' and 'social adjustment' (Rose, 1985, p.184). A realist reading of Kerry's extract calls into question the possible risks associated with her strategy for finding surrogates. For instance, whether her seeking out multiple alternative fathers seemingly indiscriminately ('*I usually form a father like attachment wherever I go'),* makes her vulnerable, open to exploitation or further abuse and, ultimately, whether this strategy puts her at risk of continuities of victimisation.

Section Summary

The nuclear family ideal has been much critiqued, particularly for the way it is held up as the *natural* structure, most conducive for its members and for raising children (Bengtson, 2001; Rose, 1985). One of the key reasons is that evidence of divergence from it, in the form of family breakdown and variance from this structure, shows it to be difficult to conform to and as such perhaps not the 'norm' it is purported to be (Bengtson, 2001; Scanzoni, 2001; Segal, 1983). As others have attested, the nuclear norm continues to exert regulatory pressure (Zartler, 2014), and this sense of regulation was evident in the research material in the importance placed on upholding the illusion of normativity, of family loyalty and cohesion, and of maintaining/creating normative structures. In contexts of violence, these normative characteristics (cultivated at macro-, exo- and micro-level) risk translating to non-disclosure, non-intervention and, as illustrated here, to continued exposure to violence.

10.2. Interpretations of Religion

In this section, I explore the intersection of some of the women's accounts of faith and family violence. While faith did not feature as an item in the interview schedule, most of the women spoke of their religion (n=5) and/or spirituality (n=2). Five of the nine women had received or were receiving support from a faith-based charity (three of whom had given an account of faith/spirituality in their interview). Attachment to faith-based agencies and, especially, to being a current recipient of faith-based support, could explain the presence of religion and faith in accounts. As such, it is important to acknowledge the possible power dynamic at play here, and for readers to consider the ways the women's accounts might function to portray a worthy and churched subject (or perhaps, a needy and unchurched one), and/or as a call to maintain or to accrue support. Largely, those women who did talk about faith and religion, did so in ways which portrayed complex interactions between faith and family, faith and relationships, and faith and experiences of violence/abuse. These interactions could not always be easily conceived of in binary ways – as straightforwardly positive or negative, agentic or otherwise. Several spoke about the support and comfort their faith provided during and in the aftermath of violence; as a means of maintaining connection with departed relatives, reducing a sense of loss and grief, and of transformation in death, which makes forgiveness and reparation of relationships broken by abuse possible. Here, I focus on the ways that adherence to religious codes was characterised as facilitative of exposure/continuities of violence.

Various authors have criticised forms of religion and/or interpretation of religious scripture for the prioritisation of marital permanence and family unity, which in the context of family/spousal violence risks inadvertently putting pressure on family members to tolerate violence and collude in its concealment (Nash, 2006; Nason-Clark, 2000; Zust et al, 2018). Exploring how hermeneutic interpretation of biblical scripture functioned for women affected by spousal abuse, Nash (2006) observed that readings acted as a source of agency and comfort, but also instilled patience and tolerance of abusive partners. Reflecting Nash's findings, the women-of-faith I interviewed talked about how translation of religion/religious scripture within their families had facilitated continuities of violence/abuse and encouraged tolerance. Note for instance, how Bettina describes being called upon to adhere to her mother's translation of Catholicism, which required her to endure her husband's violence:

> *Bettina: I met my ex-husband in Italy when I was at work. And at the beginning he was the*
> *first man I was in love with, I never had another physical relationship with anyone, he was*

my first one. But I have to say, this is very – that my first time with this man, he raped me,
in public. I discover just this – because I never had – my mum, she never taught me anything
about sex, never talked about anything. I was trusting him, I was in love with him. He took
me out for dinner, put lots of alcohol that I don't drink, I don't smoke, and in the car park,
raped me in front of other people. But still, I was in love, I was thinking, this is the way I
have to go and carried on, married this man. And after we married he started being violent
to me. When I told my mum, I said, "This man is violent to me." "Well, you married him,
you chose him, put your hand like that, your head down [moves hand to forehead and drops
head to table] and shut up". This is what my mum says. Because this is Catholic religion
and if you decide to marry this man you have to live with this.

Here, Bettina suggests that her mother's guidance is shaped by her faith in Catholicism or, at least,
to her *translation* of Catholicism ('*this is Catholic religion'*). Her mother is framed not only as
colluding in the silence of abuse, but also as actively promoting tolerance and sufferance of it. The
context Bettina describes is one in which violence is legitimised: not only accepted, but facilitated
and concealed; and in which the victim's permissiveness is encouraged. Depicting her mother as
counter to the ideal is perhaps indicative of implicit (and unvoiced) recruitment of a developmental
discourse of mother as nurturer, as teacher (Burman, 2008), an *'agent of moralisation'* (Rose, 1985,
P.169), and as an instigator to and site of social learning. Her mother, and, in particular, her
mother's withholding of life lessons, is positioned by Bettina as critical in her victimhood. That is,
Bettina constructs herself in retrospect as *made* naive and *made* ignorant, to the extent she was
unable to view her abusive relationship as such.

Bettina's excerpt is imbued with a sense of hostility toward the factors/persons
(Catholicism/mother) envisaged as enablers to spousal abuse. In contrast, Kerry spoke with much
admiration of her grandfather's adherence to his faith, even though it meant remaining in an
'emotionally abusive', 'manipulative' and 'fused' relationship (see Fig. 5 for genogram extract):

Kerry: I would say that Delia [grandmother] is manipulative of Edward [grandfather] in that
he was her kind of glorified butler. But then he was so intelligent that I wonder how much
he actually just chose to allow that to happen. I think he was a Christian, a very dedicated
Christian, social gospel, very, very committed to people less fortunate than himself, and an
absolute stickler to his marriage vows. So I think as far as he was concerned, it didn't matter

what she [wife] did, he wouldn't have broken that. His level of integrity, I don't think I've ever met anybody like him. He was really and truly extraordinary.

In Kerry's glorification of her grandfather, she portrays him as a martyr to his faith. His tolerance is not framed negatively as an object of necessity or endurance, but rather is positively aligned with 'integrity'. Noteworthy too is the way Edward – a victim - is sanctified in this account. This perhaps points to a gendered distinction in talk of male and female victims. In direct contrast to the representation of victims (as discussed in 'The Corrupted Self'), whereby female victims of violence are denigrated for staying with male partners, Edward is revered for his commitment to his wife and his marriage vows ('*an absolute stickler to his marriage vows'; 'he wouldn't have broken that'*). Regardless of whether Kerry represents it positively or negatively, adherence to religion here is cast as central in Edward's continued exposure to abuse.

Figure 5. Excerpt of Kerry's Genogram Depicting Relational Dynamics within the Maternal Grandparent Dyad.
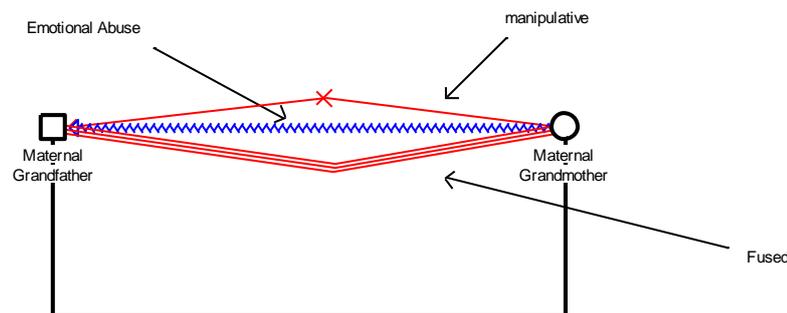
Coming from a practising Christian family, talk of Christianity featured relatively heavily within Kerry's interview account. She described making the disclosure as a teenager to faith leaders, which ultimately led to the discontinuity of violence in her family and the separation/eventual divorce of her parents. She represented her interactions with faith leaders as supportive in her journey towards disclosure, but she problematised her mum's interpretation, her *'subjective comprehension'* (Nash, 2006, p.198) of the Christian position on divorce:

> *Kerry: [...] I think James [pastor] strongly advised mum that she should leave, tried to counsel her. Because one of mum's problems is, being a Christian, she was very anti divorce. And James, as her pastor, said, "No, there are cases, and it's biblical, where*

divorce is necessary. This is one of them." He was quite clear about that. But he didn't actually do anything practical, as far as I know, to make her do anything about it. I think his hope was, if he kept talking to her about it, she'd eventually make the decision herself.

Strict adherence to Christianity and the prioritisation on family unity without exception is constructed here as a mediating factor in continuities of abuse. Kerry's text is intertwined throughout with a complicity discourse (discussed in '*The Corrupted Self*'); as her mum - a victim of spousal abuse - is centralised in future continuity or discontinuity of abuse. Implicitly, her inaction is allied with *permitting* continuity of violence. Kerry's suggestion that *'one of mum's problems is, being a Christian, she was very anti divorce',* could be read as another example tying mum into a complicity discourse. Kerry speaks more broadly than just her mum though. '*[B]eing a Christian'* situates anti divorce as an inherent issue in the Christian belief system, not one only affecting her mum. Thus, while '*one of mum's problems*' might at first seem like an attempt to individualise, perhaps instead it has the opposite function, making the links overt between religious ideologies at macro-level and its translation in the micro-system.

Isla proposed that family practices and beliefs, informed by religion, are transmitted through the generations in hierarchical and linear ways, via social learning from parent to child:

> *Int: Why do you think domestic abuse appears to repeat in different generations of the same family?*
>
> *Isla: I think obviously it's got a lot to do with religion and race as well.*
>
> *Int: Religion and race?*
>
> *Isla: Yeah.*
>
> *Int: What is it about that?*
>
> *Isla: Because in religion it's so strict and it's always going to be strict. You know, the Catholic is still there and the religion's still there, so you've got to teach your children what you've learnt; obviously if it was right, if you felt that was right. But obviously, even if you felt it was wrong, you couldn't go against your family, in fear of losing your family.*

Isla's account aligns with the dominant explanation of IGT, social learning theory. However, while social learning explanations typically focus on the family as the site of transmission, Isla's account is more complex than this, and intertwines familial processes of learning ('*you've got to teach your children what you've learnt'),* familial regulatory processes *('you couldn't go against your family'),*

and social and cultural processes of adherence and regulation (*'religion it's so strict'*) to explain abuse in multiple generations.

Isla speaks about the direct teaching of the Catholic belief system within the family, and about *'race'* (or perhaps of intolerance to interracial partnerships - an issue Isla raised earlier in her interview). Interestingly though, *'you've got to teach your children what you've learnt'* seems more of a directive than the oblique modelling and imitation aspects that pertain to social learning theory. Moreover, transmission is portrayed here as an inevitable occurrence that takes place *regardless* of the subject's morality, but with the subject *conscious* of morality. Thus, according to Isla's excerpt, parents are obliged to teach their children the lessons of Catholicism regardless of whether they feel it *'right'* or *'wrong'*. The last sentence, *'you couldn't go against your family, in fear of losing your family'*, alludes to the religious imperative on family unity (Nason-Clark, 2000). By explaining abuse in multiple generations through an account of religion, Isla constructs religion, at least the family's translation of it, as having the potential to cultivate a context conducive for abuse in each generation; by promoting a context in which family unity and member's adherence to religious teachings are prioritised.

Section Summary

The women interviewed painted complex pictures of the ways that religion/faith, family, and abuse intersected. Pertinent to this present study are the ways some of the women's accounts of IGT of family violence were underpinned by reference to religion. As I illustrated, the women constructed religion, at least their family's interpretation of it, as creating a context in which exposure to violence/abuse could continue and in which tolerance was, in some cases, actively promoted. Examples illustrated how the women problematised anti-divorce policies and the prioritisation for family unity, locating these as the principal issues for continuities of violence/exposure. This is somewhat consistent with findings by authors investigating DV/IPV and religion (e.g. Nash, 2006; Nason-Clark, 2000; Zust et al, 2018), and scholars discussing the implications of 'anti-divorce sentiment' (Nason-Clark, 2004) and 'marital permanence' (Nash, 2006).

Discourses of IGT are imbued with a notion of complicity which frame individuals and families as unconsciously perpetuating transmissions of victimisation and/or perpetration within the micro-system (ibid). However, if we conceive of religion as a macro-level process (Abrutyn, 2013), then

taking the intersections of faith and violence within the women's accounts into consideration, IGT of family violence emerges not solely as a product of the micro-system, but rather as a construction influenced by macro-level processes *translated* in the micro-system.

10.3. Responses to Family Violence

This section explores the intersecting narratives of family violence and service intervention within the women's accounts. Descriptions of being ignored, symptomology not being picked up, and generally being let down by services and institutions were evident. There were a variety of ways that the women suggested exo-level systems disadvantaged them, contributed to their vulnerability, and played a role in their own/family members' exposure to violence. Commonalities among the accounts was the location of school as a possible site of intervention, and child residency and custody processes/outcomes.

In line with the ontology of this research, reality is viewed as multifactorial, and accounts as constructed and construct-able, and therefore movable. In accordance with a discursive approach, I am interested in the ways discourses involving IGT are constructed rather than determining or ascertaining 'truth'. Thus, while the following material locates IGT (and the resistance of it) contextually - in systems and processes, in services and institutions - my analysis is focused on the function of this kind of construction, and the subject positions it opens up for the women to occupy, *rather* than a realist exploration of fact or fiction. However, due to the prominence of 'exposure' in IGT discourse (via dose-response and social learning theories), as I move through this section, I present realist readings of the research material with the purpose of providing a comparative contrast against my discursive interpretations.

10.3.1. School as a Site of Intervention

Through the women's accounts of ignored disclosure during their early education, school was situated as a potential site of intervention in family violence – a possible source of emancipatory action, but an apathetic and, therefore, impotent one:

> *Isla: The school did know a little bit of my abuse because I did try— Obviously I didn't want*
> *to tell them too much because my mum was coming into the school, but they did know that*

my mum was picking on me quite a bit. So the school really should have— I think the school should have intervened more, really, definitely.

Jenny: I used to have bruises, so—

Int: So visible?—

Jenny: And I would tell, I'd told people as well. So the school I was at when this was going on [...] I told them on numerous occasions that my dad was hitting me.

Int: And you told [neighbours] that he was hitting you?

Jenny: Yeah, [neighbours] knew that my dad was hitting me and so did the school.

Int: What was their response?

Jenny: Nothing. They just used to talk to me, everyone – like the school, I remember the teacher at the school just used to talk to me and that was it.

If we consider this material through a realist lens, we are compelled to situate power in a particular way. Power to act is located with the schools in these accounts and, in their failures to respond, we are called to place blame with them. Moreover, we are called to envisage the schools' inertia as a secondary trauma to the already victimised children. From this realist perspective, in Jenny's case, the visible signs of abuse ('*bruises*') and her verbal disclosures ('*I told them on numerous occasions*') walked and talked the private (micro-system) into the public domain (exo-system), and yet the only intervention received was access to a confidant. Both of the women's accounts here talk of being let down during what Featherstone and Peckover (2007) refer to as '*fateful moments*', moments '*from which the possibilities of 'life planning' could follow for all concerned*' (p.195). The women describe circumstances in which 'fateful moments' represented missed opportunities for intervention, where knowledge of the occurrence of violence was met with inaction rather than response. This is also consistent with findings by other authors who identified missed opportunities for intervention in responses to abuse (e.g. Beckett et al, 2015; Farmer & Callan, 2012), and work in the field indicating that teachers' awareness/response to violence has the potential to mark an important source of early intervention (Widom, 1993; Widom & Maxfield, 2001). From a realist perspective then, we are asked to uncritically view the material as a factual recounting of events. In these two women's cases, their recollection locates the schools as retaining the knowledge and power to discontinue exposure of violence/abuse, but through their non-response, as enabling continuity. In relation to the dose-response theory of IGT, this locates exposure as something that can be discontinued *and* continued by exo-level systems.

Alternatively, if we examine this interview material from a discursive perspective, looking at the way this talk functions, it is possible to conceive that the women's orientation of the school and institutional failures provides a safe haven from individualising discourses which centralise the family system (i.e. those discussed in '*Blind Spots*'; '*The Inevitable, The Avertible*'), and which tie victims into self-blame and complicity (i.e. those discussed in '*The Corrupted Self*'). The focus on school as an exo-level institution challenges the notion that exposure to family violence is entirely rooted within the micro-system. Thus, discursively, calling out the missed opportunities for intervention renders exo-level institutions culpable in continuities, locates victimisation/abuse as receptive to intervention, and highlights possibilities for institutions to help bring about discontinuities of violence and reduce exposure.

Several of the women suggested there was a failure by schools to 'decode' the symptomology of abuse they were exhibiting:

> *Jenny: The first place it [abuse] should be picked up on is school [...] [b]ecause that is where it will be picked up from that child's behaviour, from their reaction – so I was always anxious, if I wasn't anxious I was crying, I was covered in eczema. I did not make friendship groups, I stayed isolated to protect myself. Where was the interventions?*

> *Kerry: Possibly when I got almost straight A stars at GCSE and straight As at A level and never seemed to want to leave school, somebody might have been like, why is this kid so driven? Because I know you get bright kids but that's kind of abnormal. I was taking up every extracurricular activity there was, running the library, I was president of every society they would let me get my hands on, anything to not have to get on that bus at the end of the day. Even to the point that it would wreck my health, I'd be knackered and tired and ill and I'd still want to go to school because I didn't want to be at home. So you would have thought that that would have been noticeable. But I guess as a school if you've got a high-flying student who's performing you want that, don't you, that's the problem. Nice, middle class, speaks nicely, useful on all our posters because she'll speak like an adult, but that's what I was, I was like a poster child. So it was like – and the problem is it's perpetuating, because if you are missing affection all of that is then like, yes, love me. I'm a worthwhile, useful person, make me useful. And so the problem is it's like you're feeding each other.*

Through a realist lens, these quotes would likely be read as an expression of vulnerability in their link to damage, and the visibility of violence in body and behaviour. Again, the schools are problematised, and despite the prevalence of discourses involving the effects of violence/trauma which relate to the physical/intrapsychic manifestations, the symbolic nature of Jenny and Kerry's suffering failed to be 'decoded'. Thus, a realist reading produces an image of the school as enabling continuity of exposure through its inaction (and in Kerry's case, exploitation), which persists even in the face of the embodied evidence of violence/abuse in the form of the children's symptomology.

However, a discursive perspective generates a distinctly different reading of these extracts. For instance, I argue that by centralising the overt nature of their particular stigmatisations (Jenny's as corporeal, visible) (Kerry's as behavioural, corporeal, visible), the women articulate their public codified 'disclosures'. By constructing themselves as symbolic communicators of the experience of violence, they resist being cast as complicit in its silence. Rather, others' failure to read violence and their resultant inaction here is centralised and problematised. The women's talk of being let down, of service abandonment and exploitation, brings into view the school, an exo-level institution, and its role in (dis)continuities of family violence. It is this which provides a powerful resistance to dominant individualised narratives and micro-level analyses of violence (Mehrotra et al, 2016).

10.3.2. Child Residency and Custody

Two of the mothers talked about difficulties in housing their children and retaining physical custody after fleeing abuse. For instance, fleeing without financial resources meant Jenny was forced to leave without her children:

> Jenny: [...] the woman at the council, when I went to the council and told her what was happening, she said, "Well, you're not eligible for housing because you're on that mortgage." And I started to tell her about some of the abuse and she said to me, these were her words, "It doesn't matter if he puts you through a plate glass window, love. You're on that mortgage." So I went and lived in the pub with the landlady, the landlady of the pub I worked in took me in.
>
> [...] I went down [to the District Council], told her what was going on. I said, "I've moved into a pub with the landlady who has realised that I'm not safe there and she's sent me

down here to find out about housing." And she said, "You're not eligible because you're on the mortgage. You need to go back home or sort yourself out." And I said, "What about my kids? He won't let me take the kids and I've got nowhere to go with them, the landlady can't take all three of us in." And she said, "It's not my problem, love."

If we look at this account through a realist lens, considering it a reflection of events as they occurred, we see that Jenny and her children's lives are governed by a rigid bureaucratic system, a system which neglects her and her children's safety. While she is able to sustain her own physical separation from her violent partner, this comes at a cost, resulting in physical separation from her children and, in turn, an inability to protect them from their father. Jenny suggested in her interview it took a further two years after seeking help from the district council until she was reunited with her children, and this change in events only occurred because the children's father declared he was unable to cope. After which, her son disclosed that his father had been using physical abuse in the home, and additionally, that he had forcibly been made him use physical violence against his sister.

If we take a moment to examine this scenario from a realist perspective we can envisage, without too much effort, that the extended period of time Jenny's children were exposed to their father's abuse was, in part, a consequence of state-sanctioned processes of non-intervention. If we conceive exposure to violence as the principal risk factor for IGT of violence/victimisation, as per social learning accounts, and if we consider that the extent of exposure is important in outcomes, including IGT, as per dose-response theory, then Jenny's account troubles the notion that outcomes including IGT are entirely a consequence of the micro-system. Instead, Jenny's account gives us a glimpse into the social construction of continuity: the macro- (state policy), exo- (state policy in practice via district council/community support), micro- (family) interplay; and how these macro- and exo-level factors informed the duration of the children's exposure to their father's abuse and, potentially to the frequency and severity of it too.

By the time I spoke to Jenny in interview, she had already regained residency of her children, and had raised them into adulthood. Sue on the other hand was living apart from the children she had with her step-father (turned first partner) and was struggling to regain physical custody of them. She expressed a strong sense of injustice during her interview at the child custody her ex-partner

had been granted, and the level of control he continued to exert around her contact with the children:

> *Sue: I'm not understood. Nobody understands how it is. When you've lost children from somebody that's abused you and they're staying with that abuser, it is sickening. It is very sickening. But I have to live day by day. A lot of people have said, "Just wait for them to come to you," but you can't wait and wait and wait.*
> *Int: Who says wait until they come to you?*
> *Sue: Some of the professionals.*
> *Int: Some of the professionals have said that.*
> *Sue: I was under [DVA agency] and they turned round and said, "I think it would just be better for you to wait for them because you're giving them more pressure" […] They [the children] won't answer [me] now because sometimes they are scared of their dad. They have to lie to their dad sometimes.*

Here, Sue speaks of vulnerability: of the possible exposure to abuse her children are at risk of in their father's custody; and of the control her ex-partner (step-father) continues to have over her. Both of these vulnerabilities are located as unhindered by professional responses. The situation Sue describes is consistent with findings by other authors. Investigating mediation (including court-mandated mediation) in disputed cases in the US, Johnson et al (2005) counter-intuitively observed that in cases where there was DV, fathers who were perpetrators were granted primary physical custody of their children '*at an alarming rate*', '*significantly more often in DV cases than in non-DV cases*' (p.1047). Moreover, consistent with Sue's description of contact with her children, many authors have discussed fathers' use of the children to exact control and coercion over mothers during and after separation (Beeble et al, 2007; Burman & Chantler, 2005; Eriksson & Hester, 2001; Featherstone & Peckover, 2007; Rasool, 2016; Saunders, 1994).

From a realist perspective, the professional response that Sue speaks of - in relation to the loss of child custody and in the aftermath of this loss *("[j]ust wait for them to come to you"), -* may illustrate the difficulty of intervening in coercion, but it could also signal a lack of *attendance* to the stronghold of the father's coercion on the children (*'[t]hey won't answer now because sometimes they are scared of their dad. They have to lie to their dad sometimes').* If we conceive of exposure as the primary risk factor for IGT, Sue's account illustrates how exo-level processes of action and

inaction intersect with family-level factors to cultivate contexts conducive to continuities of exposure and, thus contribute to IGT.

My discursive reading of the two women's quotes shown here is that, in their emphasis on decisions made by professionals outside of the family regarding child residency and physical custody which result in continuities of exposure for their children, they challenge dominant victim-blaming discourses which locate IGT and continuities of victimisation as products of individual and family processes.

Section Summary

A realist reading of the research material in this section calls on us to conceive of institutions and services as failing to utilise their power to intervene in abuse within the family; failing to respond to disclosure and to symptomology; and for decisions involving child residency and physical custody. Most pertinently to this chapter, a realist view calls us to examine the role of institutions/services in continuities of exposure to violence within the family.

Discursively, the centralisation of institutions and services at exo-level, forces attention beyond the individual and family, and in doing so avoids a draw on pathologized and individualised discourses such as those discussed in the three prior analysis chapters ('*Blind Spots'; 'The Inevitable, The Avertible';* and '*The Corrupted Self'*). Calling into question the wisdom of institutions marks a point of defiance for the women - a counter to the othered subject position of the subservient, humble and grateful 'needy' - a position created in the hierarchical structure of those who run services and those who receive them – a hierarchy increasingly engendered in 'antiviolence work' through its prioritisation on professionalization (Mehrotra et al, 2016, p.158). Also salient is how the women's scrutiny of institutions keys into participatory, co-production and consultation practices that seek to reduce hierarchies of power and equalize relations by capturing the opinions of 'service users'. The 'authorization' of the voice of dissent is in and of itself subject to power inequities that could be revealed in institutions' tokenistic practices (Duckett et al, 2010), or through clients' constrained voicing of opinion (in anticipation of what may threaten, maintain, or increase support). Discursively though, this trend for 'service user' consultation would facilitate people's willingness to voice (dis)satisfaction, constrained or otherwise. Thus, rather than interpreting the women's accounts of institutions/services as a form purely of *resistance*, they

could also be read as *allied* to the organisational practices of 'service user' assessment/scrutiny of service provision.

Conclusion

IGT is typically constructed as a process operating entirely within the family, as a product of the micro-system, and one of the key assumptions, at least of a social learning explanation of IGT, is that exposure to violence within the family correlates with future victim/perpetrator behaviours. In keeping with this emphasis on the micro-system, a well-worn cliché involving family violence is that it occurs 'behind closed doors'. This may speak of the value privacy is afforded in nuclear family ideals, or perhaps of the collusion in silence violence demands. However, in accordance with neoliberal individualised explanations, this framing foregrounds the private response of the family while marginalising public involvement. This avails the latter of responsibility for intervention and justifies inaction. In this chapter, I illustrated the ways the women's accounts talked of moving the 'private' into the 'public' through verbal disclosures and by symbolically embodying abuse.

When confronted with participants' talk of service failure, other authors have interpreted such data as a strategy to absolve the individuals of responsibility, and correspondingly have avoided realist readings which risk making '*wholesale conclusions about services'* (Casey, 2012a, p.5), or moralized assumptions which legitimize one party/version/subjectivity and admonish another (Sandelowski, 2002). Throughout, this thesis has adopted a discursive approach to analysis. However, due to the significance of 'exposure' in explanations of IGT, (i.e. in social learning and dose-response theories), and because of the prominence of non-familial influences on exposure within the women's interview accounts, this present chapter compared and contrasted realist and discursive readings of the research material.

From a realist perspective, *'Continuities of Exposure'* represents women's talk of vulnerability and oppression. However, through a discursive lens, dissentient talk of institutions and practices marks a resistant and powerful subject position. Discursively, framing exo- and macro-level systems and processes as possible but inactive sources of intervention, provides a powerful resistance against pathologising complicity discourses. Moreover, *'Continuities of Exposure'* demonstrates how women's accounts externalise exposure to abuse by locating its continuation beyond the family

and in exo- and macro-level influences. In these broader spheres of influence, institutional and cultural systems and processes are located as setting-up contexts in which IGT is enabled. This serves an emancipatory function for the women, providing liberation from neoliberal, individualised discourses. Discursively, it illuminates the culpability of broader exo- and macro-systems in continuities in the micro-system, thus showing violence in multiple generations to be socially constructed, not solely produced by/within the family. It shifts the gaze from the women and their families to acquiescent or problematic institutions/ideologies. In this respect, talk of broader ideologies and practices – of nuclear family, of religion, and of services – not only tells us of their role in continuities, but also how discontinuities might be actioned. As soon as we re-envisage that IGT could be constituted by macro- and exo-level processes operating beyond the family but translated within the micro-system, it transforms our individualised conceptualisation of IGT as a sole construction of the family system.

Chapter 11

Discussion and Limitations

Introduction

In this final chapter, I contextualise the present study, considering: how the study and its analysis relate to the existing evidence-base; implications for practice and policy; future directions for research; strengths and limitations of the study; and finally, in my conclusion, I outline the main contributions and make recommendations for the direction of theory.

11.1. Present Study

This present study examined how participants constructed their personal accounts of violence in multiple generations, including how they drew upon the hypothesis of intergenerational transmission of 'family violence' (defined as *any* indirect or direct violence, maltreatment, abuse or coercion within *any* family relationship or intimate partnership). A discursive approach was adopted to in-depth individual semi-structured interviews (n=15) with women (n=9) from families affected by violence in multiple generations (between 3-5 generations). The research questions guiding the study were fundamentally concerned with representation and construction: of violence within multiple generations; of family and intimate relationships; of IGT; of conceptualisations of continuity and discontinuity; and of the possible influences within the family and beyond it on (dis)continuities.

This study makes an original contribution to existing literature involving IGT of family violence, and various aspects make it unique in the field. The study design sets it apart in five key ways. Firstly, the field is overwhelmingly populated by quantitative research, and so this study adds to the small number of qualitative studies (e.g. Aparicio, 2017; Fleckman et al, 2018; Hall, 2011; Insetta et al, 2015; Suzuki et al, 2008). Secondly, in its preoccupation with the micro-system, research in this area typically locates IGT as a product of the family. In an effort to counter this narrow focus, consideration was given to social ecologies - to community and socio-cultural factors - operating beyond but influencing the family. Thirdly, generally speaking the evidence-base has been informed by realist epistemologies, and increasing movement towards studies which examine

possible mechanisms of transmission further embed a realist notion of IGT. The constructionist epistemology makes this study a valuable contribution, troubling realist conceptualisations, and providing critical debate around IGT in academic and policy literature, and in the accounts of participants. Fourthly, novel in the field, discourse analysis aimed to provide a critical examination of research material, enabling consideration of the language and discursive qualities that constitute and construct IGT of family violence in accounts. Finally, this study invited participants to engage in visual methods in conjunction to interview, an innovative combination of methods in the context of the evidence-base.

Chapter 6 marks an original contribution through its critique of a particular form of written reflexivity for portraying what I term a '*participant-effecting, researcher-affected'* version of the research dyad. In this account, the researcher's feelings, emotions and symptomology are located as emergent from the encounter with the participant. By dissecting examples of such reflexive writings, I demonstrated the risks and implications of such a portrayal. Of pertinence to this study, I showed how this decontextualised and unidirectional version of the encounter implicitly locates the participant as an inevitable transmitter and consequently perpetuates stigmatising transmission narratives relating to populations that may be involved in sensitive research.

Discursive analysis of the research material has shown that participants' accounts resonated with dominant understandings of IGT and its core assumptions, but they also troubled IGT as an explanation of violence in multiple generations. The hypothesis of IGT, by nature, orientates attention toward the micro-system; violence in each new generation is cast as a product of this system and, as such, it promotes a pathologized view of the family and its members. In accordance, this present study indicates the numerous ways participants occupied pathologized subject positions which portrayed them as damaged and damaging, and which characterised them as inevitable receivers and transmitters of violence/victimisation. However, analysis also illustrated how the women created space within oppressive pathologising narratives to occupy subject positions as insightful and conscious of risk; active and agentic; purposeful in attempts to resist and halt IGT. In addition, accounts of inevitability were contrasted with more empowered narrations of possibilities for invoking discontinuities through various means of resistance. Moreover, research material illustrated powerful rejection of the individualised, pathologized and family-centric assumptions of IGT, with the women pointing to exo- and macro-level influences in

continuities of violence/victimisation. From a realist perspective, this challenges the notion that violence in multiple generations is produced solely through familial processes.

11.2. '*Rooting Futures in Pasts*' in Context of the Evidence-Base

Nearly all quantitative studies identified in literature searches reported statistical significance in one form or another, with the majority observing weak-to-moderate relationships between exposure to violence in childhood and subsequent perpetration/victimisation in adulthood. Concerns have been raised about the small effect sizes and weak relationships identified (e.g. Fergusson et al, 2006) and of the general methodological and analytical weaknesses of research in the field, weaknesses which in some cases have been found to seriously undermine the strength of findings apparently in support of IGT (Abramovaite et al, 2015; Ertem et al, 2000; Haselschwerdt et al, 2017; Herzberger, 1990; Johnson & Ferraro, 2000; Kimber et al, 2018; Thornberry et al, 2012; Widom, 1989a,b,c).

I illustrated in the literature review how, even though the evidence-base has hitherto been unable to consistently and conclusively build a persuasive case for the hypothesis of IGT of family violence, a discourse of acceptance runs through academic and policy literature. This truth-portrayal is persistent and pervasive, to such an extent that IGT is represented more as fact than theory, intuitive almost (Abramovaite et al, 2015; Baker 2009; 2012; Engel, 2005; Herzberger, 1990; Kelly, 1994). The implication of this uncritical application is two-fold: firstly, it fuels and legitimises pathologising and fatalistic dialogue around families/individuals affected by violence; secondly, the representation of IGT as an irrefutable truth means that, generally speaking, the phenomenon is enabled to operate as an 'absent trace' (Macleod, 2003), evading critique, even in the face of an instable and inconsistent empirical evidence-base.

The evidence-base is largely comprised of quantitative research, with very few qualitative studies. Qualitative investigation has the potential to examine IGT in nuanced and detailed ways, offering the opportunity to consider the rich accounts of those from families affected by violence in multiple generations. While this present study has contributed to the small number of qualitative studies in the field, a key point of distinction is that the relevant qualitative IGT of family violence work identified is predicated on IGT, whereas this present study is not. The hypothesis of IGT is

typically drawn upon in qualitative work in relatively uncritical ways but, in accordance with a constructionist epistemology and discourse analysis, this study examined accounts which troubled and challenged the theory of IGT, as well as those that synchronised with dominant conceptualisations. In its critical consideration of IGT, the stance this present study adopted is informed by and feeds into conceptual work in the field by those who have scrutinized the pervasiveness and uncritical application of the theory of IGT, and illuminated the implications of this. For instance, it keys into the theoretical work of Herzberger (1990), and the orientation of Baker's (2009; 2012) conceptual examination of the implications of IGT in refuges, similarly bears some resemblance to this study, in its consideration of the representation of IGT and the implications for individuals/families. A point of difference though is that Baker primarily adopted a gendered view whereas this present study examined IGT from more of an integrated ecological perspective, which also enabled a consideration of gender. This located families in context, helping to contribute to understandings of the private-public interplay in (dis)continuities of family violence.

This present study demonstrated how the women's accounts of preventing IGT located intergenerational continuity of violence as the status quo. That is, transmission to the next generation was described as something that continues to happen unless it is actively and consciously resisted. The resistant and 'corrective' strategies used as a means to prevent IGT I identified in women's accounts are in line with the findings of other qualitative researchers in the field who reported similar content in their interviews with individuals exposed to violence (e.g. Aparicio, 2017; Fleckman et al, 2018; Hall, 2011; Nixon et al, 2017; Suzuki et al, 2008). These studies and others like them, to a degree, mark an important disjuncture from the broader body of IGT research. They give voice to resistance, agency, and discontinuity, and, in doing so, bring about a challenge to the sense of determinism sometimes adopted in the field. However, the construction of intergenerational continuity as the status quo if not for resistance, and the individualisation of (dis)continuity, mean that to an extent they fall in line with much literature. This present study differs because it does not assume that the theory of IGT can fully and consistently explain the occurrence of violence in multiple generations of the same family. It does not presume a causal relationship between the violence/victimisation in one generation and another. Furthermore, this study does not assume continuity without resistance, nor that discontinuity is only ever as a result of resistance.

11.3. Implications for Practice and Policy

This thesis promotes critical engagement with the hypothesis of IGT. The review of the evidence-base, with its recognition to the pitfalls and limitations, enables us to take stock of the current state of knowledge; and the analysis of this study invites us to re-consider and re-frame how we think about and how we apply the hypothesis of IGT. This re-framing has the potential to have positive implications for practice in particular, and also for policy. In this section, I will summarise the issues at stake in applying IGT in practice and policy, and will outline how I envisage this study can act as a basis for positive transformation.

11.3.1. IGT in Intervention

The hypothesis of IGT is integrated into a host of interventions. For instance, with a view to helping fathers who have perpetrated violence to '*recognize their role in the intergenerational transmission of IPV*', the 'Fathering after Violence' programme incorporates activities centred on an analysis of IGT: of the behaviours and attitudes fathers learned in childhood and transmitted to their children (Labarre et al, 2016, p.14). Similarly, 'Fathers for Change' includes a phase whereby fathers are educated on the possibilities for IGT (amongst other impacts) with the aim of encouraging the desistance of violence (Labarre et al, 2016). Likewise, one of three guiding aims of a Swedish attachment-based psychoeducational intervention for victims and perpetrators of IPV, 'Parenting and Violence', is to '*prevent the violence from following the child into adulthood and affecting his/her own future relationships*', (Kamal et al, 2017, p.313). Furthermore, a Sri Lankan programme advocates early intervention with preschool children, '*early enough to arrest the cycle of violence that results in children themselves becoming victims and perpetrators of such violence*' (Lokuge et al, 2018, p.572). Research conducted by Pallatino and colleagues (2019) illustrates how a sample of practitioners draw on conceptualisations of IGT in their work with perpetrators to promote understanding of the possible outcomes of violence. The practitioners '*emphasized that both perpetrators and survivors often witness violence as a child between family members and that this cycle of abuse continues with each generation*' and stressed that children witnessing IPV in the family-of-origin '*leads to perpetration of abuse in their relationships as adults*' (p.6). Various researchers have called for interventions aimed at 'breaking the cycle of violence'. Insetta and colleagues (2015) recommend interventions are targeted '*toward children of IPV victims who are at high risk of entering violent relationships*' (p.717). Others advocate interventions be aimed at supporting victims to recognise the constituents of (un)healthy relationships (e.g. Laporte et al,

2011; Valdez et al, 2013) while Aparicio (2017) recommends that parenting classes are offered around risk of IGT '*including explicit content on how having been abused or neglected as a child creates risk for repeating these patterns*' (p.614). Thus, interventions are both in motion and being advocated which are not only guided by the hypothesis of IGT, but which are propagating its central assumptions to individuals, to fathers, to mothers, and to children affected by violence, in the UK and in others parts of the world.

'*Rooting Futures in Pasts*' illustrates how institutional propagation of IGT was reflected in the accounts of the women interviewed, as the voices of organisations/services/professionals were present in the women's constructions of IGT and pathologized self-talk. Messages about IGT were framed as being communicated by professionals more so than through family or other informal pathways. This illustrates the socially constructed nature of IGT and the ways conceptualisations of violence in multiple generations may be shaped by spheres of influence outside the family. Of course, many practitioners working with those affected by violence will be critical of the hypothesis of IGT, and others will not subscribe to the inevitability of it (Wagner et al, 2019). However, analysis from this study alerts us to the level of power professionals may hold in informing individuals' understandings, and indicates the need for those responding to violence apply IGT cautiously. Within the literature, the empirical evidence-base is often misrepresented as being unanimous in its support for IGT. In order to accurately reflect the state of knowledge, it is imperative that practice does not succumb to this same misrepresentation. Instead, it should seek to develop an increased awareness of the evidence. Careful examination of the representations of IGT, could in itself provide an anchor point in intervention, from which to explore IGT as a widely accepted theory against clients' own representations and conceptualisations of the long-term impacts of violence and of violence within multiple generations. Furthermore, it could provide a basis from which to start discussions with clients around the aspects of IGT that might be helpful and those that might be detrimental to self-conceptualisations. It is important that organisations responding to violence recognise the myriad ways IGT dismantles philosophies of recovery, of living violence-free, of resilience, and of agency, and that they critically reflect upon how this might directly oppose their organisational philosophies and approaches.

IGT enlists victims into pathologized self-talk, into claims of complicity and, through the veil of enculturation and inurement, locates their senses in relation to violence – the ability to determine

violence and detect its threat – as fundamentally untrustworthy. On the contrary, this study problematises and troubles the notion of blindness and 'inability' to 'see the signs of violence', challenges the idea of victims' perception deficit, and of inability to distinguish the constituents of (un)healthy relationships. Violence itself sets up a dislocation between the victim and their feelings, and particular specificities like coercion and gaslighting work on making the victim distrust their own feelings and perception of threat. Accordingly, intervention which centres on teaching victims how to recognise (un)healthy relationships and the warning signs of abuse, risks communicating the message that their senses have historically failed them, that their senses are unreliable and, in some way, impaired. This is in danger of continuing the messages conveyed in contexts of violence, because it further crystallises the notion that victims cannot trust themselves in their relationships with others, and adds to the construction of victims as complicit in their own victimisation.

11.3.2. Expectancy and Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Just as IGT was gaining ground and starting to become firmly enmeshed into the academy and, as a result, the social psyche, one author warned of the damage that '*widespread propagation and acceptance of the cyclical hypothesis*' causes to '*professionals and lay perspectives on the consequences of abuse victimization*' (Herzberger, 1990, pp.541-2). Others have similarly talked of the harms of the hypothesis, and the expectation of violence that IGT and its various synonyms (e.g. 'cycles of violence' and 'violence begets violence') set up (e.g. Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). The danger of this expectation of violence is that it engenders acquiescence and apathy in responses to violence, that agencies hold a view of their clients as perpetually risky, and transfer this negative perception onto them (Herzberger, 1990; Valdez et al, 2013). Pertinently, the expectation of transmission could be the very thing that promotes tolerance of violence. In this way then, the promotion of IGT could in itself be viewed as a promotion of tolerance.

Examples of existing/proposed interventions outlined above (in 11.3.1) are firmly grounded in IGT. I would argue IGT is already so heavily embedded culturally that the inclusion of messages in practice around risk of transmission, needs to be carefully managed so as not to generate expectations of enduring victimisations/perpetration or to provoke self-fulfilling prophecies (Abramovaite et al, 2015; Hall, 2011; Kaufman & Zigler, 1987; Pagelow, 1982; Widom, 2017). After identifying the increased likelihood of adults with histories of abuse being reported to child welfare authorities, a host of scholars have proposed that there is a possible detection or surveillance bias

in operation whereby families stigmatised by violence are subject to closer monitoring and more stringent reporting processes by professionals (Dixon et al, 2005; Leve et al, 2015; Widom et al, 2015; Widom, 2017). Widom (2017) posits that such practices risk invoking self-fulfilling prophecies and expectancies of victimisation/perpetration in clients.

Incorporating any discussion of 'cycles of violence' into interventions that purport to support victims, firstly does not reflect the evidence-base and, secondly, leans towards victim-blaming in its location of victims as complicit in such cycles; as potential transmitters, and as responsible for discontinuity by 'breaking' transmission. For those interventions aiming to support resistance to violence, I propose that a strengths-based approach which actively works to engender agency and encourage victims to 'trust' their feelings - to take heed of and attend to their own concerns - could more effectively facilitate resistance to violence. IGT is shaping interventions aimed at those affected by violence, but drawing on analysis of this study, it is recommended that its inclusion into practice and policy responses to violence are done so with great caution, with acknowledgement to the evidence and, crucially, with awareness of the possible implications of its application. Hunter and Kilstrom (1979) note the value of hope in the discontinuity of violence, suggesting that parents who successfully interrupted the IGT of abuse were hopeful that they could do so. This further highlights the responsibility on those working within this field, academics and practitioners alike, to instil hope of discontinuity.

11.3.3. Managing Exposure

In something of a contrast to individualised explanations of violence within multiple generations so familiar in the literature, analysis of this present study showed a complex interplay of the private and public, with accounts pointing to broader exo- and macro-systems at play in exposure to violence: via schools, child residency and custody interventions; in macro-level discourse involving normative conceptualisations of family, in religious interpretations of marital permanence, and in institutional messages of expectancy of continuities and 'cycles of violence'.

If we envisage exposure to be the most significant precipitating factor in transmission, as it is typically conceived of in IGT research, it should be important from a theoretical basis to consider all influences that precipitate, maintain, or prevent exposure. However, because IGT tends to be represented as an issue of the micro-system - perhaps an influence of social learning theory, which

dominates as the mechanism most commonly drawn upon to explain the occurrence of violence in multiple generations of the same family (Black et al, 2010; Corvo, 2006; Delsol & Margolin, 2004; Foshee et al, 1999), - factors beyond the family that might influence exposure are often overlooked. However, this study indicates that exposure and continuities of violence/victimisation may be subject to and shaped by exo- and macro-level processes.

The women located their childhood schools as potential but failed agents of change in their exposure to violence, and several of the mothers interviewed suggested that housing policy and decisions made around child custody actually facilitated the possibilities of exposure to violence. Moreover, macro-level imperatives on nuclear family and marital permanence underpinned accounts of exposure. For instance, even though, by virtue of the violence, the women's families sat outside of normative conceptualisations of nuclear family, consistent with Weima (2012), interview accounts at some moments described placing greater importance on preserving the illusion of normative family than on living without violence. In this way, discursively it was located as more important to uphold the illusion of the nuclear family by obscuring violence through talk of cohesion and closeness, than to speak of non-normativity and the disparities with nuclear family. In terms of intervention, a false dichotomy was present in the women's accounts: individuals either disclose and instigate family breakdown *or* withhold disclosure and preserve (the illusion of) cohesion. Disclosure then is framed as producing only one outcome and non-disclosure is located as an act not only in accordance with preserving family unity but also as an act against the regulatory powers that have the potential to invoke family breakdown. This binary unveils a narrative gap, illuminating possible middle ground where there might be room to intervene in the regulatory grip of macro- and exo-level imperatives for nuclear family, and the way this risks translating in micro-systems affected by violence to an imperative on non-disclosure, isolation, and relational management and, in turn, risks continued exposure to violence. Maintaining a normative family structure requires members remain, to all intents and purposes, 'unified'. In contexts of violence, this drive to uphold normative family, not only risks engendering the oppression of dissent and the silencing of injustices but, most importantly, risks continued exposure to abuse. This study extends understanding of 'exposure', and analysis challenges the persistent framing in IGT research on exposure as the principal precipitating/predictive factor of violence in multiple generations, and of exposure as an artifact of the family system. Analysis indicates that exposure is also maintained by influences beyond the family. This has implications for practice and also points to the direction for future research. Responses to violence often operate around risk

management with exposure reduction as one element of this. Both practice and research must broaden its focus to take into consideration the precipitating factors in exo- and macro-systems that facilitate exposure and continuities. Explanations of violence oriented to the micro-system, such as social learning theory, should also be extended outward to include a focus outside of the family.

11.4. Directions for Future Research

This thesis addresses several gaps in the literature, but more research is needed which builds on and extends the focus of this present study: which further investigates the discursive construction of IGT; which develops understanding of the ways violence in multiple generations is explained by those affected by it; and how the hypothesis of IGT is drawn upon in accounts; as well as the implications of such an explanation.

11.4.1. IGT in Practice

On the basis of this thesis and the literature reviewed, there is a need for future research to address a gap in the literature around the use of IGT in practice. The women's constructions of violence in multiple generations, their anticipation of continuities of victimisation, and their conceptualisations of IGT were at times intersected with talk of professional support and intervention. Further research is needed to understand how IGT is being communicated in practice, and the implications it has on clients.

Because IGT troubles, and potentially opposes, organisational philosophies and approaches centred on empowerment and recovery, it is essential to develop an understanding of the ways IGT might inadvertently be undoing the strengths-based messages of such services, replacing them with a deterministic message of the enduring expectation of violence/victimisation. Not only do such messages risk undermining the crucial work being done to support those affected by violence, but too, in its communication of family legacy and fate, it has potentially catastrophic implications for clients; impacting on self-conceptualisation, prohibiting the possibility of envisioning violence-free futures and more positive narrations of recovery and healing, and inducing resignation to violence/victimisation. They risk rooting victims' futures firmly in their pasts in deterministic and fate-filled ways and, moreover, are in danger of concealing structural issues and social inequalities

and disadvantages. Organisations must break through the general level of acceptance of IGT and the seeming intuitiveness of it and draw their attention to the ways this hypothesis may be detrimentally influencing and affecting their work.

In 'Blind Spots', I illustrated the significance of the external source in women's accounts of their capacity to 'see' violence and to resist continuities. DV programmes were located by some of the women as integral to their insight and agency, but in ways that problematically tied these aspects into intervention. That is, it constructs victims as unable to see and identify violence autonomously, and positions intervention as essential for discontinuity. This may mark one aspect of IGT in practice that troubles organisational agendas to develop client empowerment, confidence and self-belief, and as such, is an important area for future research. Another commonly occurring feature of IGT discourse relates to continuity and involves the notion of IGT as the status quo if not for resistance. This notion recurred across the analysis chapters but featured as a main point of analytic discussion in 'The Inevitable, The Avertible', where I highlighted the issues that the presumption of continuity raises. Women's talk of their conscious and purposeful attempts at resisting transmission are based on the premise that resistance is required to avert continuity, which in turn locates IGT as a default, the status quo, and discontinuity as an effect of resistance. This notion is heavily embedded in IGT discourse and in academic and policy literature. While the women's engagement with resistance synchronises with dominant discourse, it jars with the historical foci of prior IGT research, which has typically been concerned with continuity – with propensity for transmission, and the mechanisms by which transmission occurs. The offshoot of this has been the cultivation of an image of members of families as passive, and blind in their fall to the repetition of victimisation/perpetration of the prior generation. The women's talk of engaging with resistance as a mechanism of discontinuity counters this image and highlights an important and, as yet, relatively untapped avenue for future research. While the evidence-base comprises a small amount of research around resistance, I have not identified any prior studies specifically investigating the presumption of continuity, indicating a gap in the field and an opportunity to explore this in future research.

Perhaps because IGT is most typically cast as fact, I observed a scarcity of literature which explored the hypothesis of IGT in practice, identifying only one author working in this area. Baker's (2009; 2012) conceptual work examines the implications of theories of IGT in DV shelters and suggests

research is needed which counters the deterministic view of children as inheriting their futures from violent parents, by highlighting children's capacity for agency in informing their own lives. In concurrence with Baker, I advocate that more research is needed in this domain, to trouble the largely uncritical acceptance of IGT. However, unlike Baker's emphasis on the reframing of those exposed to violence in childhood, as a point of divergence, and drawing on this present thesis, I propose the direction of future research needs to be oriented around two domains: the existing translation of IGT theories in institutional and organisational policy and practice; and the benefits/harms of this application. The first area would enable investigation into how IGT is translated in practical application, for instance, in psychoeducational programmes, in organisational policy, in campaigns, in everyday language and assumptions drawn upon in practitioner-practitioner, practitioner-client, and in peer-group interaction/support. It will also allow Baker's (2009; 2012) conceptual work to be built upon through applied research, examining the ways IGT might be informing refuge provision. The second domain I propose important for future research is around benefits versus harms of applying IGT in practice, which would enable exploration of the challenges it presents to organisational agendas and the implications of these applied theories to clients.

As I illustrated in the analysis, in spite of the disproportionate male-perpetrated violence against females in their families, some of the women located intergenerational continuity as a female issue of victims rather than a male issue of perpetration. This could indicate that IGT is operating as a 'patriarchal discourse' (Kelly & Radford, 1996); facilitating female oppression and blame and enabling the possible long-term ramifications of male violence to be hidden. The nuclear family, a 'cornerstone of the patriarchal status quo' (Kelly & Radford, 1996, p.52), as present within the women's interview accounts (Chapter 10), could also signify the patriarchal nature of IGT as a discourse. This is a theory that warrants further research, especially since IGT is a construct frequently drawn on by DV services, which largely exist to support women affected by male-perpetrated violence. According to Stark (2007), '*shelters today are indistinguishable from the traditional, paternalistic service system they arose to challenge*' (p.7). Whether or not this is the case, the adoption of a possible patriarchal discourse (if indeed this is what IGT is) in these spaces surely requires examination.

This study highlights opportunities to balance and re-set notions and assumptions of IGT. Dispelling the myths of IGT, especially around inevitability, might go some way to supporting this change. The application of these kinds of myths and assumptions are particularly problematic in agency responses to violence. Thus, these environments might be most benefitted by resetting beliefs about IGT, and casting a critical eye over dominant constructions with a view to unpacking the ways they might be informing existing service policy and practice. Future research or action research projects might contribute to activities to this effect, perhaps acting, initially as a pilot, to larger scale work in this area. There is scope to conduct desk-based research which requests and explores the mission statements, policies, and governing documents of organisations, to determine the presence of IGT and its core assumptions, and also how agendas and approaches might be undermined by the inclusion of IGT in practice. This same strategy could be taken to review organisations' manualized programmes and intervention materials. In addition, opportunities exist for resources to be developed and targeted at services providing intervention to families affected by violence. For example, workshops aimed at professionals and parents could provide an innovative way of illuminating and exploring the assumptions of IGT, and the ways they inform professional practice, decision-making, parenting, and beliefs about the next generation.

11.4.2. Major Life Decisions

While not asked specifically about major life decisions, this material was present within the interview accounts, as women described making choices around relationship avoidance and reproductive choices. In two accounts, beliefs and fears about IGT were framed as informing choices to be child-free. There are a number of contextual factors and discourses that converge to situate the choice to be child-free as rational and sensible. Firstly, the pervasiveness of IGT and its historical and cultural embeddedness (Nader, 1998) crystallises the core assumptions of the theory, polishes them up, and leaves them with the patina of fact. This is particularly troubling when we consider that the theory of IGT automatically problematises the prospect of parenthood for those exposed to violence. It does this by locating parents/would-be parents as perpetually risky: as transmitters of their family legacy of violence to their children; and at risk of exposing their children to their own perpetual victimisation and/or perpetration of harm.

Secondly, in an ableist society the purported impacts of family violence, particularly involving propensity for transmission (ibid), risk stigmatising and undermining the capacity of anyone affected by violence as individuals and as (potential) parents. So damning is it, that if the literature

around the long-term consequences of violence were read uncritically, it would surely be a careless and irresponsible citizen that chose to procreate following exposure. Consider, to name a few: the vulnerabilities to psychosocial health (Madigan et al, 2017); the increased susceptibility to lifelong disease (Shonkoff, 2016); increased engagement in risk-behaviours linked to the leading causes of death (Felitti et al, 1998); the lifelong social malfunction and impact on wellbeing (Felitti & Anda, 2014); and the increased risk of mental illness, as well as changes to hormonal responses and neural function affecting the '*life span of the individuals'* and '*with consequences for their offspring and grand-offspring*' (Cowan et al, 2016, p.155). Thus, the purported impacts of violence frame those affected as at risk *and* as transmitters of risk.

Thirdly, parenting, especially mothering, is stringently observed and regulated and the parental role as one of a social and emotional coach, an *'agent of moralisation'* (Rose, 1985, P.169), is normalised (Burman, 2008; Lapierre, 2010). Thus, in the context of these converging issues, the discursive implications are such that choosing childlessness emerges as the only rational adult decision. The possible implications of the converging discourses described here, and the lack of evidence in this area, together with the analysis of this study, indicate that it may be important for future research to investigate whether IGT of violence is informing reproductive decision-making.

11.5. Strengths and Limitations

This study is novel in the field, and through its discursive and constructionist orientation, it provides an alternative perspective of IGT than is typically adopted. However, it is not without its limitations, and the thesis should be read within the boundaries of those described below.

11.5.1. Study Design

The flexibility of this present study was such that participants could talk about violence in multiple generations beyond the narrow and constricted remit of IGT, enabling talk of, for instance: discontinuity; resistance; and consideration of the family as part of an ecological system, rather than something isolated and discrete. It was specifically designed to allow consideration of family, community, social and cultural factors. This was a major strength of the study and enabled consideration of issues within participants' ecosystems that may have facilitated and/or hindered (dis)continuities. Complementary methods were valuable in supporting an exploration of

ecologies. Genograms and Ecomaps were not intended to be constructed for the purpose of analysis and were not analysed in isolation, rather this information was indirectly embedded in interviews and analysis through the interaction that took place between verbal and visual methods during the interview process.

The ontological and epistemic stance adopted by this study prohibited a realist examination of the genograms and ecomaps. However, they showed some interesting information about the possible precipitating and protective factors in continuities, for instance, the protective factors of peer/family support, belonging to clubs/social groups, involvement in creative activities/sport, and family pets, as well as the precipitating factors of being care-experienced, of war, and other political, social, temporal and geographic specificities. In terms of the direction of violence, combined, genograms depicted a total of 47 intra-generational relationships characterised by violence/abuse (between partners and between (step-)siblings), and a further 12 characterised by control/hostility. Additionally, the women represented positive/supportive intra-generational kinships/friendships in their genograms and ecomaps. This demonstrates the need to examine relationships intra-generationally, i.e. operating laterally, not only inter-generationally, i.e. running in vertical ancestral descent (Punch 2020; Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015). Moreover, two counts of child-to-parent violence were depicted on genograms. While this is minimal in comparison to the number of instances of top-down and lateral violence symbolised, it illustrates the need for future research to move away from viewing relations (and power dynamics) in unidirectional, top-down ways, and shows genograms as useful tools in generating multi-directional information of this kind. Together, genograms and ecomaps enabled an examination of 'the more fluid and reciprocal nature of intergenerational negotiations and contestations' (Vanderbeck & Worth, 2015, p.6) and therefore avoided conceptualising continuities of violence as generated by top-down familial processes.

This present study drew on an integrative ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a) as a mechanism to consider the (re-)production of discourses related to IGT of family violence operating within and between different ecological levels. Using an ecological approach allowed a broad view of participants' social ecologies, and a focus on multiple-levels and multiple factors contributing to (dis-)continuities of violence and playing a role in discourses of IGT. Ecological frameworks have the capacity to integrate key approaches to violence which are often seen as

conflicting or are set in opposition to one another like, for instance, feminist and family violence theories (Belsky, 1980; Heise, 1998; Whitaker et al, 2009). The ecological approach, sympathetic with a feminist approach, enabled interpretations to be drawn on issues of gender operating at macro-level (the ecological level much feminist work attends to (Heise, 1998; Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019)), the micro-level (the level much family violence perspectives focus on (Stark, 2007)), as well as the exo-level. Not only were issues of gender inequality present in the women's interview material, but one woman graphically represented attitudes to gender on her ecomap as well as other social attitudes that disproportionately have negative implications for women such as attitudes to divorce, single parenthood, and social class, illustrating that gender was present in implicit and explicit ways within the material generated.

Various scholars have used an ecological framework to study intimate partner violence (Ali & Naylor, 2013; Dutton, 1985; Smith Slep et al, 2014; Whitaker et al, 2009; Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019); violence against women (Hagemann-White et al, 2010; Heise, 1998), and child maltreatment (Belsky, 1980). Ecological frameworks have tended to be used to organise the evidence base into respective ecological levels (e.g., Heise, 1998) or as a model to site multi-level predictors of violence (e.g., Zapata-Calvente et al, 2019). However, I have not identified any studies that have attempted to explore discourses of IGT using an ecological model, as this present study has done. This indicates an opportunity for future research to further explore the ways an ecological framework might firstly support the integration of seemingly contrasting approaches and, secondly, contribute to an improved understanding of the ways discourses of IGT manifest in peoples' lives.

This study focused on discursive constructions, however, as detailed here, genograms and ecomaps produced information the likes of which future research may want to investigate through a realist lens. In addition, while this present study did not set out to explore the antecedents or the risk factors of violence per se, information of this nature was present in the interview material; for example, through the women's unprompted accounts of the role substance use, addiction, and mental health played in violence within the family. Future research intending to build on this study might consider capturing this information more systematically from participants.

11.5.2. Definition

Various authors recommend that definitions are made clear by researchers (e.g. Herzberger, 1990), and that details such as severity and frequency of violence exposure are established (Haselschwerdt et al, 2018). I did not define what makes an abusive act, nor did I ask participants to articulate how they defined/understood violence, but rather left it open to participants to decide what constituted violence in their lives. The issue this raises is that both parties – researcher and participant - '*may be operating with different assumptions*' (Hall, 2011, p.32), risking the creation of a misalignment between the meaning researchers and participants are assigning to key terminology used in the study. Most salient to the central aims of this research were the discursive constructions of accounts of violence in multiple generations. Thus, it did not necessarily warrant capturing detailed information on severity, frequency, or exposure, the likes of which is traditionally sought in quantitative IGT research. However, in replicating this study, there is an opportunity for future researchers to establish clear definitions of violence between researcher and participant.

The IGT literature is so variable, with distinctions in definitions, in the study of generalised violence versus individual taxonomies, and differences in methodologies. While explored, I did not scrutinise in systematic ways participants' conceptualisations of the nature of transmissions – i.e. how what is experienced in one generation is transmitted and materialises in the next. This is a limitation with the evidence-base generally, and relates to one of the key problems of IGT research, that causal links between the behaviours in one generation and the outcomes in the next are not rigorously evidenced (Herzberger, 1990). A major strength of this present study though is that it did not presume causal relationships between one generation and another, nor did it seek to establish such links. To further prohibit causal links being assumed between generations of the same family, this study made a distinction between 'IGT' and 'continuities of violence'. The latter allows for a broad consideration of influences within and outside of the family (further facilitated by the combination of genograms and ecomaps), not only directly and linearly between generations (as per the former).

11.5.3. Recruitment

Those missing from the service landscape and not represented in services should be recognised as missing from the cohort of this present study. Fewer services exist for male victims and female perpetrators and, as a result, they are less likely to be represented. Male teenagers may be

prohibited from DV services (Baker, 2009; 2012); older women may be less likely to come to the attention of specialist DVA services (Lazenbatt & colleagues, 2013; Lombard & Scott, 2013); a lack of 'minority-targeted programs' may be a barrier for Asian survivors of violence in accessing help (Lee, 2013, p.1350); women or men who migrate for marriage, who have insecure immigration status and who have no recourse to public funds, may not be eligible to access DV services and so are less likely to be represented (Anitha, 2008). Conversely, certain populations may be overrepresented in DV services. Families on lower income or in poverty are overrepresented in state child welfare services through need (Jonson-Reid et al, 2009) or reporting bias (Widom, 1989a) and this, as a consequence, may be translated in DV provisions.

During the recruitment phase, in one annum (2014/15), 37.5% of the clients of one DV agency I recruited from were from Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority and Refugee (BAMER) communities. In the same year, 1.62% of their clients were from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities (reference omitted). As my sample comprised white heterosexual women only, with similar demographic characteristics, and all, except one, British, it is limited in its capacity to reflect the diversity of the target population. As others have observed, there is an over-representation in the literature on violence within heterosexual relationships (Kimber et al, 2018), and an emphasis on female victims (Rodriguez & Tucker, 2011; Stith et al, 2000). The women-only sample in this present study is in keeping with this tradition, which means that it has not been able to contribute to knowledge around gender by including male victims. Aside from the inherent issues of generalising qualitative data to populations other than the relevant cohort, the lack of ethnic, racial and demographic diversity means that the sample for this present study is not representative of those experiencing violence and, as such, limits possibilities for transposing analysis to the general population. Towards the end of the recruitment phase, on the guidance of one particular provider, I offered prospective participants the option of an interpreter/translator. This measure did not attract any further participants, but had it been implemented and advertised as an option earlier in recruitment, it may have made participation more inclusive and accessible for non-English-speaking individuals. It is recommended that future research considers embedding this option into their recruitment strategy to ensure their cohort is representative of those experiencing violence and accessing services in the UK.

11.6. Conclusion

Intergenerational transmission is a loaded phrase. 'Intergenerational' assumes a focus on the family, and 'transmission' presumes a causal link between phenomena in one generation and another. From a discursive perspective, the notion of IGT as a preserve of the family, maintains a narrow and decontextualized view of the occurrence of violence within multiple generations. This prohibits an orientation outward, to other systems and processes and, more crucially, it prohibits further enquiry into precipitating or protective factors beyond but affecting the family. On the contrary, this present study adopted a critical enquiry, it did not assume causal links and, as such, did not presume IGT as the only possible explanation of violence in multiple generations.

This study has extended knowledge of the hypothesis of IGT of family violence through a discourse analysis of the qualitative accounts of women from families affected by violence in multiple generations. It marks an important disjuncture from the field in design and in findings. Analysis shows how personal accounts are shaped by and resist the hypothesis of IGT and associated assumptions, and how drawing on IGT enlists victims of violence into pathologized self-talk, into claims of complicity, and into enculturation discourses which locate them in passive and docile ways; as imbued into a climate of violence, and as desensitised and inured to it. Crucially, analysis illuminates the socially constructed nature of IGT: with exposure and continuities influenced by exo- and macro-system factors; and expectancies of transmission communicated by institutions and practitioners. This thesis unsettles individualised readings of violence within multiple generations of the family i.e. family-centric IGT frameworks, and shows the need for a reconceptualization which takes account of the multitude of ways (dis)continuities may be informed by micro-, exo-, and macro-level factors.

Both practice and research must extend their focus to take into consideration the precipitating factors in exo- and macro-systems that facilitate exposure and continuities of violence. Explanations of violence oriented to the micro-system, such as social learning theory, must be extended outward to include a focus outside of the family. This thesis has identified opportunities for future research to examine the stronghold of the hypothesis and associated assumptions of IGT of family violence, how entrenched they are, how they are constructed in discourse, the extent to which they are integrated at a service-level, and the implications on organisations and individuals/families accessing services.

The principal benefit of IGT research is that it can provide insight into the potential long-term consequences of violence within the family, which can in turn help to mobilise resources to those in need. Future research should aim to counter unhelpful trends in the literature, moving away from research premised on IGT, and away from the location of continuity as the status quo (i.e. beyond the assumption of inevitability without resistance, and the notion that discontinuity is as a result of resistance). Moreover, recognition must be afforded to the dangers of such discourses for individuals and families affected by violence and for the risk it poses for undermining the crucial work of organisations responding to violence. Furthermore, research is needed which takes a broad view of social influence, considering the ways continuities and discontinuities are shaped by systems of influence within *and* beyond the family.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Literature Search Log

Database Literature Search Log							
Search No.	Date	Database	Keywords	Results (pre-limits)	Limits	Results (with limits)	References obtained
1.	18/02/19	Medline	Intergenerational transmission OR transgenerational transmission AND Family violence OR Family Abuse	34	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	26	20 relevant by abstract
2.	18/02/19	Medline	(intergenerational transmission OR transgenerational transmission) AND (domestic violence OR domestic abuse)	70	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	14	10
3.	19/02/19	Medline	Intergenerational transmission AND (violence OR abuse)	259	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	127	24
4.	19/02/19	Medline	Transgenerational transmission AND (violence OR abuse)	24	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	9	1
5.	19/02/19	Medline	continuity AND (violence OR abuse)	815	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	231	6
6.	19/02/19	Medline	discontinuity AND (violence OR abuse)	76	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	28	1
7.	19/02/19	Medline	Cross-generational AND (violence OR abuse)	23	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	13	1
8.	19/02/19	Medline	Cycle AND (violence OR abuse)	1837	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	863	34
9.	20/02/19	Medline	(Pattern OR Legacy) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	95	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	25	6
10.	20/02/19	Medline	(heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse) NOT drug abuse	6	None	N/A	1
11	20/02/19	Medline	(heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	8	None	N/A	1
12	20/02/19	Medline	(heritability OR inheritance) AND (violence OR abuse)	353	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	133	4
13	20/02/19	Medline	Family of origin AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	30	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	16	4
14	20/02/19	Medline	Childhood AND later life AND (violence OR abuse)	374	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	214	11
15	20/02/19	Medline	Childhood exposure AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	28	English, Abstract, 15 years (Jan 2004 - Jan 2019)	19	4
16	23/02/19	PsychNET	(intergenerational OR transgenerational OR cross-generational) AND transmission AND (violence OR abuse)	869	Peer reviewed, Abstract, 2004-2019	225	56
17	23/02/19	PsychNET	*continuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	98	Peer reviewed, Abstract, 2004-2019	23	4
18	23/02/19	PsychNET	(cycle OR pattern OR legacy OR heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	241	Peer reviewed, Abstract, 2004-2019	71	12

19	24/02/19	PsychNET	Family-of-origin AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	670	Peer reviewed, Abstract, 2004-2019	19	2
20	24/02/19	PsychNET	childhood exposure AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	224	Peer reviewed, Abstract, 2004-2019	29	2
21	24/02/19	Social Care Online	(intergenerational OR transgenerational OR cross-generational) AND transmission AND (violence OR abuse)	65	Abstract	50	13
22	24/02/19	Social Care Online	continuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	17	Abstract	11	1
23	24/02/19	Social Care Online	discontinuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	3	Abstract	2	0
24	24/02/19	Social Care Online	(cycle OR pattern OR legacy OR heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	42	Abstract	32	4
25	24/02/19	Social Care Online	Family-of-origin AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	12	Abstract	8	0
26	24/02/19	Social Care Online	childhood exposure AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	7	Abstract	5	0
27	24/02/19	Social Care Online	Childhood and later life AND (violence OR abuse)	58	Abstract	49	4
28	25/02/19	ASSIA	(intergenerational OR transgenerational OR cross-generational) AND transmission AND (violence OR abuse)	1382	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ literature review/statistics & data report	66	11
29	27/02/19	ASSIA	continuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	552	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ literature review/statistics & data report	8	1
30	27/02/19	ASSIA	discontinuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	131	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ literature review/statistics & data report	0	(4 articles accessed from original 131 prior to limitations)
31	27/02/19	ASSIA	discontinuity AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	131	15-year date range	91	4
32	27/02/19	ASSIA	(cycle OR pattern OR legacy OR heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse)	2091	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ Evidence based healthcare/ literature	48	5

					review/statistics & data report		
33	27/02/19	ASSIA	Family-of-origin AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	537	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ Evidence based healthcare/ literature review/statistics & data report	9	0
34	27/02/19	ASSIA	"childhood exposure" AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	97	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ Evidence based healthcare/ literature review/statistics & data report	2	1
35	27/02/19	ASSIA	"childhood exposure" AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	97	All fields, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ Evidence based healthcare/ literature review/statistics & data report	47	0
36	27/02/19	ASSIA	Childhood and later life AND (violence OR abuse)	12,432	Abstract, peer-reviewed, 15-year date range (Jan 2004 – Jan 2019), English, scholarly journals - article/case study/government and official document/ Evidence based healthcare/ literature review/statistics & data report	144	6
37	27/02/19	WOS	"intergenerational transmission" AND "family violence"	169	Topic	127	29
38	27/02/19	WOS	Transgenerational OR cross-generational AND transmission AND violence OR abuse	96	Topic 15-year English Article/Review No conference proceedings	71	8
39	28/02/19	WOS	continuity OR discontinuity AND intergenerational AND violence OR abuse	153	Topic 15-year English Article/Review No conference proceedings	110	7
40	28/02/19	WOS	(cycle OR pattern OR legacy OR heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND (violence OR abuse) (cycle OR pattern OR legacy OR heritability OR inheritance) AND intergenerational AND family AND (violence OR abuse)	384 (too broad, narrowed through inclusion of 'family') 219	Topic 15-year English Article/Review No conference proceedings	130	5

41	28/02/19	WOS	Family-of-origin AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	71	Topic 15-year English No conference proceedings	46	5
42	28/02/19	WOS	"childhood exposure" AND subsequent AND adulthood AND (violence OR abuse)	12	Topic 15-year English No conference proceedings	9	1
Total				24314 yielded pre-limitations		2840 yielded after limitations	313 references obtained

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHAMPTON

Adults Invited to Participate in Family Violence Research

I'm inviting adults who have experienced family violence (domestic violence, maltreatment, neglect, and/or abuse) in one or more generations of their families to take part in my research by sharing their experiences in an individual interview.

The purpose of the project is to explore experiences of family violence, including thoughts about support systems and relationships. I'm particularly interested in exploring thoughts and beliefs about how and why violence appears to 'repeat' in families across generations. I'm also interested in thoughts and feelings in relation to the things that have helped & hindered coping and resilience in childhood, in adulthood, and within families.

Participation would involve a one-to-one interview. I will take steps to protect participants' identity, and no names, locations or identifying information would be included in any of the written or spoken presentation of the research. Interviews can be carried out at a mutually convenient day/time and in an appropriate space (e.g. such as your local dv centre).

I would like to speak to those:

- ➢ **Adults aged 18+**
- ➢ **Who have experienced family violence (domestic violence, maltreatment, neglect, and/or abuse) in one or more generations of their family**
- ➢ **Are now safe and living away from violence**

If you would like more information, contact Jo:
Mobile: XXXX
Email: XXXX
Contacting me, does not commit you in any way.

Appendix 3. Participant Information Sheet

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Information Sheet for Participants: Adults

Deconstructing intergenerational transmissions of family violence

Thank you for showing an interest in this study. The following information will provide details about the nature of this research and how it will be carried out.

The Purpose of the Research

My name is Jo, I'm a Researcher at the University of Northampton working on a family violence research project. I would like to invite you to take part in an interview, but before you decide, I will explain the purpose of the research and what participation involves.

I'm inviting adults who have experienced violence (domestic violence, maltreatment, neglect, and/or abuse) in one or more generations of their families to take part in an interview. I'm particularly interested in beliefs about intergenerational transmission of family violence, and in exploring experiences of support networks, family relationships, as well as thoughts on what helped and hindered resilience and coping during childhood and/or adulthood.

What Participation Involves

As part of the interview process, I am asking participants to take part in a creative activity which involves creating a simplified version of a family tree (called a genogram), and a map showing support systems (called an ecomap). In total, the activity and interview will take about 3 hours. Interviews are typically done on one occasion, but you can divide the 3 hours over 2 occasions if you want to. Also, if you find that you need more time to explore your experiences, we can arrange a second interview for you to talk some more.

A copy of the kinds of questions I will ask is shown at the end of this form. Before the interview, you will be given an opportunity to ask any questions about the study. If you decide that you would like to participate, you will be asked to sign a consent form. The interview can take place at a time convenient to you within an appropriate space (such as your local domestic violence centre).

The Genogram will show family relationships during your childhood and adulthood as you consider them. I will ask that the general relationships of three-four generations of your family are included on your Genogram. I do not expect participants to do prior research into their family history; you will only be required to give a very basic outline of the information listed above and if you're not sure of certain information it doesn't matter. I will show you

examples of the exercises so that you get an idea of how to create them, and you can ask me questions before and during the exercise if you need further clarification. Our own experiences and thoughts may differ from those of our family members, but this research is most interested in the thoughts and experiences of each individual participant, and so there are no right or wrong answers.

After you have created the Genogram and Ecomap, I will ask you the questions from the Interview Schedule. If you don't want to answer a particular question, or you want to stop the interview at any point, you can just let me know. After the interview, if you decide that you no longer want to be part of the research, you can let me know (up to eight weeks from the date of your interview), using the email at the end of this information sheet, and I will not include your information in the study.

I will audio-record the interview, as it is important for me to remember in detail the things you say. The interview will be written out word for word, but I will not include any identifying information (such as names, place names etc) in the written record of the interviews, to protect your and others' identity.

When I have completed all the interviews, I will read through the written records, to look for patterns and themes, relating to participants' experiences and perceptions in relation to family violence. These themes will be written up in reports and publications. I will use quotes from the interviews to illustrate the themes. Names and other identifying information (such as names, names of places etc) will be removed from these quotes.

Care will be taken to store all the information from the interviews securely. Digital audio recordings will be stored on a password protected device. Consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet, and stored separately from the recordings.

Researcher contact information:
If you would like to ask questions or if you want to withdraw after the interview, I can be contacted using the following information:

Email: XXXX
Phone: XXXX

If you have concerns about the research process or if any problems should arise, you can contact my Supervisor:

Name: XXXX
Address: XXXX
Email: XXXX

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. If you are happy to continue in this process, please read and sign the consent form below.

Appendix 4. Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form – Individual Interviews

Please tick to confirm

I have been informed of the purpose of the study. I have read the Information Sheet and Interview Schedule and have seen an example of the Genogram/Ecomap exercise.	
I understand that I do not have to answer questions or provide information which I may find uncomfortable or upsetting.	
I am fully aware of my right to stop participation at any point during the interview, and to withdraw my data up to eight weeks after my interview.	
I understand the interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. My name and other identifying information will be removed from the transcript to protect mine and others' identity. My Genogram & Ecomap will be recreated, and pseudonyms will replace real names to protect identity.	
I understand that the recorded interview and my original Genogram/Ecomap will be stored securely and destroyed as confidential waste after the completion of the PhD.	
I understand that anonymised Genograms, Ecomaps and quotes from my interview will be used within the PhD report, subsequent scholarly publication, conferences and other scholarly dissemination activities.	
I have had an opportunity to ask questions about the interview, the task and my involvement in this research.	
I am able to contact the researcher if I have any queries or wish to withdraw.	

Signed..

Print Name...

Date..

Appendix 5. Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule – Experiences of Family Violence

Please note that the questions below in bold will be asked in interview, those in italics may be asked as prompts.

Could you talk me through your Genogram?

> *- What were relationships like within your immediate family growing up? Consider conflict/tensions/violence/support/trust etc.*

> *- Why have you chosen particular relational patterns?*

Could you talk me through your Ecomap?

> *-Explaining how you retrospectively consider relationships within your extended family and relationships at a wider community level*

> *-As a child/young person, was there anyone you could go to for support?*

> *-Were there critical points where intervention or support was needed?*

> *-In what ways did interventions/support both positively and negatively impact upon you and your family?*

> *-During your childhood, who could you most & least rely on/talk to/ask for help?*

> *-Were there times when you felt others hindered your situation/relationships?*

> *-Who in your family has been most and least influential in your life, and why?*

How did you cope with family violence within your family? Consider moments of violence, the immediate period afterwards, and later on in adulthood

> *-Were there things that you did to help yourself and/or your family members?*

> *-What is it like to reflect back on your childhood experiences?*

> *-Are there positive or negative ways in which your experiences might have influenced you in adulthood?*

> *-How do you make sense of intergenerational repetition of family violence (domestic violence, maltreatment, &/or abuse)?*

-Why do you think violence sometimes appears to 'repeat' in different generations of the same family?

-Do you think repetition of violence within families is inevitable? If not, what/who might help to prevent or exacerbate the repetition of family violence?

-Have you ever consciously tried to avoid repeating familial relationships/situations that you experienced during your childhood?

Is there anything else you'd like to raise that we haven't discussed already?

Appendix 6. Genogram Legend (GenoPro, 2011)

LEGEND

Emotional Relationships

|					
Indifferent / Apathetic	Harmony	Hostile	Violence	Abuse	Manipulative
Distant / Poor	Friendship / Close	Distant-Hostile	Distant-Violence	Physical Abuse	Controlling
Cutoff / Estranged	Best Friends / Very Close	Close-Hostile	Close-Violence	Emotional Abuse	Jealous
Cutoff Repaired	Love	Fused-Hostile	Fused-Violence	Sexual Abuse	Fan / Admirer
Discord / Conflict	In Love	Fused	Focused On	Neglect (abuse)	Limerence
Hate	Emotional Connection / Spiritual Relationship	Distrust	Focused On Negatively	Never Met	Plain / Normal

Family Relationships

Marriage	Engagement	Legal cohabitation	Cohabitation	Casual relationship or dating (short-term)
Separation in fact	Engagement and cohabitation	Legal cohabitation and separation in fact	Cohabitation and separation	Casual relationship and separation
Legal separation	Engagement and separation	Legal cohabitation and official (legal) separation	Non-sentimental cohabitation	Temporary relation / One night stand
Divorce	Nullity	Committed relationship	Non-sentimental cohabitation and separation	Love Affair

Genogram Symbols

Male	Female	Unknown Gender	Pet	Adopted Child	Foster Child	Pregnancy	Miscarriage	Abortion	Death	Twins	Identical Twins

Appendix 7. Example Completed Genogram

Sue's Active Genogram: Identifying Family Dynamics (Aged 46 yrs)

P.7. Active Genogram:
Identifying Family Dynamics
(Aged 46 yrs)
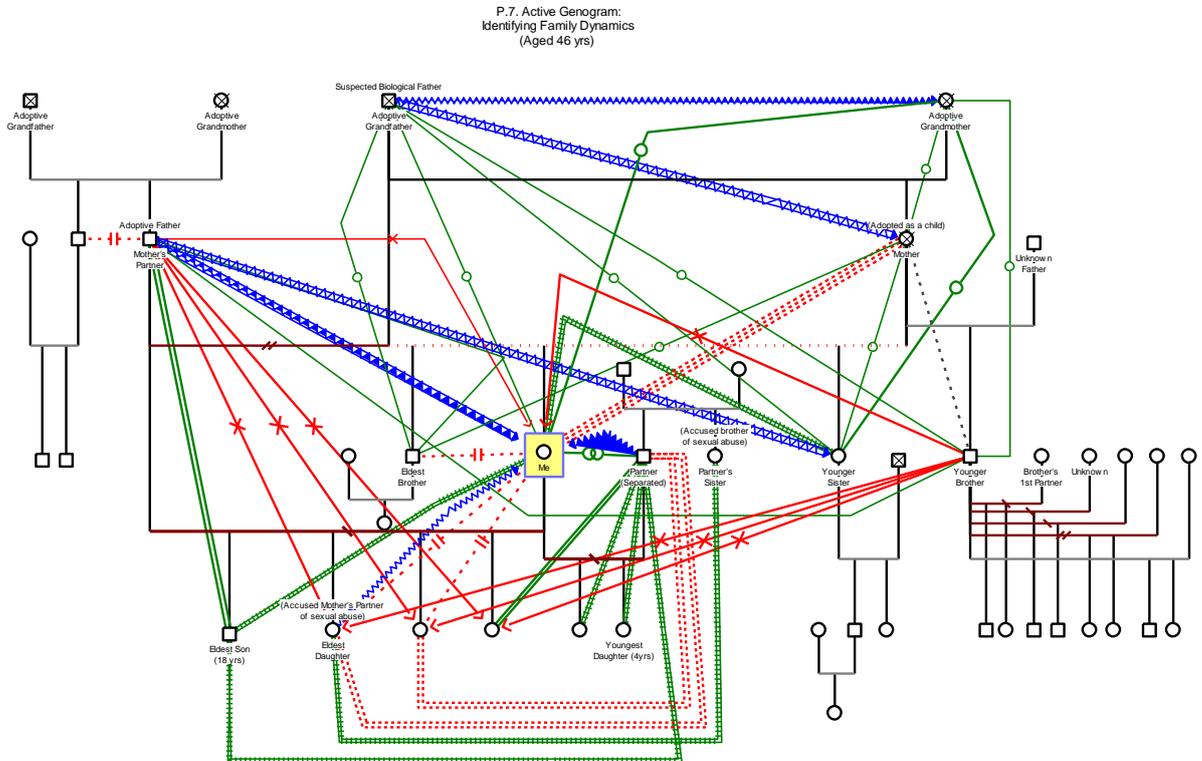
Appendix 8. Example Completed Ecomap

Amy's Ecomap: Identifying Micro, Exo & Macro Systems (Aged 7-10 yrs)